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A Social History of the Irish Music Industry, 1910–1985

Michael Mary Murphy

A thesis submitted for the degree of
PhD (Sociology)
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Michael Mary Murphy

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Summary

This thesis re-inserts a number of key behind-the-scenes individuals and factors into the history of the Irish music industry, placing the commercial and artistic achievements of Ireland's popular music artists in their industry context. By documenting a century of industry activity, it is possible to identify patterns of entrepreneurial activity, and ways in which the industry's development was shaped by internal and external factors.

Drawing on theories which highlight the importance of collective activity, including field theory, the concept of art worlds and the production of culture perspective, this thesis identifies the different types of labour and commercial perspectives in the music industry and the music scene. In particular, it documents how the informal and supportive environment for musicians, *the scene*, operates with principles different from those of the more professional centralised global music industry. That industry conducts its activity within what Stahl termed 'stable structures of authority and subordination, of property creation and appropriation' (2013: 3).

Following these methodologies, I undertook an extensive review of media representations of the music industry between the 1880s and 1985. This enabled conclusions to be drawn about the types of entrepreneurial activity and local community music making that took place and had an impact on the music industry's development. Newspaper archives and data bases were a particularly rich source of data and were extensively researched. This desk research was combined with interviews with a select group of music industry and music scene participants. In addition, published accounts of Ireland's popular music makers and the entrepreneurs with whom they interacted provided additional insight in mapping the social history.

This allowed a number of the dominant myths of the Irish music industry to be challenged. In particular, the role of the Catholic Church and the domestic cultural protectionist power groups were interrogated. The research indicates that they did not represent a monolithic force; this is illustrated by identifying ways in which the protectionist power groups were challenged publicly by the Irish legal system and even from within the Church itself.

Also highlighted is a previously under-documented pattern of engagement by the Irish Catholic clergy with local music making. While the clergy have been widely

acknowledged in their role as censors of dancing and music making, far less attention has been paid to the numerous ways in which they interacted productively with the domestic music scene and with the commercialised music industry. In the early 20th century, for example, members of the clergy were authoring and publishing collections of Irish popular songs as well as editing the 'autobiographies' of popular music celebrities. In addition, the Church was responsible for local music making through the extensive organisation of local variety shows during the 1940s. These were a significant site in which artists, including Val Doonican, acquired music industry skills and experience. In the 1950s, the Irish clergy managed to interface productively with the commercial global music industry. One act under clerical supervision, The Little Gaelic Singers, was signed to a major international record label and toured the US, even appearing on television programmes with Elvis Presley.

Operating behind the scenes on behalf of Irish popular music acts were certain individuals, including Bill Fuller and Philip Solomon. Both of these impresarios brought international acts to Ireland and facilitated the successful export of music product by domestic acts. If the cultural protection power groups wished to isolate Ireland from 'foreign' music, it is also important to acknowledge the ways in which the country's borders were porous. By reinserting the entrepreneurial activities of Fuller and Solomon into the industry's history, it is possible to gain a better understanding of how that industry works and how successful acts were guided to commercial success.

While Fuller and Solomon were full-time entrepreneurs, this thesis also presents evidence of widespread not-for-profit scene-supporting activity which had major consequences for the development of the commercial music industry, as well as a number of high-profile artists, including Thin Lizzy, The Boomtown Rats and U2. The thesis acknowledges the significant behind-the-scenes activity of the local music network which enabled those acts to develop. By doing so, it challenges the accepted idea that the centralised global music industry is solely responsible for nurturing and developing artists in a small open economy like Ireland.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Local and global: A mom with a VW Beetle; personal assistants and Maseratis

In September 2014, U2 collaborated with the Apple Corporation and released their new album exclusively free to iTunes users. Two months later, *Rolling Stone* magazine asked the band's singer about what it described as 'an instant, noisy, sometimes kinda-hysterical backlash' to the release (Hiatt, 2014: 57). Bono responded:

> ...in America you look up at the mansion on the hill and you say, 'One day, if I work really hard, I might get to live there.' In Ireland, particularly in Dublin, you look at the mansion and you say, 'One day, I'm going to get that bastard.' That's a great preparation for life on the Internet (Hiatt, 2014: 57).

It is noteworthy, and relevant to my work, that Bono referred to two types of culture in his answer: local Irish culture and an American industry culture where mansions can be acquired apparently by hard work. What Bono claims is Ireland's local *culture of envy* prepared him for the global *'life on the Internet'* that accompanies successful high-profile music stars.

It is debatable how factual Bono's appraisal of Dublin culture is, yet his statement touches on the two key themes of my social history. First, how do countries interact with the global music industry? This is economically and socially significant for Ireland. Second, you don't get to the 'mansion on the hill' alone or immediately. Who helps the artist to get there? In what ways do they help? In the context of Bono's quote I want to examine whether the local Dublin music scene was actually supportive of him and his band. Was U2's success completely engineered by the professional music industry? Did this professional industry help the band to escape from the local Dublin scene whose underdeveloped conditions conspired to impede the band's progress?

Elsewhere, the *Rolling Stone* article represents these two worlds in almost binary-opposite terms: the centralised music industry of major labels and stars and plentiful resources; the local scene with limited resources. U2 are depicted within the concentrated, yet powerful, centre of the global music industry along with their many collaborators, both musical and entrepreneurial, on their album. These include their former and current business managers and their business allies including 'Steve Jobs [former Apple CEO] ... [who] was a close friend' (Hiatt, 2014: 58). Their achievement as 'the biggest band left on Earth' (Hiatt,

2014: 54), provides them with a lifestyle complete with 'a vintage Epiphone Casino guitar' (Hiatt, 2014: 56), Bono's 'Maserati sedan' and personal assistant (Hiatt, 2014: 57) and their villas in the French Rivera, 'bought for $3 million…apparently worth far more now' (Hiatt, 2014: 61).

In direct contrast to this world the band's early days are recalled: '…driving around in an orange VW Beetle, the Edge's Mom at the wheel – "she was our first roadie" – with rolls of wallpaper advertising U2' (Hiatt, 2014: 57). While no magazine story, or even book, can tell the full story of any artist, by identifying the band's friends and business allies, and the crossover between them, the magazine indicates how the culture of the music industry is collaborative. In both the local music scene and the centralised music industry, the band have benefited from collaborating with allies from the guitarist's mother to some of the world's most powerful corporate titans.

My social history aims to reinsert a number of these behind-the-scenes participants into the story of the Irish music industry. I am seeking to identify the activities of managers, concert promoters, ballroom proprietors, label owners and entrepreneurs. The music industry does not operate in isolation and I place this activity in the context of cultural flows between Ireland and the outside world. At a simple level, as seen above with Bono, the music industry provides musicians with opportunities to communicate their opinions and impressions internationally. This raises a question: how did the music industry interact with key discourses prevalent in Ireland, in particular that domestic culture should be protected and preserved?

My dual themes, *behind-the-scenes activity* and *the position of Ireland's music industry within the overall global industry* are interconnected in multiple, and frequently unacknowledged, ways. When combined, these twin themes will illuminate some of the different ways that local scenes and the increasingly centralised music industry work, as well as their different values and motives. How does the local scene where the guitarist's mother drives the band in an orange VW Beetle link to the world of the Maserati and personal assistants? To illustrate why my social history re-inserts the local behind-the-scenes activity I will briefly examine Ireland's current position in the global music industry.

'Irish artists being of principal benefit to companies based in other countries'

One of the earliest academic analyses of the Irish music industry was Rob Strachan and Marion Leonard's 'A Musical Nation: Protection, Investment and Branding in the Irish Music Industry' (2004). This acknowledged the global success of Irish rock and pop music; 2.3 per cent of global sales were by Irish acts making Ireland the fifth highest ranking country-of-origin for popular music. Yet despite this *global* success the authors identified serious flaws in the *domestic* music industry which they argued 'was clearly in need of development and support' (Strachan and Leonard, 2004: 48). They illustrated how local and global music industries can connect in an asymmetric way when they concluded that the industry was undermined by 'problems that have historically led to the global success of Irish artists being of principal benefit to companies based in other countries' (Strachan and Leonard, 2004: 48). This analysis invites the question: how did a country with such successful popular music exports, including U2, Enya, Sinéad O'Connor, The Corrs and the Cranberries, not possess a well-developed domestic music industry? The authors partially answered this in their conclusion that Ireland could only be considered 'a truly industrially productive as well as creative musical nation' (Strachan and Leonard, 2004: 48) if the country secured music industry rights and revenue flows from the core of the global industry back to Ireland.

Following Strachan and Leonard's study there was a steady decline in Ireland's market share in the key British market over the decade. In the year 2000, Irish acts comprised over 6 per cent of Britain's total music market of both singles and albums. However by 2008 Irish acts accounted for 2.6 per cent of the album market and 1.8 per cent of the singles market (IFPI, 2010).

Strachan and Leonard's warnings about the local industry were subsequently borne out by the global industry's published statistics. Lee Marshall (2012) documented the recent trends in global music sales and concluded:

> ...there does seem to be an overall trend of local repertoire increasing its market share in the first decade of the century. It is, of course, an increased share of a smaller market, but the figures suggest that music fans have been more loyal to local artists than global hits (2012: 3).

Consistent with this trend towards domestic markets supporting local acts the global industry's trade association, the International Federation for Phonographic Industries (IFPI), has frequently invoked the phrase 'investment in local repertoire'. For example:

> Investment in local repertoire remains the lifeblood of the international music industry. Album charts in individual markets demonstrate the continuing strength of local repertoire as a share of overall music sales. In many markets, local artists account for the vast majority of the top selling albums of 2013 (IFPI, 2014).

And:

> Album charts in most markets show that investment in local repertoire is alive and well. In many countries, local repertoire accounts for the vast majority of the top selling albums of the year (IFPI, 2013).

Their 2013 statistics identified how local acts account for 85 per cent of the 20 best-selling albums in France and 70 per cent of the 10 best-selling albums in Germany. The market strength of domestic repertoire was also evident in thirteen other non-English-speaking markets selected by the IFPI in the above surveys.

If Ireland's domestic music industry was healthy, and indeed 'local repertoire was the lifeblood of the international music industry' it should be possible to find evidence that 'investment in local repertoire is alive and well' as the IFPI stated. In fact the opposite is apparent, and the Irish market statistics indicate low support for domestic acts. According to the industry's own statistics (IRMA/The Irish Charts, 2014), only one of the Top 20 best-selling albums in Ireland 2013 was by an Irish act, Kodaline. In 2012, only The Script made the Top 20. In other words, in 2012 and 2013, 5 per cent of Ireland's 20 highest selling albums were domestic while 95 per cent were imports.

The situation was somewhat better in the preceding three years, 2009-2011 when U2, Westlife, Imelda May, Mary Byrne, The Script and Jedward featured in the annual Top 20 best-seller list. This brings the five-year average of domestic albums in the annual Top 20 to 14 per cent. In other words, for every 14 Irish albums in the best-selling list there were 86 imported titles. If the Irish music industry is judged on its ability to invest in and market local acts domestically it appears to be unsuccessful.

The Irish situation is in stark contrast with other European countries. In 2006 Ireland's domestic music consumption ranked third lowest of the twenty one European countries surveyed. On average 44 per cent of the music purchased in each country was by local artists. Ireland at 21 per cent was less than half this figure; only Switzerland and Austria purchased fewer domestic recordings as a percentage of the total market (IFPI, 2006).

It is worth considering the seven acts that did make the domestic Top 20 annual best-selling list between 2009 and 2013. Two of the acts, U2 and Westlife, first released material prior to 2000. Another two had moved from Ireland before enjoying their best-selling status, Imelda May to Britain and The Script to the US. Of the remaining three, two had achieved prominence via the British television show the X-Factor. Therefore, only three *'new'* (post-2000) *Irish-based* acts have made the national annual Top 20 best-selling list, and only one, Kodaline, bypassed the X-Factor. They had, however, previously won an Irish television talent contest under a different name, 21 Demands. All of this indicates that new Irish bands seek alliances with major international media firms, or emigrate, as a means of reaching the domestic annual Top 20 chart. Perhaps inevitably, they also depend on overseas recording firms, just as Strachan and Leonard had found in 2004.

Of great consequence to Ireland is how the global music industry has been accelerating towards centralised decision-making. This includes touring, release dates, promotional campaigns and video-making (Laing, 2008). This strategy prioritises the global rather than the national. A member of one Irish band, The Script, was quoted on the implications of this: '...Sony have just put us on their "World Priority" list again, which means – whether they like it or not – every country has to release you[r music]' (Clark, 2010). There is a commercial logic to this centralisation which limits local decision-making in domestic markets; one Sony/BMG executive was quoted on the implications of local, which here means national, decision-making: '…you diffuse your global effort… people are myopic about their own markets…' (Laing, 2008: 223).

A balance-of-payments comparison might be a useful tool in light of this. In global terms Ireland is a net importer of commercial music with some very significant and successful exports. It remains to be seen whether the international and domestic success of Hozier in 2014 will reverse this trend. This is one of the reasons why I will examine the early cultural and business environment and behind-the-scenes activities of the firm which has

nurtured and developed him, MCD Concerts. The company proves that Ireland is capable of developing firms that can compete globally, in this case in the live music industry.

Different worlds: A scene and the industry

Music scenes can be defined by geography, for example the Dublin music scene, or by genre, for example the punk scene. Andy Bennett and Richard A. Peterson (2004) provided a useful theoretical insight into how different scenes function by dividing them into three categories: local, translocal and virtual. This way of thinking allows scenes to be understood in terms of outside links; the Dublin or Ireland music scenes are geographically defined but still open to these outside links, particular with virtual scenes linked by technology. This is relevant for the Irish case, where the music scene's links with the outside world were historically varied and influential. Bennett and Peterson (2004) also provided valuable insight into how the local scene interacts with the global industry.

> In many ways the organization of music scenes contrasts sharply with that of the multinational music industry, in which a relatively few people create music for mass markets. The scenes and industrial ways of making music of course depend on one another. The industry needs scenes to foster new forms of musical expression and to give its products the veneer of authenticity, while scenes take advantage of technology, from the CD to the Internet, created by the music industry (p. 3).

If the scene and the industry have different values and ways of operating what happens when part of the music industry has a music scene instead of a profit-focused decision-making process at its centre? In this case, according to the authors: 'this scene-supporting industry is largely the domain of small-collectives, fans turned entrepreneurs, and volunteer labour' (Bennett and Peterson, 2004: 5). The contrast between this activity and the multinational firms can be illustrated by referencing Matt Stahl's (2013) recent work on the nature of labour in the industry. He argues strongly that the modern 'pop star' represents a 'double figure'. They 'enjoy exceptional autonomy in their work, as well as a strong property interest in the songs they record' (2013: 1), yet 'typically work under unequal contracts and must hand over long-term control of the songs and albums they produce to their record companies' (2013: 2). Stahl's conceptualisation of the music industry vividly illustrates why my work seeks to examine how the local music scene in Ireland interacted with the global industry. In his analysis the contracts signed by local acts with major firms are similar to 'the steel I-beams that stabilize masonry buildings in earthquake-prone areas… [they] join and reinforce constellations of artists, companies,

markets, legal structures and consumers' (2013: 3). In summary, 'the legal arrangements undergirding stardom and its cultivation constitute stable structures of authority and subordination, of property creation and appropriation' (2013: 3).

When distinguishing between the scene and the industry, and because they are interlinked in complex ways, the idea of the industry being 'a stable structure of authority and subordination, of property creation and appropriation' is a useful way of distinguishing it from the more collective, often voluntary, labour in the scene. If the industry can be compared to an earthquake-proof building, the world's collective music scenes can be imagined as a vibrant, evolving ecosystem beneath it. As Bennett and Peterson maintained, 'while the music industry is global, most music is made and enjoyed in diverse situations divorced from these corporate worlds' (2004: 5).

Reconciling the music industry and the music scene can be theoretically difficult, while Bennett and Peterson argue that 'most music' is made and consumed away from the music industry (2004: 5), they also acknowledge how the music industry, via technological innovations including the Internet and the CD (2004: 3) does creep into local music scenes. Two of the meta-theories that most-usefully facilitate the integration of the music industry and local scene are Bourdieu's field theory (2012) and Howard Becker's (2007) art world theory and both were highly influential in my decision to compile a long-term social history that illustrated individual and group action.

While significant differences exist in their approaches and conclusions, there is a consensus that the cultural industries must be understood as collaborative activities where power groups and individuals impact on the final product. Howard Becker (2007) argues that:

> All artistic work, like all human activity, involves the joint activity of a number, often a large number, of people. Through their cooperation, the art work we eventually see or hear comes to be and continues to be. The work always shows signs of that cooperation (p. 1).

Both Becker (2012) and Bourdieu (2007) have argued that the production of culture was the result of a collaborative process, where the contributions of individuals impacted on the final product. Naturally, some individuals and groups were more influential during this process, and this invites some consideration of the power of these individuals and groups.

To comprehend this use of power Stuart Hall's (1997: 24-41 and 2003: 348) application of Gramsci's concept of hegemony is highly useful. To Hall, hegemony is a far more meaningful concept in examining how power functions than 'domination'. As he explained: ''hegemony' is won in the to-and-fro of negotiation between competing social, political and ideological forces through which power is contested, shifted or reformed' (2003: 348). My social history examines various and surprising sites in the music industry and music scene where these 'negotiations' took place between domestic and global social, political and ideological forces.

My decision to include in this social history the period from the 1880s until 1985 which involves sacrificing the depth permitted by a shorter time frame, is derived from Bourdieu (1993). He explicitly stated that what he calls 'fields of cultural production' needs to be understood in their historical context. His study of the theatre industry is relevant to the music industry and he argued that the researcher as well as industry members should understand contemporary directors, and hence their artistic and business options, in a broader context. Their analysis should not be limited to 'the economic conditions of the theatre, subventions, receipts, or even to the expectations of the public':

> Rather, one must refer to the entire history of production since the 1880s, during which time the universe of the *points under discussion* – that is, the constitutive elements of theatrical production about which any director worthy of the name would have to take a position – came into being (Bourdieu, 1993: 176).

Within this framework, the current industry can only be understood when we appreciate the historical factors that shaped it.

Biographical note

No social history is free from subjectivity; therefore some knowledge of my particular background may alert the reader to inherent biases resulting from my background. Without question, social and cultural factors have shaped the perspective I have taken on my study which has drawn from my active participation in both the local Dublin music scene and the global music industry.

I was born in 1963 and grew up in suburban Dublin, Ireland, into a family of first-generation Dublin-raised children. I had no family background in music or the

entertainment industry, apart from a grand-aunt who had featured as a piano accompanist in a 1940s Athlone concert which included John McCormack. In the context of Ireland's 'porous cultural borders', my parents both came from homes in the Ulster Counties of Monaghan and Cavan with gramophones and wireless radios during what my father describes as 'the golden age of radio'. Their exposure to music from overseas occurred in multiple situations. My father, for example, recalls finding and enjoying BBC yearbooks in the 1950s in his County Longford school library. He listened to the radio at home with his family, tuning in most frequently to the domestic Raidió Éireann Athlone station and the BBC transmission from Edinburgh. In post-War Ireland, the American Forces Network, based in Frankfurt, exposed him to West Coast American jazz music which he enjoyed.

I grew up in a home where the music my parents listened to informed my taste. My father had a medium-size record collection and my mother listened to the RTE radio during the day. My own tastes in music developed further thanks in large part to the porous cultural borders and the influence of my older brother John. For us BBC's 'Top of the Pops' on Thursday evening became *the* unmatched television event of the week. We listened to BBC Radio 1, Radio Luxembourg and to Dublin's pirate radio stations of the era. John was an early fan of punk rock and bought many singles by punk groups. In addition, he bought the British publication, the *New Musical Express (NME)* weekly. Reading about these bands, and listening to their music, made me feel keenly that the music I liked didn't receive enough positive media attention. I began to wonder why the bands that I liked were not played on RTE instead of Joe Dolan, Dickie Rock, Dana or Big Tom and the Mainliners. My personal investment as a fan made me wonder who 'selected' the artists that received attention. Part of this identification with the music of my teenage years inevitably stemmed from what the industry theorist, R. Serge Denisoff (1995: 16), identified as the 'generational conflict' which often accompanies popular music. For some people of my age, 'our' music was certainly offensive to our parents and older siblings yet was important to us and communicated values that we embraced.

If music was an area of activity where societal values could be questioned, it was also a place where commercial practice could also be challenged. The rise of 'independent' bands during the punk movement was very inspirational to me. These bands made it very clear that culture could be produced without large commercial investment: essentially do-it-yourself (DIY) music. My fascination with and consumption of popular music provided me with a number of unexpected opportunities to become involved with the local music scene.

While there were no 'pull' factors based on family ties to help me enter the industry, despite this I was offered part-time work in my local record shop, *Exiles*, Dun Laoghaire in 1980 because I was a frequent customer; I was invited to work in the Eamonn Andrews recording studio in 1980 because my brother's friend needed a last-minute temporary replacement; I was invited to join a band, Cuba Dares, in 1982 because I knew the band socially and shared similar music tastes; I was invited to work in event management, and as a disc-jockey, by an *Exiles*' customer, Michael McCaughan, when he was the Trinity College entertainments officer in 1984–1985; I was invited to review records and concerts for college magazines because the editor knew I liked music; I was invited to manage a band, The Pleasure Cell in 1985, because I was an obvious fan and was a friend of McCaughan, who could provide gigs. This led to setting up a record label, Common Records, to release the band's single in 1986; later, in 1986 I was invited to write for Niall McGuirk's 'Whose Life Is It Anyway?' fanzine. Both McCaughan and McGuirk influenced me by indicating that not just music, but the way it was presented, could be socially significant. With their emphasis on co-operative activity, they both challenged the accepted commercial practice of concert promotion in Dublin.

The network theorist Mark Granovetter described the social functioning of 'weak ties'. They provide 'access to information and resources beyond those available in their own social circle' (Granovetter, 1983: 209). It is relevant that *all* of my early music industry opportunities, important as they were, literally came to me as a result of 'weak ties'. These were people I was on 'nodding terms' with in Dublin's admittedly small punk and new wave music audience.

While most of my participation in the Dublin music scene came from being a fan and a consumer, I also acquired knowledge and skills from my behind-the-scenes experiences. While working in a record shop I contributed to decisions about the music played, the posters displayed and the stock ordered. Trying to obtain in-demand product deepened my perception of the differences between the Irish and British markets. It was frustrating when the local distributors of those British labels were unable to provide us with stock we knew we could sell. I recall how singles by The Cure were only available in limited quantities if at all.

Other opportunities took me beyond what Erving Goffman (1999) theorised as 'the front region', the area where culture is seen and consumed. Instead, I had been given access to the 'backstage' area. This 'demystification' was deepened when I was asked to join Cuba Dares. In my brief time with the group (1982–1983), I saw how opportunities in the music industry were shaped by personal interaction within networks. My time with the band coincided with the development of Dublin's live music industry. More overseas acts were visiting Ireland and this provided opportunities for local bands as support acts at concerts. Our manager, Terry O'Neill had a close relationship with the concert promoter, Denis Desmond of M.C.D. Concerts, and therefore we secured prestigious appearances including opening for ABC, Depeche Mode and New Order.

I engaged with the international music industry when I took a year's sabbatical from my studies and moved to London with Cuba Dares in 1983. We sought out and enjoyed the company of other Irish musicians who had recently moved to London. For our first gig in the city, I even played a synthesizer lent to me by the Irish band Zerra 1. They had, in turn, borrowed it from The Cure, with whom they had toured. This brought home to me the remoteness of Dublin from the music industry of London: I couldn't buy The Cure's singles in Dublin, yet I played their synthesizer in London. While we formed friendships and alliances with other, generally music-related, members of the Irish diaspora in London, we received little interest from the key industry gate-keepers and I returned to Dublin to complete my studies.

I emigrated permanently from Dublin to London in 1988. Again through 'weak ties', a friend's sister, I was offered a music industry position, this time with Virgin Records. In 1989 someone I barely knew at Virgin recommended me for a more senior position at another label, Imago, and they transferred me to New York. There I witnessed the type of hierarchical power structure than can limit innovation. Decision-making at the label, which was funded by the BMG major firm, was highly centralised and concentrated. When I left the label in 1991, my career eventually encompassed the personal management of a number of acts who achieved commercial success, with gold and platinum awards, in North America. My perspective on the music industry was shaped by my earlier participation in Dublin's independent music scene. I observed that managers could make a difference to the careers of acts. I also saw first-hand how acts suffered from decisions made by their managers.

My decision to write a social history of the Irish music industry up to 1985 was based on personal, methodological and national reasons. First, I was genuinely curious about what had shaped the industry prior to my involvement in it. Second, and more surprisingly, as I conducted my research interviews it became apparent that many of the central figures in the industry were also unaware of historical factors that had shaped the industry. Finally, I felt that we can only understand the industry by examining its behind-the-scenes participants, not just the well-known faces. From my experience, collaboration was the key, not just to music industry success, but also to providing opportunities and encouraging the music scene.

Because of my background in the scene and the industry I was anxious to find a methodological approach that acknowledged the different characteristics of the scene and the industry yet was able to incorporate both.

Why a social history?

My initial challenge was finding an appropriate theoretical model for my study. My work is empirical and has a very particular purpose: to highlight the influence of key behind-the-scenes figures and this led me to constructing a social history. Many of the vital features of social history were identified by F.M.L. Thompson. As a social historian himself, writing in the 1990s, he was active in redefining this relatively recent and quickly evolving field of scholarship. He noted the discipline's 'open-endedness, its freedom from the constraints of a formal tradition, its eclectic habits' (1996: xii). The consequence of this freedom, he concluded, was that any social history inevitably must 'deal in conclusions which are probable and plausible rather than directly verifiable' (1996: xiii). Yet this does not imply that social history is based on speculation and conjecture, or that it is 'history with the politics left out' which was once an attributed definition during the 1940s. Rather it draws on 'concepts from historical demography, social anthropology, sociology, social geography, and political science, as well as from economics' and acknowledges quantitative methods (1996: xiii).

My social history draws most heavily on sociology and is guided by Pierre Bourdieu's definition of the sociologist's primary aim which is to 'construct systems of intelligible relations capable of making sense of sentient data' (1996: xvi). In my case the 'sentient data' is drawn from first-person interviews, archive research, newspaper and periodical analysis and my study of music industry ephemera.

Small countries and big industry: The music industry and cultural flow

Based on the data I collected as well as my personal experience it is clear that Ireland, like any other country, has a distinctive music industry and set of relationships between local scene and global industry. Some key existing studies which analysed the interaction between music scenes and the industry have been very helpful to my social history. The multi-country publications by Malm and Wallis (1992) and Lee Marshall (2012) are particularly helpful. The former specifically examines the music industry in small countries including Jamaica, Wales, Sweden and Tanzania. Marshall's volume provides analysis on music industry activity in Brazil, Finland, Ukraine and Japan amongst others.

Krister Malm and Roger Wallis' findings identified how mass communication models of international flow have traditionally focused on the U.S. Their excellent book *Media Policy and Music Activity* (1992) highlighted the difficulties in applying these models to smaller nation states. To address this deficit they developed a conceptual framework for smaller countries which identified how three key constraints impact the development of national music industries (1992: 20). The three constraints are: (i) technology (the machines and processes that are available); (ii) economy (financial resources); (iii) organization (human and cultural resources and structures).

Of direct relevance to Ireland is Malm and Wallis's (1992) three-stage model drawn from their eight country study. This model documents a process which often follows a pattern: international firms enter local markets; they form alliances with domestic entrepreneurs; eventually the roles performed by local content and entrepreneurs are diminished or eliminated. The Irish music industry engaged with this process in a particular manner and my thesis draws attention to the action of actors who either participated in the process identified by Malm and Wallis, or by-passed it. The Irish case, then, indicates where some form of resistance can be offered to the apparent inevitability of major firms dominating local markets. That said, Malm and Wallis (1992) have provided an extremely useful bench-marking process against which the music industries can be analysed, and my work is very influenced by their findings. The ways that different countries responded to industry changes is also the subject of more recent research on domestic music industries, in particular *The International Recording Industries* (2012) edited by Lee Marshall.

These studies by Malm and Wallis (1992) and Marshall (2012) identified the strategically transformational interaction between the major international firms and local music entrepreneurs. Naturally, in the Irish case, this interaction was a key determinant in the local industry's development. My social history also addresses some of the ways that Irish music entrepreneurs impacted upon the development of the music industry *globally*. Of necessity it includes reference to some key events, most of which occurred in the context of Ireland's relationships with Britain and the US and its demographic pattern of high emigration.

Jason Toynbee, who describes music as a 'precociously global form' (2002: 156–157) analysed the music industry literature which described the flow as uni-directional from core to periphery. In the Irish case, I argue, this core to periphery flow over the last hundred years was accompanied by the periphery-to-core human movement. This human movement had a significant and lasting impact on the global music industry. This is why my social history primarily concentrates on the *individual-level* rather than the *firm-level* unlike some previous music industry studies.

Thesis boundaries

As stated, one of the key epistemological foundations of my work is that domestic music industries do not exist in a vacuum and must be studied in the context of their trans-border relationships. Therefore it may seem counterintuitive that my social history is limited to the study of the Republic of Ireland rather than an all-island approach which includes Northern Ireland. There are two primary reasons for limiting this social history to the music industry within the Republic of Ireland. One is the practical while the other is tactical. On the practical level, the amount of information available on this subject combined with the limited prior published research, means that any initial social history will lack in depth what it may gain in breadth.

On a tactical level, the agencies and individuals with a vested interest in the Republic's music industry should better comprehend its history and some of the key forces involved in that history. By understanding some of the key contributors to the development of the Republic's industry it can be appreciated just how vital influences from Northern Ireland have been in the past and continue to be. Naturally Northern Ireland's music industry deserves a comprehensive social history, and in the future a lengthy social history that

studies in depth the flows between the industries on both sides of the current border would be desirable.

This thesis covers the period 1910-1985. The start date coincides with historical evidence of an *industry* of music within Ireland. Following Stahl's definition of the music industry as an industry of full-time professionals connected by contractual relationships founded on 'property creation and appropriation' (Stahl, 2013: 3), it can be seen that from the early 1910s there were full-time professional members active in the Irish music industry including a well-organised and active group of professional music retailers. Live music promoters were also active. In addition, during this era, John McCormack became active in the global professional music industry; as I will demonstrate in this thesis, this had implications for Ireland and for organisations interested in Irish culture. McCormack's early contractual relationship with the global music industry was a highly significant intersection between the local music scene in Ireland and the global music industry's cores of activity: London and New York.

Although it may seem paradoxical at first, the notion that Ireland's music scene exists at the intersection of local and global forces encouraged me to focus my study on the Republic of Ireland. By limiting the study to the Republic it is not my intention to endorse what Tovey and Share labelled 'more statist versions of sociology' which had been prevalent in Irish sociology (Tovey and Share: 2003, 36). Instead, I demonstrate that aspiring Irish professional musicians have been historically dependent on individuals and organisations based beyond the country's geographic boundaries. The Irish example, which indicates a dependence on outside actors, may encourage debate and action about how to lessen that dependence and to develop alternatives. It may also stimulate debate about why Ireland has been largely historically dependent on overseas firms and industry personnel.

The thesis ends in 1985. In the context of the global media production of the Live Aid concerts, this was the year when 'new media technologies' presented opportunities for Ireland to engage more productively with the global cores of media production according to Chris Morash (2010, 199). Live Aid was organised by Dubliner Bob Geldof who had gained prominence with his band the Boomtown Rats. He successfully leveraged his music industry network into a vehicle with global and local consequences. While raising money for famine relief organisations, he simultaneously demonstrated that Ireland, and its popular music, could access and benefit from the new global media reach. The concert

highlighted the global reach of popular music; it had a 'potential television audience of 1.5 billion' people (McLaughlin and McLoone: 2012, 174).

McLaughlin and McLoone (2012) represent Live Aid as an important event for U2 and argue that broadcasting was 'central to the success of U2' (2012, 174). By 1985 U2 were well established and capable of selling large quantities of product to the international market. In that year, the band received industry certifications in the US for sales exceeding one million copies for The Unforgettable Fire, War and Under A Blood Red Sky (RIAA.com).This indicates that by 1985 Irish individuals like Bob Geldof and Irish bands like U2 were capable of interacting with the combination of the music industry and the new media technologies to advance their own causes and careers. In this thesis I examine how Ireland had interacted previously with both music industry new media technologies and the global centres of music industry production.

Methodology

In some respects, this social history grew developed from my research for my Masters in Public Culture Studies at Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology. My thesis, 'Ireland's Punk Rock Moral Panic' (2007) addressed how punk rock was represented in the Irish media and national political discourse. For the theoretical foundation of the thesis I returned to the original source of my sociological inspiration, Stuart Hall and Dick Hebdige's work within the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Social Studies. This work addresses the functioning of representation and the production of culture with respect to power groups in any society.

My research included over forty recorded interviews with participants in the Irish music industry. I spoke to managers, promoters, publicists, disk jockeys, broadcasters, journalists, fanzine publishers, members of music collectives, record label founders, record shop staff, music instrument shop staff, fans, graphic designers, archivists, major label and independent label staff, as well as former university entertainment officers. I also interviewed a number of musicians, trying to gather information on how their social and industry networks provided them with opportunities. These musicians represented a broad cross-section of Irish musical life and included folk, rock, pop, showband, punk, reggae, electronica and new wave musicians as well as many who combined more than one genre.

The appendix includes a list of the people interviewed for this thesis. All of these interviewees contributed to my insight into the music industry and the music scene. However, it was never my intention to present a straightforward 'oral history'. Instead I sought to interview individuals who could help me to understand the functioning of networks, motives and relationships in the local music scene. In addition I wished to speak with individuals who could provide details of how the local scene interfaced with the global music industry. Although the majority of my interviews are not cited in the final thesis, they contributed immensely to its development and structure.

During the interview process it became apparent that many of the participants in both the music scene and music industry were unaware of the histories of the scene and industry. This thesis allows current and future participants in the field and industry to understand how the challenges they face were often faced and overcome in earlier eras.

While reducing my reliance on the recollections of industry and scene participants I instead examined local and national newspapers to gain insight into how popular music was represented. In particular I wanted to scrutinise how popular music was represented in the national and local printed media; therefore I concentrated my newspaper archive searches on specific topics and eras. For the 1920s I wanted to identify how John McCormack was represented by the Irish print media. I also wanted to identify how opposition to the dominant power-brokers was represented during the 1930s. In the next two decades, the 1940s and 1950s I actively sought out evidence of clerical and judicial involvement in local music-making, as well as any influential party-political involvement in the live or recorded music industry. For the 1960s I wanted to identify the ways in which 'foreign' music, both live and recorded, were depicted by the Irish printed media.

One very fruitful avenue of research was a systematic search through Irish and international newspapers and music magazines of the era 1976–1980. This study was enabled by the holdings maintained by Trinity College and the National Library in Dublin. For my social history of the Irish music industry I returned to these sources, this time looking for evidence of the behind-the-scenes activity, and I expanded my search to 1984. I physically searched through the British music magazines, *New Musical Express*, *Sounds* and *Melody Maker* as well as Ireland's *Hot Press* for articles about Irish acts. Their combined 60,000 plus pages yielded rich data.

Because my time-frame was a period lasting over a century, the availability of on-line searchable newspaper data-bases was of enormous help. This would be a very different thesis without these resources. They enabled me to systematically search for media representations of Irish musicians and behind-the-scenes personnel and firms over that 100 year period. *The Irish Times* online archive pre-dated the start of my research in 2009 and was subsequently joined by the *Irish News Archive*. The latter now includes a searchable data-base of thirty-three Irish national and provincial newspapers. The data on media representations provided by these searches supplemented my own reading of the published material on Irish artists. The popularity of a number of Irish music acts has resulted in the publication of a huge number of volumes about them. Many of these books, while I acknowledge their inherent biases, were helpful to my research.

These archive searches not only provided details of the power-groups that participated in the Irish music industry and music scene, they also provided details on music-making opportunities for Irish acts including Val Doonican. The newspaper archive searches were supplemented with searches of the records of the Irish Dáil and Seanad as well as by extensive research into published accounts, including biographies, of Irish musicians and music scenes.

This archive research has enabled me to provide specific examples of activity relevant to Ireland's business and culture of music by politicians, members of the clergy, entrepreneurs, cultural power groups and other interested parties.

The relationship between Ireland's music-makers and the music industry has not remained static. It has evolved in response to changes in both the global industry's development and the operation of power-groups in Irish society. For this reason, I have organised this thesis into chronological chapters. This allows for the appraisal of artist careers in the historical context of the relevant cultural, demographic and political factors. I had initially considered organising this thesis thematically, with a section covering the role of the Catholic Church, for example. Yet, I felt that a chronological thesis allowed for each era's music-making to be more fruitfully analysed in the context of evolving and historically-contingent factors.

The Irish popular music literature: Hits, misses and opportunities

In one sense the Irish music industry has been very well served by literature. The success of Irish acts has spawned a vast library including some very high quality work. Two books on Ireland's rock artists, by Mark Prendergast (1987) and Tony Clayton-Lea and Richie Taylor (1992) for example, provide analysis and insight into a range of acts, their careers and circumstances. Yet these books, in search of wider readership, inevitably and naturally focus on artists rather than the industry. Books on particular music scenes or genres are similarly artist-centric yet also provide tantalising details of how the industry works. These include Vincent Power's (2000) *Send 'em home sweatin'*, Jimmy Higgins' (2007) *Are Ye the Band?: A Memoir of the Showband Era*, Colin Harper and Trevor Hodgett's (2005) *Irish Folk, Trad and Blues: A Secret History*, Daragh O'Halloran's (2006) *Green Beat: The Forgotten Era of Irish Rock* and Tony Clayton-Lea's (2012) *101 Irish Records (You Must Hear Before You Die)*.

It is hardly surprising that biographies, authorized and un-authorized, are also artist-centric. Yet, again, they can yield insightful information about the industry. Bill Graham (1989) and Neil McCormack (2006), who were both personally close to the band, provided insider details on U2's industry activities. Recent work on Rory Gallagher (Connaughton, 2012) and Horslips (Cunningham, 2013) are also beneficial to understanding the Irish music industry. Other particularly helpful biographies include Tony Clayton-Lea's (1996) biography of *Chris de Burgh* and the self-published accounts of the Skyrockets and Columbia 7 showbands. The latter by Kettyles (2005) and Weadick (2011) are particularly valuable because they combine personal accounts with forensic details of concert dates, income and expenditure.

One Irish book with a specific industry focus, Louis Walsh's (2007) *Fast Track to Fame*, represents the music industry as a particular place where pop star dreams come true. The book lacks depth of analysis, and is obviously invested in a music industry where power is highly concentrated and 'experts' select and guide those stars, yet it does at least represent the music business as simultaneously competitive and relationship-dependent. This underexplored complexity, surely is an argument for understanding the industry and how it works; it is at once competitive *and* co-operative. Walsh's self-acknowledged emphasis on shortcuts to stardom may not be relevant to artists taking circuitous paths to sustained careers. They are better served by Jackie Hayden's (1997) *The Need to Know Guide to the Record Industry*. However, both books do highlight the multiple interlinked professionals involved in music careers.

Other books also identify the valuable contribution of managers, producers, engineers, record label staff, media personnel, graphic designers, booking agents, promoters, publicists, stylists, video and film makers, as well as live music professionals including sound and lighting technicians and tour managers. Ireland is producing large number of skilled behind-the-scenes workers achieving success domestically and internationally. This can be seen in Diane Scrimgeour's (2004) authorised *U2 Show* and Mark Cunningham and Andy Wood's (1998) *Live and Kicking: The Rock Concert Industry in the Nineties*, which document effectively the variety and range of personnel in the global live music industry. Irish technicians operate at the highest level, while Irish bands employ technicians from a global talent pool.

However, despite being represented so prominently in the national discourse, popular music studies are underrepresented in some broader areas of the academy. For example, the apparent difficulty of where popular music belongs in Irish sociology can be seen with reference to the consistently outstanding text book, *A Sociology of Ireland*. The first edition of the book included some very insightful analysis of the role of popular music in Irish and global culture (Tovey and Share, 2000). Artists including U2, David Holmes, the Saw Doctors, Boyzone and The Chieftains, as well as the Riverdance production, were mentioned. Music was included as an important element of the country's media production and was placed in the context of how:

> ...increasing globalisation of media production and distribution is a threat to our ability to tell 'our own' stories. The tendency, when producing for an international marketplace, is to provide what is attractive and non-controversial (Tovey and Share, 2000: 384).

The book's second edition (2003) concluded that: '...the communications industry is the defining industry of the twenty-first century' (p. 448). Elsewhere the complex position of small countries like Ireland relative to the modern media industries was highlighted. This is certainly the key question that underpins my social history of the music industry. How do the local and global factors interact?

> Local cultural entrepreneurs involved in organising such new cultural items may lack material resources, but what they possess is local knowledge, which is less available to the culture business at the centre of the global system (could Hollywood have invented Riverdance?). They know their territory, they are competent in its cultural practices and sensitive to its

> meanings, and this derives primarily from their involvement in the local forms of life (Tovey and Share, 2003: 542).

This is a critical concern for small countries like Ireland. How do individuals, regardless of the national origins, who are aware of Irish cultural practices and sensitive to its meanings express themselves in the global music marketplace? If the provocative question 'Could Hollywood have invented Riverdance?' is placed in the context of global cultural flows it invites the corollary: 'Could Riverdance have been invented without Hollywood?' Clearly these flows matter, as the authors have acknowledged, and can Riverdance be better understood by examining lesser known cultural products including the Little Gaelic Singers and 'Yankee Doodle Blarney', both of which, like Riverdance, existed within and because of the cultural flows between Ireland and the US?

The *Sociology of Ireland's* 2007 edition acknowledged how 'recorded music has possibly been Ireland's most successful popular cultural export and we can easily highlight the international success of acts as diverse as traditional group The Chieftains and DJ David Holmes (2007: 451). Despite this, the 2012 edition has disposed of popular music completely. Thankfully, some international and Irish academic research of the highest standard has addressed popular music in the context of small countries like Ireland. These provide excellent pointers to further fruitful analysis of the Irish music industry.

From an academic perspective, Irish musicians and singers have recently been afforded a steady, yet growing, body of scholarly literature of very high quality. While this addresses important questions including representation and identity, in common with the commercial literature, however, the focus is on the popular music artists. Work on the music industry behind-the-scenes factors is rare. Méabh Ní Fhuartháin (1993), Aileen Dillane (2002) and Roxanne M. O'Connell (2013) have provided excellent analysis of early Irish recordings and their industrial context in the US. Sadly, similar studies of the domestic recording industry are lacking.

At the same time, my work has clearly benefitted from, and been guided by, academic work on Irish artists and their music. This work has invited provocative questions about what happens behind-the-scenes. Although my work does not speak directly to most of this literature, I want to acknowledge its influence and some of its key questions.

Barbara Bradby and Brian Torode's question, stated in the title of their article, 'To Whom Do U2 Appeal?' (1985), was an invitation to analyse who made U2 appealing and how they did this. Similarly, Bradby's (1989) follow-up question, in her dissection of the first major insider-account of the band's success, demanded examining the network behind the band represented as 'God's Gift to the Suburbs?' Her analysis was the direct inspiration for my undertaking a social history of the Irish music industry.

Gerry Smyth's (2005) *Noisy Island: A Short History of Irish Popular Music* acknowledges the influence on Irish music of cultural organisations amongst other factors. The Irish music industry in the post-U2 era, he argued, could be seen as 'one of the most active – as well as one of the most managed – popular music scenes in the world' (2005: 4). This invites the questions: How was it managed prior to this and who benefitted from this management? I address both in my study. Smyth (2005) in his co-authored book with Sean Campbell, *Beautiful Day: Forty Years of Irish Rock*, also indicated how Ireland's diverse popular music was influenced by overseas and domestic factors.

Here the authors identified key struggles for position within the music industry field. They acknowledge the cultural flow between Ireland and the rest of the work as well as key social and technological factors that influenced the development of the domestic industry. The effects of migration and cultural flows on everyday life, music-making and the commercial music industry are thoroughly examined by Sean Campbell (2011) in *'Irish Blood, English Heart': Second-generation Irish Musicians in England*. This book encompasses a wide analysis of the literature on the 'in-betweenness' of migrants which is combined with in-depth interviews with, and discourse analysis of, the Smiths, the Pogues and Dexy's Midnight Runners.

John O'Flynn (2008) skilfully analyses the consumption of Irish music in *The Irishness of Irish Music*. He also weaves into his framework many topics drawing attention to its industrial modes of production. Noel McLaughlin and Martin McLoone (2012) also address many complex questions relevant for Ireland's popular musicians. Their book, *Rock and Popular Music in Ireland: Before and After U2*, makes a very strong argument for why Irish popular music must be studied in the context of global cultural flows. For example, they conclude that from the 1930s and through the 1950s 'the power of global culture was instrumental in prising open the cultural sterility of an overly essentialist national culture' (2012: 6). I will examine the newspapers of the era to see how the

struggle between local and global culture in that period was represented. McLaughlin and McLoone's conclusion that the Beatles and U2 'in their different eras, made their respective countries of origin renowned centres for popular music production in the international imagination' (2012: 313) invites analysis of how U2 developed to achieve that elevated position in the global industry and the 'international imagination'. Once again this will guide my research of the U2 era.

A number of quality essays contained in *Music and Identity in Ireland and Beyond* (2014), edited by Mark Fitzgerald and John O'Flynn, also present questions for a social history to explore. Ruth Stanley's (2014) documented analysis of the music policy of BBC Northern Ireland invites examining how music policy elsewhere on the island was represented in discourses. Similarly, Eileen Hogan's (2014a) study of Irish youth culture, invites examining how youth-centric music movements were engaged with by the Irish establishment.

Recent studies on the industry indicate a need for a long-term social history. Jim Rogers (2011, 2013) has done very strong work in analysing the recent developments in the Irish and global music industry. He concludes that despite the rhetoric employed by the major recording firms the industry is currently 'witnessing not only change, but also significant continuity in the structure and character of the music industry' (2013: 13). Some of his earlier co-authored works also illuminate this combined 'change' and 'continuity' within the modern music industry. For example Rogers and Sparviero (2011) and Preston and Rogers (2011) analyse social networks, legal factors and innovation in the music industry.

An encouraging number of academics have recently explored, in varied and meaningful ways, the relationship between Irish popular music and its industrial culture without this being the primary focus of their research. The musician and academic Matteo Cullen's (2012) *Vagabonds of the Western World(s): Continuities, Tensions and the Development of Irish Rock Music, 1968–78* examines the conflict between the music industry culture and the self-representation of artists including Rory Gallagher and Thin Lizzy. Caroline O'Sullivan's (2014) research into Ireland's dance music scene reinforces my decision to conduct a long-range study of the Irish popular music industry. She has concluded that music scene participants ignore earlier scenes, even if these existed just a few years earlier and in the same neighbourhoods. Thus resources, including knowledge of mistakes made and productive decisions, are lost to the next scene.

The ongoing work by Eileen Hogan (2014b), Sheryl Lynch (2014) and John O'Flynn (2014) indicate how Ireland is now a site of vibrant music practice for a wide range of ethnic and cultural communities. Standard music industry practice is frequently challenged by these self-generated practices. Equally, as Ciarán Ryan (2014) Jaime Jones conclude separately in their studies of Cork and Dublin's underground independent rock music scenes, '(Not) Making It' commercially is no obstacle to enjoying the practice of making music.

Perhaps it is my Dublin punk rock roots, yet I see this research and mine as potentially – and positively – disruptive. Understanding how the industry functioned historically enables us to engage with its current incarnation more productively. If Ireland is ever to become, in Strachan and Leonard's (2004) words, 'a truly industrially productive as well as creative musical nation' (p. 48), this is unlikely to happen unless the current industry concentration is challenged. To do this, a firm understanding of the international music industry and the local music scene is required.

'Firing back' against 'pop star propaganda'

Having acknowledged some Irish studies which have encouraged me to undertake a social history it is important to also acknowledge some of the theoretical work that underpins this approach. A number of theorists have made a very clear case for why the music industry and music scenes need to be understood in terms of collaborative behind-the-scenes activity.

Richard Peterson (1932–2010), for example, drew from both Becker and Bourdieu for his work on the 'production of culture' framework. This formed part of his life-work which he described as his 'quest to demystify culture' (Peterson, 2000: 231). Peterson indicated how individuals can significantly shape the development and structure of the music industry and demonstrated this in his insightful study of the reasons why rock and roll music became a market-force in the mid-1950s. He argued that some industrial environments are highly structured and foster 'top-down' patterns of activity with 'predictable careers'. By contrast:

> In competitive environments, careers tend to be chaotic and foster cultural innovation, and career-building market-sensing entrepreneurs enact careers from the "bottom up" by starting from the margins of existing professions and conventions (Peterson and Anand, 2004: 317).

I want to identify Irish music industry participants who were able to 'foster cultural innovation' as well as to stand in its way. In Ireland the definition and boundaries of culture were frequently highly contested so it is relevant to know where innovation and barriers-to-entry were found. This matters because even though the accrual of rights and status could take decades or centuries, as Bourdieu argued 'it took painters nearly five centuries to achieve the social conditions that made a Picasso possible' (2003: 71), these rights and positions could be undermined quickly. Individual activity becomes a more vital source of innovation when the music industry becomes more centralised. Dave Laing's (1970) study *'The Sound of Our Time'* drew from Marxist theory to demonstrate how the industry is drawn relentlessly towards standardisation. His research, cited earlier, Laing (2008), proved that almost four decades later, the implicit warnings about standardisation were not unfounded. Does the Sony/BMG executive (Laing, 2008: 223), who appeared to label individuals who invested in the local scene as 'diffusing global effort' and being 'myopic' represent the centralised music industry outlook? If this is the industry's logic, the lack of apparent investment by the major labels in developing acts in Ireland makes sense. It also presents an invitation for others to take action to 'diffuse global effort' and apply innovation and enterprise to the local scene.

Like Peterson and Laing, Serge Denisoff (1975), in the first published comprehensive sociology of the US rock music industry, drew attention to the behind-the-scenes participants and their activity. He wrote:

> The manager, producer, company distributor, merchandiser and the media also play roles in the scenario of a hit record or the success of an artist (1995 [1975]: 39–40).

This conclusion is echoed by the author and theorist Johnny Rogan, who interviewed and studied a large sample of successful managers of British acts. He wrote how the media has perpetuated 'pop star propaganda' by ignoring what he describes as the 'architects of fame': the artist managers (1988: 10). Rogan's conclusion has steered me towards identifying the activities of artist managers in particular in Ireland. As individuals they play a key role in the collective activity that provides opportunities for artists and entrepreneurs.

More recently the author Malcolm Gladwell also reinforced this idea. He wrote:

> ...we cling to the idea that success is a simple function of individual merit and that the world in which we all grow up and the rules we choose to write as a society don't matter at all (Gladwell, 2009: 33).

The 'rules we chose to write as a society', then, are of consequence; this means dispensing with the simple idea of a meritocracy which has been perpetuated by 'pop star propaganda'. With this in mind, an underlying theme of my social history is the substantial influence of individuals and groups who were not working for the major recording firms. Some of these individuals and groups struck mutually beneficial alliances with those major firms, and not all were altruistic in their activities. In fact, some of them apparently amassed considerable sums from their music industry activities. Yet many of them were driven by goals of cultural preservation, the desire to nurture local talent or simply to ensure that the music they liked got the opportunity to be heard.

These figures seem to act in a way that countered the process of globalization, a topic that Bourdieu addressed. Some of his less-known material, written in the later stages of his life marked a significant change from his earlier theorization. It argued strongly against the globalization process. In direct opposition to this process he positioned internationalism and solidarity between non-commercial cultural producers. A number of his essays are collected in the short book, *Firing Back* (2003). To him, the current situation had involved the encroachment upon 'the hard-won independence of cultural production and circulation' by 'the intrusion of commercial logic at every stage of the production and circulation of cultural goods' (2003: 67). The counter-argument advanced by Bourdieu specifically includes 'commercial music' (2003: 69). Homogeneity, not diversity, is the result of the increasingly concentrated and vertically integrated cultural industries; products are selected and designed to appeal to international markets. Although Bourdieu presents an example from the televisual industry this has direct correlations in the music industry:

> The pursuit of audience ratings leads producers to look for omnibus products that can be consumed by *audiences of all backgrounds in all countries*... (Original italics) (2003: 68).

This coincides with Tovey and Share's (2000) conclusion quoted earlier that increasing globalisation of media production and distribution is a threat to our ability to tell 'our own' stories (p. 384). Just as ominously, for Bourdieu the 'logic of profit' is not just an opposition force for cultural production; it is 'the very negation of culture' (2003: 70).

Clearly this critique of the major firms that dominate the music industry has implications for a small open-economy like Ireland. A social history of the Irish music industry may contribute to debates over the future of that industry. Acknowledging how struggles for position between major firms and those at the 'margins' have occurred in the past may encourage others at the margins to participate. The implications of inaction were clearly expressed by Bourdieu:

> What is at stake here is the perpetuation of a cultural production that is not oriented toward exclusively commercial ends and is not subject to the verdicts of those who dominate mass media production, especially by way of the hold they exert over major channels of distribution (2003: 70).

Bourdieu wrote that the 'ideology of creation, which makes the author the first and last source of the value of his work' (2003: 76) hindered the identification and acknowledgment of these vital participants in cultural production.

Bourdieu had earlier addressed this in *The Rules of Art* (1996). Here he states the sociologist must stand against the 'friend of the beautiful spectacles and voices' (1996: xvi). Bourdieu, believed the *experience* of the work of art was enhanced by 'scientific analysis of the social conditions of the production and reception' (1996: xvii). It is doubtful that many consumers of popular music possess knowledge of the specific institutional relationships behind the production of the music they consume. It is also doubtful whether they would feel their experience of that music enhanced by that knowledge. Yet, clearly, scientific analysis of cultural production must include interrogating the 'beautiful spectacles and voices' and their production.

The idea of interrogating the 'beautiful spectacles and voices' in the Irish context is demanded by Tovey and Share's (2000) argument, cited above, that the international marketplace is served product that is 'attractive and non-controversial' (p. 384). Do Irish artists who want to appeal globally then have to be 'attractive and non-controversial' to that large market? In this case who decides what is attractive and what is controversial? Can members of the local scene make Irish acts more attractive to the global industry gate-keepers by their activity?

If they can it is worth considering another conclusion, cited earlier:

> Local cultural entrepreneurs involved in organising…new cultural items may lack material resources, but what they possess is local knowledge, which is less available to the culture business at the centre of the global system (Tovey and Share, 2003: 542).

With that in mind, I now want to examine some of the 'local cultural entrepreneurs' who, in Ireland indeed often did lack material resources, yet made a significant impact on local acts, the local scene and even the 'cultural business at the centre of the global system'.

Chapter 2: 1900–1929

'...only certain people leave': Population, professionals and popular music

The likelihood of any country being able to shield its culture from outside influences is naturally influenced by its geographical position. Ireland's location, an isolated Atlantic island west of Britain, initially appears ideal for self-containment. Yet the country was not sealed off from outside forces and was historically subject to a succession of invasions. In fact, Ireland's geographic location, with her local tribes who waged war on each other, proved attractive to invaders. Ireland lacked strong allies with land access to call upon when she was threatened and she literally stood alone against invaders. As shipping and military technology developed Ireland suffered incursions from Scandinavian Vikings and continental European Normans. Both left indelible cultural traces.

Yet the unequalled dominant force in Ireland's development was her neighbour across the Irish Sea. Britain was a seafaring nation as well as a country with an appetite for economically advantageous overseas expansion. As the historian Tristram Hunt in his study of the British Empire wrote, Ireland entered British consciousness as 'a colonial project' in the sixteenth century (Hunt, 2014: 109). From the 1590s, the combination of British government policy and private enterprise pushed to subjugate the local Gaelic ways and bring the country culturally into line with Protestant Britain. Native land was seized and by 1642, the start of the English Civil War, 100,000 migrants from Britain had been transplanted across the Irish Sea (Hunt, 2014: 110).

The settlers and in particular the 'Protestant Ascendancy' who assumed positions of cultural and political leadership in Ireland, maintained close ties with Britain despite some ongoing tensions. This relationship shifted with the mass redeployment of British troops from Ireland to North America during the latter's successful struggle for independence in the 1770s and 1780s. Coinciding with this, Irish political forces, both Catholic and Protestant, began agitating for more local autonomy. One notable outcome of this power struggle was the establishment of an Irish parliament, still under the British Crown, in 1782. However, any hope that this limited self-rule would bring peace and prosperity proved illusory. As the historian R.F. Foster (1988) has documented, throughout the 1800s Ireland continued to be a place of economic catastrophe, agitation and emigration. The Great Potato Famine of 1845–1849 devastated rural Ireland which had become dependent on this single crop.

The country's ongoing economic failure meant that throughout the 1800s emigration continued to be a fact of life. According to calculations, at least 1 million and possibly 1.5 million people left Ireland between 1815 and 1845. In the next 25 years another 3 million departed. By 1890, almost 3 million people, 39 per cent of the total number born in Ireland, were living abroad (Foster, 1988: 345).

Emigration is not a random event and it has huge consequences for any country's culture. Later attempts to preserve Irish culture, and its music, were severely restricted by the reality of Ireland's large migrant population. The Irish travelled by ship overseas in the pursuit of better opportunities. There they developed communities which, via kinship or economic bonds, attracted more migrants; as the sociologist, Saskia Sassen (1999) documented:

> Migrations are highly selective processes; only certain people leave, and they travel on highly structured routes to their destinations, rather than gravitate blindly toward any rich country they can enter (p. 2).

In the case of the Irish those 'highly structured routes' led predominantly to the US and Britain. This exodus resulted literally in 'an Ireland abroad' (Foster, 1988: 345). In terms of defining 'Irish culture', it is important to acknowledge how this 'Ireland abroad' meant that the 'Irish' were not a geographically contained homogeneous group. In a sense, the 'Irish' were two groups *separated by geography*; those in Ireland and those abroad. Both of these groups had a vested interest, and often radically different visions, in defining 'Irish culture'. Clashes between the two were both complex and inevitable.

Although Britain was closer and more accessible, the Irish migrated in increasing numbers to North America. In the second half of the 19th century a number of pull factors encouraged this transatlantic flow. It is important to remember that Ireland and the US were separated by more than distance at this time. The Irish were leaving a country where, for the majority, economic opportunities were perennially lacking and sailing to a country that was experiencing historically unprecedented growth. Massive communications and transport infrastructure projects, most notably the railroad and telegraph, created demand for both labour and enterprise. In her analysis of US entrepreneurial culture and its impact from 1865 to 1920 Naomi R. Lamoreaux (2010: 367–369) identified how, and of direct

consequence for the arriving Irish, this was a 'golden age' for invention and entrepreneurship.

This climate of entrepreneurship represented a huge cultural chasm between Ireland and America. Ireland did not just lack opportunities, it did not *foster* them. Naturally, Britain was more concerned with its own economy than Ireland's. As the Irish sociologist Tom Inglis has argued, most notably in *Moral Monopoly: The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Modern Ireland* (1998), the clerical domination with its ethos of conformity actively hampered domestic entrepreneurship. By contrast, in America at this time, Lamoreaux describes entrepreneurs at the time as 'the most admired figures in society'; popular books reinforcing this perception included the impresario P. T. Barnum's *The Art of Money-Getting*. Entrepreneurs in America, including those like Barnum in the entertainment industry, with their elevated social standing, actively participated in the representation of the Irish.

Representing Ireland at the World's Fair: Culture and enterprise

The interaction of culture and enterprise was the subject of intense rhetoric and tactical struggles in Irish society. As power groups sought to delineate both culture and enterprise these struggles were not always straightforward. My research indicates that the debates over culture and enterprise defined many areas of the Irish music industry and had long-term consequences. John McCormack in the first quarter of the 20th century provides the clearest example of how the new mass-marketed gramophone record industry could put an Irish 'star' with his expressed Irish 'values' before a global audience; examining his career indicates why the culture/enterprise debate mattered. I want to show how McCormack's career and representation showed signs of the influence of his US business manager as well as of the Catholic Church in his native Ireland. This analysis also highlights how business entrepreneurs dealing with Irish musicians were deeply involved in how Ireland was represented, often to a wide audience. Naturally these businessmen, often based overseas, were not the only people interested in how Ireland was represented; the Catholic Church in Ireland was also adamant that it should play a central role in defining Ireland's culture.

McCormack's early appearance at the 1904 St Louis World's Fair or Exposition demonstrated how entrepreneurs had widely divergent ideas about how to present national culture. Naturally, this representation was mediated. For example, Ireland was excluded

from the main exhibition area of the Fair. Those pavilions were exclusively for independent countries, British colonies and self-governed states.

