As a people we Irish have always looked upon music in much the same way as the philosophers of Ancient Greece. Throughout the Middle Ages we shared with the rest of Europe certain Greek ideas: a conception of music as consisting essentially of pure, unencumbered melodic line; and the idea of melody intimately linked with words, especially in matters of rhythm and metre.

It should not, then, surprise us to find that the measures and rhythms of Irish music are intimately connected with the metres and rhythms of Gaelic poetry. As far back as our national records go, music and poetry have always been associated."The chief poet in a king's household," we are told," sat as an honoured guest at his master's table while his poetry was recited, to the accompaniment of a harp, by an official known as a reacaire."

Even as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Gaelic poetry was commonly declaimed to the accompaniment of a harp. We have ample testimony of this fact, including the words of a very unfriendly Elizabethan official, Thomas Smyth, who in describing the solemn chanting of a Gaelic poem says:

> Now comes the rimer that made the rime, with his rakry (reacaire). The rakry is he that shall utter the rime; and the rimer himself sits with the captain, very proudly. He brings with him also his harper, who plays all the while that the rakry sings the rime.

An Irish poet, Flann Mac Eoghain Mhic Craith (circa 1590) says of a poem he has written, that it is a composition:

> Bhias da h-aithris ag lucht aitis
> ar feadh faithche feorghloine
> 's bhias 'na sólás in gach comhdháil
> le gléas comhlán ceolchruite.
>
> that will be often recited by merry people
> on many a shining glassy sward
> and will be a solace in every gathering
> accompanied by equal measure from a harp.

In the Clanrickard Memoirs (printed in London in 1722) we get a clearer picture of this performance:

> The Action and Pronunciation of the Poem in the Presence ....of the principle Person it related to was performed with a great deal of Ceremony, in a Consort of Vocal and Instrumental Musick. The poet himself said nothing but directed and took care that everybody else did his part right. The Bards having first had the poem from him, got it well by heart, and now pronounced it orderly,

> keeping even pace with a Harp, touch'd upon that Occasion; no other musical instrument being allowed of for the said purpose than this alone.

It is evident that such music as was played by Irish harpers must have been determined as to measure by the length of the poet's lines, otherwise cooperation between poet and musician would have been impossible. "The lonely singer in the fields does not need, or want or stand a rational countable rhythm; but an accompanied singer requires a rhythmical principle to regulate the partnership." The metrical and rhythmical principle in Ireland was supplied by the poet, and, if we may use traditional practice as evidence, the accompaniment could have been melodic. Thomas Connellan, who was born about 1640, was the first harper whose music has come down to us.He was both poet and musician and he accompanied his singing melodically on the harp.We have no reason to believe that the music he played differed materially from the type of music played by his contemporaries to accompany the classical Irish metres which were flourishing at the time.As a matter of fact, Carolan, who followed Connellan, wrote music in the metre called Rinn Árd and sang the classic verses to his own melodic accompaniment. Considering the traditional fiddler's capacity for multiplying parts in our dance tunes I see no reason why an interesting and varied melodic accompaniment could not have been sustained by an efficient harper for the whole of the longest Bardic poem ever written - especially if the Classic poet's rhythms varied from stanza to stanza, and they did.

A musical beat underlies all our poetry, whether Classical or popular. Many of our best dance tunes are simply quick-tempo versions of music written to poetic metres. Slow down the tempo of "The Rose Tree"(ref.) and try these words to the air:

Ba ghlé ba gheal ba ghleoite í
Ba hóg í is do b'oilte ard,
Ba shéimh ba shlachtmhar seolta í
Ba shnódh-mhín ba shnoighte sámh.
Ba bhéasach blasta beodha í
Ba bheol-bhinn dar linne an bháb,
Ba mhaordha maiseach mórdha í
Ba mhodhmhail míonla míochair mnámhail.

Now divide that verse into two parts of four lines each and count the syllables in each line, remembering to elide the vowels where you must. You will see that the verses contain the first requirements of the Classical metre called Rannaíocht Mhór - lines consisting of seven syllables and ending in a mono-syllable.

