THE FIDDLE MUSIC OF CONNIE O’CONNELL

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This is a study of an Irish traditional fiddle-player, Connie O'Connell, from Cill na Martra, Co. Cork. Connie has been strongly influenced by the main musicians of Sliabh Luachra, an area which encompasses the West Cork and East Kerry border. In particular, he has been influenced by the renowned fiddle-players of the region - Denis Murphy, Pádraig O’Keeffe and Julia Clifford. Today, he is widely considered amongst the traditional music community as one of the present-day exponents of this style, and is well known for his extensive repertoire.

This thesis examines the fiddle music of Connie O’Connell within the context of the Sliabh Luachra fiddle tradition. It also examines the extent to which that tradition has changed and how this change is manifested in Connie’s music. The Introduction outlines my reasons for embarking on this project. It also details the approach adopted in examining Connie’s music and the manner in which his position within the Sliabh Luachra fiddle tradition has been evaluated. Chapter One is a brief biographical study of the musician in context. His repertoire is examined in Chapter Two and is related to that of his predecessors. The notion that polkas and slides are the dominant tune-types in Sliabh Luachra is challenged in this chapter. Aspects of melodic and rhythmic variation are examined in detail in Chapter Three, while Connie’s bowing style is also discussed here. In Chapter Four, opposing views on regional and individual styles are discussed and attention is drawn to the fact that in Connie’s playing both the regional and the individual find mutual expression.

Appendix A contains sixty-three tunes transcribed by the author from the two principal recording sessions in October 1992 and November 1992. Seven additional transcriptions are included for the purpose of examining Connie’s bowing style. These are the result of a video session which took place in October 1993. Transcriptions of tunes played by Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford are also included for comparative purposes. The manner in which these tunes are laid out is explained in this same Appendix.

The transcriptions are indexed in a variety of ways in Appendices B, C, D and E. In Appendix B, the tunes are listed in the order in which they were played on the above recording dates. In Appendix C, they are indexed according to tune-type. In Appendix D, the tunes are indexed according to regional source. In addition, where an alternative title has been discovered for certain tunes, a number in bold print follows the relevant tunes in this appendix. The source of these alternative tune titles is explained in Appendix E.
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INTRODUCTION

It was not until I attended University College, Cork, that my attention was drawn to the art of traditional fiddle-playing. It was compulsory that first year students take a traditional instrument as part of their traditional music studies. Since I had a grounding in classical violin and viola playing, it was only natural that I opted for the fiddle. I was privileged to have as a fiddle tutor Connie O'Connell of Cill na Martra, Co. Cork - a musician noted for his stylistic integrity and for the quality and breadth of his repertoire (see illustration 1). Not only was I impressed with his skills as a teacher - imparting the musically and often technically elusive 'secrets' of traditional fiddle-playing to a classically trained musician is no mean feat - but I was also fascinated by the sweetness of his playing, the lyricism of his music and the never-ending supply of tunes!

During my four years as an under-graduate, fiddle classes took place every Monday morning in the Music Department in the college. Three classes were organised in order to cater for the beginner, the intermediate musician and finally, the more advanced player. Each class usually consisted of four students. The beginners' class was generally reserved for those who had never played the fiddle either in a traditional or in a classical capacity until then. The intermediate class comprised students who were relatively proficient as classical players but with little or no experience in traditional fiddling, and those who had a grounding in traditional fiddling but who, as yet, did not qualify for the advanced class. As a classically trained violinist, I was assigned to the intermediate class.

Connie's classes were entirely aurally based. Although he is musically literate, we were never issued with a transcription of the tune being taught, although naturally we frantically indulged in transcription at the end of each class - if only as a mnemonic aid.
Illustration 1: Donie Nolan, Connie O’Connell and Johnny O’Leary in Hennessy’s pub in Miltown Malbay (© McNamara, 1997).
During the entire teaching-learning process, very little oral instruction took place. At first, Connie played the tune, which we were to learn, in its entirety. This was repeated several times to allow us to familiarise ourselves with the tune. After this, the tune was broken up into its component phrases or sub-phrases, depending on our ability to absorb the phrase or the difficulty of the phrase in question. Connie then played a phrase of the tune and we responded by playing it as a group. This was followed by individual checking to ensure that we had grasped the phrase. When secured, this phrase was played and followed by the next phrase, until the tune, in its entirety, had been learned in this fashion. This is quite a common technique adopted by teachers within the tradition (Veblen, 1991: 71-72). As we became more proficient, individual attention became less necessary, the phrase components into which the tune had been divided became longer, and the speed at which we picked up parts, and eventually whole tunes, improved greatly. In retrospect, I now realise that this phrase approach was ideal for developing the ear and focusing our attention on details of ornamentation. Consequently, the foundation for the work which I was to carry out on this thesis was being firmly laid.

Connie is an extremely modest musician and recording has never been a priority with him. In fact, at one stage, he turned down an offer to record with the American record label, Green Linnet. However, I believe he is one of the core musicians responsible for the continuation of the Sliabh Luachra tradition of fiddling into the present day. The musical tradition of Sliabh Luachra is an incredibly rich one. It was established by a generation of travelling fiddle-masters who traversed the West Cork/East Kerry region during the early decades of this century - the most notable being Tom Billy Murphy and Pádraig O'Keeffe. It has been continued in the music of Johnny O'Leary, Denis Murphy, his sister Julia Clifford and, indeed, many others who were students of Pádraig. These musicians, in turn, have passed their music on to yet, another generation of musicians -
one of the most outstanding being Connie O'Connell. The musical tradition of Sliabh Luachra, therefore, is one of the few regional styles still intact today. In an age where the regional style continues to suffer the brunt of change initiated in the 1950's, in an age where it is becoming increasingly difficult to pinpoint the stylistic origins of musicians (the younger generation in particular), it is vital that musicians who “exhibit a rare depth of tradition” in their playing be acknowledged (Ceol go Maidin), and Connie is, undoubtedly, such a musician. The most effective way of doing this, I felt, was through collecting, transcribing and analysing the tunes played by him. Thus, the bulk of the material in this thesis is based on a series of ten fieldwork tapes recorded over a three year period, from October 1992 to July 1995. These are listed in the Tapeography section of this thesis. Eight of the tapes are devoted exclusively to Connie. Tapes 1, 2, 3 and 10 consist of both conversation and music, while Tapes 4, 5, 6 and 7 comprise conversation mainly. In Connie’s principal commercial recording to date, fellow musician, Séamus Mac Mathúna, states that Connie “would not be the best known, and certainly not the most extensively recorded musician” (Ceol go Maidin). It is for this reason that I feel these fieldwork tapes are invaluable as sources of Connie’s music, his thoughts on his music and how he feels his music relates to that of the older generation of Sliabh Luachra musicians. Tapes 8 and 9 are the outcome of a day trip to Rathmore, Co. Kerry, where a most illuminating afternoon was spent in the home of Johnny O'Leary and his wife Lil. Johnny is a renowned accordion player and is recognised as one of the finest exponents, if not the finest exponent of the Sliabh Luachra slides and polkas today. It is because of his expertise in this area that he has been the subject of a relatively recent publication by Terry Moylan (1994). My meeting with Johnny naturally focused on the music of Sliabh Luachra and Connie’s position within this tradition. Johnny has watched the tradition evolve, from his early days as a pupil of O’Keeffe’s, to playing with O’Keeffe himself. His partnership with Denis Murphy, who was also taught
by O'Keeffe, has played a significant part in his musical career. Both Johnny and Denis provided music for the sets in Gníomh go Leith over a remarkable thirty-four year period. Johnny has also played with Connie and continues to do so occasionally. Therefore, his observations of Connie, his recognition of him as one of the present-day exponents of the tradition - in which he himself has played such a fundamental role - are invaluable. Consequently, I have made considerable use of his remarks and observations throughout this thesis.

Since repertoire is one of the principal means through which the music of different regions can be distinguished, I have paid close attention to the tunes played by Connie. Thus, the seventy tunes transcribed in Appendix A are the focal point of this thesis. I felt that a concentration on repertoire would not only highlight the extent to which Connie is continuing the tradition of Sliabh Luachra but also the manner in which the tradition has been affected by the many social changes in the latter half of this century. Extensive discussion with Connie (Tapes 2-7 and Tape 10) illustrates his awareness of such changes and this awareness is brought to bear on the discussion throughout the thesis.

It is not my intention, however, to provide an inexhaustible collection of Connie’s entire repertoire. This would be a daunting task, if at all possible. When I started this project, I did so with the intention of discovering what Connie himself regarded as the core of his repertoire, and focusing on these tunes accordingly. While this would obviously be subject to a degree of variation over the years, Connie’s comment, two years on from the original recording dates, would suggest that I had, indeed, captured such a core repertoire, and in this respect, I feel that the tunes transcribed are valid as sources of study.
If you took this piece of paper away from me, guaranteed I'd play, maybe not all of them, but it's the same amount of tunes we'll call it, I’d say three-quarters of them would probably be the same tunes. You know, there's something that, if you were put in a spot to do something, you're going to stay in familiar ground anyway. Everyone has that kind of a block of tunes, even though they have thousands more of them besides (Connie, Tape 5).

All of the tunes were transcribed in detail for the purpose of stylistic analysis. In isolating the stylistic elements at work in Connie’s playing, I paid particular attention to variation occurring within the performance of each tune. This highlighted the extent to which Connie employed variational elements drawn directly from the Sliabh Luachra tradition such as the roll, or the adoption of the grace note in such a manner as to approximate the sound of a slide, and other such ‘typical’ variations. It also drew attention to those ornaments which are less typical of Sliabh Luachra fiddling. For example, throughout the transcriptions, I noticed that Connie was extremely partial to adopting the treble or the cran as a form of ornamentation, yet this is an ornament which was not commonly used by the older generation of Sliabh Luachra players. It was only natural that I discuss the similarities and examine the differences between Connie’s playing and that of his predecessors, with a view to identifying the origins of both.

The transcription format evident in Appendix A was chosen to facilitate the immediate appreciation of variation within each tune. The layout is explained in detail in this Appendix. Appendix A also explains the system of abbreviations which I adopt throughout this thesis to indicate the transcription numbers, the rounds and the parts of the various tunes. As these abbreviations appear consistently in each chapter, I will summarise them briefly here. The abbreviation ‘Ts.’ is used for the word transcription. This is invariably followed by a transcription number i.e. Ts. 12, Ts. 13. The abbreviation ‘R’ refers to the round being discussed and is also followed by a number - R1 = round 1, R2 = round 2. The letters A and B refer to the A and B sections of the
tune, or the 'tune' and the 'turn' as referred to in Irish traditional music circles (Ó Súilleabháin, 1990: 118). The letters C, D, E and F appear if the tune is a three, four, five or six-part tune respectively. A typical combination of these abbreviations reads as follows: Ts. 12, R1, B, bar 6. This implies that the particular musical example to which I am referring features in transcription 12, round 1, section B, bar 6.

With regard to my analysis of Connie’s, I felt that this could only be truly validated by his reactions to his own playing. For this reason, Connie and I were in regular contact as my work progressed on this thesis, discussing our individual thoughts and impressions on what was happening in his music. This particular interactive approach has inspired everything in this thesis and thus my analysis of his tunes is heavily punctuated by his comments, and, as previously stated, by those of Johnny O’Leary. Throughout the thesis, where I have quoted either Connie or Johnny O’Leary, both the speaker and the tape from which the quotation is taken are indicated at the end of the quotation.

Musical Performance as a Research Tool

The importance of musical performance as a research tool has been outlined by many musicologists. John Blacking believed strongly in the importance of musical performance in the ethnomusicologist’s fieldwork. In a letter to John Baily in May 1972 quoted in Baily’s article ‘Learning to Perform as a Research Technique in Ethnomusicology’, he stated that:

learning to perform and play music is a basic field technique in ethnomusicology (Baily 1995: 334).

Through participation in the song-singing and rituals of the Venda, Blacking experienced aspects of their culture that would surely be denied the non-participant.
Baily speaks of performance as being a means of investigating the music. Through performance or by “learning to perform”, one can examine the music from within. The performer then is naturally placed at a point of advantage when compared to the listener “without specific performance skills”.

The importance of this [learning to perform] as a research technique, for investigation of the music itself, must be emphasised. One understands the music from the “inside”, so to speak. This means that the structure of the music comes to be apprehended operationally, in terms of what you do, and by implication, what you have to know. It is this operational aspect that distinguishes the musical knowledge of the performer from that of the listener without specific performance skills (Baily, 1995: 341-342).

Koning also reaffirms the importance of musical performance as a fieldwork technique:

Musical performance is...a most important research tool for fieldwork (Koning, 1980: 417).

Herndon, in her article, ‘Analysis: The Herding of Sacred Cows?’ adds that in conjunction with an array of other techniques, “to ‘music’ music” is a most useful fieldwork technique (1974: 246).

It is a fact that the seventy transcriptions in Appendix A and, indeed, the thesis as a whole, are the outcome of my learning to perform Connie’s music. While the tuition received from Connie during my years at University College, Cork, undoubtedly paved the way for much of the work in this thesis, it was not until I started this work in 1992 that I came to any real understanding of the music, the style and the sense of history attached to it. It was through the performance of Connie’s tunes that I arrived at this understanding. Learning Connie’s tunes served as a crucial intermediate stage between the listening phase of transcription, which involved listening in a most critical fashion to the recordings made, and the actual process of transcribing the tunes themselves. A great deal was learned during this intermediate stage. This involved trying out various ornaments employed by Connie in particular tunes, listening carefully for changes of
bow-stroke in an attempt to approximate the sounds and the rhythmic lift, in my own playing. In my experience, certain details bypassed in the initial stages of the transcription process were only noticed through the performance dimension of analysis, for example, the often ‘accidental’ and barely perceptible inclusion of the open-string or stopped drone. Similarly, prior to videotaping Connie for the purpose of analysing his bowing style, performance was, once again, a means through which I attempted to work out the bowings which he employed, and much time was spent trying to work these out for myself. Thus, performance was an extremely useful research tool - a bridging of the gap between the performance of the tunes by Connie and my transcription of these same tunes. In addition to this, a comparative study between the performance of certain tunes played by Connie and his predecessors, Pádraig, Denis and Julia, was aided through my performance of their individual versions of the tunes in question. This allowed a close examination of any differences perceived aurally and the conclusions which I draw from my study of these tunes will be discussed in Chapters Two, Three and Four.

While Alan Feldmann felt that “the relationship of informant and collector can replicate the unequal and exploitative interaction between modern and folk cultures”, I feel that my role as “collector” of Connie’s music has been anything but “unequal” or “exploitative” (Feldmann, 1979: 18). This, of course, is due mainly to my former role as a pupil of Connie’s, a role which I feel has merged successfully with that of collector-researcher for this particular project. In his article, ‘The Fieldworker as Performer, Fieldwork Objectives and Social Roles in County Clare, Ireland’, Jos. Koning states that:

The most likely and most suitable role for a fieldworker who wants to collect data on music and its functions with the help of the technique of performing, is the role of pupil (Koning, 1980: 422).
Certainly, my exposure to Connie’s playing over a period of seven years now, has placed me at a point of advantage in terms of repertoire and stylistic awareness. I think it is most interesting that it was Connie who opened the door to traditional fiddling for me, and in doing so, provided me with the performance skills which turned out to be the key to my research into his music, several years later.

Finally, during my research, I discovered that due to the Anglicisation of the Irish placenames, a variety of spellings existed. In these cases, and where the pronunciation is very similar to the native Irish, I have retained their original Irish form. This applies particularly to Cill na Martra (Kilnamartyra), Gníomh go Leith (Gneevguilla) and Gleanntán (Glountane).
In this chapter, I intend to focus on Connie’s musical and geographical background. As a young boy, Connie was exposed to music in his home and this awakened his interest in traditional music. The location of his homeplace in relation to Sliabh Luachra furthered this interest in traditional fiddle playing. Therefore, it is only in relating Connie to his musical and geographical background that one can appreciate his initial and ongoing source of inspiration. This, I feel, leads to a greater understanding of his music.

Any comprehensive study of a musician must involve looking at the particular musician from a number of different angles. First and foremost, Connie is a performer and he is highly regarded for the depth of tradition which he exhibits in his performances. A discussion of this performance dimension is mainly reserved for Chapter Two, where I will illustrate how Connie’s main performance outlet has had a major impact on the music which he plays. The recordings which he has made to date are detailed here, however, as this will enable the reader to place him within the context of his commercial output. In addition to performing, Connie is also a teacher and a composer and these aspects of his musicianship will be discussed in this chapter.

**Geographical Background**

Connie is a native of Cill na Martra, Co. Cork - a parish located approximately halfway between Macroom, which lies to the east and Ballyvourney, which lies to west (see illustration 2). Cill na Martra is a Gaeltacht area, and the parish is divided. The western
half is called ‘Rae na nDoirí’ (Reananerree in its Anglicised form). The word ‘Rae’ or ‘marsh’ attests to the marshy nature of parts of the land in this half of the parish. ‘Rae na nDoirí’, therefore, translates as ‘The Marshland of the Oak’ or ‘The Marshland of the Oakwood’. Connie lives in the eastern side of the parish which is situated approximately one mile south of Cill na Martra village. While the eastern side bears the same name as the village, Connie lives in the townland of Baile Uí Bhuáigh, (the town/townland of Ó Bua) or Ballyvoig (also spelt Ballyvoge). This name was apparently derived from the Ó Bua (Boyce) clan who resided in the area at one time.

Cill na Martra village is small, with a church - reflected in the name of the village in that ‘Cill’ refers to a church building¹, school, post office, two public houses and a unique toy soldier factory, which provides employment for some of the local people. The parish of Cill na Martra encompasses approximately sixty square miles and consists mostly of agricultural land, and Connie shares in the love of the land with his farming neighbours.

Cill na Martra is located south-east of the area referred to as Sliabh Luachra (The Rushy Mountain), which is an area renowned for its rich musical and cultural heritage (see illustration 3). Not only did it produce the nineteenth century poetic masters Aodhaghán Ó Rathaille and Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin, but it is also an area where the travelling fiddle-master Pádraig O’Keeffe and his pupils - Denis Murphy, Julia Clifford, Paddy Cronin, Johnny O’Leary and, indeed, many others - left their mark.

¹ The name Cill na Martra or ‘The Church of the Relic’ dates back to the Eighth Century. The relic referred to here is the arm reliquary of St. Lachtain - the patron saint of the Parish. St. Lachtain had a monastery in Clohina (Cloheena), approximately two miles from the present village of Cill na Martra. After his death, his arm was enshrined in bronze and kept in the Monastery. People came to the shrine in search of cures. The Monastery at Clohina is said to have been plundered by Cromwell and all that remains of it today is a ruin. A mass house was set up on the site of the present church in Cill na Martra village and the latter dates from 1834. The Shrine of St. Lachtain’s arm is now on display in The National Museum of Ireland.
Illustration 2: Map of Cill na Martra, Co. Cork.
In his article, 'Music from Sliabh Luachra', Alan Ward pointed out that the boundaries of Sliabh Luachra are difficult to define.

These limits cannot be defined precisely but beyond Castleisland in the west, Newmarket and Millstreet in the east, Brosna in the north, and the Derrynasaggart mountains in the south, musicians are said to be less numerous and playing styles begin to be different (Ward, 1976: 5).

The definition of Sliabh Luachra, in geographical terms, still poses a problem today. It is perhaps for this reason that its description as “more of a state of mind than a territory” (Moylan, 1994) is more practical than the imposition of geographical boundaries, inside which - particularly in this day and age - styles are no longer ‘contained’. Connie himself felt that it was a most appropriate description of the area.

It was a perfect description...It’s not exactly where you’re living, only what [you’re] state of mind [is] (Connie, Tape 6).

It is also most effective in that this description caters for musicians, who may not be from the actual area itself, but who have been influenced by the main musicians of the area to such a degree, as to be considered Sliabh Luachra musicians themselves, and Connie is, undoubtedly, one such musician! Since he is no further than a three-quarter hour drive from Sliabh Luachra, he has been greatly influenced by the music of this region.

Musical History

As a child, Connie was exposed to music in the home. It was this exposure which sparked his lifelong interest in music. Living in the paternal homestead in which he was born and raised, he recalled occasions where his mother played the melodeon for the house dances and the threshing dances, which were extremely popular in rural Ireland in the past. Although his father did not play any musical instrument, his paternal grandparents were musically inclined. Therefore, it is not surprising, that the “dúchas”,

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Illustration 3: Location of Cill na Martra in relation to Sliabh Luachra.
this inherited capacity for music, in this case, surfaced. However, while Connie’s parents encouraged him to play the melodeon, he showed greater interest in the fiddle. This interest in the fiddle is also shared by his daughter Áine. Áine is an accomplished fiddle-player and the stylistic similarities between father and daughter are very obvious to those who have heard them play together. The love for traditional music is also shared by Connie’s son, Cathal, who is deeply interested in sean-nós singing and participates in sean-nós competitions.

At twelve years of age, Connie was presented with his first fiddle and began to instruct himself forthwith. When participating in a competition as a young lad, he was advised to hold the fiddle up and move his left hand out from the neck of the fiddle. This was all the guidance he received with regard to holding the fiddle! In his later teenage years, he travelled to Macroom to avail of tuition with a local music teacher - Paddy Foley. While this was obviously a productive period, in that he learned how to read and write music, Foley, it appears, was more of a classical violinist than a traditional fiddle-player and, consequently, was not a noteworthy source of tunes. By his late teens/early twenties, Connie told me that although he could play reasonably well, he had very few tunes. At this stage, his interest in fiddling diminished somewhat:

I kind of kept playing under a very low flag. I'd play at whatever if I was asked to do something. I'd no big interest you know, no real interest at all in playing (Connie, Tape 4).

However, in 1967, at the age of twenty-four, he attended his first Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Enniscorthy, and it was this event which rekindled his interest in traditional music.

I got very interested around 1967. I was taken to the first Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in Enniscorthy that year, and that was my first reunification, I suppose, with traditional music again (Connie, Tape 10).
On returning home from the Fleadh, he decided to make contact with the local musicians of his area. This led him in the direction of Denis Murphy - the well known fiddle-player of Sliabh Luachra and pupil of Pádraig O'Keeffe's.

I went to the Fleadh Cheoil, and I came back, and I started thinking was there any local musicians around, you know, that I would go to, and I found that he [Denis] was there... I started getting the wheels in motion then, trying to get to meet Denis Murphy. At that stage the Fleadh used be on the June weekend, and I'd say it was the end of the year - probably September/October of that year that I got to meet Denis Murphy for the first time - '67 I’d say (Connie, Tape 10).

The meeting with Denis was an extremely important one and was to have a profound effect on both his playing style and his repertoire. (This is discussed in further detail in Chapter Two). Connie had very few tunes at this stage of his musical career.

The amount of tunes I had when I met Denis Murphy...I had about twenty reels, maybe the same amount of jigs, maybe less. I was only learning, but I suppose he could probably see some potential in what I was doing, that I was going to be reasonably good anyway (Connie, Tape 4).

Although Connie stated that he was “only learning”, Johnny O'Leary stated that Connie was “fairly good” at this stage, and that Denis was very impressed with him as he recognised considerable potential in his playing.

Oh...he was fairly good that time, and do you know what Denis said about him - Denis heard him and heard him after that... “I'm telling you that Connell is good,” he says, “He’ll be heard of yet”...

He always knew he was very promising. He liked the way he was playing (Johnny O'Leary, Tape 9).

Johnny also recognised the potential in Connie’s playing

The first time I heard Connie O'Connell playing, I'd years put down with Denis in Gníomh go Leith here. I was after playing thirty-four years with Denis and Denis was also a great fiddler. Be God - you know what I said to myself - there’s another Denis up, when I heard Connie Connell playing. I was delighted when I heard the way he was coming. (Tape 8)...and when Denis said it to me long ago that “He’ll be heard of yet,” he says, “Connell is good!” (Johnny O'Leary, Tape 9).
In 1967/1968 Connie’s interest in fiddle-playing intensified. He was, he said, determined to learn as many tunes as he possibly could. He began to work on the tunes which he had acquired from Denis, tunes which he had heard on the radio, taped at fleadhanna and, indeed, at any music festivals which he attended.

I got this idea into my head that I was going to learn every tune that was ever played...At one stage I remember I was learning at the rate of three every night of the week. I’d sit down with a tape recorder, and I’d take out the fiddle and I’d learn tunes. I remember at one stage - I don’t know how long this period lasted for, but I was learning tunes at the rate of three a night - every night of the week - seven nights a week - twenty-one tunes in a week. How long that lasted, I don’t know...I was only messing before that, I’d no tunes, I’d no nothing. I couldn’t actually...I wasn’t able to roll notes at the age of twenty-five. I didn’t know what they were (Connie, Tape 4).

The fact that Connie did not employ a roll in his playing, is quite an astonishing revelation, as is his admission that he was unaware of how this was technically accomplished! He was in this respect “a late starter” (Connie, Tape 10). Equally fascinating is the account he gave of his initiation into the world of left-hand ornamentation.

In fact, I remember at one stage, there was a fellow from Ballinasloe, I got to know him through music. I remember going up to Dublin. He was staying up in a flat in Dublin at the time. Micheál Mac Aogán was his name....We’d made arrangements to go to a Fleadh Cheoil somewhere. I went up to Dublin and I stayed with him...’Tis he actually, that night, showed me. I was actually saying, what were they doing - this roll. I could hear the sound you see...I was asking what were they doing to make this sound. ’Twas he showed me what a roll was, just showed me there and then. That’s where I learned how to do a roll (Connie, Tape 4).

These years were obviously incredibly productive, for in 1969, he made his first appearance on national television on the monochrome traditional music programme *Bring Down The Lamp*. His next television appearance was on the monochrome series *Ag DÉanamh Ceoil* on 1 February, 1972, with presenter Tony McMahon. Since the early days of black and white television, he has been recorded quite extensively by Radio
Teilifís Éireann. He appeared on the programme *All The Best* presented by Brendán Ó Dúill on 28 May, 1984. He also featured in *The Humours of Donnybrook* - a series which ran from the mid to the late seventies. He featured on two *Mountain Lark* programmes in the mid eighties, both of which were presented by Josephine Begley. The first programme was transmitted on 7 January, 1986 and the second programme was aired a week later, 14 January, 1986. Connie recorded five *Pure Drop* programmes with different presenters. The first programme was transmitted on 14 January 1988 with presenter James Kelly. Three programmes were recorded with Iarla Ó Lionard. The first two programmes were transmitted on 11 October 1988 and 1 April, 1991, respectively. The third programme was recorded on the 13 June 1990. The last *Pure Drop* programme, on which he appeared, was hosted by Paddy Glackin. On all of these programmes, Connie is invariably introduced as one of the present-day exponents of the Sliabh Luachra style. For example, on this last *Pure Drop* programme aired on 10 October 1993, Paddy Glackin recalled a particular musical occasion, twenty years earlier, where he met Connie and Denis McMahon for the first time. Both musicians frequently perform together on such programmes. It was, he stated, his "first time" experiencing the music of West Cork and Sliabh Luachra, and he proceeded to describe this occasion.

It was the first time that I actually came into contact with the music of West Cork and Sliabh Luachra, and these two men here are two of its finest exponents. First from Cill na Martra in Cork - Connie Connell ... Well, they used to call Peter McDermott, the great Meath footballer, "the man with the cap", well, this man here this evening, we'll call him - the man with the hat - Denis McMahon (*The Pure Drop*, 1993).

Apart from the early recording of *Bring Down The Lamp* which was erased, all of the above programmes are held in the archives of R.T.É. in Dublin. (At the time of writing, traditional music programmes in the sound and visual archives of R.T.É are being copied
and indexed by the Irish Traditional Music Archive in Dublin, and the television recordings listed above are also available here).

With regard to radio recordings and broadcasts, Connie has been extensively recorded throughout his adult life. As the process of indexing traditional music radio programmes is not yet complete in R.T.É., I was unable to access those programmes on which Connie featured. However, Connie mentioned certain radio programmes on which he featured, including *The Job of Journeywork*. He also featured on *Céilí House* several times and recorded a programme in the early seventies with ‘The Green Linnet Céilí Band’.

Connie has featured on three recordings to date. He features on a cassette recorded by Belfast-born Colin (Hammy) Hamilton (now residing in Coolay), called *The Moneymusk*, where he plays one of his own compositions. This tune is transcribed in Appendix A and bears the title ‘The Torn Jacket’ (Ts. 62). He provides backing on Peadar Ó Riada’s album *Go mBéannaítear Duit*. He also features with Jimmy Doyle, Séamus Mac Mathúna and Nora Mhic Mhathúna on his principal commercial recording to date, *Ceol go Maidin*, issued by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (no date, c.1993). The latter cassette is a combination of tracks recorded in the recording studio of the Culnirlann, the headquarters of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in Dublin, and those recorded at a session in the Cultúrlann hall. Connie dislikes the recording studio environment, as he feels it is not conducive to great music-making and he is most relaxed when playing in the informal setting of a session. Consequently, the two solo tracks which he plays on *Ceol go Maidin*, were taken from this session. As he dislikes the recording studio environment, he turned down an offer to record with Green Linnet and although representatives from
the recording company called to his home for three successive years, Connie refused their offer. Paddy Fahey, the renowned East-Galway fiddle-player, also refused to record with them at this time.

