The Ivory Tower and the Commons: Exploring the Institutionalisation of Irish Traditional Music in Irish Higher Education (Discourse, Pedagogy and Practice)

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by me, that it is my own work and that it has not been submitted by me for any other degree or professional qualification.

_________________________________
Jack Talty

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Date
This dissertation explores the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. In particular, this research examines how Irish traditional music is located in academic institutions, and how this relates to the practices and processes of the wider Irish traditional music community. Informed by elements of social-science-inflected ethnographic practices (particularly interviews), this study, for the first time offers a diverse and extensive range of community commentary on third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy to the academic record. This dissertation also examines public discourse that has facilitated intra-communal debate on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. Throughout the dissertation, I use the term ‘discourse’ to describe “ways of speaking about the world of social experience” that “is a means of both producing and organising meaning within a social context” (Edgar and Sedgwick 2008, p.96).

In addition, this research provides an overview of the historical development of Irish traditional music studies in Irish higher education, as well as presenting a contemporary overview of the Irish traditional music studies offered in nine higher education institutes in the Republic of Ireland. Also, this thesis examines the existence of discourse and research in extra-academic contexts such as Irish traditional music events, with a view to assessing the extent to which practitioners and other stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community engage with discourse, intellectualisation, and analysis of Irish traditional music.

Three chapters of this dissertation deal specifically with three prominent themes that have emerged from a combination of international scholarship on the
First, I explore the concept of canonicity in music education, and explore how the selection and prioritisation of elements of a musical culture such as repertoire, style, and aesthetics, for example, impacts the diversity of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland. Second, I examine the ways in which folk and traditional music pedagogues draw on, adapt, or depart from Western art music educational models, to better understand how third-level Irish traditional music pedagogues negotiate the historical predominance of the Western classical tradition when designing pedagogies for Irish traditional music. For example, to what extent do pedagogues design music theory systems based on idiomatic musical characteristics of Irish traditional music? Third, I investigate how higher education institutes offering studies in Irish traditional music negotiate community expectations and needs in relation to balancing what are perceived as authentic and traditional interpretations of Irish traditional music, with artistic exploration and experimentation. Notwithstanding the cultural and geographical specificity of this work, my research findings are expected to contribute to wider, international conversations that are

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1 Throughout this dissertation, the terms ‘folk’ and ‘traditional’ appear frequently in reference to genres of music such as Irish traditional music, and Finnish folk music. When making general references to many folk and traditional musics, I use the term folk and/or traditional to denote multiple genres that include Irish traditional music, Scottish traditional music, English folk music, Swedish folk music, and Finnish folk music, for example. I have selected these terms, that incorporate both ‘traditional’ and ‘folk’ because they are the ones adopted by practitioners of these respective genres. At no point do I use the terms interchangeably, or suggest which terminology is most appropriate. Usage is contested however in the Irish context. Breandán Breathnach published his “Folk Music and Dances of Ireland” (Breathnach 1971), while as Vallely asserts, “the term ‘traditional’ is used in place of ‘folk’” (Vallely 2011, p.142). However, in my experience as a practitioner and researcher, the term Irish traditional music is used more frequently than Irish folk music to describe the genre of music at the centre of this research dissertation.
happening on how best to locate folk and traditional musics in higher education environments. This dissertation does not provide a critical ethnography of all or any of the institutions engaged in the research. What it does do is provide an overview of histories, activities, practices and discourses in order to provide context for the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music within and beyond Ireland.
Acknowledgements

First, I’d like to thank all of those interviewees referenced throughout this dissertation who so generously and graciously contributed their valuable time and expertise to this research. I would also like to thank and acknowledge the many scholars who have informed and enriched my approach to this research dissertation.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Ivory Tower and The Commons

This dissertation explores the relationship between tertiary-level Irish traditional music pedagogy, and the practices of the wider Irish traditional music community from an ethnomusicological and Irish traditional music studies perspective. By this I mean that I wish to examine the implications of institutionalising a vibrant and thriving community-based folk or traditional music within a formalised academic structure. Today in Ireland, Irish traditional music is taught in a number of third-level institutions and is arguably more popular than ever before, both in Ireland and abroad, within and external to higher education institutions. I am interested in how the processes adopted by higher education institutes to design Irish traditional music pedagogy relates to what is done outside of higher education. In using the term ‘pedagogy’, I refer to the institutional transmission of traditional and/or folk music in higher education, as a process that includes the provision of academic, research, and performance skills to third-level music students.

Traditionally, the ‘Commons’ as a term, has been used to describe natural resources considered to be the common property of all society. Such resources include water, air and forests, for example. There are precedents for ‘Commons’ discourse in Irish traditional music literature. The work of McCann and Smith draw on, and apply ‘Commons’ theory to the perceived ‘community-owned’ nature of Irish traditional music (McCann 2001, Smith 2006). The term ‘Ivory Tower’ has long been employed as a metaphor for the university or academia, which according to Phillips and Pugh, is commonly perceived as being removed from reality and social contact with others.
Of course, the concept of the Irish traditional music community is an inherently problematic one as it is invariably generalised as being one unified entity, but in reality, there are many discrete ‘communities of practice’ (see footnote 4, on p.5) at play, which combine to form a diverse overarching community, much like the interpretation of the often-idealised jazz community offered by Ken Prouty (Prouty 2010). Examples of communities of practice, which may be discrete and unrelated yet have Irish traditional music as a common practice, include sectors such as the recording industry, the media, international touring structures, and formalised education systems, for example. In essence, it is therefore problematic to construct an oversimplified community structure that is perceived to be disconnected from all other communities of practice (see Wenger 1999). It is important to state that the ‘Ivory Tower’/’Commons apparent binary that I have created here must be interpreted as having many overlapping communities of practice in mind. However, I feel that the comparative framework used to acknowledge and explore the contextual differences between Irish traditional music practices both within and external to Irish higher education structures is useful.

In ethnomusicological literature, issues on education, learning and transmission have been largely neglected (Szegö 2002), and considered to belong in the realm of music education (Smith 1999). Research specific to the institutionalisation of folk and traditional music pedagogy includes two important studies by Hill (2005) and Keegan-Phipps (2008) on the third-level institutionalisation of Finnish and English folk musics respectively. Both studies lay an invaluable foundation on which to discuss the institutionalisation of Western folk and traditional musics in Western music education structures, and many of the thematic analyses conducted in these studies
can be easily applied to how we look at Irish traditional music in Irish higher education today. Despite the global popularity of Irish traditional music at present, and the long historical affinity Irish traditional music has had with Irish higher education, the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education remains largely unexplored as a research topic.

Throughout this dissertation I use the term ‘extra-academic’ to signify those individuals who are not employed in the higher education sector but who otherwise overlap in some way with third-level music education provision. The term extra-academic also acknowledges the considerable degree of overlap between ‘the community’ and ‘the academy’; many academics and third-level researchers are practitioners who engage with Irish traditional music practices in community contexts, and many of those who identify as community practitioners have experience of teaching Irish traditional music performance in third-level education.

The idea of undertaking this research was inspired by an after-dinner conversation one night at the residential artists’ retreat, the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, in Annaghmakerrig in county Monaghan. The discussion, among seven or so artists working in different disciplines such as poetry, music, sculpture, literature, and the visual arts, focused on how we all experienced our particular artforms as practitioners.

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2 Such practitioners may teach Irish traditional music performance in third-level music departments on a regular, or irregular basis, but they do not identify as being academics or researchers. I draw on the work of Koskinen and Mäki on transdisciplinarity in academic research when considering the term ‘extra-academic’. They use the term in reference to “parties such as businesses, local communities, NGOs and indigenous people” who operate outside university structures (Koskinen and Mäki 2016, p.2), I am referring to stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community who are not employed by, or directly engaged in Irish higher education but who are part of the wider Irish traditional music community that includes the higher education sector. The term is intended to take into account the significant degree of intra-communal overlap between academics, researchers, and practitioners working within higher education, and those practitioners and researchers who do not.
and how our artforms were being institutionalised in Irish higher education. Days later, that conversation remained with me, and after leaving the centre, I contemplated the possibility of doing some research on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. As a traditional musician, I had directly experienced the traditional generational transmission and enculturation processes of a rural Irish traditional music community, similar to the holistic learning environment described by Smith (2005), that included “most subtly and most crucially, insight into the social dynamics of which the music is both locus and catalyst” (Smith 2005, p.73). I grew up in a well-known musical family, and I had access to many older traditional musicians in my community. I am also a graduate of the music department of University College Cork, where I studied a Bachelor of Arts, and a Bachelor of Music, and consequently, I feel part of a higher education community, having experienced Irish traditional music studies in a third-level context. Throughout my journey as a PhD candidate at the Irish World Academy, at the University of Limerick (one of the main institutions involved in third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy), I have also felt part of the Academy’s community. Having experience in these realms, and how they overlap, has certainly informed my rationale for undertaking this research, and it has motivated me to unravel what I perceive as a complex relationship between Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education, and the practices of the wider Irish traditional music community.