Representing unaccented syllables with an asterisk (+) and accented syllables with an accent (/), a prosodist, used to dealing with Classical poetry and uninhibited by a knowledge of differential musical durations, would write out the pattern of the verse like this:

+ / + / + / / } 4
+ / / + / + / }

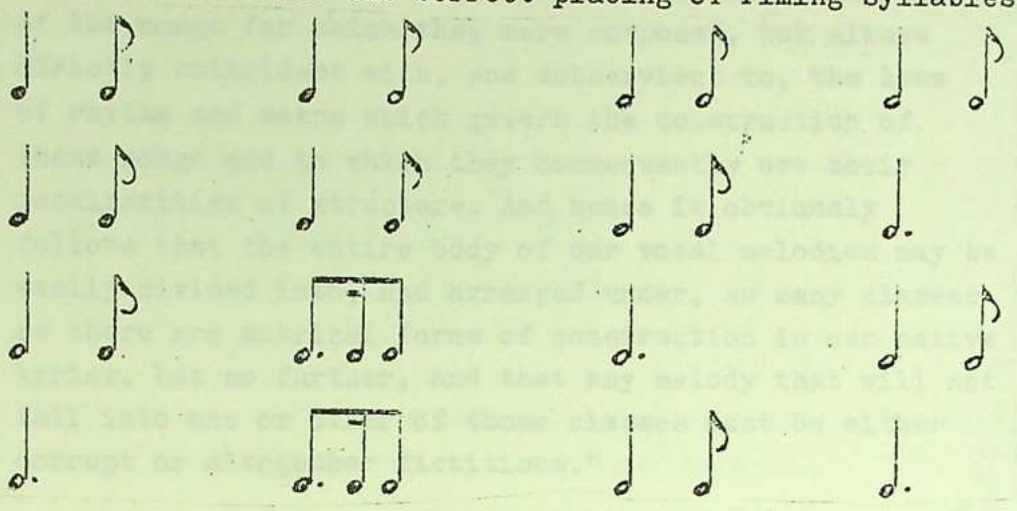
The music (which shows comparative durations) is surely a better guide to the rhythmic pattern of the verse:

Now count the beats in each line and you will find sixteen in your first verse and sixteen in your second. The whole thing has the same shape as the tune and turn of a reel, but whereas a musician might mark the underlying beat with his foot (for his own guidance), the poet marks them (for your benefit and mine) by a skillful arrangement of riming syllables differing in duration. Stress is not an important part either of the poetry or the playing of the music. The rhythmical texture formed by the poet's placing of assonances is in as little need of a tonic accent as the constituent phrases of a double reel.

Now, if you're a traditional musician at all, you should be able to beat sixteen with your foot while saying this:

Duibhe id	mhailghibh	gríos id	gruadhaibh
gurma id	rosgaibh	réidhe it	fholt
gaoth ag	iomramh do	chúil	chraobhaigh
úidh	fionnbhan an	aonaigh	ort.

And that is a verse from one of oldest Classical metres, Séadna Think of it speeded up into a jig, and notice especially the sophisticated rhythm of the last two lines where the poet's whole effort went into the correct placing of riming syllables:



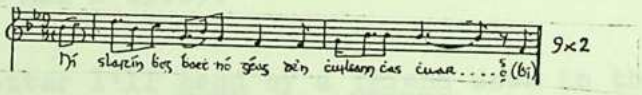
If the speeding up of even one verse of Classical poetry can result in a jig rhythm or in the rhythm of a reel, then I for one believe that, by working back from traditional dance rhythms known to have been used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we can discover the underlying musico-metrical principles of bardic poetry. Such rhythmical principles, in my opinion, form a link between the poetry of the Schools and the much-decried sráid-éigse (vulgar poetry).Both types of poetry combine rhythm-by-stress and rhythm-by-length (including measured silences) and by these very characteristics reveal their intimate relation to the art of music. The writers of our popular poetry made their verses to the lie of popular melodies and dance tunes, but the composers of our Classical verse, who wrote for instrumental accompaniment in complicated rhythms, must have been a race of musician-poets. For, as W.P.Ker has remarked: "The art of music cannot be improvised and poets who write for music, like Pindar in Greece, have to learn the technicalities of music, with which the technicalities of metre are closely connected."

In Irish music this close connection was first observed by George Petrie in his Ancient Music of Ireland (1855):

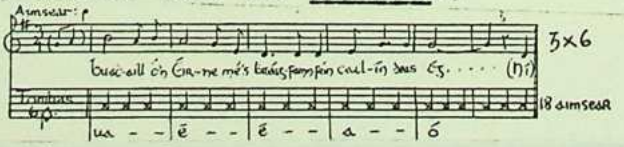
> "...these airs are not, like so many modern melodies, mere ad libitum arrangements of tones, unshackled by a rigid obedience to metrical laws, they are an arrangement of tones, in a general way expressive of the sentiments of the songs for which they were composed, but always strictly coincident with, and subservient to, the laws of rhythm and metre which govern the construction of these songs and to which they consequently owe their peculiarities of structure. And hence it obviously follows that the entire body of our vocal melodies may be easily divided into, and arranged under, as many classes as there are metrical forms of construction in our native lyrics, but no further, and that any melody that will not fall into one or other of those classes must be either corrupt or altogether fictitious."

