

Useless and extravagant? The consumption of music in the Irish country house

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Despite being overlooked in much of the historiography of the European country house, music was a key facet of social and cultural life among regional landowning elites. In the medieval period it was an agent of hospitality and entertainment provided by feudal lords as public demonstrations of power and prestige; musicians and poets in return extolled the illustrious ancestry and munificence of their patrons. Music was also a component of Christian worship, supported by ecclesiastical authorities in devotional contexts ranging from monastic contemplation to congregational hymn-singing. Elaborate choral and instrumental styles of music were cultivated for performances in the context of solemn sacred ceremonies, the grandeur and spectacle of which was emulated in the secular sphere.¹ During the age of 'enlightenment', civil authorities and intellectuals in Europe actively promoted music, rationalising their patronage by deeming it an appropriate means of celebrating human creativity, enriching education and elevating taste.² Aristocratic patronage inspired the transmission of music among a broader section of the population during the 18th century, increasing access to this art form but ultimately encouraging its commodification.³ In commercial centres across the continent, industries developed around the manufacture of musical instruments and the printing of sheet music for 'private' consumption by fashionable amateurs.⁴

By the 1770s, the pioneering music historian Charles Burney (1726–1814) could declare that there was 'hardly a private family in a civilised nation without its flute, its fiddle, its harpsichord or guitar'.⁵ Plotting the nature, extent and social spread of 'private' music-making, however, is fraught with difficulties owing to what Christina Bashford termed the 'partial survival, and impenetrability, of source material'.⁶ As Richard Leppert has observed, references gleaned from contemporary correspondence

and diaries – private records principally generated by the upper social classes – are 'invariably non-descriptive and brief'.⁷ This difficulty can be obviated to some degree by interrogating the extant records of consumption, such as account books, inventories, invoices, bills and receipts associated with elite households. Contextualisation of these quantitative records is tendered by a range of qualitative materials surviving in the public record: trade directories, travel writings, philosophical treatises, auction catalogues, contemporary newspapers and other periodicals, conduct books and works of literary fiction, as well as extant printed/published music scores, musical instruments and, for the 20th century, sound recordings. Sporadic and fragmentary though some of these sources are – especially in Ireland – evidence of the consumption of musical goods, services and experiences offers fresh perspectives on the form and function of the country house.

Elite musical culture

Notwithstanding its position on the continental periphery, elite musical culture in Ireland reflected much of that found elsewhere in Europe; Ita Hogan's pioneering work has demonstrated that by the early 18th century fashionable music was following 'English models, which in turn took their prevailing style from the Continent'.⁸ The formation of an Anglo-Irish political and social elite whose status and authority was underpinned by landownership was largely an outcome of English colonial policies centred on 'civilising' and social engineering during the preceding centuries.⁹ The total population of Ireland is thought to have been around five million by 1800, approximately one-third of the overall population of the British Isles, twice that of Portugal or Sweden and about equal to that of the Netherlands.¹⁰ There were fewer than 10,000 landowners on the island at this time.¹¹ A

vastly disproportionate amount of wealth and power was thus controlled by a minority of the Irish population loyal to the English monarchical state and its sanctioned religion. This so-called 'Protestant Ascendancy' comprised the country's leading landowners, politicians, military officers, ecclesiastics and entrepreneurs in the 18th century but it became an increasingly heterogeneous and somewhat less Protestant socio-economic collective during the 19th.¹² Consequently, the estates, homes and possessions of individual members of the Irish landed elite often varied greatly – as did their social and artistic horizons. Travel purposes were manifold but typically centred on going to 'town' to participate in public life and socialise with peers; the choice of town was determined by a range of factors, including age, rank, income and marital status. Dublin operated as the social and cultural capital for many but some sought new practices and materials in London or further afield, while others deferred more to localised forms.¹³