As already stated, Connie is primarily a session player and the manner in which this has affected his working repertoire will be examined in detail in Chapter Two. He plays in weekly sessions in ‘The Ould Triangle’ in Macroom, Co. Cork and occasionally plays in O’Connell’s bar in Ballyvourney. He also plays on a less frequent basis in Jimmy O’Brien’s bar in Killarney, Crowley’s bar, Kenmare and Dan Connell’s of Knocknagree. He also performs at local and regional festivals e.g. he participates each year in the annual commemoration of Pádraig O’Keeffe in Scartaglen. Similarly, he appears annually at the Cork Folk Festival where, in addition to performing, he provides music workshops for interested parties. Connie also attends annual Fleadhanna Ceoil and any other noteworthy festivals held throughout the country. His association with musicians from both Sliabh Luachra and further afield, has, naturally, coloured his repertoire and influenced his style of playing and this will be examined in detail in Chapters Two and Three.

Although Connie mainly plays in sessions, he played for a short time with ‘The Green Linnet Ceilí Band’. This was a Dublin based Céilí band whose members came from various parts of the country to participate in competitions. Connie played in four All-Ireland Fleadh competitions with ‘The Green Linnets’. Other members included Tommy Peoples, Cathal McConnell, the late Peig McGrath - a flute player from Roscommon and fiddle-players - Kathleen Smith from the north and Micheál Mac Aogáin from
Ballinasloe. The members of the band varied from year to year depending the musicians available.

We all knew each other like, and somebody decided they’d form this Ceilí band, and maybe one year we’d have one flute player and the next year I’d be gone and there’d be somebody else to replace me (Connie, Tape 6).

Closer to home, and after ‘The Green Linnets’, he played periodically with ‘The Desmond Ceilí Band’ of Castleisland. Although this band was extremely well known in the dancehall scene, “at one stage the band were playing six or seven nights a week” (Connie, Tape 10), Connie did not play with them regularly. He joined them solely for competitions and played in three competitions with his fellow musician-friends. This, then, was not a regular musical outlet for Connie.

Not a regular slot at all. It might happen once a year, it might happen twice, it mightn’t happen at all (Connie, Tape 6).

Although he still occasionally competes with Céilí bands, Connie does not enjoy playing in the dancehall environment. For Connie, playing in this particular musical environment is far less intimate than playing in the context of a session, where he is free to play what he wants with his musical associates. When playing for dancers, he is tied to playing the tunes which the dancers require “like a machine to be turned on and off…” (Connie, Tape 10). Furthermore, he is on stage and physically set apart from the dancers. Thus, he is removed from the excitement on the floor and denied the contact with the ‘audience’ (the dancers in this case), that one has in the session.

I don’t like playing in a Céilí Band atmosphere...You’re completely removed if you’re playing with a Céilí Band. You’re a machine to be turned on and off for the people that are dancing...I’d put it down - a Céilí Band is more work. You’re actually working - you’re labouring instead of playing music... I prefer the session ‘cause I enjoy it like - playing - If I’m left play what I myself want (Connie, Tape 10).
Connie as Teacher

Apart from his reputation as a fine performer, Connie is also an accomplished fiddle teacher, a role he has fulfilled for the last twenty-six years. In the early seventies, Connie began to teach with the Vocational Education Committee in County Cork. He taught in Coolay, Ballyvourney, Cill na Martra and Bantry, and continued teaching up to c.1989 when the exigencies of farm life would not allow him to continue.

He began teaching in the Music Department, University College, Cork, at the invitation of Micheál Ó Súilleabháin in the early eighties, and he continues to be the resident fiddle-teacher there. It was here, in fact, that I first met Connie. Through his teaching, he has come into contact with and influenced countless people, who have had the privilege of experiencing the southern tradition, at the hands of one of its finest present-day exponents. Like Denis Murphy, his willingness to pass on the tunes he has collected in his years of playing and his enthusiasm in sharing aspects of his style, mark him as an important carrier of the tradition.

Connie as Composer

In addition to the performance and teaching dimension of his musical persona, Connie is also a composer. Reels and jigs are the genres which he has composed exclusively to date. He has never shown an interest in the composition of slides and polkas, although he feels one could nearly play these “straight off”. While his compositional output may not be extremely prolific, his compositional tendencies are nonetheless evident in Ts. 61 and 62, both of which are reels. Ts. 62 is the tune entitled ‘The Torn Jacket’ which features on Hammy Hamilton’s cassette, *The Moneymusk*. This was a reel inspired by
tearing of a jacket, at a session, during the annual Irish language festival, the Oireachtas, which was held on this particular occasion in Cork City! Ts. 63 bears no title and Connie left it untitled. Another jig bearing his name was traced in *The Irish Fiddle Book* (Cranitch: 1988, 126). However, Connie did not compose this jig. This was, he said, an untitled jig. Therefore, the jig transcribed in *The Irish Fiddle Book* is a version of the tune associated with Connie, and so it bears his name. The manner in which greater importance is attached to the individual’s setting of a tune, rather than to the person who composed the tune, within the Irish tradition as a whole, is amply demonstrated here and this will now be explored in more detail.

In his MA thesis, *A Study of the Composition of Tunes and their Assimilation into Irish Traditional Dance Music*, Stephen Jardine points out that in Irish Traditional Music, the role of the composer is of lesser significance than in Western art-music (Jardine, 1981). Maria Holohan in her MA thesis, *The Tune Compositions of Paddy Fahey* (1995), also bears witness to the level of importance attached to the “original creator” of the tune or tunes in the tradition. Ó Súilleabháin further strengthens the above research when he points out that once assimilated into the huge corpus of anonymous tunes of the tradition, the speed at which compositions become anonymous indicates the “low status” accorded the composer.

In situations where a new tune is composed, the rapidity with which it acquires anonymity as it goes through the process of assimilation into the current repertoire is an indicator of this low status (Ó Súilleabháin 1982: 59).

What is infinitely more important than identifying the composer, it seems, is the variation process that can occur in the performance of each tune and the manner in which each
individual puts his or her mark on a particular tune in order to form a 'setting' of that
tune. Ó Súilleabháin explains what is meant by this term 'setting':

It contains part of the traditional musician's perception of what music is: a
floating body of melodic patterns which become 'set' when subjected to the

The level of importance accorded the individual's interpretation or setting of the tune
over the original composition of the tune can be seen in another of Connie's
'compositions' - the three-part jig which is accredited to Connie and bears his name (Ts.
24). This jig also features on the recording by Liz Carroll and Tommy Maguire entitled
Kiss Me Kate, where it bears his name. However, Connie stated that he didn't actually
compose this jig and he attributed the original composition of this tune to Mick Dwyer of
Castletownbere who is a brother of accordion player, Finbar Dwyer. Connie stated that
he merely 'changed a few notes here and there' and so, for this reason, the jig is
associated with him! Ó Súilleabháin also bears witness to the importance of setting over
composition.

A tune with a title 'Garret Barry's Jig' is more likely to refer to a performer who
creates his own setting of a pre-existing tune-structure than to any composer (Ó

Thus, with the emphasis placed on the setting of the tune more than on the composer,
tracing the origin of a tune can be quite difficult. In Connie's case, the difficulty lay in
identifying the number of tunes he has composed. Because he is quite critical of himself
as a player, he only records tunes which he feels are worth recording. Thus, many tunes
he has composed have been 'mislaid'. Unless he tapes his compositions, he tends to
forget them as quickly as they are conceived since he does not transcribe them.
Indicative of his forgetful nature in this respect is the following story he told. While
playing in a session one night, an enthusiastic musician performed a particular reel for
Connie. At the end of his performance of this tune, he put down his fiddle and informed Connie that the reel which he had just played was one of Connie’s compositions. Connie however, did not recognise the tune!

Since Connie does not place much importance on associating his name with his compositions, it is difficult to gauge the exact number of his tunes in circulation at the moment. In this sense he has become another anonymous source of these tunes, another contributor to the already huge corpus of anonymous tunes that mark the tradition. While there are at least two jigs in circulation, he pointed out that there was a half dozen, even more perhaps, that had been “dropped by the wayside”.

Although he may not have composed a large body of tunes, it seems that the art of composition comes quite easily to him. He states that once he gets the first bar of a tune, the rest of the tune seems to follow naturally.

'Tis very easy to follow from there, that’s what I find about composition, especially the first bar like. If you get the first bar going right, get the first note and the first bar, you’re away - fly through it (Connie, Tape 6).

The inspiration for composition may be drawn from a number of sources. The moment of inspiration may occur while farming. Maria Holohan also discovered that Paddy Fahey, the noted East-Galway fiddle-player and composer, “has come upon ideas for tunes while out working on the farm, away from the performance situation” (Holohan 1995: 28). Unlike Paddy, however, Connie’s compositional tendencies could also be awakened while listening to Classical music.

You could be listening to the radio in the car, and probably be listening to Classical music, and you’d hear a phrase of notes - a great start for a reel or a jig or a hornpipe or whatever. It could be some extract from Mozart or Tchaikovsky or anybody at all. That’s the way it works for me. I don’t know
how it works for other people. There are no set rules or regulations (Connie, Tape 6).

The only other reference of which I am aware, where the player points towards Classical music providing motivic elements in his or her music, is the Ph.D. study on the music of the Dublin fiddle-player Tommy Potts (Ó Súilleabháin, 1987). However, while Potts could identify particular motifs incorporated into his music and the sources of these, Connie was unable to be specific about the influences in his music. Not only was he unaware of the pieces which he had heard, but he was not conscious of the elements or sections in his own repertoire which these had influenced.

In the next chapter, I will examine Connie’s repertoire particularly within the context of the Sliabh Luachra fiddle tradition.
CHAPTER TWO

REPERTOIRE

It is a widely held view that the Sliabh Luachra repertoire is one in which the polka predominates, while the reel, a tune-type popular in other parts of the country, is poorly represented in this particular tradition. The following comment made by Denis Murphy’s wife to both Denis and his musical companion, Johnny O’Leary, illustrates this particular viewpoint:

But I remember now, Denis Murphy’s wife - she’s still alive - Julia Mary, a lovely woman now, this is going back a few years, but she said, going up to Dublin, “Let ye play a couple of reels because there’s a pile after asking me have ye any reels?”

Ha ha, they said to her, “have they any reels? Would they play something else beside the polkas?” (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

Polkas, slides and jigs were the tune-types most commonly performed in the dance environment of Sliabh Luachra. Due to the practical and functional role of these tune-types within the vibrant dance tradition of this area, their existence was more than ensured. Consequently, within Irish traditional music, as the highland and mazurka became associated with the Donegal fiddle tradition, the polka and slide became strongly associated with that of Sliabh Luachra. Thus, these tune-types became a means of distinguishing the music of these regions from that of other regions. Yet, out of a total of sixty-three tunes which I recorded on the two main recording dates (15 October, 1992 and 25 November, 1992), the reel was the predominant tune-type in the repertoire of Connie O’Connell. Eleven jigs were also played, four hornpipes, two slides and one polka set (the slides and polkas were only played as I specifically asked for these). A single slow air was performed, while ‘The Blackbird’ (Ts. 55) was the only set dance performed. This was not what I expected from a man who had a reputation as a Sliabh Luachra fiddle-player, one who acknowledged the influence - both stylistically and technically - of Denis Murphy and Pádraig O’Keeffe.
Prior to immersing myself in the music of Sliabh Luachra and in particular, in the music of Connie O’Connell, I, too, had been under the illusion that the polka formed the core of the Sliabh Luachra tradition, followed closely by a strong tradition of slide and jig playing. Hornpipes also featured, but reels lay very much on the periphery. How then could one justify the prominence of reels in the repertoire of Connie O’Connell - a man considered an exponent of this same tradition? Why did this tune-type feature to such an extent in his repertoire, in contrast to the few slides and polkas performed?

It is my intention to address these issues in this chapter. In particular, I will pay close attention to the position of the reel within the Sliabh Luachra tradition and how this compares with its position in Connie’s repertoire. I will explore the commonly voiced opinion that the Sliabh Luachra tradition is one in which reels are relegated to “a poor fifth” (Ward 1976: 19). I intend to focus to a large extent on this particular viewpoint, which was first noted in the booklet *Music from Sliabh Luachra* (Ward, 1976), for I feel that it is a view which still persists.

There has been significant change in Sliabh Luachra from the days when dancing was practised in the home, at the crossroads and in the many dancehalls which breathed life into small rural communities during the dancehall era. It was here that the dancing of polkas and slides took root. However, I believe there is a reel tradition as valid as that of the slide and polka in this area and this is becoming increasingly evident in the repertoire practised by present-day Sliabh Luachra musicians. In order to substantiate this argument, the repertoire of the central figures of the tradition - Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy, Julia Clifford and Johnny O’Leary - is examined from a number of different angles and particularly within the context of their era. (The insight gained from discussions with Johnny O’Leary and the information gathered from the principal recordings devoted to the fiddle-players of the region, has proved most illuminating in this respect!) With this in mind, I intend to discuss their repertoire in relation to Connie’s, making reference to the manner in which social changes within the last fifty
years have affected the performance situation in Sliabh Luachra today. The manner in which these changes - in conjunction with the influence of modern telecommunications - have allowed the emergence of a more open musical environment is discussed and the effect this has had on Connie’s repertoire and on that of present-day exponents of the Sliabh Luachra tradition will also be examined. It should then become apparent how these changes have affected the degree to which the various tune-types are present in Connie’s repertoire.

Tunes for listening, tunes for dancing

In her MA thesis, *Repertoire in the Donegal Fiddle Tradition*, Damhnait Nic Suibhne identifies two categories in which different tune-types function i.e. those which are dance tunes (or those which are played for dancers) and those which are ‘listening’ tunes. The latter would be played outside of the dance and were also referred to as “solo tunes for listening” or as “solo pieces to entertain a listening audience” (1993: 45). Nic Suibhne points out that the musicians themselves divide their repertoire in this manner. In relation to the fiddle tradition of the Shetland Isles, Peter Cooke also observes this categorisation of repertoire. However, he felt that the listening category is:

really little more than a convenience, a catch-all that includes, in addition to song airs and other pieces, tunes that are no longer danced, nor have been for several generations (Cooke, 1986: 79).

Yet, in my area of study, I feel that this categorisation of tune-types according to function is more than “a convenience”, as there is considerable evidence to support this division in Sliabh Luachra music (although the number and variety of tune-types in each category is not as extensive as that of Donegal or the Shetland Isles). Connie himself made a distinction between ‘listening’ tunes and dance tunes:

If you sat down in front of me, listening to me play music, I would play certain types of tunes, but if...three or four get up to dance, I’m going to start thinking of tunes straight away, tunes suitable for the dancer then. I’m going to change my line of thought and I’m going to pick tunes especially for that particular dancer, tunes that I know are going to be suitable (Connie, Tape 6). 

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Similarly, Pádraig O’Keeffe is known to have preferred playing ‘listening’ music as distinct from the dance music of the tradition (Browne: c.1993).

The similarity between the Donegal fiddle tradition and the Sliabh Luachra tradition is acknowledged by Nic Suibhne:

There are notable similarities in both traditions. Of particular significance, is the similar grouping of the repertoire material; in both regions the music is classified either as dance music or as listening music (Nic Suibhne 1993: 53).

However, as both Cooke and Nic Suibhne point out, this does not imply that the dance tunes could not be played in a listening context and indeed, this would explain the two polkas and slides which Connie played when recorded. Neither does it imply “that dancers don’t listen to music played for them” (Cooke, 1986: 51; Refer also to Nic Suibhne 1993: 47). However, the fact remains, that the playing of reels is not a common practice in the dance environment of Sliabh Luachra, for this is a tune-type still mainly categorised as a ‘listening’ tune. Therefore, bearing these two categories in mind, one can appreciate the concentration on certain tune-types in Connie’s repertoire.

When Johnny O’Leary, a man who has played for sets all his life, attested to the popularity of polkas, slides and jigs in Sliabh Luachra, he was, of course, referring to music exclusively for the dance.

I started playing at the age of five or five and a half, playing the accordion, but at that time I hardly ever heard a reel played here for a set. They didn’t know the reel sets here. And I was playing in Thady Willie’s hall [Thady Willie O’ Connor], in Gníomh go Leith along with Denis Murphy, for the most part of thirty-four years and all we ever played was polkas and jigs (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8, see illustration 4)

An examination of the popular sets in the area indicates the preference for the polkas, slides and jigs. In the Sliabh Luachra Set, which consists of six figures, figures 1, 2 and
Illustration 4: Thady Willie O'Connor outside his well known dancehall in Gníomh go Leith, where Johnny O'Leary and Denis Murphy regularly played for sets. (Picture taken from the article, 'Going to the Hall', *The Journal of Cumann Luachra*, 1 (4), p.6).
4 are danced to a polka, figures 3 and 5 to a slide and the sixth figure is danced to a hornpipe. In the neighbouring Ballyvourney Jig Set, all figures are danced to a slide in 12/8 time, while the figures of the set, which is curiously called a Reel Set in this area, are danced to polkas. Other sets associated with the south see a similar concentration on the above tune-types, for example, in the Ardgroom Polka Set of West Cork, all five figures are danced to polkas and in the Kenmare Plain Set, the first three figures are danced to polkas, the fourth to a slide and the fifth to a hornpipe (Murphy: 1995). The dancers, therefore, “were brought up on polkas and jigs” and it is these tune-types which prompted them to dance, unlike the dance tradition in Co. Clare where reels are popular.

The dancers here were brought up on the polkas and jigs ...you couldn’t get folk to dance a reel here, they were mad for the music they were brought up with like (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8, see illustration 5).

Despite the rarity of reels in the dance environment, this tune-type, nonetheless, plays an important part in the session tradition of Sliabh Luachra. Johnny O’Leary confirmed the importance of the reel within the tradition and felt it was certainly as valid as the slide and polka tradition of the area. He quoted examples of three musicians, who, in his estimation, bore testimony to this - Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Connie O’Connell.

A lot of people think we’ve nothing in Sliabh Luachra only polkas and slides, when we have Connie Connell and Pádraig O’Keeffe that have reels with anyone. Pádraig O’Keeffe had reel after reel that people never had. He could come out and play five reels out of each other that we wouldn’t know of (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

O’Keeffe’s partiality towards reels, in contrast to his virtual disregard for the slides and polkas of the area, is also documented by Peter Browne in his article, ‘The Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Master Pádraig O’Keeffe (1887-1963)’.

One remarkable thing emerged when it came to hearing about the type of tunes Pádraig preferred. Although slides and polkas are justly noted music in Sliabh Luachra, it seems he cared little for them. He wrote them because of the demand in the area, but when it came to sitting down to play himself, he seldom, if ever, played a slide or polka. Reels and hornpipes and to a lesser extent jigs were his favourites and in the words of one of his pupils, ‘The crosser they were, the better he liked ’em’ (Browne 1994: 67).
The reference here to O’Keeffe’s “sitting down to play himself”, obviously refers to his playing in a listening environment. The distinction between reserving the playing of slides and polkas for dancers and favouring the performance of reels, hornpipes “and to a lesser extent jigs”, in a listening context, is noted here. Slides and polkas were obviously strongly linked with the dance in O’Keeffe’s mind. Their key function was to supply the basic rhythm required by the dancers, hence, while these tunes were melodically simple, he, perhaps, found them restrictive in terms of personal creativity. When playing for himself, O’Keeffe was no longer musically restricted by the needs of the dancers, but was free to do whatever he desired with the tune in hand and had the freedom to ornament the tune accordingly. The playing of reels and hornpipes in the listening context, undoubtedly represented a freedom in which he revelled. Damhnait Nic Suibhne also identified this freedom experienced by the musician who played outside of the dance.

For the fiddler in a solo context he, personally, was free to explore tune-types unrelated to the dance. He was no longer tied to it’s rigid rhythmic boundaries and this gave him the scope to interpret the music in whatever manner his creativity allowed him. This in effect allowed for the development of a listening repertoire (Nic Suibhne, 1993: 53).

Like his fiddle teacher, Denis Murphy was also partial to reels.

Denis might put down one night and he’d play no reel and the next night he might go on all reels, ‘cause he had plenty of reels. He had reels that we never heard of I’d say. The tunes he played, any amount of them, he brought to the grave with him (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

In fact, the night he died, Denis played several reels which Johnny O’Leary had never heard.

He played three reels out of each other and he looked at me and he said, “Why don’t you play them with me?” I haven’t ‘em, I said. “I was sure you had them,” he said. Next thing, he played two jigs and he played three more reels after them and played four or five hornpipes and I never heard a note of any one of ‘em and he said, “I must give you them tomorrow - tomorrow night,” he said, “I’ll put them on a tape and bring ‘em down to you.” (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).
It is obvious, therefore, that the reel tradition in Sliabh Luachra has been underrated due to the popularity of the dance tradition and the tune-types associated with this, in particular, the slides and polkas. Johnny O’Leary confirms this:

The reels were here, but they weren’t playing [them] because the public here weren’t looking for ‘em, they were looking for the polka and jig (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

Although the public may not have been ‘looking for them’ in the set dancing environment of Sliabh Luachra, reels have been and are popular within the context of the session, where this tune-type is very much in demand. This can be seen in the session culture of Castleisland, “the heart of Sliabh Luachra”, where Sliabh Luachra musicians, Nicky McAuliffe and Anne Sheehy, are noted for their reel playing (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8). Mary Mitchell in her study of six North Kerry musicians also noticed this partiality for the reel in the repertoire of other well known Sliabh Luachra musicians such as Con Curtin of Brosna (Mitchell, 1995). Where Johnny O’Leary has concentrated on the slides and polkas which attend the sets, these musicians - together with Connie O’Connell - seem to have focused on the reels of the area, and have added to these, reels which they have acquired on their travels to other areas for music festivals, Fleadhanna Ceoil and other such musical events.

It is the performance environment which has been the principal determinant of Connie’s repertoire and since his main performance outlet is the session, his repertoire is mainly focused on the listening tunes of the tradition.

‘Tis nearly sessions Connie Connell plays for...Connie wouldn’t be playing for many sets. He’d join in now, if there was a crowd, he’s lovely able for it like, but he’s more of a session player like, and for radio and television - he’s great at that (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).
Connie plays in a weekly session in ‘The Ould Triangle’ in Macroom, Co. Cork. He also plays at sessions in O’Connell’s bar in Ballyvourney and frequents various other sessions throughout Co. Cork and Co. Kerry (these are already listed in Chapter 1). However, he may only play in Dan Connell’s of Knocknagree, one of the principal set dancing venues in Sliabh Luachra, four or five times a year. In addition to this, Johnny O’Leary pointed out, that whenever Connie plays in Dan Connell’s, he tends to join the musicians “at the front of the house”, where the sessions are held, rather than play for the sets which take place “at the back of the house”. This explains why there are so few polkas and slides present in this collection of his tunes. Connie himself admitted that the representation of these tune-types was fairly typical:

Well I don’t normally... I wouldn’t be too much surprised at that you know, because if somebody wanted me to make a tape, I’d say the amount of polkas and slides I’d put in would be very few (Connie, Tape 9).

While Alan Ward acknowledged this distinction between music played for the dance and ‘listening’ music, he nonetheless went on to strengthen the notion of the tradition as one where polkas predominate:

with jigs and slides a long way behind in second and third place, hornpipes fourth and reels - the dominant rhythm elsewhere in Ireland - a poor fifth (Ward, 1976 :19).

In the context of everything discussed in this chapter, so far, this relegation of reels to “...a poor fifth,” is questionable. Johnny O’Leary also felt this comment was misleading. However, I feel that when Ward accorded reels a fifth position, he was considering them within the dance context only, without considering their position in the listening environment.
The Evidence of Recordings

An examination of the main commercial recordings devoted to the fiddle music of the area, also attests to the significant position of the reel within the Sliabh Luachra repertoire. Those fiddle recordings which I examined include Volumes 1 and 2 of the *Music from Sliabh Luachra* series, *Kerry Fiddles and The Star of Munster Trio* respectively, *The Star above the Garter* and the more recent Denis Murphy and Pádraig O’Keeffe compilations released by R.T.É. (Raidió Teilifís Éireann) - *Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra*, and *The Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Master Pádraig O’Keeffe*. In fact, in these recordings, the reel is the dominant tune-type - an interesting discovery for a tradition where the polka and slide is said to predominate! (The degree to which the different tune-types are represented on these and other recordings of the music of the region, is illustrated in tabular form in illustration 6). *Kerry Fiddles* sees an allocation of four tracks to reel playing - ten reels in total - with a mere single track reserved for the polkas of the area. Six tracks are devoted to reel playing on *The Star of Munster Trio* - eleven reels in total! In contrast to this, only one track is allocated to polka playing, while not a single slide appears. The latest Denis Murphy compilation issued by R.T.É., also sees an allocation of six tracks to reel playing (eleven again in total). Polkas fare a little better in this recording, as three tracks are devoted to this tune-type, while four tracks are devoted to slide playing. However, Johnny O’Leary’s, *Music for the Set*, Volume 5 in the *Music from Sliabh Luachra* series and Volume 6 in the same series, which features Jackie Daly, see polkas predominate, because these recordings are devoted to set playing - music for the set! The latest Pádraig O’Keeffe compilation, released by R.T.É., sees slides and reels represented virtually equally - three tracks are
Recordings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recordings</th>
<th>KF Vol. 1</th>
<th>SMT Vol. 2</th>
<th>HL Vol. 3</th>
<th>SAG</th>
<th>POK</th>
<th>DM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reels</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracks</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jigs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slides</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polkas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7/8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hornpipes</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set-Dances</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tracks</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Illustration 6: Table representation of tune-types in the principal commercial recordings of Sliabh Luachra music.
devoted to each tune-type. This results in eight slides, with reels a ‘poor’ second (a total
of seven are played) and not a “poor fifth” as suggested by Ward (1976: 19).

How indicative of the tradition are these recordings? How representative are they of the
ratio of tune-types in the Sliabh Luachra tradition? As stated at the beginning of this
section, these recordings are the principal commercial recordings of the music of this
area. They were intended to represent the music of this area, “to bring this distinctive
music to a wider audience” (Music from Sliabh Luachra series) and this, indeed, is what
they have achieved. The subtitle on the album The Star above the Garter - ‘Fiddle
Music from Kerry played by Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford’ - is indicative of the
regional origin of the tunes. The reels which predominate on this recording are local
ones. Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford obviously felt that this tune-type ratio was
representative of their rich musical heritage. Hence, one finds reels such as ‘The Banks
of The Ilen’ (Ts. 46a) and ‘Tom Billy’s’ (Ts. 47a), ‘Callaghan’s’, ‘The Galtee Rangers’,
‘The Gleannntán Reel’, former song airs ‘Johnny When You Die’ and ‘Anything for John-
Joe?’ (Ts. 60a), and many other reels whose tune titles commemorate local people and
celebrate real places and events.

The predominance of the reel in this collection of Connie’s music is understandable,
when he is considered within this Sliabh Luachra context. Johnny O’Leary was adamant
that there was nothing unusual in the tunes which Connie had played. Johnny, who has
known Connie since he was a teenager and has played with him on many occasions since
then, felt that he was, in fact, representing a part of the tradition, which had been side-
stepped by those who were more interested in the peculiarities of the polka and slide than
the subtleties of the Sliabh Luachra reel.

I think there’s nothing unusual with what Connie did now. I think Connie’s right
to have done that. I’m delighted that you have someone like, from Sliabh
Luachra, that have the reels, because a lot of people think we have nothing in
Sliabh Luachra only polkas and slides... (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

Apart from the few sets of jigs played, Connie felt that the tunes which I
recorded and transcribed were, indeed, representative of his core repertoire. This was stated earlier in
the Introduction to the thesis.

If you took this piece of paper away from me, guaranteed I’d play, maybe not all
of them, but it’s the same amount of tunes we’ll call it, I’d say three-quarters of
them would probably be the same tunes. You know, there’s something that, if
you were put in a spot to do something, you’re going to stay in familiar ground
anyway. Everyone has that kind of a block of tunes even though they have
thousands more of them besides (Connie, Tape 5).

He stated, however, that his interest in reels was practically matched by his liking for
jigs.

I suppose I’d have more reels I’d say, although I have a lot of jigs. I would have
as much or more jigs as a lot of people like, because I came from an area that was
associated with jigs. Kerry was a big place for jigs you know (Connie, Tape 4).

The penchant for jigs is a natural one when one considers the dance history attached to
the Munster region. The popularity of the Jig Set within the region confirmed its place
within the tradition, together with the polkas and slides. While the slide and polka were
essentially functional as dance music, the jig served equally well in the environment of
the session as it did in the set dancing context and so Connie is also noted for his jig
playing. While his taste for the local Sliabh Luachra jigs is evident in Ts. 3, 4 and 5,
Connie is also inclined to adopt any interesting jigs he acquires from his musical
acquaintances in other counties. Connie associates ‘The Sporting Pitchfork’ (Ts. 17) and
'The Rambling Pitchfork' (Ts. 18) with the playing of Patrick Kelly, Co. Clare, while the first set of jigs played (Ts. 1 and 2) is associated with Galway.