3 The Tyrone Guthrie Centre is named after its founder Sir William Tyrone Guthrie (1900-1971), who bequeathed his estate to the State for the purpose of benefiting artists and the arts. The centre is “a residential workplace for artists of all disciplines” (Tyrone Guthrie Centre 2018). It is situated in Annaghmakerrig, county Monaghan, in the Republic of Ireland, and is owned by the Irish state. The centre is funded by the arts councils of both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.
During the course of my research I began to realise that amongst members of the Irish traditional music community, there are a number of opinions on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. In some quarters (largely academic) I encountered surprising responses to my chosen topic. Some felt that my subject area was somewhat controversial as I was essentially exploring the impacts of higher education on Irish traditional music as a young doctoral student undertaking research in a higher education institution. To some, perhaps this research was being viewed as some kind of audit of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy. In interviews I quickly became accustomed to negotiating the complex responses of research interviewees. In many cases, contributors (invariably extra-academic stakeholders\(^4\)) would comment loquaciously about their views on Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, but when the recorded interview commenced, some declined to make those same statements on record, as they feared that their opinions would jeopardise future work opportunities at certain institutions if they expressed negative or critical views. Given contributors to this research approached the topic of tertiary-level Irish traditional music pedagogy from a variety of standpoints, it was important for me to nuance and interrogate opinions, both celebratory and critical, and somewhere in between. Some informants were resistant to institutionalisation generally, rather than critical of specific higher education sites. Some contributors employed in higher education, while determined

\(^4\) Throughout this dissertation I use the term ‘stakeholders’ to refer very generally to the many interested parties that comprise the wider Irish traditional music community, a community with various overlapping communities of practice. For more on communities of practice, see Wenger (1999). The term is used here to describe a group of individuals united by a common interest, rather than a community united by geographical and physical proximity exclusively.
and hopeful about the benefits of locating Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, were candid in how they expressed their concerns about some trends in third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy. Some higher education representatives felt protective of their institution and the wider sector, and contributed defensively, while other stakeholders relished the increased status and recognition that higher education could bestow on Irish traditional music, with the concomitant opportunities that it brought to them. In all cases, consultants gave of their time generously, and I endeavour to represent their voices here. Their opinions and insights are crucial to the aims and objectives of this dissertation.

1.2 Dissertation Aims

In this dissertation, I offer an exploration of the institutionalisation of folk and/or traditional musics in higher education systems, focusing specifically on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, informed by approaches from Irish Music Studies along with fieldwork and interview strategies central to ethnomusicological practice. I discuss this research process in greater detail in chapter three. In this research I am particularly interested in the relationship between the convergences and divergences of Irish traditional music practices in higher education, and in the wider Irish traditional music community. What are the impacts of institutionalising Irish traditional music in Irish higher education? What does the wider Irish traditional music community think about such impacts? Should those involved in third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy aim to recreate a microcosm of the vibrant Irish traditional music community in the academic institution, or should the higher education sector negotiate Irish traditional music in
whatever manner it deems appropriate? Throughout this thesis, I consider these very questions, and how they are negotiated by scholarship and institutional practices within the broader context of European folk and/or traditional music pedagogy.

The institutionalisation of traditional musics is a global issue. My rationale for confining this study largely to a European context stems from both the geographical location of Ireland, and my desire to compare the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education with the tertiary-level institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics outside Ireland, in contexts that are sufficiently musically unrelated to Irish traditional music, yet influenced and impacted by some similar, or at least comparable, socio-cultural factors, resulting from being situated in Western Europe. Even though I do not look at comparable programmes in the United States, US-based scholarship is frequently drawn on in this literature review because of the importance of the studies on institutional pedagogy conducted by Kingsbury (1988) and Nettl (1995), and also due to the significance of the institutionalisation of jazz in higher education in the United States, something that might be understood as a vernacular music in that context. Time, resources, and scope (in order to ensure depth) dictated that I limit my visits to three folk and/or traditional music higher education institutes outside Ireland. I felt that selecting European sites would optimise the degree to which wider conversations on folk and traditional music pedagogy could contribute to understanding my specific case study on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. Future work may well broaden this scope to compare the Irish context with how folk and traditional musics have been institutionalised in non-Western, and non-European education systems.
An extensive survey of literature on the institutionalisation of music in higher education (presented in chapter two), provided three prominent research questions with which to frame the substantive focus of this research. These research questions, which form the foundation of this doctoral dissertation, have been formulated in response to literature that has explored how the higher education institution has impacted upon (a) mainstream music, (b) European folk and traditional musics, and (c) Irish traditional music:

1. How do pedagogues negotiate canonicity in third-level folk and/or traditional music pedagogy?
2. How do folk and/or traditional music pedagogues draw on, adapt or depart from Western classical music pedagogy when designing curricula?
3. How do pedagogues manage community needs and expectations in balancing tradition and innovation in third-level folk and/or traditional music pedagogy?

1.3 Dissertation Objectives

To optimally achieve the aims of this research, I have identified and undertaken a range of research objectives that draw on the disciplinary methodologies and literature of both ethnomusicology and Irish traditional music studies. The methodological framework designed and negotiated throughout this doctoral journey is outlined in detail in chapter three. The themes identified and presented throughout this dissertation have primarily emanated from Irish traditional music studies and ethnomusicological literature, and the large proportion of interviewee contributions have been collected and documented through extensive fieldwork. The individuals
invited to contribute to this research have been selected because of their experiences of Irish traditional music, folk and traditional music education, and higher education systems in Ireland and abroad. I believe that the 110 individuals interviewed for this research reflect a diverse cross-section of stakeholders in the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. A list of interviewees is provided in Appendix A. Finally, I discuss how I have thematically organised the structure of this dissertation, chapter by chapter, outlining how in each chapter I present the materials and data, and follow up with a discussion section in each case.

1.4 Dissertation Outline

The first section of this dissertation consists of five chapters and details the historical, theoretical, and methodological background to this research. Chapter two is focused on a survey of literature relevant to the institutionalisation of traditional and folk musics in higher education systems. Chapter three outlines the research methodologies employed to rigorously and effectively interrogate how the impacts of third-level folk and traditional music pedagogy on extra-institutional practices are understood and expressed. Chapter four, “Irish Traditional Music in Irish Higher Education: A Historical and Contemporary Overview”, provides both a historical account of the development of Irish traditional music studies in Ireland’s higher education system, as well as overviewing current Irish traditional music studies offered by nine selected higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland. Chapter five,

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5 During my interviews, contributors offered personal views that were often interwoven with their institutional views. This was particularly evident when interviewing representatives of higher education institutions. As I present voices throughout this dissertation, I endeavour to contextualise each contributor for the reader, with a view to giving an insight into what might inform each contribution.
“Locating Community Perspectives in Extra-Academic Irish Traditional Music Discourse”, both acknowledges and critically reflects on instances of community commentary on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education specifically. It also includes a section dedicated to extensive ethnographic fieldwork that contributes to the academic record, the opinions of a sample group of the Irish traditional music community, on how they view third-level studies in Irish traditional music. Importantly, this chapter also explores the role of discourse, analysis and intellectual debate, in community settings operating external to academic and higher education institutions.

Section two of this dissertation consists of three chapters, each one focused specifically on one of three primary themes forming the basis of this dissertation’s central research questions. Chapter six, “Encountering Canonicity in Third-Level Irish Traditional Music Education”, looks at wider concerns about the potentially narrowing effects of canonicity, or the construction and acceptance of ‘textbook narratives’ in music education, with a specific focus on third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy. Chapter seven, “Idiomatic Pedagogies or Lingua Franca? Negotiating Western Art Music Pedagogy in Third-level Irish Traditional Music Studies in Irish Higher Education: Comparative Studies”, explores the degree to which pedagogues draw on, adapt, or depart from Western art music educational models when designing and implementing third-level Irish traditional music curricula. Chapter eight, “Negotiating Tradition and Innovation in Third-level Irish Traditional Music Pedagogy” discusses the impact of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy on a perennial theme in Irish traditional music discourse, concerned with both honouring tradition while
encouraging artistic exploration. Finally, chapter nine summarises and critically reflects on the findings presented by each chapter in this dissertation.

It is important to point out that this is not a detailed ethnography of specific sites of institutionalisation, i.e. I do not go into detail regarding the spaces and places where institutionalisation has occurred following extensive time spent in these places. Neither do I do this in relation to my own institution, which forms part of this investigation. Rather, I am focussed more broadly on discourse and on detailing institutional practices with the hope that future scholars can draw upon my work when doing more detailed ethnographies of these sites.

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6 When formally launching the published proceedings of the *Crosbhealach an Cheoil* (1996), at the Willie Clancy Summer School in 2000, Founding Director Emeritus of the Irish Traditional Music Archive, Nicholas Carolan (see Appendix A) made reference to the tradition/innovation debate discussed here as a “permanent artistic war between tradition and innovation. This is a tension that always exists in any art form, and traditional music, like any other art form, is always held in some kind of equilibrium between the people who are pushing forward and the people who are pulling back. This is a natural, and necessary condition of art” (Carolan 2000).
Chapter 2: Institutionalising Music Education in Higher Education: The Literature

In approaching the task of understanding the processes and impacts of institutionalising folk and traditional musics in higher education environments, it was important to consider current thinking and trends relating to what happens when folk and traditional musics, as traditionally community-based musics, are contextualised within formal educational systems. This chapter reviews literature relevant to my research, and outlines and subsequently critically reflects on scholarship that focuses on the institutionalisation of Western folk and traditional musics in Western higher education systems, with a particular emphasis on European models predominantly. I hope to further investigate beyond the European context in future work, but due to time, resources, and a desire to interrogate specific educational sites with relative cultural and geographical proximity to Ireland, I confined my case studies to three European institutions. In addition, most of the relatively few studies that have been focused on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in higher education systems have been conducted in Europe. Some of these studies (Hill 2005, Keegan-Phipps 2008) provide a lot of ethnographic detail but are far less focussed on the voices of those involved in conceiving, designing, generating, and implementing traditional music pedagogy. My work here is precisely focussed on such matters.