Dublin held its own as a centre of significant social and intellectual stature throughout the 18th century, largely on account of the independent Irish parliament and the vice-regal court at Dublin Castle, and the city, second only to London in terms of population, attracted many great masters of music, including George Frederic Handel (1685–1759).¹⁴ A distinctive feature of elite social life both in Dublin and the provinces was the promotion of concerts for the support of charitable causes, including the funding of hospitals or the relief of families of imprisoned debtors and, significantly, 'decayed musicians'. Burney notes that this was widely encouraged by clergymen, 'the most respectable profession ... in order to open the purses of the affluent'.¹⁵ It was in aid of Dublin's Mercer's Hospital, for instance, that Handel's *Messiah* was first performed in April 1742. (A royal favourite, Handel's choral output features consistently in extant collections of music associated with Irish country houses and their occupants.) Irrespective of their specified purpose, charity concerts were held in a variety of settings, including churches and pleasure gardens. Theatres, too, became increasingly important venues for musical activity in Ireland and Britain over the course of the century, with many entertainments featuring vocal and instrumental music.¹⁶ Graded entrance fees permitted admission by all levels of society to plays, pantomimes and farces, but attending an opera was an elite activity encouraged by high admission prices, elaborate set design and strict protocols.¹⁷

Fashionable society in 18th- and 19th-century Ireland was led by the vice-regal court at Dublin Castle. The arrival from England of the viceroy (lord lieutenant) and his wife – regarded as leaders of taste and propriety – usually marked the commencement of the Dublin Season and typically coincided with the sitting of parliament at College Green. This occasioned an influx of courtiers and parliamentarians from their country seats and a seasonal boost to the city's economy. Suppliers of all types of goods and services – music masters, musicians and music tradesmen among them – used targeted newspaper advertisements to attract the custom and patronage of the so-called 'nobility and gentry'. With at least 60 'music sellers' recorded for Dublin between 1780 and 1830, there was a flourishing trade in the sale of sheet music, some of it published on site. Because music copyrighted in England had no protection in Ireland, Irish firms 'made fortunes on pirated editions of English and Continental works' and 'flooded the English market with them'.¹⁸ There was also a large trade in musical instrument-making, with many Dublin makers supplying both the town and country residences of elite households.¹⁹ The music trades were not confined to the Irish capital, though, as provincial towns like Cork, Belfast, Kilkenny, Limerick or Waterford sustained both native and immigrant music providers.²⁰ Such towns functioned as significant bases for landowners in their roles as local patrons and powerbrokers, social animators and arbiters.²¹

The commodification of musical culture from the late 18th century, especially in the provinces, did not occur without comment. In February 1763, a letter appeared in the *Cork Evening Post*, purportedly written by an 'old batchelor', criticising 'the present spirit of parents educating their daughters above their circumstances in the fashionable arts of being useless and extravagant'. It suggested that without such 'frivolities' as music, more women would 'be brought up modest, useful and sober, and then they [would] deserve husbands'.²² For women of, or aspiring to, rank and fortune, however, music-making was one of a number of requisite social 'accomplishments' and young ladies like Dorothea Herbert, the daughter of Rev Nicholas Herbert, rector of Carrick-on-Suir, Co Tipperary, took lessons as part of their social edification.²³ The ability to sing or play music, dance, speak French or Italian and draw or paint indicated that an investment had been

made in a girl's refinement and in her preparation for her future roles as wife, mother and hostess. The conception of music as a suitable female diversion was propagated as much by elite women – dubbed by the writer Maria Edgeworth as 'the cabinet council of mothers' – as by instruction manuals and conduct literature and the music 'industry' throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Contemporary female commentators – including Edgeworth, whose ancestral home was at Edgeworthstown in Co Longford – endorsed the notion: 'accomplishments are such charming resources for young women, they keep them out of harm's way ... They are as necessary to her as a fortune: they are indeed considered as part of her fortune, and sometimes are even found to supply the place of it. Next to beauty, they are the best tickets of admission into society which she can produce'.²⁴ At the same time, elite women rarely, if ever, 'performed' outside the home, playing music only in an informal capacity, and while their skills were utilised on impromptu occasions in the country house, professional musicians were always employed for formal, invitational events. Music was thus a significant agent in the formation and expression of female identity; for centuries, domiciliary music-making in Europe and North America facilitated courtship, being considered an appropriate means of display.²⁵ As such, it was more than an amusement to alleviate idleness and enliven domestic life – it was a commodity in the marriage market.