When I went up to Clare or to Galway, wherever I went, if I heard a nice jig, I’d always bring that home with me and I’d learn it, whereas more people wouldn’t, they’d prefer to learn reels. I’d learn reels as well like, but I’d always bring the jig ‘cause I’d a liking for jigs (Connie, Tape 4).

Connie’s partiality for hornpipes was obviously inherited from Pádraig O’Keeffe who, it is said, was very fond of this form of ‘listening’ music. This of course is evident in the exclusive six-part version of ‘Johnny Cope’, a tune of Scots origin. This was:

originally a reel which was later used as a tune for a Jacobite song and is still a favourite marching-band standby (Ward, 1976: 29).

It is still unclear as to how this tune became a six-part hornpipe in the Sliabh Luachra tradition. (Ts. 8a contains O’Keeffe’s well known version of the hornpipe, Ts. 8b is Julia’s version of this same tune).

Out of a total of sixty-three tunes which I recorded, Connie only played one slow air and this was due to my specific request for this tune-type. Johnny O’Leary stated, however, that he associates Connie with the playing of reels, jigs and hornpipes, more than polkas, slides and slow airs, although he said that Connie is more than capable of performing these tune-types when requested (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 9). Connie, himself, stated that the occasion seldom arises today for the playing of slow airs:

The occasions, nowadays, doesn’t come up for playing slow airs that much except you’d be doing something such as a concert. I think you have to have a very select crowd for you to play slow airs (Connie, Tape 2).

While Sliabh Luachra is renowned for its slow airs, it seems that few people, today, have the time or the attention span to sit and listen to the performance of this tune-type.

---

1 This tune marks the 1745 Battle of Prestonpans near Edinburgh where the Highland Scots led by Bonnie Prince Charlie, defeated the English. Johnny Cope, the English general, is said to have fled the scene of battle in a state of terror.
Consequently, they are more the exception than the rule in the repertoire of many present-day musicians, although there are musicians who specialise in their performance. (Both the album *The Star above the Garter* and Volume 6 in the *Music from Sliabh Luachra* series, are noteworthy as sources of the renowned local airs of the area).

**A Changed Society - Sliabh Luachra and its transition**

Sliabh Luachra, as with all other rural areas in the country, has undergone great social change from the period in which the above-mentioned archive recordings were made, to the present day. In this section, I intend to give an overview of the interaction between the changing social environment and the manner in which these changes have affected the music both in terms of repertoire and style.

Connie is performing in a different era, in a different social and musical context to that in which Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford performed, when dancing was a commonly shared activity. While continuing in the tradition of these musicians, there is a shifting of focus in Connie’s repertoire (this was identified earlier as a concentration on the listening repertoire of the tradition). If one is to appreciate the elements of change in Connie’s music, it is essential that one is aware of the old Sliabh Luachra tradition, the extent to which dancing was a pursuit throughout the region and the conditions in which this aspect of the tradition flourished, in contrast to the musical environment which exists today.

An underdeveloped infrastructure coupled with an inadequate telecommunication system, both fuelled by a struggling economy, resulted in a type of geographical isolation
for many rural communities in Ireland, whereby the distance travelled by people was
mainly confined to their locality. This geographical isolation resulted in local dialects -
both verbal and musical - traditions, customs and activities, being fostered and nurtured,
but largely contained within specific geographic confines. These confines were dictated
by natural boundaries such as major rivers or mountain ranges (Mac Aoidh, 1981) e.g.
the Connemara mountains separate West Galway from East Galway and while East
Galway is renowned for its unique style of playing, this same style is not associated with
the western part of the county. The area referred to as Sliabh Luachra - which seems to
be ever-expanding today - was once ‘contained’ between the Derrynasagart mountains to
the south and the Mullaghareirk mountains to the north. Musicians within these
geographical boundaries played together, listened to and learned from each another,
exchanged tunes with one another, and perpetuated a particular repertoire, no doubt,
handed down to them by their ancestors - tunes which were representative of their
locality, tunes which were an expression of its people. As a consequence of the limited
transport resources within many rural communities, local music-making flourished. This
gave rise to the term ‘regional style’. Consequently, certain tune-types became strongly
associated with certain regions. Clare, for example, became renowned for its partiality
towards the reel. This is not surprising when one considers the popularity of reel sets in
this part of the country such as the Caledonian, the Plain (Reel) Set, the Labasheeda Reel
Set, the Clare Lancers Set and the Mazurka Set. In Sliabh Luachra, however, the type of
set dance favoured saw a heavy concentration on slides and polkas. As mentioned
earlier, this naturally saw the popularisation of these same tune-types within this region.
It was in this environment that the fiddle music of Cal Callaghan of Doon, Tom Billy
Murphy of Ballydesmond, formerly Kingwilliamstown (illustration 7), Din Tarrant of
Kingwilliamstown and later Pádraig O'Keeffe of Gleannán (illustration 8), and his
pupils, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford of Lisheen, took root. The seeds of this dancing
tradition were firmly planted in the house dances recalled by Julia Clifford in her article in
*The Journal of Cumann Luachra*: “...in my youth, dances were held mainly in houses and
the crossroads...” (Clifford, 1987: 20). Here, local musicians regularly converged on a
particular house in the locality to celebrate the harvest or any other festive occasion
which warranted music-making with and for, neighbours and friends. The dances at the
crossroads were also a celebration of the good times and perhaps a way of restoring
hope when times were hard in the early decades of this century. As a child, Connie
witnessed his mother playing the melodeon for the threshing dances which were so
popular at harvest time. House dances were eventually supplanted by dances in the
dancehalls which became popular in the mid twenties.

The number of dancehalls which were established during the twenties, thirties and forties
in small rural communities is quite astounding. There were three in Gnìomh go Leith,
two in Knocknagree, three in Scartaglen and numerous other halls located in Sliabh
Luachra alone (illustration 9). In his article ‘Going to the Hall’, taken from *The Journal
of Cumann Luachra*, Seán Ó Céilleachair documents the number of dancehalls in Sliabh
Luachra and the popularity of the dance within these. Here, “every second dance was a
polka set interspersed by a fox-trot or old-time waltz” (Ó Céilleachair, 1987: 5). In the
same article, Ó Céilleachair bears testimony to the lack of transport and poor road
conditions at this time:
## Dance Halls In Sliabh Luachra

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Opened</th>
<th>Closed</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballydesmond</td>
<td>Vaughans</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Big dance was the Teachers' dance. Cinderella Dance was very popular here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barraduff</td>
<td>Richard Murphy</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Steve Garvey's band provided the music on the opening night of the new hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Orient Ballroom</td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bealnadeega</td>
<td>Tom O'Mahony</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Evening Dances were very popular here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clamper</td>
<td>Daniel O'Sullivan</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Among the builders was Dan Tarrant. The Gramophone - a novelty at the time - did not work on the opening night. Music was then supplied by Rockhill Bard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Young Dan'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Young Dan' was Dan Tarrant. The Gramophone - a novelty at the time - did not work on the opening night. Music was then supplied by Rockhill Bard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O'Donoghue</td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>This hall re-opened for a short period some years ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Mick the Bridges'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonkeen (Kileen)</td>
<td>Horgans</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Dancing 7 - 10 p.m. Always one musician.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clonkeen (Poulgorm)</td>
<td>O'Connors</td>
<td>1927</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Tady always shook hands to patrons 2d was the admission. Musicians got 7s 0d each (35p).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Tady Willies'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gneeveguilla</td>
<td>Hickey's</td>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>The two main musicians were Jerome O'Sullivan &amp; Joe Conway both from Ballydaly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Dan Sean Gabhas'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Do you remember Paddy's white starched coat? Jimmy Rohan's band on the opening night? Admission 3s 6d (17½p).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O'Connell</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Regularly raided by the clergy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Paddy Marias'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkcummin</td>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Present</td>
<td>Musicians - T &amp; J Brosnan John Ulic, G. Burke and B. Callaghan. Dancing Centre 8 - 10.30 (Adm. 4d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkcummin</td>
<td>Committee</td>
<td>1926</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>The only place in Kerry to hold all night dances. What happened on Aug. 15th 1931?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkcummin</td>
<td>Jack Fleming</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>The door charge was 3d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Small Jacks'</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkcummin</td>
<td>Eugene Moriarty</td>
<td>1933</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Lawlor sold the site of a house to Moriarty. He built the house and ran the old creamery as a Dance Hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knockeenahone</td>
<td>O'Mahoneys</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>1949</td>
<td>The admission was 4d. Sonny Fitzgerald and Tom O'Sullivan were the musicians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knocknagree</td>
<td>Dan Sheehan</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>Rose of Tralee entrances visited the hall in the early sixties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1960s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knocknagree</td>
<td>Mick Herlihy</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td></td>
<td>This hall was rebuilt on the same site by Kelleher of Ballyvourney. Used as a cinema for a while.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacka</td>
<td>Peter Murphy</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Did you ever travel in Peter's lorry to a dance? Patrons often 'stole out' from the dance to go to Vaughans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Vale</td>
<td>Pat O'Riordan</td>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Musicians were Julia Drislane, Nonie Connell and Jack Connell. Often up to 300 attended the dances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Dance Halls in Sliabh Luachra contd.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dance Hall</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lighthouse</td>
<td>Janie Horgan 'Janies'</td>
<td>1927-1930</td>
<td>Built by Dave Loughlin and son Donal. John O'Donoghue was door man. Dave and Dan Curtin, Rockhill were the musicians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathduane</td>
<td>Nolans</td>
<td>1928-1932</td>
<td>The Conways regularly provided the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore</td>
<td>Temperance Society</td>
<td>1912-1929</td>
<td>Built in West End. Promoted by Fr. Brick. Doubtful if ever used for dances but as a library and meeting room. Knocked by Canon Carmody, P.P. Sinn Fein may have used it for dances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore</td>
<td>Paty Cronin</td>
<td>1932-1942</td>
<td>Evening Dances - Adm 3d. Canon O'Sullivan ordered its demolition. Acquired by Dairy Disposal Board but used as a cheese room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore</td>
<td>John C. Cooper</td>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Known as Casino - originally built as a cinema but also used for dancing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(now the Community centre)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rathmore Shinagh</td>
<td>Daniel O'Connor</td>
<td>1931-1935</td>
<td>This was a rather temporary structure used for evening dances. Locals say it had a short but brilliant career for Ceilí and Sets. Morrissey always insisted that they 'stop that Jazzing'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scartaglen</td>
<td>Jerry O'Leary</td>
<td>1917-1949</td>
<td>Built as a school-Private Dancing - Sinn Fein Hall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Browne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scartaglen</td>
<td>John Brosnan</td>
<td>1949-1952</td>
<td>John Brosnan himself and friends provided the music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scartaglen</td>
<td>Dalys Old Hall</td>
<td>1949-1957</td>
<td>First hall in Village at Martin Leans. Terrible rain the night the new hall opened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Hall</td>
<td>1959-1983</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrone</td>
<td>Ryans</td>
<td>1933-1964</td>
<td>Purchased subsequently by Nagles. Sonny Sweeney was the main musician.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tureen</td>
<td>Pady Denny O'Connor</td>
<td>1932-1942</td>
<td>The L.D.F. frequently held their dances here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Illustration 9: A list of the dancehalls in Sliabh Luachra (taken from the article ‘Going to the Hall’, *The Journal of Cumann Luachra*, 1(4), 10-11)
Transport being non-existent, people walked in groups. The exception, who was the proud owner of a bicycle, was more to be pitied than envied as he spent more time carrying the bicycle than it carrying him owing to the poor state of the roads and the inferior tyres (Ó Céilleachair, 1987: 5).

Transport for musicians - Denis Murphy, Jack and Julia Clifford and others - from the Gníomh go Leith dances, which took place from two to six in the afternoon, to the dances held in Ballydesmond, where they danced from seven to ten - took the form of the local Gníomh go Leith hackney. However, these services were limited and only for the privileged few! Alan Ward bears testimony to the rarity of motor cars in 1940’s Sliabh Luachra, in the amusing account he gives of the time both Denis Murphy and John Clifford cycled from Lisheen to Cork “a distance of over fifty miles” in order to make a broadcast. Both musicians returned home again that night as Denis “could not be persuaded to stay in Cork overnight” (Ward, 1976:14).

It was the widespread availability of the motor car, however, which signalled the death-knell of many of the smaller dancehalls. People now travelled outside their locality on the newly tarred roads either in a neighbours car, or, if they were fortunate enough to own one themselves, in their own vehicle, in search of the ‘greener pastures’ of bigger dancehalls. The car, therefore, facilitated the easy transport, not only from one parish to another but soon, from one county to the next. Séan Ó Céilleachair highlights the fact that as motorised transport became more accessible in the 1950’s, rural Ireland would never be the same again:

As the 1950’s progressed, the widespread emergence of the motor car very perceptibly changed lifestyles in rural Ireland. The outside world also began to intrude on Sliabh Luachra and it could be equally claimed that Sliabh Luachra began to intrude on the outside world - people travelled away from their own parishes freely for the first time. This trend couldn’t but interfere with the old pattern of dancing and many halls fell victim to the new turn of events (Ó Céilleachair, 1987: 8).
Before the death-knell of the dancehalls was sounded in Sliabh Luachra, Denis Murphy, Julia Clifford and Pádraig O’Keeffe were in constant demand for the local dances. The account of their being driven from one dance venue to the next - from the four-hour dance in Gniomh go Leith, to the three hour dance in Ballydesmond, in order to supply music for sets - indicates the serious demand for this type of music. It is not surprising then, that these musicians had an extensive knowledge of the tunes associated with these sets. The demand for set dancing music was quite astounding, particularly when one contrasts it with the situation today. While set dancing is still an important aspect of the Sliabh Luachra tradition, it is not, however, as pervasive as it once was - neither in the informal setting of the home, where it is seldom if ever practised now, nor in the more formal environment of the dancehall. In fact, Johnny O’Leary pointed out that while it is cultivated in places such as Dan Connell’s of Knocknagree and Cullen and is practised in areas outside Sliabh Luachra such as Farranfore and Killorglin, session-playing outweighs it in popularity today. It is within this changed social climate that Connie finds himself playing today. He is performing at a time where the session outweighs set dancing in popularity and it is this which has affected his working repertoire significantly.

While their penchant for reels was discussed earlier within a listening context, the primary musical outlet of Denis, Pádraig and Julia was that of the set dance. It is not surprising, then, that Connie noted a difference between his repertoire and that which they perpetuated, a difference expressed in the degree to which the various tune-types are present in his repertoire.

They’d have only about one quarter the amount of reels that I have and I’d have only one tenth of the polkas and slides they had (Connie, Tape 5).
The following observation made by Connie, I feel, highlights his awareness that while he
is certainly in the tradition of Pádraig, Denis and Julia, there are changes in this music -
his music - as the result of performing in a different environment to that described above:

If I lived, if I was born fifty years earlier, a hundred years earlier, I’d play music
completely the same as Denis Murphy and Pádraig O’Keeffe did play it. I’d play
exactly as they played it but ah, due to the fact that I was born when I was...
(Connie, Tape 5).

If he had been a contemporary of Denis, Julia and Pádraig, the musical environment with
which he would be most familiar would have been that of the set.

The degree to which reels are present in this collection of his music, in comparison to
their presence in the repertoire of Pádraig, Denis and Julia, is also seen as a reflection of
his personal taste and the outcome of his travels to annual Fleadhanna Céoil and to
festivals around the country - notably to Galway and Clare. In addition to the repertoire
he has acquired in Sliabh Luachra, he has added to this other noteworthy tunes which he
has acquired on his travels to such counties. His repertoire, therefore, has been
considerably coloured by the music of other regions.

He’d [Connie would] have more experience going up to Clare and up to Galway
and Dublin and everywhere. Connie’s meeting all the top musicians you see
(Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

This seems to be a common trait among present-day exponents of Sliabh Luachra music.

Connie’s repertoire is not confined to that of his locality and neither is the repertoire of
his contemporaries. Nicholas McAuliffe and Anne Sheehy from Castleisland, for
example, have also been influenced by the music of other regions.

Then of course you have Anne Sheehy and Nicholas McAuliffe. They’re two
more that goes outstanding together and they have every tune in the country.
They’re in Clare regular of course playing. They have all the Clare reels too,
along with reels here around, and then they travel out a lot sure (Johnny O’Leary,
Tape 8).
In contrast to this Johnny O’Leary stated that while Denis also travelled to Clare, he did not travel with the same frequency as these three musicians.

Sure Denis usen’t hardly stir [on] occasions. He might go out for a week, then he usen’t go again for two months. That was Denis’ way (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

The Clare tradition, in particular, seems to have had a considerable impact on Connie’s music and this will now be looked at more closely.

The Clare Influence

It is because Connie is located so closely to Sliabh Luachra, has been influenced so strongly by the main musicians of this area and has recognised the musical empathy that exists between Sliabh Luachra and Clare, that his style and repertoire are strongly coloured by both musical traditions.

There’s something about Sliabh Luachra music that always kind of draws me more than any type of music ...Clare music draws me as well but there isn’t a whole lot of difference there (Connie, Tape 5).

The similarities between the music of County Clare and Sliabh Luachra, have always been acknowledged by Sliabh Luachra musicians. In his article ‘A Reappraisal of Irish Fiddle Styles’, Caoimhin Mac Aoidh points out that exchanges between these two musically fertile areas were made possible by the turf boats which crossed the Shannon from Clare, to Counties Limerick and Kerry (Mac Aoidh, 1981). Consequently, polkas and slides often thought of as exclusively Sliabh Luachra in nature can be found in the repertoire of certain Clare musicians, and Connie stated that it is not unusual to find Clare tunes inside the Cork/Kerry border today. Similarly, stylistic similarities between these counties have been noted. The ‘closeness’ in the slide and polka playing of Patrick Kelly, Cree, Co. Clare, with that of Pádraig O’Keeffe, has always, and still remains a
point of fascination for many. Kelly was taught by George Whelan from Fossa, Killarney, one of the old generation of travelling fiddle masters. As he retained this style of playing through his lifetime, it was very difficult to distinguish between the Clare musician and his Sliabh Luachra contemporary.

Very hard to discern which was it, Patrick Kelly or Pádraig O’Keeffe was playing the fiddle if you heard them playing the slides - the very identical same in the polkas and slides... (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 9).

Johnny also stated that Denis Murphy, who met Patrick Kelly on three or four occasions, remarked on the stylistic similarities between Kelly’s and O’Keeffe’s performance of the aforementioned tune-types.

He’s the very same as if ‘ou had him here in Sliabh Luachra. You could sit down and play with him no bother in the world - he was the same as all of ourselves (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 9).

Connie also acknowledged this ‘closeness’:

Patrick Kelly now, he played real Kerry music an awful lot. There’s a lot of tunes he played, he played them very like Pádraig O’Keeffe and vice versa (Connie, Tape 5).

Connie has always admired Patrick Kelly’s playing, as he also admires the music of other Clare musicians - John Kelly, Bobby Casey and Joe Ryan. He spoke about stylistic similarities between both regions and drew attention to the fact that the full length of the bow is favoured in both traditions. In addition to this, the roll is the most favoured mode of ornamentation in both Clare and Sliabh Luachra music. He has always felt a kinship for county Clare and its musicians and has formed strong friendships with many Clare musicians over the years. Two close musical associates are Peadar O’Loughlin of Kilmaley and Paddy Canney: “the great fiddle played from East Clare - up Feakle direction” (Connie, Tape 4).

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2 A general analysis of Patrick Kelly’s style may be found in the article ‘Gnéithe de Cheardafocht Phádraig Ó Cheallaigh’ (Ó Súilleabháin, 1977: 26-27).
Connie visits Clare at least once a year. He spoke of occasions where his friend Jim O’Connor (box player), former Macroom resident, but now residing in Ennis, would have sessions organised. A great deal of music has been exchanged with Peadar O’Loughlin, Paddy Canney, Noel Hill and Tony Linanne over the years. Alternatively, Jim would travel down to Connie’s home with other Clare musicians for some great music-making. He rarely misses the annual Willie Clancy week in Milltown Malbay. During this annual week of music-making, there is ample opportunity to exchange music and to perform with a host of musicians from all parts of the country, and he often joins Johnny O’Leary for ‘serious sessions’ in Hennessy’s pub.

This association of Sliabh Luachra musicians and Clare musicians is well established, however. Denis Murphy’s friendship with Willie Clancy saw the happy exchange of many tunes:

But Denis used always go up to Willie Clancy and Willie used be down along with him above in Gníomh go Leith and Scartaglen (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 9).

Similarly, Connie’s association with the aforementioned musicians, has led to a flavouring of Clare music both in repertoire and style. He associates ‘The Maids of Feakle’ (Ts. 38) with the concertina player Paddy Murphy. ‘The Gooseberry Bush’ (Ts. 35) is associated with a recording of Willie Clancy, while ‘Kitty gone a-milking’ (Ts. 29) is associated with Mrs. Crotty. ‘The Sporting Pitchfork’ (Ts. 17) and ‘The Rambling Pitchfork’ (Ts. 18) are both associated with the playing of Patrick Kelly. These jigs were taken from private recordings made in the home of Patrick Kelly which were made by Séamus Mac Mathúna and Séan Ó Riada. The recordings made by Séamus Mac Mathúna are now stored in the Cultúrlann archive in Rathfarnham in Dublin. ‘Paddy Taylor’s’ reel (Ts. 7) is associated with the playing of Paddy Taylor from West Limerick.
Although Connie associates his version of 'The Shaskeen' (Ts. 20) with the Ballinakill Céilí band from East Galway, this was taken from from Peadar O'Loughlin from Clare. Peadar, however, was associated with the band and recorded an album with Aggie Whyte at one stage. Naturally, versions of tunes played by the band were retained by Peadar and passed on to musicians with whom he has played. This affiliation with County Clare, this empathy with its musicians, both past and present, has undoubtedly strengthened the position of the reel in his repertoire.

If you were going to Clare for a session for the night, you’d no business in going there except you had a lot of reels ‘cause they were going to play very little else...” (Connie, Tape 4).

**The East Galway Influence**

His interest in East Galway music is also reflected in his repertoire. This is evident in his performance of the jigs which he associates with the playing of Paddy Carty (Ts. 2), the flute-player from Loughrea, Co. Galway and the reels which he associates with The Ballinakill Céilí Band e.g. 'The Milliner's Daughter' (Ts. 21), ‘The Mills are Grinding’ (Ts. 22) and their version of ‘The Shaskeen’ (Ts. 20). He admires the playing of Paddy Fahy from Kilconnell in East Galway and pays tribute to his compositional skills. Connie never fails to travel to the West for any noteworthy festivals such as the annual Cooley festival held in Gort, Co. Galway every bank holiday weekend in October. This festival commemorates the renowned local accordion player, Joe Cooley. The token Sligo representation of tunes in this thesis is evident in Connie’s pairing of Michael Coleman’s ‘Feargal O’Gara’ (Ts. 50) and the untitled reel which follows this (Ts. 51), although Connie got these reels from a source other than the Coleman recordings. He also has a deep admiration for the music and the playing of Sligo musicians Peter Horan
Indeed, his entire repertoire - a fraction of which is captured here - is an amalgamation of tunes collected while travelling to Fleadhanna and various festivals in Galway and Clare. His position as an exponent of the Sliabh Luachra tradition is not so introspective as to be oblivious to the music of other regions. Like any other musician actively participating in the tradition he has a healthy interest in that which is musically happening around him. Accordingly, when he hears a tune which appeals to him - irrespective of the tradition from which it comes - he adapts it, injecting it with the Sliabh Luachra nuances of style for which he is renowned. This explains the healthy representation of tunes from other regions, in his working repertoire. It is not surprising, therefore, that Connie is acclaimed for the extensive nature of his repertoire.

The Sliabh Luachra Influence

There’s something about Sliabh Luachra music that always kind of draws me [more] than any type of music...’cause that’s the music I’ve listened to and I understand it better, same as an accent I suppose (Connie, Tape 5).

Despite the varied and interesting repertoire he perpetuates, Connie feels that most of the tunes which he plays are of Sliabh Luachra origin (although the tunes collected here would suggest a 50-50 ratio). The strong Sliabh Luachra element in his playing is not surprising considering he met the late Denis Murphy of Lisheen at a formative stage in his playing life - in his late teens. As stated in Chapter One, Connie had few tunes when he first came into contact with Denis Murphy c.1967 (Connie, Tapes 4 and 10). Johnny O’Leary first introduced him to Denis, the night he brought him back to Denis’ home in Lisheen. A great night of music ensued on this particular occasion! Connie recorded on
a reel-to-reel on this occasion - a recording which he still treasures. This recording is kept in his home in Cill na Martra. He acknowledges that many of Denis’ tunes which he still plays, were recorded on that particular night.

A certain amount of tunes that I got that night that definitely, that stayed with me afterwards, and I still associate ‘em with that particular night (Connie, Tape 6).

Denis apparently was very willing to pass on tunes.

He [Denis] was great to give music and to play. He’d sit down anywhere he’d meet you and play music with you. I don’t know if he’d do it with everybody or not, but that was my experience with him anyway (Connie, Tape 4).

Connie acknowledges Denis as an important source of inspiration to him, both in terms of his style and his repertoire and certain pairings and versions of tunes attest to Denis’ influence. ‘The Banks of the Ilen’ and ‘Tom Billy’s’ (Ts. 9 and 10, 46 and 47) were played as a set by Connie and this pairing was obviously inspired by Denis. Both reels feature as a set on The Star above the Garter album where the former is called ‘Seanbhcan na gCartaf’. ‘Johnny When You Die’ and ‘Anything for John-Joe’ - two reels which are virtually inseparable in Sliabh Luachra - are also played as a set by Connie (Ts. 59 and 60). ‘The Harlequin Hornpipe’ (as it is called on the cassette Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra) or ‘Father Dollard’s’, as it is also known, is also transcribed in Appendix A (Ts. 54). Denis’ influence is most obvious in Connie’s version of ‘The Piper’s Despair’ which is virtually identical to Denis’ version (Connie, Ts. 6 and 64, Denis’ version - Ts. 6a). The above tunes, of course, must be accredited to Pádraig O’Keeffe. As a former pupil of Pádraig’s, Denis, naturally, was an invaluable source of his tunes.

Denis’ influence on Connie was also perceived by Johnny O’Leary.

Ya, he’d have a lot of Denis Murphy’s [tunes], and he’s following Denis Murphy and Pádraig O’Keeffe there a lot now and God, he can play the very same as
them - no problem at all in the world to him...and he's playing some of Denis’ music now, and you’d hardly know one from the other...and he’s a grand loud fiddler... I could play forever with Connie O’Connell and Denis Murphy was the very same (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

Connie also admits to Denis’ importance in terms of stylistic influence.

I learned a lot of tunes from Denis Murphy, so I learned a lot of tricks that he did with these tunes as well - unconsciously - I didn’t realise it at the time. But I was doing that ‘cause I thought that what he was doing with the tune was nice, and I learned it in that particular way. So for that reason, I think I unconsciously learned a lot of his...from there I got a certain amount of my style (Connie, Tape 5).

These elements of style are examined in detail in Chapter Three.

Much of O’Keeffe’s music was passed onto Connie through Denis and his sister Julia. ‘Callaghan’s’ (Ts. 58) and ‘The Doon Reel’ (Ts. 48) were tunes played by Pádraig’s maternal uncle, Cal Callaghan of Doon. Other tunes include ‘The Fisherman’s Hornpipe’ (Ts. 61), ‘The Ballydesmond Polkas’ (Ts. 52 and 53), the six-part version of ‘Kiss the Maid behind the Barrel’ (Ts. 42) and many others. Johnny O’Leary stated that Connie is following O’Keeffe’s tradition even closer now than in the past. The six-part version of ‘Johnny Cope’ evident in Appendix A and attributed to O’Keeffe would suggest that this is so (Ts. 8 - Connie’s version, Ts. 8a - Pádraig’s version).

Connie have ‘em of course. Connie’s after following Pádraig O’Keeffe a lot...He’s like Denis Murphy, Denis was the same (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

While Denis was a vital link between Connie and Pádraig in terms of repertoire, Pádraig’s music was also passed onto Connie through other musicians of the area. For instance, ‘Father Dollard’s’ hornpipe (Ts. 54), was taken from Jerry McCarthy of Scartaglen, a former pupil of Pádraig’s. John Connell and Dan Cronin, two “older musicians” who lived around Ballyvourney, were also extremely important as sources of Pádraig’s music (Connie, Tape 5). Dan Cronin was a flute-player and the son of the late.
Bess Cronin (a renowned singer from the area). John Connell was a singer and a fiddle-player (Connie, Tape 5). Both musicians played regularly with Pádraig, Denis and Julia and they often cycled to Pádraig’s house where a natural exchange of tunes took place. Consequently, they absorbed many tunes from Pádraig, “nearly everything he ever had...” Connie felt (Tape 5). Both of these men were involved in the Comhaltas branch in Ballyvourney (there was no branch in Cill na Martra) and they played regularly at sessions in O’Connell’s Bar there. Connie also played in O’Connell’s Bar and continues to play there occasionally. It was here that he met both Dan and John. Sean Ó Riada also frequented these sessions. Further musical ventures often followed these sessions.