Petrie might have added that our present corpus of traditional melody contains many rhythmical patterns derived from dance music and not originally from indigenous poetical metres, but that is another aspect of our historical musical development which we shall consider later.

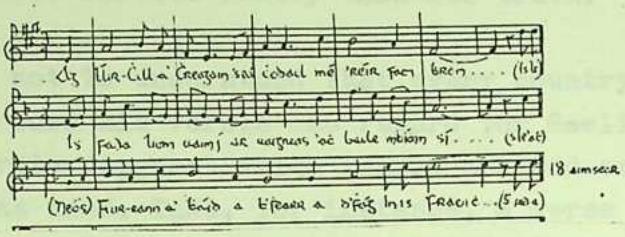
The metre known as Amhránaíocht, a stanza with five stresses in each line, forms the basis of some of our most characteristic vocal melodies. It consists of five isochronous periods in words, and is contained in eighteen musical times which may be written in two bars of 9/8 time or six bars of 3/4 time.Here is the first line of a song called An Bata Dubh Droighin (The Blackthorn Stick) published by Petrie in 1855:



And here is the first line of another version of the same tune, recorded by myself in Donegal in 1940. It is called Buachaill ón Éirne (The Boy from the Erne) and I have written it in 3/4 time, and shown in the measure below how the rhythm is regulated by the placing of poetical assonances in the verse. (The word Aimsear is the Gaelic equivalent of Gk. Chronos and Lat. Tempus. Tomhas is the Gaelic word for Measure.)



Within this measure are many various rhythms. Here, for instance, are the first lines of three songs which I collected in Donegal:



This, by the way, is also the musical metre with which Thomas Moore grappled when he wrote, to a wordless tune:

> At the mid-hour of night when stars are weeping I fly....

If he had known the Irish language he would surely have placed his internal assonances more skillfully in a line something like this:

> At the mid-hour of night by the light of the stars I fly.....

Now folk poets of his time writing in the English language with the sound of Gaelic melody in their heads and the ring of Gaelic metrics in their ears, were placing their internal rimes just in the right place. Take, for instance, this verse from an English language adaptation of Bean an Fhir Rua (The Red-haired Man's Wife):

> A letter I'll send by a friend down to the sea shore
> To let her understand I'm the man that does her adore
> And of she'd but l(e)ave that slave I'd forfeit my life
> She'd live like a lady and ne'er be the Red-haired Man's Wife.

Nowadays we would accept that kind of verse as genuine folk-verse, and it is; but in the nineteenth century, Gaelic speakers

were highly critical of it. William Carleton, the great Tyrone novelist, records that his mother, when asked to sing the English version of Bean an Fhir Rua, said: "I'll sing it for you, but the English words and the air are like a quarrelling man and wife - the Irish melts into the tune but the English doesn't." - "An expression," says Carleton, "scarcely less remarkable for its beauty than its truth."

One is not to understand that every country poet using an Irish air to form his verses had regard for Gaelic metrics.Many of them wrote doggerel which can be scanned only by reference to the tune used. Take, for instance, a verse from Dunlavin Green, the tune of which accomodates Amhránaíocht. Divided into isochronous music-periods, the words may be given a semblance of metrical construction:

> In the/year of one/thousand seven/hundred and/ninety/eight
> A/sorrowful/tale the/truth unto/you I'll re/late
> Of/thirty six/heroes to the/world were/left to be/seen
> By a/false inform/ation were/slain on Dun/lavin/Green.

Truly, as Carleton's mother remarked, the words and the air are like a quarrelling man and wife:

Whatever his faults, poor Tom Moore never wrote such doggerel to his Irish Melodies (1808-1834).But in all his adaptations

of English words to Irish music, he never once hit upon the form of Gaelic verse commonly imitated by the "illiterate peasantry" of his time writing in English. It is known in English as "tail-rime", in French as "rime couee", and in Irish as "ochtfhoclach". Here is a verse collected by myself in 1955, sung to the tune of Youghal Harbour, and correspodning in rime and, generally, in syllabic count, to the Middle Irish metre called Ochtfhoclach bec:

From sweet Dungannon
to Ballyshannon,
from Cullyhanna
to old Arboe
I've roved and rambled
caroused and gambled
where songs did thunder
and whiskey flow.
It's light and airy
I've tramped through Derry
and to Portaferry
in the County Down
but in all my rakings
and undertakings
I met no equal
to sweet Omagh town.