While it was unacceptable for talented ladies to play in 'public', it was acceptable for gentlemen, but this was always done in an amateur (unpaid) capacity and for charitable purposes. So it was that by the 19th century, men with evident ability studied music in an academic way and many of the leaders of amateur musical activity in Ireland were landed gentlemen. Conversely, elite women were dissuaded from engaging seriously with music in order to avoid appearing too 'masculine'. The versatile Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan (a former governess and lady's companion at Bracklyn Castle in Co Westmeath, Fort William in Co Tipperary and Baron's Court in Co Tyrone) admitted: 'I have studied music rather as a sentiment than a science ... lest I should have become a musical pedant'.²⁶ A girl's music education was largely determined by the resources, status and social ambition of her family. Some saw it as the sole responsibility of a governess, who taught the rudiments of music, alongside other subjects, at

home in the country; others were tutored only by prominent music-masters in town. More often, girls like the aforementioned Dorothea Herbert were initially instructed in performance basics by a governess, family member or local teacher, and then sent to town for a 'polish' during the Season. In any case, masters employed by the ruling elite tended to be literate men who taught music as a means of supplementing the income they received as theatre musicians or church organists in Dublin and the larger towns. Some also supplied their pupils with materials, including printed music sheets and sets of lessons, as well as pre-ruled copybooks for manuscript music.²⁷ As Cyril Ehrlich remarked: 'Few occupations offered so many opportunities to cross frontiers of wealth and class which were closed to most people: entering rich households to play and teach, sometimes mingling with the company ... In most cases the crossing was temporary and constrained'.²⁸

The dissolution of the Irish parliament after the rebellion of 1798 and the subsequent creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland was followed by economic decline and, as the ruling class migrated to the new centre of power in London, an increased number of 'absentee' landlords.²⁹ However, the continued presence of the viceroy – who from the 1760s was required to live in Ireland for the duration of his term – ensured Dublin's continuance as a significant centre for the dissemination of new tastes and practices. The urban musical economy was deprived of much of its aristocratic patronage but sustained by the rising middle classes, who were acquiring 'unprecedented financial clout as well as increased leisure time to pursue the vast range of entertainments on offer'.³⁰ Moreover, as Paula Gillett has highlighted, the broadening of the social elite to include wealthy businessmen, bankers and other professionals was paralleled by 'a tendency to withdraw from public events such as non-exclusive public concerts (those with low minimum ticket prices) and a turning inward for a major proportion of their entertainment and leisure pursuits'.³¹ This type of sociability undoubtedly had an impact on the form and function of spaces within country houses.

At home with music

Until the abolition of the office of the viceroy in 1922, Dublin Castle endured as an elite social centre and a focal point for the nobility and gen-

try. Many of the formal gatherings there involved social dancing and though this was a recreational activity enjoyed by most sections of the population, it was an essential 'accomplishment' for both male and female members of the nobility and gentry. It required professional instruction from a dancing-master and was thus both an investment in and measure of social refinement. Formal balls almost always began with a designated exhibition dance. In the 18th century, this was typically the minuet, the performance of which was 'predetermined' in accordance with a protocol of precedence' that applied to the ranked pairings of couples and the order in which they appeared on the dance floor.³² The stately minuet was supplanted in the 19th century by the quadrille, a livelier dance performed by two couples of high status in square formation. Social dancing was a proactive form of ritualised social interaction that centred more on performance than recreation but it was not confined to dignified state occasions. It became such a popular aspect of elite sociability that the nobility and gentry held balls in their town houses during the Season and on celebratory occasions in their country homes.

Prior to the 18th century, rural residences generally took the form of fortified tower-houses or defensive dwellings, owing to inevitable conflict with those dispossessed by land confiscation and resettlement.³³ As Jane Ohlmeyer has argued, these 'powerful, physical manifestations of the crown's civilising message' facilitated the 'privatisation' and the 'anglicisation of the Irish landscape' in the 17th century.³⁴ It was not until after the triumph of the Protestant King William III at the Battle of the Boyne (1690), which gave rise to a period of relative political stability and economic development, that landowners grew more settled, prosperous and inclined to build ambitious unfortified structures in the countryside. Palladian architectural styles dominated for much of the Georgian era as the classical principles of proportion and symmetry were readily adaptable to houses of varying sizes.³⁵ Interiors were evidently influenced by the aesthetics of the public buildings and commercial recreation spaces with which country house architects and their patrons were acquainted. Of particular significance were the assembly rooms that had sprung up in several large towns by the end of the 18th century. These were sets of circulatory spaces with different social functions, capable of facilitating large numbers of people and sometimes

connected with a prominent building such as a hospital (for which fundraising events were frequently held and the names of the chief lady-patronesses printed in newspaper advertisements to attract company of quality and means). Assembly rooms were perennially popular with young Irish gentlemen as the nature of sociability at such places enhanced the probability of meeting a potential marriage partner; circulation was encouraged, simultaneity in diversions was required, and an impression – if not a realisation – of informality was promoted. In 1831, after dancing at a ball at Almack's, the most exclusive of London's rooms and where he believed he was 'the star of the evening', the young Earl of Ossory, John Butler (1808–54), afterwards 2nd Marquis of Ormonde, concluded: 'We Irish lads are quite the thing & English ladies when they can will ne'er refuse the wedding ring if offered by an Irishman'.³⁶