Perhaps inevitably, given Ireland's emigration pattern and lack of domestic economic success, the stewardship of 'Ireland' at the World's Fair was, according to media reports, 'only rendered possible by the patriotic enterprise of certain Irish-Americans' (Gill, *The Irish Times*, 21 December 1904). Newspapers in Ireland celebrated the 'patriotic enterprise' of these individuals and one in particular, Thomas 'Tom' Hanley. In a rather fanciful article which served to enhance Hanley's reputation, 'The Irish Exhibit at St. Louis', the *Freeman's Journal* reprinted material from the *Chicago Citizen* newspaper (*Freeman's Journal*, 26 November 1904). Here, Hanley was depicted in a heroic light, battling to save Ireland's reputation and image from unsympathetic forces.

His first connection with the Exposition was accidental. A syndicate of Jewish speculators had laid out before the governing board of the Exposition an application for a site for an 'Irish Village'. Among the features which this syndicate proposed to install were a Donnybrook Fair and a free dancing platform. Camels were to be introduced as a special attraction. It was to be a mixture of the streets of Cairo and a slum beer garden (*Freeman's Journal*, 26 November 1904).

In this telling of the story of Ireland at the World's Fair, Hanley is depicted saving Ireland's reputation from 'a syndicate of Jewish speculators'; by comparison his 'national pride...was aroused' and he was prepared to invest in it 'even if it took his last dollar'. Hanley was also depicted battling against the sceptical British administrators of Ireland who forced him to plead his case for Government support before both the Royal Commission and the House of Commons.

M. J. Murphy, the manager of the Irish exhibition at the Fair, was cited on the prominence of Irish music in the presentation, as well as on how Ireland's history and 'ruins' could be used to promote her industry. He was quoted as saying:

> Music will be a leading feature everywhere... 'Ireland's Own' Brass and Reed Band... will find echoes in every heart present... Irish pipes, harpers, and other instrumentalists...for the delectation of those who prefer the most ancient music... There will be no ridiculous blarney stone to catch the foolish coin; nor is it an Irish village, the keynote of which is poverty. It is

> industrial Ireland rising from among her historic ruins, around which her most sacred memories cling (Murphy, *Connaught Telegraph*, 7 May 1904).

The Irish exhibition in St Louis was, in fact, very successful. Various accounts indicate that of the attractions enjoyed by the Fair's over 19 million visitors, the Irish exhibition was one of the highest grossing (Wertheim and Bair, 2000: 41). With its 1,800 person capacity auditorium, and restaurant which could accommodate 2,000 guests, the exhibit was a major production. If it did not include a 'blarney stone', it did feature facsimiles of Blarney Castle, the Irish Houses of Parliament, Cormac's chapel from the Rock of Cashel and Drogheda's St Lawrence's Gate. Irish craftspeople travelled across the Atlantic to demonstrate their skills and were joined by the musical and dramatic attractions. The ways in which culture, industry and politics are entwined were demonstrated by the visit of the parliamentarian John Redmond, a driving force behind Ireland's push towards Home Rule. He was quoted endorsing the exhibition, declaring that it 'should elevate the idea of Ireland to the minds of every visitor'. He also echoed manager M.J. Murphy's notion that the Irish exhibition 'shows what Ireland is to-day and the wonderful possibilities in store for the future' (*The Irish Times*, 12 October 1904).

Yet not everyone found the presentation of Ireland authentic or even respectful. McCormack eventually departed abruptly and later claimed it was due to the demeaning representation of the Irish.

> ...I saw something on the stage of the theatre that aroused my Irish blood in hot resentment. The Irish people are my people, and I'll not stand by and have them mistreated or slurred... [the new cast-member] was made up with red side-whiskers, a bit of putty on the end of his nose to give it a further tilt upwards and he wore a green coat. From his mouth protruded a clay pipe. My first impulse was to follow and forcibly remove this caricature of an Irishman from the stage... (Key, 1918: 82–83).

Complaints about the 'Irish Village' were also voiced in *The Irish Times*. The newspaper printed the comments of one visitor who found the exhibition of Irish industry to be 'first-class' yet objected to the location of the Irish area in the midst of the fairground side-show activities. Having been excluded from the main industrial Pavilions, the Irish exhibit was instead located in the midst of the entertainment attractions. This area included 'hundreds of men and women shouting and bellowing at the top of their voices...' in an attempt to gain customers for their attractions. The sales pitch for the Irish exhibition reportedly

included: '...two little boys on the platform, and they dance an Irish step, and next come two little girls and they sing a song'. The author described his feelings: 'I felt ashamed of the whole affair' (*The Irish Times*, 2 December 1904).

Bless and suppress: The clergy and leisure in Ireland's independence era

Concerns about music as an element in the representation of Ireland and Irish identity continued during the early 20th century both at home and abroad. The new power groups that emerged in Ireland following the 1916 Rising against British rule frequently depicted the preservation of traditional culture, including music and song, as an element of nation-building. Marie McCarthy (1999), in her analysis of the Irish cultural transmission of music, documented the Irish publication of two collections of hymns in Gaelic in 1917. According to her research, by 1920 the canon of school singing comprised Catholic hymns and Gaelic songs; a process she identified as 'wedding' Catholicism to nationalism and inculcating these values in future generations (1999: 89). This embodied what Leo Keohane described as 'sacral nationalism' (2013: 64). It should be noted that members of the clergy were participating in the popular music field, and remained prominent in it well into the 1960s.

Even before the 1916 Easter Rising the Catholic clergy were heavily involved at the intersection of national identity and popular music. The activities of Fr Patrick Breathnach provide a good example of how effective these undertakings could be. His collections of Irish songs, in both Gaelic and English, were positively reviewed in both commercial and clerical publications. Another priest, Rev Patrick McSweeney, featured 'Songs of the Gael', Breathnach's most celebrated work, in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (1915) while the *Irish Independent* wrote that the collection of his songs 'should be hailed as a memorable event by lovers of the ballad poetry and the ancient music of which our land can boast' (*Irish Independent*, 7 June 1915).

Later publications of Fr Breathnach's collections of Irish songs were also well received and provided an opportunity for ideas of national popular culture to be expressed. The *Anglo-Celt* wrote how in Ireland:

> ...up to this London Music Hall ditties have occasionally been listened to with toleration. For the future there can be no excuse for inflicting them on an audience. 'Native music is beyond comparing' (*Anglo-Celt*, 21 January 1922).

The publication of these volumes also provided Fr Breathnach with the opportunity to express his ideas on national popular culture. In 'Songs of the Gael: A Collection of Anglo- Irish Songs and Ballads' (Breathnach, 1922), he wrote how 'the music hall and concert room may be made a very powerful agency in de-nationalising and even in debasing our people' (Breathnach, 1922: 4); he asked: 'when will Irishmen learn to appreciate the work of their own countrymen and taboo the inanities of the Anglicised concert hall?' (p. 68).

Fr Breathnach's collections were not simple detached transcriptions of Irish songs. His notes make it very clear that the books are not ideologically neutral. The song *John Dwyer of the Glen* which includes the image of a persecuted priest, he argues, 'enshrines a "fact" of Irish history, the ruin that followed the attempted extermination of a noble and ancient race' (Breathnach, 1922: 256). Of the lyrics of *The Men of the West*, he wrote this is 'a magnificent rallying song which every rising generation of Irish children ought to be taught'. He also described the Archbishop of Tuam singing this song in Gaelic 'at every social gathering of his priests' (p. 196). Throughout the songs and notes in his books, Fr Breathnach positions the clergy as central to life in the Catholic country. In addition they are frequently depicted as active patriots defending not just religion but Ireland.

The book's songs include *Arthur M'Coy* whose titular hero scorned kings and tyrants and 'knelt, with a Christian demeanour, to his priest, or his Maker, alone'. *The Croppy Boy* reinforces this myth in the most dramatic way. The song's hero is killed during the sacrament of Confession where a yeoman captain impersonates the priest he has already murdered. Another reinforcement of the myth occurs in the song *The O's and the Mac's*. This refers to Irish Gaelic family names and deepened the perception of Ireland as a Catholic country; it contains the vivid images of Britons running naked and wild, victorious pagans, Danish marauders, false Saxons, and the trusting Irish being driven to extinction. The light of spiritual Faith is saved only by 'the monks and the nuns of the O's and the Mac's'. It can easily be seen how popular music, Catholicism and nationalism were deeply entwined during this era and that the clergy were very active in the local music culture.

Fr Breathnach's death was noted in regional newspapers as the passing of a patriot who had promoted native culture. The *Nenagh Guardian* wrote: '…no other collector, past or

present, has done so much to popularise Gaelic songs' (15 March 1930). To the *Munster Express*, he was 'a full-souled patriot' and the paper described a choir of over fifty priests singing at his funeral (14 February 1930).

A century later, it is impossible to know precisely what impact Fr Breathnach's song books had on Irish music-making. What is relevant is that they prove how the clergy were active, influential and public in the field of popular music in the early 20th century. The myth of a patriotic clergy was advanced via popular music in two inter-related ways at this time. First, the clergy were acknowledged, by the media for instance, as historians and custodians of Irish popular music. Second, and not-unrelated to this custodial role, the Church was able to ensure that songs that specifically reinforced the idea of a patriotic clergy featured in popular music songbooks.

Fr Breathnach's activity reinforces how behind-the-scenes participants help to demarcate the boundaries of acceptable, and in this case, national, culture. This activity also highlights the close involvement of the clergy in Ireland in leisure and culture. I want to emphasise that this activity was not always of a repressive or censorial nature. Often the clergy were publicly involved in pastimes that enhanced their reputation as the providers of entertainment and even pleasure in Ireland. It is perhaps unsurprising that the clergy were closely involved in John McCormack's social circle and even in his self-representation.

John McCormack: Culture-defining conflict between clergy and commerce

The music industry trade magazine, *Billboard*, provided some insight into McCormack's global achievements. The Irish singer's sales were described as 'sensational' and averaging $70,000 annually. It was claimed that he had been paid $2,472,918 in royalties and that only one figure in classical music, Caruso, had out-earned him (Ackerman, *Billboard*, 5 November 1949).

For a singer who was described as 'genuinely poor' (Key, 1919: 8), McCormack's various biographies offer numerous examples of his dependence on the local supportive network he accessed. He received scholarships to attend school in County Sligo (McCormack, 1949: 9) and during his schooldays he performed in local concerts. This provided him with both funds and experience (Key, 1918: 35). While at school he also received what he recalled as valuable advice from the 'school maid' about his diction, as well as encouragement to pursue a singing career (McCormack, 1949: 10).

He acquired more skills when he joined the Pro-Cathedral choir in Dublin; like his school, the choir was a Catholic institution and it provided him with £25 a year (McCormack, 1949: 10). The experience prepared him for another of Ireland's major music performance opportunities, the Feis. McCormack could not afford the contest's admission fee, and while one friend paid for this, another friend bought the required sheet music (McCormack, 1949: 2); Vincent O'Brien, the renowned teacher at the Pro-Cathedral choir, provided tutoring free of charge (McCormack, 1949: 2).

McCormack won first prize in the Feis, an example of how the local supportive music-making community bestowed prestige on artists. This led to further engagements; some were in formal concerts while others were 'at homes' (McCormack, 1949: 11). The latter were a form of do-it-yourself music promotion which took place, literally, in people's homes. During one 'at home', the host recommended that McCormack should train with an Italian vocal coach, Sabatini, and offered to provide McCormack with a letter of introduction to the noted teacher (McCormack, 1949: 11).

It is relevant that Lily, McCormack's widow, describes the informal local Dublin performances as 'a means to an end' while the Italian tuition, in career terms, was a 'stepping stone to success' (McCormack, 1949: 11). There appears to be an implication that the former belongs to a local network while the latter is part of professional training. Yet it appears clear that without a supportive local network and the many instances where McCormack benefited from this, that a professional career would have been highly unlikely. The fact that his first three interactions with the centralised professional industry led only to temporary work seem to reinforce this view. The 'talent scout' (McCormack, 1949: 4) for the St Louis Fair while selecting McCormack to appear at the fair, did not ensure that the singer would even stay in the US for the Fair's duration and McCormack as noted above, returned to Ireland prematurely. Similarly, the early recordings made for Edison, while lucrative, did not lead to a contact with the firm (McCormack, 1949: 11). At this point, the gate-keepers of the 'professional' centralised industry did not feel McCormack was a worthy long-term investment.

Once again, it was the supportive non-industry network, or music scene, that sustained McCormack. In 1905 he received his first professional engagement in Italy. Because he lacked the funds to travel and prepare for the concert, he wrote to Bishop Clancy in Sligo

who lent him £50. Later McCormack presented the Bishop with a gold chalice set with jewels to thank him (McCormack, 1949: 16). The following year it was Sir John Murray, a 'wealthy patron of the arts' who secured McCormack with a key audition at London's Covent Garden opera house (Ledbetter, 1984).

Could the non-professional network have brought McCormack to global acclaim? It appears almost impossible that they could have. Yet that does not diminish their role in McCormack's ultimate commercial achievement, for which he apparently did need an alliance with a major record firm. Both the professional and non-professional networks were vital for his eventual success, and while one was industry-contingent and was an investment-for-profit arrangement, the other was socially-contingent and on a not-for-profit basis.

The case of John McCormack demonstrates how popular music acts can shape culture and participate in the representation of nations. This case also demonstrates how industry gate-keepers are involved in that representation process. On a fundamental level, the perception of artists as being 'popular' provides them with a platform for expressing their opinions. Their views on a range of topics are broadcast and printed in multiple forms of media. One of the most controlled means by which popular artists represent themselves, and topics of interest to them, is by their autobiographies. How did John McCormack represent himself, Ireland and other topics in his autobiography? While addressing that question, it should be kept in mind that this autobiography was not unmediated. Various individuals had a vested interest in it and participated in its construction and production.

One of the key gate-keepers in McCormack's career was his business manager, Charles Wagner. It is worth noting that McCormack's selection of a manager based overseas remained the predominant pattern for Irish acts that succeeded in international album charts for the next sixty years. In McCormack's (1918) autobiography, *John McCormack: His Own Life Story*, which was represented as being 'transcribed' by Pierre V. R. Key, the Irish singer is effusive in his praise for his manager, Wagner. He describes their first meeting: 'I was so taken with his frank and honest personality that in ten minutes we had fixed up a business deal which has been to our mutual advantage' (Key, 1918: 291–292). Significantly, McCormack also describes introducing Wagner to an associate of his, the Irishman Denis McSweeney and advising them to collaborate in his management. In

McCormack's words, 'they make a splendid combination. I, of course, think they are the greatest managers in America' (1918: 292).

McCormack described his relationship with Wagner and McSweeney in terms that served to enhance the reputations of all three. While his account is based on his experiences up to 1918 when the book was published, the managerial traits he acknowledged could refer to any contemporary healthy artist–manager relationship. The famous singer represented himself as business-savvy and a good judge of character, to his readers he outlined why his managers were worthy of trust and respect. His comments reinforce the point that popular music is the end-product of a collaborative process involving both artists and supportive industry gate-keepers. McCormack wrote:

> No one knows better than I how much their splendid cooperation has aided me in my hard climb towards success. Their kindly advice, their unswerving loyalty, their unshakable belief in my abilities, and, above all, their absolute honesty in all our business relationship have been a pillar of strength to me. I want my public to know that I am grateful to them (Key, 1918: 292).

McCormack's very public endorsement of his management in his 'autobiography' is best interpreted with some knowledge of the book's preparation. In *his* autobiography, Charles Wagner (1940) represents his involvement with McCormack's book:

> In the spring of 1918, I felt a book based on McCormack's unusual rise to artistic heights would be a sort of homeopathic dose of press agentry – a sugarcoated publicity stunt – and had faith enough to believe his friends would buy it (Wagner, 1940: 159).

If the book was designed as a publicity stunt, in Ireland it appeared to have succeeded by drawing attention to McCormack and representing him in a positive light. In 1919 the *Meath Chronicle* newspaper described it as a 'quasi-biography' and reprinted extracts from American reviews of the book. Rather than focus on his musical ability, the article referred to McCormack's celebrity and close association with the Catholic Church. These selections identified the singer's interaction with world leaders; his meetings with Pope Pius X and US President Wilson were mentioned. The newspaper represented McCormack's close relationship with the Catholic Church, which in Ireland was a source of prestige at the time. It should be noted that McCormack, as an internationally known Catholic public figure, in turn brought prestige to the Church and members of the clergy associated with him. The newspaper represented that 'two Bishops are forever memorable in John

McCormack's career'. Bishop Clancy had provided encouragement and 'financial assistance' when McCormack was studying at Summerhill College; Bishop Curley was a 'devoted friend through the years' and 'in this biographical enterprise a capable assistant' (Key, 1919: 3).

The *Freeman's Journal* gave the book a glowing review. The journalist, J.E.L., was effusive in his praise of both subject and author; McCormack was an artist who 'deepens and sweetens the lives of the multitudes who hear him… the construction of the book could not be improved upon' (J.E.L., *Freeman's Journal*, 13 September 1919). The review provided the opportunity for the newspaper to represent McCormack as emblematic of Ireland: he was a singer who 'shared his glory with his native land'; he was 'a lover of his native country'; 'Ireland is proud of this "master singer of true Irish song" loyal to his country'. McCormack was quoted on his belief that music could enhance a country's reputation. He referred to Ireland's folk songs, which he wrote: '…I hold to be the most beautiful of any music of this kind – this is song-propaganda'.

The publication of the book also provided McCormack with an opportunity to make his opinions known. Growing up, his family were 'genuinely poor', yet 'fortunate in those things which create happiness in the home'; in one of a large number of references to his religion, McCormack described his home as a 'Catholic Christian hearth' (Key, 1918: 8). His wife, Lily, was quoted on her husband's priorities: 'He has three things in life. His family, his Catholic faith and his art. To each one his allegiance is complete' (Key, 1918: 226). Of his meeting with Pope Pius, McCormack wrote: 'Never had I seen such a beautiful face' (Key, 1918: 231). Of McCormack himself it was written: '…he knew very little outside the Catholic church, his school and humble living' (Key, 1918: 18). If McCormack's Catholic faith was one dominant theme of the book, so was his nationality. Its narrative served the 'sacral nationalist' position well.

In one vivid passage, McCormack's friend, Bishop Curley, was quoted on the Battle of Athlone which was fought between the British and native forces. This was: '… history all Ireland delights in; a proof of national courage and good red blood' (Key, 1918: 12). A public speech made by the Bishop about McCormack was also quoted as saying:

> True to his splendid Irish faith, to the grand old-time Celtic traditions, he is hailed to-day as a credit to Irish-Ireland, and centuries from now his name will be written on the pages of Ireland's story as the greatest gift to the world of song (Key, 1918: 343).

Yet, despite the positive media attention received by the book, McCormack's 'quasi-biography' was not a success. Its failure highlights that the book was a mediated production, with the clergy on one side and McCormack's business manager on the other. What had been dreamt up as a straight-forward 'sugarcoated publicity stunt' by Charles Wagner became complicated with the involvement of Bishop Curley. He was mentioned by the *Meath Chronicle* as 'forever memorable' (*Meath Chronicle*, 12 April 1919) in McCormack's career and features prominently in the book.

Bishop Curley is named in the biography as one of the three 'illustrious' sons produced by the town of Athlone. Naturally, McCormack is one, Bishop Curley (described as the 'youngest of Catholic bishops in America') is another, while the third, the politician T.P. O'Connor, was described as 'one of Ireland's best loved statesmen'. Collectively this was 'a triumvirate, surely, which instils community pride' (Key, 1918: 10). To fans of McCormack, therefore, Irish clergy and politicians were being represented as figures worthy of respect. If music had drawn people to read the McCormack book, they were being encouraged to see clergy and nationalist politicians as influential and trustworthy public figures. This early convergence of Church, politics and popular music reappeared frequently in the Irish discourse.

In the case of McCormack's biography it was the clergy rather than Irish politicians who were most prominently featured. In fact, the book demonstrates how clerical influence in popular music extended to serving as an 'editor' to McCormack's 'own story'. In this story, Bishop Curley is depicted sitting in during McCormack's reminiscences, and the bishop provides the history of Athlone as well as his own reflections of McCormack as a youth.

McCormack is quoted explicitly referring to the clerical involvement with the construction of the biography: 'Bishop Curley has sent back his last batch of proofs. He made a few changes, but he approves what we've done. I'm glad of that…' (Key, 1918: 429). The author adds: 'we have been fortunate, John and I, in having the scholarly and sympathetic guidance of His Lordship, as editor' (Key, 1918: 429).

If McCormack's manager had the stated aim of producing a 'sugarcoated' version of the singer's story, it is ironic that he later described the finished product as 'a very sentimental and unreal account'. To Wagner it was 'laughable and ridiculous' as literature, and filled with 'oversentimental expressions that sounded quite absurd on paper' (1940: 160). The tone of the book was blamed in part on Bishop Curley's influence which resulted in the author being 'obliged to change his writing style… [while] the bishop edited the copy for John' (Wagner, 1940: 160).

While Wagner wrote that 'no one ever had greater regard for John than this splendid churchman' (1940: 160), in this case, clerical interference, as well-intentioned as it may have been, effectively undermined the project. Wagner described the outcome: the author was paid his $5,000 fee, while McCormack 'bought off the publishers and withdrew the entire edition' (Wagner, 1940: 160). In situations in which both the clergy and entrepreneurs actively participated with popular musicians, their values and expressions were often at cross-purposes.

'Hundreds of thousands of dollars and "sixth sense"': Managing John McCormack

In his comprehensive and systematic analysis of British popular music management, Johnny Rogan (1988), in *Starmakers and Svengalis*, argues that the media has perpetuated 'pop star propaganda' by ignoring what he describes as the 'architects of fame': the artists' managers (Rogan, 1988: 10). His broad research of popular music managers – he interviewed and studied 25 key individuals – led him to conclude that managers both reflect and help to construct the industry environment in which they operate. This conclusion applies equally to the prominent managers of the US music industry. Thus, Charles Wagner, the manager of the most successful Irish artist of the early recording industry, John McCormack, should be understood within the context of the industrial conditions of his time and which he, in turn, affected.

Without doubt, McCormack's career benefited greatly from the major scientific and marketing developments, in particular mass-produced gramophones and radios which impacted on the early 20th century industry. Yet this career also benefited from the skills acquired by his 'architect of fame', Charles Wagner, during the less technologically advanced era preceding this. In his pre-World War II autobiography, *Seeing Stars*, Wagner (1940) represents a huge list of tasks undertaken during his daily routine. This overview

provides insight into the functioning of the popular music manager lacking modern technology. While the technology has changed, the manager's responsibilities have not.[1]

This exhaustive list of daily activities may be exaggerated, yet it certainly does not overstate the range of activities, and the potential influence, of the popular music manager, whose activities conform to the classification outlined by business theorist, Henry Mintzberg (2009). Following his observational research on professional business managers, he designated 10 'roles' carried out by the manager. These belong to three categories: interpersonal, including figurehead, leader and liaison roles; informational, including recipient, disseminator and spokesperson; and decision roles: entrepreneurial, disturbance-handler, resource-allocator and negotiator. What is distinctive about the music manager is that while profit is the aim in any commercial enterprise in standard capitalism, the music manager is responsible for the production of both profit *and* culture. This culture, from high-profile Irish artists for example, often became an element of Irish discourse and national culture.

If Wagner's high industry-status and lucrative client list resulted from his management skill, this should be seen in the context of his personal background and wide entertainment industry experience. His autobiography details his youth in the small Midwestern town of Shelbyville, Illinois. A reference to 'my old colored mammy' (Wagner, 1940: 12) implies how his family of German ancestry enjoyed social privileges denied to black Americans.

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[1] In this case, Wagner makes decisions on concert requests for his established artists (1940: 3); publicises his new artists; considers prospective clients; negotiates fees for his clients (1940: 4); manages relationships with local promoters; designs, writes and prepares promotional and marketing material for his clients; plans the activities of his office staff; communicates via phone with his clients, here reassuring a performer, although he maintains an 'inviolable rule to stay away' from artists in the hours before any performance; persuades another artist to perform despite her complaining of fatigue (1940: 5). In addition he accepts meetings with unannounced callers, part of his open-door policy to prospective talent in case he might 'miss something good'; consults on song selection for acts (1940: 6); attends talent auditions in a local auditorium; has lunch with his lawyer to discuss entertainment tax (1940: 7); organises the guest list for a début concert by an artist, having already invited radio and record label decision makers; re-arranges the logistics of an up-coming tour; arranges delivery of promotional material to local concert promoters; participates in a meeting about movie rights (1940: 8); answers interview questions for a publication; meets with the general manager of the prestigious Metropolitan Opera Company; arranges the preparation of legal documents for an artist who will be touring in Latin America (1940: 9); has dinner with his staff; visits the venue where a client is performing to ensure the dressing room is prepared, the equipment and concert programs are in place; requests an assistant to speak with the artist to ensure he is prepared; ensures that the invited guests have attended and are in their correct seats (1940: 10). Finally, when the details are confirmed and the concert commences, he studies the audience, including the critics, to gauge their reaction before meeting promoters and ultimately congratulating the artist after the concert (Wagner, 1940: 11).

From his mother, described as his 'bulwark and sustaining power', he claims he received 'a thorough drilling in the German trait of thriftiness' (Wagner, 1940: 14).

Wagner travelled widely in his search for new talent and recalled hearing McCormack at the St Louis 'Irish Village' during the singer's truncated first US visit (Wagner, 1940: 95). However, he was not sufficiently impressed by McCormack's performance to book him. In the context of McCormack's eventual huge US success, Wagner's first-hand account of the entertainment industry at the time is of great significance. During the early 20th century, large sums of capital began to flow from industry to culture. For example, in 1906 the industrialist Oscar Hammerstein opened New York's Manhattan Opera House. One of its aims was to provide 'high culture' with quality production at more affordable prices. I think that the representation of McCormack's appeal to both opera fans and general audiences needs to be seen in this context. The music audience was being developed by impresarios including Hammerstein at the time of McCormack's commercial ascent. Thus the singer was responding to new market conditions rather than creating a new audience.

Heavily promoted 'stars' were one means by which the music audience was being expanded; Hammerstein launched his new venue with 'an astounding list of artists headed by the great Nellie Melba', who was reportedly paid $3,000 per performance (Wagner, 1940: 96). While industrialists like Hammerstein were now active in individual venues and artist tours, Wall Street financiers also found entertainment an attractive investment and became involved in the developing show business industry (Wagner, 1940: 104). The inflow of capital and enlarged audience led to an increasing professionalization of the US live music industry. Powerful promoters dominated the large cities. In New York two major firms, the Shubert company and Law & Erlanger prevailed, while Chicago was controlled by F. Wright Newman (Wagner, 1940: 103–105). These interacted with the emerging music manager power brokers. While working for R.E. Johnston, whom he described as the 'dean' of managers in New York (Wagner, 1940: 17), Wagner was closely observing the activities of Charles Ellis. The latter's clients included Melba, as well as Fritz Kreisler and Sergei Rachmaninoff (Wagner, 1940: 125–126).

When Wagner began his own personal management activities, it was with both extensive experience and a large professional network. Thus when McCormack became a client of Wagner in 1910 during a live music boom in the US, he was combining with an industry-insider with considerable advantages. Their client–manager relationship was certainly

lucrative for both of them. The latter wrote how McCormack's second tour during their alliance resulted in a profit in excess of $171,000 for the singer and close to $70,000 for Wagner (Wagner, 1940: 162). This enabled him to purchase a mansion with a 300-acre farm in New York State; in his autobiography he refers to it as 'The House that John [McCormack] built' (Wagner, 1940: 163–165). McCormack clearly benefitted from Wagner's management. Initially, his new manager more than doubled the singer's income from $1,200 a week to $2,500 a week (Wagner, 1940: 128). Their first 50 concerts together earned McCormack $37,500 (Wagner, 1940: 129).

McCormack eventually terminated his business relationship with Wagner after 13 years and his affairs appear to have been handled subsequently by the Kerry-born McSweeney, who had worked with Wagner. The reported comments of both men reveal how the entrepreneurial stewardship of McCormack's career had implications for Ireland also. Wagner had presented McCormack as a 'star' in his own right; previously the Irishman had been a member of an ensemble of five singers from various countries labelled the International Concert Company (Wagner, 1940: 130). Wagner's views on the business practices of McCormack's previous managers are interesting in the context of the history Irish popular music. While they must be read as coming from a manager wishing to prove his business prowess, they raise questions about how artistic success and 'Irishness' were combined in the marketplace. He wrote:

> These early managers emphasized his [McCormack's] nationality – an unnecessary tactic. John McCormack never belonged solely to the Irish race; he belonged to the entire musical world… they [previous managers] announced him with green ink and heralded an *Irish ballad singer*… shamrocks were no more necessary in exploiting McCormack than carving a polar bear on an ice pitcher... Because of this limiting type of promotion, most of his early press criticism dwelt on his minstrelsy (Wagner, 1940: 130).

Here, Wagner explicitly states that the particular way in which McCormack was positioned as 'Irish' had negative implications for his career; this resulted in a loss of credibility in the eyes of key industry gatekeepers in the US media. The representation of Ireland continued to be an element of the discourse accompanying McCormack's career. Later the *Irish Independent* film correspondent enthusiastically quoted from a letter he claimed he received from McSweeney about a McCormack film:

> ...the film will be different from any Irish picture ever shown, unique in this respect: there will be no Irish colleens (so called), no pigs, no broth of a boy, no shillelaghs, no pipes, no caubeens, or any of the other junk which has hitherto passed for Irish atmosphere in pictures (*Irish Independent*, 15 February 1930).

By this time, McCormack was one of the Western world's best-known entertainment figures; while independent Ireland was pushing to assert itself on the world stage, an identifiably Catholic Irishman was contributing to that nation's visibility and representation. It can be seen how in McCormack's case, his professional alliances, in this case his managers, were active in making commercial decisions that had implications for how Ireland was being represented globally. It is important to note that in the cultural industries, key gate-keepers are making decisions, often for financial reasons, which have implications for national representation.

This balancing act between the national and international has continued to be a serious consideration for Irish artists ever since. It is a balancing act made more complicated by the evolving nature of environmental factors which impact on the music industry. Between 1880 and 1930, the rapid global market penetration of both radio and the gramophone dramatically changed the nature of the music industry. At the same time, these technological developments altered the nature and impact of the cultural linkages between Ireland and its diaspora. The diaspora were no longer just sending money in the form of remittances, they were also sending representations of Irish culture in gramophone records, albeit as imagined and manufactured in their new host countries.

Because of the significance of the Irish diaspora, in Ireland's case the music industry core-periphery pattern of transmission is not a simple uni-directional flow. Large numbers of the 'Ireland abroad' were located close to music industry core centres of operation and influenced it as both consumers and entrepreneurs. In the US this was particularly significant. By 1890 the Irish-born population there numbered 1.87 million, while by 1900 over 3.3 million second-generation Irish-Americans were resident (Kenny, 2000: 184). John McCormack had the great fortune of commencing his career when the music industry was growing rapidly and a ready-made audience for Irish products existed in the US. The man responsible for signing him to HMV was later quoted:

> No one was keener to welcome an Irish tenor than I, since I was alive to the commercial possibilities among the Irish Americans, who showed the most idolatrous worship of their bards (Moore, 1977: 92).

How the international recording industry mattered to Ireland

Even before McCormack's accomplishments, and the mass-market penetration of gramophone records, Ireland had proved how the global music industry could aid in positive national representation. The career of Thomas Moore (1779–1852) provides a visible example of this. While it is impossible to verify actual sales numbers, by 1894 it was being claimed that the sheet-music of Moore's song 'Tis the Last Rose of Summer' had sold 1.5 million copies in North America alone. To Charles Hamm, this achievement, if true, makes it popular music's first 'million-seller' (Hamm, 1983: 46). Moore's most famous work, his *Irish Melodies*, first published in 1808 and constantly reprinted, as well as his popularity, had an impact on Ireland and the music industry. Terry Eagleton credits Moore with placing 'Ireland almost single-handedly on the culture agenda of his day' (1998: 157). Hamm places his achievements in the global context; to him, Moore was 'instrumental' in 'shaping indigenous popular music' in North America as well as its related business, in particular the publishing industry (Hamm, 1983: 58).

In light of Moore's impact on the domestic and global music industries, it is worthwhile examining his career to identify the role of entrepreneurship in it. Here it can be seen how James Power, an Irish music publisher, initially identified a potential market for combining Irish airs with 'Irish themed lyrics' (Kelly, 2009: 153). Power understood the market for printed sheet music and had noted market demand for similar works based on Scottish melodies; he was also the publisher of an earlier collection of Irish airs by Bunting (Hamm, 1983: 47). Bunting's collection provided material for Moore's later work. Moore's contribution, then, was adding lyrics to original Irish tunes at the request of a music industry entrepreneur with market knowledge. Power had a firm vision of what he required before Moore even received the commission; the entrepreneur advertised for authors to compose lyrics, even specifying that they should feature 'Words containing, as frequently as possible, allusions to the manners and history of the country' (Kelly, 2009: 162). He knew that 'Ireland' could sell music product.

Following Moore's success, artistes and stage characters labelled 'Irish' remained popular in the US. As William H. Williams (1996) concluded in *'Twas Only An Irishman's Dream:*

The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics 1800–1920', by the 1850s the Irish character celebrated in stage and popular song persona could now be a 'handsome, witty, attractive, yet sentimental hero who was not above shedding a manly tear for mother and motherland' (Williams, 1996: 214). It should be noted how the stage Irishman who possessed the positive attributes above was generally depicted as American-born. The existence, and growing influence, of the 'Ireland abroad' complicated the reception and representation of 'Irish' music, and frequently major music industry firms in the US were responsible for the most commercially successful of these representations. It is significant that 'the sentimental core of twentieth-century Irish-American song' (Williams, 1996: 215) derived from the Witmark and Sons publishing firm and the artist manager Augustus Pitou. As David Suisma (2009) has documented, the Witmarks were by the 1890s one of the first major American firms with a national market, while Pitou recalled how 'during all my years of management, no matter how many attractions I had on the road, one of them was a singing Irish comedian' (1914: 172). By 1870 the Irish were posting more than 65 million letters and parcels annually (Morash, 2010: 73), and reports from emigrants were just as plentiful. With the arrival of mass-produced gramophone records, the Irish in America began to send recorded music home as well as the economically significant remittance money.

Ireland's independence provided the country with a greater opportunity to define her own polices and culture. However it should be remembered that by the time this was achieved, there was a substantial and influential 'Ireland-abroad'. In 1919, members of the British Parliament elected in Ireland founded their own parliament in Dublin and withdrew from Westminster. The 1916 Easter Rising – and in particular the execution of the rebellion's leaders in its aftermath – had indicated increased support for Irish independence. The negotiated independence, with the six counties in the country's North East remaining part of Britain, precipitated the 1922–1923 Civil War. The now self-governed country was also in a state of acute economic depression. The land relinquished by Britain to Irish self-governance was described by the historian Oliver MacDonagh as not 'an undeveloped country' but rather 'a pocket of underdevelopment in an advanced region' (Brown, 2004: 5). He compared the Free State to Canada's Maritime Provinces or Sicily in the context of Italy. Although territorially independent, the 26 counties were economically dependent on the former colonial power; 98 per cent of its exports went to Britain as documented by the economist T. K. Whitaker (2006). His assessment of the country perhaps indicates why most of the initial pivotal activity in the 'Irish music industry' occurred outside of the

country. To Whitaker, 'the new state was in touch with the rest of the world through emigration rather than through exports' (2006: 3).

Against this backdrop, Irish political leaders began the process of building a sustainable independent state. Terence Brown (2004) provides a critical view of the country's management during this era. To him, the 'artistic, social and cultural vitality' of pre-revolutionary Ireland had been maintained despite a lack of economic resources. This was replaced, surprisingly, by a 'devastating lack of cultural and social innovation in the first decades of Irish independence' (Brown, 2004: 8). The 'social and cultural conservatism' stemmed, Brown felt, from the homogeneous nature of Irish society. This was due to the partition of the country and the loss to the Republic of six Northern counties with their industrial activity and distinctive sense of identity (Brown, 2004: 7–8). Allied with this were demographic patterns which ran contrary to contemporary trends. The 1926 Census counted a higher percentage of unmarried people than any other country that kept records: 80% of males aged between 25 and 30 were single. This was combined with systematic 'perennial emigration', which resulted in 43 per cent of Irish-born men and women living elsewhere (Brown, 2004: 10). The human exodus was 10 times the figure for most other European countries, where the average was close to 4 per cent. By comparison, even other countries with traditions of emigration did not experience the emigration pattern of Ireland in this era: Norway experienced emigration of 14.8 per cent, Scotland 14.1 per cent, and Sweden 11.2 per cent (Brown, 2004: 10). For the music industry, this diaspora provided a receptive audience in two of the major markets for recorded music, the US and Britain, as well as providing emigrants who participated in the music industry in the countries to which they had immigrated.

Ireland's emigrant pattern complicated the global music industry flows, particularly those originating in Britain or the US. The historian Diarmaid Ferriter (2005) identified (following Ó Crualaoich) that emigration served as a 'safety valve' for Irish society as it made the transition from a traditional to a modern rural society (2005: 181). The population outflow was exacerbated by what Ferriter identified within the emigration discourse as a 'lack of honest appraisal of the problem by clergy and politicians'.

'...a great boon in the more lonely parts of the country': How and why Irish politicians welcomed the gramophone

Those same Irish clergy and politicians were unable to ignore the rapidly advancing mass-marketing of the record industry at this time. It is possible to get some insight into how Irish politicians engaged with the industry by examining the Dáil records of the era. To protect Ireland's cultural borders, the political parties could have impeded the progress of the record industry by placing restrictions on the importation of gramophone players and records.

Yet by the time of the 1924 Dáil Import Duties debate it was apparent that the international music industry had found loyal advocates amongst domestic politicians. The field of power indicated that it had a vested interest in the field of cultural production. Major Cooper, representing Dublin, was an early adopter of the new technology. He had even commissioned one London firm to produce Irish language recordings. Naturally he argued that the government should forego tariff revenue to facilitate the entry of gramophone records.

Major Cooper, whose occupation was listed as land-owner, stated his case based on paternalistic, personal and cultural grounds. In the context of national welfare, he described gramophone records as 'a great boon in the more lonely parts of the country', providing comfort for 'people whose lives were more or less monotonous'. He argued that the elimination of taxes on them would contribute to a 'contented population'. To him, 'these little petty duties are rather injurious to the State, because they create constant exasperation and enemies against the Government' (Cooper, 1924, *Dáil Éireann*).

Other politicians also represented gramophone records in the Irish parliament in terms of education and national identity. The possibility of being educated by listening to recordings of John McCormack was advanced as an argument against the taxation of imported music product by Mr John Daly, a vintner and baker by profession, and an Independent Labour TD for Cork. He also advanced the often repeated essentialist idea that 'the Irish are a musical people'; in addition he invoked the rural-based discourse and the value of gramophone records for education and exposing Irish listeners to other cultures:

> For instance, take the gramophone in a country house. I hold it is a source of education to the youth of that house. They can listen to John McCormack or they can be talking Scotch to Harry Lauder if they like (Daly, 1925, *Dáil Éireann*).

The Dáil advocacy came as the gramophone was enjoying business and consumer support in the country. In 1928 The Irish Gramophone Dealers' Association (IGDA) presented a 'performance' of gramophone records at Dublin's Theatre Royal (*Sunday Independent*, 'In the Realm of Records', 9 September 1928). By then, the market was sufficiently developed for the Harris firm, with three branches in Dublin, to claim to be 'Ireland's Oldest Gramophone Specialists' (*Sunday Independent*, 'In the realm of records', 9 September 1929), and in 1931 for the O'Hanrahans' firm in Phibsboro, Dublin, to advertise itself as 'Indisputably the foremost gramophone specialists in Ireland' (*Irish Independent*, 1 January 1931). It is notable that even as Irish politicians were emphasising the benefits of the gramophone industry to 'country houses' and the 'lonely parts of the country', the gate-keepers of the Irish record retail industry were almost exclusively based in Dublin. Of the 12 members of the IGDA identified in the 1927 advertising campaign, 11 were based in the capital city (*Sunday Independent*, 'Irish Gramophone Trade Association', 2 October 1927).

To understand why some Irish politicians represented the gramophone industry as desirable for the young as well as for Irish people with 'monotonous lives' or those in 'the more lonely parts of the country', I want to examine some features of the industry at this time when radio and gramophones were gaining market penetration rapidly and globally.

The dramatic effect of the recording industry on domestic culture derived from the speed and success of the new technology. The overseas expansion of the early recording firms followed a pattern identified by Dave Laing. He argued that European and US manufacturing industries developed geographically in accordance with 'the regional empires or regional sphere of influence' of the world's major national powers (2013: 13). Thus industrial concentration and established trade-routes equipped the gramophone firms for rapid global prominence. In additional, the 1901 'cartel' agreement between the Gramophone Company in Britain and the Victor firm in the US effectively reduced competition by dividing the world market into separate 'spheres of influence' (Laing, 2013: 33). For any country, and in Ireland's case, one with a complicated relationship to these major powers, the impact was sudden and comprehensive.

Both radio and gramophone records were achieving landmarks in demonstrating their global reach at this time. Robert W. Witkin (2003: 121) identifies the English performance by Dame Nellie Melba on 15 June 1920 as the defining moment that 'proved that radio could be successful'. She sang in French, Italian and English, in the first broadcast to be

transmitted to both sides of the Atlantic simultaneously. This global success was not a fluke. Read and Welch (1959) provided striking evidence of the resources deployed by the major radio firms. In 1924 the biggest of the radio firms, Victor, spent $5 million on advertising. This was the largest single advertising budget of any American corporation (1959: 216).

While McCormack was Ireland's greatest commercial success in the industry, there was plenty of other gramophone activity by the Irish abroad. Between 1899 and 1942 approximately 40 companies released recordings of Irish music in the US. Tim Brooks (1978, 1979, 2002) vividly illustrates the Irish content in American recordings during the industry's early years; however, it should be noted that almost three quarters of these were on three major labels: Columbia with 40 per cent; Decca with 18 per cent; Victor with 16 per cent (Dillane, 2002: 114). The amount of material recorded in the US and the underdeveloped music industry in Ireland makes it difficult to argue with Méabh Ní Fhuartháin's (1993) assessment that the major developments in the field of Irish music during the first half of the 20th century occurred in the US.

However, in terms of content, Aileen Dillane (2002) concludes that 'Most early recordings of "Irish" music had little to do with traditional Irish dance music practices' (2002: 111). Irish music was just one, albeit an initially substantial, repertoire category in the marketing-driven, profit-oriented recording industry. In this context it was shaped by commercial considerations rather than any consistent desire to 'preserve' Irish music. Irish cultural interest groups, powerful as they may have been domestically, lacked the ability to steer the global representation of Irish culture. In fact, the impact of the gramophone and overseas recordings on Ireland was striking, although as both Hillary Bracefield (1998) and Fintan Vallely (2008) concluded, this was not always positive.

> This device froze performances in a mass-reproducible, durable, saleable plastic, and for such limited leisure time as people had, it brought other music 'live', so to speak, into less-well-off homes after the opening 1900s, and reaching out to all parts of the island by the 1930s, with the availability of cheap phonographs and emigrants' money (Vallely, 2008: 123–124).

The gramophone was a device for learning and appreciating Irish music even as it diverted people from the sounds of traditional music-making by providing them with the novelty of entertainment for entertainment's sake. If gramophone records 'froze' performances and led to standardisation because musicians copied the Irish-American recordings this also

had a 'galvanising effect on the development of Irish traditional music in Ireland itself' (Bracefield, 1998: 34) due to lack of locally recorded music. The format of the 78 records, which limited content to three minutes, shaped Irish music-making. Musicians learning tunes and songs from the records adopted the style their heard.

In the long run, it was the commercial logic of the industry's major labels that predominantly dictated what Irish music would be recorded and demand appeared to ebb as the novelty wore off. As O'Connell (2013) documented, the 1920s peak production of 'ethnic' recordings, including Irish ones, was never repeated; by the 1940s the majors had ceased issuing 'Irish' records completely and the only remaining small firm in the field, Celtic Records, failed to secure a long-term business model.

One small independent label, O'Byrne-DeWitt, in New York was notable. Atypically for the era and the industry, the founder was a woman. Ellen O'Byrne was born circa 1875 in county Leitrim and emigrated aged 15. In New York she married a Dutch immigrant, Justus De Witt. Together they opened a shop in Manhattan 'despite initial protests from the companies involved' (1993: 55), the objections apparently stemming from the prominence of a woman in the venture. While Justus maintained the accounts, Ellen successfully 'explored new and enterprising avenues' (1993: 55) for the business. The shop sold musical instruments; accordions were a prominent item, and the new cylinder recordings of music also found space on the shelves. According to Susan Gedutis (2005), O'Byrne-DeWitt 'may be credited singlehandedly with founding the Irish recording industry' (p. 149).

Certainly the entrepreneurial activities of Byrne-DeWitt proved that small companies could find a niche in the recorded music industry. This was particularly significant because she achieved this in New York, a core of music industry activity. Another way in which emigrants from Ireland mattered to the music industry core is illustrated by the legal case that helped to define copyright law in the US. The case was taken by the Irish-born musician, Victor Herbert, against an Irish restaurant in New York whose orchestra played his music in their dining room (Pollock, 2014: 14–16). The restauranteurs, members of the Shanley family who had emigrated from Leitrim, were judged to be benefiting from the provision of music. They, and every other restaurant that included music, were from then on legally obliged to pay fees to the song owners. It is worth noting that one of the Shanley restaurants was owned by a female entrepreneur, the widow of one of the Shanley brothers.

It was reported that her premises grossed $500 per day in 1905 (*New York Times*, 7 November 1905).

This indicates how even in the early 20th century, Irish entrepreneurs were successfully competing at the core of the music industry. As Rose Shanley and Ellen O'Byrne proved, female business-owners were also active. While this may be credited to the more progressive view of entrepreneurship in the US compared with Ireland, there were also female entrepreneurs active in the domestic industry at this time.

If the Dublin live music industry was underdeveloped, it would have been even more barren without the activities of women entrepreneurs. Annie Horniman was one and although she had the greatest impact on theatre, her work also provided opportunities and exposure for some musicians. Horniman was a member of the Quaker family, whose innovation was introducing tea in sealed packages to the British market (Fromer, 2008: 316). In Dublin, she, an 'ardent feminist and patron of the arts' (O'Connor, 2012), played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Irish National Theatre, The Abbey, by funding a building for the group for its first six years (*Irish Examiner*, 14 March 1930). In addition she funded and worked behind the scenes on Irish plays in Britain, including the London debut of works by Yeats and Shaw (O'Connor, 2012).

According to a later press report, one tour arranged and funded by Horniman resulted in a financial loss, although:

> ...something good was gained. England learned that Ireland possessed valuable folk music. Mr Arthur Darley, a violinist who had travelled through Ireland collecting from every fiddler the precious traditional airs handed down through generations, played his Irish tunes, and in such cultured places as Oxford, Cambridge and Edinburgh... and many expressed their delight in so rare a treat (Henderson, *Sunday Independent*, 15 October 1922).

Another female entrepreneur who was active directly in Ireland's live music industry was Mrs Page Thrower, who presented concerts at Dublin's Rotunda (*Freeman's Journal*, 13 March 1901) during the early 1900s. Sadly, her activities were cut short by her death, which occurred shortly after notices of her concerts began appearing in Irish newspapers. It was noted at the time of her death that she had been planning to establish a concert agency for booking artists in Irish halls (*The Irish Times*, 18 January 1902).

The Irish market appeared to lack any such organisation according to the recollections of one of Britain's most active concert promoters, Wilfred Stephenson (2000). In his account, he had received assurances from a 'certain titled lady' that she would underwrite any losses during a return visit by the Hallé Orchestra in 1926. The concerts failed to break even and he never recouped his investment:

> This rather shook my faith in the Irish and I vowed henceforth to steer clear of Dublin. I recall Gerald Cumberland's words: 'I put mankind into three categories, people you can trust, people you cannot trust – and the Irish!'(Stephenson, 2000: 59).

This appears to confirm the under-developed nature of the live music industry in Ireland at this time. In terms of how live music scenes are encouraged and developed it certainly indicates that some significant events during this time derived from approaches that could be termed not-for-profit or cultural patronage. At times these two worlds, the professional and the 'cultural patronage', did not interact smoothly.

Conclusion

From the early history I have presented here, it can be concluded that the Irish power groups initially welcomed the global gramophone industry that was marketing John McCormack to a global audience. This was consistent with the Cumann na nGaedheal laissez-faire approach to enterprise (Ferriter, 2005: 321). Yet the early activity also reinforces the view that the Irish music industry was not just born global, but also born dependent.

At an industry level, rapid advances in the recording, manufacture, marketing and distribution of recorded music took place. In practice, and of great relevance to Ireland, these industrial advances often enabled mass-market representations of national identity for individual artists such as John McCormack. In his case, this benefited the 'sacral nationalist' Irish Catholic lobby group.

The early development of the mass-produced gramophone industry occurred at a time of continuing high emigration from Ireland. This sustained pattern meant that a large Irish population existed in the US and members of this diaspora interacted with the music industry in a number of ways, as musicians and entrepreneurs, including music shop and record label owners, as well as proprietors of restaurants where music was performed.

These individuals operated simultaneously in the Irish music industry and the global music industry. This indicates that, in Ireland's case, the simple core-to-periphery cultural transmission model was complex rather than unqualifiedly uni-directional.

That large Irish population in the US had earlier proved to be eager consumers of Thomas Moore's works and they were similarly supportive of McCormack. Even in the field of traditional music, it was US-based firms who supplied many of the most influential gramophone records for the Irish, both at home and abroad.

This core-to-periphery model, where the core is seen as a standardising force, was also challenged by music entrepreneurs in Ireland who appeared to be 'cultural patrons' rather than part of a for-profit music industry economy. In Ireland, these 'cultural patrons' combined with family, friends, educators and members of the clergy to form a supportive network. This enabled artists, McCormack in this case, to develop the skills and abilities that eventually made them attractive to the for-profit commercial music industry. In a sense he had crossed a border from the supportive not-for-profit local environment to the for-profit music industry with its centralised major firms. The way in which Irish popular music acts drew from their respective and unique supportive networks continued to be a factor in the development of significant Irish acts in the coming decades.

Chapter 3: 1930s

How the 'old-new' ideological wars influenced Ireland's music culture

In the 1930s, as nation-building gathered force, the Irish government's laissez-faire policies came under scrutiny. As power groups in Irish society fought for position and attempted to define Irish culture it was inevitable that music was frequently drawn into volatile debates. These debates took place against a backdrop of divergent opinions about both the economic and cultural directions for the new Free State. Church, State, cultural and commercial power groups competed and, at times combined, with various motives, to influence the field of music production. I want to highlight how the music industry faced two almost diametrically-opposed strategies by the major Irish power groups. On the one hand, mass-produced music, radio broadcasting and gramophone records were welcomed. On the other, the culture of live dancing was treated with the most intense scrutiny by the same power groups. I want to explore some of the reasons for this dual approach. In addition, because the power groups that tried to restrict dancing initially appeared unified and dominant, I examine how these forces were challenged.

In many respects, Fianna Fáil's victory in the 1932 general election defined the Free State's political landscape for the next eight decades. The party ascended to power and dominated Irish governments by maintaining an electoral percentage above 40 per cent until the 1990s. A determination to distinguish Ireland culturally and economically from its colonial past marked the party's early rhetoric.

Fianna Fáil's policy of protectionism has to be placed in both international and domestic contexts. The 1929 global economic crisis, precipitated by the Wall Street stock market crash, resulted in many Western countries adopting protectionist trade policies. As one of the figures behind Ireland's economic recovery in the 1950s, T. K. Whitaker, subsequently wrote: 'protectionism was not an Irish aberration' (2006: 5). However, a number of factors were distinctive about the Irish situation, one of which was its dependence on Britain, its largest trading partner, with whom it shared a currency. An Economic War from 1933 to 1938 between the two nations drastically affected Ireland's exports. This compounded an economically disastrous start to the decade by the new Free State which had suffered a fall in exports of 25 per cent between 1930 and 1931 (Lee, 1995: 190). Despite this, and perhaps partially because of it, the rhetoric of self-sufficiency prevailed.

In Lee's appraisal of the decade, the economically turbulent early 1930s were a less than ideal time to embark on a combination of protectionism and a radical process of decentralised industrialisation (1995: 190). The situation was compounded by the lack of planning or procurement of relevant economic data. Lee identified another fundamental failing: policy was undertaken without sufficient relevant data. In addition, events initiated by the government, such as the withholding of land annuities from Britain, had unforeseen results.

Seán Lemass articulated the Fianna Fáil party's isolationist policies with respect to nascent domestic industries: 'Protection is given unless facts coerce us to modify them in some particular way' (Lee, 1995: 188). This perspective was articulated in the Control of Manufactures Act, 1932, which stipulated that to operate in the county, firms must be at least 50 per cent owned by Irish citizens. Exemptions had to be approved by the Minister for Industry and Commerce. The justification advanced by Irish politicians was that Irish industry needed to be nurtured and protected from competition. In reality, according to economic historians including John O'Hagan (1995: 30), the rationale for self-sufficiency was 'intellectual and cultural' rather than economic. Despite this, the desire for cultural protectionism was an important element of the national discourse.

The new political establishment in the Free State was conservative and Catholic. Clerical intervention was both frequent and highly influential in the most significant cultural discourses of the era. The cultural theorist Leo Keohane (2013) described the social and political era from 1922 to the 1970s: 'Various governments during that time collaborated with, or were unduly influenced by, vociferous minorities whose zeal in advocating a sexual Puritanism was rivalled only by their sacral nationalism' (2013: 64). Finola Kennedy, who has explored extensively how religion shaped the Irish cultural landscape, recalled the 1850s observations of Cardinal Newman. To him, the Irish clergy thought: 'Ireland will become again the Isle of Saints, when it has a population of peasants ruled by a patriotic priesthood patriarchally'. In Kennedy's conclusion: 'not much seemed to have changed by the 1920s…' (2011: 134).

Barbara O'Connor (2013) has summarised the prevailing conditions of Ireland at the time as a:

> ...climate of economic protectionism and cultural authoritarianism in which a binary opposition between Irish/traditional and foreign/modern culture was overlaid on to a moral discourse in which Irish/traditional was designated as good and the foreign/modern as evil (O'Connor, 2013: 59).

This conflation of Irish/traditional versus foreign/modern culture is evident in the 1934 uproar about women participating in athletics. Mr P. J. O'Keefe, the Secretary of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), was reported as saying that:

> He had been asked by members of his Council and by people of influence in the country not to allow them [women] into Croke Park. Most of the people interested were clerics, and they knew the attitude of clerics in the country' (*Irish Examiner*, 5 February 1934).

Despite this, the National Athletics and Cycling Association voted at its Congress to encourage more female participation in athletics and to include one women's event at major athletics meetings. The decision was quickly attacked by the President of the Blackrock College boy's school, the Very Reverend Dr McQuaid, who quite pointedly called it 'un-Irish and un-Catholic' (*Irish Press*, 8 February 1934). He threatened to withdraw his students from any events in which girls also participated, 'no matter what attire they may adopt'. Here, clearly Irish and Catholic were being conflated. In addition, McQuaid was to assume a more central role in Irish society when he became the Archbishop of Dublin in 1940.

Because of the prominent and influential cultural role of the clergy in Irish culture, it is important to appreciate not just what they did, but who they were. Kennedy (2011) argues that in the 1920s and 1930s the clergy were, literally, *parochial*; they even distrusted devout lay groups, including the Legion of Mary. Some of this insularity may have stemmed from positional and status anxiety: during the 1920s there were more priests in Ireland than there were vacancies for them. Some of the recently ordained priests had to be dispatched to Britain until there was room for them at home (Kennedy, 2011: 135). To Kennedy, amongst Dublin's plentiful poor, these clergy represented an 'educated caste' (Kennedy, 2011: 134). Although generally not considered in discussions of the primacy of the clergy in early 20th century Ireland, to me this superior education is relevant to how

popular music was seen and engaged with by the hierarchy. In fact, Bourdieu's conclusion that European 'intellectual and artistic life has progressively freed itself from aristocratic and ecclesiastical tutelage' was far from true in Ireland during this time (2003:112). Here, the clergy evidently possessed 'cultural' as well as 'symbolic' capital; the former includes 'forms of cultural knowledge, competences or dispositions', while the latter includes 'accumulated prestige, celebrity capital' (Bourdieu, 2003: 7).

The impact of clerical influence on cinema, literature and public dancing has been well documented. Censorial interventions in these fields have been identified and placed in context by, amongst others, Martin McLoone (2008) for cinema, Donal Ó'Drisceoil (1996) for literature and both Helen Brennan (2001) and Barbara O'Connor (2013) for dancing. One aspect of cultural reception, which I argue had a lasting and significant impact on the Free State's culture, has received far less scholarly attention. The Irish power groups' response to recorded music in the early Free State has been under-theorised. Contrary to the establishment's concern and successful intervention in the fields of cinema, literature and dancing, the recorded music industry was not subject to the same level of censorship or concern. Instead it was embraced and represented as a vital element of nation building, despite the foreign ownership of the major producers.

Without wanting to travel too far down a well-trodden path, I also wish to revisit the 1930s discourse involving the Catholic Church and dancing. In particular, I want to draw attention to how the Church positioned the *commercialisation* of dancing as problematic. They condemned dance halls not just because of the type of entertainment that was provided but also because of the type of *commercial* activity involved. Their apparent concern was not just the dancing, but the people who profited from it. This reinforces Tom Inglis's (1998) conclusion that the Church in Ireland influenced the 'type of economy that was developed and the way business was conducted' (1998: 65).

This reluctance to embrace entrepreneurship was evident both in the era's political and cultural rhetoric, as well in major policy decisions. In terms of state policy, the Trade War with Britain and the rhetoric of 'self-sufficiency' had significant consequences for the emerging nation and the development of the music industry. The mechanics of this isolation included import tariffs as high as 45 per cent in 1936, the year represented as the apex of the Trade War (O'Hagan, 1995: 30). At this time the Church represented music-related immorality as a threat to values; their ability to convert religious issues into

legislative instruments resulted in the Dance Halls Act of 1935. Under the terms of the Act, public dancing was confined to venues which were approved by local courts. Licences to hold dances were subject to conditions including 'the character and the financial and other circumstances of the applicant' (Dance Halls Act, 1935). The clergy also participated in a volatile debate over balancing cultural preservation with international media trends. The anti-jazz movement during the decade was one front on which this campaign was waged.

Victory for Britain's Gramophone Co: The Irish Government welcomes the record factory to Ireland

J. J. Lee argues that de Valera's founding of his own newspaper, the *Irish Press*, in 1931 provided a publication that 'continued to bestow vicarious papal benediction on Fianna Fail's economic programme' (1995: 177). The paper, whose circulation was over 100,000 by 1933 (Lee, 1995: 177), also provided a widely-read publication in which de Valera's views on Irish culture could be articulated and propagated. Music was naturally an element of Fianna Fáil's cultural vision; from my examination of the earliest issues of the newspaper, I want to illustrate how Irish music, the gramophone and the topical struggle between national and foreign culture were represented.

In its first week of publication, the *Irish Press* argued that the Irish 'produced the greatest folk-music in Europe' and welcomed the prospect of Carl Hardeback initiating an Irish national school of music. His apparent aim was to find a sympathetic way of somehow combining Ireland's 'ancient music of such artistic beauty... [and] all the new-old elements that are permeating contemporary music throughout Europe' (Grainne, *Irish Press*, 8 September 1931). In the context of Ireland's cultural borders, here it was apparent that European influences were acceptable; presumably this was because they were not 'British' and were 'high-culture'. The policing of the borders of Irish culture was clearly subjective and the paper continued to validate the music activities that supported its world-view.

Also on 8 September 1931, the newspaper provided coverage to one musician's attempt to 'do for Irish music what the Abbey has done for Irish drama' by setting up a 42 musician Irish orchestra. Once again, this was mirroring the standards of European classical music. This would bring what the paper explicitly described as a 'cultural benefit' to the country, which, it stated, lacked any significant venue where 'one could take a visitor to hear Irish

music'. Cultural life was in fact represented as a battle between live and recorded music. The musician, Mr Schofield of Dundrum, County Dublin argued:

> If the love for good music was not preserved for the present generation he feared that 'canned' music would oust it forever (Grainne, *Irish Press*, 8 September 1931).

This battle between live music and reproduced music recordings was revisited during the second week of the paper's publication. Here, the apparent decline of a national musical emblem was documented. A teacher at the Royal Irish Academy of Music described how only three students had enrolled to learn the harp in 1931, an improvement of three from the previous year. She placed local music making in historical and national context:

> Time was when the harp figured conspicuously at 'at homes,' but its place has now been taken by the gramophone. The gramophone, however, does not receive a responsive audience, and it is not an uncommon thing to find gramophone music a favourable background for conversation. The consequence is that people do not sit and listen to good music. Their taste has been allowed in many cases to fall to a standard set by foreigners (*Irish Press*, 15 September 1931).

This was very explicit rhetoric; the passive consumption of music led to local tastes sinking to standards 'set by foreigners' and was undermining native music making. This representation was reinforced by another article in the same week. Here the question was asked in the headline: 'Why No Modern Music?' This argued that current accounts of music, and not only by English authors, 'have a humiliating way of either entirely ignoring Ireland, or else dismissing us in a few brief words as an unimportant province of England' (G.O'B. *Irish Press*, 15 September 1931). The author stated that Irish music was alive and vibrant, but neglected, and he recalled hearing high quality tin-whistle playing in rural Kerry. He urged a cultural reawakening with 'Ireland taking her rightful place amongst the musical nations'.