I have written the verse above in sixteen short lines consisting of four parts. Ideally each part has three lines of five syllables and one line of four syllables, but musical flexibility has caused a hypermetrical syllable in parts three and four. The five-syllable lines end in riming disyllables; lines four and eight rime with each other, as do lines twelve and sixteen. Prosodists give all this information in the formula:

Ochtfhoclach bec (5^2 5^2 5^2 4^1, 5^2 5^2 5^2 4^1)

When printed with the music, of which they are the form, verses of this kind are written in eight long lines as, for instance, this verse from Preab san Ól:

Is iomaí slí sin a bíos ag daoine
ag cruinniú píosaí 's ag déanamh stóir
's a laghad a smaoiníos ar ghiorra an tsaoil seo
go mbeidh siad sínte faoi leic go fóill.
Má's tiarna tíre, diúc ná rí thú
Ní chuirfear pingin leat 's tú 'gabhail faoin bhfód;
Mar sin 's dá bhrí sin níl beart níos críonna
ná bheith go síorraí 'cur preab san ól.

A verse from The Deserter's Meditation by John Philpot Curran (1750-1817) seems to echo not only the metre but the sentiment of Preab san Ól, especially in the last four lines:

But as in wailing
there's nought availing,
and death unfailing
will strike the blow,
then for that reason,
and for a season,
let us be merry
before we go.

This verse structure corresponds exactly to a type of tune called a "narrative air" by Petrie. Quite a number of these tunes is given in Old Irish Folk Music and Songs by P.W. Joyce, who also gives in his Preface an analysis and description of their bar structure (Preface pp.xi - xiii).

Another musical structure characteristic of our songs is related to the versification called Ochtfhoclach Mór ($6^2\ 6^2\ 6^2\ 5^1$, $6^2\ 6^2\ 6^2\ 5^1$.) Allowing for the odd hypermetrical syllable in the singing, this metre occurs in songs like Seán Ó Duibhir an Ghleanna:

Ar m'éirí dhom ar maidin
grian an tsamhraidh 'taithneamh,
chuala an uaill dá casadh
is ceol binn na n-éan.
Bric is míolta gearra
creabhair na ngoba fada
fuaim ag an macalla
is lámhach gunnaí tréan.

In English we have The Boys of Mullaghbawn, written by Joyce in stanzas of four long lines (OIFMS p 206), but quite obviously belonging to this metrical type. I have put all hypermetrical syllables in brackets:

(On a) Monday morning early (as my) wand'ring steps did lade me
(Down) by a farmer's station (of) meadow and green lawn
(I) heard great lamentation (that the) wee birds they were making
(Saying:"We'll) have no more engagements with the Boys of Mullaghbawn.

It should come as no surprise that the melodies of Seán Ó Duibhir an Ghleanna and The Boys of Mullaghbawn are interchangeable. Equivalence in poetic metre between one song and another has always been the criterion for even "illiterate" Irish people in finding an air for words presented to them without music. This explains why we sometimes find the same set of words sung to completely different airs in different parts of the country. A farmer at a fair buying a ballad-sheet in the old days felt under no obligation to pick up the tune actually sung by the ballad-monger. As one of these countrymen is alleged to have said: "I've got the words now. I can go to the mountains for the air."

He could also have gone to a dance at the crossroads where many a poet picked up a rhythmic pattern for his verse.There they found words for jigs in 6/8 time, for slip and hop jigs in 9/8 time and reels in 4/4. One thinks immediately of songs like Slán agus Beannacht le buaireamh an tsaoil, The Rocky Road to Dublin, Peigín Leitir Móir and hundreds of others. Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin earned himself the title of Gaelic Ireland's greatest metrist by writing in involved metres answering to the tunes of what we now call Set Dances.

Finally, we should notice that, by and large, our long airs and dance tunes are built either on the pattern AABA or ABBA, where the letter A and B represent recurring passages in the music. The combination AABA, called the "sonata form" by some people, seems to be the characteristic Irish structural

type. Among the many songs in this group, we find Coinleach Ghlas an Fhomhair, An Bunnán Buí, An Droighneán Donn and Anach Cuan. Typical songs of the ABBA type are Fáinne Geal an Lae and Róisín Dubh.