Several Irish landowners met their wives while socialising in England. Invariably English heiresses, these young women acquired rank and title in exchange for capital that was often expended on the decoration, furnishing, renovation or building of their marital homes in Ireland. Even in great houses established as centres of hospitality – like Castletown in Co Kildare, the marital home of Lady Louisa Augusta Conolly (1743–1821), a daughter of the 2nd Duke of Richmond – competitive society hostesses had 'state' rooms modified to facilitate the circulation of large numbers of invited guests.³⁷ The urban entertainment experience had begun to impact on the planning and design of country houses throughout the British Isles by the late 18th century, with domiciliary entertaining centring more on providing comfortable diversion than adhering to the social and spatial customs of the baroque era, which operated on a graduated basis according to one's rank or relationship to the host. Mark Girouard's work has shown that this in turn necessitated more evenly decorated circulatory spaces, a more equitable distribution of objects and furnishings, as well as areas for social dancing.³⁸ Furthermore, the practice of visiting country houses was becoming a popular leisure activity, with the primary reception rooms open to respectable callers, sometimes at appointed times.³⁹ As Jeanice Brooks has pointed out, these rooms 'not only answered to their owners' quotidian needs but served to construct idealised visions of domestic life for external consumption'.⁴⁰ It is difficult to establish when the terms 'ballroom' and 'music

room' first featured in relation to country houses and if such rooms were purposely designed for – or simply came to facilitate – music and dancing. More often than not, music was practised in drawing rooms or libraries that were increasingly conceived as multifunctional social spaces containing decorative musical iconography, particularly in the ornamental plasterwork on walls and ceilings.

The levels of spending on musical instruments varied over time and between country houses, as did the systems of supply. While some items appear to have been sourced in Ireland, many came from further afield. At Rockingham in Co Roscommon (Fig 15.1), for instance, a London firm, Flight and Robson, was responsible for building a pipe organ at the neoclassical mansion designed in 1809 by John Nash (1752–1835), the Prince Regent's architect, on behalf of Robert Edward King (1773–1854), Viscount Lorton. The exact nature or location of the organ is now unknown – the house was demolished in 1971 – but a letter written to Lorton by

his clerk of works in May 1815 reveals the creation of a 'recess' for it that was '9 feet 11 inches high and 5 feet 8 inches broad ... 4 feet deep, it will be 2 feet into the room'.⁴¹ The instrument itself cost £501 12s 9d, but further sums were spent on: a packing case (£23 16s 6d), freight duty from England (£15 19s 6d), transport by carriage from Dublin (£15), installation by Benjamin Flight on behalf of the company and travelling expenses from London (£82 11s), bringing the total cost to £638 19s 9d.⁴² Putting this figure in perspective, the annual family income of the average landless labourer, who characterised the majority of the Irish population at this time, is estimated to have been less than £20 in cash and kind.⁴³

While the instrument at Rockingham appears to have been an exceptionally extravagant commission, the pipe organ, typically associated with sacred music-making in a church setting, was a component of secular music-making in many country houses, including Carton in Co Kildare, the former residence of the FitzGer-

Fig 15.1
Rockingham House, Boyle,
Co Roscommon, a John
Nash-designed mansion
demolished in 1971.
[Photo: Davison &
Associates Ltd]