Yet if the attitude in the nationalist media was predominantly hostile to the gramophone and the mechanised reproduction of music, it was not universally so. In any event, the international recorded music industry had a tactic for deflecting some of the local criticism. The *Irish Press* also reported in its first fortnight on a pedagogical initiative by one record company. The paper announced that 'Mrs. Henry of the Education department of the Gramophone Co.' was giving a series of lectures on music appreciation. She invited Irish

educators to the first of these, in the Teacher's Club in Dublin. The lecture featured 'the assistance of the gramophone' (*Irish Press*, 14 September 1931). This indicated that the battle over the acceptance of the gramophone, depicted by some *Irish Press* articles as an assault on native culture, would not be straightforward. If, as the harp teacher at the Royal Academy of Music asserted, the gramophone was usurping the playing of music on instruments and reducing music appreciation in Ireland to 'a standard set by foreigners' (*Irish Press*, 15 September 1931) the gramophone industry had an effective way to counter this by demonstrating how the gramophone could assist in the sacral nationalist project.

The huge global popularity of John McCormack in the 1930s proved how the gramophone industry could assist in reinforcing the 'Irish Catholic' national identity. The obituaries which accompanied his death in 1945 demonstrate how McCormack was acclaimed not just for his singing talent but for his dedication to both Ireland and the Catholic Church. It is notable that these accounts provided details of both his commercial success with a major label, as well as the nurturing local environment which facilitated his early music making. As *The Irish Times* noted, McCormack was 'reported to have made more money than any other singer' with peak annual gramophone sales of 1.25 million and US concert tours yielding £70,000 (*The Irish Times*, 'Death of Count McCormack', 17 September 1945). To prepare him for this professional career, his friends and supporters had 'organised a number of concerts with the object of getting funds to enable him to take a course of instruction in Italy' (*The Irish Times*, 'John Count McCormack Dead', 17 September 1945).

Yet it was McCormack's services to Ireland and the Church that stood out in his obituaries. The *Irish Independent* wrote how he was 'the supreme artist of the world on the concert platform' and that he enriched the 'charitable objects for which he so often appeared' (*Irish Independent*, 17 September 1945). Furthermore, 'the world delighted to honour him, and none more than the Catholics, because all his life Count McCormack was a devout and faithful son of the Holy Church'. In recognition of this devoutness and faith, the Church had bestowed many honours on him, including 'Count'. The paper listed some of these Papal titles, which included: in 1921 the Commander of the Order of St Gregory, as well as the Commander of the Holy Sepulchre, in 1928 the title 'Count', in 1931 the Grand Cross of Order of St Gregory, in 1932 the Chamberlain of the Cope and Sword.

The *Irish Press* also drew attention to his religious and national identity, which as Dr McQuaid had asserted, were conflated in 'Irish Catholic'.

> ...Irish singers owe it largely to his success that they are no longer obliged to give their names an Italian or German form in order to secure an engagement... [he] did much to gain the admiration of the musical world for music which previously had rarely been heard except from the lips of the vagrant ballad-singer... [this] aroused the affection of Irish exiles for the homeland... his own career in the United States was an example of which they could feel proud (*Irish Press*, 18 September 1945).

In this representation, McCormack opened the door for Irish singers to compete with Europeans, brought Ireland's previously marginalised ballads to the world, and inspired the 'Ireland abroad'. The fact that this had been achieved thanks to the global reach of the international gramophone industry indicated how that industry could benefit the sacral nationalist lobby.

This representation did not begin with the singer's death. During his lifetime, McCormack was also celebrated for advancing the causes of both Catholicism and Ireland. In 1928 it was written that his Papal honours were awarded in:

> ...recognition of the great singer's eminent position in the world of art, together with his life-long ardent devotion to his faith and to the Holy See, and his munificent generosity to Catholic causes in both the old and in the new world (*Irish Examiner*, 24 February 1928).

While in 1932, in a front-page *Irish Press* story, it was very explicitly demonstrated how the commercial alliance between the His Masters Voice (HMV) Company, a division of the Gramophone Company, and McCormack, could benefit the Church:

> 'Christ the King,' a hymn written by Father Donnelly S.J., of New York, was made into a gramophone record yesterday by Count John McCormack in London. The profits from the sale of the record, made by His Masters Voice Company, are to be devoted to the building fund of the Liverpool Cathedral (*Irish Press*, 28 May 1932).

The Gramophone Co.'s local tactical engagement with the Irish market had long-lasting and profound consequences. The firm's 1930s activities are relevant when they are placed in the context of the 'domestic versus foreign' and 'active Irish music makers versus

foreign arbiters of taste' debates in the *Irish Press*. They are even more dramatic when placed in the context of Fianna Fáil's stated cultural and economic rhetoric of self-sufficiency. The profitable alliance between the firm and McCormack helps to address the question: How did an English firm gain a monopoly on domestic gramophone record manufacture that lasted for several decades?

The decision to welcome the British firm to Ireland should be placed in the overall context of the recorded music industry at the time. Analysis of archives of the pro-business *Irish Independent* newspaper indicates that the gramophone retailers very rapidly developed into a well organised public trade association capable of staging poplar events in Dublin. By as early as 1927 the Irish Gramophone Trade Association (IGTA) had been formed and was actively lobbying on behalf of their collective interests.

In October 1927, the IGTA possessed enough resources to take a full page advertisement in the *Sunday Independent* newspaper. Here the virtues of the gramophone records were extolled, and their relevance to the local market was emphasised. Gramophone records had 'preserved the voice of Pope Leo XIII' the reader was informed. Ireland's past was recalled and failing to embrace the gramophone appeared futile:

> We would give a lot to listen to the words of Robert Emmet or Daniel O'Connell or Father Mathew, but in future the spoken word will be as familiar as the handwriting of famous men (*Sunday Independent*, 'In the realm of records', 2 October 1927).

Perhaps more importantly, at least from a public relations perspective, the IGTA was also capable of filling Dublin's prestigious Theatre Royal for four 'recitals' of the new gramophone records. The *Sunday Independent* and its daily sister paper, the *Irish Independent*, reported on the four recitals as news stories. The papers drew attention to the 'popularity' of the music events which were presented as public successes: 'The theatre was crowded long before the hour fixed for the opening' (*Sunday Independent*, 2 October 1927); the second recital was 'much appreciated by a crowded audience' (*Irish Independent*, 3 October 1927); the third recital was 'thronged' (*Irish Independent*, 5 October 1927); for the final recital, 'every seat in the Theatre Royal was occupied…' (*Irish Independent*, 6 October 1927).

It should be noted that the fourth recital included Irish music. Here gramophone records of hornpipes and reels were accompanied by Irish dancers on stage. In light of subsequent developments in the marketing of Irish dancing as a stage spectacle, this 1927 combination of pre-recorded music and native dancing presented dancing as a spectator rather than a participatory activity.

The idea of an audience sitting listening to gramophone records in a large public theatre was expanded on and enhanced in the following year, 1928. For that year's 'Gramophone Week' five performances were provided in the Theatre Royal. On this occasion the IGTA took out another full-page advertisement in the *Sunday Independent* and this was accompanied by celebratory reviews in the paper's news section (*Sunday Independent*, 16 September 1928). From the reviews it was apparent that the industry gramophone recitals were getting more sophisticated and were a site where nationalist recordings were performed. The *Independent* reported how the 'performance' included two machines as well as 'stage-lighting and atmosphere'. While the works of continental composers including Bizet were performed, special attention was drawn to the playing of 'the record "O'Donnell Abu" and then "The Soldiers Song"' (*Sunday Independent*, 16 September 1928). The latter had been recently adopted as the Irish national anthem.

In the following year, in an indication of increasing commercial activity, the IGTA doubled the size of its advertisement in the *Sunday Independent* to two full pages. The development of the industry, and its desire to reinforce its Irish nationalist credentials, can be seen in these pages; McHugh's shop in Dublin claimed to have 25,000 records in stock, while Parlophone boasted that 'now you can hear your own Irish friends playing and singing your favourite Irish songs' (*Sunday Independent*, 'In the realm of records', 2 October, 1927). While international firms like Parlophone were representing their commercial product as culturally relevant to Ireland, the IGTA membership also included prominent nationalists. In fact by the time that the Gramophone Co. began to engage with the Irish Government about the feasibility of opening an Irish base of operation, Martin Walton was identified in the Irish media speaking on behalf of the IGTA (*Irish Independent*, 13 May 1932). Walton had been imprisoned by the British after the 1916 Rising and founded a band at the internment camp using music instruments donated by the Red Cross. After his release he opened the Walton's music shop which sold instruments and records and later founded the record label, Glenside, which released Irish nationalist material (*Irish Press*, 23 May 1981).

For the Gramophone Company the benefits of an Irish operation were obvious. I want to examine these briefly before addressing why the Irish Government also viewed that operation as advantageous. By the mid-1930s the Gramophone Company was very familiar with the Irish market. As early as 1929 it was marketing a special range of Irish themed releases at St Patrick's Day (*The Irish Times*, 2 March 1929). Released on the firm's HMV label, these included songs from Margaret Burke Sheridan, comedy from the Flanagan Brothers and instrumental jigs and reels. The firm was also aware that the ongoing trade disputes between Britain and Ireland could curtail Irish imports of British products at any moment. A tactical solution to this was to set up an Irish base which would be exempt from restrictions including tariffs.

As manufacturer and dealer of radio sets, gramophone players and gramophone records, they were involved with the local market for both hardware (players) and software (records). Two of the firm's representatives were intimately familiar with the Irish market; they had been making regular journeys to the Free State from 1923 promoting the firm's products. They were subsequently tasked with identifying a suitable site for a manufacturing plant in Ireland. According to Aidan O'Hara (1997), one of them, Leslie Thorn, presented Waterford as the best option because it was the 'most strike-free port in Ireland at the time' (O'Hara, 1997: 63). Thorn photographed the potential site and sent the photographs to the decision makers in England. Despite noting a sign on the wall in one of his photographs which read 'Boycott British Goods', the firm decided to proceed with the factory in Ferrybank, Waterford (O'Hara, 1997).

Having an Irish factory exempted the Gramophone Company from the sizeable import duties that their competitors in the music industry now faced. The British firm, according to Thorn 'were afforded every possible assistance by the authorities, which included a protective duty on importations' (O'Hara, 1997: 63). The import rate of 33.3 per cent on gramophone records made the Gramophone Co.'s competitive advantage substantial.

For the Irish Government the advantages may not initially have been so clear. That said, as my analysis of the 1920s has indicated, there was support from some of Ireland's power groups for gramophone records with their potential for education, culture and nation building. The 1920s paternalistic argument in the Dáil had also continued into the 1930s. In a debate on the Finance Bill 1932, Ernest Blythe sought to have gramophone records

exempted from the 33.3 per cent import duty. He argued: 'Many people have no type of musical instrument except these records and they are found in the poorest households' (Blythe, 1932, *Dáil Eireann*). Mrs Collins-O'Driscoll added: 'in some of the poorest houses the people save their pennies in order to purchase gramophone records. It would be inflicting a great hardship on them to tax records' (Collins-O'Driscoll, 1932, *Seanad Eireann*). It should be noted that even while the Royal Irish Academy of Music harp teacher represented the gramophone industry as 'lowering Irish music taste', Irish politicians were endorsing the industry.

Despite the arguments, for the time being, the tax remained. Yet, these debates demonstrated that public support from Irish politicians for gramophone records was not diminishing. While the gramophone discourse itself was political, the records themselves were shortly being used for political purposes. For example, in 1933 *The Irish Times* reported how an election-eve Fianna Fáil marching band was disrupted by Irish music recordings broadcast from Cumann na Gaedheal offices. The paper described how the band was drowned out by a 'loud speaker… giving forth a jig' from a gramophone record (*The Irish Times*, 24 January 1933).

In reality, the Control of Manufactures Act proved porous in its application and the Gramophone Company was granted an exemption from the Act in 1936. This was despite 1936 being described in hindsight by the economist Whitaker (2006) as the 'high-water mark of protection'. However, this accommodation is consistent with the economist John O'Hagan's assertion that 'in practice exceptions were usually granted on request' (1995: 30–31). While this may be true, the Act continued to present practical difficulties to business start-ups for the next twenty-six years until it was abolished in 1962. As I will highlight in the case of the Jewish Singer brothers in the 1950s, entrepreneurs who were not born in Ireland and who lacked the cultural and social capital to gain exemptions from the Act, were at a severe disadvantage.

The Irish Government's decision to welcome the Gramophone Co. was subsequently co-opted into political debates about Irish industry and sophistication and the accommodation of the British firm was transformed into a nationalist success narrative. According to the *Irish Press*, the firm 'intended to employ only Irish nationals' (*Irish Press*, 30 June 1936). In addition, the Fianna Fáil newspaper made claims about the firm's potential benefits to the Free State's industrial competitiveness:

> The establishment [of the factory] places the Free State in as favourable a position as any country in the world, so far as scientific developments in the future are concerned, whether in the field of wireless or television (*Irish Press*, 30 June 1936).

By 1937 it was reported that the Ferrybank factory employed 90 people; significantly, its output was also being praised by the media for its service to Ireland. *The Irish Times* suggested that the firm should be 'congratulated on the steady increase in their output from the Waterford factory, and especially on their policy of putting before the public in this country records by *native* artists' (emphasis added) (*The Irish Times*, 30 November 1937). The firm's prime objective was, according to the paper, to 'meet as completely as possible the demand which has been found to exist all over the country for records of a distinctively Irish and national character' (*The Irish Times*, 3 May 1937). The company was involved in cultural preservation, according to the paper, providing: 'a chance to capture and place on record for future generations all that is best in the art of these old musicians and storytellers' (*The Irish Times*, 3 May 1937).

Two distinctive aspects of the music industries: the *record* industry (artist development, repertoire selection, marketing and manufacture) and the *recording* industry (studios) can be seen overlapping in the Irish case. While the record industry was developing quickly and Irish acts were being recorded, often in London, and marketed, the recording industry at this time was under-developed.

Consistent with Bourdieu and Becker's conclusions about of the importance of behind-the-scenes cultural intermediaries, O'Hara's (1997) account acknowledges the role played by a local journalist. According to O'Hara, Jimmy Kitchen, editor of *The Irish Radio News*, recommended a singer to the newly established Gramophone Co. On behalf of the firm, Leslie Thorn went to see the singer, Delia Murphy, perform in Jury's Hotel, Dublin and decided to record her for the label (1997: 64). Knowing that Ireland lacked suitable domestic studios, he approached Dr T. J. Kiernan, then Director of Broadcasting at the state radio station, Radio Éireann, and requested permission to use the station's studios for the recording session (1997: 65). Kiernan, who had been appointed Director of Broadcasting at the national radio station in 1935 and was also Delia Murphy's husband, consented to the request. The combination of Radio Éireann and the Gramophone Co. brought Murphy to national prominence. As I will document in the next chapter on the

1940s, she became arguably the first home-based music 'star' whose career was developed by an Irish-based, although not Irish-owned, recording firm. First, I want to examine how the national broadcaster and Dr Kiernan engaged with debates about nation building and the values of 'old and new'.

'Its teaching and propaganda purposes are tremendous': Building a nation and challenging tradition with radio

Having examined the way in which the Irish Government engaged with the record industry in the 1930s, I now want to turn my attention to how it engaged with radio broadcasting. Ferriter (2005) argues that the quality of Irish music played on the State broadcaster in the 1930s was low, although he acknowledged that with a staff of 18 and lacking capital and other resources, the station faced an unenviable task (2005: 349). In 1932, the hours of transmission were limited to 30 minutes at lunchtime and five hours in the evening.

I examined the newspaper archives of the 1930s to see how broadcasting was represented to the public. The construction of a new transmission station in Moydrum, Athlone, in 1932 was characterised as a significant advance in Irish broadcasting. Although music was a prominent element in the broadcasting discourse, one of the greatest incentives for the Irish Government to upgrade its radio facilities was the 1932 Eucharistic Congress in Dublin. This event was sacral nationalism personified and included the Papal Count John McCormack, performing 'Ave Maria'. It was an event that McCormack later represented as a highlight of his professional life (*Irish Press*, 14 February 1933). The *Irish Press* also reported how he had made his mansion available for visiting cardinals during the religious event (*Irish Press*, 25 April 1932).

The *Irish Press* described the opening of the Moydrum transmitter as not just a technological accomplishment but an opportunity for Irish culture to flourish. The paper endorsed the transmitter as: 'One of the most important events in European radio broadcasting, and certainly in the growth of modern Ireland'. The cost of the undertaking, stated as £70,000, was cited as a substantial yet worthwhile investment. This, according to the article, would be more than offset by the benefits to the country from its embodiment of 'all the most modern ideas for the perfect transmission of voice and music'. The paper continued:

> It will transmit Irish music and Irish voices, not only to Ireland, but to England and every country west of the Ural mountains. Its teaching and propaganda potentialities are tremendous. Ireland can now, through man's latest and most wonderful discovery, talk to and be listened to by millions of its friends and neighbours (*Irish Press*, 15 December 1932).

Here, the new radio industry technology was represented as a way of empowering the periphery and, in a sense, allowing Ireland to compete internationally. It is worth noting how the *Irish Press* was embracing modernity and technology here and music was a prominent element of this endorsement.

Technological advances empowering music are frequently accompanied by commercial opportunities and the Athlone transmitter was no exception to this. The page on which the article appeared was completed by three advertisements for radio-related companies. The advertisement for United Radio Manufacturers Ltd also emphasised the capacity of Ireland's music and voices to be accessed internationally. Tellingly, however, its appeal to the reader also encouraged embracing radio as a way to receive international transmissions:

> Soon Moydrum's power will spread across the world. Soon Irish songs and Irish voices will be heard wherever radio is heard. Moydrum is Ireland's important step to home entertainment by radio. Let the Stationmaster Three [brand radio] bring you its programmes – and 50 or 60 foreign ones as well (*Irish Press*, 15 December 1932).

The formal opening of the transmitting station in Athlone in February 1933 provided another opportunity to emphasize the possibilities of broadcasting Irish culture internationally. The *Irish Press* featured the launch on its front page beneath headlines including: 'A Choir of a Hundred Million'; 'One of the Oldest Nations Speaks to the World'; 'Ireland's Great Mission'. Clearly radio was being represented as a nation-building technology. The paper recorded how 'the chief feature' of the special opening programme 'was the recital of Irish music by the Studio Orchestra'. Also included, it noted, were four Irish songs sung by the station's Director, Mr Seamus Clandillon.

At the opening ceremony Eamon de Valera, using sacral-national rhetoric, was quoted declaring that 'Ireland's music is of singular beauty' and giving a lengthy exposition on its quality and history. He described the dance tunes of the nation as 'spirited and energetic, in keeping with the temperament of our people'. The music experts, Mr de Valera said, had identified Irish music as 'the most varied and the most poetical in the world'. Included in

his speech were references to Ireland's Christian ethos and his designation of Ireland's 'hope' which was: 'that, true to her own most holiest traditions, she should humbly serve the truth and help, by truth, to save the world' (*Irish Press*, 7 February 1933). His conflation of the national essence with music-based leisure activities mirrored contemporary publications from the Vatican. The Church made its position on youth and leisure explicit in *Vigilanti Cura*, published in 1936 by Pope Pius XI. This edict stressed that a nation could lose its power if its youth were to be involved in pastimes which violated decency or honour (Pius XI, 1936).

At the opening of the transmitter, the Free State's ability to broadcast its music and its voice was represented as an opportunity. At the same time, the threat of contagion from foreign broadcasters was played down. Clearly the convergence of radio technology and the nation-building exercise presented both challenges and possibilities for the Fianna Fáil government. In his history of media in Ireland Christopher Morash (2010) asserts that this new technology, partly because of the speed of its widespread adoption, 'challenged more profoundly than any other before it the very idea of a self-contained national culture' (p. 132). It would be difficult to argue with this assessment; it certainly makes the discourse of 1930s broadcasting an important site for understanding the way in which key decisions about Irish music were made.

One surprise is how in the mid-1930s the state broadcaster, empowered by a domestic monopoly, did not fully acquiesce, or give the impression of acquiescing, to the demands of the Irish-Ireland lobby. It took this stance despite continued calls for the station to be a constituent element of nation building. These calls came from, amongst others, the pro-business *Sunday Independent*, part of the Independent group of newspapers which Christopher Morash characterises as 'the non-party organ of business interests in the country' (2010: 148). The paper's radio correspondent represented his position in an article titled 'The Voice of Ireland: Broadcasting as Means of National Expression'. There he wrote how he had advised the government to call the station 'The Voice of Ireland'. He welcomed the appointment of the new Director, describing him as a man who 'shares my view that the national broadcasting service should be expressive of the nation's genius' (*Sunday Independent*, 4 August 1935).

'...a slight reaction against tradition...': the influence of Dr T.J. Kiernan as Director of Broadcasting

The appointment by Fianna Fáil of Dr T.J. Kiernan as the Director of Broadcasting in 1935 provides an opportunity to reappraise the national radio station. I want to examine the broadcasting discourse in the national newspapers concerning his appointment and activity.

The Irish Times had been openly critical of the station's contribution to Irish cultural life. In March it described the station in a condition of 'moribundity' and noted it lacked money and – more pejoratively an 'understanding of the art of entertainment' (*The Irish Times*, 28 March 1935). The following month it documented how fewer radio licences were held in the Free State than in the six counties of Northern Ireland. Even more damning, it maintained that 'very few people' tuned in to 2RN if their receivers were powerful enough to listen to international stations (*The Irish Times*, 30 April 1935). In 1933, 33,000 households had subscribed to radio, a figure which had only risen to 71,000 by 1935 (*The Irish Times*, 10 September 1935).

Radio itself was celebrated at the September 1935 ninth annual Wireless and Gramophone Exhibition in Dublin, which coincided with the national debate about public dancing and the imposition of the 1935 Dance Halls Act. I will examine this shortly, yet in the meantime it is relevant to note that while dancing was being restricted, often on the grounds of 'native versus foreign' arguments, overseas radio broadcasts were freely accessible to radio owners in Ireland. In addition, relatively few Irish households paid for the radio licences that would have supported domestic broadcasting financially.

This Wireless and Gramophone Exhibition was also an opportunity for entrepreneurs to interact with policy makers. The Minister for Posts and Telegraphs, Mr Boland, in a speech broadcast by 2RN, urged more domestic production of radio and lauded the firms who had begun local manufacturing. Dublin's Lord Mayor claimed that frequent complaints about the State broadcaster from Irish emigrants in Britain had ceased since Dr Kiernan's appointment. Earlier, at a dinner hosted by the Irish Radio Traders' Association, a toast was proposed to 'the State' and Dr Kiernan described Mr Boland as the ideal Minister to work for due to his lack of interference (*The Irish Times*, 10 September 1935).

Dr Kiernan faced a dilemma in attempting to reconcile the opposing viewpoints. One early media report of his appointment in May 1935 represented his proposed approach to music

in the station. In a positive sign for aspiring young musicians it was announced that all first place prize winners in the national Feis Ceoil music competition were to be given a broadcast opportunity. Of concern to cultural preservationists, however was the decision described by the paper: 'to reduce considerably the number of broadcasts by traditional players' (*Irish Press*, 24 May 1935). Dr Kiernan felt that broadcasts of ensemble ceilidhe music would satisfy the demand for traditional music. This did not indicate any lack of interest on Kiernan's part in music; he was later quoted stating that 'radio should be the handmaid of music' (*The Irish Times*, 24 January 1938).

At the end of the year, Dr Kiernan presented a paper analysing the station's progress (*The Irish Times*, 20 December 1935). He celebrated the lack of competition facing the broadcaster while lamenting the low licence numbers. Licences were held by slightly in excess of 4 per cent of Leinster's population and just over 1 per cent in Connacht. These figures must be read in the context of the country's demographics. Families were large, on average Catholics who had married before 1916 had six children (Houghton, 2011: 14) and only one licence was required for each household. That said, the figures are still very low.

Kiernan positioned the station relative to the cultural preservation power group: 'Merely to be traditional was not to be national – certainly not constructively national'. He also characterised the perspective of that group as 'intolerance'. They believed, he felt, that any questioning of music from the Irish tradition was 'a form of national sacrilege'. To his mind: 'a slight reaction against tradition... might be no bad thing' (*The Irish Times*, 20 December 1935). Three years later he was quoted, identifying 'more talk' than 'intelligence or action' from the advocates of more Irish music on the station (*The Irish Times*, 24 January 1938).

In common with some advocates for the new media in the Free State, Kiernan saw the educational possibilities of radio and records. If he was willing to take on the 'traditional music lobby' he was also willing to challenge the myth of rural idealisation. He was quoted:

> The almost complete ignorance of the rural youth was startling in many areas as compared with the ordinary interests of the town dweller. These people had virtually no means of improving their knowledge on subjects of an international application, finance, economics, the arts and literature (*The Irish Times*, 20 December 1935).

In some areas, Kiernan was lauded for his ability to open the station to new voices. For instance, in 1939 the *Sunday Independent* praised the accessibility of the station. It stated: 'There is an impression that one needs influence in order to appear in a broadcast programme. This idea is entirely erroneous'. The paper encouraged amateurs to apply to the station, having concluded that Ireland lacked a 'professional class from which to draw material as exists in other countries' (*Sunday Independent*, 11 June 1939). This is relevant in a country where local community-based variety shows, often with direct clerical participation, became a major feature of the entertainment landscape. I will explore this later in this chapter.

Naturally for radio policy, in a country where conservative cultural entrepreneurs continued to wield significant influence, change was often resisted, unless on *their* terms and under *their* control. The conservatism of Irish radio listeners was identified by Kiernan shortly before the end of his tenure at the station. In a 1938 speech he announced how the broadcaster received no positive audience response to 'new Irish musical compositions' (*The Irish Times*, 24 January 1938).

Kiernan was no maverick acting outside the Fianna Fáil party's standards of acceptable behaviour. His tenure at the national station was succeeded by a diplomatic career with postings to the country's key allies. His importance as a gatekeeper to the Irish music industry was increased because his stewardship of Radio Éireann coincided with the arrival of the Gramophone Co. in Ireland. His alliance with them in making recording facilities available for recording Delia Murphy and his station's subsequent championing of her records represented a breakthrough for local entrepreneurs, even those working for the national radio station. This proved that by engaging with major overseas firms it was possible to record, develop, market and successfully sell large quantities of records by domestic acts.

'...a Commission to define and purify Irish dancing'. Ideological clash at the Feis

My search of the newspaper archives from the 1930s and other accounts of the era, in both music and national histories, do not indicate any opposition to the factory. However, the Irish Government's welcome to the Gramophone Co. in the 1930s and Dr Kiernan's ability to advocate even 'a slight reaction against tradition' did not mean that the arguments about music which drew from the 'old and new' and 'native versus foreign' debates had been

settled. Far from it, the cultural debates about music, which generally focused on dancing, were intense, public and passionate. Before examining some of the sites and arguments of those debates, I want to first document the particular struggle over the 1935 Father Matthew Feis in Dublin.

One means of establishing the values of a group of cultural entrepreneurs is to identify what they stand against. To this end, it is worth examining the public rhetoric attributed to both sets of protagonists in the 1935 Feis dispute. In April of that year the *Irish Press* reported that the Feis, founded in 1908, would not be restricted to dances approved by the Dancing Commission. The Commission, founded in 1930 by the Gaelic League, was active in defining Irish dancing and acceptable practice in the art form. Because the Feis ignored these guidelines, it faced a ban by the Gaelic League. The President of the Feis, the Capuchin priest Fr Micheál,[2] was quoted referring to the Coisde Gnótha, the committee who guided the League: 'It is out of touch with the greater part of our people' (*Irish Press*, 18 April 1935).

The following day, the newspaper published the response of the Gaelic League, as well as additional comments from Fr Micheál. Under the pen-name Cú Uladh, translated as 'The Hound of Ulster' in English, a name with mythic significance in Ireland, the President of the Gaelic League expressed his sentiments about the priest's viewpoint. He called for Fr Micheál to be acknowledged as a 'champion of this foreign dancing':

> The Gaelic League some years ago appointed a Commission to define and purify Irish dancing; and it named and recognised expert judges and exponents of what is native Irish dancing... It strikes me as funny that Fr Micheál should stand out as a champion of this foreign dancing. Now that the issue is raised we Gaelic Leaguers will not shirk it. We invite the people of Dublin and of Ireland to make their choice and take their sides as between the native article and the product of the foreigner... We have no room in the Ireland of today for 'Tadhg a' dá thaoibh'[3] (*Irish Press*, 'Gaelic League and Father Mathew Feis', 19 April 1935).

[2] Father Micheál only used his first name.
[3] The English translation of this expression is 'taking both sides'; perhaps 'fence-sitter' captures its meaning. Either way, it was evident that in this particular select club there was no room for divergent opinions.

Another individual contributing to the debate was Séan Og O'Céallaigh, from Connradh na Gaedhilge. He was quoted as saying:

> ...we cannot sincerely work with those who, while professing adherence to Gaelic ideals, would tolerate even the dregs of an insidious inter-nationalism and the alien pitfalls laid by the enemy within our gates. Hence have we withdrawn our support, after many years of co-operation, from this retrograde institution [the Feis] (*Irish Press*, 'Retrograde institution', 19 April 1935).

On the other side, Fr Micheál was also quoted as follows:

> A Gaelic Leaguer who dances an international waltz or a Spanish tango or a Highland fling, or who looks at a Soccer or Rugby match, is breaking the rules made up by these new and old fossils (*Irish Press*, 'Gaelic League and Father Matthew Feis', 19 April 1935).

In the *Irish Independent* on the following day, Séan Og O'Céallaigh, was quoted asserting that Fr Micheál was ignoring the committee regulating Irish dancing to accommodate one teacher of 'foreign dancing' (*Irish Independent*, 20 April 1935). The dispute continued the following week. The *Irish Independent* cited Fr Micheál on his endorsement of children learning a multiplicity of dances: 'I don't think that they are in the least less Irish because they are able to do other little dances besides Irish dances'. Another statement attributed to him, which ran counter to the Dancing Commission's policy, was that: 'variety is the spice of life' (*Irish Independent*, 4 April 1935).

On the same day, the *Irish Press* also wrote about Fr Micheál's self-representation as both nationalistic and open to outside culture. While the priest restated his areas of disagreement with the Dancing Commission: 'Even those who looked at other than Irish dances are debarred from Irish dancing classes', he declared his regard for Irish culture and he even encouraged parents of dancers to find Irish-made clothing for them. His nationalist outlook, though, did not prevent him from embracing 'foreign' culture. The newspaper quoted him thus: 'We should be Irish first and last in all things, but as versatile as possible at the same time' (*Irish Press*, 24 April 1935). He later represented the more vigilant guardians of the country's cultural borders:

> They might have imagined that they were the first flower of the earth and the first gem of the sea, but a little reflection showed that they should have a little humility and see that there were some good things in other countries (*Irish Press*, 29 April 1935).

He was quoted as being: …'"all out" for the Irish language, culture and traditions'; at the same time he was 'not so extremely national as to think that Ireland was the best place in the world'. In fact he called for national humility: 'They should promote their own culture without excluding the best in other national cultures' (*Irish Press*, 29 April 1935).

Challenges to the dancing authorities

While it is impossible to know how dancing would have developed if the 'Irish-Ireland' power group had remained unchallenged, it is important to acknowledge that challenges did occur. This is particularly important because historical accounts of the era represent the borders of the field of popular music being drawn and policed by conservative orthodox forces. This has been ably documented by Helen O'Shea (2008) as well as Catherine Foley (2013), who placed the long history of social dancing in context, including details of the 'culturally constructed' reformation during the 1930s (2013: 143). Likewise, Helen Brennan (2001: 39) in her study of the history of dance in Ireland described the meetings of the Dancing Commission, who were the source of Fr Micheál's disputes, as a type of 'cultural court of law'.

The action of Fr Micheál concerning the Fr Mathew Feis indicates that at least some cultural entrepreneurs during the era held positions that were simultaneously both nationalistic and culturally inclusive. Although the nuanced position of individuals like Fr Micheál was depicted as unpatriotic by the extreme members of the Irish-Ireland cultural entrepreneurs, it is important to acknowledge that there was some form of public opposition. Dancing and music-making subsequently moved from feis halls into parochial halls, particularly in the 1940s. There too some clerical supervisors advocated types of music making, including ballet dancing and cowboy songs, which was frowned upon by those who wished for Ireland's cultural borders to be less porous. My research indicates how they continued to be challenged by individuals like Fr Micheál, who depicted the Gaelic League as 'shock troops' determined to 'stop enjoyment' (*Irish Press*, 'Gaelic League and Father Mathew Feis', 19 April 1935) while they engaged with that 'enjoyment' in a sympathetic manner, even when this included 'foreign' culture.

There is no question that the Gaelic League was organised, powerful and shared a similar ethos with other sacral-nationalist organisations. Dancing was only one of their spheres of interest, yet it appears to have been a particularly successful area of activity for them. R. V.

Comerford (1989), who argues that they succeeded in 'gaelicizing Irish nationalism', estimated that approximately 75,000 people were involved in League activities. He wrote that 'under the league's auspices more people learned to dance reels well than learned to speak Irish well' (1989: 35).

If, as Fr Micheál asserted, the Gaelic League were cultural 'shock troops', where was the resistance? From examining the national and local print media of the time, it appears that few were willing to take on the combined forces of the Gaelic League and the 'sacral-national' power groups. The one exception was what appears to be a small group under the leadership of a Professor Graham, a dancing teacher. The many changes in the name of Graham's organisation indicate how he struggled to find a platform from which to air his views on Irish culture. In 1932 the organisation was reported as the Irish Dance Promoters and Musicians' Protection Association (*Irish Independent*, 20 October 1932). At the time the organisation was lobbying against the tax on dancing which had been imposed by the Government. The group took the position that the large tax, 25 per cent of gross, was driving dancing underground including to places where, according to Professor Graham's press coverage, 'the Gardai would have difficulty in discovering' it. Here, Professor Graham claimed that 'the only people who could supply accurate information were his Association who were in touch with most dancing functions' (*Irish Independent*, 24 December 1932).

In 1933, Graham's organisation was referred to by a shorter name Irish Dance Teachers' Association (IDTA). The group continued to advance their claims that they could assist the Government in regulating dance halls. They pointed out the potential fire hazards of some unlicensed dance halls and recommended that dance promoters as well as hall owners should be formally registered (*Irish Independent*, 2 January 1933). Perhaps the groups' most controversial activity was openly opposing Gaelic League policies. According to the *Irish Independent*, the antagonism between the IDTA and the League stemmed from a long-held philosophical difference over the regulation of Irish dancing. It was stated that Professor Graham had first argued with the League 25 years earlier, circa 1908, when in the context of Irish versus foreign dancing debates, he told them 'that it was foolish policy to draw a line of demarcation between dances' (*Irish Independent*, 11 April 1933).

Graham's reason for revisiting this dispute with the League was the recent decision by the Coiste Gnótha to sanction individuals for attending a 'foreign' dance. Under Gaelic League

regulations it was an offence not only to participate in foreign dances but also to watch them. In a pointed statement Graham claimed that more Irish dances took place in Dublin under the British regime than currently took place under the Gaelic League. In other words, under the League's leadership, Irish dancing was being diminished. To the IDTA Irish dancing would be more popular if dancers were not forced to choose between national or foreign formats. The IDTA, with an inclusive approach, wanted them to be able to enjoy both.

Yet their wish was clearly in contravention of the gathering forces that held a conservative nationalist position. The following month, May 1933, this intransigence was reported in the newspapers. The Irish Dancing Commission demanded that some of their members who had taken part in the recent Sligo Feis appear before a committee. There they would have 'to show cause why they should not be suspended' (*Irish Independent*, 2 May 1933); the Sligo Feis had not followed League rules and therefore should have been boycotted by League dancers. When not dictating terms to its own members, the Irish Dancing Commission was apparently lobbying the Government to ban the teaching in schools of 'foreign dances', including 'the Minuet and the Cachucha or other types of folk dancing'. They were also policing the aesthetic borders of Irish dancing: they had announced that the 'correct music for step-dancing is violin with light pianoforte accompaniment' (*Irish Independent*, 2 May 1933).

Graham and the IDTA continued to advocate for an inclusive dancing culture yet they appeared to be marginalised by the effectiveness of the cultural-protection groups. The *Irish Press* reported that one of the IDTA dancing teachers was withdrawing from Ireland and moving to London. It is possible to imagine that the paper's coverage of the group reinforced the idea of their being out-of-step with Irish culture and more suitable to English life. The *Irish Press* wrote that he had been presented with a silver cigarette case by his fellow members of the Irish Dance Teachers' Association whose Anglo-sounding names were given as Madame Rock, Miss Muriel Cott, Miss Peggy Medlar, Miss Corry Hill, Miss Lawrence, Mr R. W. Divine and Mr McGoney (*Irish Press*, 29 July 1933).

It is easy to understand why they objected to another of the Gaelic League's recent rulings. This forced contestants in dancing competitions to successfully pass a Gaelic-language exam. It was reported that the IDTA had not received a reply from the League on their request to remove the ban on dancing teachers who were unable to speak Gaelic (*Irish*

Independent, 2 January 1933). Possibly while still waiting for a response from the League, the Irish Dancing Teacher's Association continued to argue for inclusive dancing. They were reported to claim that 'during the British regime all the GAA clubs in Dublin had half their dancing programmes in Irish dances… at present there was no Irish dancing owing to the Gaelic League's attitude' (*Irish Press*, 17 January 1934).

The IDTA continued to conduct events in Dublin, although it appears that they did not represent any serious challenge to the Gaelic League; in 1935, the IDTA even staged an All-Ireland Amateur Dance Championship featuring the quickstep. According to reports, it attracted 200 spectators and featured 35 couples (*Irish Press*, 21 March 1934). Just before Christmas that year, Professor Graham was advertising both Irish and 'foreign' dance classes and specifically mentioned expertise in the waltz, foxtrot, quickstep, tango, jig, reel and hornpipe (*Irish Press*, 20 December 1934). In 1935 it was reported that the winners of the IDTA national competition would be entered in the World Championships in Blackpool (*Irish Independent*, 10 April 1935). I found no mention in the *Irish Press* of how Ireland fared in this international competition.

As time progressed, it was becoming apparent that confusion reigned about what constituted the culture of 'Irish dances'. In 1935, the same year as the Blackpool Competition, it was reported that one County Meath judge had been making it a legal condition that a quarter of dances at an event should be Irish. When questions were asked about the constitution of these mandated 'Irish' dances a Superintendent McDonagh stated in court:

> There is only one definite rule with regard to Irish dancing, so far as I know, and that is that the participants – men and women – only touch each other in the arms (*Meath Chronicle*, 21 September 1935).

Finally, the Gaelic League's dancing legislators announced that Irish dances were no longer mandatory at government licensed events. The decision in September 1935 was front page news in the *Irish Press* where it was reported that it had been taken unanimously by the Standing Committee of the Irish Dancing Commission as 'detrimental to the interests of Irish dancing' (*Irish Press*, 10 September 1935). The IDTA made a statement agreeing with The Gaelic League, who in effect had finally adopted the Irish Dancing Teacher's Association position. To the IDTA's professional perspective:

> The association felt that such dances would be included simply to get the licence, and would, even if carried out, be executed indifferently (*Irish Independent*, 21 September 1935).

Or course there was no lasting consistent consensus between the two organisations' approaches to the borders of 'Irish dancing'. However, two conclusions may be drawn from the skirmish between the groups. First, the dominant culturally isolationist Gaelic League and other groups were not wholly unchallenged. Second, and just as importantly, as these challenges indicate, their vision for Irish culture was not inclusive. To these sacral-national groups Irish dancing was not an open aspect of culture; it was a case of *their* Irish dancing. They would formulate and authorise its rules, and police what constituted a very visible aspect of Irish national culture.

Brennan (2004: 126) documented how a widespread programme of parish hall construction was initiated in the 1930s and 1940s. This coincided with Church and state suppression of dances in other venues. Yet, just as the Dancing Commission's about-turn over compulsory Irish-only dances indicated, the vigilant control of Irish dancing did not appear to lead to an increase in Irish dancing. Thus it is reasonable to conclude that a major challenge to the Irish-Ireland lobby was internal. They had either lacked the organisational abilities or vision to appeal to the general population.

The 1939 Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis, or party conference, also indicated that legislation so far had been unsuccessful by failing to protect their interpretation of Irish culture. The Monaghan and Kilkenny delegates proposed an amendment to the Dance Halls Act. It, they asserted, had resulted in the commercialisation of dance halls 'which debased their pastimes and culture'. The remedy was to change the law to prevent dances under the auspices of anyone who was not involved in 'the promotion of Gaelic culture' (*Irish Press*, 2 December 1939).

The Fianna Fáil delegates' assertion that dancing legislation had not achieved its objectives must be seen in context; just as Fianna Fáil conflated Irish music with national identity, the Catholic Church conflated Irish music with Irish Catholic identity. The importance of the clergy in the administration of leisure in the country is supported by Keohane's (2013) identification of the era 1922–1970 as a 'particularly conservative one'. His designation, referenced at the start of this chapter, that the Irish Government formed productive tactical

alliances with 'vociferous minorities' who were driven by 'a sexual Puritanism and a sacral nationalism' (2013: 64), inevitably affected the music and dancing industry. As Jim Smyth (1993) argued: 'The Clergy were not against dancing in principle – as long as the dances were Irish… and the supervision was close' (p. 51).

Also inherent in the clerical rhetoric was an implicit anti-commercial argument; 'close supervision' meant financial control of dancing by the Church or its allies. For example the *Connacht Tribune* editorial wondered:

> …is Ireland to lose her pride of place as the home of the most chaste women in the world?' …Dance halls and the pictures with their alien and exotic standards are blamed… [dangers could befall those] who haunt the ensnaring atmosphere of the commercialised dance hall (*Connacht Tribune*, 17 February 1934).

Elsewhere, Fr Devane titled his letter 'Commercialised country dance halls' and wrote of 'those commercialised dance-halls'. The police and Court records give irrefutable testimony to the intimate connection between them and the alarming growth of sexual offences' (Devane, *Irish Independent*, 25 February 1933). The *Irish Press* published the Lenten letter of the Bishop of Ossory:

> The social life which not so long ago formed the central attraction of the home and the family circle of relatives and friends has now been removed to these public places of commercialised, expensive amusement with their attendant evils. These places create artificial expensive tastes in many directions and raise standards of amusement which a poor country and a Catholic country can very well do without' (*Irish Press*, 19 February 1934).

The rhetoric very pointedly questioned the commercial and 'profit-making' aspect of the dance halls. This is very relevant given Inglis's (1998) conclusions how clerical influence actively impeded the development of enterprise in Ireland. He concluded how Ireland suffered a lack of entrepreneurs and individuals taking risks with capital (1998: 76). This can be seen in the press coverage of dancing culture. Sacral-nationalism in Ireland often translated as anti-commercial and the music industry was to be a prime site for this to be expressed and challenged. The *Irish Press* cited the Bishop of Achonry denouncing: 'the commercialised rural dance hall, which was run for profit by individuals, who were therefore supposed to be careless about the class of persons admitted' (*Irish Press*, 9 October 1931). This was not an argument about types of dances; it was an argument

against the types of people who engaged in commerce. Fr Moran of Claremorris was quoted: '...imported customs from England and the Isle of Man, such as the running of dances for private profit should be put down' (*Irish Press*, 18 May 1932). Here commerce is equated with 'foreign'.

The counter-narrative was not as widely reported and was perhaps uncommon. Yet, one revealing article on a legal case acknowledged that there was at least some active opposition to Church control over local dancing. *The Western People* quoted a defendant, under oath in a case in which his hall had been censured by the local clergy. They reported an exchange: 'Is it your suggestion that the priests wanted the hall to commercialise it?' 'Yes.' (*Western People*, 16 September 1933). The defendant further stated that the hall had been used for a number of years without any problems. Disputes had arisen when the parish council had agreed, with the consent of the Bishop, to purchase the hall for £150. However there was: 'no one to get the money out of the bank' when the agreed fee was due. It was only after this failed deal that the clergy began to object to dances.

This appears to indicate that local priests and their allies wished to control halls. One effective way to achieve this was by having a monopoly on local entertainment, even if it was being provided without any trace of immorality elsewhere.

The commercialisation of dancing, I argue, was a defining debate between 'old and new' Ireland in the next three decades and case studies of local music venues can help to identify how entertainment was used to advance or repel notions of modernity and identity. The foundations for these case studies can be laid by analysing newspaper reports of activities in these halls. In light of the 1930s debates about national identity, religion and modernity, I want to examine the newspaper coverage of one iconic rural ballroom. A search of the *Irish Newspaper* database revealed 45 mentions of 'McGivern's Hall' between 1935 and 1955. Collectively, these provide insight into the types of entertainment facilitated in the hall, located a short distance outside the village of Glenfarne, Country Leitrim, the capacity of which was described as over 400 (*Sligo Champion*, 18 March 1950).

In 1934, John McGivern opened a hall in Glenfarne. The hall achieved mythic status as the 'Ballroom of Romance', in part, arguably, because of McGivern's promotional techniques and his apparent aim to 'encourage the (respectable) mingling of the sexes in the ballroom' (O'Connor, 2013: 62). In her study of the culture of dancing in Ireland Barbara O'Connor

(2013) has argued that the hall provides a 'valuable insight into the mutual accommodation between local cultural entrepreneurs… and the local clergy' (2013: 63). O'Connor also draws from McGivern's recollections that his hall was condemned from the altar by a visiting priest, who later withdrew his criticism. This clerical about-turn resulted from what O'Connor concludes was the 'Christian ethos' of McGivern's hall, which was even evident in 'his parting words to the dancers: 'Good night, good luck and God bless you all!' (O'Connor, 2013: 63).

This account also credits McGivern with innovative promotion of the hall which included 'spectacle, gimmickry and showmanship', extensive newspaper advertising and a 'Romantic Interlude' where men were encouraged to ask women to dance (O'Connor, 2013: 62). By analysing the newspaper reports of McGivern's Hall, it appears that these innovations, and even the brief clerical condemnation, belong to the post-1950 period when McGivern changed the hall's name to The Rainbow. Before this, in its first 15 years, the hall benefited sacral nationalist groups, including the GAA and the Church, in various ways. Far from representing a threat to the clergy, McGivern's Hall was in fact a valuable ally to them.

The opening of the venue was announced in the *Anglo-Celt* newspaper, alongside items of local interest including the visit of two TD's and a local priest to a local mine, reports of the wheat harvest, a local death, a whist drive and a bicycle accident. The debut event of the hall was 26 December, a St Stephen's Night Concert, which included music performed by two musicians, as well as two sketches (*Anglo-Celt*, 5 January 1934).

This was not a solely musical event; it was apparently a dance following a local drama presentation. This mixture of entertainments is worth noting in light of the subsequent development of the country's live music industry. My research indicates that the local presentation of multi-entertainment genre 'variety shows' were a very prominent feature of local community life during the 1930s, 1940s and into the 1950s. This Leitrim hall provided cross-genre entertainment and apparently desired cross-political socialising. The paper reported that John McGiven stated on stage that 'there was no politics attached to the hall and that all patrons were assured of civility and courtesy' (*Anglo-Celt*, 5 January 1934).

Why did it matter that these local events were not purely 'dances'? In light of the anxiety expressed by Irish power groups about dancing, it is worth noting that prohibitions on dancing were not prohibitions on singing or performing music. These local variety shows provided communities and the clergy, as I will demonstrate from archive searches, with a means of providing music without dancing. The songs and tunes included in these shows were subject to far fewer, if any at all, anxieties about 'jazz' or 'foreign' music.

If there were any other events held in the hall during 1934, the local newspapers did not record them. The next mention of the hall was in January 1935 when the 'annual' dance in aid of the Glenfarne Drum and Fife Band featured in the *Anglo-Celt*. The band had been formed in the early 1930s, according to newspaper reports and had won first place in the local Feis in 1930 (*Fermanagh Herald*, 23 August 1930). It can be seen how in this case local halls provided performance opportunities for local music makers.

While the hall was nominally non-political, the entertainment at this 1935 event reflected the drive for native culture: it was stated that 'preference was given to Irish dances' (*Anglo-Celt*, 19 January 1935). In March, the last dance before Lent was reviewed. According to reports this included dancing demonstrations as well as the singing of 'good old Irish songs'. Dancing was not apparently confined to the stage as 'people came from distant places to have a good jig before Lent' (*Leitrim Observer*, 9 March 1935). The clerical prohibition on dancing during Lent's 40 days was evidently observed by McGivern. An exemption was made for St Patricks Day, 17 March, and in 1936 a dance on this day took place, although no details were supplied (*Anglo-Celt*, 28 March 1936).

While the hall owner was observing Catholic prohibitions on Lenten dancing, he was also raising funds for the clergy. 'Bazaars' were held in the hall in 1939 and in 1940 (*Anglo-Celt*, 11 March 1939, 20 January 1940). In addition, the hall was used for both GAA meetings and fund-raising dances (*Anglo-Celt*, 15 January 1938; *Leitrim Observer*, 8 October 1938).

In early 1942, McGivern's Hall provided the type of entertainment which cemented the local rural reputation and prestige of the clergy within the community. In this case, at an event to fund raise for a curate's residence, the *Fermanagh Herald* stated that one priest, Rev T. Maguire, was to be 'congratulated on the increasing popularity of the entertainments which he organises' (*Fermanagh Herald*, 14 March 1942). Here the concert

included a children's choir as well as the singing of patriotic songs. In addition the Templeport (Co. Cavan) Dramatic Troupe appeared and was credited with 'upholding a tradition of good acting begun in 1911 by the First Templeport Troupe, which was trained by the late Fr Peter Brady, a parish priest'. According to the paper, Rev Brady had been responsible for constructing halls in two parishes thanks to his fund-raising abilities.

In this case, McGivern's Hall, far from being a threat to the clergy, raised funds for the Church. In addition, it was providing the clergy with repeated opportunities to embed themselves in the local community. These rural halls allowed the Church to fund raise and to participate in entrepreneurial, creative and administrative ways in the provision of entertainment, including music, to local communities.

How cultural protectionists were undermined during the 'jazz debates'

The local, uncontroversial, community activities of the clergy in local halls was one success during set-backs faced by the cultural protectionist lobby during the decade. I want briefly to draw from research of the newspapers of the era to examine how 'jazz' became a less controversial and more widely accepted term in Ireland. I argue that this acceptance undermined the forces who arrayed themselves against it.

In early 1934, the *Irish Press* featured front page reports of government intervention in broadcasting. The article included the headlines: 'Minister's plans for less jazz; censorship right used in past few months; "jungle" music banned'. The newspaper appeared to praise the Minister for removing what was termed 'jungle music' as well as 'crooning' from sponsored programmes. It also appeared to praise his decision to forego the fees paid by the sponsors by thwarting those who 'serve the advance of jazz'. In addition, the newspaper detailed how the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs had personally intervened to prohibit the broadcasting of a 'foreign type of "Good-night song"' (*Irish Press*, 6 January 1934).

Yet this battle between Irish-Ireland and the 'jazz jungle' was more nuanced than it first appears; it certainly was not a case of 'Ireland versus the outside world'. When it suited their purposes, the 'Irish-Ireland sentinels of Christian civilisation' were happy to find common cause with cultural expressions of that 'civilisation' even if it was British or North American.

In my analysis, this reveals how – on a practical level – Ireland's culture of commerce, as underdeveloped as it was, undermined the campaign even as it was being instigated. Newspaper advertisements in 1931 served to make jazz quotidian. It was not only 'everyday' it was representative of youth. Therefore being anti-jazz was similar to being anti-modern and even out-of-touch.

Martin Walton's music shop was advertising 'jazz outfits' along with music instruments in the earliest issues of the *Irish Press* (12 November 1931). Other media also advanced the cause of normalising jazz. Just as it would be in the 1950s for rock and roll, cinema was a potent force in popularising new music styles from abroad. If newspapers based outside Dublin were expected to be critical of 'foreign' music that was not always the case. Even the Cork-based *Irish Examiner* both praised the film, 'King of Jazz' and drew attention to its popularity with local audiences; they wrote that it was 'a brilliant and impressive picture… extensively supported' and it included many song performances (*Irish Examiner*, 27 January 1931). The film had technology on its side. It was reported as the first 'talkie' film shown in Killarney, showing to a crowded house (*Irish Press*, 25 September 1931).

In the first week of the *Irish Press* publication, one Irish department store was representing itself and the newspaper as fulfilling a market demand. It also contributed to making 'jazz' an everyday term. The shop claimed: 'like the Irish Press Guineys new store will fill a national need'. They also advertised 'ladies cardigans and jumpers in jazz design' (*Irish Press*, 10 September 1931). Further evidence of 'jazz' entering common parlance is found when the *Press* cited a Dublin optician offering 'a frame of jazz design, and pointed out it was favoured by some young ladies who wanted something striking for dancing' (*Irish Press*, 2 October 1931). Clery's department store was advertising one of the most practical household items, hot water bottles, in red, blue and jazz (*Irish Press*, 9 November 1931).

If jazz was an accepted word in Irish commercial marketing and everyday life, from a dancing point of view it was also being represented in some places as passé. For example, and as early as February 1931, the *Irish Examiner*, in an article that made reference to the growing storm over 'jazz' that raged in Ireland for another four years, wrote:

> If dancing has become an insanity in some parts of the country, as was recently alleged at a provincial court, it must be nearing the padded cell stage in Dublin, for dances in scores every week have been given here for months past. There is no sign of flagging… All classes of

> worker must have their night out. But they do not dance to jazz. There has been considerable misapprehension... People who have no liking for this form of amusement and stigmatise it as jazz should know that jazz in ballroom dancing went out years ago. A syncopated rhythm had then a short season of popularity, but a Dublin teacher now avers that the flowing rhythm of the waltz now prevails (*Irish Examiner*, 9 February 1931).

I argue that this meant that as the 'anti-jazz' campaign developed, to some it appeared that the cultural authorities were mobilising against something that meant 'modernity' and to others, including up-to-date dancers, it symbolised something that was already 'over'. Thus the 'anti-jazz' campaign, as vehement as it was, was incomprehensible or irrelevant to many. It should be noted that these types of dogmatic morality campaigns can undermine authority. This occurs when the campaign is seen as out-of-touch. Ferriter concluded how:

> In private, civil servants were scathing about the simplistic attempt to link immorality with the existence of unlicensed dance halls, at the expense of examining housing, education or unemployment (2005: 321).

News reports also indicate a loss of credibility sustained by the moral guardians at this time. The outspoken defendant was quoted in the *Western People* when asked if he was aware that the local priest objected to his dances: 'But he is 90 years of age and doesn't understand what the young people want' (*Western People*, 16 September 1933).

Conclusion

Culture, conservatism, self-sufficiency and a suspicion of entrepreneurship were dominant themes during this era. These themes and their practical consequences had a major influence on the development of country's live music industry. While these debates were active and vehement during the 1930s, I have shown that they were also nuanced and not always accepted uncritically. For the overall music industry, two of its constituent industries were treated with apparently opposed approaches. The recording industry, and in particular the British firm, the Gramophone Company, was welcomed uncritically while the live music industry was supressed by a number of power groups.

The recording industry was embraced and welcomed, in part, I argue, because of the major international success of John McCormack. The singer proved how the mass-marketing of recorded music could advance the Irish 'sacral nationalist' project. He was very publicly represented as emblematic of both Irish and Catholic by the Irish media. Thus, even during

the heated political debates about protectionism, the Gramophone Company was steered around legislation ostensibly designed to limit foreign industry in Ireland and enjoyed a monopolistic position. Just as records were viewed as allies in nation building, so was another Gramophone Company product, the radio. This was also positioned by the Irish media, including the *Irish Press*, as a means of bringing Ireland to the world.

In a way, given Ireland's Catholic ethos, the intolerance of 'foreign' dancing is easier to explain than the tolerance and welcome provided to mass-produced music. It was as if these cultural groups accepted the major international firms as logical curators of the country's recorded output. Whatever the reason, the use of live music, in the context of restrictive legislation on dancing, was tightly controlled, while the use of mass-produced recorded music was in practice free of state intervention. In the long run, arguably this was a contributory factor to a chronically under-developed commercial live music industry as well as long-term dependence on foreign record firms to market develop of Irish popular music acts globally. I will examine both of these circumstances in further chapters.

The strict control over the live music industry, including the Dance Halls Act, naturally acted as a barrier to entry. In light of this, perhaps the most surprising conclusion that I arrived at during my research of the 1930s is the as yet under-documented evidence that even as the control of dancing was proving problematic to moral authorities, the clergy had found another sphere of activity. This was the proliferation of variety shows and local community entertainment, which often included music, yet was not exclusively music-based. At times, the music element was as a demonstration and not necessarily for audience participation.

The live music industry suffered in the 1930s because it was frequently a site where morality rather than commercial logic ruled. Yet, and with long-term implications for Irish society, the Church proved sure-footed in quickly finding another social sphere in which it could retain its central position in local community life. Even more importantly, based on my research, it had found a sphere of influence in which it was not seen as reducing pleasure or fun locally but increasing it.

Chapter 4: The 1940s

Defining jazz, entertaining the Irish abroad and producing 'stars'

During the 1940s, Ireland's nation-building and the routine of its everyday life were severely disrupted by world events. The global conflict of World War II forced the Irish government to engage with the outside world in a highly charged atmosphere. Decisions taken about alliances and diplomacy naturally had repercussions at a time of war. Yet overall, the manner in which the Fianna Fáil government operated underscored its dependence on Britain even as it attempted to distance itself from it ideologically and culturally.

The Fianna Fáil party under De Valera had achieved what the historian R. F. Foster describes as a 'hegemony' over Irish politics by the start of the 1940s (Foster, 1988: 543). The strength and vitality of its local organizations enabled it to expand from its original base of small farmers and the working class and to attract voters from the Irish business classes and larger farmers. The party's percentage of general election votes had expanded from its original 1920s electoral base in the west of the country towards the more prosperous east (Foster, 1988: 547).

With this mandate, the Irish government, led by Fianna Fáil as well as the opposition, famously elected to stay neutral during World War II, which was referred to in the country as 'the Emergency'. Although, as Foster (1988) states, neutrality had been the traditional policy of smaller European countries, Ireland's geographic position rendered this decision more complex. Located to the west of Britain and strategically situated on transatlantic flight and shipping routes, its neutrality was a blow to Britain, which explains the nationalist and bellicose rhetoric publicly exchanged by Winston Churchill and Eamon de Valera during the 1940s.

In the first year of the 1940s, the debate of the previous decade about 'native versus foreign' culture was still raging. In October, the *Connaught Telegraph* described this as 'The Ceilidhe versus Jazz question'. In this case, they were referring to an application to hold two dances in the Mayo Mental Hospital. Unusual as this sounded, the dances were being organised by the 'staff amusements committee' to raise funds for a film projector for patients. The Hospital management committee presided over by a priest, Fr O'Donohue, raised objections to the dances on the grounds that they ran contrary to the 'great outcry

against the Anglicisation of the country'. Fr O'Donohue argued that 'the wrong type of amusement' was not a suitable way of raising funds for a good cause. Another member of the clergy, Fr Gildea, referred to the Gaelic League ban on 'foreign' games and dances when he reasoned that 'the dance is much more de-nationalising than the Soccer football match' (*Connaught Telegraph*, 19 October 1940).

The reason why the management of a 'mental hospital' in Mayo were debating the 'Ceilidhe versus Jazz' question was that the staff, who apparently had some experience in arranging fund-raising events, understood the local market demand. As the reports of the meeting recorded: 'the question of public taste comes into it... the dance committee might not make a [financial] success of a ceilidhe'. This leads to the conclusion that edicts about dancing continued to be contested, even in rural Ireland, despite the 1930s rhetoric. A very clear indication of how strong that challenge was came in the same month, October 1940, when the Gaelic League voted to rescind its ban on both foreign dances and sports (*Irish Press*, 22 October 1945). This about-face was accompanied by an approved motion which permitted members 'complete freedom of action as regards personal activity outside the League'. While the motion acknowledged that 'foreign dances are not part of our nationality' and such dances were banned from all Gaelic League premises, it did lift the restrictions. Just like the Mayo hospital fund-raisers, this action was probably a tactical response to the realities of market demand. One Gaelic League delegate from Carlow was quoted as saying: '...it is better to Gaelicise foreign dances than to prevent Gaelic Leaguers from attending them' (*Irish Press*, 22 October 1945). If the Gaelic League had been unsuccessful in getting the Irish public to obey their instructions, they now had to be more practical; if the public would not go to Gaelic League dances, the Gaelic League would go to the public's dances.