[illegible]

Now Irish music is based not only on the metres and rhythms of Gaelic poetry, but also on the scales within the compass of our national instrument, the harp. The Irish Harp, once it was tuned, was fixed and unalterable in pitch.(The pitch-changing pedal, as we know it today, was unknown until 1720, when Hachbrucker of Bavaria first introduced.) The harpers' scales were therefore based on the only system possible on their instrument, and that was the Modal System.

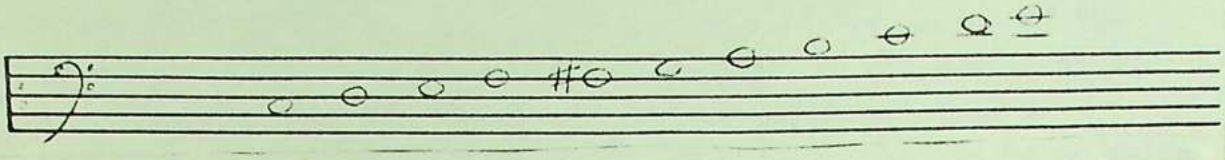
The scales or modes of Irish music are six in number.Each extends from its ground tone to its octave and includes all fully qualified notes but leaves out those due to casual alteration or modulation.Their character is determined simply by the way the tones are disposed in them.

Now, since re-tuning was the only way a player could change a series of modes (say three, on a small instrument) it seems obvious that such a serial change involved a change of pitch. That is why I like to think of our Irish scales in two sets of three, involving a minimum change of pitch:

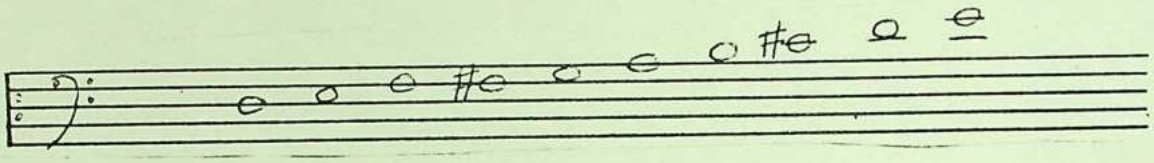
Do Mode	C D E F G A B C'
Re Mode	D E F G A B C'D'
Mè Mode	E F G A B C'D'E'
Fa Mode	C D E F♯ G A B C'
Sol Mode	D E F♯ G A B C'D'
La Mode	E F♯ G A B C'D'E'

From the stringing of the Irish Harp, as recorded in Bunting's 1840 edition of Ancient Music of Ireland we can see how these modal changes were possibly effected. The harp contained two G strings in the Tenor. If we assume that one of these G strings was tunable down to F♯ , then, on a small harp of eleven strings, all the modes listed above were playable. Moreover the playing of some old Irish tunes written in an eight note scale would be feasible. Here are the modes:

Through F natural: a Do, Re and Mi Mode from C,do.
Through F sharp: a Fa, Sol and La Mode from G,do.



Judging from Bunting's reference (AIM,1840,p.23) to the use of Third-Space Treble C, we can safely assume that this sharpening occurred originally in the formation of modes in the Tenor. Harpers were thus provided, by tuning, with a Do Mode and a Re Mode from D,do.From the same D as starter, they had already a Sol Mode and a La Mode from G,do.



Most of the tunes we hear today are in one or other of the four modes, Sol, La, Do, Re. The Mi mode is very rare and tunes in the Fa mode are far from common.

It is significant, in regard to the pitch of the modes as outlined above, that the old harpers called Treble D the "string of melody" and that traditional pipers, fluters and whistlers even today refer to the bottom note of these instruments as "D", irrespective of the pitch.

From the inherent differences of pitch and tone-relationships in these Modes, the Irish, again like the Greeks and Indians and other ancient peoples, classified their music according to the effects it was alleged to produce. It was, they said, of three types: Goltraige, Gentraige and Suantraige - words which are generally translated as Sad Music, Joyful Music and Sleep Music. Personally I have never heard of any Irish word traige, meaning music. Perhaps it had a meaning something like the Hindu word raga which is a word for a general melodic type or pattern associated with specific rhythms and certain tetrachord genera.