Located at a disciplinary juncture of ethnomusicology and Irish traditional music studies, this dissertation incorporates a significant amount of scholarship focused on musicological and ethnomusicological studies of numerous aspects of Irish
traditional music that do not always connect with inter-disciplinary academic conversations happening outside Ireland. However, this dissertation undoubtedly also draws on the scholarship and disciplinary tools of ethnomusicology to understand the socio-musical and cultural relationship between how Irish traditional music is contextualised within, and outside of Irish higher education. Although embedded in the world of music education, this thesis is more concerned with an ethnomusicological study of the cultural implications of institutionalising Irish traditional music in Irish higher education than it is with models of best pedagogical practice within the disciplinary frame of music education. For this reason, I place less emphasis on music education scholarship in this chapter, than I do on studies rooted in ethnomusicology and Irish traditional music studies.7

In this literature review, I first explore literature on higher music education from three discrete vantage points, beginning at a macro level with mainstream music education, then focusing on tertiary-level European folk and traditional music pedagogy, and concluding with an exploration of literature specifically relating to issues surrounding the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. The final section of this literature review suggests how the approach taken in completing this research addresses a number of issues that are underexplored in the literature to date. Among these is the inclusion of a far greater number of interview participants than has been done in comparable research projects focused on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional music in higher education systems, and as a

7 The work of Kari Veblen on the role of teachers in the transmission of Irish traditional music is of particular value in exploring the practical educational practices adopted by a range of teachers that she consulted for her research (Veblen 1991). For an insightful overview of literature that locates Irish traditional music within a music education disciplinary framework, see Johnston (2013).
consequence, this provides for a rich and diverse study, informed by interviews and historical and current observations, featuring a wide range of stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community.

At each stage of the research, I was mindful of interrogating the significance and relevance of this research, and in addition, reflecting on for whom this research may be of interest. I propose that this dissertation is of value to third-level institutions and pedagogues as it provides higher education institutes in Ireland with research that presents an array of prominent themes drawn from documented qualitative data on the opinions and beliefs held by a range of external stakeholders in the wider Irish traditional music community, on third-level traditional music pedagogy. This research also provides representatives of the wider Irish traditional music community with a discursive space to express their views on Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. The views expressed by academics, practitioners, educators, and commentators may be of benefit to pedagogues who design and implement tertiary-level music curricula around the globe, especially those who engage with folk and traditional music pedagogy in higher education in Ireland, and it is possible that scholars in the fields of ethnomusicology, education, and Irish music studies, more generally, will also find such views interesting and useful.

The term ‘institutionalisation’ is used here to refer to the process whereby an institution, such as the higher education institute, or music department, locates a cultural practice such as Irish traditional music within its educational and curricular structures. Of course, institutionalisation manifests in all manners of ways external to higher education, and an institution is not merely a visible, singular, and obvious structure. The term institution has “become the normal term for any organized
element of a society” (Williams 1983, p.136). An institution is also “a regular and repeated social practice” and does not merely relate to “prisons, asylums, schools, hospitals, and government offices” but the term institution can relate to “language and moral and cultural practices” (Edgar and Sedgwick 2008, p.175). Throughout this dissertation, the use of the term institutionalisation, with a lower case ‘i’, serves to describe the act of teaching, conceptualising, and designing curricula for Irish traditional music in higher education, without inherently presuming that such institutionalisation is directly having an impact on wider practices of Irish traditional music.

2.1 Institutionalising Music in Western Higher Education: The Literature

The literature review conducted in this chapter is primarily focused on how scholarship on the institutionalisation of music pedagogy in higher education has informed and helped to negotiate the three research questions outlined at the outset of this chapter. First, I explore higher music education from the widest vantage point of mainstream music education, examining in particular, scholarship on Western classical music and jazz pedagogy, which dominates the literature. Second, I examine the ever-expanding areas of folk and traditional music pedagogy, and I explore literature on the institutionalisation of selected European folk and traditional musics in Western higher education. Third, I focus specifically on literature that explores issues relating to the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education.

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By the term Western, I refer like Kurth, to the United States, Europe, and also Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, although he accepts that the term is somewhat contested, and dependent on context (Kurth 2004, p.5).
education. My overarching aim here is to establish how my case study on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education converges and diverges with trends in the institutionalisation of music in mainstream music programmes, and with folk and traditional music pedagogical practices outside Ireland. It raises the question of what can be learned in the Irish context from such comparative studies. Importantly, it also asks to what degree tertiary-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland can contribute to broader conversations about institutionalising folk and traditional musics outside Ireland. I outline key scholarship in each strand of enquiry, and later, I discuss what my research can in turn contribute to these wider pedagogical conversations.

2.2 Institutionalising Mainstream Music Pedagogy in Western Higher Education

Two significant American-based ethnomusicological studies explore the impacts of institutionalising music education in third-level educational environments generally. Henry Kingsbury’s *Music, Talent, and Performance: A Conservatory Cultural System* (Kingsbury 1988) explores a music conservatory as a field site and provides invaluable insights into institutional issues such as evaluations and perceptions of talent, conceptualisations of musical meaning, and the social dynamics of conservatory life, specifically in relation to Western art music. This seminal publication is of particular significance to my research for several reasons. It is an important anthropological and ethnomusicological exploration of a particular music education culture, using an American music conservatory, an environment known intimately by its author, as its field site. Kingsbury’s methodologies and negotiations of researcher positionality, as well as his opening up of a Western music conservatory as a field site, have informed
my methodological approaches to this research significantly. In addition, *Music, Talent and Performance* is invaluable in how it reflects upon the way in which the institutionalisation of music education invariably codifies musical experience in accordance with culturally constructed institutional or individual ideology, rather than observing music as “highly shifting” with “indeterminate meaning” (Kingsbury 1988, p.26). Kingsbury’s study, although focused on Western art music, provides a useful precedent for exploring the culture of a music education institute as a practitioner and member of that educational community, using an ethnomusicological disciplinary toolkit. Naturally, given the study’s focus on Western classical music, folk and traditional music pedagogy are beyond its scope, but its approach can be modelled and adapted easily in many respects. Kingsbury’s acute insights into institutional authority, teacher-student power relations, and the tendency of music education to define music and creativity provide my research with a significant analytical frame with which to interrogate my own case study of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. Kingsbury’s approach invites such questions as: to what extent, and in what ways, do Irish higher education institutes influence how talent, creativity, and even Irish traditional music itself are conceived and understood by higher education students, graduates, and the wider Irish traditional music community? In this research, I hope to complement Kingsbury’s methodological approaches by further exploring and nuancing the extent to which stakeholders’ contributions presented throughout the dissertation, are integrated with analysis of relevant literature on the topic.

Bruno Nettl’s *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Excursions on Schools of Music* (Nettl 1995) presents a narrative of the fictitious Heartland University (Heartland U.) music department, as a representation of Midwestern music schools in the United
States of America. In it, Nettl reveals much about the internal workings of what he calls Music Building Society. Once again, the emphasis here is on Western art music, though from the viewpoint of an ethnomusicologist treating it as the music of the ‘other’. In this study, Nettl outlines his experiences of music school culture as an institution that disseminates its own authoritative ideology among its student population. Throughout the study, Nettl observes the music school culture from three separate vantage points: as an experienced professor, as a “native informant”, and as an outside observer, or “ethnomusicologist from Mars” (Nettl 1995, p.11). Later in this chapter I discuss the specific themes that this publication offers to my work but more generally, *Heartland Excursions* is significant for this research in how it locates its enquiry within the culture of a music institution and reflects on what it perceives as that institution’s power to shape how its students think about music. Nettl advances the idea of ‘positionality’, introduced by Kingsbury, by observing his field from a variety of perspectives, an approach that I have drawn upon throughout this research. It is worth noting that Nettl does not present any significant degree of informant contribution in this work. Again, my research aims to draw on the methodologies of *Heartland Excursions* to further explore and nuance the voices of research consultants working within, and outside of higher education environments.⁹

Beyond the significant studies by Kingsbury and Nettl on the institutionalisation of Western art music in the United States of America, there is also a considerable body of scholarship offering interesting insights into how the institutionalisation of jazz in higher education has influenced perceptions of the genre,

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⁹ For further reading on the institutionalisation of Western classical music, and its predominance in general music education see Moore (2017), and Wicks (1998).
and its performance practices, particularly in relation to formally constructing an official jazz canon. DeWitt (2017) points out that jazz was the “first vernacular music to make inroads in the curricula of community colleges and four-year colleges, and universities in the United States” (DeWitt 2017, p.69). Entering by the “back door” of the campus, jazz appears in higher education as early as 1947, in the form of a jazz college band. Various authors critically engage with the impacts that higher education has had on jazz, an artform that epitomises for many, an anti-institutional image, given its origins on the streets and in clubs (Wilf 2014). Focussing on jazz canons Thomas discusses the role of academia in defining perceptions of what jazz is. Thomas’ study offers ways to think about how institutional canons can sometimes be imposed on the very cultural activity that it has institutionalised (Thomas 2002). Likewise, Marquis (1998) interrogates the suitability of the processes and culture of academia to provide a home for jazz that reflects how it is practiced outside the institution, in a way that resonates with many arguments that express reservations about institutionalising folk music in higher education. Similarly, DeVeaux (1991) questions whether or not academia or higher education can adequately represent the diverse socio-musical processes of jazz, foreshadowing questions that arise in the case of other vernacular musics. Finally, Dobbins (1988) outlines his views on the potential mutual benefits to both jazz and higher education as a result of the provision of jazz studies in American higher education. This provides a model for thinking about similar considerations in Europe, and in particular, tertiary-level folk and traditional music pedagogy. I return

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10 For more on the chronology of jazz in American higher education see Marquis (1998).
to some of these concerns later in this chapter and, indeed, throughout the dissertation.