House sessions and parties were organised. A crowd would converge regularly on a particular household, for nights of music, song and dance. The homes of John Connell, Dan Cronin, Sean Ó Riada and Connie O’Connell were popular meeting places. Connie regards Dan and John as important sources of Pádraig’s tunes and recalled occasions when he would specifically ask Dan for his tunes.

There was tunes that Pádraig used to play that I used to try to revive Dan’s mind, to get them hopping you know. It worked on occasions and I think I got a certain amount of music from that source as well” (Gallagher, 1986: 9).

Another important source of southern tunes has been Johnny O’Leary, who now lives in Rathmore. Johnny, who “learned a pile of music from Pádraig O’Keeffe over a course of about seventeen years” and who played with Denis Murphy for the sets over an incredible thirty-four year period (tape 9), is renowned for his superb polka and slide playing and is recognised as an outstanding Sliabh Luachra player. Obviously, he is an invaluable source of tunes, particularly of the more localised slides, polkas and jigs.
Summary

While Connie’s repertoire is influenced by Sliabh Luachra tunes, it is also strongly coloured by the tunes of other regions. This is a result of his travelling to other musically fertile areas such as East Galway and Clare and his partiality towards the music and musicians of such areas. Visits to these counties and friendships established with musicians there have, invariably, seen the adoption of tunes from these regions. This, of course, is a natural outcome of today’s open musical environment. The degree to which reels are represented in his repertoire is partially a product of his exposure to the music of other traditions, but also, and more importantly, it can be explained as a concentration on a part of the Sliabh Luachra tradition that is often side-stepped by others. The core of Connie’s repertoire is focused on the reels, jigs and hornpipes of Sliabh Luachra, rather than on the polkas and slides. To this core he has added tunes which he has acquired from other musical regions and it is for this reason that he is noted for his extensive repertoire. However, this particular repertoire concentration is ultimately seen as a result of his playing in a different time and social context to that of Denis, Pádraig and Julia. In particular, it has been noted in this chapter, that the environment of the session is a more natural and frequent one for Connie than the set dancing environment. It is not surprising, then, that he has concentrated on the ‘listening’ repertoire as opposed to the dancing repertoire of the tradition.
CHAPTER THREE
PITCH, RHYTHMIC VARIATION AND BOWING IN THE MUSIC OF
CONNIE O'CONNELL

In this chapter, I intend to examine the manner in which Connie manipulates aspects of
pitch and rhythm in the seventy transcriptions collected in Appendix A. As stated in
this Appendix, the transcription layout allows the immediate appreciation of any
variation which may occur in either or both dimensions. The study of Connie’s bowing
style is based on transcriptions 64-70, as these comprise the bowed transcriptions of this
thesis.

Any study involving an analysis of the melodic, rhythmic and bowing dimensions in
Irish traditional music, immediately calls to mind publications dealing with these
subject areas. Those on which I concentrate in this chapter include Breathnach, 1971,
McCullough, 1977, Ó Canainn, 1978 and Ó Súilleabháin, 1990. These articles deal in
various ways with the improvisational element of the tradition. Ó Súilleabháin, for
example, draws attention to the fact that certain articles tend to focus on the “product”
rather than the “process”. He then focuses on the improvisational process - “the
creative process” which occurs when the musician interacts with the natural phrasing,
underlying motor rhythm, pitch and structure of the tune itself. Lawrence McCullough
also identifies four main improvisatory elements in any musicians style - “variation in
melodic and rhythmic patterns, ornamentation, phrasing and articulation” (1977: 85).
Breandán Breathnach refers to a type of phrasing (1971: 93) and tone quality (1971: 96)
which characterise the tradition, but focuses mainly on the concept of ornamentation
(1971: 98). He suggests that there are three main forms of ornamentation employed by
the traditional musician in instrumental music - embellishment, melodic variation and
rhythmic variation - and that examples of each type may be found in a single
performance of a tune. Both Breathnach and Ó Canainn give an account of ornaments
suited to the different instruments and those which help distinguish certain regional
styles from others. A combination of these analytical sources is essential for any
analysis attempted on the tunes of the tradition. Consequently, these are referred to at various points throughout this chapter.

I decided to examine Connie’s music under the headings of ‘Pitch’, ‘Rhythmic Variation’ and ‘Bowing’, as I found that these headings allowed a detailed examination of his music. In each of these sections, certain aspects of Connie’s performance style, observed in the tunes which he played, are isolated, discussed in detail and related to the music of Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford, in order to assess his position as an exponent of the Sliabh Luachra fiddle tradition. This, in turn, has highlighted the degree to which Connie is carrying on the tradition of the above musicians and drawn attention to any stylistic changes in the tradition today. As this is a study of Connie’s music, I felt it important that the manner in which he views his own playing should be recorded, together with my views. Thus, as stated in the Introduction, my analysis of his music is punctuated by his comments.

Within the overall context of variation, I will now proceed to deal with the three parameters of pitch, rhythm and bowing in that order.

**Pitch**

In his *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland*, Breandán Breathnach identified different degrees of melodic variation which may occur in a traditional tune, a distinction which is not made by Lawrence McCullough (Breathnach, 1971). Here, Breathnach differentiated between a form of melodic variation which was more structurally orientated, in contrast to the melodic variation of notes of less structural importance.

Variation, the second class of ornamentation, consists in changing or varying groups of notes in the course of the tune...Two different kinds of variation occur...The simplest form consists in changing a note in a group...The second form of variation is an entirely different matter, involving as it does a degree of instant composition. Here the group or bar is varied, perhaps only the skeleton of the phrase being retained (Breathnach, 1971: 101-102).

Breathnach’s second form of ornamentation refers to the displacing of the ‘set accented tones’, a term adopted by Ó Súilleabháin, which caters for those “individual tones
which occur at important accentuated points” within a performance of a tune (Ó Súilleabhaín, 1990: 123). In the jig, for example, these set accented tones occur on beats one and four. Ó Súilleabhaín points out that most variation occurs between these tones.

[Set accented tones] provide an underlying framework for a form of pitch-play which takes place largely between these set tones but which may at times disturb the tones themselves (1990: 126).

Where these tones are disturbed on a large scale, the identity of the tune may change and a new tune may result. This degree of variation, however, is more the exception than the rule in the Irish tradition as a whole.

In Connie’s case, the identity of the tune is never undermined. He concerns himself mainly with the embellishment of the set accented tone. This is achieved through his adoption of:

• the roll
• drones
• double stops
• delayed set accented tones
• grace notes

The Roll

The roll is a much favoured and ever-present form of embellishment in Sliabh Luachra music. Allied with the system of bowing, which is favoured in this part of the country, it has contributed a great deal to the fluid sound, which distinguishes the music of Sliabh Luachra from that of other regions. It is, in fact, a very common ornament throughout Irish traditional music in general and is normally described as involving the note above the main note and the note below in a rolling effect.

Two auxiliary notes, one above and one below, decorate the main note, usually a dotted crotchet, in a five-note sequence, in which all the notes are played in the same bow stroke (Cranitch, 1988: 54).
In this case the roll would appear as follows:

The roll may also decorate the basic crotchet:

In both forms of roll, the emphasis is placed on the main note, in this case the E, and not on the auxiliary notes. The speed at which this ornament is executed ensures that the rhythm of the tune remains intact. It is common for fiddle-players to roll on the first, second and third finger and Connie is no exception. In Connie’s case, the roll on the first finger involves the note a third above the main melody note, the main note and the open string. Thus, he tends to flick with his third finger, as is indicated in the above examples.

The roll on the second finger and the third finger involves the note above and the note below the main melody note:

While these rolls are transcribed as played on the D string, the same pattern applies on all strings. As traditional fiddle-players tend to confine themselves to first position, this form of roll is not possible on the open string.

Since Connie uses the same notes in the first, second and third finger rolls, I decided to use the symbol ∞ to indicate where these rolls occur in his music. In addition to this, as Connie’s tunes are heavily marked by this ornament, I feel that this symbol adds greater clarity to the transcriptions. As early as 1963, Breandán Breathnach felt it necessary to
adopt his own symbols to indicate the occurrence of ornaments throughout the tunes he had transcribed. By including a table of ornaments at the beginning of Volumes 1 (1963) and 3 (1985) of *Ceol Rince na hÉireann*, the symbols were translated into ornaments adopted by the different instruments in the tradition. The instrumentalist could adopt the appropriate form of ornamentation whenever the corresponding symbol appeared in the tunes transcribed. Thus, by avoiding instrument-specific transcriptions, Breathnach increased the accessibility of his transcriptions to various instruments. While Breathnach adopted the symbol $\mathbb{U}$ to indicate the roll, I opted for the symbol quoted above. This symbol has also been adopted in other commercial publications (Cranitch, 1988; Flaherty, 1990).

There are two contexts in which Connie employs the roll. The first is where the roll may occur on beats one and three of the reel, the second - where it occurs on beats two and four. As Connie refers to these as “the roll within the note itself” and “the roll after the note” respectively, these are the terms which I will adopt henceforth.

The roll within the note

![Roll within the note](image)

The roll after the note

![Roll after the note](image)

In my opinion, there are two contrasting energies to be felt in Connie’s music and before I continue to discuss Connie’s use of the roll, I wish to introduce two terms of my own, which I feel represent these energies - ‘hold’ and ‘flow’. ‘Hold’, in this instance, is linked with the successive repetition of a motif or a close variation of that motif. ‘Flow’, on the other hand, is represented by the opposite of this - a succession of intervals, which create an onward moving structure in the music. In our last untaped meeting, Connie and I discussed this aspect of the music in some detail. He felt that the terms ‘hold’ and ‘flow’ were “as good a description as you could get” of the creative energies
within the music itself. These two concepts are represented in the B section of ‘The Mills are Grinding’ (Ts. 22, bars 1-4).

The Mills are Grinding (Ts. 22),
R1, B

Certainly, when one hears this tune played, there seems to be an element of holding in the first two and a half bars which flows into the latter half of bar three and into bar four. It may be significant that a tie occurs at the point where I am suggesting ‘hold’ moves into ‘flow’. It may be equally interesting that as well as occasioning that particular transition, the tie may also have a functional use in adjusting the movement of the bow to allow it to fall back into the natural correlation of the down-bow with beat one of bar four. In describing Connie’s music in these terms, I am not suggesting that the energies created are not actually part of the structure of the music, for in actual fact, it would appear to me that that is the case. However, it is the manner in which Connie interacts with these underlying elements, through the bowing he employs and through his use of ornamentation, which heightens the sense of both. In addition to supporting the concepts of ‘hold’ and ‘flow’, Connie emphasised the importance of a balance between these two opposing, yet complimentary energies, and drew attention to the fact that if a balance was not maintained between the ‘hold’ and the ‘flow’ of the tune, the tune would be “lost”.

If you hold too long, you repeat it too often, the flow is too late coming in, then it’s lost (Connie, last untaped meeting).

Thus, it would appear that the balance between ‘hold’ and ‘flow’ elements in the tune is crucial to the stability of the tune.

‘Hold’ – ‘The roll after the note’

The ‘roll after the note’ is confined to the ‘hold’ sections of the tunes which Connie performs. This is evident in ‘The Mills are Grinding’, the example just quoted. (It is not used in the ‘flow’ of the melody). The repetitive motivic nature of this part of the tune
calls for a high concentration of such rolls. This motivic idea is very common in traditional tunes and it features predominantly in the B sections of these tunes. Further examples of this motivic idea in the tunes which Connie plays include the B section of 'Kitty gone a-milking' (Ts. 29, bars 1-3, 5 and 6) and that of 'Kiss the Maid behind the Barrel' (Ts. 42, bars 1-3 and bar 5; see illustration 10). Generally speaking, when this melodic figure is decorated, the first beat of the bar is played on an up-bow, while the roll, which immediately ensues, is attended by a down-bow. The roll on the second beat, in conjunction with the bowing employed at this point, injects the music with a rhythmic lift for which Sliabh Luachra music is renowned. These bowing patterns are evident in the following bowed transcriptions: 'Killavil Fancy' (Ts. 69, section A, bars 2 and 6) and 'The West Clare Reel' (Ts. 67, section A, bar 3, and section C, bars 1, 3, 5, and 7). This particular pattern was observed wherever this melodic figure arose and so it was also noticed in tunes where the bowings are not transcribed. Further examples of tunes in which it features include 'Johnny Cope' (Ts. 8, sections A and C, bar 3) and 'John O'Shea's' reel (Ts. 37, sections A and B, bar 1).

'The roll within the note' and 'the roll after the note'

At this point, I will give a brief overview of the different effect produced by rolling 'within the note' and rolling 'after the note'. In order to do this, I will examine both Connie's and Denis Murphy's performance of two reels i.e. 'The Banks of the Ilen' and 'Tom Billy's'. Since Connie performed these reels on the two principal recording dates, these tunes feature twice in Appendix A and are numbered Ts. 9 and 46, 10 and 47 respectively. Denis' versions of these tunes are numbered Ts. 46a and 47a accordingly.
The Mills are Grinding, Ts. 22, R1, B

Kitty gone a-milking, Ts. 29, R1, B

Kiss the Maid behind the Barrel, Ts. 42, R1, B

Illustration 10: Examples of 'hold' and 'flow' in the music of Connie O'Connell.
While 'the roll after the note' is reserved for what I have termed the 'hold' sections of the tunes, 'the roll within the note' does not feature at these points. This tends to feature in the 'flow' sections of tunes and Connie is very fond of this form of roll. 'Julia Delaney's' reel (Ts. 11) illustrates this particular point (refer also to transcriptions 1, 2, 12, 17, 18, 25 and 26).

Although both types of roll contribute considerably to the flowing 'feel' or sound which marks his playing, both produce very different effects. The sense of lift, which is produced by rolling 'within the note', is not as pronounced as that produced by rolling 'after the note'. This difference is highlighted in Connie's adoption of 'the roll within the note' in the B section of 'The Banks of the Ilen' (Ts. 9 and 46) where Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford favoured 'the roll after the note' (Ts. 46a).

Where the same note occupies the first two beats of the bar, Connie is inclined to roll on the first beat. In Julia and Denis' version, however, the first beat is unornamented, while the roll is reserved for the second beat. This occurs consistently in their versions of tunes. Their approach, accompanied by an increase in bow pressure and an acceleration in bow speed on this second crotchet beat, results in the production of a 'swell-like' effect, the roll, in particular, accentuating this 'swell-like' feeling. (This 'swell-like' effect will be discussed in further detail in the 'Rhythmic Variation' section of this chapter). Therefore, in the music of Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford, 'the roll after the
note' was not confined to the 'hold' or the motivic sections of tunes, as it is in Connie’s case. Although Connie is very aware of their use of the roll in the aforementioned manner, he nonetheless opts for rolling on the first beat of the bar in this case.

I was conscious of the other thing.. of the roll after the note instead of the roll before, within the note itself.. but I never used it that much - maybe a bit in the tunes that I associate with them - maybe a bit - not that much (Connie, Tape 10).

While it was an effect he liked, Connie stated that he just “never seemed to get around” to actually using the roll in this way (Connie, Tape 10).

This different placing of the roll is also evident in the reel entitled ‘Tom Billy’s’. The manner in which Denis chooses to roll on the second crotchet beat, F sharp, as opposed to the first crotchet F sharp, is once again evident in Ts. 47a (R2, B, and R5, B, bar 1). Connie, however, resorts to his usual practice of ‘rolling within the note’ i.e. rolling on the first crotchet F sharp and this is very obvious in his version of this reel (Ts. 10, bars 1 and 5 throughout the tune, bar 2 of R1, B1, R2, B1 and R3, B1, and bar 3 of R2, B1 and R3, B1). While the F sharp is left 'bare' in his repeat performance of ‘Tom Billy’s’ (Ts. 47, R1, B and R2, B, bar 1), in R3, B, bar 1, the familiar ‘rolling within the note’, which he favours, is, yet again, evident and this, in fact, features consistently in bar 5 of the B section throughout the tune.

In the music of Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford, the exploitation of the roll on the second beat, was, I feel, a feature which arose from playing for dancers - a musical response to that ‘lift’ experienced physically by the dancers. The fact that Connie does not employ ‘the roll after the note’ as Denis, Julia and Pádraig did, is
undoubtedly connected to the fact that he does not play as frequently for the dance as these musicians did. The rhythmic lift in the set dancing environment is not the same as that required in the context of the session. In the set dancing environment, the function of the musician is to prompt those present to dance. In the case of the session, the musician plays for him/herself, with his/her musical associates and often for an informal audience. Thus, it is only natural that lift-inducing musical devices used in the dance environment, such as the placing of the roll on the second beat, may be replaced by other musical practices, within the context of the session. In this case, the roll moves to the first beat producing an entirely different rhythmic effect to that created by its appearance on the second beat.

Droning

The practice of droning was identified as another feature “contributing to the identity of fiddle styles” by Lawrence McCullough (1977: 91). Sliabh Luachra musicians have always been most partial to this practice, particularly in their adoption of the open string drone. This form of drone features consistently in the performances of Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford and appears to be an integral part of their style. At times, the concordance and discordance implications of these drones seem irrelevant. It is a practice, therefore, which seems to draw its inspiration from its rhythmic effect and colours a great deal of their music.

It is often quite difficult to decipher the exact rhythmic positioning of these drones. ‘John Mahinney’s’ jig, played by John and Julia Clifford and their son Billy on The Star above the Garter, provides one with a perfect example of this. While Julia is the only fiddle-player performing on this recording, the drones are employed in such a manner as to virtually defy exact rhythmic pinpointing. In contrast to this, Julia’s version of the hornpipe, ‘Johnny Cope’, as played on The Humours of Lisheen (Ts. 8b), sees the drone used in a far more pronounced and definite fashion. Here, a striking sub-rhythm is created by virtue of the G, D and A drones, which are very prominent throughout the tune. The D drone, in particular, is used to remarkable effect in bar 1, where it
punctuates the tune on beats 2, 3 and 4. This adds a rhythmic solidity to the hornpipe, which can only be truly appreciated when heard. The manner in which these drones interact with and punctuate the rhythm of the tune is discussed towards the end of this section.

Johnny Cope (Ts. 8b),

Connie also favours droning in his performances. This is obviously a practice derived from his predecessors, a fact which he acknowledges:

'Tis heavily practised by the likes of Pádraig O'Keeffe. I think, even though you don't do these things consciously, you hear something done by somebody, something you admire in their music or whatever and you're going to try and do that yourself. If I learned a tune for instance, no matter who I learned it from... I have a tendency to try and play that tune in the same - not in my style, but in the style of the player that I learned it from. So therefore like, if you're going to hear somebody use the G string or the D string in a drone, or an A, first finger on the G string or whatever kind of drone, you're going to use [that] you know or double stops or whatever. Hearing that done by somebody like Pádraig O'Keeffe or someone like that, you're going to try [it], it sounds nice to you and why not do it again. And that would be the main reason why you'd be doing these things is because you hear the other person doing it. It sounds nice (Connie, Tape 10).

Like the older Sliabh Luachra musicians, Connie is particularly fond of using open strings as drones. While the open string may be struck above or below the string which carries the tune, the latter is far more prevalent in Connie's music than the former.

Different touches of the open string were observed in Connie's playing. While some of these touches were very pronounced, many of them were extremely slight and, in fact, in some cases they are barely audible. Examples of slight drones include those which occur as a result of the sympathetic vibration of, for example, the open G string with the stopped G on the D string. Here, an harmonic-type sound reverberates throughout the fiddle. An example of this can be heard in the A section of 'The Turnpike Gate' (Ts. 40). There is also the case where a particular string resounds due to the finger movement from one string to the next. 'The Piper's Despair' (Ts. 6) contains examples of this (section A, bar 1, and bar 5 - R1, A1, R2, A and A1, R3, A and A1). Here, the
fourth quaver beat in both bars, an A, is persistently accompanied by an open D string. This is due to the lifting of the third finger off the D string as the fingers move to the A string as the tune progresses. Consequently the D resounds - if only at a low dynamic level. All such drones were included in the transcriptions, as they tended to result in a sub-rhythm, which, working against the basic underlying motor-rhythm that attends all tune-types, could not be ignored.

The Open String Drone

The open string is used quite prominently in Connie's playing for harmonic effect. While this may be struck above the string which carries the tune (refer to Ts. 31), it is mainly struck below the melodic line and this is used to great effect by Connie. The manner in which the open string is used to accentuate the tonic, at various points throughout certain tunes, is a recurring practice which I observed in the tunes transcribed. These drones may be clearly struck or just slightly touched. Two examples of this include 'The West Clare Reel' (Ts. 33 - unbowed version; Ts. 67 - bowed version) and 'The Mills are Grinding' (Ts. 22, section A). In both of these reels, the open string is struck in a definite manner and this accentuates the tonic, by reinforcing it at the beginning and during the course of these tunes. The first four bars of Ts. 22, quoted below, illustrate this particular point.

The Mills are Grinding (Ts. 22),
R1, A

This form of drone is heavily practised by Connie:

I have a tendency, anyway, when I hit with the third finger in either the D, the A or the E, you can cover the full octave there by drawing in the open string drone below, and you have the full octave there and you can use it to your advantage, anywhere you want to (Connie, Tape 10).

Connie's use of the drone is motivated by his internal harmonic idiolect and he is more aware of its harmonic implications than its rhythmic effect. For Connie, the drone on the fiddle functions as an harmonic support, which, like the bass of the button accordion,
'fills out' the tune. The harmonic support provided by the drone is such that Connie feels it is on a par with the backing by another instrument:

Not a rhythmic thing. It kind of harmonises. It fills, it gives a fuller sound to the music itself. You know, 'tis very much the same as if it was being backed by something else, by another instrument. It works to a certain extent in that direction. Same as an accordion. Why have you the bass in the left hand, like? (Connie, Tape 10)

The drones also produce a particular rhythmic effect, however, and the accent markings evident in 'The Mills are Grinding' (Ts. 22, quoted above), were used to highlight this rhythmic aspect to which the harmonic has given rise.

This form of drone is also employed in reinforcing other key notes such as the dominant. This is evident in the B section of 'The Liffey Banks' (Ts. 19 - unbowed version, last bar, all rounds). Here, the dominant, D on the A string, is attended by the open D string. As a consequence of highlighting the dominant, the need for the return of the tonic in the A section is rendered more urgent.

While the end of the B section, quoted above, sees the accentuation of the dominant, the open string is used to reinforce the tonic at these points more frequently. An example of this is evident in 'The Milliner's Daughter' (Ts. 21, R1, B, R1, B1, R2, B1 and R3, B, bar 8).

This form of musical punctuation is also evident in 'The Shaskeen' (Ts. 20, section B, last bar). Here, it is interesting to observe the manner in which the harmonic progression implied in the tune at this point i.e. $\text{I} - \overline{V} - \text{I}$, is reinforced by the relevant open
strings. Although these tend to ‘drift in’, they are, nonetheless, a recurring feature in this section. This is evident in R1, B, R2, B and R2, B1.

The Shaskeen (Ts. 20)

In the remaining rounds, the open G string which appears on the first beat of the bar is absent. However, this harmonic progression is still felt by virtue of the G present in the tune itself on beat 1 and through the open D and G strings employed on beats two and three respectively.

The Shaskeen (Ts. 20),

The B section of ‘The Maids of Feakle’ (Ts. 38, bar 5), serves as yet another example of the open string drone. In this instance, the open D is used in a syncopated context.

The Maids of Feakle (Ts. 38),

In ‘John O’Shea’s’ reel (Ts. 37, section A, bar 6), the open D string adds further rhythmic interest to the tune. Here, the inclusion of the open D after R1, A and the increase in frequency with which it occurs as shown in examples (ii) and (iii), results in a rhythmic excitement which can only be appreciated through the aural experience.
This technique was used to great effect by Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford, particularly for rhythmic effect. (It is interesting, then, that Connie remarked on the harmonic and not the rhythmic significance of these drones!) As stated at the beginning of this section, Julia’s version of the six-part hornpipe ‘Johnny Cope’ (Ts. 8b), learned from her teacher, Pádraig O’Keeffe, attests to the employment of open string drones on a wide scale. Throughout the entire tune, the employment of drones, in particular the D drone, sets up an exciting sub-rhythm which works against and punctuates the rhythm of the tune itself. This rhythm, in turn, works against the motor-rhythm model described by Ó Súilleabháin which, he points out, lies at the heart of all traditional tunes (1987: 121-122). At this point, one hears the interplay of these two rhythmic levels - the rhythmic values that attend the tune itself and the sub-rhythm supplied by the drones - while keeping in mind the third level against which these work - the basic motor-rhythm. In Connie’s case, this type of rhythmic activity is condensed into the example quoted above - ‘John 0’Shea’s’ (Ts. 37). This tends to lend great rhythmic excitement to the tunes in which it features. It is something which he introduces into his tunes occasionally and, as stated earlier, it is a practice obviously derived from his predecessors.
Double Stopping

In his article, *Music from Sliabh Luachra*, Alan Ward points out that while open string droning features prominently in the music of the older generation of Sliabh Luachra musicians:

deliberate chords using the string above that carrying the melody are virtually unknown, except, that is, with players who have copied these features direct from such sources as Michael Coleman’s records... (Ward: 1976, 21).

There are, however, a few interesting examples of ‘deliberate chords’ in Connie’s playing which, I feel, warrant attention.

Of particular interest is the double stop which features in Ts. 31, an untitled reel (section A, bar 4, all rounds). In this reel, Connie juxtaposes an open string drone with this double stop to interesting effect. Both the drone and the double stop are struck above the string carrying the tune.

Reel - Untitled (Ts. 31), R1, A

The parallel fifth progression from beat four of bar 3, to beats two and three of bar 4, throughout the A section, is quite an amazing sound to hear in this tune. Because of its unusual sound and the manner in which it seems to ‘drift in’ through Connie’s playing, I initially thought that the double stop struck on beat 2 of bar 4 was a consequence of the position of the third finger over the G and D strings and, as such, was not intended by Connie. However, Connie stated that the double stop was intentional, and that it was a feature which he occasionally adopts in his playing. He explained that since the third finger was positioned over the G string, it was only natural that he stop the string above this with the same finger - it was the “convenient” thing for him to do at this point.

It works in the sense that . . .you’re drawing you’re third finger flat across the two strings. ‘Tis convenient and by doing it, ‘tis going to sound okay - by doing it in a sparing sort of way (Connie, Tape 10).

Connie was also aware of its harmonic implications. This is hinted at in the latter comment - that this double-stop should be used in “a sparing sort of way”. The C# and
G# are, he continued, “two notes, they don’t harmonise, but by using them in a sparing sort of way, [they give a] jarring sort of effect and make you sit up” (Connie, Tape 10). This double stop seems to be a deliberate shock tactic and ‘spices up’ the music. Also of interest here, is Connie’s desire to make the listener “sit up”. Certainly, the parallel fifth movement which occurs in this tune has that desired effect on the listener. Connie, however, acknowledged the fact that it is “a very delicate sort of situation” and that it is crucial that the ‘right’ balance is struck here:

But it’s a very delicate sort of situation. If you’re going to override with the G# against the C#, ‘tis going to sound terrible. You know ‘tis a thing - very subtle sort of thing - that if it isn’t used properly, ‘tis a disaster...You have this very delicate balance between the two things which has to be right (Connie, Tape 10).

The occurrence of the double stop, as a result of the “convenient” positioning of a particular finger over two strings, is also seen in the B section of the untitled reel, Ts. 32 (Rs. 1, 3 and 4, bar 8). Here, the main melody note on the second half of beat 2 is an E on the D string. However, the first finger also lies flat across the A string at this point. Consequently, the B drone ‘drifts in’ above the main melody note (Rs.1, 3 and 4), resulting in a double stop - if only for this quaver beat. The parallel fifth movement from the double stop, E:B, to the open string drone, D:A, is, yet again, present and commands the attention of the listener. This may also be seen in Ts. 51 (R2, A, bar 4, beats 3 and 4). Here, parallel fifth movement occurs from the double stop, E:B, to open strings D:A (the E and D are the melody notes, the B and A above these notes ‘drift in’ accordingly). A similar example occurs in Ts. 11, R2, A (last quaver beat of bar 5 onto the dotted crotchet of bar 6). An additional example of this parallel fifth movement can be seen in R2, A1 (beats 3 and 4 of bar 1) of this same tune. At this point, the main melody note, F on the D string is attended by a stopped C on the A string. This moves to the double stop, E:B, the dotted crotchet of bar 2.

**Stopped Strings:**

Throughout the transcriptions, there are few examples which feature a stopped string being struck below the melody, resulting in a double stop. Out of the sixty-three tunes
transcribed, there are very few tunes in which the first finger stops the string below the main melody note. (Refer to: ‘The West Clare Reel’ (Ts. 33, section C, bars 1, 3, 5 and 7, beats 3 and 4), ‘The Maids of Feakle’ (Ts. 38, R1, A1, bar 4, beats 3 and 4) and ‘The Galtee Rangers’ (Ts. 56, R2, A, bar 6, beats 1 and 2 and the first half of beat 3)).