Now, how are you to recognise what mode a song-air is written in?If you are good at tonic solfa you should recognise it, generally, by the sound of the last note in the tune - if the air ends on La, the air is in the La Mode; if it ends in Re it is in the Re Mode and so on. If you are presented with a transcription of an air, you must remember to use the tonic solfa name of the last note to denote the scale (or "mode"), irrespective of the pitch in which the tune is written. Here are six tunes, each written in one of the six modes mentioned:

You will notice that in each tune given above, all the notes proper to its particular mode occur. In some songs, however, either one or both of the modal semitones are missing. Tunes lacking both semitones are called pentatonic (five tone) tunes; those deficient in one tone are said to be hexatonic (six tone).

Here is a pentatonic tune written in the Lah Mode from A,do:

(Airdí Cuan).

This next tune, which is hexatonic, is written in the Lah Mode from C,do:

(An Cóisire).

Airdi Cuan above could have been written with a two-sharp signature and presented rather dubiously as being in the Mi Mode from D Doh. Similarly An Cóisire could have been written with a one-sharp signature and presented more confidently as a tune in the Re Mode from G. This ambiguity of mode is inherent in all pentatonic and hexatonic airs.

Sometimes we find an air containing a modulation from one mode to another - where, for instance, in a tune of form ABBA, the A strains are in the Soh Mode and the B strains are in the Doh Mode:

(An Goirtín Eornán)

And now having considered pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic tunes we must look at a typically Irish tune in an eight-note scale (octatonic?) Such a scale, you may remember, I have shown to have been playable on the modally-tuned Irish harp. Here is a tune containing both the seventh and the flattened seventh of its scale:

(To Cashel I'm going)

Listening to that last echo of the tuning of the Irish Harp, we may be reminded that Cultivated Irish Music used the same kind of musical system as served the whole of European Music, even art music, until the beginning of the seventeenth century. The names of Irish monks on the continent are very intimately associated with the earliest developments of ecclesiastical music there. "All musical persons," says Grattan Flood, "have read of the world-renowned Monastery of St Gall in Switzerland, but the fact is too often ignored that its foundation in the year 612 was the work of the Irish saint, Cellach, whose name has been Latinised Gallus or Gall. This great Irishman, a student of Bangor Co Down, the friend and

disciple of St Columbanus, died on October 16th, 646, and at his demise the fame of his musical school became known far and near." Saint Maoldubh, the founder of Malmesbury, in England, is best known as the tutor of St Aldhelm who was the first Englishman to refer to neumes - and anyone who has heard Sál Óg Rua will realise the significance of the fact. Dungal, an Irish monk, founded a great school at Pavia, and on his death at Bobbio, in 834, bequeathed among other books three Antiphonaries which are still preserved at Milan. In 870 St Moengal (Marcellus) was appointed headmaster of the music school of St Gall's and under his direction it became the wonder and delight of Europe. His successor was another Irishman, Tuathal, latinised Tutilo, and he was known as a skilled performer on the cruit and psaltery.Two of his most famous compositions, Hodie Cantandus and Omnipotens Genitor, betray, I am told, all the characteristics of Irish Music.

This period of European music, called the Plain-Song period, lasted from the beginning of Christian times until the end of the thirteenth century. During this time the singing was unisonal, was in the modes and had no instrumental accompaniment. But from the ninth century onwards it was challenged by the rise of Polyphony in which the music was in parts, and was also in the modes. Now the polyphonic practices of the 9th and 10th centuries are known to us, not through practical monuments but through theoretical writings. The earliest of these, Musica Euchiriadis, is now widely held to have been the work of an Irishman.

When the Normans came to Ireland, in the twelfth century, their Chronicler, Giraldus Cambrensis, found nothing in thenative music dissimilar from the music he had heard all his days on the Continent, except, as he noted, that Irish harpers were incomparably more skillful than any he had ever heard.

So, patronised by the native chiefs, practised even by the Norman conquerors, and encouraged by the Church, our native music flourished until the beginning of the seventeenth century. By that time, Polyphonic music on the continent had been brought to its highest point of perfection by Palestrina and Vittoria and men were already, as Sir Richard Terry has put it, "casting about for new modes of expression." Gaelic Ireland had no part in this new era, and for very good historical reasons.

Just at the time when music in Europe was feeling its way out of the modes, Irish music was outlawed because of the part taken by harpers, pipers and poets in the last upsurge of Gaelic Ireland against the English. The defeat of the Irish at the Battle of Kinsale in 1601 was a catastrophe for a national aristocratic order of society which, until that time, had encouraged music by an intricate system of patronage. In 1603 a proclamation was issued by the Lord President of Munster for the extermination by martial law of "all manner of bards, harpers etc.," and within ten days of it, Queen Elizabeth herself ordered Lord Barrymore "to hang the harpers wherever found".