alds, Earls of Kildare and Dukes of Leinster. The exact installation date is unclear but an organ reportedly existed there as early as 1822, when it was played at a musical soirée held by Augustus Frederick FitzGerald (1791–1874), 3rd Duke of Leinster – at which the premier Irish peer himself played the double bass.⁴⁴ Amateur musical parties like this were not unusual but the eager participation of such a prominent nobleman was not necessarily commonplace. The duke, however, was one of the most prominent amateur musicians in 19th-century Ireland and appears to have spent most of his free time making or advocating music. When he was not attending to parliamentary business in London, he took lessons on the double bass and had the distinction of being tutored from 1819 onwards by the Venetian virtuoso Domenico Dragonetti (1763–1846). One newspaper reported in 1833: 'His Grace lives a quiet and happy life in the bosom of his family. His tastes are chiefly musical'.⁴⁵ The duke's penchant for music extended to the decoration of his country house, extensively remodelled after the sale of his Dublin town house (Leinster House, today the seat of Dáil Éireann, the Irish parliament) in 1815. The main salon had been decorated in the 18th century with sumptuous stuccowork featuring mythological figures carousing in the heavens and appears to have originally functioned as a dining room. By the mid-19th century, though, this was a prime entertainment space, referred to as the Music Room or Organ Room (Fig 15.2); the extant gold-and-white organ casing was designed in 1857 by the duke's son Gerald (1821–1862), an officer in the Scots Guards and a gifted composer (Fig 15.3).⁴⁶

Not all landed families had the proclivities or the means of the FitzGerald. Many did not purchase instruments as new; some were obtained by inheritance or as gifts, others acquired second-hand. The writer Elizabeth Bowen (1899–1973), whose ancestral home was at Bowen's Court in Co Cork, noted that her great-great-grandfather 'had placed in the hall not only a harmonium of some power but a large-size organ with gilded pipes' which he had acquired 'at auctions'.⁴⁷ In other houses, instruments were simply hired or borrowed as required. Household account books reveal, for example, the frequent hire of a piano at Woodlawn in Co Galway, the home of the Trench family, in the early 1800s and, in 1829, the one-off rental of a 'harp and musick stand' at Jenkinstown, Co Kilkenny, home of the Bryan

family.⁴⁸ It may have been the case that musical instruments were viewed by some landlords as luxuries, and their permanent acquisition and maintenance deemed extravagant; this could certainly account for a paucity of inventory references. However, the temporary procurement

Fig 15.2
The Gold Saloon (Music
Room) at Carton, Co
Kildare.
[Photo: Davison &
Associates Ltd]

Fig 15.3
The cover of *The Elopement Galop*, composed by Gerald FitzGerald.
[Photo by the author]



of keyboard instruments suggests that these were 'necessary' at times and greater meaning is assigned to their utilisation as a result.

Historical narrative and the contemporary country house

Although the contentious matter of land possession has long dominated Irish history, investigations of the 'ordinary' daily lives and accoutrements of elite owners and their families, not to mention the materialisations of musical culture, are deficient.⁴⁹ This owes much to the fact that for decades after Irish self-government was attained in 1922, the material possessions of the former landowning and governing classes, perceived as 'some form of affront to the nation', failed to gain recognition as part of the 'narrative of national achievement'.⁵⁰ Regarded as relics of English colonialism and reminders of the struggle for landownership – inextricably linked with Irish nationalism – numerous houses were burned for 'political' purposes, dismantled for materials, demolished outright or, in many cases, simply denuded of contents and abandoned to fall to ruin. A small number persisted as private family homes; a few were afforded utility as schools, hospitals and other institutions run by religious orders or by the state. It was not until

the economic boom of the 1990s – the so-called 'Celtic Tiger' era – that a growth in national confidence produced a gradual change in political, public and academic perspectives.⁵¹

For the most part, the 'big house', a term which historically embodied both Irish deference and disaffection, has become a more acceptable aspect of Ireland's heritage and a number of properties in private and public ownership operate as visitor attractions with the support of local communities. This has been a positive outcome of the country's recent political, economic, social and cultural involvement, but the country house visitor offering is still in need of development. Today's discerning visitors expect historical 'experiences' and levels of interpretation presented by popular period drama productions for television. Investigating the practices and materials associated with music offers, at the very least, a key to unlocking the social histories of the 'big houses' and their former inhabitants. The resultant data offers fresh narratives for the promotion of the country house, as well as opportunities for collaboration between providers in heritage, tourism, culture and the arts – and with those conducting scholarly research.