To the Gaelic League, Irish dances were still the best: they were just underappreciated. The *Connaught Telegraph's* editor also noted a lack of interest in Irish dances; he proclaimed that 'the ceilidhe is dead' (*Connaught Telegraph*, 5 October 1940). He did not blame the public for this lack of interest; instead he blamed the Public Dance Halls Act, which he described as 'a charming failure', adding 'It has put the whole nation on a perfectly splendid whole-time dancing basis'. The Act had stimulated dance halls playing 'foreign' music:

> ...our great Irish-Irelanders suffered from a form of Anglophobia. But that disease has turned to Anglomania, and all of us are tumbling over one another in order to build up funds by spreading and encouraging jazz. We won't take a lesson from France where too much jazz lulled a nation to sleep (*Connaught Telegraph*, 5 October 1940).

He noted that the dances were primarily to raise money for local community organisations, including the Local Security Forces (LSFs), which during WWII provided supplementary services to the Irish army and police. To him that made the 'Anglomania' and 'jazz' an act of national treachery:

> No, the ceilidhe is dead. It is laid out. It was stretched by the Irish-Irelanders themselves. And is it to be buried by branches of the Local Security Forces? That is the fateful question (*Connaught Telegraph*, 5 October 1940).

To some members of the Irish establishment, the way to combat the foreign dances was to restrict them and a passionate advocate for this was District Justice Goff. His perspective and many of his decisions appeared faithfully to advance the cause of 'Irish-Ireland' and sacral nationalism where the Church was aided by other power groups, including the judiciary.

In his Dundalk, County Louth, court, District Justice Goff, who also used the Gaelic version of his name, MacEachach, imposed strict licensing restrictions in his jurisdiction. According to national media reports, this area included what he labelled as the two 'jazzified' districts, Dundalk and Carrickmacross (*Irish Press*, 3 October 1940). The newspaper reported that he imposed a large minimum entry fee to dances, the number of which he had reduced by a third from the previous year. In addition, all halls had to present at least one night of Irish dancing weekly. The regional newspaper covering the District Justice's area of control was also naturally interested in the case. The paper quoted MacEachach: 'The reason for making the restrictions was to keep out undesirable people and to have less popularising of jazz' (*Meath Chronicle*, 'Justice defines jazz', 5 October 1940). According to this report, MacEachach explicitly acknowledged that dancing was a social activity over which the Church should maintain control. In his sacral nationalist argument, Bishops and priests had made themselves clear on the subject and should be deferred to:

> Time and again they have denounced this mania, and have asked the people to dance our own fine, harmonious, melodious, and in every way desirable dances (*Meath Chronicle*, 'Justice defines jazz', 5 October 1940).

Two other judgements by MacEachach were also featured in the 5 October edition of the newspaper, both featuring restrictions on dancing. One referred to a decision made against a female entrepreneur, Mrs Ellen Hoey, of the Northlands Hotels in Bettystown. Here, MacEachach made specific reference to both gender and class and said that he had heard that alcohol was consumed by young people from the 'upper classes' at hotel dances. The newspaper reported that: 'He had been told of some scandalous scenes where young women of the better class had actually got drunk at hotel dances' (*Meath Chronicle*, 'Not in the public interest', 5 October 1940). He refused the application for the hotel dance. In another of his courts that week, MacEachach criticised a fund-raising applicant for not holding Irish dances. The dance in question was to aid the LSF. District Juistice MacEachach asked in court, in light of the application for a 'foreign' rather than an Irish dance: 'I wonder if the L.S.F. is going to become a jazzing promoter?' (*Meath Chronicle*, 'Navan District Court', 5 October 1940). The following month, the Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, was quoted in the *Irish Press* as he addressed 6,000 LSF recruits. He praised their patriotism and said that he:

> ...hoped the day would soon come when it would be unnecessary for anybody speaking at a public meeting to use the language of the stranger. They wanted Irish spoken on all occasions like this (*Irish Press*, 11 November 1940).

The Taoiseach may have wanted the LSF speaking Irish, but, apparently, at least in Navan, the recruits did not voluntarily choose to dance Irish dances.

District Justice MacEachach's ruling on the LSF dance quickly featured as a story on the national newspaper, the *Sunday Independent*. Here, the District Justice was quoted as saying: 'one of the Bishops described the jazz hall as the vestibule of hell, but I would go further and describe it as hell itself' (*Sunday Independent*, 27 October 1940). If this implied that MacEachach was challenging the Church definition of hell, he quickly corrected the matter. In a published letter to the *Irish Press* he wrote:

> ...I was not so presumptuous; but in refusing permission for a bar license at a L.S.F. jazz hall, I remarked that providing a bar at such a function makes the place hell itself... (MacEachach, *Irish Press*, 28 October 1940).

While his definition of jazz halls being 'hell' was not based on first-hand knowledge but from reports from 'reliable witnesses':

> ...it is also a rational inference from the well-known sensualistic influence which jazz and spirituous drinks exert – even singly, not to say in combination – on addicts (MacEachach, *Irish Press*, 28 October 1940).

It is clear that District Justice MacEachach was a highly influential force in local dancing culture although it appeared that his opinions were based on second-hand reports. Dancing was not only a key social activity, but also a key fund-raising mechanism for local community groups, therefore these opinions helped to shape the community's leisure. It was also clear, both in public office and in his published newspaper letter, that he followed the moral leadership of the Church. Yet despite this, MacEachach was successfully challenged not only about his opinions, but also about his ability to interpret and apply Irish law. I want to demonstrate how this indicates that the power to control local dancing was being undermined in the early 1940s.

The attack came from two sides, from both the periphery and the core of the global entertainment industry: first, from local opposition, and second, from the increasing Irish presence of the global music industry and its allied entertainment industries. It is difficult to know precisely how the global music and film industry affected everyday Irish values, yet I want to point out how both the film and music industries, and sometimes in combination, occupied an increasingly central role in Irish life in the early 1940s. It is possible to speculate that the popularity, and local embrace, of 'foreign' music undermined the authority of individuals like MacEachach and even groups like the Gaelic League and the Church. The very popularity of modern singers, even those labelled 'jazz', meant that their Irish fans questioned the authorities who tried to suppress them. To young fans, the authorities appeared 'out of touch'.

While this is an area for further study, it may help to explain why the sacral nationalist, 'anti-jazz' and pro-Irish dancing lobby groups did not enjoy more widespread and unqualified support. This is not to underestimate the power and influence of these groups,

yet in the long term they were undermined and it is important to ask why this happened. In the meantime, I want to present examples of how they were challenged in the 1940s. In terms of the global music industry's ability to reach the young Irish consumer, it is notable that an advertisement for the film, *The Star Maker*, appeared beside the reports of MacEachach's dancing restrictions in the newspaper. This alerted readers to the fact the American singer Bing Crosby starred in the film and that it featured 'grand old songs and new hits' (*Meath Chronicle*, 'The Star Maker', 5 October 1940).

If this was an example of synergy between the film and music industries in reaching the Irish audience, the Gramophone Co. Ltd. was also advertising its hardware (radios) and its software (gramophone records) in the *Irish Press* at this time (*Irish Press*, 9 May 1940, 1 October 1941). If this was how the core penetrated the periphery market, it should be noted that the former advertisement included the line 'a product of our Waterford factory', while the latter mentioned both international artists like Joe Loss, Gene Autry and Victor Silvester, as well as Irish artists, John McCormack and Delia Murphy. Thus local workers and local artists were being used to advance the local interests of the international firm. It should also be noted that the nationalist Fianna Fáil newspaper, the *Irish Press*, was benefiting financially from these advertisements.

In addition, overseas radio shows, including BBC shows, were openly playing and celebrating that 'jazz' that the Irish establishment railed against. In a clear sign of how available this music was to Irish listeners, newspapers included daily listings of BBC broadcasts, including the programme, 'Pioneers in Jazz' with Teddy Foster (*Irish Examiner*, 18 October 1940). It was also significant that from as early as 1936, the *Irish Press* had devoted space to a review section which studied: 'Songs from the Films' (L. Mac G., *Irish Press*, 18 February 1936).

The availability of overseas broadcasts and the advertising of American films starring Bing Crosby and featuring 'new hits' were a clear indication of Ireland's porous cultural borders at the start of World War II. This invites the questions of how jazz was defined by the guardians of those cultural borders, as well as how those guardians were challenged. From analysis of the Irish newspaper archives, it appears that the judgements of District Justice MacEachach can help to answer both of those questions.

In reporting on one of District Justice MacEachach's cases above, the *Irish Press* described how he had been asked to define 'jazz' in the court. He responded that it was 'the thing popularised by Jews in America; it was English and American of the worst type and was of savage origin' (*Irish Press*, 3 October 1940).

The *Meath Chronicle* also reported this definition, although they wrote that MacEachach described it as 'the dance popularised by Jews in America' and the paper also quoted comments by a solicitor who had asked for the definition, Desmond O'Hagan (*Meath Chronicle*, 5 October 1940). According to this report, O'Hagan had accused the Justice of wanting local dance halls for farm labourers to be closed down. He was quoted as saying:

> I know that from your personal outlook you would like that, but I suggest that your judicial function is that you are not to hold a brief for Gaelic dancing or jazz dancing, but to administer the law as it is. I suggest that you are not entitled to make distinctions between dancing when both forms are quite legal in this country (*Meath Chronicle*, 5 October 1940).

O'Hagan appealed MacEachach's restrictions on local dancing and Judge Comyn found that in fact the District Judge had either deliberately or incorrectly applied the law. Judge Comyn argued that Irish courts could not force dance halls to present an Irish dance every week. In addition, he asserted that prohibitions on dances based on grounds given by MacEachach, including limiting dancing to locals who lived within five miles, were not within the law (*Irish Independent*, 19 October 1940; *Meath Chronicle*, 26 October 1940).

I do not want to overstate the significance of Judge Comyn's dismissal of District Justice MacEachach's rulings. Yet I want to reinsert into the history of the Irish music industry the fact that dancing restrictions were not unilaterally accepted by local communities. The Irish establishment and the sacral nationalists anxious to prohibit a subjectively defined 'jazz' menace could clearly be defeated at times where there was access to skilled solicitors like O'Hagan. It is in the context of debates about foreign and local entertainment, major industries and local community activities that I now want to place the supportive environment that provided two Irish 'stars', Delia Murphy and Val Doonican, who enjoyed success many years later, with the skills and opportunities they required to become celebrated national and international artists. This can help to answer the question of how Ireland during the 1940s engaged with the developing music industry. In light of Doonican's eventual success in London, a core of the global cultural industry, this is particularly significant. Naturally, these cultural flows were influenced by social and

economic factors at the time, including World War II, the country's continuing under-development and continued Irish emigration.

To de Valera, the country's neutrality was an element of nation building and an expression of cultural identity. I argue that the global music industry was able to represent itself to de Valera at this time as an ally in these pursuits. This should be seen in the context of Bourdieu's field of cultural production. As other commentators, including Johnson (2003: 2) have noted, Bourdieu addressed 'the role of culture in the reproduction of social structures'. Cultural practices help to establish and reinforce power relations in any society and the newly established gramophone recording industry deliberately engaged with the field of Irish politics and nationalism. At times, perhaps inevitably, the industry was implicated in discourses of politics, nationalism and even international relations. I want to examine some of the ways in which it interacted with the field of politics in the World War II era. The government of Ireland's decision to stay neutral during World War II appeared to provide the state with the opportunity to reinforce its cultural borders against foreign influences and the rapidly industrialising cultural industries.

World War II also initially threatened Ireland's dependence on emigration to provide employment opportunities for its labour force. As Paul McMahon (2008) has documented in his history of the British intelligence forces and Ireland, there was widespread distrust of the neutral Irish in the British government and intelligence services, particularly at the early stages of the War. Movement of people between the countries was initially restricted and only permitted, with a visa application and vetting process, when Britain experienced a severe shortage of labour. The British government also implemented full censorship of all postal, telegraph and telephone communications with Ireland (McMahon, 2008: 394–395).

Thus, Ireland's sustained pattern of emigration continued, although in a more supervised manner, during the 1940s, with Britain the destination for the majority of departing Irish. According to Andy Bielenberg and Raymond Ryan's (2013) analysis of travel data collected in Britain at the time, over 50 per cent of the females arriving were domestic workers, while almost three quarters of the male workers were agricultural or possessed low-level skills. Britain's need was for low-skilled labour.

One result of the sustained emigration pattern was an increased presence of young Irish in major British cities and the provision of entertainment for this growing community had an

impact on the local music industry in Ireland. As opportunities opened up for Irish musicians to perform in Britain, practices which were deemed unacceptable in Ireland, such as dancing during the Lenten period, meant that musicians were no longer forced to seek alternative employment during the 40 days of Lent.

The gramophone and nationalism: Recording De Valera and 'come-all-ye' songs

Shortly after the foundation of the Gramophone Co. factory in 1936, the British recording firms were associated with a musical talent search. It is significant that the musicians sought did not conform to current trends in international popular music, but instead addressed the local market. In February and March 1938, the firm of the Jewish brothers-in-law Maurice Solomon and Harold Peres was acting as a representative for Decca in selecting Irish artists to be recorded. According to newspaper advertisements and local media reports, they were specifically seeking singers of 'Old Irish Songs (Come-all-yes)' and 'Ceilidhe Musicians'. Open auditions were held in Waterford, Cork and Killarney (*Irish Examiner*, 22 February 1938; *Kerryman* 26 February 1938; *Munster Express*, 25 February 1938). The local 'come-all-ye' songs had been included in Fr Walsh's songbooks in the 1910s and 1920s, although evidently some Irish commentators found them a less-than-suitable musical expression. As I will discuss, this is relevant because one of the most popular singers of the era, Delia Murphy, included them in her repertoire. Murphy was one of the first success narratives of the alliance between local music makers and the locally-based English recording firm and her recording sessions made newspaper headlines in the *Irish Press* (24 September 1941).

Murphy was publicly identified as both singing and recording 'come-all-yes' from as early as 1930. The *Western People* (24 May 1930), for example, detailed her performing songs, including 'The Croppy Boy' from Fr Walsh's collections, at a local charity concert. As popular and nationalistic as some of the songs were, they were not always embraced at the time. The columnist 'Leesider' wrote in 1932 how:

> ...the vast majority of our rural population has to be educated out of its present condition of inability to appreciate any kind of musical entertainment except cheap gramophone records, dancing, and 'come-all-ye' singing (Leesider, *Irish Examiner*, 2 April 1932).

Although the 'come-all-ye' was popular, doubts were raised about whether it was Irish in origin. Thomas Jones (1930) wrote of them 'seldom having any literary merit... [and

being] hackneyed and old-fashioned', arguing that the song form appeared in the works of Shakespeare and Goldsmith as well as the hymn 'Adeste Fideles' (Jones, *Irish Examiner*, 27 November 1930).

Murphy enjoyed success with her vernacular singing style, but before examining some of the behind-the-scenes activities in her career, I want to examine other ways in which the record industry productively engaged with Irish politics and national identity at this time. The war brought shortages and the curtailment of foreign entertainment and this provided domestic artists with increased opportunities. Crucially, for a small neutral country like Ireland, the development of the major record firms provided a means for marketing and promoting elements of national identity. Another example of how popular culture products being generated by industry cores in Britain and the US could be re-purposed and deployed for national identity purposed in Ireland was the *Irish Press* daily publication of the Walt Disney 'Mickey Mouse' cartoon strip daily where the rodent spoke in Gaelic ('Walt Disney "Michilín Luch"', *Irish Press*, 18 May 1945).

Foreign firms, Irish culture

Clearly, the recently arrived Gramophone Co. Ltd, and its rival, Decca, at the time of Ireland's neutrality, provided ways for articulating national identity through recorded words and music. With its global reach, the firm was able to promote and market Irish music internationally. Simultaneously, its activities within the country established Irish acts in the local market. Christopher Morash described how the commercial release of de Valera's St Patrick's Day speeches by the firm in 1943 was 'one of the clearest articulations of the traditionalist view of Irish culture [and] was made possible by a multi-national media culture' (2010: 150).

The two records made by de Valera provided him with an opportunity to have his speech on national identity and language preserved, broadcast, marketed and consumed. The recordings are a good example of how the fields of the recording industry and Ireland's field of political power overlapped; the discs provided de Valera and the Gramophone Co. Ltd with a means of mutual prestige exchange. The *Irish Press* reported how 'Mr W.B. Farmer, branch manager Gramophone Co… was very proud to have had the privilege of recording the voice of Mr. de Valera' (*Irish Press*, 5 December 1944). The recordings continued to be advertised in Ireland and in 1945 were included in advertisements along

with titles by Gene Autry as well as the Cooke Brothers performing cowboy songs (*Irish Press*, 19 February 1945).

This mutual prestige exchange between the Gramophone Co. Ltd and national leaders was not an Irish aberration. The Gramophone Co. was skilled and experienced at forging such alliances. This could have been excellent salesmanship or a tactical way of getting a positive reception for the products in various countries, or most likely both. As Miller and Boar (1982) document:

> ...during its first forty years, the Company collected no less than seventeen royal warrants and recorded an exotic procession of kings, queens, sheiks, sultans, maharajahs and caliphs (p. 115).

They provide insight into the variety of these alliances between the firm and national rulers which included recordings by the Queen of Rumania in 1903 and, shortly after, a record by the Shah of Persia, who received a new gramophone and 300 records annually from the firm to cement the relationship. Denmark's King Christian was another of the Gramophone Company's record artists and in 1932 King George and Queen Mary of Britain had their speeches recorded and marketed (Miller and Boar, 1982: 115–120). This royal tradition by the British recording firm places Morash's conclusion about de Valera's recordings in an international context. He argued the recordings were 'one of the clearest articulations of the traditionalist view of Irish culture' and pointedly noted how this 'was made possible by a multi-national media culture' (Morash, 2010: 150). In the case of the Gramophone Company, the leader in that multi-national media culture was happy to serve multiple national rulers.

The international dimension of the new multi-national media culture meant that its output was subject to multiple and unexpected interpretations. In 1945, a gramophone record played by Radio Éireann before a de Valera broadcast led to different perceptions about its supposed political message. The *Irish Press* reported how Britain's *Daily Express* had claimed: 'the radio item before his broadcast was Hitler's favourite opera, "Tannhäuser", sung in German by German singers' (*Irish Press*, 'Traffic in lies', 18 May 1945). To the Irish newspaper, this was 'a lie... told for the purpose of poisoning relations between Britain and Ireland'. The *Irish Press* acknowledged that music from Tannhäuser had been broadcast 'more than an hour' before Mr de Valera's speech and had been followed by the

news read in Gaelic as well as a Gaelic language instruction programme. The incident certainly indicated how the combination of recorded music and national identity was not straightforward. Another unanticipated consequence of new media technologies combing with national identity occurred during a live broadcast of R.E.'s popular quiz show, *Question Time*. The Irish media later reported how, in 1942, the Northern Ireland Director of Broadcasting was forced to issue a statement following Questions in the House of Commons about the R.E. show. The host had asked 'Who is the world's best-known teller of fairy tales?' Instead of the expected answer, Hans Christian Andersen, the Irish response had been: 'Winston Churchill' (*Irish Independent*, 14 October 1992).

The Fianna Fáil political rhetoric preceding the 1944 general election emphasised how Irish identity was defined against British rule. In a reference to a recent article in *The Irish Times*, Mr de Valera responded to charges that he was leading the country into 'splendid isolation'. He was quoted as follows:

> ...we say that if it is to be choice between what it calls impudently a Gaelic-speaking, potato-digging Republic, and John Bull's cabbage patch, as their policy would have us, I don't think there would be any difficulty in our choice....Their policy would have condemned Ireland to be something like the obscure counties in Britain, and it would never have been heard of in the world. Ireland is, thanks be to God, out in the world (*The Irish Times*, 29 May 1944).

Fianna Fáil's rhetoric argued that the British government could not help it achieve its aims; yet British firms evidently could. In 1940, the *Irish Press* represented the Gramophone Co. as a key ally in the creation and assertion of Ireland's cultural identity. In the primary retail season approaching Christmas, the newspaper carried a full page advertorial for the firm.[4] It included the following:

> From the Gramophone Company's factory at Ferrybank, Waterford, comes a selection of records which should set new sales figures. Recorded in Ireland by Irish artistes, and made by Irish craftsmen, these discs mark an important step in the gramophone industry. The Gramophone Company Ltd., have every reason to feel proud of their successful efforts to provide first-class entertainment by Irish artistes (*Irish Press*, 9 December 1940).

[4] The full page was devoted to content about and advertisements for the Gramophone Company and its products.

Here, the *Irish Press* conflated the national 'recorded in Ireland by Irish artistes' with the popular 'should set new sales figures' and the newspaper congratulated the firm for its contribution to Irish culture; it also magnified the contribution of the Irish workers. They were no longer factory machinists engaged in industrial activity, they were 'craftsmen'. The newspaper made further claims about the output derived from this combination of Irish factory worker and English firm:

> The Gramophone has now been established as an artistic instrument sufficiently long to acquire the role of historian. Records of Irish dance music and traditional Irish airs and ballads help to preserve and spread the music of our land. Every collection of gramophone records should include at least a few Irish discs, not only for the public of to-day, but for the inestimable benefit of future generations (*Irish Press*, 9 December 1940).

Here the Gramophone Co. positioned its products as 'artistic instruments' as playing a vital cultural role by preserving and spreading 'the music of our land'. Irish customers were being urged to buy the British company's products to ensure their *own* country's cultural legacy.

In other print advertisements for the company, it is possible to see how the firm positioned itself simultaneously as an essential mediator of global events *and* a bastion of Irish culture. In one advertising campaign, the comforts of home and the ability to keep up to date with international developments were emphasised. The notion of Irish listeners maintaining their cultural identity via music, while engaging with modern global media possibilities, was explored as World War II became a reality. In December 1939, one *Sunday Independent* advertisement contained the following:

> News is NEWS these days and the Second Great War has brought home more than ever the importance of a reliable radio receiver to keep abreast with the latest developments... These hits [songs by international artists and Delia Murphy were listed] will make home life brighter still! (*Sunday Independent*, 10 December 1939).

In a similar manner, *The Irish Times*, in a prominent feature, praised the Gramophone Co. for its contribution to the Republic's cultural life. About the comedic records of Jimmy O'Dea and Harry O'Donovan, the paper wrote: '"H.M.V." has contributed largely to the gaiety of the nation by popularising their records'. The newspaper was even more effusive in praising the firm for its cultural contribution via music recordings:

> ...their records are a practical guarantee for the preservation of much of our native folk music. Indeed, their widespread use must have done an enormous lot to revive throughout the country a love for, and interest in, these old melodies (*The Irish Times*, 25 April 1940).

As arguably the artist who benefited most from the Gramophone Company's engagement with Ireland during the era, Delia Murphy's career helps in understanding how the Irish music industry field operated. The media attention which accompanied this career included representations of Irishness, popularity, tradition and the music industry.

Delia Murphy: The Irish music industry produces a 'star'

To Bourdieu (2012), the field of production is altered by the entrance and evolution of power groups. Therefore, it is subject to constant change which redefines the field to the advantage of some acts, genres and agents while lessening opportunities for others. Individuals, both artists and industry figures, can influence the shape and status of the field. In the case of Irish popular music production, the field was redefined by the arrival of the Gramophone Co. It was further redefined by Radio Éireann's policy before and – in a particular way – during T. J. Kiernan's directorship.

The commercially successful folk singer Liam Clancy was quoted on his opinion of Delia Murphy:

> We idolised her... But what we must remember about Delia Murphy was the context of the times when she started recording. We were coming out of desperate poverty, and it wasn't fashionable any more to sing the ballads, or come-all-ye's, as my mother used to call them. But then along came Delia Murphy and she gave us all a feeling of confidence and a feeling of value, that there was something to our traditions and that we had no need to be ashamed of it, because she wasn't. And she became a heroine and the most popular singer in the country (Doyle, http://martindoyle.wordpress.com/2009/12/29/the-backbird/).

Clancy positions Murphy at the forefront of a national revival of folk songs. The impact of her career can be gauged by the nature of the published eulogies from journalists, industry figures and musicians at the time of her death in 1971. In these reflections there was a constant invoking of her popularity and the impact of her recordings on national identity. In *The Irish Times*, the music critic Charles Acton wrote:

> Round about 30 years ago one could hardly switch on Radio Eireann, certainly not a Hospitals' Request programme or a Sweeps programme, without hearing one of Delia Murphy's songs... [these songs] as she sang them and as she recorded them became a deep-seated part of the national culture (Acton, *The Irish Times*, 17 February 1971).

In the *Connacht Tribune*, Martin Walton, the founder of the Glenside record label and Murphy's song publisher, was quoted from a 1971 broadcast:

> I have no doubt that the interest in Irish – true Irish – folk songs that we see today had its start and success in the efforts of Delia Murphy (*Connacht Tribune*, 11 November 1981).

Murphy's emergence as one of the first female 'celebrities' produced by the cultural industries in Ireland makes her worthy of note. The historian Dermot Keogh described her 'as near to being a "pop star" as any entertainer had come to be in the Ireland of the 1930s' (1995: 160). It is evident from the esteem in which Murphy was held that she played a key role in Irish popular music. As already noted, her early recordings were enabled by the personal interaction of The Gramophone Co. executives with her husband, Dr T. J. Kiernan, director of 2RN. While individually the Gramophone Co. and 2RN lacked the power to establish an artist as a significant domestic figure, this was possible when they combined their resources. The record firm supplied the recording and marketing resources, while 2RN provided the recording facilities, at least initially, and – more importantly – national airplay. Thus, their combined ability to record, market and broadcast an Irish artist resulted in national prominence and lasting influence for the folk singer. Murphy proved that the local industry was capable of producing successful domestic artists in Ireland, a very significant step for culture in the Free State. Any debates about the benefits or dangers of reliance on foreign firms took place at a time when the Gramophone Co. was actively promoting Irish acts.

In Aidan O'Hara's (1997) biography of the singer, Murphy's son is quoted on the mechanics of the alliance between the Gramophone Co. and Radio Eireann (RE) He is paraphrased, stating how the Gramophone Co. believed that 'Dr. Kiernan's position there could only advance her career'. He referred to the significant airplay Murphy received from the State broadcaster:

> The fact that my father was Director of Programmes had a bearing on that outcome. While he never influenced anyone to play her music, and while there were thousands of letters that

> requested her music, the fact that he was Director doubtless influenced programme selection in [RE headquarters] Henry Street (O'Hara, 1997: 71).

The early recordings from Murphy and the Gramophone Co. were critically well received. *The Irish Times* described her possessing 'a rare talent for the singing of traditional songs and street ballads'. Her material, including 'Three Lovely Lassies' and 'The Spinning Wheel', was represented as 'lovely old songs, whose beauty is enhanced by the artiste's reading of them' (*The Irish Times*, 18 May 1939).

The November 1941 advertisement in the *Irish Press* demonstrates how recorded music was represented as an antidote to the privations of 'the Emergency': 'Due to present conditions the home and family life are coming into their own this winter more than ever before'. The company claimed that the recordings listed in the advertisement, including Murphy's, 'will enable many to rediscover the pleasure and entertainment of a musical night "at home"'. Another significant feature of the advertisement is the equating of domestic and global talent; with the prestige of the label behind them, they became consecrated members of a community: 'fine artists – national and international' (*Irish Press*, 28 November 1941).

An admiring May 1941 article in the *Irish Press*, 'The Revival of the Ballad', written by L.R., reinforced the representation of Murphy as a key cultural figure. The revival of the Irish ballad, the author speculated, could be the explained by various factors. These included the revival of nationalism stimulated by the World War and the 'simplifying effect on literature' caused by the shadow of war. Another factor to be considered was 'the personality of Delia Murphy, who in the last few months has become one of the most popular figures in Ireland'. As mentioned earlier, the singer's popularity did not derive from live performances; in fact she was due to play her first 'public' concert in Dublin at the Gaiety Theatre in 1941. The *Irish Press* emphasised this and stated that Murphy had become a national figure thanks to the HMV label of the Gramophone Company. The notion of the foreign recording firm participating in domestic culture was represented with a nationalist outcome.

> A few years ago the messenger boy cruising along the street on his bicycle was whistling the popular jazz song of the moment. To-day, for some extraordinary reason, he is whistling the 'Three Lovely Lassies', or the 'Spinning Song' or 'The Moonshiner'... [Delia Murphy] records were made and almost overnight every poet, plumber and politician was humming the

> air of the 'Three Lovely Lassies'. Even the academicans (sic) have been startled by the revival of interest in the ballad (*Irish Press*, 31 May 1941).

Bourdieu (2012) demonstrated that artists who enjoyed support could redefine the field by establishing trends and styles. An indicator of Murphy's celebrity, prestige and redefinition of the field of popular music is how quickly other female singers were being promoted or reviewed as performing in *her* style. The 1942 review of a concert in aid of parochial funds in St. Patrick's Hall, Strabane, included the billing of Kathleen Logue 'as Delia Murphy' (*Ulster Herald*, 2 May 1942). Six months later, the artist 'Baby Logue' was being advertised as 'Strabane's Delia Murphy' (*Ulster Herald*, 26 June 1943); Murphy's sister Angela was billed 'doing Delia songs' at a charity concert (*Ulster Herald*, 2 May 1942).

As the first domestic artist to gain prominent national status by being recorded, marketed and promoted by an international firm based in Ireland, Delia Murphy stands at the historical convergence of nationalism and mass cultural production. Her status as both a woman in the early Irish record industry and a cultural figure deserve acknowledgment. A prominent feature of Delia Murphy's live appearances in this era was how many were under the auspices of, or related to, the Catholic Church. It is arguable that with a more professional concert promotion business, her career would have been both more lucrative and more prominent. As it was, she was largely confined to concerts arranged by local groups.

While live music and dancing have been well covered in studies of Irish history, most comprehensively by O'Connor (2012), the types of shows, best described as variety concerts, in which Murphy appeared have received very little attention. I want to suggest that they represented, to the Church and other moral guardians, a social activity which often featured music yet did not involve dancing. In a sense, variety shows represented an ideal *solution* to the dancing *problem*. Thus, to understand Ireland's dancing culture, I feel it is necessary to understand that variety shows were an important aspect of local Irish cultural life.

Some of the performances given by Murphy provide some insight into these alternatives to dancing. It is notable that while District Justice MacEachach was condemning fund-raisers for the LSF in dance halls and even accusing the LSF of being 'a jazzing promoter?' (*Meath Chronicle*, 'Navan District Court', 5 October 1940), Delia Murphy was appearing

in variety concerts for the same cause without controversy (*Irish Press*, 14 September 1940). An earlier concert at which Murphy appeared also included a speech that placed the event in the sacral nationalist camp. Here, the *Irish Press* noted, before a reportedly 'crowded house':

> In the present state of conflict between Christianity and both the new and the old paganism the Irish nation was practically the only nation that could be considered Catholic, because it was almost the only nation that have never departed from its faith (*Irish Press*, 8 October 1934).

Another Murphy performance, this time alongside an Irish harpist, was also part of a concert which included political speeches. In the context of Ireland producing, with Murphy, a *female* popular music star and the perception that sacral nationalism was not concerned with empowering women, the content of the speech is notable. Here, it was reported how Mrs Tom Clarke, widow of the executed 1916 leader, had argued: 'The struggle for freedom has yet to be accomplished, that is first with me, and after that, women's rights' (*Irish Press*, 3 November 1939).

Murphy was positioned at the borders of 'new–old' culture and values at a time when recording and broadcasting were growing in influence. This can also be seen from other newspaper reports of the time. For instance, the *Irish Press* described how her songs were 'becoming popular throughout rural Ireland through Radio Eireann recitals' (L. Mac G., *Irish Press*, 9 January 1940). The influence of the national radio station was also credited in the *Western People* newspaper with popularising her:

> ...the advent of the radio, over which we can hear the latest music from day to day... [brought] a source of pleasure and pride to all Mayo people, being one of the few in which a country woman is heard' (Wanderer, *Western People*, 26 November 1938).

There was a subtext to these reports which emphasised the local: Murphy was popular 'throughout *rural* Ireland' (emphasis added) and hers was one of the only radio voices belonging to 'a country woman'. Yet Murphy and her recordings, although represented as the voice of rural Ireland, were being manufactured by a British firm which also sold the radios on which she was heard. This mediation of the local and the global was captured when her first visit to Waterford was reported; in addition to performing at a variety concert which was to be broadcast by Radio Éireann and 'also transmitted to America', Murphy visited the factory where her records were manufactured (*Munster Express*, 18

October 1940). The *Munster Express* named the people who accompanied her and a priest, Rev D. O'Connell, was listed first. The clergy were also highly visible at the fund-raising concert to aid the De La Salle Gaelic Football and Hurling Club. On the bill with Murphy were a comedian, Irish dancers, a tenor and a choir conducted by the Rev Bro. Brendan. The latter, 'due to the insistent demands of the audience, gave many encores'. As I wish to document later in this chapter, the clergy, even during the rise of the recording of recording 'stars' like Murphy, were active and visible in local community music making.

Singing cowboy songs for the Catholic Church: Val Doonican in 1940s Ireland

Val Doonican was one of the most visible and successful Irish musicians in Britain in the 1960s. No other Irish act enjoyed the chart status that he did, with 11 Top 40 albums during the decade, the first five of which made the Top 10. His singles also enjoyed considerable success; 12 Doonican singles featured in the Top 50 during the 1960s. Five of these made the Top 10 (Betts, 2004). His Saturday night television show on BBC ran for over 20 years.

Clearly, Doonican was a significant figure in the process of communicating notions of the Irish via the international media. He reached the British pop music charts with records entitled 'Doonican's Irish Stew' and 'Lucky 13 Shades of Val Doonican', which included the songs 'The Agricultural Irish Girl', 'Delaney's Donkey' and 'Paddy McGinty's Goat' (Roberts, 2005). These albums were in the British charts during a time when negative representations of the Irish were prevalent in the media, as documented, for example, by Liz Curtis (1996). The Irish in the 1970s were frequent targets of racist jokes on television and racist stereotyping in some of the tabloid newspapers.

Just as with John McCormack almost 80 years previously, Doonican consciously engaged with the representation of the homeland. In 1968, the BBC published a book entitled *Val Doonican tells the stories of O'Rafferty* (Doonican, 1968). The short volume features stereotypical images of Ireland including nuns, pubs and, in one passage, a quick-talking Irish huckster who is outwitted by a more knowledgeable English antiques dealer. Yet overall, the short stories collected in the small volume do not represent the Irish in a demeaning way. Instead they draw from Doonican's background in the world of amateur and professional dramatic shows and the humour is contained in situations, rather than at the expense of the Irish.

He depicts his early years of music making in Ireland as 'a kind of endless apprenticeship... filled with enjoyment, hope and invaluable experience' (Doonican, 1986: 1). While this may appear like a sentimental reflection, it invites analysis of what constituted an 'apprenticeship' in the relatively unstructured Irish music industry of the time. This also addresses how the Irish music scene of the 1940s could equip an artist with the skills required for a sustained international career.

Doonican as a music-maker in South East Ireland was assimilating multiple influences from outside the Irish tradition during his 'apprenticeship' with other musicians and perhaps most influentially with Bruce Clarke a friend who had moved from England. The material they rehearsed included country and western, pop, jazz, folk and Hawaiian (Doonican, 1980: 62).

Doonican's three autobiographies provide a fruitful site for examining his social history. I have combined my reading of Doonican's self-representation with analysis of local newspaper notices of his early music activities to gain insight into both how he represented himself and how the media represented him. His life narrative recalls a youth spent in the city of Waterford, where he lived in the family home until the age of 20. He describes his working-class Catholic origins and his mother as 'completely unselfish in her devotion to the family' (Doonican, 1980: 8) and his steel-worker father who read a book a day (Danker, *Sunday Independent*, 6 October 1974) yet 'drank too much... [and] spent too much of his hard-earned and our badly-needed money gambling on the horses' (Doonican, 1980: 15). Val was the youngest of eight children. In terms of his early exposure to music, he describes his older brother's enjoyment of Bing Crosby (Doonican, 1980: 17) and his own love of 'singing cowboys', Roy Rogers and Gene Autry. Doonican describes the central role played by the 'wireless' radio, bought on hire purchase, in his life. He wrote:

> ...I don't think there has even been a bigger influence on my life. I adored the radio: the talks, plays, comedy shows, quiz shows, the endless music and, of course the news... the radio became part of the family (Doonican, 1980: 26).

It should be noted that all of the programmes that he lists the family listening to in the South East of Ireland were broadcast by the BBC: 'It's That Man Again', 'Band Wagon', 'In Town Tonight', 'Monday Night at Eight', 'Stand Easy', 'Variety Bandbox' and 'Happidrome' (Doonican, 1980: 26). As strong as the drive to preserve Ireland's national

culture was, listeners could, and in this instance evidently did, enjoy the same radio programmes as people living in Britain in the 1930s and 1940s. This should be interpreted in the light of Christopher Morash's (2010) observations about media influence during the era:

> At the very moment when Irish culture should have been most self-contained, it suddenly seemed most porous. Controlling the promiscuous airwaves by creating a state broadcasting service was a relatively simple solution to the problem of cultural integrity... (Morash, 2010: 139).

Yet, the output of the State broadcaster was often less popular than the alternatives available from other stations. In terms of international popular culture, radio was one medium that Ireland proved 'porous' to, while cinema was another. Morash identifies the important role of cinema in the cultural life of Ireland at the time. He documents the growth in the number of country's cinemas between 1934 and 1948 from 190 to over 320 (Morash, 2010: 153). American films were popular in Ireland; the number and nature of family connections with Irish immigrants in the US helped to render it, in Morash's words, 'the promised republic'.

In Doonican's case, the cinema was a means of learning his craft. He recalled:

> I started to go to the films a lot and would come home and write out the music I had heard on the screen. I began teaching myself to read and write music in a small way (Danker, *Sunday Independent*, 6 October 1974).

In an unusual way, to Doonican the cinema industry also represented an opportunity rather than a threat (Doonican, 1980: 69). In search of revenue to replace the earnings of Irish World War II workers in Britain, in October 1947 a cinema tax was levied on the growing cinema industry. However, a way around the tax was quickly discovered. As the *Sunday Independent* described it: 'Latest Entertainment Taxes a Boomerang' (21 March 1948).

Proprietors could avoid paying the tax if they provided live entertainment of equal length to the films being shown, except in Dublin where the law specifically barred them from taking advantage of this arrangement. The tax had an unforeseen benefit for musicians. By combining films with live entertainment, a practice called cine-variety, the rural cinema proprietor could avoid the tax. For Doonican and Clarke, this involved performing close to

six hours of music each day to a seated audience waiting for the film to be screened. The taxes were eliminated in April 1948 amidst claims that cinema attendance was down 50 per cent (*Sunday Independent*, 25 January 1948).

Doonican also describes how he read *Melody Maker,* the British music magazine, via a friend's subscription. The local music shop was a source of musical supplies and gramophone records as well as information. There he was informed by the proprietor that a mobile recording unit was scheduled to visit Waterford (1980: 62) and this led to his first recording.

Many of Doonican's early local performances were in 'variety shows'. I want to suggest that this places the later 'showband' genre in a social and historical context. Rather than being interpreted as a 'breach' in Irish music and entertainment, my research indicates that it was instead an evolution from the variety show entertainment that was common in rural Ireland. From as early as April 1946 (*Munster Express*, 19 April 1946), Doonican contributed to the variety entertainment which took place over three nights in Tramore's Assembly Rooms. Shortly after, he appeared in another show where 'cowboy songs' were depicted as an acceptable element of an Irish variety offering. (C.V.K., *Munster Express*, 27 September 1946).

The benefit of these variety shows to local communities is evident from the troupe's reported invitation to perform an additional unscheduled show to raise funds for Mount Sion Hurling Club. It should also be noted that the review's mention of Reverend Father Farrell thanking the artists indicates that the reviewed performance either took place in a Church-owned hall or in aid of a Church charity. This supports the notion that local clergy maintained a dominant role in local community entertainment. Doonican appeared at variety concerts in aid of: Mercy Convent New School Fund (1980: 57) and Ballybricken New Church Building Fund (C.V.K., *Munster Express*, 7 February 1947), while a two-and-a-half-hour variety concert which took place in the De La Salle College Hall, Newtown, another Church venue, was transferred to the Theatre Royal three weeks later (C.V.K., *Munster Express*, 7 March 1947). Other beneficiaries of his music making included the local Athletics Club (C.V.K., *Munster Express*, 14 March 1947) and 'inmates' of the Little Sisters of the Poor Home (Tatler, *Munster Express*, 25 April 1947).

I want to suggest that the close links between the Catholic Church and local entertainment enabled clerics in the 1940s to engage with the community in a non-authoritarian way. For instance, Doonican wrote of one cleric, Brother Bruno from De La Salle [school]:

> ...he taught us everything from cooking to nature study and from first aid to tree felling. And he loved music: he organized the singsongs around the fire with the enthusiasm of a young lad (1980: 55).

Other priests are also portrayed in a positive light while joining in activities. These representations are in contrast with many accounts of clerical participation in Irish social life. The latter often present a simple narrative concerned with draconian control. Yet, these accounts ignore the complexity of clerical interaction with Irish life. In addition, they fail to acknowledge the benefits accruing to the Church when their tactical involvements are multiple and nuanced rather than simply authoritarian. That said, for Doonican, it was an alliance with someone from beyond this network that enabled him to make the next significant step in his career.

Doonican's music-making career was dramatically and positively altered by the arrival of an English family, the Clarkes, in Waterford. The family took up residence in a large house when Mr Clarke became the manager of a local iron works. His son, Bruce, was an enthusiastic musician and quickly made himself known to Doonican. It is important to locate this alliance historically for two reasons. First, it indicates that the clerically-influenced music-making scene, at least in this case, was not completely sectarian in the 1940s. Second, it indicates that the mixing of Catholics and Protestants in the later 'showband' era was not unprecedented.

This music-making and social alliance between Doonican and Clarke is particularly significant given the nature of Irish society. The conclusion drawn by Share et al. (2012), from their survey of research on the subject, is that Ireland was a country of very low social mobility. They cite analysis by Breen and Whelan (1996), who found, in particular, an 'extremely low level of upward mobility from the working class to the professional and managerial class' (2012: 175). This lack of upward mobility was of greater importance given Ireland's desperate economic situation. Therefore, it is vital to understand where Doonican found the resources to advance his career. Without explicitly saying it,

Doonican's representation of this alliance makes it difficult to imagine any possible way he could have acquired these resources other than through his alliance with Clarke.

Crucially, Doonican describes how Clarke furnished him with his 'first professional engagement', as a member of Clarke's quartet in Courtown Harbour (Doonican, 1980: 65). He had been prepared for this by the social and cultural capital he had gained from his many amateur music-making activities. Still a teenager and lacking the capital to own a guitar, Doonican had relied on the extended loan of an instrument belonging to a friend's parents. For the 'professional engagement', Clarke lent him £20 , a considerable sum at the time, to purchase a Gibson guitar. They had learnt of the instrument's availability via the music papers. Doonican repaid the loan in monthly instalments of £2. In a later account, Doonican recalled that Clarke also lent him the money to purchase an amplifier (Danker, *Sunday Independent*, 6 October 1974).

The alliance between the two young music makers belongs to what economic sociologist Mark Granovetter (1973) designated the 'strength of weak ties'. These ties occur when individuals connect with people outside their immediate social network. They are thus exposed to opportunities that do not exist in their close network of 'strong ties', where essentially everyone knows everyone. As Granovetter described, the links to the new group represented 'not merely a trivial acquaintance tie but rather a crucial bridge' between two groups (1983: 202).

In a very real sense, the socialisation patterns advocated by many of the clergy, for example in their restriction of dances to 'locals', actively discouraged those weak ties. This clerical desire to limit engagement by local Catholics with outsiders has been acknowledged in histories of leisure in the 1930s and 1940s. These histories have naturally identified the significant influence of the Church and other conservative elements of the Irish establishment. Helen Brennan's (2001) account of dancing in the country argues that, following the 1935 Dance Halls Act, in rural Ireland 'the clergy organised the construction of parochial halls, and thereafter Church and State combined to eliminate the organisation of any dances outside these halls' (2001: 126). Helen O'Shea notes that the Church maintained the ability 'to exert a repressive surveillance of and control over Irish social life through its networks of schoolteachers and parish priests' (2008: 32). To fully comprehend the depth of clerical control of Irish leisure, it should be acknowledged that Church engagement was delivered via a number of tactical interventions. By providing both

venues and organisational skills, as well as, in some cases, enthusiasm, local clergy were establishing a positive perception of the Church. If at a national level they were undoubtedly censors, at a local level they were often providing entertainment activities and embedding themselves in communities. It is reasonable to conclude that this multi-faceted engagement was a more successful long-term strategy than one of pure surveillance and control.

By the late 1940s Doonican was playing more frequently with dance bands, although he subsequently returned to variety shows in both Ireland and later Britain. While his chart success in Britain, which as I noted earlier proved that an Irish artist could succeed commercially in one of the music industry 'cores', it should be acknowledged that his 'apprenticeship' occurred in his local supportive music-making community. This provided him with performance opportunities, skills and important 'weak ties'. In addition, in the context of Irish acts competing internationally and in the core-to-periphery flow, with Doonican the Catholic Church was visibly active and benefiting from local entertainment which lacked the controversy of the 'dancehall debates'. Doonican eventually emigrated to achieve commercial success and I want to situate two of the most significant behind-the-scenes actors in the Irish music industry in their respective contexts of emigration.

'...like the dance halls back home': Entrepreneurs entertaining at home and abroad

During World War II, Britain was a major provider of employment for Irish workers and the remittances home from these workers were significant. In 1939 documented remittances from the Irish in Britain amounted to £700,000 (Blowick, 1945, *Dáil Éireann*). During the war, according to Dáil records, this increased to as much as £11,650,000 annually. The remittances were so important that concern was raised in the Dáil as to how the country would cope when the war ended and the workers returned. Ultan Cowley documented the working and social lives of these temporary migrants in *The Men Who Built Britain* (2001) and *McAlpines' Men: Irish Stories from the Sites* (2010), and he cites Irish government figures of wartime remittances from Britain totalling £22,650,000 (2001:120). Much of the total was sent home by some of the 160,000 Irish workers who migrated in the 1940–1944 period, between 30 and 40 per cent of whom were women (Cowley, 2001: 117). Large construction firms, such as Taylor, Wimpey and McAlpine, dispatched experienced Irish workers to recruit from their home towns and counties. An indirect benefit to the Republic from this migration was that Irish unemployment figures were lower than they otherwise would have been.

As a prominent member of the construction worker community, Bill Fuller was remembered at his funeral service. There, Fr Maurice Brick was quoted as saying: 'He had the gift of entrepreneurship, where he learned it, I don't know, but he had it and it was a great gift'. This entrepreneurial 'gift' was not exhibited during his youth working on the family farm according to people the priest had spoken to. He remarked: 'They said he didn't really display it at this time, but he was always full of ideas and was always trying to figure out if there was an easier way of doing certain jobs around the farm' (Nolan, 2008) .Yet Fuller had indeed exhibited his entrepreneurial abilities before he emigrated. According to his recollection, 'at home in Kerry, I was a handy man at organising the shilling dances to raise funds for an uncle who fought an election to become a TD' (Hand, *Sunday Independent*, 28 September 1975).

Fuller, born in 1917, worked in construction in Britain the 1930s and subsequently set up his own firm. In addition to undertaking construction projects in London, he opened music venues for the young Irish to socialise in. One London venue which had previously served as a social centre for the immigrant Irish community, the Buffalo in Kentish Town, had opened in the mid-1930s. It was quickly closed down; sources claimed it was due to frequent visits by the police to break up fights (Harrison, 2004). In 1938, the venue was acquired by Fuller (Suggs, 2009: 58–60), who then combined his construction business with music venue management while building up a chain of dance halls in Ireland, Britain and the US. He was quoted on his introduction to London entertainment management:

> I was one of the boys, and I knew that to have any sort of social life in London you'd have to have something like the dance halls back home. So, I leased a place in Bayswater, did it up, got a group of musicians, a bar license and I was in showbusiness (Hand, *Sunday Independent*, 28 September 1975).

He claimed he reopened the Buffalo despite the initial misgivings of the local police:

> The Buffalo had been closed down by the police, who had put a big lock on the gate, so I went to see Inspector Harris in Holmes Road, and he was a hard man to bargain with, but I said 'I'll make a deal with you: if you're ever called in to sort out a fight here, I'll put the lock back on the gate' (Harrison, 2004: 29).

He described the entertainment he provided:

> In those early days, I always had good Irish music. It was mainly old-time waltzes, reels and jigs – and, after a while, the quick step came in. At first, I used to make up my own bands: I had a blind pianist called Billy and another lad who was called Tommy, who was half-Irish and half Italian, who played the accordion (Harrison, 2004: 29).

Fuller was a major employer of Irish construction workers in London; accounts of the numbers he employed range from 2,000 during the Blitz bombings (Cowley, 2001) to Fuller's own account of 600 (Hand, 1975). The often repeated anecdote reinforced his prominence during World War II construction and demolition: 'What Hitler didn't knock down, Bill Fuller did' (Cowley, 2001: 145).

Fuller expanded his range of activities to include venue ownership, personal management and the promotion of tours both from and to Ireland. In doing this he was responsible for the transmission of British and American music to Ireland and the sustaining of the careers of Irish acts and the representation of Irish culture to Britain and America. Through the 1940s to the 1970s he was responsible for many of the tours of Britain and the US undertaken by Irish acts and was especially prominent in the 'showband' circuit. In terms of 1940s social history, Fuller was part of the major wave of wartime reconstruction emigrants to Britain. In his case, recognising an opportunity to provide entertainment for these emigrants in their host cities also led to an international music venue empire.

Another individual occupying a cross-roads position between global and local culture was Phil Solomon. Like Fuller, he was involved in bringing overseas acts to Ireland, as well as very successfully bringing Irish acts to overseas markets. Solomon, in conjunction with his wife Dorothy and his brother Mervyn, guided acts from both sides of the border into the British charts. In the 1950s and 1960s, while the perception of Ireland was as an industry outpost, the Solomons successfully delivered Irish acts into the British charts, for example Ruby Murray and Them, featuring Van Morrison, the Bachelors and the Dubliners. The family was also instrumental in the careers of local acts like Bridie Gallagher, The Gallowglass Ceili Band and Deirdre O'Callaghan. They also provided both Gilbert O'Sullivan and Rory Gallagher with some of their earliest commercial recordings. Their ownership interests in radio, record distribution and labels such as Emerald and Major-Minor provided them with multiple areas of industry involvement.

The 1901 census recorded a small family at 32 Bedeque St, Shankill parish, Belfast (Census, http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie). Philip Solomon's grandparents, Jacob and Jane, were listed as Russian-born and of the 'Hebrew' religion. A decade later, the 1911 census recorded the growing family of nine children now resident at 23 Fleetwood St, Shankill parish, Belfast (Census, http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie). Jacob's occupation was documented as draper and it was recorded that he was illiterate in the English language. Ray Rivlin (2011) records the total Jewish community in Ireland in the 1881 census as numbering 394 individuals. The family's eldest son, Maurice, became involved in the emerging music business in Ireland and in 1919 Maurice married Evelyn Peres from Leeds. He formed the Solomon and Peres firm with his brother-in-law Harold (British Jewry, http://www.british-jewry.org.uk).

In his cultural history of Jews in the music industry, Michael Billig (2000) includes an explanation for the prevalence of Jewish entrepreneurs; he concludes that 'unwelcome on Wall Street, many Jewish businessmen looked for places where there were fewer barriers to entrepreneurship' (Billig, 2000: 32). Denied access to the more secure and established networks in traditional industry, they instead turned to more speculative and uncertain ventures lacking barriers to entry based on religion. For the Solomons, Ireland provided no significant existing network of fellow Jews to access. This made their success even more remarkable. Lack of numbers was one obstacle, so too was an undercurrent of anti-Semitism. As the historian Dermot Keogh points out in his book *Jews in Twentieth Century Ireland: Refugees, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust* (1998), the 'ratio of Jews to the rest of population was perhaps the lowest of any English-speaking country' (Keogh, 1998: 226). Ireland's Jewish community was small and conservative; Ireland's policy of restricting wartime refugees from Europe, despite Nazi persecution, meant that the community was 'uninfluenced by continental newcomers' and often more traditional than Jewish populations elsewhere (Keogh, 1998: 226). Overt anti-Semitism was a feature of the Irish discourse of the 1930s and 1940s. The 1916 Veteran's Association passed a resolution in 1938 urging 'drastic restrictions' on 'alien immigration' and Keogh (1998) cites Fine Gael deputy Oliver J. Flanagan's notorious 1943 speech seeking to 'rout the Jews out of this country' (1998: 172).

The lack of kinship ties with Irish business families served as barrier to entry for entrepreneurs born outside of the Republic. Under the 1932 Control of Manufactures Act, at least half of the 'beneficial capital' accruing from a business had to be owned by a

'national of Saorstát Eireann'. The suspicion with which Jews were viewed in Ireland was even evident in the legal system. In 1940 the *Meath Chronicle* reported on a court case involving Solomon and Peres. Here, the firm pursued Thomas Blake of Navan for unpaid debts. The judge indicated that the he was sceptical of the claim because Solomon and Peres could be 'Jewish money lenders'. When it was pointed out that these claims were for goods sold and not for money lent, the judge's remarks were reported as: 'there were various devices used for such purposes' (*Meath Chronicle*, 'Navan District Court', 22 June 1940).

Despite these obstacles, the career of Maurice Solomon was represented as a 'rags to riches' narrative in his *Music Week* obituary (*Music Week*, 12 February 1977). Following his death in February 1977, the industry trade publication published biographical details and an outline of his career. According to *Music Week*, Solomon was born into extreme poverty in Belfast. The family circumstances were such that as a youth he turned down a high-school scholarship to instead support his siblings financially. He served as a shop apprentice until he had saved 8s 3d. He used this sum to purchase pins, needles and buttons which he sold door to door. By the age of 14, he had saved enough to purchase a bicycle, enabling him to increase the number of houses he called on. Three years later, he had the considerable sum of 300 pounds, which he used to fund the education of his 11 siblings.

The teenager built up a business specialising in aprons, pillowcases, shirts and trousers. During a trip to Yorkshire sourcing raw materials, he heard about the recent discovery of crystal radio sets. He subsequently added gramophone speakers and records to his catalogue of goods. By 1925, it was stated that the firm was selling several thousand gramophone players a year.

Solomon's knowledge of the Irish market meant that he understood the type of product that would appeal locally. He identified a demand for Irish repertoire locally and requested specifically Irish repertoire from Decca. The firm's owner, Edward Lewis, travelled in person to Belfast to play these samples for Maurice Solomon and the Belfast businessman promptly ordered 100,000 copies. The firm became the first sole distributor selected by Decca when they launched a software division selling records in 1929.

Conclusion

With hindsight, it is possible to see how a number of key figures in the Irish music business acquired the social capital and experience during the 1940s which they later used to shape the local industry. In London, Bill Fuller gained the skills and experience amongst the manual workers supplying Britain's war-time needs, which he then applied in the live music industry. Just as crucial to the development of the domestic industry were the Solomon family's skills. If Ireland's music industry had been 'born global' in the 1940's, despite the isolationist rhetoric, it was becoming more so.

What did the turbulent era of the 1940s mean for the long-term local music industry? First, it proved that Ireland could produce music 'stars' locally. Delia Murphy's performing career, which included appearances at events that had a distinctive 'sacral nationalist' flavour, was also advanced by two recent technological and marketing developments, gramophone records and radios. It was collaboration between the Gramophone Co. and the national broadcaster, Radio Éireann that led to her work being issued as records and promoted on the station. This was one of the ways during the 1940s that the Gramophone Company embedded itself in Irish life and with Irish power groups. The recording and marketing of recordings by Eamon de Valera was another and the firm undertook advertising campaigns to promote its products in Irish newspapers.

This may account for why, despite the continued anti-jazz rhetoric and the tension between Ireland and Britain during World War II, the recording firm did not encounter any apparent hostility. Just as the Gramophone Company found a way to embed itself in Ireland's music culture, so did the Church. It did this by its multiple involvements with local variety shows. While dancehalls brought with them questions of morality, the highly popular and plentiful variety shows appeared to be controversy-free. This was important as it can be argued that the anti-jazz campaigns undermined the Irish moral authorities by placing them in opposition to type of music that was certainly available to – and apparently enjoyed by – many Irish people at the time. The open and successful opposition to District Justice MacEachach indicates that the Irish anti-jazz campaigners and even apparently monolithic movements like the drive to establish Irish dancing as a national pastime, could be, and were challenged.

If Delia Murphy proved that Ireland could produce local 'stars', Val Doonican eventually proved that the country could also produce international ones. Yet he grew up in Catholic-dominated Ireland and in the wake of the intense national debates about 'native versus

foreign' culture that had marked the 1930s. Why was he not speaking Gaelic, or at the very least singing Gaelic songs? If his early music making and career development took place under the vigilant eyes of the clergy who were policing those Irish-Ireland values, why did his repertoire primarily consist of 'foreign' songs? The answer to these questions appears to be that the values advocated by the 'Irish-Ireland' group simply did not filter down to everyday Irish life. Under this model of society, the clergy were supposed to be monitoring the people; instead, Doonican and other young performers were openly playing foreign music with the acknowledgement and endorsement of the clergy whose charities were benefiting from those performances.

During the 1940s, on a quotidian level, the earlier values of the 'Irish-Ireland' group were not only contested, they were bypassed completely. Bill Fuller provided entertainment for the Irish in London during the decade and as Fuller and the Belfast-born Phil Solomon acquired skills during this time, they were ready to make Ireland's cultural borders even more porous.

Chapter 5: 1950s

Rock and Roll, 'Yankee Doodle Blarney', The Clancy Brothers: Pathways to the market

During the 1950s, Ireland's economy continued to falter and by the decade's end it was finally acknowledged that the self-sufficiency policy, pursued with such rigidity for decades, was a failure. Yet, despite the underdevelopment of both the economy and the local music industry, during the 1950s some Irish artists managed to secure contracts and achieve commercial success with major international firms. This invites two related questions: How did they achieve this and who helped them? The commercial popular music activity took place against the transition towards a more open economy and highlights how both industry-specific and social-specific factors determine an artist's opportunities for commercial success.

The 1950s have been under-represented in histories of Irish popular music. Smyth (2005) draws attention to how the most comprehensive histories of Irish popular music, including Prendergast (1987) and Clayton-Lea and Taylor (1992), take showbands as their 'point of departure'. He stresses that the showbands had an 'inheritance' and emerged from 'a complex island-wide, popular music-making culture' (2005: 11). Yet he also uses the showbands as the point of departure for his study, *Noisy Island, a Short History of Irish Popular Music* (2005). Similarly, McLaughlin and McLoone (2012) and Campbell and Smyth (2005) effectively take the 1960s as their starting point. Even in the Irish Senate, the 1950s have been marginalised from the history of popular music: 'the Irish music recording industry can really only trace its beginnings to the early 1960s' (Mooney, 1999, *Seanad Eireann*).

The 1950s, then, have been under-explored. I am going to examine how Ireland's 'complex island-wide popular music-making culture' as Smyth describes it, underwent major changes during the decade. In particular, I want to draw attention to the significance of behind-the-scenes entrepreneurs like Philip Solomon and Bill Fuller. Solomon, based in Belfast during most of the decade, managed two of the most popular Irish female acts of the 1950s, Ruby Murray and Bridie Gallagher. Murray, from Belfast, achieved unprecedented British chart success for an Irish act, while Gallagher was one of the Republic's most celebrated singers. In the context of Ireland's public and political cultural discourse about 'foreign' versus 'native', it is significant that by 1959 Gallagher was being

represented in the Irish media as successfully challenging overseas singers in popularity. At a time when 'rock and roll' was becoming established, this was remarkable. A spokesman for Radio Éireann quoted in *The Irish Times* stated how, in terms of 'domestic versus foreign' debates, the local was triumphing: 'Irish ballads easily lead the field, having more or less ousted American "pop" singers in the past two years'. To the newspaper, this stemmed from:

> ...the recording companies' sudden interest in traditional Irish music about two years ago... [while] John McCormack and Delia Murphy still have their staunch admirers, the majority of listeners, however, now request, again and again, to hear Bridie Gallagher... [records by Gallagher and Brendan O'Dowda] caught the public imagination at once, however, and the demand for these is growing, rather than slackening (*The Irish Times*, 30 December 1959).

It is important to note here that the newspaper is crediting international firms with stimulating the demand for local singers and it is significant that Gallagher's profile had risen while she was being managed by Belfast-based entrepreneur whose Jewish grandparents had emigrated to the city. Another prominent entrepreneur during the 1950s was Bill Fuller who, in addition to running venues in Ireland, Britain and North America, managed his wife, the Dublin singer Carmel Quinn; she achieved Top Ten positions in the US album charts (*Billboard*, 15 May 1955). In addition to bringing Irish acts to local, British and US charts during the 1950s, both Solomon and Fuller, sometimes together, were bringing overseas acts to Ireland. They proved how Irish music industry gate-keepers were engaged in two-way cultural flows between the local scene and the international industry.

Continuing crisis: The Irish economy in the 1950s

The Irish cultural protection lobby faced major challenges during the 1950s. They encountered an increasingly sophisticated and organised domestic and global music industry and this undermined their attempts to preserve indigenous culture. Here, entrepreneurs played a key role although some, particularly those born outside Ireland, encountered obstacles to their commercial activity.