The Galtee Rangers (Ts. 56),
R2, A

There are few examples of the second finger stopping the string below the melody line (refer to Ts. 2 and Ts. 26, R3, B1, both untitled jigs). In both of these jigs, the second finger stops the string a fourth below the melody line. The double stop is reserved for the last bar of the tune and is struck in a marked fashion. While this is a common sound in traditional fiddling and is normally found at the end of phrases, it is not heavily practised by Connie.

Jig - Untitled (Ts. 2),
R3, B1

Another example of this may be found in ‘The Maids of Feakle’ (Ts. 38, R2, A and R3, A, beats 3 and 4).

The only examples of the third finger stopping the string below the melody line, are evident in ‘Killavil Fancy’ (Ts. 41, R2, A and R4, A, bar 2, beat 3).

Killavil Fancy (Ts. 41),
R2, A

Connie seldom uses the fourth finger to stop the string below the melodic line. A rare example of this occurs in Ts. 27, an untitled reel (R2, B1, first quaver beat). Here, an open E is accompanied by the stopped E on the A string, if only briefly.
On the whole, when a string is stopped below the main melody note, this is struck in a far more pronounced fashion than strings stopped above the melody line.

While Connie has, undoubtedly, followed in the footsteps of Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford in his adoption of the open string drone, the presence of double stops in his music may indicate a slight departure from their music. However, there are so few examples of deliberate chords in the tunes transcribed, that this ‘departure’ would almost certainly pass unnoticed to those outside the Sliabh Luachra tradition.

*Delayed Set Accented Tones*

Another form of melodic variation is evident in the manner in which Connie delays the entry of the set accented tone, through his use of anticipatory notes. These set accented tones ‘should’ occur on beats one and three in the reel. However, Connie tends to displace these by half a beat through inserting a note on the main beat - other than the set accented tone - before the main melody note. The B section of ‘Sweeney’s Dream’ (Ts. 13, Rs. 1, 2, 3 and 4, bar 6, beat 3), serves as a classic example of such a delay. The set accented tone is F#. This ‘should’ occur on the first half of the third beat, but Connie delays its entry by half a beat through the insertion of the anticipatory note - E - directly on the third beat.

*Sweeney’s Dream (Ts. 13),
Rs. 1, 2, 3 & 4

Sometimes this form of musical variation gives an impression of sliding. The slide, however, is a musical device which does not feature prominently in Connie’s musical
vocabulary. In fact, it rarely occurs in his playing.

The tendency to delay the set accented tone is obviously inherited from Connie’s predecessors. An example of it may be seen in Denis Murphy’s rendition of ‘Tom Billy’s’ (Ts. 47a, B section, Rs. 1, 3 and 4, bar 1).

Tom Billy’s (Ts. 47a),
R1, B

Similar delays are noted in Connie’s rendition of ‘The Boys of the Lough’ (Ts. 23, bar 5, beat 3, R1, B1, R2, B1 and R3, B1). Another example of this form of variation may be seen in ‘The West Clare Reel’ (Ts. 33). Here, the C section is heavily marked by this melodic tendency (bars 1 and 2 are quoted below). In bar 1, both the anticipatory note, the quaver B, and the set accented tone, the crotchet C, are marked by a stopped E drone. The displacement of the set accented tone by a half beat results in syncopation. A quaver-crotchet-quaver motif occurs at this point as a consequence of this displacement. This is a form of rhythmic variation Connie frequently adopts and it will be discussed in more detail in the rhythmic sub-section entitled ‘Syncopation’.

The West Clare Reel (Ts. 33),
R1, C

In terms of the over-all effect, approaching the set accented tone from below - beat 3, bar 1 and beat 1, bar 2 - results in a softer, more ‘rounded’ approach than that which would result if the main melody note was articulated ‘head on’. This technique features quite prominently in Connie’s playing and it finds expression once again in ‘The Shaskeen’ (Ts. 20, section B, bars 1 and 5, beat 3, and R1, A, bar 7, beat 1).
The Shaskeen (Ts. 20),
R1, R2 & R3, B
\[\text{etc.}\]
The 'quaver-crotchet-quaver' syncopated rhythmic figure noted in 'The West Clare Reel' (bar 1, beats 3 and 4) - a consequence of this melodic practice - is also evident in 'The Shaskeen' (section B, R2, B1, and R3, B and R3, B1, bar 3).

The Shaskeen (Ts. 20),
R2, B1
\[\text{etc.}\]
R3, B
\[\text{etc.}\]
R3, B1
\[\text{etc.}\]

Grace Notes

In his *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland*, Breandán Breathnach isolates and discusses the different types of grace note and their function.

The primary function of the single grace note is to emphasise an accented note, but pipers often use it to separate notes of the same pitch. It is also used to good effect before the unaccented notes of a group, imparting a lift or skip to the music. The double grace notes in the form abA are favoured by fiddle players....The roll, or group of three grace notes, is a most effective form of decoration (1971: 99).

The single grace note features consistently in the tunes which Connie plays and is used, in particular, to separate two notes of the same pitch. The double grace note is also a common form of melodic embellishment which he adopts (Ts. 1, an untitled jig, contains examples of both forms of grace note), while the roll has already been shown to be a favourite form of embellishment. In Connie's music, it is the technique of prefixing a rolled note with a lower grace note, which is of most interest and it is this on which I will
briefly focus at this point. Ts. 12, an untitled reel, serves as an example of this common practice in his music (bar 2, beat 1, R1, A1, R2, A, R2, A1 and R3, A1).

Reel - Untitled (Ts. 12),
R1, A1
\[\text{\begin{tikzpicture}[baseline=(current bounding box.center)]
  \draw[thick] (0,0) -- (0.5,0) -- (0.5,0.5) -- (0,0.5) -- cycle;
  \draw[thick] (0.5,0) -- (1,0) -- (1,0.5) -- (0.5,0.5) -- cycle;
  \draw[thick] (1,0) -- (1.5,0) -- (1.5,0.5) -- (1,0.5) -- cycle;
  \draw[thick] (1.5,0) -- (2,0) -- (2,0.5) -- (1.5,0.5) -- cycle;
  \draw[thick] (2,0) -- (2.5,0) -- (2.5,0.5) -- (2,0.5) -- cycle;
\end{tikzpicture}}\]

etc.

This is a very common technique in the music of Sliabh Luachra and Connie confirmed the regional origins of this device.

That’s definitely a method of using rolls. You know, they play the note below first and they roll the one above and they wanted a kind of sliding effect which they weren’t sliding anything - that sort of effect... (Connie, Tape 5).

It is, in fact, something he associates with the playing of slides and polkas. It is a technique which features consistently in his playing and is evident in many of the tunes transcribed. While the grace note is not clearly audible, the difference between this approach to the F# and the ‘head-on’ articulation of the F# is obvious in performance. Further examples of this are evident in ‘Julia Delaney’s Reel’ (Ts. 11, section A, bars 3, 6 and 7, beat 3). In addition to prefixing rolled notes, this tune contains examples of the grace note preceding unrolled notes. This is evident in section A, bars 1 and 5, beat 3. It is also evident in bar 2, R1, A and R2, A, beat 3. Here, the grace note, E, delays the entry of the unrolled F#. With the first finger on the D string, the second finger slowly descends and at an angle. This results in quite a pronounced sliding effect, although a slide is not actually employed at this point.

Julia Delaney’s (Ts. 11),
R1, A
\[\text{\begin{tikzpicture}[baseline=(current bounding box.center)]
  \draw[thick] (0,0) -- (0.5,0) -- (0.5,0.5) -- (0,0.5) -- cycle;
  \draw[thick] (0.5,0) -- (1,0) -- (1,0.5) -- (0.5,0.5) -- cycle;
  \draw[thick] (1,0) -- (1.5,0) -- (1.5,0.5) -- (1,0.5) -- cycle;
  \draw[thick] (1.5,0) -- (2,0) -- (2,0.5) -- (1.5,0.5) -- cycle;
  \draw[thick] (2,0) -- (2.5,0) -- (2.5,0.5) -- (2,0.5) -- cycle;
\end{tikzpicture}}\]

etc.

Thus, the grace note, in both these instances, serves as another form of melodic embellishment. In conjunction with delaying the set accented tone, it contributes towards creating a more rounded, fluid sound.
Summary

In terms of melodic embellishment, Connie has been inspired by the music of Pádraig, Denis and Julia in a) his adoption of the roll as a form of ornamentation (although it was discovered that there is some variation in the manner in which the roll is placed in Connie’s music), b) his partiality towards open string droning, c) his tendency to delay the entry of the set accented tone through his use of anticipatory notes and d) the manner in which he prefixes certain set accented tones with a lower grace note. The few examples of double stopping in his playing indicate a slight departure from their music, where deliberate chords seldom featured. However, in this section, I also pointed out that there are so few examples of chords in Connie’s music, that this difference would probably not be perceived by those outside the Sliabh Luachra tradition.

Rhythmic Variation

Due to the strong dance tradition associated with Sliabh Luachra, the music of this area has always been characterised by a remarkable rhythmic ‘lift’ - music for the dance necessitating a strong rhythmic drive. Denis Murphy’s rendition of ‘Tom Billy’s’ (also referred to as ‘The New Post Office’ on the recording Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra), is an example of the amazing and unique lift which was practised by musicians of this area, in the set dancing environment (Ts. 47a). This was achieved by virtue of their unique style of bowing, through which they varied the basic motor rhythm of each individual tune-type, within the thirty-two bar structure of the standard round. This basic motor rhythm is evident in the theoretical representation of a) reels\(\frac{4}{4}\)\(\text{III III III III}\) b) jigs\(\frac{6}{8}\)\(\text{III III}\) c) hornpipes\(\frac{4}{4}\)\(\text{III III III III}\) d) slides\(\frac{12}{8}\)\(\text{III III III III III III}\) and e) polkas\(\frac{4}{4}\)\(\text{}\). It is against this basic rhythmic framework that the musician improvises a rhythm of his/her own. It is in the improvisation of such an idiosyncratic rhythm that the feeling of ‘lift’ is generated, a feeling which Ó Suilleabháin describes as “an invitation to dance” (Ó Suilleabháin: 1990, 123). Ó Suilleabháin identifies two ways in which lift is achieved - through variation of the rhythmic cells present on the one hand
and through a process of accentuation on the other (1990: 122). Where the fiddle-player is concerned, it is the bow which is primarily responsible for such variation and accentuation. Connie’s bow-hand will be examined in detail in the ‘Bowing’ section of this chapter. In this rhythmic section, I intend to look at the manner in which Connie varies the basic rhythmic values of the different tune-types. I will discuss the main rhythmic ornaments which Connie employs, as observed in the tunes transcribed. I will examine his use of the triplet initially. In Connie’s music, three types of triplet occur and these will be discussed separately. Connie’s tendency to syncopate the basic note-values of tunes will then be discussed. Towards the end of this section, I will briefly look at the combined parameters of pitch and rhythm and show how their simultaneous manipulation can result in extremely subtle but skilled variation. I will end this section with a comparison between the rhythmic lift in the music of Denis Murphy and Connie, for it is in this area that the difference between Connie and his predecessors can be most felt.

*The Triplet*

Three types of triplet are employed by Connie.

1. **The Monotone Triplet/The Cran/The Treble**

Here, three notes of the same pitch are bowed separately within a triplet rhythm. The bow stroke is short and involves a quick flick of the wrist. The term ‘monotone triplet’ is a term which I have adopted, in order to distinguish it from those triplets wherein there is pitch variation. Connie refers to this rhythmic ornament as ‘cranning’, a term associated with piping. The term ‘trebling’ is widely used by traditional fiddle-players to describe this rhythmic ornament.

![Monotone Triplet](image)

Although Ó Canaínn states that “traditional fiddlers tend to do all their trebles with the same bowing and few of them are able to treble with equal facility up and down” (1978: 94-95), Connie is equally adept at initiating the treble with an up-bow as he is with a down-bow.
2a. The Ascending Triplet

Here, the ascending interval of a third is filled in. The quavers B–D become a triplet, B, C#, D (as transcribed below), or E–G becomes E, F#, G.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{C}
\end{array}
\]

This is classed as “the second type of embellishment” by Breathnach (1971: 101). (The first type of embellishment focuses on grace notes (1971: 99)). Ó Canainn points out that in the case of certain triplets, the first two notes may be “considerably shortened and the emphasis placed on the last note” Consequently, “the effect is that of a decoration of the last note by the two preceding notes”. For this reason and because Connie has a strong tendency to bow this triplet as follows: \[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{C}
\end{array}
\]
, this may also be notated as two semiquavers and a quaver, as indicated:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{C}
\end{array}
\]

(Refer to 'The Piper's Despair', Ts. 64, R1, A, bar 6, and bars 2 and 6 of successive rounds).

2b. The Descending Triplet

This also corresponds with Breathnach’s “second type of embellishment” (1971 :101). Here, the descending interval of a third is filled in. Thus, the quavers F# to D, become the triplet F#, E, D, and Connie tends to bow this triplet in a similar manner to its ascending counterpart.
3. The Cut Cran

I decided to call this form of triplet 'the cut cran', as Connie felt it was a combination of both the cran and the cut.

This may be bowed in a similar fashion to the ascending and descending triplet, or it may be bowed separately.

Triplets 2a, 2b and 3, could also be classed as a form of melodic variation. However, since they observe the same rhythmic values as the treble and since "ornamentation within the dance music tradition is largely a rhythmic rather than a melodic one" (Ó Súilleabháin: 1990, 122), these are classed as a form of rhythmic variation. Although triplets 2a, 2b and 3 may be bowed separately by Connie or, indeed, bowed three notes to the bow, Connie is more inclined to adopt the '2 + 1' bowing system outlined above.

1. The Monotone Triplet/ The Cran/The Treble

While the separately-bowed treble is a rhythmic ornament widely practised in the Donegal and Clare fiddle traditions, it seldom featured in Sliabh Luachra music. The fact that it was exceptional in the music of the latter area is evident in Alan Ward’s booklet, *Music from Sliabh Luachra* (1976). Here, Ward states that the appearance of the treble in Julia Clifford’s playing in the sixties, was a consequence of her absence from her home in Sliabh Luachra during this time.

For a while in the sixties, Julia moved quite a distance from the Sliabh Luachra base and, for instance, we hear some trebling and relatively little open-string drone on *The Star of Munster Trio* (Ward: 1976, 23).
However, a period spent in her Sliabh Luachra home soon rectified this.

But more recently, after her stay in Ireland, the trebling has gone and the drone is back in continuous use (Ward: 1976, 23).

Although two examples of this treble may be found in Julia’s version of the six-part hornpipe ‘Johnny Cope’ on The Humours of Lisheen album (Ts. 8b, sections A and E, bar 4), this was more the exception than the rule. This form of ornament was more suited to the detached sound favoured by Northerners, than to the fluid sound favoured by Sliabh Luachra musicians. Yet, it is a rhythmic ornament which features quite often in Connie’s music. Johnny O’Leary also drew attention to the frequent use of the treble in Connie’s playing and commented on the “sharp bowing” which attends this:

and he does it in a lot of reels, Connie, he does a lot of that sharp bowing (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 9).

The extent to which the treble features in Connie’s music, distinguishes his playing from that of older Sliabh Luachra musicians. Connie, himself, admits that this is one of the areas in which he differs from his predecessors. He feels that this is the result of the impact which radio and television has had on his music and on that of his musical contemporaries within the region. He also acknowledges the influence of the musical tradition of Clare in his adoption of the cran:

I listened to a lot of Clare fiddle players and so forth down through the years which would have had an effect [on me]...There’s a lot of people up in Clare - the likes of Joe Ryan, Junior Crehan, Bobby Casey, and all these people, they all use cranning and I listened to them down through the years...I’d say it influenced me, ya (Connie, Tape 10).

He is aware, too, that the music of Paddy Cronin from Sliabh Luachra, has influenced him in this respect. Although Paddy was born in Sliabh Luachra, he has spent most of his life in the United States and would be classed as a ‘less typical’ Sliabh Luachra musician. The aural nature of the tradition, the fact that Connie himself stated that when he plays a tune, he plays it as close to the source from which it came, irrespective of regional origin, has, undoubtedly, resulted in his adoption of this rhythmic ornament.

There are other factors which have influenced Connie in his adoption of such rhythmic ornaments. Connie feels that the distance of his home from Denis Murphy’s may have
resulted in his adoption of ornaments such as this. Similarly, he acknowledges, that as he
did not “spend enough time with Denis Murphy”, stylistic differences between his music
and that of the older generation of Slieagh Luachra musicians, were only natural (Connie,
Tape 10). This was, interestingly enough, a point also made by Johnny O’Leary and one
which will be examined later in relation to the different lift which, in particular,
distinguishes Connie’s music from Denis’. Certainly, it must be said that if Connie had
had a longer period of time with Denis Murphy, or if he had met him when younger, it is
unlikely that ornaments such as the treble would feature in his playing. However, this
ornament adds a tremendous rhythmic dynamism to his performance in general and
marks him, once again, as an individual operating within the Slieagh Luachra tradition.
This rhythmic ornament features quite prominently in ‘Sweeney’s Dream’ (Ts. 13) and in
‘Hand Me Down The Tackle’ (Ts. 14), both popular tunes played throughout the
country. It also appears in ‘Kitty gone a-milking’ (Ts. 29), a tune which he associates
with Mrs. Crotty of Clare. It is also evident in the C section of ‘Paddy Taylor’s’ (Ts. 7,
bars 2 and 6, beats 1 and 3).

Here, a roll would have ‘softened’ the sound (and would, undoubtedly, have been
adopted by Pádraig, Denis and Julia), but Connie adopts the separately bowed treble at
this point in the tune. The articulation of the three triplet G’s serves as a contrast to the
fluid bar 1, the latter rendered so by the adoption of the earlier mentioned anticipatory
notes. (In this case, the anticipatory note is an E and the rolled note is a crotchet F#).
Indeed, this entire section sees the alternation of more fluidly-bowed bars - bars 1, 3, 5
and 7 (rendered so by virtue of the slurs and rolls which Connie employs) - with
predominantly separately bowed bars - bars 2, 4, 6 and 8. Thus, an interesting balance,
between the fluid and the detached, is evident in this section of the tune.

Since the treble is part of his music idiolect, it has, naturally, found its way into more
local tunes where they were not usually found, for example, it is evident in in Connie’s
rendition of ‘Johnny When You Die’ (Ts. 59, R1, A bar 5, R2, A, bars 1, 3 and 5, and R3, A, bars 1 and 3). Not surprisingly, the performance of this reel by Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford on *The Star above the Garter*, sees the adoption of a roll at this point. It appears that the treble has become such a natural form of variation for Connie, that it has become an intrinsic part of his own compositions. Consequently, it is evident in his composition entitled ‘The Torn Jacket’ (Ts. 62) and the untitled reel which immediately follows this (Ts. 63).

While the treble regularly features in Connie’s music, there are times when the fluid nature of the Sliabh Luachra tradition ‘breaks out’ and Connie inserts a roll instead of this rhythmic ornament. Connie could, for example, insert a treble at the opening of ‘The Milliner’s Daughter’ (Ts. 21).

![The Milliner's Daughter](image)

However, he inserts a roll at this point.

![The Milliner's Daughter](image)

Similarly in bar 2 of ‘Killavil Fancy’ (Ts. 41), Connie could, once again, insert a treble which would work very well.

![Killavil Fancy](image)

However, as he prefers a smoother sound here, he opts for the roll.
Admittedly, he adopts a treble in the following bar (bar 3, beat 3). However, Connie cannot roll on the open A which occurs in the tune at this point and so the treble is adopted (R1, A, bar 3).

2a. The Ascending Triplet

The ascending triplet is an integral part of Connie’s style. The manner in which this embellishes the melodic line is evident in Ts. 31, an untitled reel. In section B, bar 2, beat 1 of this reel, the unornamented melodic line appears as follows:

Reel - Untitled (Ts. 31),
B
\[\text{\includegraphics{melodic_line.png}}\]

However, Connie employs the ascending triplet at this point and the above progression does not, in fact, occur until R2, B, bar 6.

Reel - Untitled (Ts. 31),
R1, R2, R3, R4, B
\[\text{\includegraphics{melodic_line.png}}\]

Connie frequently ‘fills in’ the ascending interval of a third in this manner. A particularly colourful use of this triplet is evident in bar 3 of ‘The Shaskeen’ (Ts. 20). Here, beats 1 and 3 of R2, A, are transformed by the adoption of two such triplets in R2, A1.
The ascending triplets, on the first and third beat of this bar, are carefully balanced by the descending quavers, which follow on beats two and four respectively, and the bar is subsequently transformed. Another example of this triplet used as a form of variation may be seen in 'Killavil Fancy' (Ts. 41). Here, R1, A, bar 5, beat 1, is replaced by this ascending triplet motif in subsequent rounds.

Sometimes the adoption of this triplet does not serve the purpose of filling in the aforementioned arpeggic progressions. This is evident in 'The Green Fields of Rosbeigh' (Ts. 30). Here, R1, A, bar 4, beat 1, becomes R1, A1, bar 4, beat 1.

This triplet motif changes the melodic contour suddenly, but only briefly and this may be the result of a sudden melodic impulse experienced by the musician. Another example of such a 'flight of fancy' is evident in 'The Turnpike Gate' (Ts. 40), where the melodic figure which features in bar 4 of R1, A and R3, A (a figure similar to that quoted above, but starting a fourth higher, i.e. on an E instead of a B), is transformed by the ascending triplet motif progressing from the E up to a G.
While the ascending triplet is used as a variation of the tune in the above quoted examples, it also occurs in the initial statement of tunes. This is evident in 'The Gooseberry Bush' (Ts. 35, B section, bar 4, beat 1, all rounds).

The Gooseberry Bush (Ts. 35),
R1, B

Here, it provides the music with an impetus that would not attend mere quaver movement at this point and this tends to propel the music forward. Other examples of this include 'Kitty gone a-milking' (Ts. 29, A section, bars 2 and 6, beat 3, all rounds) and 'The Ravelled Hank of Yarn' (Ts. 43, R2, A, and R3, A, bar 5).

2b. The Descending Triplet

While the descending triplet does not feature to the same extent as its ascending counterpart in the tunes which Connie plays, when it is adopted, this triplet adds tremendous rhythmic energy to the tune or tunes in question. An example of the descending triplet in Connie’s music may be seen in the B section of 'Sheehan’s' (Ts. 34, R1 and R3, bar 8, beat 1).

Sheehan’s (Ts. 34),
R1, B

Further examples of this triplet may be seen in The Derry Hornpipe’ (Ts. 39, section B, bar 4, beat 2 and section D, bar 4, beat 2, all rounds), ‘The Turnpike Gate’ (Ts. 40, section B, bar 2, beat 2) and ‘Kiss the Maid behind the Barrel’ (Ts. 42, B section, bar 7, beat 1, all rounds). Like the ascending triplet, this triplet also serves as a rhythmic-melodic embellishment of the tune.
Both the ascending and descending form of triplet featured consistently in performances of Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford. This is amply demonstrated in ‘The Banks of The Ilen’, played by Denis and Julia on The Star above the Garter, where it is called 'Seanbhean na gCartai' (Ts. 46a). Here, the descending triplet is particularly prominent (section A, bars 1, 3, 5 and 7, and section B, bar 7, all rounds).

The Banks of The Ilen* (Seanbhean na gCartai - Transcription 46a).
Version played by Julia Clifford and Denis Murphy,
R1, A

Connie’s version (Ts. 46),
R1, A

This triplet is a smoother progression than the quaver movement which Connie adopts at this point (from the F# to the D#) and it injects their version of this tune with a tremendous rhythmic energy. While the triplet does not feature in Connie’s version of the latter tune, the ascending triplet is quite prominent in his version of O’Keeffe’s six-part hornpipe, ‘Johnny Cope’ (Ts. 8, section A, up-beat to bar1 and bars 2, 7 and 8, section B, bars 2, 4, and 6, and the last bar of sections C, D and E).

Hornpipe - Johnny Cope (Transcription 8),
R1, A

Pádraig and Julia’s version of this hornpipe also features this triplet (refer to Ts. 8a, sections A and C and the last bar of section F, and Ts. 8b, sections A, B and C and the phrase endings of D, E and F). What is of most interest here is the fact that the triplet (both ascending and descending) is an intrinsic feature of Sliabh Luachra music and Connie seems to have carried this form of rhythmic variation forward into the present day.
3. The Cut Cran

Another variant of the rhythmic triplet is evident in this third form of triplet identified by Connie as 'the cut cran'. In the A section of ‘Sheehan’s’ reel (Ts. 34), it is used as a variant of the dotted crotchet of R1, A, in subsequent rounds.

Sheehan's (Ts. 34),
R1, A
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{\textit{etc.}}
\end{align*}
\]

This ornament also appears in bar 1 of R1, B of this tune (beat 1). The set accented tone on the first crotchet beat of this bar, G, is converted into this form of triplet (i). The non-embellished G is not heard until R3, B1, bar 1 (ii) and R3, B.

Ts. 34, R1, B
(i)
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{\textit{etc.}}
\end{align*}
\]

R3, B1
(ii)
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{\textit{etc.}}
\end{align*}
\]

The employment of this triplet in the first round of a reel is also obvious in ‘The Maids of Feakle’ (Ts. 38). Instead of a ‘straightforward’ crotchet C, on beat 3 of bar 2 (i), this triplet motif is adopted (ii).
The Maids of Feakle (Ts. 38),
R1, A

(i) \[ \text{etc.} \]

(ii) \[ \text{etc.} \]

In the B section of ‘The Derry Hornpipe’ (Ts. 39, R1, bars 1, 4 and 5, beat 1), 'the cut cran' is adopted, yet again. The juxtaposition of this triplet with the descending form of triplet in bar 4 of this section, is reminiscent of the ‘filling-in’ tendencies of Padraig O’Keeffe (Ward: 1976, 24).

The Derry Hornpipe (Ts. 39),
R1, B

While this ornament adds further colour to the tunes which Connie plays, it is not used as extensively as the cran. This figure was also adopted, quite sparingly, by Padraig (see ‘Johnny Cope’, Ts. 8a, R1, D and R2, D, bar 5, beat 3). It is more prominent in Julia’s version of the hornpipe (see Ts. 8b, section D, where it observes the following rhythmic values: \( \text{etc.} \) ) and Connie has obviously been inspired by their music in his adoption of this figure.

**Syncopation**

Syncopation is a significant feature in Connie’s fiddle-playing. Coupled with his use of the treble, this is another rhythmic device which lends a tremendous rhythmic drive to his music. He, himself, is very aware of the manner in which it propels his music forward, as he described it as having the effect of “borrowing, firing into the next bar or something like that” (Connie, Tape 10). A classic example of such syncopation and a recurring form of rhythmic variation in his music is that which occurs in the B section of ‘The Liffey Banks’ (Ts. 19, R1, bar 6, beats 1 and 2). At this point in the tune, Connie
employs a ‘quaver-crotchet-quaver’ combination, as indicated in example (ii) below, in place of the melodic idea outlined in example (i).

The Liffey Banks (Ts. 19),
Section B

(i) \( \text{\scalebox{0.6}{\includegraphics{example.png}}} \) etc.

R1, B

(ii) \( \text{\scalebox{0.6}{\includegraphics{example.png}}} \) etc.

In example (ii), the first quaver ‘fires’ itself onto the crotchet which enters on the second half of beat 1. This lends the music a rhythmic impetus which would not attend the quaver movement of example (i) above. This syncopated idea recurs throughout the tune in bar 6 and also occurs in bar 2 of R1, B1, R2, B1 and R3, B1. In bar 7 of the same section, the delay of the set accented tone, G, through the employment of the anticipatory F#, results in a similar form of syncopation. Thus, the syncopated ‘quaver-crotchet-quaver’ idea is evident again, in this tune.

The Liffey Banks (Ts. 19),
R3, B

\( \text{\scalebox{0.6}{\includegraphics{example.png}}} \) etc.

This syncopated idea also acts as a variant of bar 3 in the B section of ‘The Shaskeen’ (Ts. 20) and may be observed in R2, B1, R3, B and R3, B1.
While the syncopation outlined above, was used to vary the tune in subsequent rounds, Connie also adopts it in the first round of the tune e.g. syncopation occurs in R1, C of 'The West Clare Reel' (Ts. 33, bars 1 and 5).

In the reel 'Sweeney’s Dream' (Ts. 13), this form of syncopation occurs throughout the B section (bar 1). The tie employed from the second to the third A, illustrated below, extends the duration of this syncopation even further. Connie frequently resorts to such bowing habits.

While the syncopation in Connie’s music may be inspired by the music of Denis and Julia (e.g. see ‘Tom Billy’s, Ts. 47a, bars 4 and 8, section A, Rs. 2, 3, 4 and 5 and ‘Johnny Cope’, Ts. 8b, sections A, E and F), the syncopated rhythmic motif which I observed on analysing Connie’s music, seems to be a variational device unique to him. This, therefore, serves as yet another expression of his individuality within the regional style.
Connie felt that this was "something that adds a bit of colour to the music as well" (Connie, Tape 10). Certainly, it is another device employed by him which, like the parallel fifth movement created through his use of the drone, makes the listener 'sit up'.