While some general manifestations and meanings of music consumption have emerged from the nascent study of music in the context of the country house in Ireland, the United Kingdom and further afield, much analytical work remains to be done on elite consumers of musical goods and services. Scholarship on the systems of supply and demand, in particular, would shed more light on the cultural and intellectual worlds inhabited by country house owners, occupants and employees, and their respective roles as patrons and purveyors. Urban providers played vital roles in articulating music consumption but further study might uncover more information on social hierarchies generated by aristocratic patronage among music and dance professionals, as well as continuities or cessations with traditional practices among the rural peasantry. Musical choices were evidently made across a range of provincial, Dublin and London suppliers for a myriad of reasons, with the result that the pattern of supply was, as Jon Stobart has commented in an English context, 'far from being a simple dichotomy of local-everyday and metropolitan-luxury purchases'.⁵²

Further scholarship might expose networks that would help to situate developments in

music, culture and society in Ireland within a much broader range of contexts than have been considered in conventional historiography. At the same time, engaging with issues of social transmission and cultural commodification would allow some obviation of questions of nationality or ethnicity, long predominant in the historiography of Irish music, and illustrate the value of applying 'other' ideologies of individual and collective identity including 'class' and 'gender'. It is noteworthy that newspaper reports of music in Irish country houses, especially in the years after the Great Famine (1845–51), tended to be in connection with social dancing at high-society gatherings or at family celebrations involving estate employees and tenants – as opposed to concerts of music per se. The presence of newspaper journalists at these 'private' – or at least 'non-public' or non-fee-paying – events points to the fact that they were, in Gillett's words, 'less a sign of admiration for superb musical attainments than a statement of the power that could be demonstrated by highly conspicuous consumption'.⁵³ Anomalously, there seems to have been a concerted effort to report music-related news from Parsonstown in King's County (known today as Birr, Co Offaly) and the contributions of the Parsons family, earls of Rosse, who resided at Birr Castle. It was typically the only Irish venue mentioned in the 'country news' section of the prestigious periodical *Musical Times* throughout the late 19th century.⁵⁴

Though the historical consumption of music by regional landowning elites was an expression of status it did not necessarily characterise landlords as musical connoisseurs. It would seem that music consumption had, in fact, much more to do with the management of social relations and expectations. Musical activity embodied notions of propriety, promoted positive interactions with peers, supporters, servants and tenants, and even informed the design and decoration of spaces within the home. Access to music was broader and more democratic by the 20th century, but its realisation continued to necessitate specialist expertise and materials, ensuring its perpetuation as a marker of socio-economic status. This is particularly evident in the vast music collection at Birr Castle, which includes mechanical and electrical instruments such as automatons, music boxes and gramophone record players – decorative and functional items intended for immediate consumption. The collection also

comprises hundreds of records – with music by the Viennese, German, Italian, French and Russian masters, performed by major international orchestras – amassed by subscription. Original record packaging, containing customs declaration stickers and postage stamps, still held at the castle, confirms the musical interests of the sixth Earl, who had records sent from various music sellers in the USA in the 1930s.⁵⁵ Travel thus had implications for the transfer of musical ideas and materials, as did personal subjectivities and familial circumstances, all of which warrant more serious consideration. The case of Birr Castle also highlights the position of some country houses not only as repositories of music documents and period instruments, but also of substantial audio collections, which reflect profound transformations in the practice and reception of music alongside technological advances in sound recording. As Caroline Wood remarked in the context of her study of music-



Fig 15.4
Royal Portable Harp made by John Egan, a leading Irish harp-maker in the early 19th century. Measuring just three feet in height, few of these harps are known to exist today, a small number of them in Irish country houses.
[Photo by the author]

making at Burton Constable Hall in Yorkshire, the ancestral home of the Constable family, landed families were ‘not oblivious of the new order’ in social and musical terms, ‘pursuing the fashionable accomplishments of music with relish, while developing a relationship with musical worlds outside.’⁵⁶

Conclusion

Music, while at times extravagant, was – and is – by no means useless. The study of music in the country house offers perspectives on the place of landowners and their families in their local communities, as well as the social and familial relationships fostered by music-making.

The consideration of music as a social and cultural observance informs an abundance of

interpretative narratives that represent a shift away from the divisive and less propitious elements of landlordism – especially significant in the Irish context – to the communal and more accessible aspects of daily country house life, above and below stairs, in and out of doors. In Ireland specifically, the adoption of alternative narratives might deter the habitual presentation and perception of individual properties as hollow, lifeless architectural monuments and encourage their greater consumption as resonant spaces, lived and living.