As Richard A. Peterson (1990) documented, the US industry was transformed during the 1950s by new entrants and innovative entrepreneurs. One of their transformational activities resulted in the new 'rock and roll music' that was eagerly embraced by the 'teenage' market. This was a major factor in making the recording industry particularly

profitable during the mid-1950s. Read and Welch (1959) documented that total sales of records in 1955 were approximately $300 million (1959: 217). For Ireland this provided a potentially lucrative field for enterprise, however, the country's traditional lack of entrepreneurship did not offer any guarantees that local entrepreneurs would engage with the rapidly developing global music industry.

As in previous decades, any attempts to 'protect' Irish culture from outside influences continued to be undermined by continuing emigration. The 1956 emigration figures were the highest of the 20th century and the economic crisis of 1955–1956 was described as the 'defining event of post-war Irish economic history' (Bielenberg and Ryan, 2013: 19). The ongoing pattern was for emigrants to be primarily drawn from Ireland's younger generation; over half of early-1950s school-leavers had emigrated by 1961 (Share et al., 2007: 156). Not all of these emigrants were equipped by the Irish education system to have the greatest prospects abroad. While there was a growing consensus internationally that education had stimulated post-war recovery elsewhere, in Ireland this had not happened. Even as late as the mid-1960s, less than half of Irish students remained in education past the age of 13 (Bielenberg and Ryan, 2013: 23).

Britain continued to be a primary destination for emigrants and by the 1960s the Irish were the biggest ethnic group there, with over a million Irish-born residents (Share et al., 2007: 157). The underlying economic reasons for mass emigration were stark. Despite some improvement in trade relations with Britain at the time, including a 1948 agreement liberalising trade, the balance of payments deficit was £61 million in 1951. This was despite Ireland receiving £47 million in Marshall Aid between 1948 and 1952 (Bielenberg and Ryan, 2013: 18). The most obvious benefit of this post-war reconstruction funding was capital, yet one of the requirements for receiving this funding was also significant; recipient nations were required to collect accurate economic data (Bielenberg and Ryan, 2013: 18). While this meant that Ireland's comparative economic weakness relative to other European countries became transparent, it eventually led to a shift in policy away from protectionism and some positive steps towards export-driven commercial activity.

Networks and opportunities: Irish success in Britain in the 1950s

The growing Irish population in Britain certainly provided a market for Irish acts. The very visible, and *audible*, success of the Irish in British broadcasting during the 1950s indicated that there was no institutional barrier to them. However, as significant as the

accomplishments of a number of very identifiable Irish individuals were, their achievements were not uncomplicated in terms of ethnicity. For example, some of the most prominent Irish-born members of the entertainment world exchanged markers of their Irish identity before establishing their careers in Britain.

One of the most prominent of them, Eamonn Andrews, whose origins were in a working-class area of Dublin, described how his parents invested in additional educational capital for him. In terms of Bourdieu's concepts of capital, this educational capital enhanced his career prospects. In one of his autobiographies he represents this as integral to his success. He describes the elocution lessons he undertook with Miss Ena Burke as 'the best investment my mother ever made for me' (Andrews, 1989: 32–33). He refers to these lessons light-heartedly as 'another effort [by my mother] to distance me from the mob' (Andrews, 1989: 32). Andrews was perhaps the most visible Irish success of his generation in British broadcasting during the 1950s to the 1970s and his accent was frequently commented on by the media on both sides of the Irish Sea. At the time of his death, Tom McGuirk (1987) wrote 'that class-unidentifiable Irish brogue of his granted him clear passage through that particular British minefield' (McGuirk, *Irish Independent*, 6 November 1987). As difficult as that 'minefield' may have been to navigate, the BBC was visibly supportive of individuals from the Irish Republic.

In Ireland, Andrews deployed the cultural and social capital he acquired as a well-known figure in Britain and became an instrumental figure behind the scenes in the Irish music industry. He founded a Dublin firm, Eamonn Andrews Studios, to prepare radio programmes for Radio Éireann and in 1957 merged with his competitor Fred O'Donovan, who had organised entertainment for troops while serving with the British military. In addition, the military had paid for him to be trained in broadcasting at the BBC (Binchy, *The Irish Times*, 24 May 1971). Together, O'Donovan and Andrews, under the Eamonn Andrews name, dominated Irish radio by producing sponsored shows and owning the recording studio where a huge number of domestic pop recordings were produced.

Another Irish figure who gained prominence in British broadcasting and subsequently influenced the domestic industry was Richard O'Connor from Kerry. Like Andrews, he removed markers of his Irish ethnicity before embarking on a career in London. In this case, he changed his name by deed poll to Richard Lord Afton, a decision he made, according to reports, 'for professional reasons' (*Irish Press*, 20 May 1971). The relevant

cultural capital for a professional life in British entertainment was gained via the porous cultural borders during World War II. According to media interviews, he had abandoned his medical studies to tour Ireland with variety shows before enlisting in the British military. There his duties included organising entertainment for troops stationed in the Middle East (*Irish Independent*, 28 April 1954).

Afton's post-war activity demonstrates the influence that industry figures in Britain had for Irish musicians in the 1950s. As early as 1948, he was in a position to secure highly-prestigious and visible opportunities for Irish acts on British television. It was front-page news in Ireland when he selected Leo Rowsome, the uileann piper, as well as singers and actors, for a televised 'St. Patrick's Day Variety Show' (*Irish Independent*, 6 March 1948; *Irish Press*, 8 March 1948).

This annual television programme became established as a feature of British television and in 1951 Delia Murphy was amongst the performers. She was also included the following year when the programme, including Irish dancing and a number of singers and actors, was broadcast from Liverpool (*Irish Independent*, 5 March 1952). Afton played a pivotal role in advancing the career of Ruby Murray, the Belfast singer who enjoyed greater British chart success than any other artist from the island of Ireland during the 1950s. As early as 1948, when she was 12 years old, Afton had brought her to London for a television broadcast (*Irish Independent*, 14 October 1954). Six years later, he selected her for the broadcast programme, 'Quite Contrary', during her engagement with the 'Yankee Doodle Blarney' stage production (*Irish Independent*, 1 June 1954). Similarly, the Irish media credited him with raising the profile of second-generation Irish singer, Joan Regan (*Irish Independent*, 9 October 1954).

Because key British-based music industry gate-keepers like Afton were participating in a number of networks simultaneously, they were very influential for Irish acts. Afton, for example, was engaging with the epicentre of the British entertainment industry; he even produced variety performances for the Royal family. He was also responsible for the television programme, 'Quite Contrary', for which, as seen above, he engaged Irish acts. He placed Irish acts, including the tenor Josef Locke, in his royal variety shows (*Irish Independent*, 28 April 1954). It should be noted that some of his productive connections with the Irish music industry were with other ex-members of the British army who had been involved with troop entertainment.

For Irish artists, one of Afton's key alliances was with Percy Holmshaw the founder of the Irish Theatrical Agency (ITA). Holmshaw, according to Irish media accounts (O'Reilly, *Irish Independent*, 21 December 1956) had been posted to the British Expeditionary Forces where he had received a bullet wound to the head. He was reassigned to arranging entertainment for the troops and subsequently settled in the Republic where the ITA became the country's only agency representing variety acts. According to national press classified advertisements, the firm successfully found employment for Irish acts in British holiday camps during the 1950s (e.g. *Irish Independent*, 22 September 1956; *Irish Independent*, 26 March 1959). It is highly relevant to Ireland's music industry history that Ruby Murray (*Irish Independent*, 5 September 1955), as well as the acts that appeared on the earliest St Patrick's Day British television broadcasts, apparently resulted from the Afton–Holmshaw alliance (*Irish Independent*, 6 March 1948).

Afton continued to be a significant figure in the British music industry. The Irish media wrote of him during the 1950s as 'Mr Television Music Hall' (*Irish Independent*, 28 April 1954) and 'the BBC's recognised "star-maker"' (*Irish Independent*, 21 January 1956). He also continued to be a significant figure in gaining mass-market exposure for Irish acts in Britain. In 1956, he broadcast Mary O'Hara on the 'More Contrary' programme before directing a television series in which she starred (*Kerryman*, 7 April 1956). The following year, he selected Val Doonican for his own television series (*Irish Independent*, 29 May 1957). In 1959, he placed another Irish harpist, Deidre O'Callaghan, on British television (*Irish Independent*, 2 May 1959).

By drawing attention to Afton's activities, I am not claiming that Irish acts only appeared on British television in the 1950s because of Irish-born, British-based industry insiders. Rather, it highlights how individual industry figures were very significant for Irish acts. Without emigrants like Afton based in Britain, it is impossible to know how many Irish acts would have been broadcast on television in the 1950s. What is evident from the decade is that the local music industry in Ireland benefitted from Afton, a well-placed sympathetic individual who succeeded in making Irish artists worthy of high-profile broadcasts in Britain.

'Yankee Doodle Blarney'. The flow of culture between the US, Ireland and Britain

Afton was not the only figure linking Irish musicians with key global markets. It is worth considering ways in which entrepreneurs and nurturing social environments prepared Irish acts for careers beyond Ireland. For those dedicated to keeping Gaelic culture 'pure', the title 'Yankee Doodle Blarney' may have represented their worst fears of how North American popular culture would debase native Irish culture. Yet the 'Yankee Doodle Blarney' tour of Ireland and Britain indicated that there was a demand for such entertainment when properly marketed. In September 1953, *The Irish Times* published details of the prospective entertainment in what it predicted would be 'one of the strongest variety shows that has ever toured Ireland'. Included on the bill were Boston-based singer Connie Foley who recorded for Copley Records, impressionist Connie Stewart, Belfast singer Ruby Murray and comedian Billy Livingstone, as well as dancers. In addition, a feature of the show was the inclusion of 'a talent contest, sponsored by an American recording company anxious to discover new ballad-singers and new Irish composers'. In particular, singers who could 'sing a ballad in the good old "come-all-ye" style' were invited to participate (K.M.G., *The Irish Times*, 23 September 1953).

Philip Solomon drew from his family's multi-faceted engagement with the music industry in preparing this line-up. Ruby Murray was suggested to the impresario by one of the workers in the family-owned record shop who had performed with her in a summer in a show in Bundoran, County Donegal (Burgess and Bowles, 2006: 209). Solomon's promotional efforts for the show were not restricted to the Irish communities. He also gained attention for his artists by engaging with a variety of media in Britain including radio and television. Radio Luxembourg included a broadcast of Yankee Doodle Blarney in their listings on 27 February 1954. This programming was most likely paid for by Solomon in accordance with the station's practice of selling air-time (*Irish Independent*, 27 February 1954). An even higher-profile appearance for Ruby Murray followed in June 1954 on the Richard Afton 'Quite Contrary' television show during 'Yankee Doodle Blarney's' 10-week tour of Britain (*Irish Independent*, 1 June 1954). Ruby Murray's subsequent success in Britain was unprecedented; she placed six songs in the national Top Ten in a seven-month period in 1955, a feat which established her as Britain's 'bestselling singles artist' of the year (McAleer, 1997).

A small number of other Irish acts in this era signed record deals with international firms; some of these artists received substantial benefits, education and support from the local

scene outside the 'professional music industry'. Three of these acts, Mary O'Hara, Deirdre O'Callaghan and the Little Gaelic Singers, acquired skills and opportunities from educators and Catholic religious orders, while The Clancy Brothers enjoyed the patronage of a member of a wealthy American family. Even as the Irish *live* popular music industry was increasing in professionalisation, the *recording* industry was underdeveloped and artists were often dependent on a gift economy and a supportive social environment to undertake their initial music making.

The Church and major labels: The Little Gaelic Singers

The cultural flow in the 1950s between Ireland and the music industry 'metropoles' of Britain and the US can also be seen in the case of the Little Gaelic Singers. The skills acquired by James MacCafferty during his early music-making career and later when arranging concerts for troops stationed in Northern Ireland contributed to his successful stewardship of a very distinctive Irish recording act. It was with the Little Gaelic Singers that MacCafferty achieved his greatest international recognition; their self-titled debut album (Decca USA, 1956) and the follow-up *From Donegal to Galway Bay* (Decca Records, 1958) were released by Decca in the US. The albums, containing religious and Irish songs and released by a major international firm, provided an opportunity for the group's background in an orphanage to be highlighted; the group was explicitly positioned as Irish *and* Catholic. The sleeve notes, with their overt acknowledgement of Irish religious personnel tending children and an implicit invitation to contribute to the group's upkeep, indicated a new way for the Catholic Church to interact with popular music. The sleeve notes included the following:

> One of the most unforgettable experiences in Ireland today is to visit Nazareth House, the home of the Little Gaelic Singers of County Derry. Almost a century old, Nazareth House in the city of Derry is an orphanage for girls, maintained by the Sisters of Nazareth, an Order of the Roman Catholic Church. Its upkeep is made possible by public donations from the people of Derry and of neighbouring Countries (Little Gaelic Singers, *From Donegal to Galway Bay*, Decca USA, 1957).

The Little Gaelic Singers first toured the US in 1956 and the group benefited from a combination of modern mass media communications and the active grass-roots participation of the Irish-Catholic hierarchy and community in the US. They appeared on the prestigious and widely watched *Ed Sullivan Show* and received active support from the Irish emigrant community. This engagement by the Irish-American community was

acknowledged as contributing to the success of the tour; *Billboard* magazine commented how the series of concerts was 'another example of disk sales increased by a personal appearance tour'. In music industry parlance, the magazine wrote: 'Other factors hyping interest in the Singers was their sponsorship in New York and Boston by Cardinal Spellman and Archbishop Cushing respectively…' (*Billboard*, 17 November 1956).

It seems natural that the group of Derry orphans would appeal to the large Irish-American community. Yet, in this case, the degree and nature of the community support went beyond the typical measures of audience support via ticket purchases. In most cities, a local Irish Catholic community group shared in the concert promotion and a portion of the proceeds was earmarked for a Catholic charity. For example the Reading, Pennsylvania, show was arranged in conjunction with the Junior Catholic Women's Club with proceeds aiding the Catholic Interracial Centre (*Reading Eagle*, 3 October 1956).

The Little Gaelic Singers demonstrate how Church institutions interacted productively with the rapidly developing music industry. Their case also indicates how Ireland's artists, despite being recorded and marketed by major international firms, could still be seen as representing an alternative to modernity or modern youth culture. For the choir's organiser, James MacCafferty, however, clerical control meant that he answered to a hierarchical authority. MacCafferty's career with the Little Gaelic Singers came to an abrupt end in 1959 when Bishop Farren appointed him as a teacher to the newly opened Convent of Mercy School. It was not a position he volunteered for. According to an interview: 'I was appointed – not that I wanted the job – to St. Mary's when it opened as a new intermediate school. I was put in as Music Master – and I was getting £2 less than the caretaker' (McCafferty, www.jamesmaccafferty.com). Bishop Farren's decision was final and he is described as imposing his will on the local entertainment scene in the city. According to the information on MacCafferty's website:

> James could have turned down the offer but Bishop Farren's offers were rather like Don Corleone's, and he had seen what became of those, lay or clerical, who incurred his displeasure. A popular local entertainer, Harry Roddy, who appeared on stage in a comedy sketch wearing an ankle-length nightshirt never again got a booking in Derry. Bishop Farren's rule was arbitrary and absolute (McCafferty, www.jamesmaccafferty.com).

Exporting Irish harpists

In terms of engagement with the international record industry, Mary O'Hara was one of the distinctive 'success narratives' of the 1950s local music scene. Yet her achievements in the global music industry derived from non-professional activities in Ireland which were unrelated to any sense of a 'music industry'. In her first autobiography, *The Scent of Roses* she traces her music making to the time she spent boarding in a Dublin school, Sion Hill, run by the Dominican order of nuns, where her singing talent was encouraged:

> My teacher was a very amiable, gentle person called Sister Angela Walsh. She continued to teach until she was almost ninety. I count her among my most cherished friends (O'Hara, 1980: 29).

Sister Walsh's active encouragement of her students also included organising an annual pageant. The life and work of Thomas Moore was selected as the presentation in the year of O'Hara's involvement; a harp teacher, Máirín Ní Shéa, was brought in to train three students in the basics of the harp, which was the instrument emblematic of Moore's vision of Ireland. Having instructed the students, Ní Shéa arranged for them to perform live on Radio Eireann's 'Children at the Mic' programme. When she finished school, O'Hara continued vocal training and harp playing with the encouragement of her former teacher and her own mother. O'Hara's family network yielded further opportunities. Her sister, the Abbey Theatre actress Joan O'Hara, brought Mary along to an audition at Radio Eireann, where her songs were recorded and broadcast. She was paid £2 per song and received further broadcast opportunities (O'Hara, 1980: 35). Without professional representation, the national broadcaster acted as a de facto agency for O'Hara, fielding requests for concert appearances by the harpist. She wrote how, 'without having to seek it, a fairly steady flow of work was coming in' (O'Hara, 1980: 37).

In addition, Ní Shéa arranged concert appearances for the trio of students in England under the auspices of Irish emigrant associations. In early 1953, the group was pictured on the front page of the *Irish Press* newspaper, which announced an English tour by them. Rather than being a commercial tour, this was sponsored by Fógra Fáilte to attract tourists from Britain to Ireland (*Irish Press*, 5 February 1953). This promotion provided an opportunity for the State to represent the country abroad. If the Church in Ireland used popular music as part of its representation during the 1950s, as it did with the Little Gaelic Singers, then

the State could evidently do likewise with the Irish harpists. From analysis of the media at the time, it appears to have done so with a sophisticated approach.

Rather than resorting to the stereotypical tropes of Irishness, the campaign, according to the *Irish Press*, eschewed them. Reporting on the launch of the initiative at London's Café Royal, Terry Ward described the attendance as being 90 per cent English who '...were somewhat surprised to find that there were neither big drums, shillelaghs nor begorrahs provided for the entertainment'. Instead, the harpists 'gave us music in the ancient cultivated sense' (Ward, *Irish Press*, 1953). O'Hara's music making was developed in the not-for-profit environment, in which nuns, teachers and the State tourism office provided her with opportunities as well as skills.

O'Hara wrote how the media coverage generated by her activities in both Ireland and Britain resulted in interest in her from the Decca record label. She was invited to make a demonstration (demo) recording of some of her material for the firm in London (O'Hara, 1980: 67). As successful as her engagement with the music industry appeared to be, O'Hara nevertheless indicated how these professional relationships can be problematic. She wrote:

> All went well with the recording session and (foolishly as it turned out) I signed a contract with the Decca Record Company. My mistake lay in that I didn't have an expert read through the document (1980: 73).

It is fair to conclude that O'Hara's lack of qualified legal guidance when signing her five-year contract says as much about the unsophisticated nature of the Irish music industry as it does about the young artist. Very few popular music managers existed in Ireland in the mid-1950s. Of those, even fewer had experience of negotiating record deals with major firms. Despite the demand for her live performances, it was apparent that Decca was failing to engage with O'Hara in an active productive way. She recalled:

> There was no obligation on the part of the record company to release any material of mine. They were holding on to the four songs I'd sung for the test recording in October 1955 and showed no signs of bringing them out – hoping I would record 'pop-folk' songs instead of the traditional songs I understood I'd been contracted for (1980: 108).

Decca had suggested songs to O'Hara, none of which she felt comfortable with. A compromise was reached whereby Decca released an extended play (EP) single containing four songs. In an era with a less-centralised corporate structure, individual geographic branches had discretion about what product to release and market. This had implications for O'Hara:

> They called us to their office to tell us that in Holland alone they'd sold 2,000 copies in the first few days. Now they [Decca Records] did a *volte face*. Would I record a long-playing album of songs of my own choosing? (O'Hara, 1980: 108).

O'Hara's success proved that there was an international market for Irish female singer-harpists and Philip Solomon quickly decided to launch another similar act. Deirdre O'Callaghan, who attended the same school as O'Hara and received instruction from the same teachers, recalled her interaction with Solomon:

> When I had just left school I was asked to come back to Sion Hill for an audition with this man called Philip Solomon. And he, at the time, was managing Bridie Gallagher. There was a big Irish song boom. And anyway he came out and he listened to us all and he asked me to sing on my own. And I sang on my own then and he booked me – I was about eighteen then, I think – and he booked me to tour in England with the Bridie Gallagher show, doing all the big concert halls. So, anyway, I did that for a couple of years and I earned amazing money. Like when all my friends were earning a fiver at home for secretarial jobs and things like that, I was earning maybe up to a £100 a week. Now this was in 1959/1960 you know (O'Callaghan, 2009, interview with the author).

O'Callaghan spoke of Solomon's music industry network and the varied opportunities it provided her with:

> Philip had great ideas for me. I recorded my first long playing record for him, for a company called Top Rank.... He then had the Bachelors I remember. They were called the Harmonichords, and then when he took them over he made them the Bachelors and we did a lot of work together. Then he had me going to Germany, entertaining in Germany to the American troops and things like that and it was too rough for me. So, you see he was going for the money, the big money. But he did get me loads of work when... God he had me killed with work. We did a summer season in the Isle of Man and I remember we toured all up in Scotland. Ah, it was terrific, such fun then. I toured with Kenneth McKeller for him [Solomon] as well. But he was terrific. He had brilliant ideas, you know, he really had (O'Callaghan, 2009, interview with the author).

Eventually, Deirdre O'Callaghan decided that she no longer wished to pursue a demanding full-time career making music when she married. From a business point of view, with the profile and momentum she was enjoying, it was naturally a disappointment to Solomon. As she remembered: 'He was very angry with me when I left. But I just wanted to be at home. I just wanted to do all the things my friends were doing' (O'Callaghan, 2009, interview with the author).

Bridie Gallagher and Billy Fury: A 1950s clash between Irish and international music

Bridie Gallagher began to receive national newspaper coverage in 1956 when she appeared on the Dublin stage in Royal Showband, a multi-act variety bill at the Theatre Royal (*Irish Independent*, 31 January 1956). By the following year, it was being reported that in a London retailer catering to the Irish community, she was a top-selling artist along with Delia Murphy, Mary O'Hara and John McCormack (Fisher, *Irish Press*, 19 December 1957). Before the end of the 1950s, she was receiving favourable reviews in *Billboard* magazine (21 September 1959) and being managed by Philip Solomon. Her records were represented as massive sellers. Most notably, 'The Boys from County Armagh' was estimated to have sold 250,000 copies, which made it the biggest selling single record by an Irish artist (Stewart, *Billboard*, 19 September 1970).

By this time, Solomon was a key link between the Irish music scene and the global music core. For instance, the excitement in the Irish media about a series of concerts by Irish acts in London's Metropolitan theatre included quotes from Solomon: 'This has proved that there is tremendous following for Irish entertainment in London'. Just as importantly, in terms of prestige and career opportunities for Irish acts, a spokesman for the Granada Company was cited: 'We are going through an Irish phase in show business here' (*Irish Press*, 27 August 1959). Yet Solomon's position as a 1950s live entertainment promoter did not mean that he avoided the implications of culture clashes between Irish values and the behaviour of international pop stars.

In what seems to be an unlikely pairing, during 1959 Bridie Gallagher and the English singer, Billy Fury, who was a popular rock and roll artist, performed on bills together in the Republic. Fury discovered that what was acceptable in Britain was forbidden in Ireland. During his act, while singing the song 'Too Much', he behaved in a way that was deemed inappropriate. *The Irish Times* reported: 'The management objected to the way in

which Mr. Fury behaved with the microphone during that particular song'. They quoted the assistant manager of the theatre, Mr. Philip Clark, who said:

> The act is dropped as from to-morrow because of his gestures on the stage to which we objected.We had told him to cut them out and he did so but he put them back in again last night and we drew the curtain. We warned him again and to-night he used the same gestures so we blacked him out and sacked him (*The Irish Times*, 31 October 1959).

Fury's stage performance gained him cultural capital as a rock and roll singer. His, for the time, provocative gestures became part of his myth. For example, Simpson (2003) described him as a man who '...swung his hips as if he meant it... he got banned in Ireland' (2003: 128). This was in stark contrast to Bridie Gallagher's image. *The Irish Times* had earlier represented her as follows: 'Although much of her time is now spent on tour, she likes to spend as much time as possible in her modest house in Belfast, looking after her husband and her two sons' (*The Irish Times*, 21 September 1959). Although it was not the sole reason for Gallagher's public decision to end her professional alliance with Solomon, the clash of cultures was cited as a factor. A statement was printed in the Irish newspapers stating:

> Miss Gallagher's decision to break off all association with her former manager was brought to a head by the incident [Billy Fury's gestures which were judged unacceptable] at the Theatre Royal in Dublin last week' (*Irish Independent*, 3 November 1959).

'Jewish–Irish synergy': The Clancy Brothers and the making of 'tradition'

At a time when the local conditions in Ireland were providing the supportive environment from which Mary O'Hara, Deirdre O'Callaghan and Bridie Gallagher could emerge and subsequently sign to major international firms, the music making of The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem bypassed the Irish music scene completely. The group had never performed together in Ireland and only formed and first performed in the US with the encouragement and investment of a wealthy patron.

As Irish immigrants in the US, The Clancy Brothers participated in the field of popular music in both North America and Ireland. According to Liam Clancy's (2002) autobiography, *The Mountain of Women*, a key member of their New York network was a member of one of America's best known Jewish families, the Guggenheims. Diane Guggenheim, whose father Harry left an estate worth $50 million following his death in

1971, adopted the name 'Hamilton' after a character from an Irish folksong (Unger and Unger, 2006: 300). She travelled extensively, collecting field recordings of folk songs. Her particular fascination with Irish culture was attributed by her daughter to an Irish nanny who had worked for the family. In New York's Greenwich Village, Diane witnessed Paddy and Tom Clancy, who had emigrated from county Tipperary, performing. On an ethnographic field recording trip to Ireland she encountered the youngest of the Clancys, Liam, and involved him in her field research. There, she also introduced him to the Makem family in Keady, County Armagh, where they met Tommy Makem who would later join the Clancys in their singing group. Hamilton also sponsored Liam Clancy's passage to America, as well as his enrolment in New York University's film course (Clancy, 2002: 119).

Liam Clancy even credited the North American cultural entrepreneur with his decision to sing. He was quoted as saying: 'Before I went to America, I wasn't singing at all. In fact, the first thing I ever sang was on the recording that Diane Hamilton made, *The Lark in the Morning*' (Kelly, *The Irish Times*, 26 May 2001). Crucially, she also set up a record company, Tradition, to enable the band to have their music recorded and distributed. While a Clancy Brothers album was the first release on the label, it also issued material by Jean Ritchie, Alan Lomax, Peggy Seeger and Ewan McColl. Hamilton employed Paddy Clancy as the label's director and provided key connections with the North American music scene. As Liam Clancy wrote:

> These contacts went on and out to include all kinds of people in the fields of folk music and the theatre: Alan Lomax and Robin Roberts and Jean Richie, John Henry Faulk, Frank O'Connor, Pete Seeger, and just before he died, Woody Guthrie. Woody's disciples Ramblin' Jack Elliot and Bob Dylan became friends, too… Harold Leventhal became our partner in the publishing company Tiparm Music, and for fifteen years produced our biyearly concerts at Carnegie Hall (Clancy, 2002: 119–120).

Hamilton was also the introductory link between the act and their future managers, Marty Erlichman and Lenny Rosenfeld, who had managed the singer Josh White. The Clancy Brothers received input from their US managers about image, presentation and song selection:

> You could see how they were trying to tap this raw ethnic energy that radiated from these greenhorns and make it into a saleable commodity. That's how we worked together – using

> each other to reach a common goal: Jewish-Irish synergy. Gaelic schmaltz and Yiddish blarney – great team! Our goal was success and together we managed to achieve it (Clancy, 2002: 255).

In the context of core-to-periphery cultural flows, one Irish journalist concluded about the Clancys that 'America threw them up. America virtually claims them as her own' (Orpheus, *Irish Independent*, 9 April 1968). Liam Clancy wrote:

> Marty and Lenny were professionals. They had a kind of genius that opened doors where no one knew doors existed. They forced us to focus on performing a repertoire of songs we had chosen together as a team, and under their direction, we were gaining a mix of confidence and flamboyance with every show (2002: 256).

If The Clancy Brothers are identified as an 'Irish music industry' success story, by Liam Clancy's account, it was only when the group achieved mass-media success via appearances on the *Ed Sullivan Show* that they began to enjoy the support of Irish-Americans. His *Irish Times* interview with John Kelly included the following recollection:

> In the beginning we didn't have an Irish audience at all... we were coming from a whole different situation and we just hated the stuff that was being trotted out in the Irish dance-halls. Our first audience in Carnegie Hall was almost totally liberal Jews and that's because Pete Seeger was playing with us – a communist black-listed by McCarthy. The Irish audience [in America] resisted what we were doing because of Pete Seeger. We also did a tour around New England for CORE, the Congress for Racial Equality, and then we couldn't play any of those cities again for about five or six years (Kelly, *The Irish Times*, 26 May 2001).

The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem were later credited with causing a resurgence of interest in folk music in Ireland, particularly amongst the youth market. The singer Christy Moore (2003) represented their importance:

> These guys were my Beatles... These Clancy men were vital in the development of modern Ireland and certainly they helped me to cast off the shackles of conservative Catholicism and to break free (Moore, 2003: 414).

There is a certain irony in that a group containing three Irish brothers began performing together when the American, Diane Hamilton, acted as patron to them. By funding air fares and a record label which both employed and promoted the group and introducing them to key members of the New York-based music scene, she was instrumental in providing a

platform for them. Yet, ultimately what the Clancys demonstrate is that global cultural flows are not unidirectional. These flows are complex and are produced by a number of disparate actors. They are influenced by demographic factors, including migration and the ways in which immigrants are received by the host community.

The continuing battle between ideology and commerce in the live music industry

Ireland, as seen by the reaction to the Bridie Gallagher/Billy Fury show in 1959, was not an ideologically neutral sphere of social activity, but a site where tradition and modern values clashed. Some of the earlier significant developments and tensions within the domestic live music industry during the 1950s are worth examining to place this in context.

In 1952, Eamon de Valera was quoted in the *Irish Press* stating that 'dancing was one of the only ways in which small local committees financed a number of objects of local interest' (*Irish Press*, 24 April 1952). Given Ireland's underdeveloped economy and massive emigration outflow, paid dances were important socially and economically for local communities. Public dancing was represented by politicians from all parties as a community practice as well as a fund-raising mechanism for local sporting, civic and charitable organisations. As seen in the 1930s, political parties were also beneficiaries of this activity. Thus dancing was seen not as a commercial practice but as a socialisation process of benefit to the local community. It was decentralised, with most of the dances taking place in local parish halls under clerical supervision, and was not part of a market-exchange circuit. Yet, in the long term, the clerical and community control of dancing was challenged by commercial ballrooms. My research indicates that the controversial transition from clerical-controlled to market-economy live music industry was advanced by dancing venue proprietors organising themselves into an effective lobby group and engaging with Irish politics.

Consistent with de Valera's identification of dances as valuable to local organisations for fund raising, Albert Reynolds (2010), who had owned a chain of ballrooms and later became Ireland's Taoiseach, also represented the importance of the dances to the Catholic Church. Reynolds wrote how 'the main fundraiser for most parishes was the church carnival and dance' (2010: 38). This insight is of interest as he was a pivotal individual in both the popular music and political fields; his career encompassed both. During the 1950s and 1960s he owned a chain of ballrooms and later achieved the highest elected office in the Irish Republic.

De Valera's remarks about how communities benefited from dancing took place during the 1952 budget debates. These debates were characterised by heated exchanges about the reduction of subsidies on essential foodstuffs and the implication of that for lower-income households. On 3 April 1952, Fine Gael's Cork TD, Mr Séan Collins, a barrister by profession, drew the Dail's attention to letters he described as evidence of 'the beautiful type of political skullduggery that goes on in the Fianna Fáil Party' (Collins, 1952, *Dail Eireann*). He was referring to correspondence between the Irish Ballroom Proprietors Association (IBPA) and Fianna Fáil's Séan Lemass. According to these documents, the Association had contacted Lemass in an effort to have the tax on dancing eliminated. Lemass indicated that he was in favour of abolishing tax and the Association, in turn, issued a letter to its members urging them to support Fianna Fáil financially and to work on their behalf.

Deputy James Dillon, Fine Gael, a barrister elected to represent county Monaghan, perhaps overstated the case, yet indicated how contentious the subject of the dance tax repeal was when he described it in the Dail as: 'the most astonishing proposition that has ever been brought before a democratic legislature in the history of democracy' (Dillon, 1952, *Dail Eireann*). In any event, when Fianna Fáil formed the next government, the tax was eliminated. Thus, the collective lobbying activity of the IBPA resulted in a public victory for a group of entrepreneurs in the Republic. They had engaged with the political process by financially supporting the party that promised them increased material rewards.

It is unclear whether the IBPA anticipated that their correspondence would be made so public, yet in any event they achieved their desired outcome. It is worth noting that the group first came to public prominence in 1948 during a dispute with the London-based Performing Rights Society (PRS). The Irish ballroom owners bound together to object strenuously to PRS demands for compensation to music publishers whose songs were performed in Irish venues (*Irish Press*, 31 July 1948). Thus, nationally, the IBPA was positioned as protecting Irish enterprise from British cultural and financial domination. The Association's initial meetings took place in Dublin's Four Provinces Ballroom, owned by Lorcan Bourke who was later elected to the Dublin Corporation for Fianna Fáil and rose to become the City's Deputy Lord Mayor.

One important conclusion can be drawn from this public discourse about the dancing tax. The provision of public dancing, as demonstrated by the interaction between the Ballroom Proprietors Association and Fianna Fáil, was no longer the sole domain of the Catholic Church. It was also no longer an aspect of Irish social and cultural life from which commercial considerations were absent and it featured a well-organised industry body which maintained strong political ties.

'...take hope - a strong new Union': The Irish Federation of Musicians

The Irish Federation of Musicians was another organised group within the live Irish music industry at this time. Formed in 1936, it was an affiliated member of the International Federation of Musicians and was represented by some media as a champion of workers' rights. When it moved to its premises in Dublin's Gardiner Street in 1945, the *Nenagh Guardian* endorsed it: 'Underpaid dance-band members take hope – a strong new Union' (*Nenagh Guardian*, 9 June 1945). During disputes, it depended on the Musicians' Union in England for support and while it shared principles with the English union, there were fundamental philosophical and practical differences between the two bodies. Because of Ireland's porous cultural borders and its relationship with Britain, the Fed, as it was colloquially known, stood in a vulnerable position. It was allied with a British organisation, yet concerned with protecting domestic culture and the livelihoods of its local members. Another ally was the Ballroom Proprietor's Association with whom it had lobbied the government over plans to introduce a tax on admission to dances (*Irish Press*, 21 June 1949). Here again was a well-organised industry body which was not afraid to engage with politics in pursuit of its commercial aims.

In 1951, the Federation amalgamated with the Six Counties Musicians' Association and the Belfast branch of the Musicians' Union (*Irish Independent*, 12 February 1951). The alliances with the London and Belfast unions did not result in the Federation being the sole representative of the interests of the Republic's musicians. In fact, a public turf war between the Federation and the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU) indicated strong intra-union hostilities, with the Congress of Irish Unions (CIU) going so far as to complain publicly of an 'unprovoked attack' by the Federation in 1952 (*The Irish Times*, 7 January 1953).

Naturally, one of the most contentious issues affecting the Irish Federation was whether to permit 'foreign' bands to perform in Ireland. This was not just an extension of the Irish

discourse of protectionism; the English union had placed restrictions on overseas artists in their area of jurisdiction from the turn of the century (Musicians' Union, www.musiciansunion.org.uk). The Federation's attitude to overseas artists visiting the Republic was often unclear or ambiguous although, as I will demonstrate, there were serious implications for breaching their rulings.

A proposed ban on visiting musicians in 1951 made front page headlines. The *Sunday Independent* claimed that in July 1951 the Federation had distributed a circular categorically stating that from 1 August no member of the Federation could perform with non-union or 'alien' musicians. The newspaper reported that the implementation of the ban had been postponed for a month and would therefore not affect the entertainment during Dublin's Horse Show (*Sunday Independent*, 29 July 1951). The pro-business newspaper did not endorse the union's position and appeared to be more concerned with the Horse Show Week social and commercial activities. Yet the article, which appeared to draw on materials issued by the union, provides an insight into the early 1950s live music industry.

From the article, it was clear that the union identified visiting musicians as threats to its membership. The 1950 Irish visit of Cyril Stapleton, arranged by 'an Irish agent', was represented as the catalyst for similar visits by English bands. Stapleton had been prominent on BBC radio and led the BBC Show Band. What was derisively referred to as his 'holiday tour' had precipitated 'the idea of an Irish vacation... amongst the "Big Noises" in the English dance world'. It was claimed that 30 British bands had visited Ireland by December 1950. The acts participated in a 60-40 split with Irish dance hall proprietors, while the Irish agent who arranged the dates received a commission of 10 per cent. The activities of the agent, as the intermediary between domestic dancers and foreign artists, would ultimately prove to be a bone of contention for the Irish Federation of Musicians. In 1951, though, the union lacked the support of the one group in Ireland which could give their members protection, the Irish government.

'Repeated' representations to the Department of Industry and Commerce were claimed by the Federation. The results of this 'revealed official reluctance to do anything in the matter'. In fact, it was claimed:

> The view taken at a very high Departmental level is that action taken here to protect the Irish Musicians' interests might result in 'reprisals' against Irish workers in Britain (*Sunday Independent*, 29 July 1951).

The Fed's position was precarious. It was allied with the British Musicians Union whose members, as well as – allegedly – Northern Irish musicians (*The Irish Times*, 20 January 1954) it wished to exclude from Ireland. It also lacked the support of the Irish government in legislating for this exclusion. The Irish government's inaction, seen by the union as a failure to protect domestic musicians, again reinforces the conclusion that by the 1950s Ireland's music industry was being shaped by demographic and economic considerations. It is easy to understand the government's hesitation when it came to potentially starting another trade war with Britain, particularly when an audience clearly existed there for Irish entertainers. Ireland's cultural insularity was not going to be policed and protected at the expense of opportunities for Irish acts and workers abroad.

Lacking government support, the Federation's proposed ban was finally rescinded, although restrictions were placed on visiting bands. Henceforth, all visiting bands had to observe a number of conditions: a licence fee ranging from £50 to £100 had to be paid to the Federation for visits of less than two weeks duration; a local Federation artist had to appear on the bill of any visiting act: the statement 'By Arrangement with the Irish Federation of Musicians' had to appear in all promotional materials (*The Irish Times*, 20 January 1954). Despite this, disputes arouse, including one over the visit of Ronnie Scott and his band in 1954. The Irish Federation issued instructions to its members not to play in any concert with the visitors, while Scott's home union, the British Musicians' Union, in solidarity with its Irish affiliated body, instructed him not to travel to Ireland (20 January 1954).

Ireland's unusual position within the global industry flows was highlighted by the 1953 visit of the American Stan Kenton; he was scheduled to give two concerts with his band on 30 September in the Royal Theatre. Because of territorial disputes between the British Musicians' Union and their US counterparts, the band was prevented from performing in Britain. In Dublin, the Theatre Royal's staff members were affiliated with the ITGWU union and were thus not compelled to act in solidarity with international Musicians' Unions.

Given that Ireland was often seen as conservative in embracing 'foreign' music and youth culture, there is an irony that Dublin provided an opportunity for British Kenton fans to see the band. This occurred due to an alliance between local Irish music entrepreneurs, the more established British industry and the US band. In this case, the local entrepreneur was Bill Fuller, who had brought many international acts to Ireland during the early 1950s, including Jack Parnell, Carl Barriteau, Gracie Cole and even the all-female Ivy Benson band (*Limerick Leader*, 'Ivy Benson and her All-Girls Orchestra', 10 October 1953).

The 4 July 1953 main front page story of London's *Melody Maker* magazine announced the appearance of Kenton in Dublin (*Melody Maker*, 'MM plans trips to Kenton show in Dublin', 4 July 1953). It included a photograph of Bill Fuller and Joe Loss, with the band-leader pointing his baton at Dublin on a map of Britain and Ireland. Fuller and Loss were named as presenting the concerts in conjunction with agent Harold Davison. The magazine was arranging transport by train and boat from four British cities for 'what is without question one of the most controversial bands in the long and stormy history of jazz'.

The local papers also featured the event. The *Irish Independent* music critic, Joseph O'Neill gave the concert a positive review, although he did refer to the audience as 'devotees of this musical cult' (O'Neill, *Irish Independent*, 21 September 1953). *The Irish Times* depicted the audience in even more negative terms, describing them as 'an impossible number of "jazz addicts," who attended in crépe soled-shoes and grubby garments'. If they were 'well behaved', it was only in contrast 'with the concert in Brussels, where seats were ripped and general hysteria abounded'. In the critic's conclusion, it is possible to see distinctions between what was acceptable in Ireland and internationally: '...the Kenton music is not for the Irish. There is not sufficient relaxation to allow musicians to adopt it' (*The Irish Times*, 21 September 1953).

The audience were the focus of another *Irish Times* article the following day. A journalist who had not attended the concert, yet had observed the crowd outside the venue, wrote:

> I don't think I have ever seen such an unusual crowd collected in a Dublin street – not even when M.G.M. was recruiting "extras" for its film "Knights of the Round Table." Hair was being worn at about 10 to 12 week's growth by the men, except in the cases of those who seemed to have had the whole lot shaved off, while intense looks and duffle coats seemed to be the order of the day for the women. Now and then, if you were careful, you would catch an Irish voice, but most members of the crowd were definitely English in origin, with the

> strongest contingent from the London area (Pro-Quidnunc, *The Irish Times*, 22 September 1953).

The description of young music fans as 'addicts', 'fans of a cult', 'unusual' and possessing 'intense looks and duffle coats' contributes to perceptions of youth as deviant. Stanley Cohen (2005) argued how this can have implications for public order debates and even criminal justice laws. In this context, it was hardly surprising that the Irish media engaged in a moral panic debate about Teddy Boys during the 1950s. One of the Teddy Boys media mentions, however, included a version of events that had been absent from the accounts of the Stan Kenton Dublin concert. It came from the Theatre Royal manager:

> One might have expected these Edwardian-dressed young men and their girl-friends to have been a little difficult. They had had a long tiring journey from Britain all through the previous night… when the show was over, a great many of them made that little gesture seldom typical of a Dublin audience. They sought out and thanked the management for an enjoyable show (*The Irish Times*, 6 August 1955).

These types of representations indicate how the music industry could be drawn into national discourses, in this case, debates about law and order and youth behaviour. It is worth considering where this placed both Phil Solomon and Bill Fuller. As preeminent music promoters, they actively participated in the two-way flow between the local and global music industry. They were not just ushering foreign acts into Ireland; they were also responsible for promoting Irish acts to the international market. At the same time, they were involved in cross-border *representational* flows in a country where considerable ambiguity existed about how porous the country's borders should be. Promoters like Solomon and Fuller were not only active in the music field; they also indicated how that field intersected with the political field.

For Fuller, as the key provider of entertainment for Irish emigrants in the US, his activities very clearly overlapped with the world of politics. In an Irish newspaper profile which called Fuller a 'personal friend of the late President Kennedy', Fuller claimed: 'I met him [Kennedy] first when he was going for the Senate in 1954. He'd come to my ballroom there to make speeches and used my office as a district headquarters' (Hand, *Sunday Independent*, 28 September 1975). It is easy to understand how Fuller's role at the centre of Irish-American socialisation in light of Boston's large Irish community made him an attractive ally for the Irish-American politician. A more comprehensive examination of

Fuller's activities in Boston can be found in Susan Gedutis's (2005) *See You at the Dance Hall*.

Media representations by Irish bands of life in Britain were a by-product of Fuller's provision of entertainment for the Irish emigrant community in Britain. By 1952 he was organising tours there for Irish acts, including the Brose Walsh band. The band's manager-vocalist was quoted as follows:

> As to our exiles in England they all, to an exception, were happy, very happy. They were well clothed and obviously well fed. In fact they are a credit to the old land, and quite rightly we felt really proud of them. They made a grand turn-out (*Connaught Tribune*, 11 October 1952).

In a sense, the activity of Fuller and Solomon at the crossroads of both music activity and representation helps to make sense of the Irish government's dilemma about restricting overseas artists. It was clear how the music industry provided valuable opportunities for domestic acts in Britain. Sometimes opportunities to move from the local scene to the core of the entertainment industry stemmed from unexpected interactions. For example, the Irish visits by Joe Loss led to lucrative international careers for both the Dublin-born Eamonn Andrews and Rose Brennan. Andrews secured his first British tour with Loss after the British band-leader saw Andrews when they appeared on the same bill in Dublin (Andrews, 1989: 79), while Brennan became the band's singer from 1951 to 1966. Naturally the Irish media welcomed this overseas success of local acts (*Irish Press*, 23 October 1951).

In 1952, Philip Solomon clearly positioned himself at this music and representational crossroads as a conduit for Irish artists to receive international recognition. In conjunction with music director Geraldo, with Solomon as 'organiser and sales director', he invited Irish acts to audition for a radio series he hoped to sell to American broadcasters. The *Irish Independent* newspaper reported that within a day of the announcement over one hundred people had arrived to be auditioned (O'Reilly, *Irish Independent*, 6 June 1952).

Three years later, Solomon had developed a network of links with industry professionals in London. This placed him in a unique position within the developing Irish music industry as a bridge for Irish acts to the international industry. In 1955, Solomon was credited by *The Irish Times* with bringing the Irish band The McGarrs to the attention of his 'London

friend, Norrie Paramor, Columbia's big-wig and the man who says who'll be recorded' (Ainsworth, *The Irish Times*, 8 October 1955) As director of recordings for Columbia, Paramor was indeed crucial in deciding what artists were signed by the label. Solomon's ability in securing the attention of international industry decision-makers in the mid-1950s makes his role as a link between Ireland the global industry particularly significant. The McGarrs, with vocalist Patricia Duffy, subsequently changed their name to the Gallowglass Céilí Band and were managed by Solomon. To the impresario, it was possible to combine popularity and céilí music.

By the mid-1950s, even the *Irish Press* represented overseas commercial live music as a nationalistic practice making a vital social contribution. The idea of the newspaper endorsing the importing of 'foreign' jazz and popular music acts would have been unimaginable 20 years earlier. In a two-page advertorial, Irish commercial dance halls were positioned as responsible: 'rowdies and drunks are finding it harder to gain admission to a ballroom'; they were also described as costing 'several thousand pounds to build'. They were represented as linked to the Celtic race and céilí dancing, which, according to the paper, 'is not only part of the heritage of the people but something so natural and enjoyable…':

> Dancing is the biggest branch of Ireland's entertainment industry, and virtually its entire nightlife, of the lack of which Americans complain so much….And in a country that has few theatres, British and American top-line variety stars and big British bands [are being presented]….and helping; in a very definite way, to keeping Irish girls and boys at home and on the land (Alexander, *Irish Press*, 8 April 1955).

This was a major departure from the earlier discourse. The notion of British and American stars and bands being imported to 'keep Irish boys and girls at home' was a drastic turnaround from the cultural protectionist arguments of the 1930s. Live music was no longer a local community social enterprise; it was a business unashamedly seeking profits and promoting British and US acts to Irish audiences. The headline in the two-page article proclaimed: 'Dancing is an Industry' (Alexander, *Irish Press*, 8 April 1955). Dancing was represented as part of the entertainment *industry*, as well as an element of a drive towards satisfying American socialisation expectations in Ireland. The commercial logic of the dancing industry was compelling in the context of the continued economic failure of the country.

Inevitably, in light of their position at the crossroads of Ireland's cultural borders, Fuller and Solomon would eventually find a market opportunity in rock and roll music, a genre that was emblematic of 'foreign'. By this time, an *Irish Times* feature on Solomon, using his business name, Phil Raymond, described him as 'the biggest name in dance band promotion in Ireland to-day… in efficiency and enterprise he leaves nothing to be desired'. The acts he was bringing to Ireland that year included Louis Armstrong, Gene Krupa, Joe Loss, Geraldo and Sid Phillips (Dance-a-lot, *Irish Times*, 7 April, 1956).

On 18 November 1956, Solomon hosted a 'Rock N Roll Jamboree' at Dublin's National Stadium. It featured five acts from both side of the border. The inclusion of Mick Delahunty with his orchestra indicated that the concert was offering a conservative take on 'rock and roll'. Delahunty had been performing since making his debut in 1933 at a fund-raising Easter dance for the Old IRA (Gallagher, http://www.iangallagher.com/mickdel.htm). Also included in the afternoon concert were The Alligators, Jimmy Compton and The Rockets, Eric Clark and his Downbeats, as well as Liam O'Farrell. *The Irish Times* wrote in advance that 'it is expected that the instrumental line-up in each case will be similar to that of Bill Haley's... [resulting in] a tasty dish for R & R enthusiasts' (Dancalot, *Irish Times*, 13 October 1956). The concert made the front page of the *Irish Press*, where it was reported somewhat disapprovingly that 'occasionally enthusiasts rose to their feet to demonstrate physically the effect of the music on them' (*Irish Press*, 19 November 1956).

The most extensive national newspaper review of the concert was provided by *The Irish Times* in its weekly Diary column. This was both humorous and condescending, yet provided an impression of the Irish youth market for imported music. It noted that the car registrations outside the venue indicated that fans had come from 'the northern half of the country' as well as the midlands. The audience was described as 'substantial', predominantly in the 16–20 age range, with an even gender split. The journalist wrote how he wanted to 'see for myself the cultural outlet most recently chosen by the descendants of Cuchullain and the Fianna'. He wrote:

> …most of the boys had crew cuts, most of the girls wore brightly coloured shirts. They all twitched…..With open mouths and glazed eyes, they watched the rhythm of the bands….They beat out the rhythm on the seats in front of them. Few of them smiled….[they] screamed, whistled and roared, obviously in delight; but how they knew what they were applauding was

> puzzling, since they made so much noise themselves that they can't have been able to hear very much of the other noise (Quidnunc, *The Irish Times*, 19 November 1956).

If live rock and roll had arrived in Ireland in 1956, *The Irish Times* was uncertain whether this was to be welcomed. Were the 'descendants of Cuchullain and the Fianna', mythical Irish figures, better off without it? The newspaper was evoking ancient Celtic myth in the context of rock and roll and this indicated how Fuller and Solomon's activities as live music promoters were reawakening old ideas about ancient Ireland and the pop music of the modern world.

Solomon subsequently reduced his activities in Ireland's live music market. He had been active in bringing acts from both sides of the border to the global core of London and he re-located there in 1958 with his Belfast wife, Dorothy. There, often trading as the Dorothy Solomon Agency, they focused on artist management and booking acts in Britain. They successfully guided a number of Irish acts to the British charts. As well as Northern Irish acts, including Ruby Murray and Van Morrison's Them, the firm brought the Irish Republic its first Number 1 in the British charts with The Bachelors.

The Northern Irish businesswoman was an inspiration for at least one other prominent female music industry manager. In her autobiography, Sharon Osbourne depicted Dorothy Solomon as the epitome of style:

> In many ways you could say that she changed my life. It was Dorothy who introduced me to luxury. Everything about her was glamorous... And I used to love going there just to be able to sit and move around in those surroundings. But the centre of it all was Dorothy, who looked and dressed like the ladies in the magazines I used to read (Osbourne, 2008: 23).

While the Dublin band, The Bachelors, benefited from their alliance with the London-based Solomons, The Bachelors themselves during the 1960s would, along with other Irish 'pop stars' and ballrooms, be represented in the Irish media as emblematic of glamour, luxury and success. The Solomons' ownership stake in Radio Caroline also provided another Irish act, The Dubliners, with chart success in Britain and Europe.

Keeping Jews out of the 'Four Provinces': Music industry barriers to entry

The evolution during the 1950s towards a more open and liberal economy and the apparent embrace in places of commercial logic and welcome of overseas music appeared to

indicate liberalisation and modernity. By the end of the era, even Fianna Fáil had acknowledged the logic of opening the country to increased commercial activity. Despite initially opposing arguments by the Fine Gael and the Labour Party to open the economy to foreign investment, eventually Fianna Fáil and T.K. Whitaker pursued this policy (Bielenberg and Ryan, 2013: 20) with the implementation in 1958 of the *Grey Book on Economic Development*. Yet it should be noted how, despite this progress, Ireland was not yet open for business to all.

Some historians argue that the Control of Manufactures Act was not an absolute barrier to entry for non-Irish entrepreneurs; Ferriter, for example, suggests that the legislation was not 'rigidly enforced' (2005: 372); exemptions were frequently available for commercial interests to bypass the Act's professed aims. Indeed, one media account at the time wrote that the prominent Irish lawyer, Arthur Cox, 'could put such measures as the Control of Manufactures' Acts to music if he was inclined to' (*The Irish Times*, 6 September 1958). The ability of Cox to steer foreign firms around the Control of Maunfactures Act is further documented in a flattering biography written by a member of the firm he founded (McCague, 1994). The government Acts, according to this:

> ...provided fertile ground for lawyers and accountants retained to find loopholes in their provisions. Arthur became the architect of most of the schemes to circumscribe the legislation. He was asked to advise a large number of foreign interests anxious to evade the attempted restriction on their ability to own and control business in Ireland. By a series of strategems, over the next number of years, he drove a coach and four [horses] through the legislation (McCague, 1994: 63).

Surprisingly, members of the Irish Government are represented as secretly pleased with the way in which their rhetoric and policy was being undermined. The reaction of Sean Lemass, was reported thus:

> Publicly, he attacked the attempts to frustrate the legislation... Privately at dinner parties in Vincent Crowley's house he frequently expressed his gratitude towards, and his huge esteem for, Arthur and the work he and Crowley were doing for their country (McCague, 1994: 66–67).

While this may be true, at a practical level the Act still presented a competitive disadvantage to individuals lacking the cultural capital to navigate the exemptions. For

example, in the music industry, the Singer brothers, Harry and Myer, encountered severe obstacles to their commercial activity. It is clear that the Irish legal requirement of restricting non-citizens to 50 per cent ownership of their own firms hampered business start-ups.

One account of the activities of Harry and Myer Singer represents their activity in Ireland as a rags-to-riches narrative. Philip Milofsky was quoted speaking about the origins of his family business which opened in 1944:

> My great uncles started the business by fixing sewing machines on a push cart. They travelled to America to buy top-quality dry-cleaning equipment. There they purchased a complete plant… One piece was a pressing machine called a 'New Yorker'. This inspired the trade name 'New York Cleaners' (O'Riordan, *Sunday Independent*, 24 October 2010).

Yet while the Singers achieved non-music business success in 1940s Ireland, some of the difficulties they faced can be seen in reports of a court case involving Harry Singer (*Irish Press*, 6 May 1955). The case included allegations of missing money, blackmail and threats of physical violence. Harry had emigrated from Manchester to Dublin as a teenager in 1931 and worked for his brother who operated a sewing machine repair business. Another brother Myer joined him in 1936. Harry later branched out into the entertainment industry and engaged musicians to perform in the Olympic Ballroom and skating rink on Pleasant Street in the early 1940s. According to the *Irish Press*, which publicly provided details of newly naturalised residents, he was naturalised in June 1952 (*Irish Press*, 17 June 1952).

The press reports recorded that prior to his naturalisation, to conduct business in Ireland he had engaged two Irish people to act as company directors. The directors chosen were Eddie Downey, a doorman at the Singer's ballroom, and his mother. In court evidence it was reported how 'they had been appointed so that the company would comply with the Control of Manufacturers Act'. When they were no longer required, Downey complained that his mother lost her directorship 'without even a box of chocolates' as compensation (*Irish Press*, 6 May 1955).

While gaining naturalisation permitted Harry Singer to conduct business in Ireland, it did not eliminate all barriers to his commercial pursuits. According to reports of court

evidence, the Singers had attempted to secure a lease on the Four Provinces Ballroom from its owners, the Bakers' Union, in early 1948 (*Irish Press*, 6 May 1955). They received a written reply from the Bakers' Union's solicitor; this was stated in court to be 'anti-Semitic' and the venue refused to do business with them because of their religion. Downey informed Singer that he could secure a lease for the Four Provinces Ballroom but that he would have to do it in his own name. He would also have to prove to the venue's owner that he could afford the lease and Singer gave him £4,000. The lease was never secured and allegations were made that Downey refused to return the money to the Singers. During the case, it was reported that the secretary for the Bakers' Union claimed that the union's then solicitor had not 'the authority of the Union when he wrote that the Union would not let the ballroom to Jewish interests' (*Irish Press*, 6 May 1955).

The case was settled out of court so details are not recorded (*Irish Independent*, 7 May 1955). Harry Singer continued working in the music industry until his death in 1958, the same year that The Control of Manufactures Act was relaxed. In 1964 it was completely abandoned (Bielenberg and Ryan, 2013: 22). The Singer brothers proved that the Act, while it was in force, and despite the ability of well-connected members of Irish society to profitably guide overseas firms through it, did hamper entrepreneurial activity. It also compromised some entrepreneurs by forcing them to enter into alliances that were both inconvenient and counterproductive.

Conclusion

Despite being a neglected area of Irish popular music history, there was a large amount of activity in the country's popular music field as well as its accompanying field of entrepreneurship. The music industry was no longer one in which governments and interest groups alone decided who performed. Entrepreneurs were now deciding who played in Ireland and, to a large extent, what Irish acts gained professional opportunities in Britain and the US. At the crossroads of cultural flow, professional figures, including Philip Solomon and Bill Fuller, were responsible for providing entertainment to the Irish public, as well as for guiding Irish singers, including Bridie Gallagher, Ruby Murray and Carmel Quinn, to the local, British and US best-selling charts respectively.

The entrepreneurial activity took place at a time when music was frequently used by the media in the context of broader societal discourses. When rock and roll was being successfully marketed internationally, debates about youth behaviour and law and order

often made the music industry a site where the values native and global culture were debated. During this era, jazz and big band musicians from Britain visited Ireland with enough frequency to mobilise the local Musicians' Union to take action. Their action was only partially successful and American jazz and its British fans arrived in Dublin at this time. Naturally this also became a site where the media asked questions about youthful behaviour.

Another group that became organised and effective at this time was the for-profit ballroom proprietors' organisation. This was significant in a social sphere in which the clergy had previously dominated activity. The continuing large-scale emigration continued to impact on the country and the Irish economic policy was eventually liberalised and more foreign investment was encouraged. However, prior to this liberalisation, it should be acknowledged that barriers to entry existed and in at least one notable case, Jewish businessmen were hampered in their entrepreneurial activities.

During the 1950s, 'non-industry' behind-the-scenes activity helped to prepare Irish acts for eventual 'discovery' by industry professionals. At times, these professionals included Irish-born individuals who were now active in multiple and influential, networks in British entertainment. They even included the not-for-profit actions of the wealthy American member of the Guggenheim family in the case of The Clancy Brothers. Others active in the supportive environment that incubated local acts included the Irish education system and tourist board in the case of Mary O'Hara. With the Little Gaelic Singers, the clergy proved that they could successfully engage with the recording industry.

Chapter 6: The 1960s

Enterprise, values and Irish culture: rock, showbands and traditional music

The early 1960s were accompanied by advances in Ireland's industrialisation, urbanisation and living standards, which brought the country further away from the humble, rural Catholic ideal advocated during the 1930s. Naturally, this change resulted in a revisiting of debates about morals and values, as well culture, and it was perhaps inevitable that popular music would be drawn into these debates. I aim to examine some of these debates concerning the suitability of popular music for Ireland, particularly for the country's youth. In addition, I intend to examine some of the notable entrepreneurial activity in the fields of both popular and traditional music.

Many Irish popular music theorists agree that the combination of popular music and Ireland's young population in the 1960s was significant. These studies highlight the tension along generational lines in Irish popular culture. For example, Sean Campbell and Gerry Smyth (2005) reason that rock music during the decade:

> ...became an important aspect of the cultural imagination of young Irish people, and that it offered a range of experiences and affiliations which impacted significantly upon their process of identity formation (Campbell and Smyth, 2005: 4).

To Noel McLaughlin and Martin McLoone (2012), the way in which rock music and Irish youth interacted was, naturally, affected by broader societal patterns. Resistance to rock and roll from the Irish establishment persisted into the 1960s. Visits by British musicians were very visible sites where traditional Irish values and the desires of the country's youth were vehemently contested. This can be seen with the well-documented visit by The Beatles to Dublin in November 1963; as McLaughlin and McLoone (2012) argue, to some this 'provided impetus for the new "beat group" scene', while to others, generally the older generation, as Ireland's 'popular culture finally entered the twentieth century', the response was 'general bemusement' (pp. 16–17).

This 'general bemusement' did not indicate a capitulation by the Irish establishment to overseas rock and pop music. The response of Irish power groups in the early 1960s, including those with a stated interest in policing Irish cultural borders, was complex and even contradictory. I maintain that the gender and generational aspect of Ireland's response

to popular music constituted a classic 'moral panic' (Cohen, 2005). Yet these struggles also indicate how establishment values evolve; popular music, which was once seen as decadent and corrupting, later became a warmly embraced element of Irish cultural and enterprise history. In one example, Senator Paschal Mooney positioned the pioneers of the industry close to his political party, Fianna Fáil:

> It may surprise Members to learn that the Irish music recording industry can really only trace its beginnings to the early 1960s... One of the trailblazers in the Irish recording industry was the late John Woods, brother of the Minister for the Marine and Natural Resources, Deputy Michael Woods... During the showband era, he encouraged significant numbers of Irish recording artists to record in Ireland. From that, a fledgling native Irish music recording industry emerged (Mooney, 1999).