Having looked at the manner in which Connie manipulates aspects of pitch and rhythm, in that order, I will now look at how these two parameters interact within the context of a single tune and in particular within the context of a single interval.

*Pitch and Rhythmic Variation within the context of a single tune*

In defining the framework of the standard dance-tune, Ó Súilleabháin points out that this consists of two different parts. Both parts consists of eight bars, each of which may be 'doubled' or repeated, with or without modification (1990: 118). The eight bar unit, which serves as the structural core of the tune, is a highly organised and integrated structure outside which the musician does not stray. It is within this structure that the individuality of each musician becomes apparent. What he or she chooses to do within this, may or may not betray characteristics adopted by a particular region. What is particularly interesting here is that each eight bar unit tends to be motivic in nature (although some tunes may be more tightly orchestrated than others). In his book, *Traditional Music in Ireland*, Tomás Ó Canainn comments on the unity of musical design and the motivic nature in many traditional tunes (1978: 34). Damhnait Nic Suibhne also draws attention to the remarkable motivic organisation of many of the tunes in the tradition where:

a short melodic motif is used as a basis for the entire melodic and rhythmic structure of a composition (1993:176).

"Within the framework of a tune", she suggests:

these motifs tend to appear again and again throughout the piece, sometimes as the melody or in its inversion, and often the rhythm of the motif may be employed to support a different melody." (1993: 176).

In this sub-section, I will briefly look at how Connie draws on some of the forms of ornamentation discussed in the 'Pitch' and 'Rhythmic Variation' sections and relate them to an untitled reel (Ts. 32). While this is not a standard dance-tune as defined above (in
that this is a four-part reel), the first part or section, which is under examination, is
evidence of the highly integrated structure or framework just discussed. In this particular
reel, bars 1, 3, 5 and 7 of the A section share the same progression, from the G above
middle C to the B above this.

Reel - Untitled (Ts. 32),
R1, A

Within the first eight bars of the above tune, one is exposed to considerable variation.
Each variation highlights the characteristic traits of Connie’s musical style previously
described. In bar 1, there is a clear progression from the G to the B, where the G is
marked by the familiar open string G drone. In bar 3, the anticipatory note, E, delays the
entry of the set accented tone, G. (This delay of the set accented tone was discussed in
detail in the ‘Pitch’ section). The syncopated ‘quaver-crotch-quaver’ motif discussed
in the ‘Syncopation’ section in relation to a number of tunes, is also evident in this bar.
In bar 5, a grace note decorates the set accented tone, while in bar 7, the G is
embellished with a roll and attended, yet again, by an open G drone. Subsequent rounds
see further variation of this progression (beats 1 and 2 of each bar are transcribed to
highlight this point). The adoption of the open string G drone in these variations is
immediately obvious and this provides the reel with considerable accent.

Reel - Untitled (Ts. 32),
R2, A R3, A R4, A R2, A R2, A

In the above tune, there are nine variations of this basic progression! Connie does not use
radical variation in the tunes which he plays. There are no chromatic inflections, there is
no radical altering of melodic content - but the variety, subtlety and spontaneity with
which he ornaments these bars attests to an impressive command of variation techniques,
inspired mainly by the musical tradition of Sliabh Luachra.
Rhythmic comparisons between Denis Murphy and Connie O'Connell

One of the most fascinating aspects of Sliabh Luachra music is the remarkable rhythmic energy or ‘lift’ which permeates every performance of Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford. It is a most unique sound and is compelling listening. However, it is not practised by present-day exponents of the tradition and Connie is not an exception in this case. He, himself, is more than aware of this fact.

There was another thing which Denis and Pádraig had, which I don’t have now and never could have - was this, ah, did you ever hear them playing, the music bounced along all the time - bouncing up and down, up and down. I don’t know where that came from or what it was, but I don’t play like that and I don’t think anybody does now (Connie, Tape 10).

Peter Cooke highlights the difficulties musicians have in verbalising this particular aspect of performance, this “affective quality in fiddle playing” (1986: 100). In Connie’s case, his description of the music “bouncing up and down”, is a most interesting one, for this is the effect which was created by the older generation of musicians, an effect which can only be truly appreciated aurally. As stated at the beginning of this rhythmic section, this was mainly achieved through the unique style of bowing which the older generation of musicians practised and through a process of accentuation and variation of the rhythmic cells of the different tune-types. The context and the manner in which it was used and the effect produced, will now be examined in relation to Denis Murphy’s performance of the reel ‘Tom Billy’s’ (Ts. 47a, section B, bar 5), in contrast to Connie’s performance of the same tune (Ts. 10 and 47).

The practice of leaving certain notes ‘bare’ or ‘plain’ was not uncommon in Sliabh Luachra music. This, of course, resulted from playing for the dancers, where a clear rhythm was necessary - the basic beat uncluttered by excessive note-activity or ornamentation. However, the rhythmic lift with which these notes were injected, is quite amazing. Denis’ version of ‘Tom Billy’s’ (Ts. 47a, section B, bar 5), is an example of the amazing lift generated in the music of the older Sliabh Luachra musicians.
Tom Billy’s - Denis’ version (Ts. 47a),
Rounds 1 - 5, B

Connie’s version (Ts. 10),
Rounds 1 - 3, B

Here, the set accented tone, a minim F sharp on beats 1 and 2, is unornamented in that this is not embellished with a roll, and this is marked by a stopped D on the A string. However, the ‘swell-like’ effect, which I described at the beginning of this chapter - effected through the acceleration of the bow and change of bow pressure during the duration of this minim - is most pronounced. Denis Murphy, obviously, was more concerned with injecting a type of rhythmic energy at this point, than decorating the F sharp with a roll. On the other hand, as already pointed out, this ‘swell-like’ or ‘bouncing’ effect is not a feature of Connie’s rendition of this tune or, indeed, any of his tunes. At this point in Ts. 10, Connie employs a rolled dotted crotchet. This, followed by a tied F sharp, leads to the syncopated tendencies already discussed - tendencies which were identified as his personal contribution to the tradition and a mark of his individuality within this tradition. In Ts. 47 (bar 1 of R1, and R2, B), Connie includes an open A drone alongside the main melody note, the F#, before proceeding with the tied F# already described. Yet again, the main melody note, the F#, is not marked by the rhythmic lift that is so striking in Denis’ version of this tune. The sheer difference in rhythmic effect between Denis’ and Connie’s performance of this reel can only be truly appreciated through the aural experience. Connie felt differences such as these were a reflection of the short time he had known Denis Murphy (seven years in total) and thus the style of bowing practised by Pádraig, Denis and Julia was something which never manifested itself in his own playing.

The bouncing sound - that was done with the bow. I don’t think I was with them long enough to realise what it was or something. I never studied it and I’ve seen ‘em playing over and over like, but I don’t think it’s something you could study and then bring home with you (Connie, Tape 10).
Equally interesting is the fact that this same point was made by Johnny O'Leary.

Course that's the difference now with Connie Connell. Connie wasn't playing long enough with Denis Murphy and Pádraig O'Keeffe like...Denis, Pádraig and Julia Clifford, they had a different sound, different rhythm in their music altogether - a different lift (Johnny O'Leary, Tape 9).

Melodic differences between versions of tunes played by Connie and Denis also contribute towards the production of the different rhythmic drive or lift in the music of both musicians. This is evident again in the same reel. Denis’ version (Ts. 47a) is more 'note-active' than Connie’s (Ts. 10 and 47). In section A, for example, Denis employs a crotchet and two quavers on beats 3 and 4 of bar 1 (R1, R3, and R4), while Connie adopts a dotted crotchet and quaver. While this may not appear to be very significant visually, the difference is quite astounding aurally. The rhythmic energy produced by Denis’ melodic-rhythmic choice on beats 3 and 4, is quite remarkable and this is intensified by the style of bowing which he, Pádraig and Julia practised. This is in contrast to the more relaxed dotted crotchet employed by Connie here. Later, Connie draws from his stylistic vocabulary and adopts the treble to vary this set accented tone - the crotchet D on beat 3 of bar 3 (R1, A), while ‘the cut cran’ is adopted at this point in R2, A and R3, A (Ts. 47). This is not employed by Denis and was seldom adopted by Sliabh Luachra musicians as I have pointed out in the ‘Rhythmic Variation’ section.

Tom Billy's - Denis' version (Ts. 47a),

\[
R1, A
\]

Connie's version (Ts. 47),

\[
R1, A
\]

The more 'note-active' nature of Denis Murphy’s version is also evident in the B section of this tune, bar 1 (R1, R3 and R4). Here, four quavers occur on beats 1 and 2, while in Connie’s version, a dotted crotchet and quaver occur at this point.
Tom Billy's - Denis' version (Ts. 47a),

\begin{music}
\begin{musicnote}
\staccato\fermata\fingering\\end{musicnote}
\end{music}

e tc.

Connie's version (Ts. 47),

\begin{music}
\begin{musicnote}
\staccato\fermata\fingering\\end{musicnote}
\end{music}

e tc.

On juxtaposing both Connie's and Denis' version of this tune, Johnny O'Leary also remarked on the melodic differences between both of their version:

You have more notes by Denis. Denis is putting in away more notes (Johnny O'Leary, Tape 9).

Denis' addition of these extra notes results in a more rhythmically 'active' version of the tune than Connie's version. The difference in the rhythmic energy or lift between Denis' and Connie's version of this reel, however, is reinforced by even more pronounced melodic differences in the particular versions which they performed. (The reader should listen to the recordings and look at the transcriptions in their entirety in Appendix A, in order to appreciate these differences).

Personally, I feel that the rhythmic-melodic differences between Connie's and Denis' version of this reel, highlight the fact that while Connie draws from the Sliabh Luachra fiddle tradition and is considered an exponent of this particular style of playing, there is no element of slavish imitation in his playing and there are no attempts at blatant reproduction. Connie stated that he never attempted to reproduce Denis' music as Denis played it. Consequently, while he may represent the modern tradition of Sliabh Luachra, his individuality, his music idiolect shines through.

I suppose what actually happened was that I more or less did my own thing to a certain extent as well. You know, I didn't go out to make a direct carbon copy of what they were doing, or never intended doing it with any musician like - nobody should do it - no matter how good the musician is that you're imitating or whatever. You should never try to make yourself a direct carbon copy of these people, because you're only going to be second best anyway at any stage (Connie, Tape 10).
Summary

It is in the area of rhythmic variation that Connie differs most from the older generation of Sliabh Luachra fiddle-players. In this section, I have observed that the monotone triplet or the cran is particularly prominent in Connie's music and was an ornament which seldom featured in the music of Pádraig O'Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford. In the 'Syncopation' sub-section, a recurrent rhythmic figure was observed in many of the tunes transcribed - the 'quaver-crotchet-quaver' motif. This is consistently used as a form of rhythmic variation by Connie and is another feature of his personal style. Finally, I have just drawn attention to the fact that it is in the area of lift that Connie differs most from his musical predecessors and this is a fact which he, himself, acknowledges.

Bowling

In this section, I shall examine Connie's bowing style with reference to that of Pádraig O'Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford. I will discuss the grouping of notes per bow and will pay particular attention to the highly syncopated nature of Connie's bowing style and the bowing rhythms which occur as a result of this syncopation. I will also highlight the strong tendency in Connie's playing to repeat certain bowing patterns within successive rounds of the same part of a tune.

As a pupil of Connie's and as a previously trained classical violinist, I soon became aware that it was the bowing which proved to be the most elusive aspect of Irish traditional fiddle-playing. The irregular grouping of notes per bow was in stark contrast to the regular bows employed in classical violin playing. It was clear to all the fiddle class that until we developed our own bowing style, until we could trust our ear to guide us accordingly, our playing would never be truly traditional. As Connie's approach to bowing instruction was essentially non-directive, particularly at the earlier stage of the learning process (Connie was quietly determined that we, as a class, would find our own personal style, that our ear would guide us), it took considerable time and a great
deal of exposure to his music before we could rely solely on our ear. There were, of course, times when certain bowing was suggested i.e. “You could treble on a down-bow there or an up-bow.” or “If you join x to y, it seems to work better”, but this occurred later rather than earlier in the instruction process, when we were at a stage where we could choose the style of bowing which we felt was most suited to the tune being learned.

This section is the product of a detailed study of transcriptions 64-70 as these comprise the bowed transcriptions of the thesis. Although the bowing transcribed in these tunes is a product of a video session which took place on the 18 October, 1993 (Tape 3a, VT1) and corresponds directly with an edited version of this tape (Tape 3b, VT2), it is essentially a culmination of the years which I spent sitting opposite Connie in a class of four traditional ‘hopefuls’, as we each tried to approximate his bowings in our own playing before we developed our own bowing style. If at any stage in the video, there was any doubt as to a particular bow or bows employed, I drew on this first hand experience of Connie’s bowing style. Therefore, I feel that the bowing transcribed and my comments on what is actually happening in the music, are as accurate as they could possibly be.

*Grouping of notes per bow*

There are several factors which have resulted in the perception of Sliabh Luachra as a flowing, fluid style of music. Apart from the partiality towards the earlier-described, left-hand ornamentation, the role of the bow, its importance in determining this fluid style cannot be over-emphasised. Sliabh Luachra fiddle-players tend to favour long bow strokes. This was particularly important for those who played for the dance, as the long bow-strokes ensured that the volume was adequate in the lively dancing venue. The practice of playing several notes to the bow is one which distinguishes the music of this area from that of other areas and it is this which has ensured the fluidity which marks the style. Pádraig O’Keeffe is known to have instructed his students in bowing technique and notated desired bowings in his unique form of tablature developed for teaching
purposes In fact, Johnny O’Leary stated that he had heard Pádraig suggest that Julia fit
thirteen notes into a single bow!

Pádraig told her that she should be able to get thirteen notes - I heard him
one night,
“You should be able to get thirteen notes in one bow,” he said. (Johnny
O’Leary, Tape 8).

He also advocated that she end on an up-bow:

“And never finish with a down bow, finish it with an up bow,” he said.
(Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8)

It is not surprising, then, to find Alan Ward state the following:

She tends to play more notes per bow-stroke than almost anyone else I
have ever seen and always seems to end on an up-bow (Ward:1976, 23).

While evidence of this fluid style is manifest in Connie’s music, it is not at all to the same
degree as the above. This is evident in the A section of ‘The Liffey Banks’ (Ts. 70). While
this is quite heavily slurred, the number of notes per bow is greatly reduced here. Connie rarely exceeds the practice of five notes to a bow and the most common practice
is two to four notes per bow.

The Liffey Banks (Ts. 70),
R1, A
eq

Additional tunes worth examining for such slurring tendencies include the following
bowed transcriptions: ‘The Piper’s Despair’ (Ts. 64), the D section of the ‘Untitled Reel’
(Ts. 66), the B and C sections of ‘The West Clare Reel’ (Ts. 67), the B section of
‘Turnpike Gate’ (Ts. 68) and the A section of ‘Killavil Fancy’ (Ts. 69). In the B section
of ‘Killavil Fancy’, bars 7 and 8 exhibit a high degree of slurring and the number of notes
to each bow is as follows: 2+2+5+3+2+1+2.

Killavil Fancy (Ts. 69),
R1, B
eq

etc.
What is noticeable in these tunes is that as Connie moves deeper into a tune, the degree to which slurring features increases and there tends to be an increase in the number of notes per bow. For example, in R1, A, bar 1 of 'The Piper’s Despair’ (Ts. 64), the first three quavers are bowed as 1+2: \( \text{\footnotesize \text{\textbf{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}}} \). In R1, A1, bar 1, these notes are now bowed together \( \text{\footnotesize \text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}} \). This may seem like a rather minute detail, however, it affects the phrasing of the tune and thus cannot be overlooked. Another example of this increased slurring is evident in the same tune, R1, A1, bar 4-5. Here, slurring over the bar-line now involves four quavers to one bow \( \text{\footnotesize \text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}} \) instead of two, as can be seen directly above in R1, A, bar 4-5 \( \text{\footnotesize \text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}} \). Similarly, in bar 7-8, the slur joining the last beat of bar 7 to the first beat of bar 8 in R1, A, \( \text{\footnotesize \text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}} \) now covers four notes in R1, A1 \( \text{\footnotesize \text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}} \). However, despite the increase in the number of notes per bow during the course of a tune, Connie tends to adhere mainly to his usual practice of two to four notes per bow.

Within these slurred sections, Connie is quite fond of adopting a succession of separately bowed notes. This tendency acts as a form of rhythmic punctuation and is instantly recognisable when it occurs. In ‘The Liffey Banks’ (Ts. 70), bars 1 and 2 of R1, A1, bars 2 and 6 of R2, A, and bars 1 and 2 of R2, A1, contain a succession of separately bowed notes in what is essentially, quite a heavily slurred reel. These separately bowed notes, in conjunction with the triplet-like motif which occurs on beat 1 of bar 2, mark the music with a rhythmic dynamism and solidity which can only be appreciated when heard.

The Liffey Banks (Ts. 70), R2, A
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{\footnotesize \text{\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet\textbullet}}
\end{align*}
\]

The A section of ‘The Piper’s Despair’ (Ts. 64), contains further examples of separately-bowed bars within predominantly slurred sections (refer to R1, A1, R2, A and R2, A1, bar 2). The opening of the C section of the ‘Untitled Reel’ (Ts. 66) is also noteworthy in this respect. This is in stark contrast to the D section of this same tune where the familiar practice of slurring two notes to a bow is again evident. The highest
concentration of single bows within these bowed transcriptions is evident in the B section of this same tune, the A section of ‘The West Clare Reel’ (Ts. 67) and the B section of ‘Killavil Fancy’, Ts. 69 (with the exception of bars 7 and 8, Rs. 1-4).

The West Clare Reel, Ts. 67, Demonstration 1

R1, A

Connie describes his bowing style as follows:

A lot of the notes I play are nearly all taken in single bows, except the odd one here and there. Not all them then you see, that’s where the whole thing lies. If you join the odd couple here and there it changes the whole structure (Connie, Tape 3).

While the single bows are not as prominent as one would think from the above comment, it is undoubtedly their obvious presence that results in a slightly different feeling or fluency to the heavily slurred music of Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford. On the other hand however, it is the slurring of “the odd couple here and there” which is reminiscent of the old Sliabh Luachra style of bowing. Thus, by including these single bows, Connie’s musical idiolect is manifest, while the slurring tendency must be seen as an expression of the regional dialect.

**Bowing Rhythms**

When examining the bowed transcriptions, it was the variety in the number of notes per bow which really caught my attention and the manner in which these slurred sections were punctuated by the single bows discussed above. In Connie’s music, the juxtaposition of these slurred and separately bowed sections results in the emergence of a complex and intricate syncopated bowing style. This is often rendered even more complex by virtue of the fact that it is subject to variation in subsequent rounds. In order to appreciate the syncopated nature of Connie’s style of bowing, I decided to transcribe the rhythm which results from the bowings of the first four bars of the following tunes: ‘The Liffey Banks’ (Ts. 70), ‘The Piper’s Despair’ (Ts. 64) and the B and C sections of ‘The West Clare Reel’ (Ts. 67). The rhythm transcribed is referred to as the ‘bowing
rhythm’ or the ‘bowing rhythms’ throughout this section. The degree to which these rhythms are varied within each tune is also examined. Only the rhythm of the first four bars of each tune is quoted here, as I feel this amply illustrates the syncopated nature of Connie’s bowing style.

In ‘The Liffey Banks’ (Ts. 70), bars 1 to 4 of R1, A, reveal quite a syncopated bowing rhythm. This rhythm is subject to complete variation in R1, A1. What is of particular interest, here, is the manner in which R2, A and R2, A1, share the same syncopated bowing rhythm as R1, A1. It is as if R1, A is a ‘warm up’ for Connie. By R1, A1, Connie seems to slot into a bowing pattern with which he is most comfortable. It is not surprising, therefore, that this is adhered to in subsequent rounds.

The Liffey Banks (Ts. 70),
R1, A, Bowing Rhythm

```
\[\text{Diagram of bowing rhythm}\]
```

R1, A1, Bowing Rhythm

```
\[\text{Diagram of bowing rhythm}\]
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R2, A, Bowing Rhythm