In terms of outlining a need for curricular reform in music education provision more widely, from a multidisciplinary rather than solely music education perspective, a critical intervention has come in the form of the 2017 edited volume, *College Music Curricula for a New Century* (2017), edited by Robin D. Moore. Despite a desire for curricular reform in higher music education to promote the inclusion of different musics and pedagogical methods, according to Moore, few have suggested pathways to actually instigate change (Moore, 2017, p.1). Moore’s edited volume provides a compendium of international case studies and guidelines that suggest new practice-based approaches to addressing current curricular shortcomings. Moore calls for a “more inclusive, dynamic, and socially engaged curriculum” (ibid). Contributions to this volume are framed thematically, in alignment with the following issues: commitment to community; commitment to the practical concerns of professional musicians; commitment to global awareness; commitment to social justice; and a commitment to creative, student-driven projects and practices. Case studies on pedagogical approaches to Western classical music, popular music, folk and/or traditional musics, Latin musics, Mariachi music, and Chinese music, for example, presented by a range of academics, performers, and educators, offer insights into “existing innovative curricula in programs nationally and internationally and uses them as a point of departure for analysis” (ibid). This timely publication has provided

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11 Among the chapters in this volume is an essay by this researcher titled ‘Non-Canonical Pedagogies for Non-Canonical Musics: Observations on selected Programmes in Folk, Traditional, World, and Popular Musics’ (Talty 2017).
welcome current discourse in a field of research that largely depends on earlier, less recent scholarship.

2.3 The Institutionalisation of Folk and Traditional Musics in Western Higher Education

In this section, I turn my focus from aspects of mainstream music to the specific context of selected studies of folk and traditional music pedagogy in Europe. Looking more closely at specific studies focused on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in higher education provides a useful set of themes to apply to my exploration of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. Geographically, I confine my overview of studies on folk and traditional music institutionalisation to Western education systems, especially in Western Europe, as this is the context within which my case study on Irish higher education is located. Of course, folk and traditional musics are institutionalised in educational settings outside Europe and the Western world more generally (see Moore 2017 for more). Many studies focused on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in the non-Western world deal primarily with issues such as ‘Westernisation’ and the impacts of Western art music on local music pedagogy and performance. Bruno Nettl’s *The Western Impact on World Music* (1985), and Jonathan Stock’s (2004) essay entitled “Peripheries and Interfaces: the Western Impact on Other Music” in *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music*, discuss range of issues, including an increasing emphasis on notation rather than oral transmission; the canonisation of repertoire, of particular composers, and of
performers (particularly in the media); elitism and perceptions of local and folk musics as inferior; and the adoption of Western art music theory for non-Western musics.  

The most prominent studies that explore the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in Western higher education systems with specific application to my own research include Juniper Hill’s work on the institutionalisation of Finnish folk music in the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki (Hill 2005, 2009a, 2009b) and Simon Keegan’s work on the institutionalisation of English folk music in the form of a folk music degree at the University of Newcastle. This also includes work carried out at Folkworks (a registered charity, and the largest and most successful promoter of English folk music in England) (Keegan-Phipps 2007, 2008). A Needs Analysis of the

12 For an insightful overview and analysis of the themes outlined by Nettl and Stock, see Hill 2009b.

13 In these studies, Hill is particularly concerned with the impacts on Finnish folk music resulting from the institutionalisation of Finnish folk music pedagogy at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. For example, Hill’s 2005 PhD dissertation aims primarily to contribute to “ethnomusicologists’ theoretical understanding of five larger socio-musical issues: (1) the institutionalization of musicians’ training in traditional musics; (2) the construction of legitimacy, authenticity, and historical continuity in revived and recontextualised musics; (3) the ideology, pedagogy, and methods for teaching creativity; (4) how the authority to be musical and specifically to be creative in music is created and allocated; and (5) the expression and reification of transnational and intercultural relationships through musical fusions and appropriations” (Hill 2005, p.335). Hill’s ‘The Influence of Conservatory Folk Music Programmes: The Sibelius Academy in Comparative Context’ (Hill 2009b) explores many of the same themes discussed in her PhD dissertation but in addition to discussing the Sibelius Academy, Hill also looks at music programmes in the “Nordic countries, the British Isles, North America, China, Indonesia, and former Soviet states in Eastern Europe and Central Asia” (Hill 2009b, p.207). In this paper, Hill discusses the ways in which institutional cultural and political ideology and authority can have far-reaching influences on musical practices outside of institutions. In ‘Rebellious Pedagogy, Ideological Transformation, and Creative Freedom in Finnish Contemporary Folk Music’ (Hill 2009a), Hill discusses how pedagogues at the Sibelius Academy developed a folk music pedagogy to stimulate creativity and artistic freedom in the performance of Finnish folk music.

14 Among the findings of Simon Keegan-Phipps’ PhD dissertation on the formalisation of English folk music education (Keegan-Phipps 2008) were observations on the perceived potential of the organisations discussed as case studies, to promote elitism, standardisation, and the recontextualisation of English folk music beyond those organisations’ walls. ‘Déjà Vu? Folk Music, Education, and Institutionalization in Contemporary England’ (Keegan-Phipps 2007) takes a similar approach and is keen to bring an ethnomusicological focus to an educational movement that the author felt lacking in academic literature. Again, this study focuses on the perceived effects of formalised English folk music education, such as elitism, standardisation, and the construction of an official, established canon of
Training and Transmission of Traditional Music in University and Professional Level Education Throughout Europe (Doherty 2002), similarly provides invaluable insights into the ethical, theoretical and practical difficulties encountered by higher education institutes involved in teaching traditional musics across Europe (Doherty 2002).\(^5\) Alexandra Frank’s MA thesis, “That’s the way I’ve always learned” explores the institutionalisation of Bluegrass, Old-Time, and Country Music studies at East Tennessee State University and offers a brief but useful overview of the history of traditional and folk music programmes at selected institutions in Finland, Scotland, England, and the United States. Among the topics addressed by Frank are standardisation, improvisation and imitation, the use of sheet music, and career prospects upon graduation (Frank 2014). More recently, the aforementioned College Music Curricula for a New Century offers a number of studies focused on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional music in higher education in Ireland, the United States, the People’s Republic of China, and Taiwan (Moore 2017). In my contribution to that publication, I discuss how folk, traditional, world, and popular music pedagogues in Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Finland, the UK, and the Netherlands

English folk music, that is given additional socio-cultural status due to its presence in a formalised educational environment.\(^5\) Liz Doherty’s A Needs Analysis of the Training and Transmission of Traditional Music in University and Professional Level Education Throughout Europe (Doherty 2002), commissioned by the Education Working Group of the European Network of Traditional Music and Dance, is a needs analysis report conducted to identify areas for future development in the European folk and traditional music higher education sector. Among the institutions visited by Doherty were The Sibelius Academy (Finland), T.E.I. of Epirus (Greece), The Irish World Music Centre, University of Limerick (Ireland), CEFEDEM Musique, Poitiers (France), and CNR Limoges (France). The report’s recommendations include: 1. Development of a Network for Traditional Music Educators; 2. Development of an Online Resource Facility; 3. Commissioning of Research Projects; 4. Creation of Professional Association and Discussion Forums; 5. Publication of Documentation; 6. Creation of Opportunities for Development and Consultancy; 7. Development of Opportunities for Networking; and 8. Multi-Cultural Activity (ibid).
problematise pedagogical canonicity while negotiating the needs and expectations of external musical communities (Talty 2017). In that same volume, Mark DeWitt (2017) provides an overview of vernacular music programmes in the United States and examines the challenges and benefits of institutionalising musics that exist in the regions where those colleges are located. Eddie Hsu (2017) studies the presence of Asian traditional music in music conservatories in Taiwan, and explores the ways in which artist-in-residence initiatives impact the relationship between institutional and community practices. Finally, Ludim Pedroza (2017) explores Latin music education at Texas State University-San Marcos, with a particular focus on standardisation, canonicity, virtuosity, and how to negotiate dominant Western classical music pedagogy.