Clearly Mooney's assertion that the Irish music recording industry can 'really only trace its beginning to the early 1960s' indicates how history can be contested and repurposed. By his own admission, this version of history meant the 'exception of Bridie Gallagher and a few others in the 1950s' (Mooney, 1999). It also means eliminating the 1950s efforts of Gaelic language labels, including Gael Linn. In terms of core-to-periphery flow, Mooney in fact equates the birth of 'a fledgling native Irish music industry' to Pye, a British firm, releasing records by local artists. This seems to be a questionable foundation for what he terms a 'native Irish' industry.

Without question John Woods was a pivotal figure in the Irish music industry. His successful activities, first with Pye and later with Polydor, showed how Fianna Fáil's economic policy and self-sufficiency rhetoric had been abandoned by the early 1960s. In its place, the country's economy continued to be more open to international firms and trade. For the music industry, in the context of Malm and Wallis's (1992) model, Woods' career was a local example of how large multinational music firms find allies in domestic markets and build on those relationships to acquire increasing market penetration and dominance.

In the context of how popular music history can be transformed over time, with even its historical origins repurposed, I wish to draw attention to situations in which popular music created tension over Ireland's cultural borders during the 1960s. If these borders were, as McLaughlin and McLoone (2012: 16) argue, 'patrolled by a vigilant and intrusive Catholic ethos', we need to address the 1960s with two questions. First, how was that ethos

successfully challenged? Second, how did non-Catholic entrepreneurs participate in the industry during this period? I will examine these questions with reference to ballroom owners, record label founders, and artists.

In some respects, it is not difficult to understand why Senator Mooney positioned the dawn of the music industry in the 1960s. This was a decade when, in the context of global media attention for pop music acts including The Beatles, Ireland engaged in new ways to both popular music and the industry of music.

Whilst I will examine the construction of the Irish Pop Charts in more depth later on, even a cursory glance (irishcharts.ie; Kelly, 2009) indicates why the notion of the local competing successfully with the global was fostered. If protectionism had been advocated in earlier eras, now in many sectors the idea of Irish values being swamped by 'imported culture' was replaced with a sense of Ireland's pop music taking on the world.

For example, for the first five months of 1965 local acts dominated the Number 1 positon in the Irish charts. The Beatles, Number 1 for four weeks, were the only 'foreign' act to top the Irish charts between January and mid-June. All of the other chart-toppers were local acts: The Royal Showband, The Capitol Showband, Butch Moore and Dickie Rock. Later in the year, both The Royal and Dickie Rock returned to the Number 1 position. During this era, The Bachelors became the first act from the Republic to reach Number 1 in the British charts and national newspapers advanced the idea of an 'Irish pop invasion' of Britain (Hickey, *Sunday Independent*, 7 February 1965). Pop music was even used to advance the Irish language.

Despite this, pop music was not embraced unilaterally. While the visit of The Beatles during this time has received significant attention, for example, from Colm Keane (2008) in *The Beatles Irish Concerts* and McLaughlin and McLoone (2012: 15–18), instead of revisiting this, I wish to examine the earlier visit by the British singer, Cliff Richard, to draw attention to Irish cultural intergenerational tension over popular music.

'Lush pasture for an Irish sociologist': Cliff Richard and 'jungles of the Dark Continent'

The extensive British tour in early 1962 by a package of acts headlined by Cliff Richard was modified when two dates in Dublin were added to the itinerary. For the Dublin

concert, Irish artists Dickie Rock, the Viscounts Quartet and the Sligo folk-singer Maisie McDaniel gained the opportunity of performing before a large audience in the National Stadium.

The Irish tour was newsworthy even before the concert. The *Irish Press* reported a claim by the tour's organiser that a plan to kidnap Richard in Belfast had been thwarted (*Irish Press*, 23 January 1962). For the Irish media, the concerts provided an opportunity to examine not only Richard but also the Irish youth. The headlines in all three of the Irish newspapers focused on the latter:

> *Irish Press*, 'Screaming, howling greeting', 24 January 1962
> *Irish Independent*, 'He sang – but few heard', 24 January 1962
> *The Irish Times*, 'A night out for the "cats" and "squares"', 24 January 1962

In fact, most of the coverage concentrated on the audience and the boisterous response to Richard. The *Irish Press* described the 'teenage' audience: [they] 'almost went berserk… almost became hysterical… became frenzied when their hero attempted to speak… "Oh Cliff!" they chanted… Then, when he went into one of his popular numbers, the audience rose and became part of the act' (*Irish Press*, 24 January 1962). The *Irish Independent* also focused on the crowd and reported how they had 'drowned' out Richard's singing. Yet the paper took a more measured tone in its description of the audience. They were a 'good humoured young audience who readily obeyed the Gardai on duty outside and the stewards inside the stadium' (*Irish Independent*, 24 January 1962).

The Irish Times provided both the most in-depth coverage of the concerts and also some details of the concert organisation. The paper reported how the first concert was only three-quarters full, whereas the second was 'packed to the rafters'. Richard's fee was reported to be £1,000. The sounds of the event were represented in detail: 'The abiding impression of the stadium last night is one of noise; squeals of pleasure, screams of ecstasy, groans of pleasurable pain and yells of applause' (*The Irish Times*, 24 January 1962).

One sentence in the review later became a topic for discussion in other newspapers. It was written that Richard:

> ...sang, gyrated, played the guitar, snapped his fingers, smiled, hopped, skipped and jumped – and the crowd loved it. The Stadium last night was indeed lush pasture for an Irish sociologist. Incredible though it may seem, during one pause in the din there was one clear scream from a girl: "Oh, please, Cliff, spit on me" (*The Irish Times*, 24 January 1962).

The incident was amplified in the *Kerryman* newspaper by the playwright, John B. Keane. His representation of Irish teenagers fits into Stanley Cohen's designation of a 'moral panic'; he even referred to 'narrow-trousered delinquents' outside dance halls. The 'domestic versus foreign culture' rhetoric of the 1930s campaigners against jazz was also used:

> Irish teen-agers of the present day have a sense of artistic values similar to those of the less-enlightened inhabitants of Central Africa. Stand outside any dance-hall on a dance-night and close your eyes. A little imagination will transport you to the remotest jungles of the dark Continent (Keane, *Kerryman*, 24 February 1962).

He categorically placed this delinquency and moral failing in the context of Irish identity. He claimed that these youths would 'shrug their shoulders if questioned about what happened in 1916' and had no idea about the leading figures in the Independence struggle. He also claimed that a Dublin band-leader had been booed by teenagers for playing four old-time waltzes in a row, including Thomas Moore's 'tis The Last Rose of Summer'. Keane also amplified the alleged action of an individual into an indictment of the entire Cliff Richard concert audience: 'One teen-age girl was heard to say: "Spit on me, Cliff!"...there can be no doubt that she was expressing the desires of the majority'. Keane also condemned the apparent market power of young consumers: 'It is sad to think that our adolescents have the power to dictate the trend of modern music and the power to hinder or aid its development' (Keane, *Kerryman*, 24 February 1962).

Keane blamed parents for failing to control their offspring and suggested that for Cliff Richard concert-goers: 'the cure for this revolting behaviour should be a swift and accurate kick in the rear' (Keane, *Kerryman*, 24 February 1962).

The anxiety that young people's popular cultural consumption patterns could affect the greater Irish population was not unique to Keane. It continued to be a feature of the youth and popular music discourse. One notable example was the *Irish Independent* editorial which expressed concern about the records teenagers and people in their early twenties were buying. Some of the music, it was argued was 'crude, vulgar and near indecent. Most of it originates outside the country, although we admit that virtue is not a matter of geography'. Of equal concern:

> The trouble is that the rest of the population have this Top Ten foisted on them, even if they buy no pop records or attend few dances (*Irish Independent*, 22 January 1963).

The question of 'who picks the pops?' can be addressed by examining the inception of the Irish Pop Charts at this time. As in other countries, the local pop charts, which commenced in October 1962, were designed by industry-insiders to stimulate sales and generate publicity. One of the key participants in the implementation of the Irish charts was Jimmy Magee, a broadcaster with RTE. He noted how initially 'unfortunately, there were no Irish singles at the time (Magee, 2000: 71); his multiple roles in the industry helped to ameliorate the situation. In addition to working for the broadcaster, Magee also began writing songs and later: 'I got involved with Mick Clerkin and we launched an Irish record label, Release Records' (Magee, 2000: 72). The label produced over five hundred singles, mainly of the 'showband' or 'country and Irish' genres, by local acts between 1967 and 1981 and was a significant force in the local market.

Despite the over-lapping roles of individuals like Magee, the national broadcaster came under pressure regarding its popular music policy. When Irish television was launched on 31 December 1961, the inclusion of 'The Rosemary Clooney Show' proved to be controversial (*Tuam Herald*, 16 December 1961). In its selection of the show RTE may have felt it could bypass accusations of being 'too modern'; the music programme had been made in the 1950s (imdb.com) and appeared to be suitable family viewing. Yet condemnation arrived swiftly. While the *Irish Press* critic regarded it as 'the worst thing on T.E.' (O'Conaill, *Irish Press*, 17 February 1962), it was on democratic rather than aesthetic grounds that the most severe criticism was based. Donal O'Móráin from Gael Linn argued that 'it is against the basic concepts of good government to subject our people to Rosemary Clooney at the public's expense' (*Irish Independent*, 7 August 1962). O'Móráin was later appointed as the head of the broadcaster's authority (*Irish Press*, 5 October 1970).

Sean Campbell (2011) has documented the Irish ancestry of members of The Beatles and McLaughlin and McLoone (2012: 17) identified a 'sense of coming home' in the Irish media's coverage of The Beatles. Yet naturally, in the context of cultural borders, Ireland was not an uncomplicated land of welcomes. The Coiste Gnótha of the Gaelic League, so scathing in its condemnation of Fr Michéal and his dancing contests during the 1930s, was still active and voluble. As the *Irish Press* reported, following The Beatles' visit, it demanded a Government resolution preventing foreign acts from visiting Ireland without approval. To the Coiste Gnótha, The Beatles were 'a group of foreigners ... [who] attracted the youth of this country from their ancestral heritage... [Their concerts] nourish dissatisfaction with nationalism in the young' (*Irish Press*, 'Gaelic League and foreign performers', 13 November 1963).

With hindsight, it is tempting to dismiss the Gaelic League's attempts to control what it described as 'foreign' music as the activities of a group rooted in the past and out of touch with a younger generation. Yet, at this time it was an influential and frequently cited organisation. Eamon de Valera's son, Vivion, who was the director of the party's paper, the *Irish Press*, was quoted in April 1963 at the opening of the annual Feis Mathew stating that the feis, along with the Gaelic League and the GAA, had 'raised the morale of our people [and] contributed to the great national revival which culminated in the Easter Rising and the Fight for Freedom'. The values of such organisations were necessary 'to preserve our people in a world which is destroy[ing] itself in the abandonment of proper human values' (*Irish Press*, 15 April 1963).

I argue that by 1963 the Gaelic League's ability to prevent popular musicians and their products from crossing Ireland's cultural borders had already been compromised. RTE was successfully broadcasting pop music: the disapproving *Irish Independent*'s editor had noted that some of these shows came courtesy of 'the sponsored blessing of some of the country's most sober firms' (*Irish Independent*, 22 January 1963). Once again, commercial interests saw a benefit from being associated with pop music and helped to legitimise it culturally. Pop music was also causing splits within Fianna Fáil and groups dedicated to the preservation of Gaelic cultures. By now, even the Fianna Fáil ally, the *Irish Press*, was urging caution in this particular skirmish against pop. The paper warned the League to be:

> ...careful not to get entangled in the wool of its younger and more dynamic partner, Gael-Linn, which sets a lot of store on – and, I gather, derives a lot of money from – the popularisation of pop (Newman, *Irish Press*, 16 November 1963).

It is debatable whether 'a lot of money' was derived by Gael-Linn from popular music. Far more importantly, popular music was an unmatched site for reaching and appealing to the younger audience. Thus, in a practical sense, the cultural boundary-keepers who represented pop music and Irish culture as being incompatible had already been outmanoeuvred. In 1961, Gael-Linn had diversified from traditional music and spoken language recordings and had entered the pop music field. In one article praising the firm's activity, the *Kerryman* correspondent described that move as 'a shock to the purists', yet 'a daring experiment'. Gael-Linn's philosophy was positioned thus: 'if these are the kinds of songs which appeal to young people, then why not sing them in Irish' (E O'B, *Kerryman*, 16 December 1961).

That said, despite the acceptance of Gael-Linn's decision to embrace pop, there was still a sense that the Irish could retain some sense of distinction from the English market. The *Kerryman* alluded to the study of popular music tastes in different countries and concluded: '...there is no reason why the rather brash style which is popular in England at present should appeal particularly to Irish people if we were given a choice of anything else' (E O'B, *Kerryman*, 16 December 1961).

Even Charles Acton of *The Irish Times* who had been publically championing Gael Linn's activity in preserving what he pointedly described as 'genuine Irish' culture, embraced the label's pop output. In 1958 he had written in italics for emphasis: '*Until last month there was not a gramophone record of genuine Irish folk music on ordinary sale in Ireland*' (Acton, *The Irish Times*, 3 January 1958). Now he argued that pop music was an eminently suitable way of reaching the wide audience required 'if Irish is to be the popular speech'. The songs were described as 'a relaxed cowboy number with a predominant beat' and 'a fast rock number with some Latin element' (Acton, *The Irish Times*, 28 March 1962). When the *Kerryman* embraced Gael-Linn's pop, the paper noted how one song was 'inspired by the Russian spaceships' and that 'these songs have to be rhythmic, racy and topical' (E O'B, *Kerryman*, 16 December 1961).

Gael Linn, then, in the early 1960s redrew the borders of what was acceptable in Irish culture by combining the Gaelic language with pop music which, according to the local and national press, included 'racy', 'topical', 'Latin', 'cowboy' and 'Russian' references. While the initial pop releases did not reach the newly initiated Irish pop charts, a few years later the label had significant and visible success when Emmet Spiceland landed Baidin Fheidhlimi in the national Top 10 (www.irishcharts.ie).

If local record labels were a means of preserving and encouraging domestic culture, external forces were often interested in, or saw market opportunities in, Irish music culture in the 1960s. The British music industry trade magazine, *Record Retailer,* was frequently sympathetic to Irish matters and in a 1966 front page comment, noted that the Irish market was one 'from which English manufacturers and dealers' could learn. The paper also drew attention to the Easter Rising's fiftieth anniversary and argued that 'Rebel songs and marches created during the "Troubles" which followed the Rising are still highly popular in Irish centres' (*Record Retailer*, 10 March 1966). Yet, if this was an occasion to celebrate national independence, it was also, as Charles Acton pointed out, a moment to acknowledge the dependency of the local market on overseas firms. Acton noted that eight records had been released to commemorate the anniversary, only two of which had been recorded in the country:

> ...of these eight, no disc or sleeve was made in Ireland... The record companies involved are the two major English groups, the English subsidiary of a Dutch group, the English subsidiary of an American company, a scholarly German company, and a small English company of the extreme political left (Acton, *The Irish Times*, 13 April 1966).

The same paper reported in the following year that supplies of the CBS commemorative discs had not arrived in Ireland in time for the 1916 anniversary. They were now being offered at a discounted price (Stewart, *The Irish Times*, 14 December 1967). In this case, in terms of core-to-periphery flow, the international firm had identified Irish products as globally marketable and profitable to them; yet they had other priorities apart from making this piece of Irish culture available in Ireland. It seemed remarkable that an artefact celebrating Ireland's independence was available elsewhere but not in Ireland. Yet, this indicated that there was global demand for identifiably Irish – and even nationalistic – records. To Irish entrepreneurs who could access the required resources, this presented an

opportunity. As I will examine later in this chapter, Claddagh Records was one notable example of this periphery-to-core flow.

Showband entrepreneurship and traditional Catholic values

A social history of Ireland can address how and when major changes occurred in that society and clearly any series of events which diminished the influence of the Catholic Church in the country represented major changes. As Share et al. (2012) argue, the Church accrued power in the 19th century and 'went on to wield extensive power in the newly independent state until very recently' (p. 329). The changing circumstances of Ireland in the 1960s certainly proved challenging for the Church. Basil Chubb (1986) argued that 'great changes in Irish society' stemmed from the early 1960s 'industrialisation and urbanisation and by the resultant rapid rise in living standards'. This urbanisation as Wonneberger (2009: 15) documented, was large-scale: in the 1920s less than one third of the population lived in urban areas, but by the 1960s, over 50 per cent of the population lived in cities. These factors brought the country's lifestyles closer to those of 'rich industrial countries' and also led to the spread of 'pluralistic and secular' attitudes (Chubb, 1986: 41). Yet the transition to a more pluralistic and secular society was incremental rather than sudden.

The music industry, specifically the provision of social dancing, was one area of Irish society in which Church control was successfully undermined in the 1960s by more pluralistic and secular attitudes. This challenge is all the more remarkable because it did not overtly appear to question Church orthodoxy or power directly. Although it had serious financial implications for the Church, this movement was not anti-clerical, rebellious or even generational. Instead, it came from rural Catholic Fianna Fáil stalwarts, who overturned the accepted notion that the provision of public dancing should both benefit the local community and be closely supervised by the Catholic Church.

This shift can be placed in context by examining how Irish society navigated between the values of the Church and commercialism. The sociologist Tom Inglis concluded that Ireland's economic life and entrepreneurial culture were aggressively inhibited in the early years of the State. He wrote:

> The traditional absence of entrepreneurs and people taking risks with capital in Ireland may be linked to the practices described above and a morality propagated by the Church, in which

> individual satisfaction and pleasure were subdued through an inculcation of humility, shame and guilt (Inglis, 1998: 76).

The historian J. J. Lee had earlier reached a similar conclusion when he confirmed the presence of the Church in multiple important aspects of Irish life. He added that despite the country's relative poverty, the hierarchy benefited materially. He wrote, 'rarely has the Catholic Church as an institution flourished, by materialistic criteria, as in the Free State' (Inglis, 1995: 159).

Given the strength of the Church in this area of Irish life, perhaps the bigger surprise was that this hegemony was so thoroughly undermined less than two decades following the introduction of the Dance Halls Act in 1935, which legally embedded the clergy in the live music and dancing culture. The theorist Stuart Hall (1997: 24–41) drew from the works of Gramsci and concluded that 'hegemony is never for ever'; it is always the subject of struggles between power groups in any society. I wish to examine two ways in which the traditional Irish Catholic values were challenged by the developing music industry. I first examine the media discourse and then the commercial activities in the industry. One asserted that Irish musicians merited luxury, the other that dancers deserved luxury. In a country where frugal comforts had once been advocated, this was significant.

'...you're entitled to some luxuries...' – the showband media discourse

Analysis of the showbands and the 'showband era' is not unproblematic. There appear to be two main tactics for representing showbands in the Irish popular music discourse. The first depicts them in opposition to – and stifling – local rock music, whereas the other positions them as forefathers of a music scene which enabled subsequent rock music. Bob Geldof's assertions summarise the first point-of-view: 'Musically and every other which way, they [the showbands] were a death, which is why contemporary Irish music took so long to develop....' (Heffernan, 2000). Geldof places Irish rock acts in opposition to the showbands:

> ....there were no rock gigs so you had to go about setting up your own gigs and doing your own posters, creating a sensibility of pop and rock (Connolly, *The Irish Rock Story: A Tale of Two Cities*, BBC/RTÉ, 2015).

The opposite view is advanced by McLaughlin and McLoone (2012), who state that the showbands 'laid the foundation for both a popular music *industry* as well as a popular music *culture* in Ireland' (p. 22).

Beyond the music discourse, the place of the showbands in Ireland's national overall *culture* is also subject to claims and counterclaims. For example, Gerry Smyth places them at the epicentre of a movement usurping Ireland's traditional power groups; to him, they were advancing 'the values and possibilities of a modern world which had been shunned by the prevailing powers (an assortment of protectionist politicians and Catholic clergy)' (Smyth, 2005: 12). Yet, if the showbands were challenging the conservative orthodoxy of the Catholic Church, histories of the genre often place members of the clergy in key positions within the showband world. This is true of showband entrepreneurial practice, its music making and even its marketing.

From an entrepreneurial point of view, according to Albert Reynolds' (2010: 38) autobiography, his parish priest encouraged him to organise dances for his own profit rather than for the Church's benefit. Another prominent example of clerical intervention in showband history occurs in Harry O'Reilly's survey of Drogheda's popular music making. He documents local performance, including clerically run variety shows, or 'Parish Nights' to provide funds for the Church in the 1950s (O'Reilly, 2012: 54–58). This Church-run entertainment environment incubated one of Ireland's most successful showband stars, Dermot O' Brien. O'Reilly describes how in 1959, Fr Kevin Connolly, who was in charge of The Lourdes Boys Club, organised a Sunday night dance. The priest was a 'well-known G.A.A. player' and invited a team-mate to perform at the dances (O'Reilly, 2012: 115); Fr Connolly also named the new act: Dermot O'Brien and The Clubmen (O'Reilly, 2012: 116). O'Brien, an accordion player, became a professional musician and placed 12 records in the Irish charts between 1966 and 1976, including 'The Merry Ploughboy', which went to number one (irishcharts.ie). In another example, Fr Brian D'Arcy alleges that one act was encouraged by a priest to select a more market-friendly and contemporary name and thus The Clipper Carlton band was born, credited with being the first showband (*The Original Showband Legends*, 2005). The musical inheritance of the showbands is clearly seen in the local newspaper advertisements in 1950, which witnessed the evolution of 'Hugh Toorish and his Carlton Dance Orchestra' (*Ulster Herald*, 22 April 1950) to 'Hugh Toorish and "His Clipper Carlton Band"' (*Ulster Herald*, 25 November 1950). The clerical

influence at this time can be seen in that fact that the latter's show in St. Patrick's Hall, Fintona, was in aid of the 'Eskra Parochial Fund'.

This raises questions about the showbands. Were the showbands agents of modernity, or another Church-sanctioned form of acceptable entertainment? Did the showbands help to grow the domestic music industry, or did they stunt the development of the local music scene's ability to develop original – and exportable – acts? These apparently irreconcilable differences in relation to the showbands and their ballroom circuit can be accommodated when the showband era is viewed not a static monolithic *moment*, but as a music industry *movement* which underwent significant changes during its evolution. The innovations at the start of the showband movement, which Smyth (2005) attributes to 'clearly, radically novel' departures in 'orchestration, performance and marketing' (p. 11), I want to argue were absent by the early 1970s. In this way, the showband movement mirrored the centralising process of the global music industry and indeed many other industries; early growth-stimulating innovative disruptive forces are effectively eliminated because conservative and centralised power brokers dominate the industry and erect barriers to new entrants.

Whether the showbands really held back the development of an Irish rock culture is debatable. Certainly, a case could be made that specific music industry conditions, including power relations between showband power brokers and the Irish media, combined to limit opportunities for new artists and acted as barriers to entry. On the other hand, elements of the music industry infrastructure that had been sustained by the showbands, the Eamonn Andrews recording studio for example, were available to and used by local rock bands, including The Boomtown Rats and U2. Regardless of how the showbands are represented, I wish to examine ways in which they advanced materialistic values and entrepreneurial practices that appeared to challenge the Catholic orthodoxy which had been pervasive in Ireland. This challenge was all the more remarkable by virtue of emerging from an entertainment genre in whose early history the clergy had been so prevalent.

The open embrace and validation of materialistic values was a notable facet of the showband representation. A series of articles in the *Sunday Independent* newspaper demonstrates how the media provided prestige to the showband field. Joe Dolan was featured for three consecutive weeks in November 1965. Almost two full pages of copy per issue were provided to the singer's thoughts on life and success. Significantly, the only

other articles on these pages were a weekly advice column written by Father Lucius McLean. The sub-headlines on the first instalment of the Joe Dolan story read: 'with one record I was made overnight' and 'I enjoy every moment of it' (Smith, *Sunday Independent*, 7 November 1965). Elsewhere, Dolan is quoted on the implications of his success: 'It brought me a Zephyr Zodiac – I get a thrill out of driving fast cars…' (Smith, *Sunday Independent*, 7 November 1965). The following week, Dolan was quoted speaking of one member of the showband field as 'millionaire ballroom owner Kerryman Bill Fuller' (Smith, *Sunday Independent*, 14 November 1965). The final instalment in the series included the quote: 'I confess I can meet my bank manager with a smile. I can face the taxman too without flinching. Yes, to date the business has been very good to me' (Smith, *Sunday Independent*, 21 November 1965).

The serialisation of the Dolan story was obviously successful and was quickly followed by a series on singer Dickie Rock. In this case, large advertisements in the *Irish Independent* promoted the series (25 November, 1965). Again, the interviews provided an endorsement of materialism and individualism. The singer was quoted on his commercial success:

> I began to make lots of money. Came the day when I could afford to buy an Opel Admiral [car]… when I could spend long holidays on the sunny Continent… when I could buy the dearest and very best in suits. But I suppose when you're a milk bar kid, as a friend in London once called me, you're entitled to some luxuries (Smith, *Sunday Independent*, 28 November 1965).

The reference to a 'milk bar kid' had connotations of leisure, jukeboxes and youth. This was a dramatic change from the earlier Irish discourse of unruly youth requiring supervision. The showband stars were represented as young men both *enjoying* and *deserving* their success. If music was an integral element of Irish culture, it was now a field of economic activity in which materialism was the norm. It should be pointed out that in the series of articles on Dolan and Rock, both had endorsed the traditional values of Irish Catholic society. Both singers spoke of their humble beginnings and of the support they received from their mothers. Rock was quoted as saying 'Fame hasn't changed me. I love to go back with the Miami once a year and play for charity in the local hall in Cabra'. Dolan was quoted on his experience playing for the inmates of St. Patrick's Institution, attached to Mountjoy prison. Thus, the showband stars held complex positions in terms of any simple binary relationship between materialism and traditional Irish Catholic values. While they were part of a change in Irish society, they were not anti-clerical or even

disrespectful of the Church. Nevertheless, they presented a challenge to the former's previous hegemony.

The celebratory media attention enjoyed by the showband field should be seen as an important site in the transition of Irish culture's core values from the suppression of individual interests towards entrepreneurial values. Inglis (1998: 128) asserts that the long-term outcome of the Irish 'values discourse' was that the media eventually surpassed the Church as the country's moral authority. As a key site for the contestation of materialist and individualistic values, the showband field must be included in the narrative of this transition. While the showband *discourse* undermined the traditional Irish Catholic values concerning enterprise, the showband *business* challenged the hierarchy on a practical economic level.

The activities in the commercial ballrooms, along with the Irish records that were issued by the ballroom circuit stars, are often referred to as 'the showband era'. This entertainment environment was distinguished by large numbers of domestic acts who performed 'covers' of well-known international pop songs alongside Irish rebel songs, waltzes and American country and western tunes. One of the largest chains of ballroom in the Republic was owned by the Reynolds family.

The roots of the Reynolds' ballroom empire in rural Ireland

The cover of Albert Reynolds' (2010) autobiography features the line: 'I was a businessman, a risk taker'. Thus, the life narrative presented by Reynolds, a former Taoiseach, literally positions him as emblematic of the 'rugged individual values' and 'entrepreneurs and people taking risks with capital'. These were the hallmarks which Inglis used to identify the more advanced Western economies (Inglis, 1995: 128). Given how these values were transformed within 20 years in Ireland from being demonised to being lauded, Reynolds' tale provides insight from the commercial vanguard of that evolution. Although Reynolds was central to removing an area of both revenue and social control from the Church, this challenge should not be been seen in terms of opposition to Catholic values and practice *per se*. In fact, just like Joe Dolan and Dickie Rock, Reynolds openly expressed his Catholic values.

Reynolds describes his Catholic mother as a 'purposeful deeply religious woman, who believed in the value of prayer and a hard work ethic to get you through life' (Reynolds,

2010: 18). He also writes of providing a personal introduction and recommendation which led to Father Brian D'Arcy (Reynolds, 2010: 53) becoming a music reporter writing on the showband scene. Therefore, it is important to identify that this challenge to Church control came from within its own immediate sphere of influence. On a personal level, he represents both the influence of the clergy over rural Irish life and on his entrepreneurial career. He wrote:

> Religion has always been a very important part of my life and I have always enjoyed being involved with my local church; so it was inevitable that with time on my hands I would consult my local priest as to what I could do to help… (Reynolds, 2010: 38).

Thus, according to his narrative, in 1955, at the request of his local parish priest, Reynolds became involved in the organisation of a carnival to raise funds for the 'urgent' repair of the parish church roof. After two successful years, the priest felt that the necessary funds had been secured and he encouraged the young man to continue running events for his own profit.

The shift towards a modern enterprise-driven economy is clearly visible from the case history of the Reynolds' ballroom empire. It is possible to trace the evolving pro-enterprise discourse by combining his autobiography with contemporary newspaper advertisements and media reports which provide details of his business development. The origins of the Reynolds brothers' ballroom chain were rooted in the cultural, social and financial capital available to the family in rural Roscommon. Their father had repurposed premises he owned for a coach-building business into a small hall for dancing. Therefore, when the local parish priest recruited Albert into arranging the summer carnival, his family's background in the provision of live music and dancing events was already known.

Reynolds represented himself as possessing social and cultural capital, including a network with a supportive parish priest and the knowledge of the dancing industry gained from family experience. His financial capital came from his older brother, Jim, who returned with money from Australia in 1957 following a period working in construction. Albert was employed by the state transport company (CIE) and stated that his 'parents were on good terms with our local bank' (Reynolds, 2010: 28) and that a loan was secured from the local branch of the Munster and Leinster Bank for their venture. The availability of capital in the form of bank loans was a relatively recent aspect of Irish commercial life and contributed

to the country's stimulation of small enterprises. The decision to advance a loan to the Reynolds brothers was undoubtedly influenced by the family's existing capital and Albert's employment. Families lacking resources of this nature would have been unlikely to receive bank loans at the time.

Reynolds claimed that his employment by CIE provided him with the flexibility of doing his tasks quickly and devoting the rest of his time to his ballroom business. Whatever about his particular circumstances, as the economist John O'Hagan identified, the state-sponsored bodies (SSBs) undertaken by the Irish government from the 1920s had the 'ability to attract good managers' (O'Hagan, 2011: 15). As such, they provided well-run organisations while the country's private sector lacked entrepreneurship. It is interesting to note, without inferring a pattern, how in this situation, Reynolds, with his business acumen in the late 1950s, felt confident enough to depend on his skill set in the private sector rather than in a 'safer' SSB; this points to a cultural shift in the perception of business opportunities.

The cultural capital available to the brothers also included Albert's qualification gained from a correspondence course with the Glasgow School of Accountancy; credentials from British educational institutions were of value in 1950s Ireland. He possessed financial, management and promotional skills, whilst his brother possessed the construction skills and knowledge to undertake the building of the ballrooms.

Reynolds writes that Ireland's existing halls and marquees for dances were of low quality in almost every respect. Local Church control had apparently acted as a disincentive to investment by private firms in the live music industry. To the brothers, this signalled a market opportunity for the provision of large high-standard ballrooms purpose-built for dancing. These venues would attract both dancers and artists dissatisfied with existing venues. In September 1957, the brothers opened their first ballroom, The Cloudland, in Roosky, County Roscommon.

Initially, the venue received little national media attention, although the local newspaper provided some details of its opening and operation. The hall, with a capacity of 1,200 dancers, was described in glowing terms:

> ...modern, up-to-date, spacious, designed on the most Continental lines, yet the general layout harmonised with the panoramic and colourful background of the village and its environs... [Inside, a] revolving crystal ball will send out multi-coloured rays while spotlights play on it and the hall becomes a veritable fairyland (*Leitrim Observer*, 14 September 1957).

This was a radical change from the 'frugal comforts' and isolation of earlier Irish discourses. The Cloudland may have 'harmonised' with the village and its environs, but it was bringing a globalised music industry and overseas acts to rural Ireland. If the venue was represented as a departure from that expected in 1950s rural Ireland, so was the music entertainment offered. In its first year of opening, The Cloudland not only provided acts from the Republic. The rural venue actively promoted the crossing of cultural and physical borders. Bands from Northern Ireland had a prominent place in the early showband era and they featured along with acts from England and Scotland at the Roscommon venue. The Melody Aces from county Tyrone performed on the ballroom's opening night. Other acts from Northern Ireland appearing in the venue's first months included: The Clipper Carlton, the Columba Gallagher Orchestra, Eber Clarke and the Downtones, in addition to bands led by Dave Glover, Gay McIntyre and Joe Savage. Scotland provided the Jim Cameron Scottish Country Dance Band, while England supplied both Victor Silvester and Vic Lewis with their orchestras.

Reynolds also lists other international acts he hosted in his venues. These included Jim Reeves, Acker Bilk, Chubby Checker, Johnny Cash and Roy Orbison. In addition to ownership of 'about fourteen' halls, Albert and Jim Reynolds also rented other venues (Reynolds, 2010: 47). This led to both economies of scale and a concentration of power. It can reasonably be concluded that when the 'showband' era commenced, the Republic was unable to provide enough domestic 'star' attractions to satisfy the needs of the emerging ballrooms. As the brothers expanded their business, they were able to kick start the careers of domestic 'showband stars'. Local acts were given prestigious opportunities to appear on shows with international acts and before large crowds. Reynolds wrote:

> It was regarded as an important gig, a good career move, for young bands to get dates with the Reynolds chain. It gave them status, built their audience and, if they had talent, it also guaranteed them future dates in all our key ballrooms in our circuit around the country (Reynolds, 2010: 57).

Thus, by providing local acts with guaranteed bookings in their chain, the Reynolds' could establish careers for those acts. Soon after, in the early 1960s, local Irish branches of international record firms began producing and marketing records by these Irish acts. Pye Records was the first firm to promote and distribute significant numbers of Irish 'showband' artists. This activity was subsequently followed by Irish labels and coincided with a professionalization of the industry and the formation of the Irish Top Ten pop charts in 1961. That said, the records released by Irish acts were generally promotional tools for raising their profiles and drawing larger numbers to their dances.

By examining the Irish media coverage of the growing Reynolds' ballroom change, it is possible to see how the discourse on materialism evolved. The Reynolds' launched their second venue, The Roseland, in Moate, County Westmeath in September 1959. The event was accompanied by greater media attention than their first ballroom had generated; commercial dancing was becoming more prevalent and acceptable to the Irish media. In part, this was due to the new ballroom owners, like Reynolds, taking paid advertising in the newspapers. The national newspaper, the *Irish Press*, devoted three quarters of a page, including a series of advertisements and promotional copy, to the opening. The following details were highlighted:

> The ladies' powder room is beautifully fitted with individual mirrors and of course the lighting is excellent… [the] 4,000 square-foot ballroom is made of sprung Canadian maple… The décor is in pastel shades in which pastel pink predominates… [Features included] the brilliant oasis of light in the café adjoining the dance floor (*Irish Press*, 17 September 1959).

Once again, the forthcoming attractions included visiting acts from overseas; one of the most notable was Ivy Benson with her '19-piece ladies orchestra' (*Irish Press*, 17 September 1959). Another aspect of the new ballrooms signalled how they challenged accepted notions of non-urban Irish entertainment. Now the ballrooms actively sought to entice dancers from beyond the local area. In many cases, as with The Roseland, this included the provision of special buses to transport dancers to the ballroom. Once again, this was in direct opposition to the 1930s dancing discourse advanced by the Church, which actively encouraged restrictions on dancers from outside the local area.

The third Reynolds' venue, The Dreamland in Athy, was launched with even more attention than the previous venues. The *Irish Independent* carried a full page advertorial for

the venue's opening. In a major challenge to the Church opposition to 'outsiders' mixing at local dances, the promotional material read:

> This luxurious ballroom... will, indeed, provide a much needed rendezvous for dancers, not alone from industrial Athy, but from the Midlands and even Dublin... some very famous cross-Channel attractions have already been booked (*Irish Independent*, 13 July 1961).

Four months later, the fourth ballroom in the chain, Roscommon's Fairyland, was also launched with a full page advertisement in the *Irish Independent* (22 November 1961). Yet the rise of the Reynolds' ballroom empire was not universally welcomed. The transition from frugality to materialism and luxury was neither instant nor unmediated. Naturally, the conversion in the purpose of dancing entertainment from Church control to free market was not welcomed by the clergy. Evidence of the ballroom business and its critics can be found in media reports of judicial decisions relating to Reynolds' expansion. In 1962, the *Longford Leader* provided details of objections to the new Fairyland ballroom. According to reports of evidence submitted, it had cost £20,000 to build and could cater for 1,400 dancers. The judge overruled local objections and licenced the Fairyland to hold 62 dances per year, finishing between 1.30 and 2.00 am, for the sole profit of the Reynolds' entrepreneurs (*Longford Leader*, 20 January 1962).

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Church had been able to depend on local magistrates as valuable allies to protect their control of local social dancing. By the early 1960s, however, as can be seen from reports of court rulings, this support was no longer guaranteed. While members of the Irish judiciary were still advocating Church involvement in the regulation and commerce of dancing, consideration was also being given to commercial and even class-based concerns. The Jetland Ballroom in Limerick, constructed by Reynolds, was subject to a number of objections from clergy and local residents. District Justice Burke was quoted as saying '... [I] also had to weigh the rights of the applicant and the number of people who would enjoy the dancing facilities'. The alleged financial investment in the venue was also entered into evidence; capital clearly now had a voice in these disputes. In the Jetland Limerick case, the costs of the venue were placed at between £60,000 and £70,000 for the 2,500 person capacity ballroom (*The Irish Times*, 25 July 1963). The local objections were overruled and the Jetland ballroom went ahead.

The opening of a ballroom in Clones, County Monaghan by the Reynolds family was also contested by the local parish priest there. In this case, the reported cost of the Clones

ballroom, £60,000, was entered into evidence as an argument to permit the venue to provide a return on its investment (*The Irish Times*, 12 October 1966). In his decision to allow the dances to proceed, the Justice was reported as stating that 'wealthier classes' have dances until 3 a.m., while hotel patrons could dance until 1.30 a.m.

It can be concluded that the commercial ballrooms directly challenged the social mores established by the Church in multiple ways. In addition to establishing an aesthetic of 'luxury' in venues for leisure and embracing the material values of individualism and enterprise, they also booked and promoted 'foreign acts', provided late-night dancing prohibited by the Church and actively encouraged socialisation from wide geographic areas. In so doing, they were responsible for a dramatic shift in Irish leisure and socialisation patterns.

The Reynolds entrepreneurs were prominent in the very visible usurpation of Church control of leisure in the country. Therefore, these entrepreneurs should be identified as part of a social movement through which business values began to erode the 'moral monopoly' of the Church. This undoubtedly enabled Ireland to embrace the 'rugged individual values' of the more advanced Western economies and members of the showband field were in the vanguard of the struggle between traditional Catholic anti-entrepreneurial mores and an enterprise-driven culture.

Ireland swings with Guinness: how an 'ascendancy' family influenced native culture

The Guinness firm demonstrates the significant economic impact that one successful firm can have on a national economy. The longevity of this success, particularly when contrasted with the generally underdeveloped nature of that economy, made the family firm's principals significant figures in Irish life. One study of the company's historical impact, by Patrick Lynch and John Vaizey (1960), establishes how the wealth and success of the Guinness family in this era stemmed from the firm's skilled management during the age of industrialization; beer was an early success of the mass industrial process. Historically too, this was a period of rapid income growth in its two markets: the English middle-class income during the 1840s and the Irish following the famine. By the 1880s, the family 'dominated Dublin' (Lynch and Vaizey, 1960: 246).

The firm's economic impact and the associated social and cultural activities of its prominent members continued when Ireland gained independence, as Cormac Ó Gráda's

(1997) Irish economic history of the post-1920s indicates. During the 1920s, Ireland's economy was still dependent on agriculture and possessed only a small under-developed industrial sector. Thirty per cent of the State's industrial output was produced by brewing, the majority by Guinness (Ó Gráda, 1997: 108). The firm was so integral to the national economy that its decision to set up a British manufacturing facility during the 1936 'Economic War' between the countries had a severe impact on the country's balance of payments.

The history of Claddagh Records indicates how the Guinness family were important not only financially to Ireland but also culturally. Just as Fintan Vallely (2008) concluded from his in-depth survey of Irish music, there was considerable flow between the music enjoyed and played by Catholics and Protestants, but there was also considerable flow between members of the religions in terms of enterprise. The career of The Chieftains clearly shows how their business network included and was influenced by Anglo-Irish patronage. In this case, this came courtesy of the Guinness family. Despite common assumptions, the Irish traditional music of The Chieftains should not be interpreted as belonging strictly to Irish Catholic culture. The group's harpist, Derek Bell, a Northern Irish Protestant, stated 'the source of our music has nothing whatsoever to do with any of the churches' (Glatt, 1997: 118). Despite this, as witnessed in the 1930s debates about dancing, the preservation and advancement of Irish music culture was frequently represented as monolithic, Catholic and nationalistic.

The duality of Garech Browne as Anglo-Irish was also a common feature of Irish print media discourse. Wright drew attention to his patronage of The Chieftains, remarking that he was the '26-year-old son of Lord Oranmore and Browne… [and] lives in a Mews house off Fitzwilliam Square' (Wright, *Sunday Independent*, 11 April 1965). Similarly, a 1966 feature in Britain's *Guardian* newspaper alluded to his dual identity; he was positioned as both emblematic of the Anglo-Irish and as a guardian of Irish culture. Describing his ambition to release more Irish records, a journalist wrote: 'So much the worse for the peacocks, donkeys and gentleman-farming, perhaps, but so much the better for the international image of Celtic culture' (Nightingale, *The Guardian*, 8 November 1966). Browne was quoted as saying:

> I like Irish traditional music very much and I couldn't get it on record. So I thought, well, if I couldn't get the records, I'd better make them myself. And, if I liked them, perhaps other people would too (Nightingale, *The Guardian*, 8 November 1966).

In terms of domestic media coverage, Terence Connealy's (1968) *Irish Independent* article, entitled 'Garech Browne: champion of Irish music', endorsed Browne's cultural activities; he was described as '...perfectly sincere in his affection for the old music'. Browne was quoted recalling how when he started the label in 1959, 'critics audibly sneered that "it must be for the money"'. According to the article, for the artists he selected, Browne's support and loyalty resulted in 'a richer response than if they had to depend on more profit-minded disc makers' (Connealy, *Irish Independent*, 10 May 1968). Claddagh was distinguished from its contemporaries in the Irish traditional field in a number of important ways.

These distinctions, I would argue, stemmed from Garech Browne's entrepreneurial skills, social network and business acumen. The decision to include recordings by contemporary poets in Claddagh's repertoire set the label apart from the more orthodox Irish traditional music labels. Claddagh issued recordings of Irish poets, including Patrick Kavanagh, Seamus Heaney, Austin Clark and Liam O'Flaherty. The label's artwork also represented another form of cross-field alliance and distinguished it from its contemporaries. Browne was personally invested in the design of the album covers for which he commissioned prominent contemporary artists, including Barry Cooke, Louis le Brocquy, Edward Delaney and Edward Maguire.

Browne's resources enabled Claddagh to engage with the music industry in distinctive ways. His extravagance drew attention to the label's products. Moloney is said to have remarked 'Our press receptions were the talk of the country. Nobody in Ireland had them in those days... We'd spend so much money on the launches that it would take years to see any profits on the records' (Glatt, 1997: 89).

In strictly industrial terms, the beginnings of the Chieftains belonged to the Irish Protestant entrepreneurial tradition and to Browne's social, cultural and financial capital. Just as Thomas Moore's representation of Ireland was initiated by an entrepreneur, so was The Chieftain's work. While the former was commissioned with the clear aim of making a

profit, it is arguable that The Chieftains, at least in part, belong to the type of social entrepreneurship that underlies and supports local music scenes.

According to the band's authorized biographer, John Glatt (1997: 53), The Chieftains were founded at Browne's instigation. He commissioned an album by an Irish ensemble and gave Paddy Moloney the task of selecting the musicians. Moloney was given autonomy, although Browne personally suggested Davy Fallon as bodhrán player (Glatt, 1997: 54). Once the musicians were assembled, Browne booked Dublin's Peter Hunt recording studios for five nights (Glatt, 1997: 55). In addition to funding the project, he personally oversaw the album cover artwork, which featured an illustration by his friend, the Irish artist Edward Delaney. Another friend, the author John Montague, who was also one of the label's directors, suggested the group name, after his book *Death of a Chieftain* (Glatt, 1997: 56).

Browne not only provided The Chieftains with the opportunity to record their music, he also employed the group's leader Paddy Moloney as managing director of the Claddagh record label (Glatt, 1997: 69). Just as Diane Hamilton had done earlier with The Clancy Brothers, the entrepreneur provided the musician with hands-on music industry experience in record label management. In Moloney's case, he was responsible for the financial affairs of the label as well as the production of its albums, from which he gained considerable studio experience. In his role of Claddagh managing director, Moloney engaged with the international industry while enjoying the benefits of Browne's patronage. In 1969, he travelled to New York where he both performed as a solo artist and promoted Claddagh recordings, naturally including his own (Glatt, 1997: 70).

Browne's cultural capital and network resulted in direct sources of prestige for the Chieftains. The sleeve notes for 'Chieftains 4' were written by the well-known actor and comedian, Peter Sellers. Browne is quoted on the celebrity endorsement: 'We wanted people to ask the question, 'Why is Peter Sellers interested in Irish music? ... So you made a talking point of it. We wanted to show that it was not something provincial' (Glatt, 1997: 95).

Moloney's ability to participate in this social network improved when Browne rented him a cottage in the grounds of his Wicklow estate. Glatt represents Browne 'entertaining lavishly' (Glatt, 1997: 66) at his family home where he hosted actors and musicians,

including Princess Grace of Monaco, Richard Harris, Sean Connery and Peter O'Toole, The Rolling Stones and Marianne Faithfull. In 1969, director John Huston filmed in Wicklow, including at the Browne residence. The Chieftains played at the party for the cast and crew (Glatt, 1997: 80). Group members were also invited to society weddings, including that of Desmond Fitzgerald, Knight of Glin (Glatt, 1997: 90). The gossip columnist Terry Keane described Browne and his social network:

> Garech, of course, has met or is related to everybody... Somerset Maughan, Pamela Bordes, Daniel Farson, Lucien Freud, Brendan Behan, Robert Graves... Garech also loves books (he has a collection of several thousand), 'all the contemporary ones are signed simply because I knew the authors – Liam O'Flaherty, Robert Lowell...' (Keane, *Sunday Independent*, 30 April 1989).

McLaughlin and McLoone argued that 1960s Ireland saw 'the slow emergence of a new youth scene that linked the Irish traditional with the internationally hip – with considerable interplay between both' (2012: 35–36), and The Chieftains are one of the most striking examples of this interplay. Their local rock interaction included playing in the National Stadium in separate shows with Skid Row, Fairport Convention and the ballad singer Danny Doyle in the early 1970s, in addition to performing with the poets recorded by Claddagh Records in 1970. Behind-the-scenes activity also linked The Chieftains with the internationally hip and here again the Browne family was instrumental.

It is notable how this authorized account of the band depicts the engagement of The Chieftains with Browne's network. Glatt writes of the 1960s when: 'Browne's introduction of The Chieftains to his influential friends was paying off for the group' (Glatt, 1997: 66). Mick Jagger and Marianne Faithfull are represented as fans of the Irish group having come in contact with them via Browne and his brother Tara. Faithfull's (1995) autobiography provides details of the culturally significant milieu of the 1960s. She described the small social group of new pop icons and the Britain's upper class as the *jeunesse dorée*, in which Tara Browne was a central figure. Other accounts of the era, including those of Kellett (2008: 415) and Roberts (2012: 126), provide details of Tara Browne's social and entrepreneurial activities with The Beatles and The Rolling Stones. The guests at his 21st birthday party in the family home in Wicklow (O'Byrne, 2012: 172) included members of the British aristocracy, such as the Hon. Victoria Ormsby-Gore, Sir Mark Palmer and Christopher Gibbs, the American-born oil heir John Paul Getty Jr., as well as Mick Jagger and Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones.

The Browne patronage and network proved valuable to Moloney and The Chieftains in other ways. Claddagh's press officer, hired by Browne for Claddagh, Pat Pretty, introduced Moloney to the head of EMI (Ireland), Harry Christmas. When The Chieftains required studio time to re-master their second album Christmas contacted London's Abbey Road studios, where the Beatles were booked to record. The Liverpool band permitted The Chieftains to use the studio during their block booking. This, according to Moloney, occurred because 'The Beatles knew all about The Chieftains' music and liked it' (1997: 74). John Lennon attended their shows (Glatt, 1997: 83) and Paul McCartney invited Moloney to play on his recordings (Glatt, 1997: 172).

In 1975, Moloney represented the firm at the Irish industry stand at the MIDEM music industry convention in Cannes. The networking undertaken by the Irish musician at this event was facilitated by Moloney's accommodation at a villa belonging to Garech's mother in nearby Antibes. The villa was used to host events for the Irish delegation at the convention. This networking activity funded by Browne led to Moloney meeting with Jo Lustig, an English-based American entrepreneur, who became their business manager. Under Lustig's guidance, the band, who had been part-time musicians until then, finally became full-time professionals.

The long and successful career of The Chieftain's leader, Paddy Moloney, as a professional musician performing traditional music should be placed in the context of the non-musician members of that field. In his analysis of the literary field, although applicable to the music arena, Bourdieu argued that we must ask 'how the position or "post" he [the writer] occupies – that of a writer of a particular type – became constituted' (2003: 162). In Moloney's case, his post, professional Irish traditional musician, was clearly constituted by Garech Browne acting as a patron to him.

At various times, Lustig also represented Ralph McTell and Steeleye Span, as well as Irish acts Dana and Mary O'Hara. By signing with a powerful London-based manager, The Chieftains were now closer to the centre of the core of the centralised international music industry. Yet their case also indicates that the supportive environment of their local music scene had initially sustained them before they eventually achieved chart success internationally. It is also significant that when The Chieftains turned professional, they did so with a London-based manager. Even in Irish traditional music, during the 1960s groups

appeared to encounter a lack of domestically based managers capable of international chart success.

How the Irish rock underground and Thin Lizzy cast off the 'old hat'

The optimistic rhetoric about Irish music exports was advanced by Des Hickey's 1965 series of articles on the impending 'pop invasion' of Britain by Irish artists. His series began with the headline: 'Five cars, nine horses and £50,000 a year – that's The Bachelors' (*Sunday Independent*, 7 February 1965). Yet, by the following year even the leading figures in the local industry were being more realistic. John Woods of Pye was quoted on the Irish showbands:

> As it is, much of it is second hand and is tailored towards the Irish market. The Irish market seems to like things that are, shall we say, old hat... Also they appeal to the Irish audience which as a group is older than its British counterpart. Maybe it's due to late marriage in the provinces, or a lack of amusement taken for granted in Britain, but you often get people going dancing regularly in their 30s and 40s (*Record Retailer*, 17 March 1966).

For the Eurovision-winning songwriter, Shay Healy, Ireland's emergent 'beat' music scene, which was influenced by British and American bands, was a sign of national engagement with international culture, although one that was thwarted by a lack of entrepreneurship. He was quoted as saying:

> [It] was the first emerging culture that was not specifically Irish, it was borrowing very heavily from foreign influences... the first sign that we were emerging from being an insular society... It was just a pity that nobody knew how to exploit it enough, to sell it to the people (O' Halloran, 2006: 217).

While it would be difficult to argue with this, we should acknowledge the entrepreneurs who participated in that scene. The pity was not that they did not know how to exploit and sell that music, it was that Ireland lacked the resources and supportive environment they needed. One local entrepreneur, Ted Carroll founded one of the country's first Rhythm and Blues clubs and managed local bands, including Skid Row, Rockhouse with Paul Brady and subsequently Thin Lizzy. He also booked bands into local clubs, often in conjunction with Taste and Rory Gallagher's Belfast manager, Eddie Kennedy. However, Carroll eventually emigrated, frustrated at the lack of local entrepreneurial opportunities, both in

the music industry and beyond. He recalled opening a petrol station and panel-beating business with friends at the time while he was managing bands:

> We ran that for two years unfortunately believe it or not because we couldn't get a phone in the place. It was a very ironic situation but the local switchboard was full… the local TD believe it or not was the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs and he couldn't even get us a phone you know we were employing three or four people locally… you need a phone to get work with crash repairs because you've got to be able to react immediately and give quotes and things like that. And we were getting messages sent to local pubs. That was the main reason [it] eventually it folded up (Carroll, 2012, interview with the author).

With his activities curtailed by Ireland's culture of enterprise, he emigrated to England. There, in the next decade, he had a significant impact on the London music industry, as well as on the careers of Irish rock bands. Back in Ireland, obstacles remained to the development of both a live music industry and a record industry capable of exporting its products. While the showbands had participated in advancing the cause of materialistic values in Ireland, which was a significant cultural change, they had not transformed the local music industry into one capable of overseas success.

Ultimately, it was rock bands rather than the showbands that provided Ireland with its greatest overseas commercial success in the following decade. I argue that this rock success was stimulated and incubated by a small number of local entrepreneurs, often without financial benefit to themselves. One thing was apparent in the 1960s; the Irish acts that did enjoy international success in the British albums charts during the decade did so without locally based entrepreneurs. Val Doonican's manager, Evie Taylor, was English. The Dubliners and The Bachelors were guided by Phil Solomon, who had relocated from Belfast to London. He had also been responsible for the early success of the local band Them and their singer Van Morrison. Eddie Kennedy from Northern Ireland was handling the early business affairs of Rory Gallagher and Taste. If, as Chubb asserted, the 1960s witnessed Ireland's lifestyles approaching those of 'rich industrial countries', its music industry was still dependent on outside forces even at the end of the 1960s. In the following two decades, I argue, it was local entrepreneurial activity rather than developments from the major global firms that improved the situation.

Conclusion

The 1960s were described by some members of the Irish political establishment as 'the showband era', which ushered in 'a fledgling native Irish music recording industry' (Mooney, 1989); however, this correlation has been disputed. While the debate about 'rock versus showbands' has received considerable attention, the way in which the showbands challenged Irish values has been neglected. My research indicates that the showbands both advanced a materialistic discourse in Ireland and witnessed for-profit entrepreneurial activity that ran contrary to the earlier Catholic distrust of commercial activity. The Irish media coverage of Joe Dolan and Dickie Rock indicates the former, while the activity of the future Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds, indicates the latter. This is all the more surprising in a field – the provision of live variety-type entertainment – over which the clergy had previously maintained considerable influence.

This was just one of the challenges associated with popular music that the Irish establishment faced during the 1960s. The very idea of 'pop music' was viewed with suspicion; as the moral panic concerning Cliff Richard's concert indicates, live music was an area in which this moral panic was articulated. However, if pop music was seen as a threat to traditional music in some quarters, it was embraced in others, including Gael Linn; the Gaelic language movement engaged with modern pop music in pro-active and productive ways. This progressive entrepreneurial engagement was also demonstrated in the case of Claddagh Records and The Chieftains. Just as Diane Hamilton had provided the resources, both a financial and supportive network, for The Clancy Brothers to develop in the 1950s, Garech Browne did so for The Chieftains in the 1960s.

In this case again, the entrepreneurial activity came from outside the expected core of Irish cultural preservationists and was sponsored by Garech Browne, a Guinness family heir. The creative and entrepreneurial exchanges between Irish traditional music and rock music during the 1960s continued in surprising and productive ways during the 1970s.

Chapter 7: The Irish Rock Entrepreneurs 1970–1977

Thin Lizzy, The Boomtown Rats, the showband decline and the underdeveloped live music industry

How did overseas rock acts stimulate the local Irish rock music industry? Briefly examining the influence of the English band Dr. Feelgood on the 1976 Dublin rock music scene provides one way of addressing this question. The case highlights how local music entrepreneurs participated in bringing the band to the attention to Irish audiences. It also highlights how Irish bands were influenced by overseas acts; The Boomtown Rats openly acknowledged the influence of Dr. Feelgood. This can be depicted in terms of a centre-to-periphery transmission model, with London as the centre and Ireland at the periphery. In this case, in terms of Ireland's cultural borders and global cultural flows, The Boomtown Rats were changed by Dr. Feelgood; this transformation arguably enabled the Irish band to succeed in the British market. In reductionist terms, peripheral Ireland was re-transmitting to Britain a type of popular music that the Irish had learnt from the British. By doing so successfully, they were reducing Ireland's peripheral status within the music industry.

In October 1976, Dr. Feelgood played in Dublin's National Stadium at a concert organised by the UCD Students' Union. By this time, rock concerts were being reviewed favourably in the Irish media. Highlighting the influential role of the university Entertainments Officers (Ents Officers) in the domestic music scene at this time, both the *Irish Press* (Wrafter, 21 October 1976) and the *Sunday Independent* (O'Kelly, 24 October 1976) reported on the event and that the venue was sold out. To O'Kelly, this provided the opportunity to endorse the idea that Dublin could support more rock concerts; he wrote 'the full house again proved that an enterprising promoter will invariably do well'.

O'Kelly was not a disinterested observer of Ireland's rock scene; in addition to transmitting impressions of international and local rock music via national newspapers, he was involved in managing Irish acts, including Clannad and The Boomtown Rats. In conjunction with the UCD Students' Union, The Rats had recently completed a national tour which included a show at the National Stadium. As well as disseminating impressions of Dr. Feelgood via his column, he was also successfully encouraging The Boomtown Rats to study their material. The band's singer, Bob Geldof, recalled:

> Fachtna revealed a treasure trove to me. He played me Dr. Feelgood. That was the very thing I wanted to do; brilliant new rhythm and blues, wonderful, wonderful lyrics… I played them to the others. They were electrified. We soon learned every Dr. Feelgood track (Geldof, 1986: 100).

To the aspiring band, O'Kelly also provided frequent affirmative press coverage; 'my friend Fachtna… started to write enthusiastically' (Geldof, 1986: 104); this positive press can be seen in, for example, O'Kelly's articles of March 1976 and June 1976 and O'Kelly was invited to accompany the band on their self-organised Falling Asunder tour (Geldof, 1986: 107) and to manage them (Geldof, 1986: 111). The combination of the band's musical enterprise and both their and O'Kelly's entrepreneurial activities brought them to the attention of gate-keepers in the local and global music industry. Naturally, one of the London-based record labels they attempted to impress was United Artists (UA), which was home to Dr. Feelgood. The A&R man there, Andrew Lauder, rejected the band. Shortly afterwards, when The Boomtown Rats began to enjoy major commercial success in Britain, he described being 'impressed' by the band's demo tape, which included cover versions of Dr Feelgood songs, although he was quoted as saying 'This is a small company and one group playing another's material on the label would have been silly' (*Music Week*, 15 October 1977).

This makes it clear that Irish bands had to navigate a process of music and image identity formation between the local and the global. As can be seen from the reaction of Dr. Feelgood's A&R man, this was not a straightforward process. They also had to navigate a path that combined the local and global music industries and often these did not work in the synergistic way that might be expected. For example, at the time – 1976 – CBS Ireland was highly successful, yet the local office was unable to get the London headquarters to consider signing The Boomtown Rats. Despite alerting the CBS staff in Britain to Irish acts that later proved commercially successful, the Irish personnel felt that they lacked credibility with the London gate-keepers:

> ….as far as I can remember Horslips, Chris de Burgh, the Boomtown Rats and actually just about anyone we'd offered them, they'd actually said no to… they weren't interested. There was a sense of, maybe I'm too sensitive about it, 'what would you Paddies know about international A&R and marketing? You're doing a great job over there, just go back and keep at it lads'. That sort of thing (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author).

This lack of corporate synergy between London and Dublin meant that local networks and the ways in which Irish acts and entrepreneurs could network with global gate-keepers were important to developing artists. At a local level, The Boomtown Rats drew from a supportive network of university students' union Ents Officers, as well as media personnel and entrepreneurs. It is significant that their manager, O'Kelly, had developed his skills and networks while managing Clannad; in Ireland, the traditional music industry was not divorced from the local rock industry and there were productive entrepreneurial flows between the two.

To understand the entrepreneurial activity that brought The Boomtown Rats to the global market, it is important to comprehend the conditions encountered by previous local rock acts. Therefore, in chronological order, I wish to examine the entrepreneurial factors associated with the decline of the showbands, the rise of Thin Lizzy and then the success of The Boomtown Rats. Music genres are frequently represented as being in opposition to each other, with new trends eliminating previous genres. Yet, as will be demonstrated in this case, genres frequently overlap and may, in a variety of ways, compete and cooperate at the same time.