```
\[\text{Diagram of bowing rhythm}\]
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R2, A1, Bowing Rhythm

```
\[\text{Diagram of bowing rhythm}\]
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This syncopated bowing rhythm is also evident in the first four bars of ‘The Piper’s Despair’ (Ts. 64), quoted below. Although certain bars are seen to recur in this tune (the following bars are identical: bars 1 and 2 of R1, A1 and R2, A, bar 3 of R2, A and R2, A1, and bar 4, R1, A, and R2, A), there is a far greater degree of variation in the bowings adopted within this tune than was evident in ‘The Liffey Banks’ (Ts. 70).
These two examples highlight the fact that in Connie’s bowing, the degree to which variation takes place, is, itself, subject to variation. Certain sections or parts of tunes may be varied significantly when replayed, as I have illustrated in ‘The Piper’s Despair’, while other parts have far less variation, as was seen in ‘The Liffey Banks’.

Other examples which also highlight the variability of Connie’s bowing style within a tune include the C and B sections of ‘The West Clare Reel’ (Ts. 67). In the C section of ‘The West Clare Reel’, the syncopated rhythm of R1 (Demonstration 1) is repeated exactly in R2, C. It also recurs in Demonstration 2, R1, C and R2, C.
The West Clare Reel (Ts. 67),
Demonstration 1,
R1, C, Bowing Rhythm

Demonstration 2,
R1, C, Bowing Rhythm

R2, C, Bowing Rhythm

The B section of this same reel shows a more varied syncopated approach from round to round.
The West Clare Reel (Ts. 67),
Demonstration 1,
R1, B, Bowing Rhythm
\[\text{etc.}\]

R2, B, Bowing Rhythm
\[\text{etc.}\]

Demonstration 2,
R1, B, Bowing Rhythm
\[\text{etc.}\]

R2, B, Bowing Rhythm
\[\text{etc.}\]

While certain bars are similarly bowed (and thus share the same syncopated bowing rhythms), on the whole, there is a greater degree of variation in the bowing rhythms of each round of this tune than is evident in ‘The Liffey Banks’ (Ts. 70) and the C section of ‘The West Clare Reel’ (Ts. 67). This tune, therefore, calls to mind the high degree of variation that was apparent in ‘The Piper’s Despair’ (Ts. 64). This variation in bowing may be part of the decision making which attends the creative process in the tradition. It could also indicate a ‘search’ for a bowing system in a tune which Connie has not played for some time. This would appear to be the case in ‘The Liffey Banks’. Here, I observed that once Connie had rediscovered a pattern with which he was comfortable (R1, A1), this was adhered to in subsequent rounds.

While I have observed Connie’s tendency to vary bowings from round to round, he generally tends to adhere to a ‘comfortable’ bowing pattern, once one has been established in a tune and this will be examined in the section entitled ‘Recurring Bowing Patterns’. However, before this is discussed, I wish to draw attention to the manner in which Connie tends to syncopate over the bar-line.
The use of the last note of a group of eight quavers as a “link” or “pick-up” note was a technique identified by Lawrence McCullough and is certainly at work in Connie’s music (McCullough, 1977: 93). This syncopation over the bar-line allows Connie to work against the eight bar structure of each section, by contradicting the smaller two and four bar units, within this larger structure. This is particularly obvious in ‘The West Clare Reel’ (Ts. 67).

The West Clare Reel (Ts. 67),
Demonstration 1,
Section B

The bowing rhythm, which results from the slurring over the bar-line, is illustrated below:

This practice of slurring over the bar-line has the effect of ‘blurring the edges’ of the eight bar unit which lies at the heart of the round. By throwing the last half-beat of each bar onto the first beat in the following bar, the tune is propelled forward, thereby giving it a sense of direction and a feeling of fluidity. Although the number of notes to each bow has been greatly reduced in Connie’s playing (when compared to that favoured by his predecessors), it is, undoubtedly, the slurring tendency described above and the subsequent syncopation, which are reminiscent of the bowing technique of the older generation of Sliabh Luachra musicians.
Recurring Bowing Patterns

In the process of transcribing Connie’s bowing, it was discovered that within sections or parts of his tunes, bowings adopted in R1 often recurred in subsequent rounds. This is evident in the B and C sections of ‘Paddy Taylor’s’ reel, Ts. 65 (the B section is illustrated below). In both parts of the tune, identical bows are employed in the two rounds played, with the exception of the final two bars of section C. At this point, the bowing must change to accommodate the necessary melodic changes that bring the tune to a close.

Paddy Taylor’s (Ts. 65),
R1, B
\[
\begin{align*}
V & V \quad V \\
\end{align*}
\]

R2, B
\[
\begin{align*}
V & V \quad V \\
\end{align*}
\]

Other virtually identically bowed bars include the B section of ‘The Piper’s Despair’, (Ts. 64). Once again, the bowing is only altered in R1, B1, bars 3 and 4 because of melodic variation which occurs during these bars. However, the bowing falls back into the pattern established in R1, B at the beginning of bar 5, before melodic changes at the end of bar 7 and in bar 8 (R1, B1), which herald the end of the first round, necessitate a slight variation in bowing again. The C section of ‘The West Clare Reel’ (Ts. 67), also sees the adoption of identical bowing patterns. Here, the manner in which the first quaver of the figuration \( \frac{\text{\textbullet}}{\text{\textbullet}} \) is normally attended by an up-bow when it occurs at the start of the bar i.e. \( \frac{\text{\textbullet}}{\text{\textbullet}} \), is evident in bars 1, 3, 5 and 7 of this section.
The West Clare Reel (Ts. 67),
Demonstration 1,

R1, C

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{r1_c}} \]

R2, C

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{r2_c}} \]

This, in fact, applies to most tunes in which it features and, as earlier discussed, bestows a great feeling of lift where employed. When this particular figuration was isolated in relation to its appearance in the B section of ‘The Piper’s Despair’ (Ts. 64, Tape 3a, VT1 & Tape 3b, VT2), Connie acknowledged that the first quaver was played with an up-bow all the time. This, I thought, was an interesting observation on his part and in this sense, Connie displayed a keen awareness of such bowing patterns.

There are instances where Connie may start a round of a tune with different bows to those employed in earlier rounds. In these cases, he manipulates the bow in such a manner that the bow ‘rights itself’ at a certain point i.e. the bow falls back into the pattern set in previous rounds. The A section of Paddy Taylor’s (Ts. 65) is an example of this. Here, R1 begins with a down-bow, while R2 starts with an up-bow. However, in the case of R2, by the end of bar 1/beginning of bar 2, the bowing coincides with that of R1. From this point on, the adoption of identical bowing patterns to those in R1 is evident.

Paddy Taylor’s (Ts. 65),

R1, A

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{r1_a}} \]

R2, A

\[ \text{\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{r2_a}} \]
In addition to the up-bows which attend the figuration discussed above, Connie is also inclined to begin most bars of the tune with an up-bow. This is obvious in 'The West Clare Reel' (Ts. 67, section A, bars 3-8) and the 'The Piper's Despair' (Ts. 64, section B, bars 1-6). It is also evident in 'The Turnpike Gate' (Ts. 68, section A, bars 1, 2, 5, 6 and 8, all rounds) and 'Killavil Fancy' (Ts. 69, section A, Rs. 1 and 4, bars 2-4 and 6-8, Rs. 2 and 3, bars 2-8). Some of these up-bows occur as a result of the practice of slurring over the bar-line - the linking of the last half-beat of the bar on to the first beat or subsequent beats of the following bar. This can be seen in 'The West Clare Reel' (Ts. 67, R1, A, end of bar 5 into bar 6, Demonstration 1). This bowing pattern is repeated in subsequent rounds. It is also evident in 'The Piper's Despair' (Ts. 64), which is quoted below. After playing this tune a few times Connie declared: "the second part, I'm starting on an up-bow all the time" and added "it seems to be fitting in that way all the time" (Tape 3a, VT1 & Tape 3b, VT2).
This, again, is a most astute observation and the latter comment confirms the fact that he has developed a style of bowing with which he is comfortable and one which suits his musical needs - a fact which he himself confirmed.

You've a pattern that runs from tune to tune. The bowing has to be similar like, they can't be all entirely different. It's basically the same thing I'm doing with the bow all the time anyway you know. I'm only switching and changing it around every now and then (Connie, Tape 10).

It is not unusual for fiddle-players to develop an idiosyncratic style of phrasing and articulation and thus apply it to that which they play. However, the degree to which Connie could 'zone in' on details of his bowing technique was, I felt, quite unusual. The bow, in traditional fiddle-playing, lies at the heart of the music. It is the 'heart' of the instrument and so it is not surprising that many traditional fiddle-players find it quite difficult to separate the bow from the music and analyse it accordingly. In Connie's case, I feel that his awareness of the bowing which he adopts within tunes, stems from the
years which he has spent teaching the fiddle at all levels, to people from a variety of music disciplines. Here, bowing instruction so often sought by students - particularly classically trained ones, who want to make that transition into the world of traditional fiddle-playing, but feel impeded by the bowing system ingrained into them from an early age - has obviously intensified his sense of the analytical and heightened his awareness of bowing techniques and patterns, which he, himself, adopts.

Summary

While the fluid nature of Connie’s bowing style has its origins in the music of Pádraig, Denis and Julia, the reduction in the number of notes per bow and the inclusion of more single bows in his playing, serve as a thumbprint of his personal style and mark him as an individual operating within the Sliabh Luachra fiddle tradition. In transcriptions 64 -70 (the bowed transcriptions of this thesis), I observed that within slurred sections of tunes, Connie tends to adopt a succession of separately bowed notes as a form of rhythmic punctuation. The juxtaposition of these slurred sections with the separately bowed sections mentioned above, has resulted in a complex and fascinating syncopated bowing style which has been discussed in some detail throughout this section of the thesis. The bowing rhythms transcribed in this section - a consequence of the bowing which he adopts in his tunes - confirm a complex layer of syncopation, which underpins each tune he plays. Finally, the manner in which certain bowing patterns tend to recur, once a comfortable pattern has been established, has just been demonstrated and Connie displays an interesting awareness of such recurring patterns.

From the detailed stylistic analysis carried out in this chapter of the tunes transcribed in Appendix A, it is obvious that Connie is carrying on the tradition established by the older generation of Sliabh Luachra fiddlers. However, this analysis has also shown that there are elements of change in Connie’s music which highlight the fact that Connie is an
individual operation within this tradition. In Chapter Four, I will now review Connie's playing and highlight the regional and individual aspects of his performance style.
CHAPTER FOUR
REGIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL ASPECTS OF THE MUSIC OF CONNIE O’CONNELL

In this chapter, I intend to reiterate some of the main points from the previous chapters and examine them within the context of regional and individual style. I will address the schools of thought which represent these two seemingly opposing styles and evaluate Connie’s playing in relation to these.

Connie is a musician whose roots are firmly embedded in the fertile Sliabh Luachra tradition. In an age where the regional style in Irish traditional music is being increasingly undermined, the recognition of musicians who play a part in its continuation into the nineties is crucial. At this point, I feel it is important to highlight the regional characteristics of Connie’s playing. In Chapter Three, I observed that Connie’s penchant for the roll as a form of ornamentation, is undoubtedly derived from the Sliabh Luachra fiddle tradition. Connie’s adoption of drones, in particular open string drones, is another characteristic of his style which originates in the musical tradition of Sliabh Luachra. Similarly, the technique of prefixing the set accented tone with a lower grace note, is another practice derived from the same musicians (Ts. 11 and 12 were quoted to illustrate this particular technique). This technique was associated with their playing of slides and polkas, and the effect produced was that of sliding from the grace note to the main melody note. The incorporation of the ascending and descending triplet motif, is yet, another form of embellishment inspired by the music of Sliabh Luachra and this was examined in relation to a number of tunes played by Connie including: Ts. 20, 29, 30, 35, 41, 42 and 43. However, while Connie has undoubtedly drawn from his predecessors, there are certain nuances of style in his music, which confirm his individuality within the tradition. In Chapter Three, detailed stylistic analysis revealed innovative elements in his
music which substantiate this. In relation to his use of the roll, I discovered that while Pádraig, Denis and Julia were more inclined to roll 'after the note', Connie favoured rolling 'within the note'. Rhythmic innovation was observed in his consistent adoption of the syncopated 'quaver-crotchet-quaver' motif as a form of rhythmic variation. This motif was identified in the following tunes: The Liffey Banks (Ts. 19), The Shaskeen (Ts. 20), The West Clare Reel (Ts. 33) and Sweeney's Dream (Ts. 13), and did not feature in the music of Pádraig O'Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford. The adoption of the treble or the 'cran' in his performances, is, I discovered, another departure from the Sliabh Luachra style, as this is a form of rhythmic ornament which works against, rather than creates the fluid sound his predecessors so favoured. The reduction in the number of notes per bow and the introduction of more single bows in his playing attests to further innovation within the regional style. Therefore, Connie is a musician where the balance between tradition and innovation, the regional and the individual, is carefully struck. While there is a strong element of tradition in his playing, there are also innovative elements which confirm his individuality within the regional dialect.

Although the examples just quoted signify a departure from certain musical practices within the Sliabh Luachra fiddle tradition, they are nonetheless innovations or variations that are contained within the larger tradition. The use of 'the roll within the note', more than 'the roll after the note', for example, can be traced to the influence of the music of Clare and Donegal, where the former roll is an integral part of both regional styles. Similarly, Connie's adoption of the treble can also be traced to the influence of Clare musicians, and his exposure to the music of Paddy Cronin from Sliabh Luachra and later of Boston, Mass.. Since these innovative elements in Connie's music are drawn from the tradition as a whole and since they are incorporated into an essentially southern dialect,
in an extremely subtle manner, they would, probably, not be perceived by those outside the region. This fact is also acknowledged by Connie.

There’s a slight difference there all the time like, but maybe an outsider wouldn’t notice that but I would (Connie, Tape 5).

It is because I was so immersed in the Sliabh Luachra fiddle tradition and in Connie’s music, in particular, that the ‘slight differences’ between both styles became apparent.

Interestingly, Connie sees the changes in his music, which I have described in Chapters Two and Three, as a “weakening off” in the Sliabh Luachra tradition.

My style wouldn’t be as strong as Denis Murphy’s would be to my mind...due to the fact that I was born when I was. The same as Denis McMahon and Nicky McAuliffe, we are playing a slightly, we’re Sliabh Luachra musicians, but we’re not exactly playing the same style as Denis Murphy and Pádraig O’Keeffe. There is a difference you see ...there’s a weakening off.. I think ‘tisn’t so much it being different [as] it is a weakening off of that particular style, ‘tis there but ‘tis to a lesser degree.

In Chapter Two, Connie pointed out that the “weakening off” in the Sliabh Luachra style in his playing, is, essentially, a consequence of his playing in a different era to that of his predecessors.

If I lived, if I was born fifty years earlier, a hundred years earlier, I’d play completely the same as Denis Murphy and Pádraig O’Keeffe did play it. I’d play exactly as they played it, but, ah, due to the fact that I was born when I was.....(Connie, Tape 5).

It is recognised fact that the development in modern telecommunications has had a standardising influence on much of the Irish music tradition and have undermined the position of the regional style within this. In particular, radio, television and the tape recorder, have resulted in the exposure of musicians to a greater array of musical styles than was previously possible. This, undoubtedly, has had an impact on Connie’s playing. He, personally, verifies this:

I’d say there’d be a greater mixture of music or styles in my music. I suppose, because I was born at a time when radio and, especially radio, and tape-recorders started coming into use more and that started doing away with the area style around the country (Connie, Tape 5).
Connie's participation in the various musical festivals and Fleadhanna nationwide, has, naturally, resulted in his exposure to musicians and, accordingly, to musical styles from outside his region. Consequently, it is only natural that this exposure is manifest in his music. However, despite the 'mixtures' in his music, Connie is very aware of his roots and his music is firmly grounded in the Sliabh Luachra musical tradition.

There might be a lot of mixtures in my music, but there's a lot of Sliabh Luachra music there as well (Connie, Tape 5).

Playing in a different era to that of Pádraig, Denis and Julia, has not only increased his accessibility to the music of other regions but it has also determined Connie's performance situation. In Chapter Two, I stated that in Sliabh Luachra today, session playing outweighs set dancing in popularity. The fact that Connie plays regularly for sessions rather than for sets, has determined the type of tunes which he plays. Consequently, he has focused on the listening tunes - the reels and jigs of the tradition, rather than on the dancing tunes - the slides and polkas. The fact that he seldom plays for dancers, has, I believe, also influenced the way he plays. The weakening off in the Sliabh Luachra style of which Connie speaks, can be felt most acutely in the area of lift. (This refers to that aspect of rhythm which is inherently linked to the function of music for the dance). In the section entitled 'Rhythmic comparisons between Denis Murphy and Connie O'Connell' in Chapter Three, Connie himself drew attention to the fact that his playing was not marked by the same rhythmic lift or "bouncing sound" as that of Denis, Pádraig and Julia. Both Connie and Johnny O'Leary felt that this was a consequence of the short period of time he had spent with Denis Murphy prior to his death (Connie, Tape 10; Johnny O'Leary, Tape 9). While this, undoubtedly, played a part in the differences perceived between Connie's playing and that of his predecessors, stylistic differences must also be related to his performance situation. In the 'Pitch'
section of Chapter Three, I suggested that lift-inducing devices in the music played for
dancers, which serve to stir the people to dance, are not essential to ‘listening’ music.
Consequently, I indicated that lift-inducing devices, e.g. placing the roll after the note
itself (‘the roll after the note’) - a placement which resulted in a swell-like effect and
injected the older music with a great sense of lift - are no longer necessary in music
removed from the dance context. Therefore, in Connie’s music, the roll is moved to the
first beat (‘the roll within the note’) and the swell-like effect of ‘the roll after the note’ is
lost when the former roll is adopted.

In evaluating the degree to which individual and regional expression is manifest in
Connie’s playing, I now wish to address what both terms have come to mean in the
tradition itself. The term “regional style” tends to suggest a uniformity of style amongst
the musicians of a particular area, often with little regard for the individual musician who
plays a part in the continuation of this aspect of the tradition. The problem in labelling
musicians as exhibiting a particular regional style has been identified by many authors
who write about this aspect of the tradition. In relation to the American fiddle tradition,
Miles Krassen made the following observation.

The application of a regional name to a particular group’s music can frequently
be somewhat misleading. Often several distinct styles can be found in counties
which have rich musical activity. What’s of infinitely more value than the
artificial regional designations for identifying a style is the name of the individual
who is considered responsible for the style’s existence. (Krassen, 1983:10)

Alan Ward points out a similar pitfall in the adoption of this term.

There are many pitfalls awaiting those who would generalise about the styles in
which Irish traditional musicians play. To mention two in particular: there is the
problem of the individual character of each musician which so often contradicts
the standard ideas of “regional style as to render them meaningless; and there is
the problem of setting and context.... (Ward, 1976: 21).
It is thought that the individuals musical contribution tends to be overlooked when the term 'regional style' is adopted. Certainly, when Connie is described as a Sliabh Luachra player, the subtleties of his playing, the marked differences in his lift compared to that of his predecessors (as was seen in Chapter Three in relation to his performance of 'Tom Billy’s' reel, Ts. 10 and 47), his idiosyncratic bowing style, and indeed all of the changes within his playing which render him an individual operating within the tradition, are overlooked. As a Sliabh Luachra musician, he joins those musicians, who, through the common repertoire which they perpetuate, shared inspirational sources and common musical ideals, become exponents of the regional style. In response to this grouping of musicians under the 'regional' heading, an opposing school of thought has emerged. This advocates concentrating on the individual as opposed to the group or regional style. The comment made by flute player Conal Ó Gráda, recorded in Niall Keegan's thesis, *The Words of Irish Flute Styles*, illustrates this different viewpoint.

I think to look for too many influences outside the individual is probably misleading, it's scholarly and all that, but music comes from within basically, and that's what people should concentrate on is the individual's contribution rather than the fact that it seems to be very Clareish or Donegalish or Corkish or whatever like you know. I think the emphasis should be on - he's a very good musician, that's him like, that's Charlie like, you know, rather than a Miltown Malbay player like (Keegan, 1993: 135).

This comment is an interesting one, and it is in acknowledgement of Connie’s individuality that this thesis bears the title *The Fiddle Music of Connie O’Connell*. Similarly, it is in this same spirit that I have documented the changes in Connie's music in Chapters Two and Three, and identified these as his personal contribution to the tradition. However, my experience in dealing with Connie’s music is that the reality of the situation lies between these two schools of thought - that music comes from within, that the generative point at which the music happens must occur within the individual, but that sources of stimulation can and even must come from a musician’s environment.
Therefore, the degree to which Connie has been influenced by the main musicians of Sliabh Luachra and Clare, both stylistically and in terms of repertoire (as noted in Chapter Two), the importance of tradition in his playing, and his own personal regard for the tradition from which he comes, cannot be overlooked.

One of the remarkable aspects of the Irish music tradition is its link with the past through the present and to the future, a process which the poet Séamus Heaney captures admirably in an interview for the television series, *A River of Sound*, where he states “..you’re actually linked in backwards and opened up forwards..”. This connection with the past is also very important to Connie, and he feels, as I do, that it is only natural that one would “look...outside the individual” in an attempt to identify influences which have resulted in the formation of his and indeed any musician’s repertoire or style: “...you’re dealing with a tradition you see.. the handing down ..”. All artists are subject to external ‘in-fluences’, particularly in their formative years, when they will absorb that by which they are surrounded, that to which they are exposed, until the individual voice is found and a personal style is uncovered. All artists develop, as all humanity learns in this way.

And your first steps as a writer will be to imitate, consciously or unconsciously, those sounds that flowed in, that in-fluence (Heaney, 1984: 44).

In an age where Irish traditional music has experienced great change due to the influence of modern media, and with unprecedented access to world music, the need for establishing these threads of continuity, of placing the musician, of relating him or her to what has passed before, has become more pressing, and indeed more necessary. I feel that this placing of the musician is just as relevant in a musician who displays a strong feeling for tradition, as it is in one whose sources of inspiration are drawn from further afield. It seemed only logical, then, to identify not only Connie’s personal contributions to the tradition in this thesis, but to examine the degree to which the tradition had
influenced him. Certainly, in Connie’s case, in relating his performance style and repertoire to Denis, Pádraig and Julia, the extent to which he was carrying on the tradition and the elements of change, in his playing, became increasingly obvious.

The acknowledgement by the performing musician of the source of his/her material, this connection of the present with the past has always been an important part of the tradition and is referred to below, in relation to the sean-nós singer.

And I was always very struck by the fact that...when people would sing a song....they would always say where they got it from, there was this sense of placing it, of, I suppose, acknowledging the obligation. And there was that tremendous historical sense that you were now placing yourself, you were now acknowledging what you got from people who went before you. In some sense, you were also acknowledging that you were now changing it, you were putting your mark on it and that then you were passing this on in a living way to the next generation that came up. This tremendous sense that you were there placed centre of stage, between the generations, as it were (Maureen Gaffney, A River of Sound).

As the sean-nós singer acknowledges the source of the song he/she sings and the ‘history’ or the story attached to it, Connie was also intent on identifying the sources of his stylistic and repertoire inspiration. He was also very aware of how the tradition has changed in his playing and in that of his contemporaries, in terms of the stylistic differences outlined in Chapter Three and above, and in terms of his concentration on the listening tunes of the repertoire (Chapter Two). He saw these changes as an expression of his individuality and so he has, in this respect, left his mark on the tradition.

I suppose what actually happened was that I more or less did my own thing to a certain extent as well. You know, I didn’t go out to make a direct carbon copy of what they were doing or never intended doing it with any musician like..(Connie, Tape 10)

Connie is very aware of his role in passing the music onto the next generation. As stated in Chapter One, his daughter Áine is an accomplished fiddle-player, and one who plays in the same vein as her father. Similarly the many years he devoted to teaching with the
Vocational Education Committee in Co. Cork, and his ongoing role as fiddle tutor in University College Cork, has resulted in the dissemination of much of his music. Personally, I think Connie is an important link in the Sliabh Luachra tradition and in this sense, he is placed ‘centre stage’, with his fellow musicians Nicky McAuliffe, Denis McMahon, Anne Sheehy and others, a link between the generations, between two worlds - the past and the future. In an age where the emphasis is on individual styles drawn from a variety of sources, rather than a common style shared by a locality, Connie’s position is an important one, for in his music both regional and individual characteristics are manifest.

According to Johnny O’Leary, Julia Clifford recognised an exciting potential in Connie’s playing. Reminiscing on bygone, music-filled days, she felt Connie was the only ‘up and coming’ musician of a similar calibre to the musicians of her generation.

“We had great music long ago”, Julia said.
“Denis and Jerry McCarthy, Paddy Cronin, Pádraig, Dan Leary - we’d great music. Anywhere you’d go, you’d have five or six fiddles going together, but do you know, the best of them now is, I heard of no one only Connie O’Connell”, she said.
“He’s good, Julia”, I said.
“Oh Connie’s great, he’s great.” (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 9).

Connie’s ‘greatness’ is represented not only in the recognised finesse of his musicianship, but also, just as importantly, in his position within the Sliabh Luachra tradition at this delicate transitional point from an older to a newer world. Within this context of continuity and change, of tradition and innovation, while there are aspects of change in Connie’s music, there is no doubt but that it rests back into a bed of tradition. This gives it an authenticity and validity which is a welcome antidote to the rapid change which besets the tradition, on all levels, at the present time.
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Byrne, Francis
James Byrne
Vincent Campbell
Con Cassidy

Doyle, Jimmy
Séamus Mac Mathúna
Nóra Mhic Mhathúna
Connie O'Connell

*The Brass Fiddle*
*(fiddle music from Donegal)*

Claddagh CC 44 1987

*Ceol Go Maidín*

Comhaltas CL 43 n. d.
c.1993
TAPEOGRAPHY

The following is a list of fieldwork tapes recorded between October 1992 and August 1995. Each tape has been numbered according to the order in which it was recorded in order to facilitate ease of referral during the course of the thesis. Tapes 1-7 and tape 10 are recordings of Connie. These were carried out in his home in Cill na Martra, Co. Cork and in various locations in Cork City, determined by my ever-changing abode! Tapes 8 and 9 are recordings of Johnny O’Leary and these were recorded in his home in Rathmore, Co. Kerry. I have also included a compilation analogue cassette of tunes played by Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy and Julia Clifford here (Tape 11). The compilation of tunes was taken from different commercial recordings which are listed in the Discography. This tape corresponds with transcriptions 6a, 8a, 8b, 46a, 47a and 60a listed in Appendix A. The type of tape used on each recording date is indicated as follows:

- **DAT** = Digital Audio Tape
- **AAC** = Analogue Audio Cassette
- **VT** = Videotape

The recording date, recording location and nature of the material recorded on each tape is also indicated. With regard to the latter, the letters C and M are used. ‘C’ indicates conversation, ‘M’ indicates music and ‘M & C’ indicate a combination of both music and conversation. The recordings are deposited in the archive of the Irish World Music Centre in the University of Limerick.
### TAPEOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX A

MUSIC TRANSCRIPTIONS

Appendix A contains sixty-three tunes collected from Connie on the two principal recording dates which yielded the bulk of the music included here - the 15 October, 1992 and the 25 November, 1992. These tapes are listed in the Tapeography section and are numbered tapes 1 and 2. The tunes were transcribed in the order in which they were played on these dates. Numbers have been assigned to each tune transcribed in order to facilitate ease of referral and to accommodate any untitled tunes present in this collection. The first selection of tunes performed consists of two untitled jigs and so, it is these which appear first in this Appendix. These transcriptions are numbered 1 and 2 accordingly and Appendix B lists them in this order. The recording date of each tune is noted in Appendices B, C and D where the tunes are indexed in a variety of ways. Transcriptions 1-43 were recorded on the 15 October, 1992 and transcriptions 44-63 were recorded on the 25 November, 1992. As transcriptions 9 and 10 were replayed on the second main recording date (25 November, 1992), these were transcribed afresh as played on this occasion and correspond with transcriptions 46 and 47. The titles of the tunes listed are those supplied by Connie. The symbol ‘*’ accompanies those tunes where another title was discovered and this symbol is evident in each listing of the tunes in appendices B, C and D. The alternative titles are listed in Appendix D and the sources of these are identified in Appendix E.

Seven tunes, which were recorded on tapes 1 and 2, were selected and performed on the subsequent date of the 18 October, 1993, for the purpose of examining the bowings adopted by Connie. The tunes were videotaped to allow a detailed examination of these patterns. This videotape is referred to as Tape 3a (VT1). An edited version of this videotape was made at a later date (Tape 3b - VT2). These tapes are also listed in the Tapeography. The tunes were transcribed afresh as played on this date and the bowings were inserted accordingly. Due to the different
performance situation, they are slightly varied when compared with their performance on Tapes 1 or 2. In two of these bowed transcriptions (Ts. 66 and 67), the terms 'Demonstration 1' and 'Demonstration 2' may be seen. This is where Connie performed these tunes twice, at my request, in order to facilitate a more detailed examination of his bowing style. 'Demonstration 1' refers to his first performance of the tune, while 'Demonstration 2' implies the repeat performance. In relation to Ts. 66 and 67 (Demonstration 1 only), 64, 65, 69 and 70, both Connie and I play together. The volume and timbre of his fiddle, on tapes 3a and 3b, should help the listener distinguish between his performance of the tune and my own. The bowed transcriptions are listed as Ts. 64-70 in this Appendix and Tape 3b (VT 2) corresponds exactly with these bowed transcriptions.

Included in Appendix A are five tunes played by Denis Murphy, Pádraig O'Keeffe, and Julia Clifford which were also played by Connie on Tapes 1 and 2. These were transcribed for reasons of comparative study - in an effort to identify similar and dissimilar elements at work in their rendition of these tunes, in comparison to Connie's version of the same tunes. These are numbered as follows: Ts. 6 illustrates Connie's performance of 'The Piper's Despair', while Ts. 6a details Denis Murphy's performance of this same tune. The source from which Murphy's version was taken is explained in Appendix B. Similarly, Connie's rendition of the six-part hornpipe 'Johnny Cope' is evident in Ts. 8, Pádraig's version is contained in Ts. 8a, while Julia's rendition of this tune is evident in Ts. 8b. Thus, where the letter 'a' or 'b' follows a main transcription number in appendices B and C, this indicates the performance of the particular tune in question by any one of the above musicians other than Connie. Where these transcription numbers are listed, a footnote is used to highlight the commercial recording from which they are taken. These recordings are listed in the Discography and the tunes feature on a compilation tape listed in the Tapeography (Tape 11).
It was through the process of transcription that the subtlety of Connie’s variational technique came to light. Much of my interest lay in the comparative study of such variation within the complete performance of each tune. Consequently, all rounds of the tunes were transcribed in detail. Throughout the transcriptions, the first bar of each section, or part of a tune, is referred to as bar 1. Bars 1-8 of all sections, i.e., sections A, B, C etc., are vertically aligned. I found this most effective in my analysis of Connie’s tunes, as it allowed an immediate comparison between the same bar or similar bars in subsequent rounds. A dotted line was inserted in the transcriptions to aid the eye in making these comparisons (with the exception of transcriptions 64-70 - the bowed transcriptions of this thesis - where the dotted line would have interfered with the clarity of the transcriptions). Where the tune was preceded by an up-beat in round 1, A, the reader will notice that underlying staves are indented to facilitate the vertical aligning of the bars. In each of the transcriptions, I used a form of shorthand to indicate each round and each part of the tune. This shorthand will now be explained in relation to the ‘The Boys of The Lough’ (Transcription 23, Illustration 11). In each transcription, the letter ‘R’ is observed at the beginning of all staves. This indicates the round being played. Thus, R1 = round 1, R2 = round 2, R3 = round 3 and so forth. The letters A, A1, and B, B1, which follow R1, R2, R3 (e.g. R1, A), are used to refer to what I have called the A and B sections of the tune, or the ‘tune’ and the ‘turn’ as these would be more commonly known.