Although the writings of Hill, Keegan-Phipps, and Frank were central to the development of both my research and specific interview questions, my particular focus on interviewing a significant number of stakeholders (from within and outside of higher education) engaged in Irish traditional music distinguishes my research methodology from theirs. In particular, it provides a platform for voicing a range of community opinions and perspectives on Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education that is not paralleled in the approaches of the aforementioned scholars.

2.4 The Institutionalisation of Irish Traditional Music in Irish Higher Education in Ireland

Apart from a few important studies, literature on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education is negligible. Doherty’s 2002
report includes an Irish higher education institution in its study, namely the Irish World Academy (University of Limerick), the site for some of my fieldwork, and the institution in which I have undertaken my doctoral studies. The report identifies and documents challenges in institutionalising selected folk and traditional musics in higher education institutions and offers a number of key recommendations for addressing some central issues. I discuss some of the prominent themes emerging from this report later in this chapter.

There are many online examples that chart institutional histories, including those found on music department websites, such as the Conservatory of Music and Drama at Dublin Institute of Technology. Straying a little further from historical reportage, Aloys Fleischmann’s as of yet unpublished detailed history of the Department of Music at University College Cork provides valuable chronological details of significant developments at UCC from 1902 to 1987, and concludes with a contemplation on future prospects for higher music education in Ireland (Fleischmann 1987), something I discuss at length when I chart the history of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education in chapter four.

Fintan Vallely’s (see Appendix A) encyclopaedic Companion to Irish Traditional Music (2011) provides some information on higher education programmes offering studies in Irish traditional music in Ireland, but there are few references that critically reflect on the impacts of such institutionalisation. One contribution that does assess critical responses to tertiary-level traditional music pedagogy is offered by Niall Keegan (see Appendix A), musician, academic, and associate director of the Irish

16 For more, see DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama (2018).
World Academy, at the University of Limerick. Keegan asserts that the external traditional music community is suspicious of pedagogical agendas in higher education and is apathetic towards third-level traditional music pedagogy in some cases (Keegan 2011, p.234). This proves to be an important discussion point throughout this thesis as it provides documented precedent for some community suspicions around the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education.

The proceedings of the second *Crosbhealach an Cheoil* (trans. the music crossroads) (Vallely 2013) held in Derry in 2003, but published a decade later, present a collection of arguments by academics and practitioners relating to the institutionalisation of traditional musics (including Irish traditional music) in formalised educational environments. Described as the first of its kind in Europe (Vallely 2013), the conference proceedings dedicate an entire section comprising of seven papers to ‘Third Level Approaches in Traditional Music’, but only one focuses specifically on Irish traditional music in Irish higher education; Aileen Dillane discusses how the discipline of ethnomusicology can contribute to the teaching and learning of Irish traditional music, particularly in Irish higher education (Dillane 2013). The remaining six papers focus on: ‘The cultural context of Traditional music and song (Margaret Bennett), ‘Bringing Traditional music to the university’ (Alistair Anderson), ‘Issues in teaching Traditional music at RSAMD’ (Jo Miller), ‘Defining Folk music in an educational situation’ (Frode Nyvold), ‘Problems and successes of the Folk in the Academy, (Gunnar Stubseid), and ‘Irish Traditional music in an American liberal–arts college’ (Sally K. Sommers Smith). I return to this publication, and how it has informed my work, later in this chapter. Suffice to say at this point that it is one important example of documented discourse that has explored issues relating to the
institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education.

2.5 Thematic Divergences and Convergences in the Literature

Notwithstanding the diverse approaches and foci of the literature presented heretofore, each stream of literature contributes significantly to each of my three research questions that focus on canonicity, negotiating the dominance of Western classical music pedagogy, and negotiating tradition and innovation, and how these relate to community needs and expectations. My next section, which provides a thematic overview of discourse on the institutionalisation of music in higher education institutions more widely, is organised from each of the three vantage points of wider/mainstream music pedagogy, selected folk and traditional music pedagogy, and Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education.

2.5.1 Problematising Canonicity in Third-Level Music Education

Canonicity, viewed as the construction and promotion of musical and educational canons, bodies of knowledge, or strictures, can “potentially confine our experiences of the musical world within narrow norms and conventions”, and contributes to “textbook narratives of musical orthodoxy” (Talty 2017, p.102). Of course, the formation and acceptance of a singular music ‘canon’ has had more oppressive origins and impacts. As Philip V. Bohlman states, canons were “formed from “Great Men” and “Great Music””, and he reminds us that the canon was “determined not so much by what it was but as by what it was not. It was not the musics of women or people of color; it was not musics that belonged to other cultures and worldviews; it was not forms of expression that resisted authority or insisted that music could empower
politics” (Bohlman 1992, p.198). Even in a more pluralistic and diverse society, canonicity has the potential to confine musical experiences to what are deemed by various gatekeepers and mediators as ‘canonic’, and worthy of study. Specific to the Irish context, Marie McCarthy, author of *Passing it on: The Transmission of Music in Irish Culture*, observes how canonicity or the music canon, as instilled in Irish music education represents “a centralised source of cultural authority that reflects the values of the dominant culture and imposes those values on the young, primarily through educational agencies” (McCarthy 1999, p.20). Nettl’s (1995) exploration of music school culture demonstrates how the ‘work’ is considered to be the most fundamental unit in Western art music, but he also notes the hierarchical pre-eminence of a specific group of exalted composers. As a result, Nettl contends that American students, through the selection, construction, and promulgation of institutional canon(s), are predisposed to view mainstream music history as revolving around such masters as Bach, Beethoven and Brahms, at the expense of others (Nettl 1995, p.99). Nettl also suggests that the oversimplified delineation of what he terms the ‘six-period plan’ (Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Twentieth Century) is further evidence of canonicity in action. Transition periods occurring between the ‘six-period plan’ are neglected due to music historians’ emphasis on stability rather than change (ibid). Of particular relevance to my research is the degree to which music pedagogy favours convenient codification at the expense of nuanced interpretations of musical experience as it occurs in particular cultural contexts. Is the convenient ‘six-period plan’ observed by Nettl replicated in some similar form in Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland, and if so, what informs such structuring?

Although Kingsbury speaks more about the culture of producing faithful
renditions of masterworks, his study also observes the reverence exhibited towards a select group of “lionized composers” (1988, p.34). The presence of the oversized bronze Beethoven casting in the main foyer of the conservatory in Kingsbury’s ethnography is an example of institutionalised canonicity. The results of institutional canonicity practices are increased incrementally over time through prioritising and reaffirming selected representations of music culture. Works and composers are selected and validated and admitted into an accepted canon for successive generations of music students to study. Are there parallels in how Irish traditional music pedagogues working in Irish higher education promote certain exponents and composers over others?

Entire music histories and narratives can be created and sustained through processes of canonisation manifest in institutional education contexts. Discussing the institutionalisation of jazz in academia, Marquis asserts that the introduction of jazz to American higher education has led to the development of an “official history and an official canon, perhaps even an official music” (Marquis 1998, p.121). Recalling the exaltation of composers and works mentioned previously in the work of Nettl and Kingsbury, Marquis detects a comparable trend in jazz academia. She argues that jazz has become another classical music replete with its textbook history that acclaims jazz icons of the past (ibid, p.122). Similarly, DeVeaux criticises the narrowing potential of jazz textbooks that present jazz as “a coherent whole, and its history as a skilfully contrived and easily comprehended narrative”, despite “all of its chaotic diversity of style and expression and for all the complexity of its social origins” (DeVeaux 1991, p.525). Centring more intensively on canonicity (or canonization as he terms it), Thomas points to academia’s dependency on canons to assess and attribute value
when describing canons as academia’s “yardsticks of value” (Thomas 2002, p.288).

Dobbins is critical of music academia’s emphasis on venerating the past and believes that “reverence for the past must not be allowed to become so rigidly canonized that it stifles the creation and performance of new music, however experimental it may be” (Dobbins 1988, p.38). Given the dependency of folk and traditional music (and by extension, pedagogies developed around them) on the past and generational transmission, should Irish traditional music pedagogues be mindful of the potentially stifling consequences of honouring tradition at the expense of fostering creativity? Also, do efforts to create Irish traditional music curricula inevitably misrepresent the “chaotic diversity” of Irish traditional music, as DeVeaux has observed in jazz academia (DeVeaux 1991, p.525)? These issues have specific currency in folk and traditional music pedagogy, and I return to them later in chapter nine.