A new decade: 1970 and the Irish rock entrepreneurs

By the start of 1970 it was apparent that the Irish music industry lacked the means for successfully bringing significant numbers of local acts to the international market. This can be attributed to a failure to impress key industry gate-keepers in Britain and the US of the commercially viability of Irish acts. The conclusion that could be drawn from the successful Irish acts of the 1960s, three of which, the Bachelors, the Dubliners and Val Doonican, had entered the crucial British album charts, was that overseas chart success resulted from Irish acts combining with managers who possessed credible network links with industry power brokers. Thus it is fair to conclude that by 1970 the local music industry was both under-developed and at the periphery of the global music industry. This underdevelopment and peripheral status reflected the country's overall economic position.

One study at the time measured the importance of location to economic development across Europe. Factors were appraised including 'peripherality, transport costs…and less tangible factors such as access to information and outsider's perceptions' (Ó Gráda, 1997: 178–179). This concluded that only five European locations including Corsica, Italy's underdeveloped southern region and parts of Portugal and Spain occupied more

unfavourable locations than Ireland. Disturbingly for Ireland, as Ó Gráda demonstrated, in 1973 peripherality was negatively correlated with income.

Another indicator of economic underdevelopment is employment. Britain's unemployment level, at 5.5 per cent in 1976, (Savage, 2005: 267) was the highest since the 1940s. In Ireland, during the decade's oil crises and Ireland's lack of economic progress, unemployment almost tripled from 6.2 per cent in 1973 to 18.2 per cent in 1985 (Ó Gráda, 1997: 97). Despite some progress towards connecting with the outside world, including joining the EEC in 1973, the country was still underdeveloped relative to the rest of Europe. In 1984 social welfare was being received by almost 30 per cent of the population (Ferriter, 2005: 670).

If this peripheral position was ameliorated by technology, as Morash (2010) argues, here too Ireland lagged behind Britain. In 1970 telephones were owned by less than 10 per cent of the Irish population, televisions by just over 15 per cent (Ó Gráda, 1997: 35). For every four Irish people with a phone, Britain had ten; for every Irish person with a television Britain had two.

Dependency culture

My argument is that the fundamental flaw inhibiting the development of the Irish music industry in the 1970s was related to, and reinforced by, its peripheral position in the global business. This created a dependency culture and it was acutely prevalent in the early 1970s. If successfully bringing Irish acts to international charts is accepted as an indication of improved conditions, this dependency was eroded towards the end of the 1970s and then more actively and successfully challenged during the 1980s.

Indicators of the underdevelopment of the Irish music industry included a lack of both local record labels and managers capable of bringing Irish acts to international markets, a lack of professional songwriters, a lack of access to records available in Britain and the US and a lack of suitable venues for pop and rock music. In 1970, however, the local record industry received a significant boost when RTE began a new 75-minute show broadcasting the popular music charts; the station had not broadcast the charts since 1967 due to concerns about their accuracy (Stewart, *Billboard*, 19 September 1970). The station had a monopoly of the Irish airwaves, so this presented an opportunity for local and global labels to have their products aired to a large listenership. From my analysis of the Irish pop

charts, it is evident that during the early 1970s Irish acts on local labels, generally from the showband genre or its related genres, 'country and Irish', or cabaret, competed very successfully against international acts in the domestic charts. In the first half of the decade (1970–1974), Irish acts were Number 1 for an average of almost 19 weeks annually. In the second half of the decade (1975–1979), however, there was a drastic reduction in the number of Irish acts in the Number 1 position. During this period, Irish acts topped the charts for an average of eight weeks per year. If the top of the 1970s Irish charts are viewed from the other side, that of the global acts, the trend moved dramatically in their favour. For the first half of the 1970s, songs from overseas acts were Number 1 for an average of 33 weeks; in the latter half of the decade, they were Number 1 for an average of 44 weeks.

This dependency of Irish acts on overseas music industry gate-keepers can also be seen in the area of artist management. The lack of domestic managers meant that Irish acts were steered by managers from outside the Republic. In the 1960s, the three Irish acts that made the British albums charts were managed by London-based firms: The Bachelors and The Dubliners, managed by Phil Solomon, and Val Doonican, managed by Evelyn Taylor. An increasing number of acts from the Republic featured in British album charts during the 1970s (Betts, 2004; Roberts, 2004). While the increase was encouraging, the majority, just like their 1960s counterparts, were managed by managers from outside the Republic. Skid Row, Mary O' Hara, Taste, as well as Rory Gallagher solo, The Nolans, Gilbert O'Sullivan, Val Doonican and Thin Lizzy all had overseas managers during their British chart success, although Gallagher and Thin Lizzy were either self-managed or had Irish management briefly. Of the 10 Irish Republic acts in the 1970s British charts then, only Horslips and the Boomtown Rats had managers from Ireland. Horslips' long-standing manager, Michael Deeny was from Northern Ireland, which places Fachtna O'Kelly of the Boomtown Rats in a unique position in Irish music industry history. He was the first manager from the Republic to guide an act from there to British chart success.

In the early 1970s, the Irish record labels, although successful in the Irish charts, maintained a domestic market focus. They failed to develop and promote Irish acts successfully to overseas best-selling charts. A prime example is Play Records, which entered the market in 1971 and immediately scored a Number 1 hit with their debut release, Brendan Shine's 'O'Brien Has No Place to Go'. The single stayed in the domestic charts for 20 weeks and was the first of over 200 singles released by the label. Play was at

its most active in the 1970s and the sleeve design of its 1972 Brendan Shine record, 'March of the High Kings' indicated its nationally introspective marketing. The artwork proclaimed that the singer, recording, arrangement, producer, manager and distribution were all Irish (Play 40, 1971). It failed to chart anywhere outside its home market.

Yet, if the Irish pop charts are taken as an indication of market power, these local labels were capable of stimulating and satisfying the Irish demand for popular music. There were also clear indications that Ireland's market had distinctive taste during 1970–1975. Some of the material released on these labels reflected the country's political situation. For example, in the early 1970s, songs that reached the coveted weekly Number 1 place included: Barleycorn's 'The Men Behind the Wire' (1972), Paddywagon's 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' (1972), The Wolfe Tones' 'The Helicopter Song' (1973) and Dermot Hegarty with '19 Men' (1974) (Kelly, 2009).

As overseas acts increased their market share in the late 1970s, according to accounts of the time, the international labels did not provide the Irish market with the range of records that were available in Britain. An anonymous Dublin retailer was quoted in *Music Week* in 1977 complaining about the Irish branches of the international firms:

> You hear things on the radio and its ages before you get them. They won't bring the matrix over unless they're dead sure they're going to sell them. There are several things I've been asked for and I just couldn't get them because nobody brought them in (*Music Week*, 9 July 1977).

Even more worryingly, the international firms seldom had any significant investment in local talent. In 1983, it was reported that EMI's Irish operation, which was welcomed by the Irish government when it opened its Waterford factory in 1936 as the Gramophone Co., 'has not initiated any recordings [by local acts] for four or five years'. On the era which included the late 1970s, the company's marketing manager was quoted as saying 'Basically we are dependent on the English hits to give us the largest proportion of our turnover – [we maximise profit] by having those in the quantities required and not being stuck with any when they stop selling' (Dillon, 1983).

The decline of the showbands

One place where local and international, showband and rock acts competed was in the published music industry charts. The showband industry depended on published pop charts

for prestige, as well as for radio airplay which led to increased ballroom bookings. To this end, the Irish charts served the same purposes as other national pop music charts. From his study of US radio in the mid-1940s, the French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre, concluded that broadcasts of the Top Ten charts led to sales increases of between 30 and 50 per cent (Sartre, 2004: 644). Drawing on Sartre's analysis, Dave Laing (1970) concluded in Marxist terms that the broadcast of the charts stimulated consumers into '...seeing the songs as alternatives to one another, and into choices between them or for or against one. And this choice, the identification with a record, is the precondition for the purchase of a copy' (Laing, 1970: 29).

In Ireland, the host of RTE's 'Top Ten' show, Larry Gogan, recalled the pressure the broadcaster was placed under by power brokers in the domestic music industry. Due to time constraints, not every chart song could be included:

> ...you couldn't play everything so you'd drop older songs. But drop an Irish record and the complaints would fly in from the managers. After playing one disc for about 16 weeks I dropped it on the seventeenth. There was uproar. The rule came down that you couldn't drop Irish chart records no matter how old (Corless, *Irish Independent*, 23 August 2003).

Gogan's recollections indicate that the showband managers held positions of power in the domestic industry and the 'Top Ten' show reflected this. However, by as early as 1966, this dependence on the charts was being undermined by what the *Sunday Independent* described as a 'crippling loss of faith by the public in the chart system as a true and reliable guide' (Barry, *Sunday Independent*, 18 December 1966). While acknowledging the importance of the charts to the industry and as an input to the vital RTE playlists, Barry alleged that the charts were being manipulated. Following this, the decision by RTE to drop their broadcast of the Irish charts led to what was described as the end of the 'recording boom' (O'Boyle, *Donegal News*, 3 January 1970).

I argue that the charts of the era should therefore be seen as a reflection of market power, rather than a true reflection of sales to consumers. Naturally, the Irish charts were not the only popular lists that were accompanied by controversy and allegations of impropriety; following one investigation into the British charts, Paul Du Noyer concluded that chart manipulation by industry insiders worked 'to the inevitable detriment of any independent label hoping to break its acts in the proper way' (Du Noyer, *New Musical Express*, 23

August 1980). Extending that reasoning to the Irish charts indicates that if the charts were manipulated by industry insiders, this functioned as a barrier to entry for small firms and new acts.

Barriers to entry which stifle innovation have a lasting impact on any industry. With that in mind, I wish to examine the discourse concerning the showband decline. A variety of factors have been advanced to account for why the showbands declined. Many of these reasons were articulated in November 1970, when the *Irish Independent* printed a perceptive and prescient four-part series of articles about the showband scene. This drew on interviews with successful band managers, as well as direct observations. The author, Joseph MacAnthony, presented the showband scene as having serious failings.

While some showband managers were still claiming that the genre was lucrative, Joe Dolan's manager, Seamus Casey, seemed to offer a more honest appraisal: '...you've got to face the fact that Ireland is a small country and you ask yourself how many times you can go around it without becoming boring' (MacAnthony, *Irish Independent*, 20 November 1970).

Dolan, he argued, was going to focus on the more lucrative English market. Countering this, however, MacAnthony (*Irish Independent*, 18 November 1970) wrote that historically the 'poor quality of most Irish bands made [them] a humorous prospect for English promoters'. Sadly for Dolan, although he had some earlier success in the British singles charts, after 1970 he only achieved a single week in the hit parade (Roberts, 2014). Like the vast majority of Irish showband acts, he was essentially dependent on the local market, a market which, according to the insiders quoted, was contracting. The author wrote that 'mid-week dancing is rapidly disappearing from the Irish countryside' and that both Lent and 'parts of the winter' were also poor for showbands (MacAnthony, *Irish Independent*, 18 November 1970).

Reasons for the consumer decline were many and varied; competition from other forms of entertainment and the resultant changes in Irish socialisation patterns were offered as an explanation. In terms of external factors, MacAnthony (*Irish Independent*, 18 November 1970; *Irish Independent*, 20 November 1970) wrote that showbands suffered because of the ballad boom in the late 1960s, the availability of alcohol at other entertainment venues, including hotels and lounges, and the rise of discotheques.

While all of these factors indicate that the showband audience had other leisure choices, in themselves they do not definitely account for the genre's decline. If the showbands were compelling to customers, they should have been able to overcome these external threats.

MacAnthony also identified internal showband-industry factors which could account for the genre's decline. These included the domination of the ballrooms by younger dancers. Whilst showband dances had previously been attended by a large section of the community, this newer youth audience had allegedly pushed older dancers out (MacAnthony, *Irish Independent*, 19 November 1970); to this, T. J. Byrne, who had managed the iconic Royal Showband, added 'the poor condition of some of the ballrooms' as well as bands dressing in city fashions 'with long hair, psychedelic shirts and beads' (MacAnthony, *Irish Independent*, 20 November 1970).

Perhaps most importantly, MacAnthony (*Irish Independent*, 19 November 1970) identified a 'lack of new bands who can inject some life in the business'. Tellingly, he also described how initially bands had formed on a co-operative basis, with profits evenly divided; by 1970, 'the vast majority of them today are run and owned by promoters' (MacAnthony, *Irish Independent*, 19 November 1970). O'Halloran's (2006) conclusion regarding showbands being 'bound to audience expectation' was also expressed in 1970 by MacAnthony's claim that the lack of creativity of showbands stemmed from an unquestioning belief in giving audiences what they wanted: 'the customer is always right' (*Irish Independent*, 18 November 1970).

MacAnthony (*Irish Independent*, 18 November 1970) also cited the showband dependence on 'session musicians' for their recordings, as well as the practice of buying their own records in large quantities to ensure chart successes, airplay, promotion and ballroom bookings. If these widely reported practices were true, it meant two things. First, the bands that customers paid to see performing were possibly not of the same calibre as the musicians who played on the records. Second, the charts did not accurately reflect customer preferences. If the showbands were to change and cater to real customer demand, they would need innovation and this seemed unlikely in the context of assessment from another prominent manager, Jim Hand:

> It would be very difficult for a new band to start up today. The expenses are too heavy in advertising and publicity, equipment and organisation. As well as that you must have the connections to make the bookings. It's the managers who have been a long time in the business who are best able to do that. If an advertising agency spent £20,000 on it, they could create a successful showband (MacAnthony, *Irish Independent*, 19 November 1970).

Ultimately, it could be concluded from the MacAnthony series and from other accounts, including Vincent Power's (2000) *Send 'em home sweatin'*, that the showband industry was controlled by a small group of tightly networked managers; even if new entrants could gain the attention of these professionals, the capital costs were prohibitive. Yet in the early 1970s, and not only because of the RTE broadcasting of the charts, it looked as though the ballrooms could re-invent themselves. Original songwriters began to receive support within the showband industry, most notably members of The Freshmen and the Swarbrigg brothers in Joe Dolan's band. The ballrooms also briefly hosted original rock music written and performed by Irish band Horslips in this era. Their manager, Michael Deeny, an accountant by profession, adopted a long-term strategic approach. He recalled:

> ...persuading the ballroom owners to take a chance and let us in to play gigs was an uphill struggle, and we had to do it on a town-by-town basis. The more successful gigs we had under our belt, the more evidence we could present that we could pack out a hall and be profitable for everyone (Cunningham, 2013: 60).

In the long run, this rock music entrepreneurial activity would lead to greater exports for Ireland than the showbands during the 1970s. While the showband's allied genres, cabaret and 'country and Irish' did survive, the earlier popularity of the showbands themselves was not repeated. While reasons for the decline were readily offered, ways to reinvent it were at the time in shorter supply. Yet, it appears from analysing the showband scene, that behind-the-scenes entrepreneurs were mediating audience demands and defining the showband field, rather than musicians. If there was a lack of creativity, it did not stem from musicians' decisions. This suggests a correlation between new entrants and innovation. If spontaneous do-it-yourself innovative activity had heralded the beginning of the showband industry, this was largely absent by 1970. By then, in an increasingly centralised local industry, a small group of industry insiders, acted not just as a barrier to entry, but also as an apparent self-defeating form of barrier to innovation.

Despite the declining showband industry, subsequent Irish rock music encountered a ballroom circuit that was hostile to rock music. Those rock bands, including Thin Lizzy and The Boomtown Rats generally required a different set of entrepreneurs, networks and industrial conditions in which to advance their careers. While these and other rock bands effectively bypassed the declining showband ballroom industry, they also encountered severe obstacles and had to adopt a do-it-yourself approach, or depend on the patronage of willing helpers. Yet, in contrast to the showband industry, they proved that Ireland's popular musicians and entrepreneurs were capable of both innovation and international sales.

The underdeveloped live music industry

The decline of the showbands did not immediately offer better live music for international stars or new acts, either local or visiting. The distinctive nature of the Irish live music industry, which was naturally shaped by the 'Troubles', meant that its development was severely curtailed. Like the recording industry, it was dependent on entrepreneurial activity; however, this enterprise was hampered by a number of deficiencies, the most obvious of which was a lack of suitable venues.

The concert promoter, Jim Aiken, has been credited with ending Ireland's isolation from the international live music circuit. He was quoted as saying 'At one time if someone were doing a world tour Dublin was not part of it. Now it is. I think that would be my epitaph' (Stewart, 1988: 100). During the early 1970s, Dublin was on the itineraries of very few major popular music acts, although Aiken, based in Belfast, had been active in bringing overseas acts to Ireland from as early as 1967 when he promoted a tour by Tom Jones (*Ulster Herald*, 20 May 1967).

Of the few acts that did visit in the early 1970s, as Stewart noted in 1972, Aiken was generally the promoter of choice: the Belfast promoter had upcoming visits to the Republic planned by Rod Stewart, Leonard Cohen, The New Seekers and Nana Mouskouri. In addition, Strawbs were due to play in Trinity College, while Julie Felix and the Joe Loss Orchestra were to tour the country separately (Stewart, 1972: 53).

Visiting international acts provided opportunities for Irish musicians to learn stage techniques and repertoire and to appraise the competition; this research was beneficial when competing outside the domestic market. Successful Irish popular musicians have

frequently asserted how they were influenced by live performances they attended. The U2 guitarist, the Edge, has been quoted as commenting on the October 1977 Clash gig: 'For U2 and other people of our generation, seeing them perform was a life-changing experience... at Trinity College. Dublin had never seen anything like it. It really had a massive impact around here' (2010). He was later reported to have said '...it was a tribal gathering and it had a seismic impact on the Dublin subculture' (Spencer and Brown, 2006).

As influential as visiting acts could be for local musicians, to industry commentators internationally – and frequently domestically – Ireland in the 1970s was an underdeveloped market. The sense of lagging being behind Britain was a feature of analysis of the country's popular music scene from 1970 to 1977. For example, Britain's *Melody Maker* magazine declared in 1976: 'If OXFAM were to adopt the same strategy towards rock starvation as they do towards the plight of the world's hungry, then one of the first mercy flights would be to Ireland' (Doherty, *Melody Maker*, 15 May 1976). A year earlier, in a passionate *Irish Times* article, Ireland's capital city was represented as a metropolis lacking suitable venues for local acts. The author, the future *Hot Press* magazine founder and editor Niall Stokes, attributed this failure to both social and cultural factors. To Stokes, this 'inevitable' decline stemmed from both local and international factors. In Dublin, clubs providing opportunities for local musicians had declined due to their 'maverick' organisation and 'partly because of the peculiarly Irish dependence on the commercial dance as a mode of social interaction'. He felt that clubs served the desire to socialise rather than to foster live music; the new night clubs had 'the character of slightly sophisticated amusement parlours' (Stokes, *The Irish Times*, 12 September 1975). The city's failure to incubate new artists adequately was also reinforced by Fachtna O'Kelly, then managing Clannad and Nightbus, who stated that groups were only paid £40 or £50 for performances (Stokes, *The Irish Times*, 12 September 1975).

While the Project Arts Centre venue was singled out for praise as 'probably the most attractive in Dublin', the city's universities were credited with having the biggest positive influence:

> By now it seems that the only venues featuring mainly local bands that remain viable are in Trinity College and [UCD campus] Belfield...both colleges book whatever top-quality British

> and American artists they can afford and some of the best concerts in the country in the process… (Stokes, *The Irish Times*, 12 September 1975).

As bad as the live music situation was, it actually could have been – and almost was – worse. The main rock music venue, the National Stadium, was almost lost to the music industry due to an internal power struggle between members of its ownership, the Irish boxing authorities, in 1972 (O'Brien, *Irish Press*, 29 March 1972, 12 April 1972). The small number of advertised events in the venue included concerts by Gilbert O'Sullivan, Charlie Pride, Kris Kristofferson and Leonard Cohen, as well as a clerically-organised teen talent show in 1972 (*Irish Independent*, 1 May 1972). The following year, Gary Glitter, The Dubliners and Thin Lizzy performed there, while the visiting American group, Up With People, played four shows. Despite this, the venue's deficiencies were highlighted when Strawbs refused to perform there for a performance scheduled for recording and broadcast by RTE. As Fachtna O'Kelly wrote in the *Irish Press*, despite the English band receiving their £1,000 fee in advance, they refused to play for the 1,500 audience because 'the stage was too small' (O'Kelly, *Irish Press*, 28 March 1973).

Bringing international acts to Dublin became much more difficult the following year after a series of bombings in the city. The Incredible String Band concert in the National Stadium in May was cancelled, with the promoter reportedly not wanting to 'be responsible for young people crossing the city… with the possibility of further trouble in the city' (*Irish Press*, 23 May 1974). Planned visits by Mott the Hoople and Fairport Convention were cancelled. The latter was particularly upsetting to the promoter, Irish Concert Promotions, because they had already sold tickets for the concert which was scheduled for the following week. An unnamed spokesman for the firm remarked '…two of the group had neuroses about coming to Dublin after the bombings' (*Irish Press*, 13 June 1974). Steeleye Span did venture to Ireland and were one of the few overseas acts to play in Dublin during the latter part of 1974 when they appeared in the Stadium in December (Hopkins, *Irish Press*, 16 December 1974). The English pop band, Mud, also visited in early 1975.

The brutal massacre of members of the Miami Showband on 31 July 1975 was a horrific act of violence that naturally had repercussions for the domestic live music industry. The band was targeted by paramilitaries near Newry, County Down; after being ambushed returning home from a concert, three of the band members were killed in an explosion and

another was seriously injured. One band member who escaped, Stephen Travers, details the tragedy in his account *The Miami Showband Massacre: A Survivor's Search for the Truth* (2007). Although the atrocity was the most severe attack on musicians in Northern Ireland, it was not an isolated incident. John O'Connor of the Dixies showband recalled the tension of playing in Northern Ireland prior to the Miami Showband massacre:

> ...we had a couple of hairy incidents. I was taken, and the road manager was taken, out of a ballroom in Northern Ireland by guys with hoods over their heads and guns. They stuck guns in our backs. But we were lucky. They weren't obviously interested in harming us. They put us outside; then they blew up the ballroom. On another occasion we were nearly shot by the British army... I wasn't doing anything. But they were so scared themselves. I was put up against the wall and I was been searched and I looked down and there was a soldier, a squaddie, down on his knees with a gun trained at me. He was younger than me and his face was puce red and he was trembling. And I'd say if I had sneezed he would have shot me you know. They were dangerous times (O'Connor, 2012, interview with the author).

The Ents Officers of both Dublin universities, who were key to the provision of live music in the city, recalled the impact of 'the Troubles'. Trinity's Kieran Owens recalled:

> ....you had that period in Irish music history for about two years where nobody would come to the country because they were afraid. No promoters could convince anyone to come (Owens, 2012, interview with the author).

The lack of visiting bands created a vacuum in Ireland's music scene. Owens noted how the new crop of traditional Irish music acts, such as Planxty and the Bothy Band, drew support from the youthful audience seeking original music. The Ents Officer in UCD at the time, Billy McGrath, was responsible for a Saturday night disco and live music event with a capacity exceeding 2,000 people. As McGrath observed, this made it 'probably the biggest Saturday night [music event] in town'. He also noted that 'UCD was able to afford to have the best acts'. That budget was now exclusively available for Irish artists. McGrath recalls:

> And during that summer, not a lot of people talk about this, but the Miami massacre happened. A huge tragedy... when all the visiting acts cancelled, we suddenly had to find acts to fill, specifically the Saturday night slot (McGrath, 2013, interview with the author).

As I will examine later in this chapter, McGrath, in the absence of overseas talent, played a pivotal role in helping to develop a rock music circuit for local acts. The entrepreneurial activities of Ents Officers at the country's universities were important in developing a live music industry in Ireland.

Thin Lizzy and entrepreneurship: 'I needed to make some money somehow…'

Accessing a professional network was often vital for local musicians seeking a full-time career in popular music. The manager was often a key figure in this network. Donald Passman's *All You Need to Know about the Music Business* (2012) reinforces the idea that the industry is a co-operative process in which networks really matter. The book documents how difficult it is to get the attention of industry insiders. For example, major labels only listen to music submitted by managers or attorneys; he concludes that 'record companies prefer to deal with people they know' (Passman, 2012: 16). The manager plays a pivotal role in this insider network: 'The personal manager is the single most important person in your professional life. A good personal manager can expand your career to its maximum potential, and a bad one can rocket you into oblivion' (Passman, 2012: 29).

However, as the 1974 *Billboard* magazine list of Ireland's music managers made clear, this indicated another serious deficit in Ireland's music industry. Managers numbered 11 in total and four of these worked for the Release Cabaret organisation. All of the managers were Dublin-based with the exception of T. J. Byrne, who had come to prominence with Brendan Bowyer and the Royal Showband in the 1950s. Of the remainder, only Michael Deeney, manager of Horslips, was actively representing a rock act with any significant profile outside the country. This is particularly relevant in light of the important position enjoyed by managers in the music industry.

One Irish manager who did bring benefits to an Irish act was Ted Carroll. Despite growing up in 1950s Ireland, popular music and its artefacts were available to him. He recalled seeing brass bands and street musicians in public parks and streets in Dun Laoghaire, Blackrock and Dublin city (Carroll, 2012, email correspondence). Via both international and domestic broadcasts in the 1950s, such as the BBC light programme and Radio Éireann's sponsored Walton's show, his interest developed. His interest was deepened by the BBC radio series 'A Festival of Dance Band Music' featuring Ted Heath, Humphrey Lyttelton and Johnny Dankworth.

This interest was furthered by the availability of music artefacts in Ireland. He found jazz books in his local municipal library in the Blackrock suburb. He recalls 'Around 1955 I read Humphrey Lyttelton's book, "I Play as I Please" (1954) and this introduced me to some of the greats of American Jazz'. He subsequently formed a collective with school friends, each of whom contributed six pence weekly, to purchase records. The November 1955 Dublin release of the film 'Blackboard Jungle', featuring rock and roll music like 'Rock Around The Clock', was attended on a number of occasions by Carroll.

The passion for music eventually led to Carroll joining the local band The Caravelles and developing his music entrepreneurial skills as a concert promoter and talent booker. In 1962, he began promoting Rhythm and Blues events in a tea-room in the Dublin suburb, Killiney; this was one of the only significant venues providing original music for young people at the time. Carroll attributes the underdevelopment of Irish original rock scene to the 'combined forces of the Gardai (Irish police) and the Catholic Church' (Carroll, 2012). He also depicted two strands in Irish popular music in the era: 'the more popular and populist phenomena' of the Showband and Ballad Group scenes and the Beat groups 'who wrought the more profound changes and developments in Irish musical culture in the longer term' (Carroll, 2012).

Carroll became one of Thin Lizzy's early managers and brought benefits to the band via his cultural, social and financial capital. He had acquired both social and cultural capital relevant to the music industry through his involvement with Dublin's beat music scene. As a musician – and primarily as a pioneering and successful club organiser – he had acquired social capital, including valuable contacts with Northern Irish promoters and Dublin music industry figures. His experience also included managing Dublin bands and bringing international acts to Ireland before he moved to England in the late 1960s. On a spring holiday in 1970, he met a former management client, Brush Shields, and became tour manager for his new band, Skid Row during a US tour.

Carroll's music industry experience in the early 1970s, when he became Thin Lizzy's manager, demonstrates how even high-profile and historically important bands, such as Thin Lizzy, required the support of financial capital from their management. During his time with the band, from 1971 to 1974, Carroll estimates that his total revenue from them amounted to between £3,000 and £4,000. During the early years of their career, the band, just as the showbands had, required financial support from their managers.

It was the outside business activities of Carroll and his fellow manager, Brian Tuite, who ran a music equipment shop, which sustained both them and the band during the early 1970s. Carroll recalled the financial realities of running Thin Lizzy:

> We managed, just hand-to-mouth, the main expense was motoring, when the van broke down you know you had to pay for engine repairs. Petrol was still very cheap. I needed to make some money somehow so I was doing a little mail-order with collectible records I was picking up in second-hand stores. I had some records I'd picked up in America when I was over there with Skid Row the previous year (Carroll, 2012, interview with the author).

In 1971, Carroll opened a stall selling records in the newly opened Portobello Market, London. Through the small Dublin music network he discovered Ireland's Decca distributor, the Solomon brothers, had a large stock of back catalogue records in storage. He recalled:

> Anyway I cut a deal with them. So every morning I'd get in there at nine or half nine before we'd go off to a gig somewhere and spend several hours happily digging through all these boxes of 45s and piling them up. I'd cut a deal 3½ p a throw. I ended up with about 1,700 45s, brought them back to London in the back of the Thin Lizzy van... (Carroll, 2012, interview with the author).

Carroll's London shop, Rock On, is an example of how record shops served as gate-keepers in the music industry both to business and DIY interests. Frequent customers, or those in search of rare or collectible items, inevitably conversed with the shop's staff. This networking led to business deals. For example, one customer, Nigel Grainge from Phonogram Records' Sales Department, recalled how his roles as an industry member *and* a record collector combined.

> I was down there on Saturday buying a few 45's and Ted told me that he was managing Thin Lizzy. So jokingly I made the inane statement, 'Why don't you come to a real record company', and he surprised me by saying, 'OK, make me an offer' (Fay, *Hot Press*, 7 February 1991).

According to this account, Carroll followed up the casual conversation by sending Grainge the band's new demo tape. Thin Lizzy had recently parted company with Decca Records and were looking for a new record deal. Impressed by the material, Grainge signed the

band. Carroll increased his cultural capital by continuing to make friends and allies in the London music industry. This networking included securing a place for Thin Lizzy on a British tour with the then highly successful band, Slade (Carroll, 2012). In addition, after hearing them 'messing around' with an Irish traditional song during a rehearsal, he advised Thin Lizzy to record 'Whisky in the Jar' as a potential single. They did and it became their first British chart hit.

Carroll eventually relinquished the management of Thin Lizzy to focus on his record-selling activities, although he remained on good terms with the band and served as an adviser to them. In addition to selling records, he also began releasing them on a label, Chiswick Records, which he founded with Roger Armstrong, who was originally from Belfast. Their activities indicate how the music industry cultural flows between countries like Britain and Ireland are mediated by individual entrepreneurial as well as corporate activity. In fact, as happened in this case, it can challenge those accepted music industry practices. Recent authoritative histories of punk and post-punk give a prominent place to Chiswick Records. For example, Russ Bestley and Alex Ogg (2013: 122) state that 'Chiswick was the most prominent front-runner' amongst the early labels releasing multiple acts from the scene. Jon Savage and Stuart Baker claim (2013: 28) 'Chiswick gave birth to the British independent music industry'.

Another significant label of the punk era was Stiff Records whose co-founder, Dave Robinson, was also an Irish emigrant entrepreneur. Chiswick and Stiff are often identified as two of the leading innovators of the era, as well as a source of encouragement to other labels. For instance, Rough Trade's Geoff Travis is quoted as saying: 'And that empowered a lot of people to do things. I would say this idea was led by the Stiffs and the Chiswicks, really' (Savage and Baker, 2013: 79). If the British music industry benefited from the activities of Irish emigrants like Carroll, Armstrong and Robinson, these individuals were also now well placed to provide assistance to Irish acts too.

How the Boomtown Rats benefited from local and diaspora entrepreneurs

One of the early indications of how Irish acts could benefit from productive alliances with the London-based Irish entrepreneurs came when Chiswick released records by Dublin's pioneering punk/new wave band The Radiators From Space in 1977. While Ireland's rock scene was still lagging behind that of Britain, it received a major boost through the activities of entrepreneurs establishing media outlets for rock and roll, most notably *Hot*

Press magazine, founded in 1977. The Dublin band, the Boomtown Rats, had ambitions far beyond the local Irish scene, although they later recalled what they felt was the stigma and apparent lack of industry support available in London for Irish acts. In a 2003 interview in *Hot Press*, Bob Geldof recalled the situation: 'The music industry in Dublin was non-existent... The English industry didn't give a fuck about Ireland which was way to the west of Wales. We had Thin Lizzy, a one-off, but nothing else' (Hayden, 2003).

Despite the shortcomings that Geldof identified, the Dublin music industry was developing and being developed by individuals with skills that benefited Geldof. In UCD, Billy McGrath recalled how the cancellation of the British bands in response to the Irish 'Troubles' created a vacuum for the Ents Officers:

> And we had heard about this band, a lot of the Southside students especially if they were involved in the music side of things they would have remarked on this new band, called the Boomtown Rats. So lo and behold I went to see them in the Cliff Castle Hotel. And they were booked in to headline the Fresher's Ball. So that was a big jump for them (McGrath, 2013, interview with the author).

McGrath's involvement with the Boomtown Rats did not end when his term as UCD Students' Union Ents Officer was over. He was asked by the band's singer, Bob Geldof, to help organise a national tour for domestic rock acts. In his autobiography, Geldof wrote of his impressions of the Irish rock scene at the time, as well as his dependency on McGrath and the UCD Ents Officer's resources:

> The obvious thing was to tour Ireland. The problem was that the major venues outside Dublin were part of the showband circuit... The only sensible option was to establish an alternative circuit. I did not have the resources to do it but University College Dublin did, so I persuaded its Entertainment Secretary, Billy McGrath, to come in on the scheme. Using the university offices and phones I set up a tour of all the country's major towns (Geldof, 1986: 106).

Most Irish towns lacked venues providing rock music and even more crucially, local promoters. With the exception of Horslips, who had achieved success in the Irish ballroom circuit, this was an unprecedented venture for new Irish bands. McGrath recounts:

> ...we did about 16 days around Ireland in a bus... I looked back at the different venues around Ireland and discovered that over 400 people had been at the Limerick show, over 500 people had been at the Tralee show. And the Galway one, even though it was at Teach Furbo, which is

> way out of Galway, there was over 350 there. And I looked and thought 'there is no rock gigs in those towns, so literally they're starved [of rock music]' (McGrath, 2013, interview with the author).

During this time, the social and cultural capital of the then Irish journalist, Fachtna O'Kelly, was accessed by Geldof to gain advantage for The Rats. In his autobiography, Geldof describes O'Kelly as 'intelligent' and 'possessing one of the biggest collections of records I had ever seen and brilliant taste in music' (Geldof, 1986: 100). As documented above, it was O'Kelly who introduced the band to the music of Dr. Feelgood. In Geldof's account 'success is a self-propagating phenomenon' (Geldof, 1986: 104). Yet, whilst positive press was beneficial in acquiring prestige and O'Kelly provided this initially, it was not sufficient alone to bring the band to the attention of the London music industry gate-keepers. Instead, the development of the band was enabled by music entrepreneurs in Dublin and London. At home, they benefited from the activities of Fachtna O'Kelly, their manager, and Billy McGrath from the UCD Students' Union; in London, they benefited from the music industry members who had emigrated from Ireland and retained network links with their former home country.

By this time, the small music industry diaspora in London was capable of playing a key role in supporting and advancing the careers of new Irish bands. According to Geldof (1986: 111), when the band recorded their first demo tape, they were offered a contract by Ted Carroll and Roger Armstrong at Chiswick. This not only gave them confidence, although the offer was for a 'trifling amount' (Geldof, 1986: 111), but also provided them with bargaining power when approaching other labels. Other opportunities were also provided: 'we also got offered the chance to support Lizzy on a 30 date tour once, through Ted Carroll' (Putterford, 2002: 125). While the band turned down this tour, it did enhance their industry reputation in London as a 'band in demand'. The Boomtown Rats received other significant benefits from the Irish rock network that now connected Dublin with London. There were other direct and positive effects provided to the new Irish bands via the diaspora entrepreneurs in London. The then managers of Thin Lizzy, Chris Morrison and Chris O'Donnell proved important. According to Geldof, they:

> ...helped us immensely when we were looking for a record deal. All we had to our name was this shite demo tape, and yet the two Chrises got it to the head of A+R at Phonogram, Nigel Grange (sic), and that was the key to it all for the Rats (Putterford, 2002: 125).

The commercial success of The Boomtown Rats surpassed that of any previous Irish act playing self-written material; in Britain, between 1977 and 1981 they achieved ten Top 30 singles and four Top 20 albums (Roberts, 2005). This naturally brought attention to the Irish music scene. The band's chart success changed the perception of Irish rock music in the important London music industry. Just as Thin Lizzy's network had provided access to those London industry gate-keepers for the Rats, in turn they also provided opportunities for emerging Irish bands. They brought new Irish bands with them on their early British tours: The Vipers in 1978, Protex in 1979 and The Atrix in 1981. They also increased the skilled talent pool available to Irish acts; for example, when U2 required studio assistance for their first single release, the Boomtown Rats' sound technician was selected.

New genres, musically related youth cultures and successful Irish bands can influence the local music scene, subsequent bands and, as in this case, even the global production of culture. As McLaughlin and McLoone (2000) argue: 'punk helped to create the climate and infrastructure which would propel the growth of popular music production in Ireland (including the emergence of U2)' (p. 197). Yet if, as they argue, punk represented an attack on traditional values in music and elsewhere, it is worth placing this observation in its specific Irish context.

In Ireland, the music fields of punk and traditional music had surprising interplay. While pre-punk, Thin Lizzy's interest in and knowledge of The Chieftains is credited as the inspiration for the band's breakthrough commercial success with 'Whisky in the Jar' (Connolly, *The Irish Rock Story: A Tale of Two Cities*, BBC/RTÉ, 2015), this productive inter-flow did not cease with the advent of punk and new wave in Ireland. Some of the key Irish entrepreneurs of the punk and new wave world had gained music industry skills and experience with Irish traditional music acts; most notably, Roger Armstrong of Chiswick, who had worked with The Chieftains, and Fachtna O'Kelly, who had previously managed Clannad. Similarly, John Dunford gained experience as both a sound and lighting engineer with Planxty, Clannad, Stockton's Wing and Moving Hearts before providing his skills for some of Ireland's key post-punk bands, including The Fountainhead (Dunford, 2013, interview with the author).

Another example of the Irish traditional–punk rock interflow came when Planxty's Donal Lunny produced a single for Dublin punk band The Threat. As The Threat's keyboard player recalled, the contact between the Irish traditional and punk worlds involved the band

members calling at the door of Planxty's Christy Moore and asking him when Donal would be available to complete the single. In the end the young punks decided 'feck it, we'll have to finish it ourselves' (Stano, 2011, interview with the author).

While the idea of young punk rockers calling at Christy Moore's house is initially humorous, it does indicate the hybrid nature of Ireland's music scenes. Getting a supportive and experienced music industry professional like Lunny to produce them empowered the band to record a single in the first place. This was one of the productive skills exchanges between modern Irish music and more traditional forms. It was also indicative of the interchange between amateurs and professionals in the Irish music scene. Between 1977 and 1984, the Irish music industry, including the participation of professionals and amateurs, with motives including making profits, a gift-economy exchange, altruism and do-it-yourself entrepreneurial experimentation, contributed to the industry's distinctive local development.

Conclusion

At the start of the 1970s, it could fairly be concluded that Ireland's music industry occupied a peripheral position relative to London. This mirrored Ireland's peripheral economic status in Europe overall. In 1970, it was notable that only three Irish Republic acts in the previous decade had succeeded in the British album charts. A far greater number of Irish acts, 10 in total, gained British chart places during the 1970s, although significantly they did not emerge from the showband scene which dominated the domestic charts. Thus, Ireland's domestic charts were primarily nurturing artists who failed to compete internationally. Those domestic charts drastically changed during the decade; the strong local representation in the Number 1 position during the early 1970s was replaced by domination by international acts on major labels in the second half of the decade.

The showbands' effective restriction of the local market took place as the genre declined during the 1970s. A range of internal and external factors were advanced for this failure and it may be concluded that the showbands ultimately suffered from a lack of innovation. The earlier musical and entrepreneurial activity that the genre had exhibited had been replaced by a more concentrated power structure which effectively prevented new entrants. However, the decline of the showbands did not indicate that Ireland possessed a functioning popular music infrastructure available for the next genre. Ireland's rock groups had to rely on entrepreneurial activity to develop.

This entrepreneurial activity took place during an era when the Irish live music industry, for both international and local rock bands, was severely underdeveloped. One of the reasons for the small number of visiting acts was the political situation on the island; violence acted as a disincentive to overseas artists. In 1976, however, at a time when the students' unions of Irish universities were a major force in the live music industry, the country began to provide more high-profile opportunities for domestic acts. The case of Billy McGrath at UCD assisting the Boomtown Rats is a good example of this. Groups drawing from Ireland's traditional music were also supported by these student entrepreneurs and it is significant that Ireland's rock music industry and traditional music industry had a number of productive exchanges in terms of entrepreneurial activities.

Irish rock bands also benefited from productive exchanges between Irish industry entrepreneurs, both at home and in London. In the case of Ted Carroll and Armstrong at Chiswick Records, Irish music entrepreneurs were now exerting influence on the British record industry. The porous nature of Ireland's cultural borders, stimulated by emigration and exposure to music from abroad, meant that the next wave of Irish rock acts, aiming for international success, benefitted directly from Carroll and others like him. The success of Thin Lizzy and the Boomtown Rats in the British charts during the decade proved that Irish rock acts could achieve overseas success. In terms of a fuller understanding of how the music industry functions, it is important to acknowledge how the Boomtown Rats benefited from entrepreneurs like McGrath and their manager, Fachtna O'Kelly, *and* also from the established Thin Lizzy entrepreneurial network. This Thin Lizzy network provided offers of tours and record deals in Britain, as well as an introduction to the label that eventually signed the band and brought them to international success.

Thus by the end of the period 1970–1977, Irish rock acts enjoyed access to a far more productive entrepreneurial network than had existed for Irish acts of any genre in 1970. This had occurred even though Irish acts were far more likely to top the domestic charts. If the peripheral status of the Irish music industry had been significantly improved, this resulted from entrepreneurial activity and improved networks rather than any intrinsic centralised music industry process striving to improve Ireland's position.

Chapter 8: 1977–1985

Counter-hegemony: Irish entrepreneurs and industry structures

The commercial success of U2 is one indication of Ireland's ability to productively engage with the global music industry during 1977–1985. Their success invites a number of questions. What types of entrepreneurs were active in the local Irish music scene at that time? How did U2 benefit from this local entrepreneurial activity? How did the local music scene provide music industry skills for local entrepreneurs? How did some firms develop and grow from the Irish music industry, which at the start of the period still appeared peripheral, into companies capable of competing directly with major global industry firms? Answering these questions not only places the band's initial career development in the context of their local music scene but also draws attention to some of the entrepreneurial and innovative individuals and firms active in the Irish rock scene at the time.

The distinctive characteristics of the Irish music industry at this time appeared to encourage a new wave of entrepreneurs and innovative local music industry activity. In this context, Richard Peterson's (1990), study of the US music industry is relevant. He identified key transformational moments when a combination of factors allows transformational change in the music industry. To him:

> ...these are the times when the routinising inhibitions to innovation do not operate as systematically, allowing opportunities for innovators to emerge (1990: 95).

I argue that this has major implications for Ireland, particularly in the context of Laing's (2008) conclusions about the global industry. Laing documented the global dominance of a small number of major firms in the music industry and concluded that '...the business culture and prime strategy of the TNCs [transnational corporations] is one of market control and a centre to periphery panoptic command structure' (2008: 223). The implications for small countries and peripheral music industries are clear from this; yet, as powerful as this centralised music industry process is, it can be challenged.

In the context of this hegemonic process, by examining the music industry in Ireland between 1977 and 1985, I want to draw attention to two tactical paths that were adopted. First, develop your own alternative modes of production outside the sphere of control of the major music industry firms; this can include fanzines, magazines, pirate radio stations,

record labels, venues and concert promoters. It also includes not-for-profit and unpaid work to support the local music scene and artists. This local activity does not necessarily indicate an ideological desire to avoid involvement with major firms, although some firms do choose to operate on a strictly 'independent' basis. Innovative independent start-ups during this period included the *Raw Power* and *Heat* fanzines, *Hot Press* magazine, Kick Records, numerous pirate radio stations, the Dandelion Market venue and MCD concert promoters. It should be noted that this innovative local activity for MCD resulted in a multi-faceted organisation capable of challenging large international firms on a one-to-one basis.

The second tactical path was to develop networks and productive interfaces with the international global industry gate-keepers. This includes Irish bands signing to successful overseas labels and to the activities of local workers who found employment with those major firms. If this activity appears to advance the causes of the TNC firms, in the Irish case it also includes the possibility of subverting their stated aims from within.

Thus the two tactical paths are not mutually exclusive. The newly founded independent magazines and pirate radio stations, for instance, featured acts on the TNCs. Similarly, and often in key ways, workers for the TNCs in Ireland provided valuable resources, including advice and support to the local music scene. With this in mind, while examining the period, I want to highlight how local music activity drew from the TNC establishment, the new firms, and often both as the Irish music industry developed away from the periphery of the global music industry and closer to its centre of power.

Technology and the move from the periphery to the centre stage

The July 1985 Live Aid concert, a convergence of television and popular music, was a significant event for the band U2 and their fellow Dubliner, the event's organiser Bob Geldof of The Boomtown Rats. Christopher Morash wrote about the impact of Live Aid on Ireland. He argued that the concert proved that Ireland could combat its remoteness from global power. To him it:

> ...staged the radical asymmetry of a globally mediated world in a way that would demonstrate the potential of the new media technologies to reverse this feeling of Irish peripherality (Morash, 2010: 199).

The concerts and the preceding charity single were global phenomena and it would be difficult to disagree with Morash's assessment of them. However, technology alone did not advance the careers of U2 and Geldof; there were also key local factors that impacted on their development. As indicated in the previous chapter, The Boomtown Rats benefited from the activities of their manager, Fachtna O'Kelly, Billy McGrath and the UCD student's union. In addition *Hot Press* magazine had been very supportive of the band.

It is fair to say that technology was an integral element of U2's early success; recent developments in the music industry were used to the band's advantage. For example, the Windmill Lane studios had provided them with a high-quality studio in Dublin to record in and make videos. While the Boomtown Rats were the first act to be broadcast on RTE's new station, Radio 2, in 1979 (RTE, http://www.rte.ie/tv/ttv/thecafe/emmamichael.html), the national service had not existed until they had signed their international record deal. Significantly, U2 benefited from airplay in Ireland which raised their profile and arguably made them more attractive for an international record deal.

In terms of these advantages, McLaughlin and McLoone argue that public service broadcasting 'was central to the success of U2' (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2012: 181). They credit RTE with helping the band during its crucial initial phase and BBC and Channel 4 as highly influential in the mid-1980s. If this is true, British television was broadcasting the Irish band and their representation of Ireland to the world. This was ironic, given that the original founding principles of Irish broadcasting in the 1930s were to act in that gate-keeping role for the national identity. The use of music videos was one aspect of the music industry's response to technology in the early 1980s. U2 were one of the early beneficiaries of America's new MTV channel; its broadcasting of music videos brought the band significant numbers of fans in new markets. The band's manager, Paul McGuinness, whose social and cultural capital was drawn from his experience in the small Irish film industry, was instrumental in getting a video made for U2's song 'Gloria' in 1981. This was made possible by a recent technological innovation in the domestic music industry: the availability of technicians and facilities for making such videos. Both McGuinness and the band members cited the MTV broadcasting of their 'Gloria' video as a key contributing factor to their US success (Dwyer, 1985: 14; U2, 2006: 125). McGuinness acknowledged the close relationship between early-U2 and early-MTV in network terms:

> We knew the people who started MTV quite well. It was a very innocent and much less research-driven business than it is now. You made a video and took it round there [to MTV offices] and you could play it to one of their executives and three hours later, if they liked it, you'd see it on air (U2, 2006: 125).

Again, this was a key change in the global landscape that U2 benefited from yet had not been available to the Boomtown Rats. Geldof reflected in 1985: 'Our videos have always been good – indeed if MTV had come earlier we might have made an impact in the States'. (O'Connell, *City Tribune*, 8 March 1985). Yet if music videos and channels like MTV provided Irish bands with the means of broadcasting impressions of Ireland to the world, the idea of broadcasting primarily American music videos was soon adopted in Ireland. On February 1984 RTE began broadcasting three hours of music videos, many of which were American, on Sunday afternoons (Hughes, 1985: 1). Music videos were then a two-way process, communicating videos of Irish acts to the US and transmitting US videos to Ireland.

How U2 stayed at home

By 1985 Irish rock music was being feted nationally and globally. The industry indicators of commercial success were evident: by February two U2 albums, *War* and *The Unforgettable Fire* had sold in excess of a million copies each in the US. In July they were joined by an EP, *Under A Blood Red Sky* (RIAA certifications). To understand how U2 became so commercially successful, I want to place their early career in the context of the assistance they received from entrepreneurs in the local music scene. If it was a British label, Island, which released their records and successfully promoted them, it was the Dublin music scene's distinctive characteristics that sustained them until they signed with Island.

In 1989 Barbara Bradby wrote of the need to examine the sociological reality behind the success-narrative of U2; an analytical approach is required to understand the specific conditions of any music act. Bradby's methodology reinforces the demand for the rejection of simplistic explanations for cultural production. Clearly, artistic output is a product of a collective activity. U2's trips to London in 1979 provide an insight into the value of a local supportive network. Bono, in the official U2 account, depicts how in April 1979 he travelled to London in an attempt to attract media interest; the singer was accompanied by his girlfriend who funded the couple's trip. The media itself provided another source of

financial support: *Hot Press* magazine reportedly offered to pay him if he reviewed a London gig for them (Graham, 1989: 35). During the excursion they met with Phil Chevron from the Radiators whom Bono described as 'very helpful'; 'he pointed us in the direction of a couple of music journalists he thought were good' (U2, 2006: 76).

One of the journalists recommended by Chevron, *Record Mirror's* Chris Westwood, was, according to Bono's account 'extremely generous', 'he was the most encouraging of them all' and even wrote a front-page cover story on the band in the 10 November 1979 issue of the *Record Mirror*, which secured the band industry prestige. The band's later visit to London 1979 was going to be funded by the London industry-insider, Bryan Morrison (U2, 2006: 84). He had negotiated a publishing deal with the band's manager; in return for a share of their future song-writing royalties he was going to pay the band about £3,000. The band had accepted the deal because they 'were so desperate' (U2, 2006: 84). According to the band, the only reason the deal was not signed was because Morrison, shortly before the trip to London, reduced the amount he was paying for the publishing share to £1,500.

With concerts booked and having invited other key London gate-keepers, including A+R scouts from major labels, the band frantically searched for alternative ways to fund the trip. Their manager, Paul McGuinness, recalled: 'I borrowed some money from Seamus Byrne and Tiernan MacBride, who were film colleagues' while the remainder was borrowed from the band members' parents (U2, 2006: 84). The importance of this financial wrangling has never been adequately explored to my knowledge in the context of U2's success narrative. Depending on what percentage of the band's royalties he was acquiring, the loss in revenue to Morrison was probably in the tens of millions. The £3,000 that he was offering the band for the publishing share was instead provided, without strings presumably, by the band's supportive network. The ability to access capital from a supportive network contrasted with dealing with the London music industry probably saved the band millions of pounds. The Edge summed up the transaction:

> We were going to sell our publishing rights for a pittance for the next twenty years or something. It was a pretty crap deal and at the very last minute, knowing that we had this tour booked, he made it worse. So we basically told him to stuff it up his arse (U2, 2006: 84).

This makes it relevant to examine the ways in which the Dublin music scene at this time provided resources in a supportive not-for-profit network to artists at this time.

How to DIY: Steve Averill subverting the core-to-periphery flow from the outside

The Radiators From Space had earlier benefited from the supportive network available to them in Dublin. Recordings made in Dublin, and financed by Eamon Carr from Horslips and Jackie Hayden from CBS (Ireland) had attracted Chiswick to the band (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author). Then, Chiswick's London-based proprietors, Ted Carroll and Roger Armstrong, had financially supported the band. In turn, the Radiators became part of a supportive network available to the next wave of Irish bands. As seen above, the band's singer, Phil Chevron, had provided the key introduction for U2 to Chris Westwood; an introduction that resulted in the front cover of a prestigious British music magazine. This again highlights how the supportive local scene can provide benefits for start-up artists. It is a type of gift-economy that operates with different principles to the centralised for-profit TNCs.

Another member of the Radiators, Steve Averill, played other key roles in the early development of U2. I want to examine this activity, as well as the way in which CBS (Ireland)'s Jackie Hayden benefited the band. Both Averill and Hayden indicate how the local music scene can incubate artists; they also illustrate how counter-hegemonic activity that challenges the centralising process of the TNCs can derive from people who simultaneously engage with, or are even employed by, those TNCs.

U2's first interview in *Hot Press* magazine was published in April 1978, when Bill Graham perceptively highlighted how the local scene was the site of collaborative and co-operative activity. The scene was tightly networked in part because some influential individuals played multiple roles within it. He wrote: '...moreover, in the small world of Irish rock, roles get duplicated. Besides being a fan, one ends up as some species of friend and adviser' (Graham, 1979: 9). Graham was referring to himself; he was both a journalist as well a fan and adviser to U2 and other bands, just as previously, before he became their full-time manager, Fachtna O'Kelly had been both a journalist and advisor to the Boomtown Rats. In his U2 article, Graham described Steve Averill, as a 'mentor, (though not a manager)' to U2 (Graham, 1979: 9); this was an indication that the band were already building their own supportive network within the local scene.

In their official self-representation, *U2 by U2* (2006) the band establish the importance of Averill to their development. He is credited as 'the man responsible for U2's graphic

output from their first poster' (U2, 2006: 351). This alone would make him a significant figure yet it is clear that his involvement went beyond his graphic design and aesthetic input. Adam Clayton who had initially acted as the band's manager and was a highly active networker on the band's behalf is quoted:

> Steve Averill was the son of a friend of my parents... he had been in The Radiators From Space... he was someone who knew the ropes... probably ten years older than us... I would walk over to his house... His wife would normally give me coffee or something to eat and we'd listen to music and talk. It's amazing now when I look back, a guy that age talking to a teenager for a few hours on his night off after he'd been at work. That was a very generous thing to do... He started to suggest that we think about what we wore, told us we needed to get some photographs done and he subsequently designed our first poster... (U2, 2006: 44).

Averill also recommended changing the band name from The Hype as they were then called. He even provided them with a specific name, U2 (U2, 2006: 44) and organised their first photo-shoot (U2, 2006: 52). Averill was not just a key contributor to U2; he was also a bridge between them and the Dublin underground DIY music scene. The creative ethos of that Irish music scene's culture was identified by the former Trinity College Ents Officer, Kieran Owens who was mentioned in the previous chapter. He argued that the 1977 Irish music scene witnessed:

> ... the beginning of another extraordinary era of self-promoted [music activity], and it was all in the DIY-punk ethos if you like, fanzines...[etc] (Owens, 2012, interview with the author).

The Irish fanzine culture has been well documented by Anto Dillon (2005); Dublin has a small number of creative fanzines during the era, many were enabled by another recent technological innovation, the office photocopier. Self-financed and self-published, they provided interviews and reviews, and actively encouraged participation in the scene. The first of these, *Raw Power*, was issued in March 1977 by Averill. It was inspired by the new English punk fanzines including *Sniffin' Glue* which was being encouraged by Ted Carroll in London. Averill recalls: 'We saw *Sniffin' Glue* was around and we thought this is a great communications tool for our fans' (Averill, 2012, interview with the author). Averill's fanzine embodied and transmitted the DIY ethos. *Raw Power's* debut issue urged readers:

> And most of all don't sit around doing nothing. If you want to see these bands let them know, if you're in school organize a dance, get them to play. Form your own bands if you don't like any around at the moment. Write your own fanzine so that other people will know that there

> are others around like them. Don't follow fashions, start your own. But do something positive NOW (Averill, 1977: 2).

Raw Power was quickly followed on the Dublin scene by another fanzine, *Heat*, issued in July 1977 by Pete Price and Jude Carr. Averill also made contributions to it. Both publications were well-designed, and were arguably more legible and more visually appealing that many of their British contemporaries. They continually advocated the DIY ethic and challenged standard commercial music industry practice and orthodoxy. Averill's multiple roles in the Dublin music community made him a very important connecting node in the local network. He was not only a significant figure as a catalyst and mentor, but also embedded counter-hegemonic, collaborative DIY principles in the local music scene.

In many respects, Averill indicates how it is possible to sustain a role in the music scene without possessing musical qualifications. He recalled:

> ...I also knew very early on from doing guitar lessons that I had no musical aptitude. So you try to find a role for yourself in that [scene]....I ended up...doing light shows for bands and things like that and getting involved in various ways, putting people together (Averill, 2012, interview with the author).

In addition to doing light shows, being a graphic designer, working in the Golden Disc record shop in Liffey Street and publishing fanzines, Averill assembled and was a member of The Radiators From Space. His role of 'getting involved in various ways, putting people together' in Dublin is evident in his role with another Dublin band, The Boy Scoutz:

> I had kind of got involved with the Boy Scoutz and given them the name, put an ad in one of the fanzines and said 'look you girls should be doing it as well'. I got four girls together. I more or less said 'look I don't want to be Kim Fowley [the manager of all-female band, The Runaways]. I just want to get you together and I want to step away from the whole thing'. So I did, I let them get on with what they were doing (Averill, 2012, interview with the author).

Averill therefore can be seen not as a commercially-minded full-time businessman but also as an active, encouraging member of Dublin's supportive network for young artists. He was also active in both the more standard profit-driven music industry environment by designing artwork, including U2's, for international labels.

Jackie Hayden… subverting the industry core-to-periphery flow from *within*

While U2 were accessing Averill's subcultural capital from the DIY fanzine world, they were also accessing the networks of full-time music industry insiders. One of these, Jackie Hayden, was familiar with Averill. Jackie Hayden also participated in both the supportive local network *and* the centralised music industry. He had formed a local independent label, Midnite, with Eamon Carr from Horslips and had signed The Radiators From Space to the new label. Hayden also held a full-time position with CBS Records and was thus simultaneously participating in the DIY and centralised global major label music industry.

Hayden was a judge in a talent contest won by U2 in Limerick. One of the prizes, the option of recording with CBS (Ireland), the label he worked for, was declined by the band although they sought his advice on a number of occasions. He subsequently recalled his early contact with them:

> And I remember Adam Clayton saying to me 'If we turn this [the CBS (Ireland) recording] down does that mean you'll never talk to us again. I said 'not really, it's not that important. I have a good job and I'm not going to take it personally'. They then kept coming into my office and they would have questions for me. That's really what stands out. They would ask me about the business. They wanted to know things like: How does the record get into record shops? Who decides what gets played on the radio? How do you make money out of song writing? What's publishing about? You know; that kind of stuff. I presume they were asking other people these questions as well and not just me (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author).

Thus, the talent contest provided U2 with an important industry contact. The band gained access to some of Hayden's resources gained from his experience of the music industry. It was the acknowledgment, 'the winners of the talent contest', that prompted Bill Graham to meet with the band, according to his recollection in *U2, The Early Days* (1989). One very consequential benefit from Graham's involvement was connecting them with their manager, Paul McGuinness, a friend from his student days in Trinity College.

Although the CBS headquarters in London declined to sign U2, despite making a demo recording with them, Hayden was able to persuade the British office to allow him to sign the band to an Ireland-only deal. His promotion of their debut release became a significant element in U2's success narrative and was used to attract industry attention. Hayden suggested to the band and their newly appointed manager, Paul McGuinness:

> ...could we do a deal where you sign for the rest of world - none of our business, but stay with CBS [in Ireland]? And the deal was worked out... (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author).

The perceived success of the single in Ireland attracted the attention of London industry gate-keepers. Thus, in a sense Hayden's promotion of the single in Ireland, led to the band signing a deal with Island in London. This was a productive, yet unexpected flow, between the industries in London and Dublin. Therefore, the relationship between Hayden and CBS in London should be analysed in the context of the global flow of culture within the music industry. The specifics of the U2 case indicate how the centralising music industry 'panopticon' process – as Dave Laing (2008) identifies it – can be short-circuited by individuals and their actions at the local level. Hayden and CBS were visible in the Irish market by releasing singles by Irish acts. He spoke about the relationship between the Irish branch and the English headquarters:

> We were doing that [releasing singles by Irish acts] in spite of the fact that we were repeatedly lied to by CBS U.K. who in other respects were very good to work for. They didn't interfere, they would give you a target of monthly sales figures to achieve and a budget and they'd let you get on with it... But this was happening against the backdrop of the Troubles in the North (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author).

For Hayden and the CBS staff in Dublin, the political situation and violence in Ireland naturally had implications:

> And we had had a number of threatening phone calls to the office which we knew might have been wind-ups. But we were very conscious that here we were making a lot of money in Ireland out of selling records for what people would have assumed was a British company even though ultimately CBS was American. And we thought 'well even as a PR exercise and to be seen to be putting something back into Irish music, it would be great if we only put out a single or something every month to make some gesture' (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author).

The promotion of local acts was seen as a relationship-building exercise with Irish music industry personnel.

> I justified making these records out of our marketing budget because this is part of PR exercise, it is doing us good as well as keeping us from being shot or whatever might have been behind those threats. So it made sense on a number of levels (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author).

The response from the London office of CBS was less than supportive however. Hayden and the CBS (Ireland) staff were threatened with dismissal if they continued recording and releasing local product. From a corporate point-of-view they were misusing funds that had been allocated for the promotion of product that had been selected by CBS's London headquarters. Apparently, the firm's global decision-makers had decided to limit their activities to only spending money in Ireland on product of non-Irish origin.