The letter ‘A’ signifies the A section or the initial statement of the eight-bar section of the tune. A1 signifies the repetition or restatement of this eight-bar section. Thus, R1, A, translates as round 1, section A. R1, A1, then, implies the same round, but this time the repetition of A, i.e. A1, is now under examination. Similarly, R2, A, stands for the presentation of the A section in round 2, while R2, A1, signifies the repeat or ‘doubling’ of A in this same round. Where the letters C, D, E and F follow the letter R, this indicates that the tune is a three, four, five or six-part tune respectively.
Illustration 11: ‘The Boys of the Lough’ (Transcription 23).
If a tune or a section of a tune is ‘singled’, i.e. not repeated, as distinct form
‘doubled’, which is repeated, the reader will notice that there is no A1 or B1.
Additional space is left in between the single staves to highlight this point (Refer to
Ts. 9, 11 and 46).

In each transcription, R2, A, and R3, A etc. are considered the same as R1, A.
Similarly, R2, A1 and R3, A1 are considered the same as R1, A1. (This also applies
to the B section of tunes and the C, D, E and F sections where relevant). For this
reason, only the first eight bars of each part or section of the tune are written out in
full. However, any variation which occurs on the doubling of each part, or from one
round to the next, is notated accordingly. In Illustration 11, R2, A, for example, since
bars 1-3 and beat 2 of bars 5 and 7 see variation of the corresponding bars in R1, A,
this variation is notated. Similarly, in R2, A1 bars 1 and 2 and parts of bars 3, 5 and
7, are variants of R1, A1, hence these variations are notated. Where no variation
occurs, the relevant bars or parts of bars are left blank. Thus, in the A section of ‘The
Boys of the Lough’, it is immediately obvious that bars 4 and 6 are not varied throughout the tune, while bar 8 sees little variation occurring. (This procedure does
not apply to transcriptions of the tunes played by Pádraig O’Keeffe, Denis Murphy
and Julia Clifford - transcriptions 8a, 8b, 46a, 47a and 60a, or the bowed
transcriptions of this thesis - transcriptions 64-70, where the tunes are transcribed in
full).

Notation of Rolls

As explained in Chapter Three, the symbol ∞ was adopted to indicate the presence
of rolls in Connie’s playing. Since Connie employs the same notes in the first, second
and third finger roll, I felt that the use of this symbol was both practical and valid. In
addition to this, with the sheer density of rolls employed by Connie (a classic example
of which may be seen in Ts. 22, ‘The Mills are Grinding’, section B, all rounds), I
found that transcribing rolls in full tended to clutter the transcriptions. The symbol, therefore, was a more economical means of representing the roll in Connie’s playing. It was also adopted as I felt it had an immediate visual impact and allowed a visual awareness of the extent to which Connie has drawn from the Sliabh Luachra tradition in terms of his choice of this form of embellishment.

The transcriptions in Appendix A are essentially the product of seven years of exposure to Connie’s playing. Although these are of a highly detailed nature, they are not intended as “a prescription for playing” (Hopkins: 1966, 312). While the work of transcribing these tunes has highlighted the stylistic intricacies of Connie’s performance, it has also made me aware of those aspects of performance, e.g. timbre, detailed durational aspects of rhythm, tonal inflection and other aspects of oral tradition music, which are outside the language of standard music notation and which bring this music to life. The transcriptions take no account of the slight lengthening of certain notes in relation to others. In Connie’s case, the slight lengthening of the first of every three quavers in the jig and the slide is noted. Similarly, the first of every two quavers in the reel, polka and hornpipe is also lengthened. This, of course, is ‘the norm’ in most regional styles. The majority of collections of Irish traditional music choose not to indicate such rhythmic inequalities as the rhythmic relationship between the notes is understood by the participants in the tradition and is one which is imbibed aurally (Breathnach 1963, 1976 and 1985; O’Neill, 1903 and 1915; Cranitch, 1988; Flaherty, 1990; Keane 1990; Lyth 1982; Moylan 1994). As a result of the aural nature of the tradition, this rhythmic relationship is only truly understood when one listens to performances of the music. In relation to pitch, however, the reader will note that in tunes where a particular note is ‘flatter’ or ‘sharper’ than that indicated in the key signature, an arrow pointing downwards or upwards is used to indicate this, respectively. This symbol was also adopted by Peter Cooke in his transcriptions of Shetland fiddle music (1986). Similarly, in my transcription of the slow air played by Connie, ‘O’Rahilly’s Grave’ (Ts. 45), I have adopted another symbol, the síneadh ‘→’
(De Noraidh, 1965; Ní Riain, 1988), in order to indicate the freer nature of the rhythms employed. This is also evident in transcriptions 8a, 9, 46 and 46a. Finally, the pause sign is used where the note indicated is held longer than usual. This is confined mainly to the last bar of tunes, where Connie tends to hold the last note.
Jig - Untitled (Transcription 1)

Ts. 1 and 2 are played as a set.

R1, A

R1, Al

R2, A

R2, Al

R1, B

R1, Bl

R2, B

R2, Bl
'Txs. 1 and 2 are played as a set.'
Ts. 3, 4 and 5 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R2, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1
Js. 3, 4 and 5 are played as a set.

R1, A

R1, A1

R2, A

R2, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1
Jig - Untitled (Transcription 5)

Ts. 3, 4 and 5 are played as a set.
Reel - The Piper's Despair* (Transcription 6)

Ts. 6 and 7 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1
Tr. 6 and 7 are played as a set.
Johnny Cope (Transcription 8) continued.

R1. D

R1. DI

R2. D

R2. DI

R1. E

R1. E1

R2. E

R2. E1

R1. F

R1. F1

R2. F

R2. F1
Hornpipe - Johnny Cope (Transcription 8a)

Version played by Padraig O'Keeffe

R1, A

R1, A1

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1
Johnny Cope (Transcription 8a) continued.

R1, C

R1, C1

R2, C

R2, C1

R3, C

R3, C1

R1, D

R1, D1

R2, D

R2, D1

R3, D

R3, D1
Johnny Cope (Transcription 8a) continued.

R1, E

R1, E1

R2, E

R2, E1

R3, E

Fade out

R1, F

R1, F1

R2, F

R2, F1
Hornpipe - Johnny Cope (Transcription 8b)

Version played by Julia Clifford

R1, A

R1, A1

R2, B

R2, B1

R1, C

R1, C1

R1, D

R1, D1

R1, E

R1, E1
Johnny Cope (Transcription 8b) continued.

R1, F

R2, F1
The Banks of the Ilen* (Transcription 9)

Ts. 9 and 10 are played as a set.

R1. A

R2. A

R3. A

R1. B

R1. B1

R2. B

R2. B1

R3. B

R3. B1
The G drones in the A section of this tune are very lightly struck but are nonetheless present.
Reel - Sweeney's Dream (Transcription 13)

Ts. 13 and 14 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R4, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B

R4, B
Ts. 13 and 14 are played as a set.
Ts. 15 and 16 are played as a set.

R1, A

R1, A1

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1

R4, A

R4, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1

R4, B

R4, B1
Ts. 15 and 16 are played as a set.
Ts. 17 and 18 are played as a set.
Jig - The Rambling Pitchfork (Transcription 18)

Ts. 17 and 18 are played as a set.
Reel - The Liffey Banks (Transcription 19)

Txs. 19 and 20 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1
Reel - The Shaskeen (Transcription 20)

Ts. 19 and 20 are played as a set.

R1, A

R1, A1

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1
The Milliner's Daughter (Transcription 21)

Ts. 21 and 22 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1
The Mills are Grinding (Transcription 22)

Txs 21 and 22 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B
The Boys of the Lough (Transcription 23)
Jig - Connie O'Connell's (Transcription 24)

Times 24, 25 and 26 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1
Connie O’Connell’s (Transcription 24) continued.
Jig - The Humours of Glen (Transcription 25)

Ts. 24, 25 and 26 are played as a set.

R. A.
Jig - Untitled (Transcription 26)

Tx. 24, 25 and 26 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1
Ts. 28 and 29 are played as a set.

R1, A

R1, A1

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1
Reel - Kitty gone a-milking (Transcription 29)

Ts. 28 and 29 are played as a set.
Ts. 30 and 31 are played as a set.

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Reel - The Green Fields of Rosbeigh (Transcription 30)
Trs. 30 and 31 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R4, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B

R4, B
Ts. 32 and 33 are played as a set.
The West Clare Reel (Transcription 33)

Txs. 32 and 33 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B

R1, C

R2, C

R3, C
Reel - Sheehan's (Transcription 34)

Ts. 34 and 35 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1
Reel - The Gooseberry Bush (Transcription 35)

Trs. 34 and 35 are played as a set.
The Gooseberry Bush (Transcription 35) continued.

R1, C

R1, C1

R2, C

R2, C1

R3, C

R3, C1
Reel - John O'Shea's (Transcription 37)

Ts. 37 and 38 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1
To 37 and 38 are played as a set.
The Derry Hornpipe (Transcription 39) continued.
Reel - The Turnpike Gate (Transcription 40)

Ts. 40 and 41 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R4, A

R5, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B

R4, B

R5, B
Reel - Killavil Fancy (Transcription 41)

Txs. 40 and 41 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R4, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B

R4, B
Reel - Kiss the Maid behind the Barrel (Transcription 42)

Ts. 42 and 43 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B

R1, C

R2, C

R3, C
Kiss the Maid behind the Barrel (Ts. 42) continued.
Reel - The Ravelled Hank of Yarn (Transcription 43)

Txs. 42 and 43 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, B

R3, B

R4, A
Jig - John Mahinney's no. 1 (Transcription 44)
Reel - The Banks of The Ilkn* (Transcription 46)

Ts. 46 and 47 are played as a set.
The Banks of The Ilen* (Seanbhean na gCartai - Transcription 46a)

Version played by Julia Clifford and Denis Murphy

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1
Reel - Tom Billy's* (Transcription 47)

Ts. 46 and 47 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B
The Doon Reel (Transcription 48)

Ts. 48 and 49 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B
Reel - The Green Garter (Transcription 49)

Ts. 48 and 49 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B
Reel - Feargal O'Gara (Transcription 50)

R.50 and 51 are played as a set.

R1. A

R1. B

R2. A

R2. A1

R2. B

R1. B

R1. B1

R2. B1
Reel - Untitled (Transcription 51)

Ts. 50 and 51 are played as a set.
The Ballydesmond Polka* (Transcription 52)

Ts. 52 and 53 are played as a set.

R1, A

R1, A1

R2, A

R2, A1

R3, A

R3, A1

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R2, B1

R3, B

R3, B1
The Ballydesmond Polka* (Transcription 53)

Ts. 52 and 53 are played as a set.
The Blackbird (Transcription 55) continued.

R1, B

R1, B1

R2, B

R3, B

R3, B1
Reel - The Galtee Rangers* (Transcription 56)

Ts. 56, 57 and 58 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B
Ts. 56, 57 and 58 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B
Reel - Callaghan's (Transcription 58)

Ts. 56, 57 and 58 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R4, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B

R4, B
Reel - Johnny When You Die (Transcription 59)

Ts. 59 and 60 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B
Reel - Anything for John-Joe? (Transcription 60)

Ts. 59 and 60 are played as a set.
Anything For John-Joe? (Transcription 60a)

Version played by Julia Clifford and Denis Murphy
The G drones are very faint but are nonetheless present.
Reel - The Piper's Despair (Transcription 64)

T's 64 and 65 are played as a set.
Reel - Paddy Taylor's (Transcription 65)

Ts. 64 and 65 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R1, B

R2, B

R1, C

R2, C
Reel - Untitled (Transcription 66) continued.

Demonstration 1
R1, D.

Demonstration 2
R1, D.

onto The West Clare Reel
The West Clare Reel (Transcription 67)

Demonstration 1 - Tune played on its own
R1, A

Demonstration 2 - Tune preceded by Transcription 66
R1, A

Demonstration 1
R1, B

Demonstration 2
R1, B

R2, A

R2, B
The West Clare Reel (Transcription 67) continued.

**Demonstration 1**

**R1, C**

\[ \text{Musical notation} \]

**R2, C**

\[ \text{Musical notation} \]

**Demonstration 2**

**R1, C**

\[ \text{Musical notation} \]

**R2, C**

\[ \text{Musical notation} \]
Reel - The Turnpike Gate (Transcription 68)

T's 68 & 69 are played as a set.
Reel - Killavil Fancy (Transcription 69)

Ts. 68 and 69 are played as a set.

R1, A

R2, A

R3, A

R4, A

R1, B

R2, B

R3, B

R4, B
APPENDIX B

A LIST OF THE TUNES PLAYED BY CONNIE O'CONNELL IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY WERE PERFORMED

In this Appendix, the tunes are listed in the order in which they were played by Connie on the three main recording dates - 15/10/1992, 25/11/1992 and 18/10/1993. The symbol * which follows certain tunes, indicates that alternative tune titles have been discovered. Where applicable, these alternative titles are listed in Appendix D (where the tunes are indexed according to regional source). The sources of the alternative titles are explained in detail in Appendix E. Transcriptions of tunes played by Denis Murphy, Pádraig O'Keeffe and Julia Clifford are also listed here for comparative purposes. These transcriptions are evident where the letter ‘a’ or ‘b’ follows the main tune number and they are accompanied by a footnote to indicate the commercial recording from which they were taken.

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<td>Jig - Untitled</td>
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<td>Jig - Untitled</td>
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<td>Jig - Untitled</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Reel - The Piper’s Despair *</td>
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<tr>
<td>6a (Version played by Denis Murphy)</td>
<td>Reel - Paddy Taylor’s</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Reel - Paddy Taylor’s</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Hornpipe - Johnny Cope</td>
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<td>8a (Version played by Pádraig O’Keeffe)</td>
<td>Reel - The Banks of the Ilen *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8b (Version played by Julia Clifford)</td>
<td>Reel - Tom Billy’s *</td>
</tr>
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</table>

1Version taken from Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra.
2Version taken from The Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Master/Pádraig O’Keeffe.
3Version taken from The Humours of Liskeen.
11 Reel - Julia Delaney’s
12 Reel - Untitled
13 Reel - Sweeney’s Dream
14 Reel - Hand Me Down the Tackle
15 Slide - Untitled *
16 Slide - Untitled *
17 Jig - The Sporting Pitchfork
18 Jig - The Rambling Pitchfork
19 Reel - The Liffey Banks
20 Reel - The Shaskeen
21 Reel - The Milliner’s Daughter
22 Reel - The Mills are Grinding
23 Reel - The Boys of the Lough
24 Jig - Connie O’Connell’s
25 Jig - The Humours of Glen
26 Jig - Untitled
27 Reel - Untitled
28 Reel - Untitled
29 Reel - Kitty gone a-milking
30 Reel - The Green Fields of Rosbeigh
31 Reel - Untitled
32 Reel - Untitled
33 Reel - The West Clare Reel
34 Reel - Sheehan’s
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<td>Reel - The Gooseberry Bush</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Reel - Dowd's no.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Reel - John O'Shea's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Reel - The Maids of Feakle</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>The Derry Hornpipe</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>Reel - The Turnpike Gate</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Reel - Killavil Fancy</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Reel - Kiss the Maid behind the Barrel</td>
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<td>Reel - The Ravelled Hank of Yarn</td>
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**Recording Date: 25/11/1992 (Tape 2)**

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<td>Jig - John Mahinney's no.1</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>Slow Air - O'Rahilly's Grave</td>
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<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Reel - The Banks of the Ilen *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 46a    | (Version played by Julia Clifford and Denis Murphy) *
| 47     | Reel - Tom Billy's *                    |
| 47a    | (Version played by Denis Murphy) *
| 48     | The Doon Reel                           |
| 49     | Reel - The Green Garter                |
| 50     | Reel - Feargal O'Gara                  |
| 51     | Reel - Untitled                         |
| 52     | The Ballydesmond Polka *               |

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4 Version taken from *The Star above the Garter*.
5 Version taken from *Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra*. 


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>The Ballydesmond Polka *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Hornpipe - Father Dollard’s *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Set Dance - The Blackbird</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Reel - The Galtee Rangers *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Reel - The Gleanntán Reel *</td>
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<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Reel - Callaghan’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Reel - Johnny When You Die</td>
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<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Reel - Anything for John-Joe?</td>
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<tr>
<td>60a</td>
<td>(Version played by Julia Clifford and Denis Murphy)*</td>
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<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Hornpipe - The Fisherman’s</td>
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</table>
| 62   | Reel - The Torn Jacket  
(own composition) |
| 63   | Reel - Untitled  
(own composition) |

**Bowed Transcriptions**

**Recording Date: 18/10/1993. Tapes 3a and 3b.**

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<td>Reel - Paddy Taylor’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Reel - Untitled</td>
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<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>The West Clare Reel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Reel - Turnpike Gate</td>
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<td>69</td>
<td>Reel - Killavil Fancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Reel - The Liffey Banks</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Version taken from *The Star above the Garter.*
APPENDIX C

INDEX OF TUNES ACCORDING TO TUNE-TYPE

In this Appendix, the tunes are indexed according to tune-type. Within these tune-type categories, they are arranged in alphabetical order. The tape, on which each tune is featured, is also listed here. The manner in which these tapes are numbered is explained in the Tapeography. (Tape 1 was recorded on 15/10/1992, Tape 2 on 25/11/1992 and Tape 3a, a videotape, recorded on 18/10/1993. Tape 3b is an edited version of Tape 3a).

The transcription numbers which attend each individual tune are also listed here and indicate the order in which the tunes were played. Where tunes are preceded by the symbol *, this indicates that alternative tune titles were discovered. These alternative titles are listed in Appendix D and are explained in detail in Appendix E.
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<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>* Banks of the Ilen, The</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>46</td>
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<td>46a(^1)</td>
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<td>Boys of the Lough, The</td>
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<td>Callaghan’s</td>
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<td>58</td>
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<td>Doon Reel, The</td>
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<td>Dowd’s No. 9</td>
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<td>Feargal O’Gara</td>
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<td>* Galtee Rangers, The</td>
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<td>Hand Me Down the Tackle</td>
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<td>John O’Shea’s</td>
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<td>37</td>
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<td>Johnny When You Die</td>
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<td>3a, 3b</td>
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<td>Kiss the Maid behind the Barrel</td>
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<td>Kitty gone a-milking</td>
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\(^1\)Version taken from *The Star Above the Garter* and played by Julia Clifford and Denis Murphy.
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<td><strong>Mills are Grinding, The</strong></td>
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<td>*** Piper’s Despair, The**</td>
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²Version played by Denis Murphy taken from *Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra*.
³Version played by Denis Murphy taken from *Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra*. Here it is called ‘The New Post Office’.
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**JIGS**

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**HORNPIPES**

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*Version played by Padraig O’Keeffe taken from *The Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Master - Padraig O’Keeffe.*

*Version played by Julia Clifford taken from *The Humours of Lisheen.*
CATEGORISATION OF TUNES ACCORDING TO REGIONAL SOURCE

Here, the tunes are categorised according to regional source, for example, Connie associates ‘The Piper’s Despair’ with Denis Murphy, therefore, this tune is placed under the ‘Sliabh Luachra’ heading. The ‘Rambling Pitchfork’ and ‘The Sporting Pitchfork’ are two jigs which he associates with Patrick Kelly of Cree, Co. Clare and are, accordingly, placed under the ‘Clare’ heading. The heading ‘Various’, caters for those tunes where Connie could not identify an exact source. Where alternative titles were discovered for certain tunes, these are also included here. Thus, the information contained reads as follows: the title of the tune given by Connie, alternative tune-title discovered, if any (this is contained between inverted commas), transcription number, date of recording and presence on any of the following recordings: Volumes 1 - 6 of the Music from Sliabh Luachra series, Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra and The Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Master Pádraig O’Keeffe, where relevant. (All recordings are listed in the Discography).

Certain tunes are followed by a number in bold print. These numbers correspond with those listed in Appendix E, where any further information relevant to the tunes in question is given.
SLIABH LUACHRA

Polkas


Slides

* Untitled. ‘Andy McCarthy’s Favourite’. Ts. 16, 15/10/1992. 3

* Untitled. ‘The Brosna Slide’. Ts. 15, 15/10/1992. 4

Jigs

Connie O’Connell’s. Ts. 24, 15/10/1992. 5


Untitled. Ts. 4, 15/10/1992.


Hornpipes

* Father Dollard’s. ‘The Harlequin’. Ts. 54, 25/11/1992. The Star of Munster Trio, Denis Murphy - Music From Sliabh Luachra. 6


Johnny Cope. Ts. 8, 15/10/1992. The Humours of Lisheen, The Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Master - Pádraig O’Keeffe. 7
Reels


Kiss the Maid behind the Barrel. Ts. 42, 15/10/1992.


Slow Airs


CLARE

Reels


Kitty gone a-milking. Ts. 29, 15/10/1992.
Maids of Feakle, The. Ts. 38, 15/10/1992. 20

Paddy Taylor’s. Ts. 7 & 65, 15/10/1992 & 18/10/1993. 21

Jigs

Rambling Pitchfork, The. Ts. 18, 15/10/1992. 22

Sporting Pitchfork, The. Ts. 17, 15/10/1992. 23

Hornpipe

Derry Hornpipe, The. Ts. 39, 15/10/1992. 24

GALWAY

Jigs

Untitled. ‘Bobby Casey’s’. Ts. 2, 15/10/1992. 25


Reels

Milliner’s Daughter, The. Ts. 21, 15/10/1992. 26

Mills are Grinding, The. Ts. 22, 15/10/1992. 27

Shaskeen, The. Ts. 20, 15/10/1992. 28

SLIGO

Reels

Dowd’s no.9. Ts. 36, 15/10/1992. 29

Feargal O’Gara. Ts. 50, 25/11/1992. 30

Untitled. Ts. 51, 25/11/1992. 31
VARIOUS

Reels


Hand me down the Tackle. Ts. 14, 15/10/1992.

John O'Shea's. Ts. 37, 15/10/1992. 32

Julia Delaney's. Ts. 11, 15/10/1993.

Killavil Fancy. Ts. 41 & 69, 15/10/1992 & 18/10/1993. 33

Liffey Banks, The. Ts. 19 & 70, 15/10/1992 & 18/10/1993. 34

Reel - Untitled. Ts. 12, 15/10/1992.

Reel - Untitled. Ts. 27, 15/10/1992.


Reel - Untitled. Ts. 32 & 66, 15/10/1992 & 18/10/1993. 35

Sheehan's. Ts. 34, 15/10/1992. 36


Set Dance

APPENDIX E

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION RELATING TO CERTAIN TUNES
HIGHLIGHTED IN APPENDIX D

The numbers in this Appendix correspond with those numbers which feature in bold in Appendix D. The information which follows each number includes the tune title supplied by Connie, corresponding transcription number and any additional pertinent information relating to the tunes in question. The tape on which Connie or Johnny O’Leary isolated the source of each tune is also listed where relevant. The tape numbers correspond with those listed in the Tapeography. Finally, where an alternative tune title is listed in Appendix D, the source of this tune title is also identified.

1. The Ballydesmond Polka (Ts. 52). The title ‘The Ballydesmond Polka (2)’, features in Johnny O’ Leary of Sliabh Luachra/Dance Music from the Cork-Kerry border. Here it is described as “a polka version of Maurice Manley’s no. 9” (Moylan, 1994: 33). The Irish Fiddle Book lists it as Maurice Manley’s (Cranitch 1988: 139).

2. The Ballydesmond Polka (Ts. 53). The title ‘The Ballydesmond Polka (3)’, features in Johnny O’Leary of Sliabh Luachra/Dance Music from the Cork-Kerry border (Moylan, 1994: 34). The other title which I discovered for this polka, is ‘Tom Billy’s’. This features on the CD recording The Sliabh Luachra Fiddle-Master - Pádraig O’Keeffe.

3. Slide - Untitled (Ts. 16). Johnny O’Leary suggested the title ‘Andy McCarthy’s Favourite’ for this slide. According to Johnny, Andy McCarthy was a fiddle-player. Although Connie associates this tune with Pádraig O’Keeffe, Johnny states that Pádraig
only played this slide four or five years before he died, whereas he, himself, had this tune as a young lad.

I heard that one before Pádraig, would you believe. That’s the first [slide] I ever heard and I was mad about it and the next thing I heard Pádraig play it...Pádraig only played that four or five years before he died and I heard it as a young lad and I coming up (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

4. **Slide - Untitled (Ts. 15).** ‘The Brosna Slide’ was a title suggested by Johnny O’Leary. Johnny associates it with Dónal O’Connor, whose father, Paddy Jerry O’Connor of Brosna, passed it on to Pádraig O’Keeffe. Although Denis Murphy played a great deal of Pádraig’s music, Johnny stated that he never heard him play this slide or the slide which follows it (Ts. 16). Therefore, Johnny feels that Pádraig kept a lot of music to himself.

Dónal O’Connor played this one. His father Paddy that gave it to Pádraig O’Keeffe first and now Denis Murphy learned from Pádraig and Denis never played these slides or I’d say he never got them, so Pádraig kept a lot of music to himself (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 8).

5. **Jig - Connie O’Connell’s (Ts. 24).** Although this jig is named after Connie, Connie stated that he did not, in fact, compose this tune. Mick Dwyer of Castletownbere is accredited with its composition. Connie stated that he just “changed a few notes here and there”, consequently, the jig is now associated with him (Connie, Tape 1).

6. **Hornpipe - Father Dollard’s (Ts. 54).** Connie got this hornpipe from Jerry McCarthy of Scartaglen, who, in turn, learned it from Pádraig O’Keeffe (Connie, Tapes 2 & 5). It also comes under the name of ‘The Harlequin’ on the recordings, *The Star of Munster Trio* and *Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra.*
7. **Hornpipe - Johnny Cope (Ts. 8)**. This six-part version played by Connie is accredited to Pádraig O’Keeffe. Connie stated that there is a two-part version also written in O’Neill’s (Connie, Tapes 1 & 5). This features in O’Neill (1915), where it is listed under ‘Marches’. This indexing of the tune is not surprising, if one recalls Alan Ward’s statement quoted in Chapter Two, that it was:

originally a Scots reel which was later used as the tune for a Jacobite song and is still a favourite marching-band standby (Ward, 1976: 29).

However, this two-part version bears little resemblance to any of the six parts of the hornpipe. The six-part version, transcribed from the playing of the Chieftains fiddle-player, Seán Keane, is transcribed in Breathnach (1985: 95). Here, it is noted that this hornpipe is also called ‘General Coope’. The Scottish origins of this tune are also acknowledged.

8. **Reel - The Banks of the Ilen (Ts. 9 & 46)**. Connie offered an alternative title for this reel, ‘An tSeanbhean ag Gáire’ (Connie, Tapes 2 & 5). The title ‘Seanbhean na gCartaí’ appears on the album *The Star Above the Garter*.

9 & 10. **Reels - Callaghan’s & The Doon Reel (Ts. 58 & 48)**. According to Johnny O’Leary, there are about six Doon reels, all of which are associated with Cal Callaghan of Doon, Pádraig’s maternal uncle (Tape 8). ‘Callaghan’s’ and ‘The Doon Reel’ are amongst the six reels. After playing ‘Callaghan’s’, Connie displayed a system of bowing which Pádraig is said to have adopted for this particular reel. It was John Connell of Ballyvourney who demonstrated this system of bowing to Connie (Connie, Tape 2).
11. Reel - The Galtee Rangers (Ts. 56). This is a well known reel in Sliabh Luachra. The subsequent title discovered, ‘The Humours of Galtymór’, was a title with which Connie was not familiar. However, it features on the recordings Kerry Fiddles and Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra. The spelling of Galtymór varies. The former album adopts the spelling ‘Galtymore’, the latter ‘Galteemore’. Connie felt ‘Galtymór’ was the most suitable way of spelling it.

12. The Gleanntán Reel (Ts. 57). This is another popular reel in Sliabh Luachra which is frequently played after ‘The Galtee Rangers’. In fact, these two reels are paired together on the album, The Star above the Garter. The spelling of Gleanntán is also subject to much variation including ‘Glentaun’ (The Star above the Garter), ‘Glountane’ (Moylan ed., 1994) and ‘Glauntane’ (Ward, 1977: 5). I decided to opt for the original Irish spelling of the placename which is not subject to such variation. The title, ‘O’Keeffe’s Dream’, was discovered on the recording Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra.

13. Reel - Johnny When You Die (Ts. 59). This is another well known Sliabh Luachra reel which was originally a comic song. Alan Ward also confirms the song origins of this reel (Ward, 1976: 25). The song title was traced in John Ward’s Collection of Irish Comic songs (1947). However, the tune, in John Ward’s book, is not the same as the reel which Connie performed under the same name. Interestingly enough, however, is the fact that when I asked Connie to play this, he initially played the opening of the song contained in Ward’s book. Since I had discovered ‘Johnny when you Die’ on The Star above the Garter and it did not correspond with what Connie had initiated, I simply lilted the tune, which I had heard on the album, to which he nodded and played accordingly (Connie, Tape 2). It seems, then, that there are two reels which share the same title.
14. Reel - Kiss the Maid behind the Barrel (Ts. 42). The six-part version of this tune is ascribed to Pádraig O’Keeffe and Connie pointed out that “tisn’t played anywhere else” (Connie, Tape 2). According to Connie, there was also a four-part version played by Séamus Ennis, who, apparently, had heard his father play this particular version.

15. Reel - The Piper’s Despair (Ts. 6 & 64). This reel is associated with Denis Murphy and the performances by Denis on the recordings Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra and Na Ceirníní ’78, show a remarkable similarity to Connie’s setting of this tune. Johnny O’Leary stated that they had that tune “ever” [always] in Sliabh Luachra and he knew it as ‘The Flowing Bowl’ (Johnny O’Leary, Tape 9).

16. Reel - Tom Billy’s (Ts. 10 & 47). The title ‘The New Post Office’, features on the recording Denis Murphy - Music from Sliabh Luachra. It is, however, a title neither Johnny nor Connie were familiar with.

17. Reel - The Torn Jacket (Ts. 62). This reel is an original composition of Connie’s and it features on the recording The Moneymusk. Connie spoke of being challenged to write a tune called ‘The Torn Jacket’ during the Oireachtas in Cork, a title inspired by the tearing of a jacket (Connie, Tape 6).

18. Reel - The Gooseberry Bush (Ts. 35). This reel is associated with Willie Clancy (Connie, Tape 6).

19. Reel - Kitty gone a-milking (Ts. 29). This reel is associated with Mrs. Crotty of Clare (Connie, Tape 5).
20. **Reel - The Maids of Feakle (Ts. 38).** Connie associates this with the late concertina player Paddy Murphy and his musical associate, flute and fiddle-player - Peadar O'Loughlin, both from Clare (Connie, Tapes 5 & 6).

21. **Reel - Paddy Taylor's (Ts. 7 & 65).** This is associated with flute player Paddy Taylor of West Limerick (Connie, Tape 5).

22 & 23. **Jigs - The Sporting Pitchfork and The Rambling Pitchfork (Ts. 17 & 18).** These jigs are associated with private recordings of Patrick Kelly, Cree, Co. Clare. The recordings were made by Séamus Mac Mathúna and they are stored in the Cultúrlann archives in the headquarters of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Dublin. Seán Ó Ríada also made recordings of Patrick Kelly and Connie also had access to these (Connie, Tape 6).

24. **The Derry Hornpipe (Ts. 39).** This hornpipe is associated with a recording of Séamus Ennis (Connie, Tape 5).

25. **Jig - Untitled (Ts. 2).** The title ‘Bobby Casey’s’, which was discovered on the cassette *Paddy Carty, Conor Tully, and Frank Hogan*, suggests that this tune, or the particular version of this tune, is of Clare origin. However, Connie associates this tune with Galway (Connie, Tape 6).

26 & 27. **Reels - The Milliner's Daughter & The Mills are Grinding (Ts. 21 & 22).** Both reels are associated with The Ballinakill Céilí Band, Co. Galway (Connie, Tapes 1 & 6). The 78 r.p.m. recording of these reels is available in the Traditional Music Archives in Dublin and Connie’s version of the tunes is virtually identical to that which features on this recording.
28. Reel - The Shaskeen (Ts. 20). This version of ‘The Shaskeen’ is also associated with The Ballinakill Céilí Band. Peadar O’Loughlin was the source of this version which “goes up” in the second part of the tune, instead of “coming down” (Connie, Tapes 1 & 6).

29. Reel - Dowd’s no. 9 (Ts. 36). While Connie did not ascribe this reel to any particular source (Connie, Tape 6), it was, nonetheless, placed in the Sligo section, because this is from where it originally hails. According to the article, ‘Joe O’Dowd, Sligo Fiddler’ (Treoir, 17, no. 4, 12-13), there are two O’Dowd reels in circulation. The first is called ‘O’Dowd’s Favourite’. This was recorded by Michael Coleman in the twenties. The second reel, ‘O’Dowd’s no. 9’, was recorded by Hugh Gillespie. (This is the reel which Connie played). Both reels are associated with John O’Dowd, uncle of fiddle-player, Joe O’Dowd from Gurteen, Co. Sligo.

30 & 31. Reels - Feargal O’Gara & Untitled reel (Ts. 50 & 51). Connie associates both of these reels with Michael Coleman and stated that Denis Murphy and his sister, Julia Clifford, may also have played these reels.

They were both played by Michael Coleman on the 78’s, but I’m not right sure did he give any name for the second one or not. [Coleman did not]. They’d be completely Sligo tunes, even though I’m sure that Denis Murphy and, especially Denis and Julia, they’d play a lot of those tunes afterwards ‘cause they bought up all those 78’s that came from America. They learned the tunes, they thought they were nice. Probably played them their own particular style, but they still played the tunes and learned ‘em (Connie, Tape 2).

32. Reel - John O’Shea’s (Ts. 37). Although John O’Shea’s roots are in Kerry, Connie did not associate this reel with this part of the country. He did not attribute this tune to any particular person or place (Connie, Tape 6).
33. Reel - Killavil Fancy (Ts. 41 & 69). While this tune obviously stems from Sligo, Connie did not associate it with this part of the country and he did not ascribe this reel to any particular source (Connie, Tape 5).

34. Reel - The Liffey Banks (Ts. 19 & 70). This tune and ‘The Shaskeen’ are frequently played together, no doubt, as a result of their pairing by Michael Coleman. However, Connie did not associate ‘The Liffey Banks’ with Michael Coleman and he did not ascribe it to any specific source (Connie, Tape 5).

35. Reel - Untitled (Ts. 32 & 66). This was called ‘Wellington’s Reel’ by James Morrison. Morrison played this tune in the key of E, which called for the extension of the fourth finger on the E string for the C natural in the second part of the tune. Connie’s version, in the key of D, sees the more standard incorporation of the B at this point. Morrison’s version of this tune is transcribed in Lyth (1981: 84).

36. Reel - Sheehan’s (Ts. 34). Connie associates this reel with Willie Clancy (Connie, Tape 6).