All through the seventeenth century they were proscribed and banned, hunted and persecuted. Under Cromwell, in 1654, all harpers, pipers and wandering musicians had to obtain letters from the magistrate of the district they hailed from, before being allowed to travel through the country, and this passport contained full details as to age, stature, beard, colour of hair and condition of life of the recipient. All musical instruments savouring of popery were ruthlessly destroyed, so that Archdeacon Lynch, a contemporary writer, was of the opinion that within a short time scarce a single harp would be left in Ireland.

The condition of the harpers became worse and worse, the tide of anglicisation swept on from Dublin and after the Defeat of Limerick our Irish musicians were but interesting relics of defeated greatness, depending for their livelihood on the charity of their down-trodden fellows or, what was worse, on the condescension and patronage of their conquerors. As the Irish social order gradually disintegrated the harpers and the Court poets joined the pipers and the poets of the people in the enforced social uniformity consequent on undiscriminating oppression. These poets and their successors are responsible for the indubitable and characteristic literary flavour of a great number of the songs that have been transmitted orally to the present generation.

The musicians, however, continued to make their music in the only way known to them, that is, in the modes which sounded "quaint", "barbaric" and "very ancient" to the cultivated ears of the eighteenth century English lords. For Europe, meanwhile, had moved far away from

the modes. Polyphony, as I have said, gave way in the seventeenth century to new forms of expression. To quote Sir Richard Terry again:

> The fondness for cadences with a leading note had become universal and from this small beginning came the whole system of our modern tonality. The fascination of this new progression gradually undermined the practice of the modes and drove composers - empirically and blindly, no doubt, but none the less surely - in the direction of keys. By the eighteenth century modal music was no longer practised (in Europe). The major and minor keys had been discovered and established, and the full flood-tide of modern music had begun.

Thus far Terry.

By this time in Ireland relaxed laws allowed the "assembly" of harpers at certain places, and it so happened that just when the system of music based on the major and minor keys had come to its greatest in Mozart and Beethoven, Edward Bunting, who had been trained in that system, was asked by the organisers of a harpers' assembly (called the "Belfast Harp Festival") in 1792, to take down the airs played by the last of the Irish harpers.

The new system was c onfronted with the old, the modes sounded like something from an ancient age to a man trained to think in keys. The inevitable happened. In his transcriptions, Bunting forced modal airs into major and minor keys so as to accomodate them to the contemporary theory of harmonic accompaniment. That he did not record exactly what he heard is also evident from the number of airs written by him in keys which the harpers could not have used.

The harps used by these people had, as a rule, thirty strings, which is exactly the number indicated by the string-holes of the fifteenth-century harp in Trinity College, Dublin. The compass of their instrument was from C below the bass clef to D above the treble clef. The method of tuning was by octaves and fifths, generally in the scale of G, but by alteration of one string a semitone(effected by means of a tuning hammer) the scale might be changed to C. For special tunes C in the treble clef was sometimes sharpened and tuned to F sharp(a fifth) but there is no evidence of their ever having

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One of the competitors at the Belfast Harp Festival, Denis Hempson, played the harp with long crooked nails in the traditional manner, catching the string between the flesh and the nail; not like the other harpers who pulled it by the fleshy part of the finger alone. All the harpers played the treble with the left hand and the bass with the right. There seems to have been much doubling of the melodic line between octaves. In playing chords, they struck the upper note first. Owing to excessive vibration, each string had to be dampened before the next was struck, involving an exacting technique in the case of fast-moving pieces.

All the harpers made use of terms in the Irish Language designating the several notes of the instruments and their various combinations, shapes, ornaments and moods. Their system of music making was obviously indigenous because there is no correspondence whatever between their terminology and that of other European Nations. A complete account of this terminology was procured by Bunting ~~from the most distinguished harper who played at Belfast~~, who ~~and he~~ printed it in the Preface to his Ancient Music of Ireland (1840).

His interest in Gaelic Terminology did not, unfortunately, lead him to print the Irish words to the Harpers' airs, even apart from the music. In subsequent journeys through the country in search of music he caused the Irish words of many of the airs he collected to be taken down by a scribe, but never in all his work did the Irish words appear with the tunes of which they were the form.

taken the next step towards an overall tuning in D. Though their preference in pitch was in G, they nevertheless did not think in keys. Their thinking was modal and the pitch of their modes altered from G through C to D major. Bunting, being a man of his time, must be forgiven for not understanding it.