Canonicity in music education manifests in various forms, often depending on the genre of music. Kingsbury (1988) and Nettl (1995) demonstrate how master composers and works become canonised when their work is prioritised and when music institutions visibly display symbols such as busts and portraits of composers that are considered part of the accepted canon. In jazz, canonicity (in one instance) takes the form of organising, codifying and crystallising a diverse and multifaceted musical culture, in the development of what Marquis refers to as an “official music” (Marquis 1998, p.121). This example of canonicity in jazz education can also apply to folk and traditional musics, given their extra-institutional, communal origins. However, literature pertaining to the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in higher education systems focuses primarily on how the processes of canonicity can impact upon stylistic standardisation and repertoire in performance, whereby certain playing
styles and repertoire are selected and prioritised as being of more value than others. Keegan-Phipps’ exploration of the folk music degree at the University of Newcastle and the work carried out at Folkworks alludes to the ‘clone debate’, a moniker used in reference to the significant influences that tutors have on students of English folk music. For example, Keegan-Phipps notes that informants contributing to his research expressed uneasiness at the prospect of young musicians “engaging in the emulation of an unhealthily small number of musicians” (Keegan-Phipps 2007, p.102). This example illustrates interesting points in relation to the selectivity adopted by institutions, something that emerges in this study in relation to Irish institutions that are sometimes perceived by external stakeholders as being responsible for stylistic homogenisation. Keegan-Phipps suggests that tutors are selected by the institution, and in turn select teaching materials based on their own aesthetic value judgements. Consequently, students are engaged in multiple processes of selectivity by default, and therefore uniform standards and canons based on the prevailing ideologies of tutors are established. Similar tensions have been communicated by the Swedish folk music community who feared that all fiddlers would emerge from the Folk Music Department in Stockholm playing the same tunes, in the same manner as the fiddle tutor there (Ahlbäck cited in Hill 2009a, p.215).

Some traditional music communities perceive the process of institutionalising folk and traditional musics in higher education as an impediment to promoting individuality. According to Doherty, “a collective concern is that homogeneity and uniformity will replace individualism as the main characteristics of the music” (Doherty 2002, p.18). Suggested solutions to this difficulty include actually embedding an awareness of such complications into the courses themselves (Ó Súilleabháin cited
in Doherty 2002, p.18). Such an approach has been taken by the Sibelius Academy’s Folk Music Department, where a strong emphasis is placed on personal creativity and expression. Students are encouraged to engage with divergent thinking and not to be “too obedient” (Ilmonen cited in Hill 2009a, p.89). Both insights offered here demonstrate a willingness among pedagogues to find teaching methods appropriate to the folk or traditional musics being institutionalised, rather than rely on conventional models used to teach Western classical music.

Teaching folk and traditional musics in higher education can impact upon regional identity and regional musical style. One anonymous respondent to a questionnaire designed by Juniper Hill suggested that pedagogues at the Sibelius Academy had deliberately eradicated regional differences and that Finnish identity had been lost in favour of an “Anglo-Saxon entertainment music” (Hill 2009b, p.229). Hill disputes the argument made but she does acknowledge that stylistic homogenisation has occurred due to the institutionalisation of folk music at the Sibelius Academy, raising questions about whether the same issue is occurring in Ireland. In England, Keegan-Phipps (2007, 2008) sheds light on how educational attitudes towards regionalism are market-led and influenced by a desire to attract students. Musics from many regions and traditions are taught because faculty fear that students would not be allured by the prospect of studying English folk music exclusively (Keegan-Phipps 2008, p.98). Pedagogical approaches to regional style and repertoire are not universal however. Hill suggests that institutions in Norway and Sweden, for example, place much more emphasis on the performance of local or regional styles (Hill 2009b, p.238). Although institutionalising folk and traditional musics may potentially jeopardise regional identities and musical styles, the literature
suggests that measures to counteract the dilution of regionalism can be, and are, employed by institutions, albeit in a fragmented and idiosyncratic manner.

Discussions on canonicity feature to some extent in discussions on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in educational structures. Again, few texts explore the higher education music department exclusively. Many manifestations of canonicity in Irish traditional music apply to the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music more generally. The power relations inherent in the construction of established and accepted norms or ‘canons’ are discussed, but it is also suggested that the polymorphous, diverse nature of Irish traditional music makes it difficult to institutionalise or ‘canonise’ a set of accepted norms and rules (McCarthy 1999, Fleming 2004, O’Shea 2008, Corcoran 2013). Concerns around the undermining or perhaps trivialisation of traditional music’s innate individualism due to its institutionalisation in higher education are discussed, as are the potential implications for traditional music education, of overarching bureaucratic requirements in the European education sector (Doherty 2002).

The concept of canon, and how it is constructed features regularly in texts concerned with the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in educational environments. Marie McCarthy, who discusses canon at length in Passing it On (1999), is critical of the potential influence wielded by individuals or institutions with authority, and lists competitions and graded examinations as two clear examples of how Irish music has been subject to the formulation of an accepted canon in the past. Returning to the proceedings of the 2003 Crosbhealach and Cheoil, Seán Corcoran raises a number of very relevant issues on the subject of Irish traditional music curricula in formal education when he asks: “who decides what should be taught? Who decides the
contents of the curriculum and who decides the preferable modes of performance? Who decides what this thing called ‘Irish Traditional Music’ actually is?” (Corcoran 2013, p.227). Corcoran describes what he perceives as the construction of an Irish traditional music canon as being of a “strongly prescriptive nature” and holding a “surprising consensus across a wide range of fields” (ibid). According to Corcoran, the construction of canon “only attains any significance when it is operated by social formations that have a certain amount of social dominance - e.g., organisations that are closely associated with the State; third-level educational departments, etc.” (ibid). This resonates with Bohlman’s assertion that “canonizers” only effectively ‘canonise’ when they wield some kind of power and maintain some basis of authority” (Bohlman 1992, p.206). Interestingly, Corcoran also suggests that the imposition of such canons is never complete as it is met with resistance from the wider community (ibid). The assertions made here have very relevant implications for the present research considering the social capital and status associated with higher education achievements.

Discussions on the construction of an Irish traditional music canon focus more frequently on cultural organisations such as the Gaelic League17, or Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ, trans. gathering of musicians in Ireland)18, than they do on Irish higher

17 The Gaelic League (or Conradh na Gaeilge in the Irish language) was founded in 1893 with a view to promoting the Irish language. Its founders “sought to rid Ireland of provincialism through the creation of an independent, self-confident and self-reliant nation in the Gaelic tradition of this island” (Denvir 1995, p.109). The organisation has played a key role in promoting Irish music, singing, and dance. Today, the organisation is still considered to be the main national body working to promote the Irish language in Ireland (Vallely 2011).

18 Founded in 1951, initially as a regional adjunct organisation of the Dublin Pipers Club, CCÉ describes itself as “the largest group involved in the preservation and promotion of Irish traditional music”, who have “been working for the cause of Irish music since the middle of the last century (1951 to be precise)”. CCÉ operate a local branch system in communities throughout Ireland (and the world), organising

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education. Contemplating on the fluid, polysemous nature of Irish traditional music, Helen O'Shea suggests that when an organisation involved in institutionalising Irish traditional music “reifies the process of tradition, it attempts the impossible” (O'Shea 2008, p.24). In her view, such a process attempts to “construct, canonise and control the protean nature of culture and its constant reinvention and reinterpretation” (ibid).

Adopting a somewhat more sanguine viewpoint, Rachel C. Fleming takes a similar view to Corcoran in suggesting that Irish traditional music is resistant to standardisation because “it is not dependent on an institutional system and can happen informally in virtually any location” (Fleming 2004, p.250).

Some texts that explore the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education discuss homogeneity and uniformity as potential consequences of such institutionalisation. According to Doherty, one of the main concerns of the traditional community is that “homogeneity and uniformity will replace individualism as the main characteristics of the music” (Doherty 2002, p.18). While it is worth restating that Doherty’s research explores traditional music pedagogical practices in four European higher education sites, rather than Irish higher education exclusively, the general observations made by her research apply easily to current thinking on the presence of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. Musical practices that are polysemous and diverse by their nature can be subject to standardisation through the construction of a canon in a formalised educational environment.

Homogenisation, in the case of Doherty’s aforementioned report (2002), also refers to processes that standardise educational practice across an educational sector.

music and dancing classes, concerts, and competitions at county, provincial, and national levels in Ireland (Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann 2018).
Focusing on this interpretation of homogeneity, one particularly pertinent source of apprehension towards homogeneity according to Doherty, is a consequence of the demands placed on the education sector by the European Union. Doherty posits that the free movement of labour in the European union makes it now “imperative to compare the equivalence of degrees, their content and quality in fields carrying special eligibility requirements” (ibid, p.16). She suggests that “within the departments of traditional music this may lead to standardisation of degree types and duration of studies” (ibid). This point illustrates a pedagogical quandary whereby universalism and transferability are valued, but this could also mean that that the idiomatic and nuanced generational and cultural epistemologies developed around folk and traditional musics are diluted or undervalued because of their cultural specificity.

2.5.2 Negotiating the historical dominance of Western Classical Music Pedagogy

Literature on the institutionalisation of music education in higher education and music conservatories discusses at length the perceived prestige and supremacy bestowed on the Western classical music tradition above other musical genres. This has significant implications for the development of folk and traditional music programmes in higher education systems. Definitions of the word music warrant careful consideration. Kingsbury (1988) draws attention to the historical connotations associated with the term and suggests that the term has been traditionally assumed to refer to the Western classical music tradition exclusively. In addition, the privileged status of Western classical music has been exemplified by the use of modifiers such as “serious music” and “good music” (Kingsbury 1988, p.17). According to Kingsbury’s observations, the term serious music is used to differentiate Western classical music
from musics such as popular music, rock and jazz, for example (Kingsbury 1988, p.142). Nettl’s exploration of what he terms Music Building Society also uncovers elitist attitudes toward Western classical music, by virtue of its “structural complexity and sophistication” (Nettl 1995, p.40). Wicks condemns this monocultural and elitist emphasis on Western classical music in American higher education as “the last bastion of Western colonialism” (Wicks 1998, p.1). The perceived pre-eminence of Western classical music in higher education presents a number of challenges for music education.