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- 30 Rink, J 2001 ‘The profession of music’ in Samson, J (ed), *Cambridge History of 19th-Century Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 57.
- 31 Gillett, P 2000 ‘Ambivalent friendships: music-lovers, amateurs, and professional musicians in the late 19th century’ in Bashford, C and Langley, L (eds) *Music and British Culture, 1785–1914: Essays in Honour of Cyril Ehrlich*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 331.
- 32 Carew, ‘The consumption of music’, 251–256.
- 33 For examples see O’Brien, J and Guinness, D 2005 *Great Irish Houses and Castles*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 12–51.
- 34 Ohlmeyer, *Making Ireland English*, 407–9 and plate 18.
- 35 O’Brien and Guinness, *Great Irish Houses and Castles*, 52–139.
- 36 Diary of John Butler, Earl of Ossory, 24 Aug 1830 to 23 Aug 1834 (Dublin: National Library of Ireland [hereafter NLI], Ormonde Papers, MS 19,806). Butler himself married the daughter of Sir Edward Paget (1775–1849), a prominent British army general, in 1843.
- 37 Mullaney-Dignam, *Music and Dancing at Castletown*, 28–9.
- 38 Girouard, M 1978 *Life in an English Country House: A Social and Architectural History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 158–94. See also Arnold, D 1998 *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society*. Stroud: Sutton, 87–89; McCarthy, P 2009 ‘The planning and use of space in Irish houses, 1730–1830’. Unpublished PhD thesis, Trinity College Dublin, passim.
- 39 Tinniswood, A 1998 *The Polite Tourist: A History of Country House Visiting*. London: National Trust.
- 40 Brooks, J 2010 ‘Musical monuments for the country house: music, collection, and display at Tatton Park’, *Music & Letters*, 91:4, 515.
- 41 John Lynn, Rockingham, to Lord Lorton, Stretton Hall, England, 28 May 1815 (NLI, MS 8810/7. Part 4).
- 42 Ruled account book showing the expenses incurred in building the new house at Rockingham, 1810–1816 (NLI, MS 3775).
- 43 McDowell, ‘Ireland in 1800’, 673–675; Ó Gráda, ‘Poverty, population, and agriculture’, 113.
- 44 ‘From “Notices of the FitzGerald 1879”: An account of the Earl of Donoughmore’s visit to Maynooth and Carton, 5 & 6 January, 1822, and his expenses’ (Belfast: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Leinster Papers D3078/1/2/8).
- 45 *Freeman’s Journal*, 9 Oct 1838. See also Mullaney-Dignam, K 2014 ‘“French horns playing at every meal”: musical activity at Carton, 1747–1895’ in Mullaney-Dignam, K et al (eds) *Aspects of Irish Aristocratic Life: Essays on the FitzGerald and Carton House*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 92–105.
- 46 *Court Journal*, 14 Feb 1857. Gerald’s brother Otho (1827–82), a prominent Liberal MP, was also a composer.
- 47 Bowen, E 1998 *Bowen’s Court*. Cork: The Collins Press, 379. Harmoniums were reed organs, which were more portable and less expensive than pipe organs or pianos. They also held their tune better and were especially popular in small chapels.
- 48 Household account book from the estate of Lord Ashtown, Woodlawn, Co Galway, 1800–1804 (NLI, MS 34,948); account book of Augusta Bryan re management of households of Major George Bryan of Henrietta Street, Dublin and Jenkinstown, Co Kilkenny, 1819–1833 (NLI, MS 32,489).
- 49 This is not to detract from indispensable specialist studies of other varieties of Irish material culture that have emerged in the last number of decades. For details, see Barnard, T 2005 *A Guide to Sources for the History of Material Culture in Ireland, 1500–2000*. Dublin: Four Courts Press; Dooley, T 2007 *The Big Houses and Landed Estates of Ireland: A Research Guide*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.
- 50 Comerford, R V 2003 *Ireland*. London: Hodder Arnold, 46, 249.
- 51 Dooley, T 2010 ‘National patrimony and political perceptions of the Irish country house in post-independence Ireland’, in Dooley, T (ed) *Ireland’s Polemical Past: Views of Irish History in Honour of R V Comerford*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 192–212.
- 52 Stobart, J 2011 ‘Gentlemen and shopkeepers: supplying the country house in 18th-century England’, *Economic History Review*, 64:3, 893.
- 53 Gillett ‘Ambivalent friendships’, 332.
- 54 See *Musical Times*, 1 April 1899.
- 55 See Mullaney-Dignam, K 2012 ‘Irish country house music collections: Birr Castle, Co Offaly’ in *Brio*, 49:2, 23–36.
- 56 Wood, C 1999 ‘Music-making in a Yorkshire country house’ in Zon, B (ed) *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies, Vol 1*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 224.