Hayden described how the London office reinforced the message to Dublin: 'you don't have A&R (artist and repertoire) function. You have no right to be signing acts' (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author). If the Irish branch lacked the ability to sign or release artists, it also lacked meaningful input into the centralised A&R decision-making in England. Hayden recollected: '…they had completely turned down without any interest as far as I can remember Horslips, Chris de Burgh, the Boomtown Rats and actually just about anyone we'd offered them, they'd actually said no to' (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author). He also recalled promises made to the Dublin staff that if they achieved certain sales targets they would be permitted to release local product:

> 'When you get to such and such level then we'll give you a budget'. But when we would get to that level they still wouldn't give us the budget. So we were very frustrated about this. But we were cocky enough to think 'the company is doing well, what are they going to do? Are they really going to fire us because we put out a single by Reform that cost a couple of hundred quid to make?' (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author).

When Hayden did sign U2 for CBS (Ireland), he set about drawing attention to the release. He very productively engaged with some of the recently arrived media outlets including RTE Radio 2's Dave Fanning show and *Hot Press*. He felt a limited edition of 1,000 individually numbered 12" singles would attract interest:

> Then we hit on the idea of getting Dave Fanning to play the three tracks so the listeners could pick the record which to us was, basically, a way of getting airplay. …. And I think around that time I'd arranged a cover of *Hot Press* and an ad on the back for single as well a whole big thing in Hot Press who'd previously written about them anyway, Bill Graham was a big fan, Niall Stokes was a big fan. Back then if you got Dave Fanning and *Hot Press* aboard who was to stop you? (Hayden, 2012, interview with the author).

Thus, via the supportive local network, U2 had made an ally in Hayden, and that relationship, via both U2's and Hayden's networks in Dublin brought the band to a wider

audience. Before the band signed with CBS (Ireland) and then Island in London, they also benefited from the other forms of supportive entrepreneurship in the local Dublin music scene.

Advancing 'new forms of Irish culture': The Dandelion, *Hot Press* and the Pirates

U2 also productively interfaced with the Dublin music scene's DIY practice in other ways, and even used some of the elements of this DIY practice in their global self-representation. While U2's early career was supported by innovative entrepreneurial activity in Ireland's under-developed live music industry, some of this activity also provided them with subcultural capital. This can be seen in one of their earliest syndicated interviews in the US:

> 'So we in fact invented a gig,' Bono said. 'We used to play in a car park (indoor parking lot) on Saturday afternoons in the city centre. Four walls, roof, floor, 700 people crowded in there at 3:00 in the afternoon. That caused a bit of excitement' (Arar, *The Free Lance Star*, 10 June 1981).

Like many venues, the Dandelion Market's reputation almost overshadows its reality. That said, its mythic status indicates how Ireland's capital city suffered from a lack of professional promoters and regular concerts. The underdeveloped rock music scene required entrepreneurial innovation to sustain it. The Dandelion venue, thanks to its organiser John Fisher, was innovative in providing new Irish acts, from both sides of the border, with an opportunity to appear before a younger audience. Bands that played there included DC Nien, The Outcasts, Zebra and Square Meal. Unlike the few pubs that hosted gigs at the time, there were no age restrictions at the Dandelion because the concerts were alcohol-free events. The city centre venue operated from April 1979 to March 1980 and hosted almost 90 gigs. Its activities were curtailed on occasion by factors specific to Ireland, including public bus strikes and the Pope's Irish visit. The gigs were run on a DIY collective basis. The bands had to arrive early and help to assemble to stage for the performance; the admission charge was 50 pence which went to the bands (Fisher, http://johnfisher.ie/Dandelion_Market.html).

Fisher was one of the new generation of Irish entrepreneurs who were both inspired by and found market opportunities in rock music and youth culture. In his account, a journey to England for the Reading and Knebworth music festivals in 1976 inspired him and his partner, Eoin O'Shea, to address the needs and desires of Ireland growing youth

population. They returned to Dublin with rucksacks filled with badges and opened a market stall, Sticky Fingers, in the Dandelion Market. To attract more customers, they launched a series of weekend concerts at the market. The venue was 'the one vacant area in the market – an enclosed dark, dank shed that housed the power supply for the whole market' (Fisher, http://johnfisher.ie/Dandelion_Market.html). This is consistent with Brocklebank's observation that Dublin's venues at the time were 'oftentimes makeshift sweatboxes' (Brocklebank, 2013: 15).

Irish historians and cultural theorists agree that the new media outlets in the late 1970s impacted on Irish rock music. The magazine, *Hot Press*, founded in 1977 was edited by Niall Stokes, who had earlier documented the precarious state of the domestic music scene. It was politically progressive, very overtly youth-centric and provided extensive and in-depth coverage of local and international artists, as well as political commentary and interviews. In tone and style, it was closer to America's *Rolling Stone* than to the British music weeklies. McLaughlin and McLoone represented it, at the time, as 'arguably the most important development in popular music culture' (2012: 120).

The era's pirate radio stations were even more countercultural, at least in the legal sense, than *Hot Press*; their activities were both entrepreneurial and illegal. Even more worryingly for the Irish establishment, they were also very popular. Although subject to frequent police visits and the confiscation of equipment, the pirates found an eager listenership in Dublin's youth. By 1979 there were 25 stations on the air, although some had very limited broadcasting range. Like *Hot Press*, the popular pirate stations featured a mix of international and local acts. The best-known stations attracted both significant market share and loyalty; Radio Dublin claimed it had 30 per cent of Dublin's audience (Morash, 2010: 187). It certainly had widespread and visible supporters; 10,000 people took to the streets to protest a 1978 police raid on the station (Morash, 2010: 187).

While the pirates were not beyond the law and were eventually suppressed, their enterprise proved that a demand existed for popular music broadcasting. The national broadcaster responded to this by launching RTÉ Radio 2 in May 1979. The new service had recruited a number of ex-pirates and had an emphasis on, although not a total commitment to, youth and contemporary popular music. This reactive policy is consistent with Morash's (2010) conclusion about the subdued launch of RTÉ's new television channel a year earlier. He felt this 'demonstrated once again the nagging sense that the media provided by the state

could not cope with the new forms of Irish culture' (2010: 189). That conclusion can partially be explained by the cultural distance between the Irish establishment and the large youth population. The entrepreneurs who could 'cope with the new forms of Irish culture' were young, and as I want to explore, a large proportion of them came from the ranks of the elected representatives of Irish University Student Unions.

Innovation from the new generation of rock entrepreneurs

The music industry transformation that resulted from innovators between the mid-1970s and 1985 should be placed in the context of Ireland's demographics. The steep increase in birth rates during the decade meant that the population was larger and younger. By 1984, almost 40 per cent of the population was under 20 (McDonald, 2011: 190). Members of that generation were responsible for what I argue was the single most dramatic transformation of the Irish music industry. This was the emergence of a handful of managers in the late 1970s who successfully guided their Irish clients to international market success. These managers, three individuals and one husband and wife team, established that Ireland could produce artist/management combinations capable of achieving success in the crucial album market. These managers were: Fachtna O'Kelly, initially with Clannad and more successfully commercially with the Boomtown Rats and Sinead O'Connor; Paul McGuinness with U2; Nicky and Roma Ryan with Enya; Dave Kavanagh with Clannad at their commercial peak and, in partnership with Paul McGuinness, the Celtic Heartbeat label, responsible for marketing the music from the 'Riverdance' show. In terms of their significance, it should be noted that no group of domestic managers has emerged since with anything approaching the success of the late 1970s generation. Not only was it unprecedented in Ireland, up to the current time it is unrepeated. It is also noteworthy that apart from O'Kelly, they were all domestically based.

I want to examine the emergence of this group of entrepreneurs in the context of the university music scenes the importance of which was highlighted by Niall Stokes in 1975. At that time, a number of the individuals brought their university experience, including music promotion, into careers in the entertainment industry. The journalist Bill Graham (1989: 19) wrote that from 1977 'a small cabal of graduates' from these institutions 'emerge[d] as the new leadership' of the domestic industry. Graham listed Niall and Dermot Stokes from *Hot Press* magazine, accountant Ossie Kilkenny, Dave Fanning, Dave Kavanagh and Billy McGrath, along with James Morris and Meiret Avis from Windmill Lane recording studios, the latter directing U2's 'Gloria' video.

Graham's idea that a 'small cabal' of University graduates became the 'new leadership' of the Irish music industry is an interesting concept and again indicates how music industry innovation emerges from local supportive networks rather than the centralised power groups that dominate the global industry. I want to look at an even smaller cabal, the elected officials of University student unions, to determine how entrepreneurs from the local supportive network benefited U2 and other emerging Irish acts.

In U2's authorised narrative, as well as in published interviews from the era, a number of local entrepreneurs are acknowledged by the band. They assisted the band in significant ways and I want to place those helpers in the context of their student union backgrounds. Even if we only recognise their contribution to U2's development, which neglects so many of their other activities with contemporary acts, it is possible to get a sense of their impact. For ease of identification I am labelling this group the 'Ents Entrepreneurs'.

As documented earlier, Billy McGrath (UCD Ents Officer 1975–1976) collaborated with Bob Geldof in an attempt develop an Irish circuit for live rock music. He later managed The Atrix, one of the other highly regarded bands of the time, and provided U2 with advice. Later he directed a documentary about the band. In collaboration with Bob Geldof, and with UCD's student union resources, McGrath had organised the 'Falling Asunder' tour in 1976, which reached its promotional climax with a concert in Dublin's National Stadium. McGrath recalled being approached by U2 and being asked for advice:

> ... I did give them an idea, you've got to be inventive, I gave them the idea of running the Christmas balls, the Xmas balls and they did it in July and they did the U2 Christmas Balls and at the end of the year (McGrath, 2013, interview with the author).

Bono publically thanked McGrath in an article he wrote in *Hot Press* magazine in 1980 (Stokes, 1985: 156). 1980 was also the year in which U2 played in the National Stadium and signed their record deal with Island Records. At this time, Dave Kavanagh (UCD Ents Officer 1976–1977) had become U2's Irish booking agent and was responsible for securing them performance opportunities. In one of U2's publications made available only to members of their fan club, Kavanagh recalled his role:

> I promoted the National Stadium gig in the Spring of 1980… I said, 'We'll try the National Stadium. It's a big statement, it pitches the band on a certain level, and we'll invite all the record companies…' (Kavanagh, 2014: 187).

Another UCD student's union representative, Charlie McNally (UCD SU president 1976–1977) played a vital role in the band's early development when setting up the label Kick Records in 1979. The label released the album, 'Just for Kicks', a compilation of emerging unsigned Dublin bands including U2. He also became a music promoter with Paul Tipping (TCD Ents Officer 1977–1978) and promoted concerts featuring U2. In terms of broadcasting, Ian Wilson (TCD SU president 1976–1977 and former Ents Officer) was a key and well-placed early champion of U2. He produced the influential Dave Fanning show on RTE, which gave prominent airplay to all three songs from U2's debut EP. Kieran Owens (TCD Ents Officer 1976–1977), while still a student, managed the Virgin Prunes, the Dublin band most closely allied with U2.

Yet perhaps the most influential Ents Entrepreneur in U2's early career development was Bill Graham, the *Hot Press* journalist. Graham authored his own account of U2's initial development in his book, *U2 The Early Days: Another Time, Another Place* (1989). In it, he describes his initial contact with the band: 'Somehow Adam had got hold of my home phone number and was personally plaguing my mother…' (Graham, 1989: 18). Once the initial contact was made, Graham became a champion for, and advisor to, the band. His April 1978 article on the band was the first published local media coverage of the band (Stokes, 1985: 7). Graham had been the Ents Officer in Trinity in 1974, where he became friends with another student, Paul McGuinness. It was via Graham's lobbying that McGuinness became the band's long-term manager (McGuinness, 2001: 64). It is important to note that the Belfast-born Graham had served as Ents Officer in 1971 and 1972 before the job became a paid and elected position (*Trinity News*, April 1972). This was clearly part of Dublin's not-for-profit music network.

Outside Dublin, the era's university Ents Officers were also key to U2's development. In University College Cork, Elvera Butler promoted a large number of early concerts for the band. Larry Mullen recalled:

> We did a lot of gigs in the Arcadia ballroom in Cork. We had our first real fan base in that great city. It's the first city we ever sold [a concert] (U2, 2006: 68).

These Cork shows resulted from the activity of Butler. In UCC she was assisted at the time by another student, Denis Desmond. He later joined forces with Eamon McCann, who had been Queen's University Belfast Ents Officer in 1977. They later combined their activities as MCD Concerts, which became Ireland's largest music promotion firm. In the context of U2's early development, the firm placed U2 on the bill of an 1981 outdoor concert at Slane Castle headlined by Thin Lizzy (U2, 2006: 117) and also organised U2's first major Dublin outdoor concert in August 1983. This event was significant for the band's reputation, as the Edge recalled:

> ...twenty thousand people, with Simple Minds and the Eurythmics supporting, an amazing bill. It was really a 'returning-heroes' show, coming home having conquered the world. We'd never played to anything close to that size before (U2, 2006: 144).

Taken collectively, this tiny 'cabal' of young music entrepreneurs provided a large number of significant opportunities to U2 in their early development. It is arguable that this was the first time that a music genre in Ireland, rock music in this case, was combined with a generation of young Irish entrepreneurs who understood that culture and actively engaged with it. It is also arguable that many of the Irish music industry 'leaders' of the next era emerged from the university student unions.

It is difficult to quantify precisely the skills that the Ents Entrepreneurs had acquired during the activity on behalf of students at their respective universities during the 1970s and this student activity should be placed in the context of trends in Irish education and demographics. Between 1970 and 1985, major changes took place in the Irish education system. These were instigated at both institution and State level. As Tony White (2001) in his analysis of the third-level sector noted, until the late 1960s, Trinity College attracted a 'sizeable percentage' of its students from outside the state (White, 2001: 15). This pattern changed when the Catholic Church lifted its ban on its flock attending the Dublin University in 1970. Allowing Catholics to attend Trinity came at a time when the population was increasing; in 1971 it was at its highest since the State's foundation (White, 2001: 26). In addition, during this era the Irish government implemented a policy of increasing the number of students receiving education. By 1980 Ireland had 38,000 students in full-time higher education; an extra 18,000 students compared to the figure for 1966 (White, 2001: 79).

If education is a means for social inclusion and the provision of opportunities, in Ireland these were unequally distributed. As Ferriter (2005: 753) noted of university attendees from country Dublin, 72 per cent came from higher socio-economic groups, while their parents represented only 21 per cent of Dublin's population. Yet, if university attendance was a privilege not a right for Ireland's youth during this time, it should be noted that student unions, and some of the notable generation of Ents Entrepreneurs, were active in campaigns to lower student costs and fees and open the universities up to all income groups. Both Bill Graham and Ian Wilson were identified in Irish newspapers at the time in such campaigns: (*Irish Independent*, 7 February 1973; Walshe, *Sunday Independent*, 10 March 1974). In addition, they were depicted agitating for a more liberal society (Holmes, *Irish Press*, 5 May 1978) and even openly challenging the dominance of the Church; to one letter writer in the *Irish Press*, this placed them in a 'combined conspiracy of ecclesiastical heretics, contraceptionists, and the mass media which they largely control' (O'Halloran, *Irish Press*, 8 July 1974).

If, as McLaughlin and McLoone (2012) argued, *Hot Press* magazine was a 'left-liberal… important cultural force in… challenging residual socio-political conservatism' (2012: 164), it should be noted that this was in keeping with a current of student union politics and at least some of the Ents Entrepreneurs. In this sense, the local music industry was now a more socially and politically progressive site that it had been during the time of the showband entrepreneurs.

Professional networks and DIY values: Culture clashes in the Irish music scene

Prior to U2's success, I have demonstrated how Thin Lizzy and the Boomtown Rats had provided opportunities for Irish bands who emerged after them; the benefits enjoyed by new bands included high-profile tours with Lizzy and the Rats, as well as the availability of skilled, experienced technicians, in addition to network links to global industry gate-keepers. In turn, U2 and their entrepreneurial network participated in the local music scene. One of the Ents Entrepreneurs, Kieran Owens, who managed the Virgin Prunes and the Fountainhead, recalled how this benefited him in the local music scene:

> But one of the crucial things… was the importance of sharing information. Now it's one of the best things that Principle [U2's management firm] were always very good at was if you were away or at a conference or you needed some support you could always phone somebody in Principle Management. Anne Louise Kelly… was always brilliant and Paul [McGuinness], I

> mean full credit to him, it was coming from them… there was nothing that you couldn't ask for in terms of advice that wasn't given (Owens, 2012, interview with the author).

Owens, who signed a number of deals with major global firms for Irish acts, also recalled how the local music scene was still dependent on key global music industry gate-keepers. However, because of U2's success and their network, some of these gate-keepers were now accessible to the local scene. As more Irish bands signed with international labels, Owens recalled that for many Irish acts one London lawyer played a vital role:

> …the crucial element in getting the deals was having John Kennedy as the lawyer. John Kennedy… was the feared guy who, if you were a client of his, had to be taken seriously (Owens, 2012, interview with the author).

Despite the increased professionalization of the local music scene, it was still a site where the assumed professional values of the global centralised music industry were actively challenged. When the 1984–1984 Trinity Ents Officer, Michael McCaughan, was elected, he recalled being informed that the student union was in deficit and very limited funds were available for the provision of entertainment. McCaughan maintained that his position gave him a responsibility to provide opportunities for bands from outside the centralised local music industry. He recalled:

> … [it was] very much a co-operative effort… it was run by volunteers… it was their love of music that kept them going… Because music was about more than just getting out of your head and having a good time; it had a message, meaning, relevance and revolutionary potential… Again the times that were in it often meant that bands were marginalised because they had no publicity machine. They had no machine behind them, which was good in the sense [of controlling their own art]… those bands like the Golden Horde and Those Handsome Devils who were extraordinary bands in their time never got the exposure they deserved… because they didn't belong to record companies… (McCaughan, 2009, interview with the author).

Yet if McCaughan's aims were to provide opportunities for local acts, this did not mean that those acts could not subsequently engage fruitfully with the commercial global music industry. This indicates that local music scenes, and even areas of them with anti-corporate principles, can be attractive talent sources for major labels and TNCs. During his year in office, McCaughan provided paid performance opportunities to unsigned local acts including Hothouse Flowers, Cry Before Dawn and Luka Bloom, all of whom later signed

with major international labels. He recalled one un-signed singer arriving unannounced in his office:

> ... Sinead O'Connor walked in herself. And so this, as seen in the photo, this waif-like teenager with a skinhead [haircut] came in and politely but firmly asked me could she play a lunchtime gig with her band Ton Ton Ma Coute, that there was a label coming over and that they'd like to play. And, I suppose, her attitude immediately impressed me. There weren't many women coming in like that, to push their own music and their bands and get involved, because it was a very macho/male world obviously... I immediately said yes, because the lunch-time gig was something I had control over (McCaughan, 2009, interview with the author).

While McCaughan lacked any meaningful contacts with the London music industry, by providing bands with concerts at Trinity he was increasing their possibilities of linking with that industry. Kieran Owens recalled seeing a poster for the Sinead O'Connor concert at the university and going to see what to him was an unknown new act. Impressed, he was able to initiate communication between the singer and the label that would sign her.

> ...[I] was able immediately to contact a couple of friends of mine, Nigel Grainge and Chris Hill... they were in touch with me on a regular basis saying 'what's going on' [in the local music scene]... (Owens, 2012, interview with the author).

This communication led to O'Connor signing a long-term contact with the English record company. Naturally it also enhanced his reputation in the industry: '...part of that credibility came from my long documented story of "discovering" Sinead O'Connor' (Owens, 2012, interview with the author). While Owens was comfortable with providing links between the local DIY music scene practices and the commercial global industry, there were still tensions between the two. This can be seen in the interaction between U2's management and Colm Walsh who was one of the network of volunteers who helped McCaughan. Walsh also assisted bands including the Intoxicating Rhythm Section. He recalled being invited to a meeting with U2's manager, who was interested in assisting the band. Walsh recalls:

> So we had this meeting and Paul McGuinness came in and said very properly: 'Lads, first thing you're going to have to do is sack the drummer'... [I responded] 'We can't sack the fucking drummer, the drummer is my best friend. Where am I going to go at night?' You know, which just shows the shocking naivety of it (Walsh, 2010, interview with the author).

Perhaps inevitably, McGuinness did not sign the band, although his organisation helped the band by providing funds for them to make recordings in the hope of developing them and enhancing their prospects. If the professional music industry is represented exploiting local music scenes and possessing values alien to parts of that scene, it can also be supportive of them.

Whilst the Irish music scene was capable of hosting entrepreneurs like McCaughan and Walsh, who maintained non-conformist stances relative to the mainstream profit-driven music industry, it was also hosting a growing live music promoter, MCD Concerts, which subsequently became a significant international competitor. Having examined some of the ways in which the local music scene provided an environment in which artists could develop and later sign with major labels, I want to examine how that same music scene provided an environment in which a company could develop to eventually compete with major firms.

Empire building in the periphery: MCD Concerts

The success of MCD proves that the periphery of the live music industry can ultimately produce firms with global competitive abilities. While a complete analysis of the firm lies beyond the scope of my study, some indications of MCD's market power should be acknowledged. As Carroll (2007) documented, the firm had by then acquired the Ambassador, Olympia, Gaiety and Spirit venues and held an estimated 70 per cent of the Irish live music market. In addition, MCD had aggressively expanded its activities in Britain and had an ownership share in DF concerts and the T in the Park and V festivals (Carroll, 2007), as well as the Glastonbury, Leeds and Reading festivals (Koranteng, 2005). The firm's domestic activities were also lucrative by global standards; the world's two highest-grossing live music events in 2009 were Irish events promoted by MCD, a trio of U2 gigs in Croke Park and the Oxegen festival (Waddell, *Billboard*, 7 November 2009). According to published industry sources, they were the eighth largest concert promoter in the world in 2011, with concert revenues exceeding $110 million (*Billboard*, 17 December 2011). This is before any of their income from other music and non-music sources is accounted for.

McCann and Desmond built the firm even while Desmond worked full-time outside the industry. Desmond later described his Cork family origins as: 'middle to upper-middle

class. I had everything I wanted' (Harris, *Sunday Independent*, 23 November 1986). While there was no apparent prominent family involvement in music, there was an entrepreneurial background. As a teenager, Desmond worked in his father's victualler business before attending University College Cork. As with a number of the 'Ents Entrepreneurs', his formal education coincided with the acquisition of music industry skills. He combined a Civil Engineering degree with music promotion, management and organisation; 'I dabbled in music, helping out with entertainment at the college' (O'Brien, 1990). He promoted concerts by acts including Tir na nOg, Dr. Strangely Strange and Brinsley Schwartz (O'Brien, 1990) and managed local bands.

Between 1972 and 1974 Desmond's management clients, Sleepy Hollow and Gaslight were favourably mentioned in local newspapers and *New Spotlight* magazine (Egan, 1974). At this time, the locally-based musician, Rory Gallagher, provided a connection between Cork and the international music industry, and he selected Sleepy Hollow as his opening act in both Ireland and Britain (Egan, 1995).

Sleepy Hollow's sound technician, Joe O'Herlihy was subsequently hired by Gallagher to work for him on other international and Irish tours. While he acquired this experience, O'Herlihy saw a market opportunity for providing higher quality sound equipment than was currently used in Ireland. Denis Desmond became a partner in this venture, Stage Sound Hire (O'Donoghue, 1985). In common with many Irish university graduates of the time, Desmond moved overseas to secure employment. After completing his degree, Desmond initially emigrated to Britain where he worked for BP as a petro-chemical engineer (Hayes, 1988). This did not end his music industry activities; he acted as a 'local contact' for the Belfast-based McCann (O'Brien, 1990).

The 1979 advertisement for ITM Entertainments indicates the nature of Desmond's early activity (*Hot Press*, 1979). The firm, with an address in Hull, was making African, Blues and Jamaican acts available for Irish concerts, including The Cimarons, Matumbi, Son Seals and Sassafras, as well as up-and-coming new wave acts such as The Police and XTC. When McCann and Desmond increased their activity, they used the brand MCD and were represented in the Irish media occupying a niche in the live music market. For example Hutchinson' observed how they '...have concentrated on lesser-known "street" bands, usually those vaunted by the trendy New Musical Express' (Hutchinson, 1983), while Joe

Breen described the firm promoting 'small, breaking acts... the younger and fresher outfits' (Breen, 1985).

This should be seen in the context of its most notable local rivals during 1980–1985. Dublin entrepreneur Pat Egan lessened his concert promotion activities and appeared to focus on his retail business. Jim Aiken enjoyed very significant successes in the 1980s and was depicted, probably correctly, in the local media as 'currently the most celebrated local promoter' (Hutchinson, 1983). This was allied with his representation as a 'risk-taker': 'a gambler by nature, who convincingly says he does it more for the kicks than the cash' (Doolin, 1985). Aiken's activity during the 1970s and early 1980s indicates that he preferred to promote only very large shows by well-established acts. This effectively allowed MCD to promote smaller and mid-level bands and to develop relationships with London booking agents.

One of these agents, Asgard, had initially appeared to be a threat to MCD in the Irish market. One of Asgard's directors, Paul Charles, was Irish and he had relocated to England in the late 1960s, where his intimate experience of the nascent Irish scene was combined with his knowledge of the British market. Asgard, had diversified from a folk-music focus to being one of the early bookers of new wave acts, including The Buzzcocks, Penetration, The Gang of 4 and The Human League (Charles, 2004: 43). He also booked Irish acts, including Van Morrison, The Undertones, Rory Gallagher, Christy Moore, Paul Brady and Mark Black (Charles, 2004: 50). All of these Irish acts performed at the early Irish rock festivals (1980–1984) in which Charles played a prominent role. Fortunately for MCD, Charles found his role as a booking agent more productive than being a concert promoter in Ireland and he effectively retreated from the market (Charles, 2004: 100). Even better for MCD, the Irish media reported MCD enjoying 'a useful friendship and working relationship' with Asgard (Hayes, 1988).

MCD also enjoyed engaged particularly productively with the new forces in youth culture on the Irish media landscape. RTE Radio 2 was a key ally and co-promoted many MCD shows including the major U2 Phoenix Park Festival (*Meath Chronicle*, 2 July 1983), while *Hot Press* often featured visiting acts prominently and was a suitable site for reaching the rock audience via advertising. What MCD lacked, though, was its own premises and the fledgling firm was dependent on renting halls and outdoor venues. It is fair to conclude that the lack of venues and the lengths to which promoters had to go to

find suitable concert locations proved how under-developed the Dublin live music industry was. This also effectively served as a disincentive to enter the industry and helps to explain why MCD was able to grow its business so successfully in the long term without serious sustained competition.

Live music obstacles: 1978–1983

In December 1977, the licence for the Boomtown Rats concert in Dublin's Tivoli Theatre was revoked when police, describing the band as 'punk rock', claimed they would attract an 'undesirable and unacceptable' audience. The show had to be relocated to a cinema at short notice (*Irish Press*, 20 December 1977).

The ability of the Trinity student union to present concerts profitably was undermined in January 1978 when the college authorities prohibited rock music from the Exam Hall. The decision was accompanied by national news headlines: 'Trinity prof seeks ban on music' (*Irish Press*, 30 January 1978), '"Rock in ruin" if TCD noise ban agreed' (*Evening Press*, 31 January 1978). Bill Graham wrote how this:

> ...suggest[s] only one conclusion – that the banning represents an extension of the general repression of punk and new wave music (Graham, *Hot Press*, 18 February 1978).

Although the Project Arts Centre successfully hosted the successful Dark Space Festival, featuring a large number of local acts including U2 in 1979, the following year, the Boomtown Rats encountered severe obstacles to performing in the city. In 1980 a proposed Boomtown Rats concert at Dublin's suburban Leopardstown racecourse was cancelled at short notice following a legal skirmish. The band and their management scrambled to find an alternative venue. On the Wednesday before the concert, Desmond Guinness, a member of the famous brewing family, agreed to host the event, provided the band found appropriate insurance coverage (*Irish Press*, 1 March 1980).

A fee was agreed upon for the use of Leixlip, Geldof placed the figure at £10,000 (Geldof, 1986: 166), while the *Irish Independent* claimed it was £3,000 (Morrissey, 1980). In either case, it proved that renting land for a single concert could be lucrative for Irish property owners. Violence at the gig resulted in sensational headlines in the daily newspapers. The front page of the *Irish Independent* read: 'Thirty hurt in night of terror at the castle' (Morrissey, 1980). The *Irish Press* front page reported that 37 people had been injured in

'running battles' in front of the stage, two security men had been seriously hurt and two boys tending cars in the village had their faces slashed with a broken bottle (Burke, 1980).

Indoor concerts also proved problematic in late 1980. In October, MCD found new premises for Dublin rock concerts, the Grand Cinema in Cabra owned by Gael Linn who had previously been very opposed to 'foreign' culture. However trouble *outside* the concerts led to local objections. In the court hearing to decide on the matter, Gael Linn and MCD were represented by Eamon de Valera, whose father had argued so strenuously for the protection of Irish culture. Now his son was advocating on behalf of concerts by The Ramones, as well as Siouxsie and the Banshees. Under the headline 'Stabbed pop fans – judge praises the organisers', the *Irish Independent* reported that the judge, Justice Brennan, praised the MCD organisation for its professional conduct and heard evidence from plain-clothes Gardai that the attackers had ambushed innocent concert-goers (*Irish Independent*, 23 October 1980). Despite this, a later court hearing banned other concerts. The *Irish Independent* quoted Justice Donnelly: 'It would require an overwhelming social desire and necessity before I would impose that kind of burden on any neighbourhood' (*Irish Independent*, 6 November 1980). The *Irish Press* reported him stating:

> When all is said and done, what is involved here, is Gael Linn's profit and the promoters' profit as against the peace and quiet of what was an orderly neighbourhood (*Irish Press*, 6 November 1980).

The case signalled the end of the Grand Cabra as a 'new wave' venue and at the end of 1980 MCD had to begin another search for a suitable location for rock music in Dublin.

Although it had nothing to do with any of the country's live music promoters, a tragedy in early 1981 simultaneously drew attention to the city's lack of suitable venues and ensured tougher regulation of the live music industry. On 14 February, a fire in the Stardust venue killed 48 young people who were attending a disco there. The book *They Never Came Home* by Neil Fetherstonhaugh and Tony McCullagh (2006) provides a harrowing account of the catastrophe. The venue had earlier been used for rock and pop concerts, including The Specials and The Beat, as well as The Greedies with U2.

In 1981 MCD identified a potential site which would function well despite the Irish legal and cultural impediments to live rock music. The natural amphitheatre in the grounds of

Lord Henry Mount Charles' estate presented opportunities for large-scale rock concerts. While the promoter's judgement was correct – and despite the success of the first venture there – in the medium term MCD was deliberately prevented from enjoying the full benefits of its discovery.

The 1981 concert of Thin Lizzy, Hazel O'Connor, Rose Tattoo, The Bureau, U2 and Sweet Savage attracted approximately 18,000 fans (Mount Charles, 1989: 61). It was a significant event for MCD, proving it could profitably promote large outdoor concerts in the Republic. As significant as the event was for Irish rock, it demonstrated how live concert promotion was a not a politically neutral activity in 1981 Ireland. It took place against the backdrop of a highly volatile political situation on the island. Hunger strikes were undertaken by Republican prisoners in Northern Irish prisons in an attempt to gain concessions on prison conditions from the British government.

Mount Charles (1989) described how, once preparations were underway and the concert had been publicly announced, he became a target for intimidation. His anxiety over the event was heightened when slogans were painted on the walls of his estate including the familiar 'Brits out'. He also recalled receiving threatening phone calls and a letter stating:

> Irishmen are tortured to death by your British friends. Your class has an easy ride in Ireland. Call off this vulgar festival you are promoting while brave men are dying, you British toad (Jackson, 2002).

Slane's first open-air concert also encountered local opposition from residents, who feared the influx of young concert-goers would result in disruption and anti-social behaviour. The Community Council wrote to Mount Charles stating: '...the people of the area are gravely worried about the risk to person and property if the wrong kind of people should come to the village' (Mount Charles, 1989: 60).

The summer festival activity of 1982 provided many lessons concerning the country's live music industry. Festivals took place at Macroom, Castlebar, Lisdoonvarna and Dalymount Park, as well as a Slane concert given by the Rolling Stones. According to press reports, apart from Slane, all of the summer festivals struggled to break even and some lost substantial sums. The headline that best summed up the situation was: 'Rocking into a recession!' in the *Irish Press*. This detailed some of the losses with a candour that few

modern music promoters would reveal. At Macroom, despite Thin Lizzy's Phil Lynott appearing, only a thousand fans showed up, resulting in a loss of £30,000. Lisdoonvarna and Dalymount were described as 'barely breaking even' (Bell, 1982).

Castlebar typified the consequences of entering an over-crowded market. There, in August 1982, the Boomtown Rats joined Thin Lizzy, Madness and a supporting bill consisting primarily of Irish bands at the three-day Castlebar Festival. While the newspapers reported that 13,000 tickets were sold, this was far less than the projected estimates of 20,000 expected by the organisers. Six local businessmen were behind the venture, according to the *Irish Independent*, investing £250,000 in the event (O'Brien, 1982).

Following the festival, an unnamed Garda Spokesman was quoted in a number of national and regional newspapers on the gathering. It was:

> ...the greatest collection of blackguards that we have ever encountered... The belief that decent boys and girls attend these festivals is only a myth. They are mainly cider drinkers, who sought our aspros [Asprin] and similar such tablets to mix with their drinks (*Irish Press*, 5 August 1982).

In a society in which the Catholic Church was still highly influential, popular music continued to be a site where values were debated. In rhetoric that echoed 1930s pastoral letters on 'foreign' music, a local priest, Father O'Connor, was quoted in the *Leitrim Observer*:

> My thoughts are offered out of concern for moral values and standards of our people which were openly challenged on our streets and out of concern for our young people, many of whom abhorred being subjected to such a corrupting atmosphere (*Leitrim Observer*, 21 August 1982).

In 1983 MCD offered Mount Charles another partnership, this time on a major reputation-enhancing event for U2 at Dublin's Phoenix Park Racecourse in August. The concert, promoted jointly by MCD and Mount Charles and the national broadcaster, Radio 2, was a massive public relations success for the band. On the day, U2 had a very strong supporting line-up: local synthesiser act Pat O'Donnell and Steve Belton, Perfect Crime from Northern Ireland, and British bands Steel Pulse, Big Country, The Eurythmics and Simple Minds. The concert proved that the combination of U2 and the predominantly international bands could draw large crowds. In his account, Henry Mount Charles (1989: 104–107)

described some of the problems at the Phoenix Park concert, including what he alleged were thousands of counterfeit tickets printed by a Dublin criminal enterprise. In addition, the helicopter he hired to monitor the crowd and identify any problems was pelted with stones by a group of youths gathered outside the park. This was quickly followed by the mass storming of one of the gates. Fights inevitably broke out inside the venue and some concert-goers climbed onto the roof of the stand. Bizarrely, the Scottish singer, Annie Lennox from the Eurythmics, was greeted with shouts of 'Go home to England' and bottles were thrown onstage during her performance.

Following the concert, the Fianna Fail TD Michael Barrett was quoted in the *Irish Independent*:

> There is a strong case for banning them completely... these rock concerts and festivals have turned into orgies of sex, violence and drug abuse and seem to attract the very worst elements of society (MacCormaic, 16 August 1983).

The Fine Gael TD, Michael Keating described seeing 'many young people going to the concert with flagons of cider in their hands', while the paper reported only minor incidents including: 'punk rockers fighting amongst themselves'; 'a girl who fractured her leg when she fell from a roof'; 'a number of people picked up for stealing cars' nearby (MacCormaic, *Irish Independent*, 16 August 1983).

The nature of these live music events, and the obstacles to their production, serve as indications of why the Irish live music industry was under-developed. It is easy to understand why individuals and firms viewed live events as risky investments. Despite this, however, MCD persevered and steadily not only increased its market share, but also benefited from what proved to be a very lucrative live market. It is worth considering that the obstacles it encountered in its formative years, in a market peripheral to the global music industry, enabled it to compete in the long term, both domestically and internationally.

Shortly after this, an alliance between MCD and the Jesuits for the St Francis Xavier Hall, or the SFX as it became known, proved far more lucrative and long-lasting than the promoter's brief relationship with Gael Linn. With the SFX, the firm had found not just a home for visiting rock acts, but also a site for its offices and headquarters. In the second

half of 1982, concerts at the venue reviewed in the major daily newspapers included: The Beat (Prendergast, 4 October 1982); ABC (Breen, 1 November 1982); Budgie (Prendergast, 5 November 1982); Ultravox (Breen, 12 November 1982); Simple Minds (Prendergast, 25 November 1982). The firm enjoyed the benefits of profitable concerts at the SFX, which it effectively controlled, and purchased in 1994 (O'Dea, 2000) and at other venues with the emerging post-punk bands. Instead of the 'high-profile/high-risk' strategy of Aiken, MCD was also developing relationships with agents and managers, many of whom remained loyal to the firm.

Conclusion

During the punk and 'post-punk' era of 1976–1985, Ireland successfully competed in many areas of the global music industry. In a sense, the rhetoric of the 1930s, that Ireland could broadcast itself to the world, had finally been fulfilled. The global concert instigated by Bob Geldof, Live Aid, was a major media and cultural event and U2 benefited from a close alliance with MTV. Domestically, the new Irish radio station, Radio 2, was enormously helpful to U2.

Yet the recent technological developments in the music industry were not the sole reasons for the success of Irish acts during this period. While new media outlets and channels were broadcasting Irish acts globally, those acts were still dependent on incubation and early career development from the local music scene. Here, during 1977–1985 a flurry of DIY activity took place; this included pirate radio stations, fanzines like *Raw Power* and *Heat*, *Hot Press* magazine, John Fisher's Dandelion Market concert venue and new record labels. This local entrepreneurial activity took place as a group of individuals graduated from Irish university student unions and joined and helped to develop the local music industry.

This activity, and the success of both U2 and MCD Concerts, the early development of which took place during this era, indicates how 'local supportive scenes' interacted with the centralised music industry in ways that benefited both Irish acts and Irish firms. In MCD's case, its long-term strategy resulted in it eventually being one of the world's dominant music promoters. One of the early contributory factors to its business success was the curtailment of popular music activity on Dublin's university campuses. This provided MCD with a gap in the growing market for live music by new wave and rock bands.

For U2, who became one of the most commercially successful acts of the late 20th century, the local music scene, including those university campuses and 'Ents Entrepreneurs', provided a range of opportunities. They indicate how even the most commercially successful artist depends initially on a supportive scene. The way in which their friends, families and members of the local scene rallied around them when their proposed publishing deal was reneged upon is a striking example of how differently the local supportive networks and the centralised music industry function. It is worth considering how much was at stake in the publishing deal. If, as the band stated in numerous accounts, they were ready to part with a portion of their future royalty earnings for £3,000, this could have meant a revenue loss over their career of tens of millions of dollars.

By contrast, the band's supportive network was willing to loan the money at short notice and without demanding a portion of the band's future earnings. While there are probably few examples in the music industry of how a local network can provide unconditional support for an artist with such dramatic financial consequences, the U2 case proves how valuable and important the local network is. In U2's case, that local Dublin network, as peripheral and underdeveloped as it may have been, was not only supportive but also innovative, creative and drew frequently from DIY not-for-profit 'cultural patronage'.

Chapter 9: Collaboration, the Church, and the Global versus Local Debate

Two surprising themes became apparent during my research. They were: (i) the unexpected and influential role played by the Catholic clergy; (ii) the amount and variety of activity that occurred beyond the music industry's 'stable structures of authority and subordination, of property creation and appropriation' (Stahl, 2013: 3). When combined with other features of this social history, this indicates that the 'scene' rather than the 'industry' was a key source of innovation and entrepreneurship which benefited Irish acts.

This conclusion supports the case for making the music scene, rather than the music industry, a primary site for identifying how acts 'make it' and how they are supported in their initial skills acquisition and career development. The co-operative and collaboration activity within the local scene, or scenes, deserves a more central place in music industry research. This raises questions about how the local and the global, or the scene and the industry, should be theorised.

Before examining the role of the Church in the Irish music industry, it is worthwhile briefly summarising some of the co-operative activity that shaped the development of both the industry and the scene. There is ample evidence, from the 1890s until the mid-1980s, of the 'fans turned entrepreneurs' activity and 'voluntary labour' that Bennett and Peterson (2004: 5) identified as hallmarks of the local scene. From priests editing Irish song-books in the early 20th century to cultural patrons of Irish acts in the 1950s, voluntary labour was significant.

During the course of my research, as I was uncovering crucial scene-supporting and voluntary activity in the local Irish music industry, field theory was receiving attention within academia. Because the industry and the scene can be conceptualized as interacting together within Bourdieu's *field* theory, it is relevant that some of that recent scholarship has made a compelling case for recognising the co-operative nature of human interaction within social fields. Fligstein (Vanderbroeck, 2014), for example, has argued that recent studies challenge what is seen as Bourdieu's over-privileging of hierarchal relations within fields. For Fligstein and his colleagues, within fields: 'we see two possible social principles at work: hierarchy and cooperation or coalition… it is also possible for fields to be more cooperative or coalitional in nature' (Vanderbroeck, 2014: 113). Within the field, where

co-operative activity is important, what he identifies as 'social skill', the ability to get others to co-operate with you, clearly matters (Vanderbroeck, 2014: 114).

This social history of Ireland's music industry is full of evidence of the application of social skills, as well as co-operative and coalitional activity. While some of this was based on different principles from the global industry's 'property creation and appropriation' tactic, notably, it was not part of an industry contractual relationship, yet it did create opportunities for that global industry. The Irish artists signed by major labels had invariably previously drawn from and benefited from their local supportive environment. It is worthwhile recalling some of the co-operative and coalitional activity.

For instance, in the early 20th century, can we understand the career of John McCormack without appreciating the contribution of Charles Wagner? Even before this, can we comprehend the success of Thomas Moore without the participation of his Irish publisher, Thomas Power? When Ireland gained independence and began to exert more control over her media, it is clear that Delia Murphy's career would have been very different without the influence of her husband, the Director General of Radio Éireann, Dr T. J. Kiernan. As Ireland grappled with the ambiguities of neutrality during World War II, Bill Fuller provided income and leisure for Irish emigrant workers in Britain. While his wife and management client, Carmel Quinn, was an obvious beneficiary of his expanding ballroom empire, he also had an impact on the careers of countless acts, both Irish and international, who found opportunities in his venues.

As Fuller acquired venues in Ireland, Britain and North America and provided entertainment for the Irish emigrant population, a Guggenheim heiress, Diane Hamilton, became patron to The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem. Under the guidance of the American Jewish impresarios to whom Hamilton introduced them, the group became simultaneously emblematic of both 'new' and 'old' Ireland. That same new/old entertainment paradigm was evident with Philip Solomon's 1954 'Yankee Doodle Blarney' tour. Yet, if the revue may be interpreted as lowest-common-denominator Irish culture, it should be remembered that Solomon also provided the highly critically acclaimed Van Morrison with his entry to the professional music industry.

Of great consequence to the Irish Republic's music industry, Solomon and his wife Dorothy also guided acts, including The Bachelors and The Dubliners, to British chart

success. In addition to stewarding artists' careers, both Fuller and Solomon were responsible for presenting many international acts to the Irish market; by puncturing the porous cultural border of the country and allowing Irish audiences to witness overseas acts, they influenced Irish musicians. The role of promoters like Fuller and Solomon should be acknowledged in the history of the Irish music industry, particularly as it occurred against the background of expressed tension between outside and national culture. These Irish-born music industry figures had an impact on both domestic and overseas culture, although both eventually relocated from the country. While Diane Hamilton had acted as a patron to The Clancy Brothers, Garech Browne administered the same type of support to The Chieftains. Both groups enjoyed the capital provided by these benefactors, as well as the music industry education whereby group members were employed as label managers. Clearly, the music industry is shaped by non-commercial and even philanthropic activities.

In a world in which Irish acts emigrated to secure success, they frequently engaged overseas managers to guide their careers, as in the case of Val Doonican, Gilbert O'Sullivan, Dana and Mary O'Hara. Yet Irish industry personnel were also acquiring skills that were influential in shaping the international industries.

The continued and varied participation of the global Irish in the international music industry also indicates how the industry is not just shaped by large resource-rich firms, entrepreneurs and philanthropists, but also by amateurs and activists. Could Thin Lizzy have found eventual success without the early investment by Ted Carroll? Shortly after this, he was a key figure in the British industry's punk rock/DIY movement. While Ireland may have been on the periphery of the global industry, its pattern of emigration to the industry's major cores of England and the US meant that the Irish were close to and often participated in music industry activity in these cores.

For Ireland, it was significant that the London-based Chiswick Records entrepreneurs also provided a supportive industry network to the next generation of Irish acts and their home-grown managers, including Fachtna O'Kelly with the Boomtown Rats and Paul McGuinness with U2. The Boomtown Rats and U2 also received important support from a new generation of young entrepreneurs, both men and women who entered the industry in the late 1970s: the 'Ents Entrepreneurs'. The Ents Entrepreneurs were not only significant during their University and initial post-University activity. A number of them have continued to be leaders in the Irish entertainment industry. Dave Kavanagh, for example,

was a guiding force in the Celtic Heartbeat record label with Paul McGuinness, and also managed Clannad and the Celtic Woman to international chart success (McGreevy: 2012). Ian Wilson continued to promote Irish acts both domestically and internationally during his career at RTE. In addition to producing key radio shows which championed domestic acts, he was also instrumental in developing the pan-European alliances between broadcasters which provided opportunities for Irish acts. (Carroll: 2010, Butler: 2010). Elvera Butler continued to develop and market Irish acts on her Reekus Records label, and released product by Microdisney and Aslan before they signed to major international firms (www.reekus.com). Billy McGrath, in addition to managing music acts, subsequently became a television producer and was a prominent figure in the development of Ireland's stand-up comedy circuit. Bill Graham, who participated in organising music events in TCD during the early 1970s continued to champion developing Irish acts, as well as international artists, in *Hot Press* magazine until his death in 1996.

In addition, U2 benefited very significantly from the activities of Jackie Hayden, who countermanded instructions from CBS in London and instead encouraged the development of the local Irish popular music scene. His actions, once again, highlight why the music industry should be studied as an inter-personal co-operative activity in which individual decisions and actions have major impacts.

I want to draw some conclusions about globalisation and the Irish music industry in a later section. For now it should be noted that influential participants in the music industry are not limited to entrepreneurs solely focused on profit. This is evident in the actions of John Fisher, who ran the Dandelion Market gigs, Kieran Owens who managed the Virgin Prunes while still a Trinity student, and Ian Wilson who provided opportunities for young Irish bands at the national station, RTE, and appeared to take very literally the idea of a 'public service' broadcaster by promoting concerts and events for local acts.

The local scene was also the site of activity by Michael McCaughan and Colm Walsh, who used the co-operative student environment to encourage local acts. They clearly do not belong in a history of the music industry in which major firms' motives of 'property creation and appropriation' are the main concern. At the same time as their counter-cultural and counter-hegemonic activities, the Irish music scene of the era, 1977–1985, was the site of the growth of Denis Desmond's MCD Concerts firm and his early alliances with Jesuit priests.

How the Catholic clergy interfaced with pop music

One of the significant conclusions of Irish sociology, that clerical domination held back the development of an entrepreneurial culture, was articulated by Tom Inglis (1998):

> Such was the dominance of the Church in other social fields, besides the religious, that it was able to limit and control what people did and said when they met socially, engaged in politics and dealt in the marketplace (p. 65).

Inglis (1996: 128) also asserts that in the long term, the media eventually surpassed the Church as the country's moral authority. The music industry's social history demonstrates how, prior to its supposed ceding of moral power to the media, the Church engaged very productively with at least one element of the Irish media, the music industry. This alliance bolstered the Church's prestige in Ireland and arguably prolonged their primacy as the national moral authority. What was surprising was how deeply involved the local clergy were in local music making. This activity does not feature in previous histories, which focus on the consequences of clerical censorship, and its recognition is a contribution to existing knowledge. In addition, it will surprise many to learn that within the Church there was open and public opposition to the sacral national project even during the 1930s.

It can be seen that the Church engaged with the music industry in multiple ways and not just simply as an authoritarian force. This helps to make sense of the enduring influence of the Church in Ireland; its multi-faceted engagement allowed it to continue its involvement even as the music industry evolved. Through its participation in the music industry, it was even able to position itself simultaneously as 'modern' and 'progressive', while remaining faithful to its long historically consistent theological tradition. From Fr Breathnach's publication of the Irish song book, *Songs of the Gael*, to Bishop Clancy lending John McCormack the money to appear in Italy and Bishop Curley editing the singer's 'autobiography', even in the early 20th century the Church was active in the music scene and industry.

This involvement also included Fr Michéal's public dispute over dancing, endorsing foreign dancing as a suitable activity despite the Gaelic League's principals decrying how he could 'tolerate even the dregs of an insidious inter-nationalism and the alien pitfalls laid by the enemy within our gates' (*Irish Press*, 'Retrograde institution', 19 April 1935).

It also enabled the clergy to be active in the music field even when the sacral national position there was undermined by the public's appetite for 'non-Irish' forms of dancing. Here, in the 1940s, we can note the role of individual members of the clergy, for example Brother Bruno in Waterford, whom Val Doonican credits as teaching 'everything from cooking to nature study and from first aid to tree felling', adding: 'And he loved music: he organized the singsongs around the fire with the enthusiasm of a young lad' (Doonican, 1980: 55). Doonican also credited other local clerics with arranging extensive variety show concerts in the area.

These local variety shows combined many types of entertainment, including dancing and the singing of 'foreign' material, such as 'cowboy songs'. They appear to have been a major and historically under-theorised feature of local entertainment, allowing dancing to be repurposed from a participative activity to a spectacle to be watched. For a Church with 'a morbid preoccupation with occasions of sin in dance halls' (Lee, 1995: 158), this was surely an ideal solution to the *dance problem*.

This re-insertion of the clergy into the history of popular music and dancing entertainment during the 1940s allows one accepted theory of Irish modernity to be challenged. The idea that the showbands represented a progressive social force is surely questionable. Joe Dolan's biographer, for instance, while documenting how Dolan's first performances were arranged by the clergy (Casey, 2009: xi, 24), wrote how 'the parish priest could only look on in horror as ballrooms sprang up in parishes around the country to meet a new, insatiable demand for dancing and showbands' (Casey, 2009: 25–26). The evidence suggests that while some of the clergy were unimpressed with the showband genre, others actively participated in the musical incubation of the genre and many of its major acts.

From an entrepreneurial perspective, the social history indicates that the showband world was a breach with the past and did indeed challenge the Church, which had previously enjoyed the financial rewards of local music and entertainment. Yet the showband entertainment itself could hardly have been disapproved of by all members of the clergy. When the innovation is represented as *standing up on stage* and *putting on a show*, this was surely a far more pleasing outcome to the moral authorities than the intimacy of couples dancing together. In the context of a long-term music entertainment history, it does

not seem all that removed from the variety shows that were so prevalent just prior to the showbands.

In any event, it should be noted how the Church followed apparently diametrically opposed strategies towards the dancing industry and the record industry. Dancing was heavily policed while, despite objections to some popular genres, most notably jazz, no significant attempt appears to have been made to undermine, censor or ban foreign recording labels or the gramophone industry. This may be explained, at least in part, by the early gramophone industry's ability to make itself identifiably supportive of national power groups.

This leads to another contribution to the knowledge of Irish society from this social history. This is recognizing how, at the height of sacral nationalist rhetoric and activity, Britain's Gramophone Company was welcomed to Ireland by the Government in the mid-1930s. In a sense, the firm served as a handmaid to Irish power groups; it recorded and promoted speeches by Eamonn de Valera, as well as many releases of hymns which would have been highly palatable to the Irish Church. The Church also productively interacted with the major recording firms, in one notable case, Decca, by its stewardship of the Little Gaelic Singers during the 1950s.

Given the power and influence of the Church in Ireland, it is appropriate to recall that Bourdieu (2003) saw a close relationship between key fields of cultural production and the overall society-level field of power. He argued that this relationship, although of major significance, was neither simplistic nor mechanistic. As Johnson wrote in *The Field of Cultural Production* (2003):

> The full explanation of artistic works is to be found neither in the text itself, nor in some sort of determinant social structure. Rather, it is found in the history and the structure of the field itself, with its multiple components, and in *the relationship between that field and the field of power* (emphasis added) (p. 9).

This view, that the interlinked relationship between power groups and the cultural industries matters, is also supported by Stuart Hall's (2003) work on representation. He drew from both Gramsci and Foucault when making the case that simple mechanistic models fail to account for real life. He argued that 'hegemony is never permanent' and

wrote 'we have tended to think that power operates in a direct and brutally repressive fashion, dispensing with polite things like culture and knowledge' (Hall, 2003: 48).

Global versus local

The idea of hegemony being contested and never being permanent is relevant to how this social history has foregrounded the different values and activities of the local scene and the global music industry. It can be seen that the collaborative, nurturing scene, in one example, protected U2 in their early days from signing a publishing contract which represented the embodiment of the global industry's 'stable structures of authority and subordination, of property creation and appropriation'.

This is relevant because U2 and their business manager, Paul McGuinness, as well as the music media, frequently referred to the band's commercial activities. In particular, the band's ability to avoid the pitfalls of less savvy or fortunate artists has been a feature of their media coverage. *Time* magazine, for example, in a 1987 cover feature on the band wrote that:

> ...the year after its [The Joshua Tree] release, Island [Records], detecting seismic vibrations, renegotiated the band's contract with McGuinness. 'Now U2's in an absolutely unique position,' he reports. 'They own outright every song they ever wrote, and they always will' (Cocks, *Time*, 27 April 1987).

This outright ownership of their songs was probably what Bono was referring to when at the band's induction to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2005 he said:

> The biggest bodyguard of all – it's got to be our manager, Paul McGuinness, sitting right there. The reason why no one in this band has 'slave' scrawled on their face, Paul McGuinness, thank you very much (Bono, 'Rock and Roll Hall of Fame', 2005).

The idea of a musician with 'slave' scrawled on their face derived from the musician Prince's public contractual dispute with the Warner record label. Three years later, in 2008, McGuinness remarked:

> U2 own all their masters but these are licensed long-term to Universal [Records], with whom we enjoy an excellent relationship. With a couple of minor exceptions they [U2] also own all their copyrights, which are also licensed to Universal. U2 always understood that it would be pathetic to be good at the music and bad at the business, and have always been prepared to

> invest in their own future. We were never interested in joining that long, humiliating list of miserable artists who made lousy deals, got exploited and ended up broke and with no control over how their life's work was used, and no say in how their names and likenesses were bought and sold (McGuinness, 2008, http://digitalcowboys.com/2008/01/29/paul-mcguinness-u2s-manager-speaks-out-at-cannes/).

Here, McGuinness refers very explicitly to how the band avoided the worst possibilities of the 'stable structures of authority and subordination, of property creation and appropriation' of the music industry. Yet, if U2 were 'always prepared to invest in their own future', numerous members of the local music scene who had no stake in the band were also happy to help them.

It should also be noted that U2's eventual contract with Island Records was, according to the band's subsequent recollections, 'quite a poor record deal' (U2, 2006: 155). It was only when the band achieved commercial success that they were able to renegotiate their contract. As Bono recalled:

> But what Island could give us, which nobody else could, was the return of our copyrights, so that first renegotiation basically turned on their tearing up the publishing deal and giving us back our songs....the band knew by then how important it was to own their own songs (U2, 2006: 155–157).

Other bands that did not enjoy the same level of commercial success and were unable to have their publishing deals 'torn up' ended up permanently divorced from the complete ownership of their own songs. The U2 case highlights how the band's ownership of its songs resulted from the type of commercial success that allows for contracts to be renegotiated, rather than any desires by the centralised global industry to provide improved rights to artists.

When the varied activities of the supportive behind-the-scenes participants in the Dublin music scene are re-inserted into U2's success narrative, the band's history can be clearly seen in the context of the local music scene. This supportive local scene activity was of obvious benefit to the band. Much of this activity came from beyond the music industry's 'stable structures of authority and subordination' (Stahl, 2013: 3), and can be viewed as counter-hegemonic activity if the music industry market power is depicted as a core-to-periphery flow. While the band eventually were embraced by the global music industry, it

is tempting to question whether this could have been achieved without the local scene's supportive contribution to U2's initial development and sustenance.

As seen in this social history, much of the activity that took place in the Irish music scene, somewhat 'divorced' from the global industry, was creative and innovative. In light of William Baumol's conclusion that 'virtually all of the economic growth that has occurred since the eighteenth century is ultimately attributable to innovation' (Bessant and Tidd, 2010: 6), this is relevant to how the music industry should be theorised.

The centralised global music industry has no intrinsic orientation towards serving or improving the Irish music scene. The recent published industry statistics, where the vast majority of the annual local Top 20 best-selling albums are imported, are clear evidence of that (IFPI, 2014). This is understandable because the major firms have a responsibility to their shareholders, not to any local music scene. Yet they draw their products from those local scenes and a supportive social network where an artist can gain skills, education and cultural capital is generally a pre-requisite for entry to the music industry. In addition, the centralised music industry does not educate artists or prepare them for long-term careers; again that is not their function or responsibility. Instead, that global industry depends on this advance preparation being provided by family members, educators or other unpaid members of a supportive social network. A number of them have been identified in this social history.

By identifying some of figures and factors that influenced the development of the Irish music industry and scene, it can be seen that they played important roles. The re-insertion of these figures allows the industry to be better understood. As Howard Becker (2007) argued, accounts of cultural and artistic production frequently ignore these contributions. When the front-of-stage activities are removed:

> ...the remaining activities seem to them [the readers] a matter of craft, business acumen, or some other ability less rare, less characteristic of art, less necessary to the work's success, less worthy of respect (Becker, 2007:17).

Clearly, in the Irish case, a lot of this activity contributed towards artistic success and is worthy of respect. The co-operative activity of the scene can not only support the global

industry by providing its inputs, it can also challenge its contractually based industry activities by providing an alternative. In Ireland, historically a local challenge to this industry has come from amateurs, activists and entrepreneurs. The continued ability of Ireland to produce successful acts, whether artistically or commercially, may ultimately depend on these actors rather than the dominant centralised music industry.

Dave Laing (2008) concluded, with respect to the music scenes of developing countries, 'In the longer term, the consensus view amongst national and international agencies is that the potential for music exports can best be achieved through support for a more effective domestic infrastructure' (p. 230). I suggest, based on my analysis of the Irish music industry, that this may be an applicable approach for the music industry in some *developed* countries also. The domestic infrastructure of any domestic industry and scene must be comprehended if we are to fully understand why some acts find success. Reinserting behind-the-scenes activities and actors can facilitate this.

In Ireland, that infrastructure has historically been – and continues to be – developed by the productivity of amateurs as well as professionals, activists who eschew capitalism as well as profit-driven entrepreneurs, women as well as men, employees countermanding orders from their MNC bosses as well as those obsequious to them, those erecting cultural borders as well as those smashing them, creative public servants as well as creative and conservative clerics.

In light of the many actors with not-for-profit motives who were active between 1920 and 1985 it is worth revisiting Chris Morash's conclusion about 1985. He indicated that by then Ireland could use new media technology to ameliorate its peripheral position in the global entertainment industry (2010: 199). In addition, by 1985 U2 had three certified million selling albums in the US (RIAA.com). It could have been assumed that this would lead to large market share domestically for local acts and even labels. Yet, as the music industry's statistics (IFPI 2012, 2014) indicate, this has not happened.

At the same time as the global music firms have dominated the Irish market, the music industry itself has represented its recent history as a period of turmoil; as Jim Rogers (2013, 5) has argued ''crisis' is a concept that has become embedded in discourse around the music industry since the 1990s'. In this context, is tempting to speculate whether transformational innovation and enterprise should be encouraged at the local and 'scene'

level to overcome Ireland's dependence on a centralised global industry 'in crisis'. Historically, as this thesis has demonstrated, in the Irish case, innovation has frequently come from the margins of the global industry.

Following Stuart Hall's (2003) idea that hegemony rather than domination is a better way to represent how power functions, it can be seen that the market position of the major firms represents hegemony rather than domination. Thus the major firm's position of power is the product of negotiation and can be 'contested, shifted or reformed' (2003: 348). This is relevant to Ireland. If the Irish music industry is judged solely on industry statistics, it appears that the major global firms maintain a dominant position in that industry. Yet this social history indicates that between 1910 and 1985 a surprising array of participants in the Irish music scene, generally individuals outside of the major firm's sphere of influence have made substantial contributions to its development. Some of this activity clearly 'contested, shifted or reformed' the industry.

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Member of Square Meal, the Fountainhead.

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Cashman, Paul, recorded interview with author, 23 August 2010
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Proprietor of rehearsal rooms, recording artist.

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Manager of the Intoxicating Rhythm Section (I.R.S.), graphic designer.