Revisiting Kingsbury’s observations on the use of the term music, reminds us that the label has often been used to refer to the Western classical music tradition exclusively. Nettl’s research in Midwestern university schools of music supports this assertion and highlights the fact that although institutions may adopt the moniker of “School of Music”, they do not necessarily offer studies in all musics. Multiple musics may be taught, but according to Nettl, they are all made “march to the drummer of the central classical tradition” (Nettl 1995, p.144). Moreover, Nettl goes on to suggest that university music departments function “almost as an institution for the suppression of certain musics” (Nettl 1995, p.82). Instances of such suppression according to Nettl are exemplified by the way in which voice teachers discourage students from performing jazz or other genres from outside the Western classical music tradition, ostensibly in order to prevent them from harming their voices (ibid, p.82). Although this example could be dismissed as an innocuous case of well-intentioned vocal tuition, other instances observed by Nettl suggest that elitism and condescension towards other musics exist. Nettl posits that listening to Elvis Presley, for example, is not only considered to be a distraction from listening to Brahms but is also a form of musical
pollution (ibid, p.83). In a similar vein, Marquis implies that musicians with interests in jazz were encouraged to “leave their preference at the portals engraved with the revered names: Beethoven, Verdi, Wagner” (Marquis 1998, p.120). Music education institutions possess significant power to influence and transmit the musical ideologies of its leadership and biases towards what constitutes music has the potential to be ingrained in successive generations of students. These observations also have significant implications for folk and traditional music and the pedagogical approaches designed to transmit them in higher education settings. The institutional biases and canon forming processes at play are just as potentially damaging in folk and traditional music pedagogy whereby certain artistic approaches, repertoire, and performers become that drummer to which all other interpretations must march.

Much of the literature that points to perceptions of bias towards Western classical music in higher education suggests why the educational hierarchy needs to be dismantled. The first rationale to be explored here is concerned with what other genres can offer mainstream music education. Returning to the institutionalisation of jazz in higher education, an array of musical characteristics exhibited by jazz musicians are offered by Dobbins (1988) as being useful to the development of general musicianship. These include the maintenance of a strict tempo, the ability to apply music theory and harmony to practice, and the potential to integrate musical experience into everyday life (Dobbins 1988, p.31). Dobbins implies that symphonic musicians find it difficult to maintain a steady pulse due to an over reliance on conductors, and an overemphasis on rubato and aperiodic rhythms (ibid, p.32). Lamenting the implications on jazz practices in higher education, Marquis is critical of how jazz education has developed similar values and approaches to Western classical
music in American higher education. She states that “contemporary jazz sits in its
tenured chairs, historicizing, theorizing, plodding through the disorderly debris
inevitably left behind by a dynamically developing art” (1998, p.122). The
institutionalisation of jazz in higher education has the potential to contribute valuable
pedagogical tools and methods to mainstream music education but could potentially
be de-contextualised as a result of the institutionalisation process.

Returning to the subject of this dissertation, the substantive point is as follows.
Overemphasis placed on Western classical music in higher education contexts can
impact upon students' ability to engage in meaningful musical analysis outside of the
Western classical tradition. Tracing the historical development of a bias towards
Western classical music in American higher education curricula, Caswell (1991)
suggests that the predominance of Western classical music, or more specifically,
European art music, originates in a desire to emulate the high art values of European
culture. This hierarchical bias has been accordingly instilled in American music
departments. Of particular relevance to this discussion is Caswell's suggestion that
students' capacity for critical analysis has diminished; “by unquestioningly accepting
works Europeans valued, the American critical muscle atrophied and, when
confronted with new American compositions, was able to render judgements only by
rejecting everything except what sounded most European and most canonic” (Caswell
1991, p.135). Similar trends can be found in Europe and in Ireland. As I discuss in
chapter six, Irish traditional music is, in fact, susceptible to the results of canonicity in
music education, even as definitions of what constitutes an Irish traditional music
canon are contested.

There is less concern with the dominance of classical music in typical music
departments amongst traditional music scholars and practitioners, than with the impact of using pedagogical models from Western art music exclusively when creating a pedagogy for Irish traditional music. The overwhelming consensus among those who explore the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in higher education centres on the unsuitability of contextualising folk music pedagogy in Western classical music educational settings (Doherty 2002, Smith 2005, McKeon 2007, Hill 2009a, Hill 2009b, McGettrick 2013). In Finland, pedagogues at the Sibelius Academy’s folk music department felt so compelled to distance themselves from the Western classical music educational culture that it decided to locate its premises in a different location to that of the Sibelius Academy’s classical music department. For the instigators of this move, it was important that folk musicians formed a separate music community, isolated from the “influences and judgements of classical musicians” (Hill 2009b, p.215). This example may seem extreme, but it does give a clear indication of the value placed by pedagogues at the folk music department, on folk musicians carving out a distinct community of practice, separated from the classical music community. As Doherty asserts in the broader European context, “traditional music must, in effect, find its own ways to survive and flourish in the institutional environment” (Doherty 2002, p.18). This, of course, does not suggest that traditional music pedagogues and students should isolate themselves from their departmental colleagues working in other genres, but rather, methodologies and learning structures perhaps can, and should be, developed from within the genres of folk and traditional music. An acknowledgement of the intrinsic differences between Western classical music and folk and traditional musics facilitates the development of specific pedagogical methodologies that are unique to the music tradition being taught.
2.5.3 Western Classical Music in Irish Traditional Music Discourse

By far the most prominent theme in literature on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in educational structures (beyond higher education exclusively) is a concern about the imposition of Western classical music educational values on Irish traditional music pedagogy, an educational system that has for “over 200-plus years of its development”, developed “efficient and irreplaceable means of musical pedagogy” that are “precisely evolved to accurately and reliably convey what the particular tradition itself finds significant” (Smith 2005, p.69). The following section explores examples from this discourse, which includes discussions on: historical Victorian attitudes towards ‘high art’ in Ireland and the perceived low socio-musical status of Irish traditional music (McCarthy 1999 and 2013, Vallely 2002); the imposition of classical music aesthetics and norms on Irish traditional music performance and education (Smith 2005, McKeon 2007, Corcoran 2013, Cranitch 2013, McGettrick 2013); and an awareness of the requirement for idiomatic and specialised pedagogical methodologies for Irish traditional music (Smith 1999, Heneghan 2001, Doherty 2002, Smith 2005, McKeon 2007, McGettrick 2013).

Among numerous themes discussed in the Crosbhealach an Cheoil proceedings (2013) is a brief but nonetheless important focus on the relationship between the pedagogies of Irish traditional music and Western classical music as discussed by Marie McCarthy. Her historical survey of when and how school music and traditional music transmission have interfaced makes many references to the efforts of educational ideologues to impose the values of the perceived ‘high art’ ethos of classical music upon Irish mainstream music education (McCarthy 2013). Moreover, McCarthy believes that the perennial issue of juxtaposing Western classical music and
Irish traditional music in Irish educational structures is a quandary that remains unresolved (at least at the time the paper was delivered in 2003, although the paper was not published until 2013) (ibid, p.226). Decrying the formalisation of the “Irish Traditional music canon,” Seán Corcoran feels that “‘Classical’ music techniques, intonation, timbre preferences and aesthetics have been prestiged over vernacular practices” (Corcoran 2013, p.282). Similarly, Matt Cranitch highlights some fundamental differences between Western classical music and Irish traditional music by recounting many of the challenges faced by Classical violinists learning Irish traditional music. These challenges include a reliance on staff notation, an unfamiliarity with musical style, detached bowing, and an emphasis on vibrato (Cranitch 2013). In the same volume, Paul McGettrick warns against the precariousness of imposing classical music assessment templates on Irish traditional music, calling for a more creative and idiomatic approach to evaluating traditional music performance (McGettrick 2013, p.197). Elsewhere, this caution tallies with the work of Smith (2005), when he states that attempts “to import alien tools are prone to ignore essential factors and to emphasis irrelevant ones” (Smith 2005, p.70). This has significant implications for the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education.

A considerable proportion of wider literature on Irish traditional music education alludes to the unsuitability of Western classical music educational values as a model for Irish traditional music pedagogy. Resonating with many of the studies discussed previously in this review of the literature, one of the most salient arguments made for requiring an idiomatic pedagogy specific to the values of Irish traditional music centres on accepting and embracing the prominence of primarily oral rather
than notated processes of transmission. Reflecting on the imposition of Western classical music educational values on Irish traditional music pedagogy, Marie McCarthy’s *Passing it On* historically contextualises a significant development in Irish education that witnessed a shift from informal music transmission to a more systematic and formalised educational environment (McCarthy 1999).

Similarly, Thérèse Smith (1999) observes challenges inherent in re-contextualising oral music traditions in academic environments that primarily emphasise the value of the written text. She suggests that resolutions to the perceived orality-literacy binary are further complicated by the fact that oral traditions (including Irish traditional music) frequently lack a comprehensive documented catalogue of “masterpieces”, or an abundance of documented biographical information on individual genius composers (Smith 1999, p.209). According to Smith, this can result in a lack of understanding or appreciation for the artistic depth of an oral music tradition. Smith adds that the academic environment itself is also more compatible with the Western classical music tradition as lecture halls and classrooms more closely resemble classical music performance spaces rather than those traditionally associated with oral-based traditional musics. Although Smith focuses very generally on oral traditions rather than concentrating on Irish traditional music exclusively, her views contribute considerably to discourses surrounding the pedagogical challenges involved in institutionalising Irish traditional music in a higher education system that has traditionally been heavily influenced by Western classical music educational values (Smith 1999, McCarthy 1999, Vallely 2002).