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At the end of the eighteenth century, and all through the nineteenth, the culture of the native Irish seemed to be doomed. Good men who loved the music and the language of the people could only think in terms of the preservation of "remains". This was the outlook of ~~Edward~~ Bunting (1773 - 1843), George Patrie (1789 - 1866) and P.W. Joyce (1827 - 1914). Petrie collaborated with Bunting and Joyce worked with Petrie and so formed, throughout the nineteenth century, a continuous chain of collectors imbued with the antiquarian spirit. Petrie may speak for all of them. He conceived it as a duty, he said:

> ....to preserve the native melodies, because of a deep sense of their beauty, a strong sense of their archaeological interest and a desire to aid in the preservation of remains so honourable to the national character of the country."

Look at the titles of the volumes they issued:

Bunting:	General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music(1796
	A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland (1809)
	Ancient Music of Ireland (1840)
Petrie:	Ancient Music of Ireland (1855)
Joyce:	Ancient Irish Music(1873)

The use of the word "Ancient" in connection with Irish music persisted until Joyce issued Irish Music and Song (1887) in which he printed words in the Irish language, set by himself in a kind of surgical operation to Irish airs. A faint echo of the words "Ancient" occurs in the title of his most important work Old Irish Folk Music and Song. However, the use of the in-term "Folk Music" did suggest that Irish traditional music was alive among the people though in danger, perhaps of death from senility.

All during the nineteenth century, while these men were editing and collating manuscripts and often noting them in an unorganised and unskillful manner, the Irish country people were still singing and

fiddling and piping away. The tradition was being held intact. But collectors never took down Gaelic words and music together in the field, and English language texts, when used at all, were censored or bowdlerised or completely changed. The English of the "peasantry" was corrupt, their Irish was a "dead" language. Neither was likely to appeal to the cultivated tastes of a polite society. Wordless transcript ons were the rule, and these led, in their turn, to the production of an artificial form of Irish folksong based on inaccurate transcriptions and provided with verse of varying degrees of sentimentality from poets writing in English. Chief among these was Thomas Moore, who in his Irish Melodies (1808 - 1834) sometimes altered the already faulty original transcript to suit his own verses. His melodies were far removed from the elemental beauty of the traditional singing in the Irish language, which even in his day was the predominant vernacular in the whole western half of the country. Moore's songs were nostalgic, pseudo-historical, whimsical, sentimental productions suited to the drawing-rooms of the nineteenth century and were in striking contrast to the living Gaelic love-songs, lullabies, aislingí (vision poems), laments, drinking songs, hymns and worksongs of the Irish speaking people.

Later on, other poets more in touch with the people of the country - poets like Samuel Lover, Samuel Ferguson, Alfred Percival Graves - used the tunes in the printed collections to produce what I may call Ersatz Irish songs - songs for an elite coterie and never assimilated into the repertory of folk-singers. Here is one, known all over the world, written by Samuel Ferguson to a tune taken from the Petrie Collection.

(The lark in the clear air)

So much for songs written in English by sophisticated poets for sophisticated audiences. As for songs written in English by the Irish country folk themselves, it must be admitted that they are of much less merit than the Gaelic songs. They represent the attempt of people to express themselves in a language they knew imperfectly and had only recently acquired. Indeed some of their songs reflect the bilingual period in the historical process of elimination of the Irish language. These songs are technically known as macaronic. Some of them are composed with half-lines and lines alternating in

Irish and English, like:

One day for recreation
Is gan éinne beo i m' chuideachta
I spied a charming fair one
Ina haonar is í i siopa istigh.
She was singing like an angel
Is mé ag éisteacht lena binneghuth.
I whispered soft and aisy:
"Ba bhreá liom bheith ag iomaí leat."

or:

One morning in June agus mé ag dul ag spaisteoireacht
casadh liom cailín is ba ró-dheas a gnaoi,
she was so handsome gur thit mé i ngrá léi.
is d'fhág sí an arraing trí cheartlár mo chroí.
I axed her her name no cad é an ruaig bheannaithe
a chas ins an áit thú, a ghrá gheal mo chroí?
My heart it will break if you don't come along with me,
slán agus beannacht le buaireamh an tsaoil.

Other songs contain complete verses alternating in Irish and English, the English verse being more often than not a translation or adaptation of the preceding verse in Irish:

(Tá mo chleamhnas déanta)