The orality and literacy dualism provides a constant challenge to institutions involved in the transmission of traditional music but can also provide traditional music
education with a unique and idiomatic pedagogical toolkit to develop educational strategies specific to traditional musics (Doherty 2002, p.10). Again, Doherty’s 2002 report is clear in its contention that the Western classical educational model is “deemed inappropriate in most respects for the training and transmission of traditional music” (ibid, p.18). Moreover, the report also states that traditional music pedagogy can “learn from the mistakes of the classical music community” by recognising and avoiding the potential dangers of institutionalising Irish traditional music in higher education (Ó Súilleabháin cited in Doherty 2002, p.18).

Institutions that aim to integrate Irish traditional music in Irish higher education face a range of operational challenges. Summarising observations made by Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (see Appendix A), Frank Heneghan, author of the Final Report of the Music Education National Debate, discusses a number of principal issues, beginning by questioning whether or not the general music education system is the “appropriate and natural ambience” for Irish traditional music. Key to the present discussion are the references to Western classical music education in Ireland, and the contextualisation of Irish traditional music within an “already overloaded curricula” in “an educational system hitherto dominated by the norms of method and repertoire derived mainly from Western art music” (Heneghan 2001, p.20). The process of “removing traditional music from its natural community settings” to be placed within “Western-type” formal music education is carefully considered, and those involved in designing strategies to incorporate Irish traditional music in higher education are encouraged to carefully consider the implications of such processes (ibid, p.21). In terms of assessment and evaluation, the report wonders how methods of transmission in Irish traditional music equate to “understandings of achievement targets such as composition/performance
and listening in formal education settings” (ibid, p.20). Although the report outlines various difficulties inherent in institutionalising Irish traditional music in higher education, the insights presented therein provide educational strategists with a set of important guiding principles.

In Knocking on the Castle Door: A Place for Traditional Music at Third Level? (2002), Fintan Vallely argues that Irish traditional music can indeed make a worthwhile contribution to Irish higher education but must overcome challenges presented by the education system’s emphasis on classical music. Echoing earlier references to dominant Western classical music values, Vallely laments the supremacy of Western classical music in Irish music departments and suggests that Irish traditional music is continually facing challenges from what he terms as the “‘imperial’ hegemony of ‘art’ music” resulting from “Ireland’s inherited classical music ‘establishment’” (Vallely 2002). Vallely’s confidence in the potential for meaningful engagement with Irish traditional music studies in Irish higher education stems from the belief that pedagogical requirements in music education can be fulfilled through the study of any of several genres of music, and he goes on to suggest that educational methodologies that embrace oral transmission could be of significant benefit to wider music education, in areas such as teaching style, for example (Vallely 2002). Although Vallely focuses more on negative perceptions of Western classical music rather than suggesting best practices for integrating Irish traditional music in higher education, he nonetheless presents an insightful historical backdrop to the development of a Western classical music establishment in Irish education. My research visits to the Irish higher education institutes included in this study suggest that Irish traditional music pedagogues have certainly carved out an idiomatic pedagogical space for Irish
traditional music that is predominantly respected and appreciated on its own merits and is generally not subsumed under the dominating Western classical music hierarchy lamented by Vallely.

Concerns regarding the application of Western classical music pedagogical ideologies and agendas to Irish traditional music education also exist in the wider Irish traditional music community. In the *Companion to Irish Traditional Music*, in an entry on ‘postgraduate studies’, Niall Keegan refers briefly to suspicions among the community that higher education institutions have a “stylistic and aesthetic agenda which favours third-level classical music values and dismissive of traditional-music values” (Keegan 2011, p.234). Keegan also alludes to criticisms of higher education from quarters that may fail to see the value of devoting time to the academic study of Irish traditional music. This reference is significant insofar as it signals an awareness and acceptance (from within Irish traditional music academia) of wider community perceptions towards Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, even if such perceptions are not problematised.

Although my work is concerned with Irish higher education, it is worth noting that Western classical music values have also been perceived to dominate Ireland’s secondary level music education system (McCarthy 1999, McKeon 2007, McCarthy 2013). Writing in the *Journal of Music* in 2007, musician and Central Executive Officer of *Na Piobairí Uilleann*¹⁹ (trans. the uilleann pipers) Gay McKeon suggests that Irish

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¹⁹ *Na Piobairí Uilleann* (NPU) (trans. the uilleann pipers), was founded in 1968 “when there were less than 100 uilleann pipers remaining”, and “the main object of Na Piobairí Uilleann shall be the promotion generally of Irish music and the music of the uilleann pipes in particular” (Na Piobairí Uilleann 2018). The NPU is funded by the Department of Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht, the Arts Council, Dublin City Council, and by private donors. The NPU is based at 15 Henrietta Street, in Dublin and has in excess of 3,600 members worldwide (Moylan 2011, p.481).
traditional music is largely neglected and treated superficially in the secondary school music curriculum. This, in McKeon’s opinion is due to the fact that music curricula in Ireland are shaped by classical music cognoscenti rather than by Irish traditional music specialists. In addition, McKeon stresses what he perceives as some of the fundamental differences between the genres of classical and Irish traditional musics, while emphasising the incompatibility of imposing classical music evaluation and validation structures, such as graded examinations, on Irish traditional music. McKeon feels that Irish traditional music has been well served by alternative methods of transmission (McKeon 2007). This echoes the views of Christopher Smith (see Appendix A), who asserts, “the best resource for models, methods, and philosophies in this music is the tradition itself” (Smith 2005, p.70). Notwithstanding its focus on secondary education, McKeon’s reference provides another interesting insight into the concerns of traditional musicians surrounding the ideologies that inform mainstream music education curriculum design generally.

2.5.4 Balancing Tradition and Innovation in Music Curricula – Managing the Needs and Expectations of Musical Communities.

The authority inherent in student-teacher hierarchal relationships exemplifies how authority and power relations are negotiated in university music departments and conservatories. My earlier focus on canonicity illustrates how Western classical music pedagogues authoritatively instil in their students a respect for tradition and the key exponents of that tradition. Literature suggests that such influential teacher-student relationships have an impact on creativity and on the extent to which a student feels empowered to freely explore his or her own creative expression. Kingsbury notes one
particular manifestation of hierarchical authority that involves a pedagogue authoritatively telling students how to feel during a passage of music (Kingsbury 1988, p.95). Another manifestation of authority that the literature discusses is that of the authority of the musical score, of the necessity to perform renditions faithful to that score (Kingsbury 1988). Kingsbury’s exploration of the conservatory cultural system underlines the emphasis placed by staff and students alike, on displaying a “devout respect for the creativity of the composer” by performing exactly what is written in the score, while simultaneously playing it that way because they feel it that way (Kingsbury 1988, p.88). Furthermore, some editions of musical scores are valued as more authoritative than others. Nettl (1995) observes a similar phenomenon in what he calls ‘Heartland U.’, his fictitious music school society. The authority of composers such as Mozart, Bach and Chopin reigns supreme as if they still lived. This “confluence of worship and historicism” is enacted when staff at the Heartland U. demand that students “play Mozart as he would wish us to play his music” (Nettl 1995, p.24). Manuscripts are seen as sacred texts in a system of worship not dissimilar to religion. Is it possible that this authoritative quest for respecting the Western classical tradition diminishes students’ confidence and skillset for exploring personal creativity?

Students’ increased propensity and opportunity to explore creative and artistic freedom in third-level folk and traditional music programmes is one of the most commonly discussed themes emerging from the literature. Doherty highlights the potential of higher education institutions to foster student creativity and development by providing a creative environment that facilitates innovation and experimentation, as well as providing applied musical skills to allow musicians increase their creative capacity (Doherty 2002, p.10). Hill’s exploration of the institutionalisation of Finnish
folk music at the Sibelius Academy’s folk music department discusses the institution’s emphasis on creativity and artistic freedom at length. As strong advocates of a model of divergent thinking, Sibelius Academy pedagogues encourage students to be “a little crazy and creative and have a mind of their own” (Ilmonen cited in Hill 2009a, p.89). In practice, creativity and artistic freedom are inspired and fostered at the Sibelius Academy through studying musical practices such as variation, improvisation and group arrangement. Central to Finnish folk music pedagogues’ desire to extricate themselves from the conventional educational models of education associated with Western classical music is a belief that such educational approaches have the capacity to stifle creativity. For Hill, Western European art music culture emphasises values such as technical virtuosity, harmonic complexity, music notation, faithfulness to the score, and the authority of the composer, for example. Such musical characteristics are deemed unsuitable for Finnish folk music education and performance practices. Instead, emphasis must be placed on a freedom to be creative and push boundaries, while remaining true to practices that are unique to the transmissive methodologies of folk and traditional musics (Hill 2009b, p.210).

Mechanisms for promoting creativity and artistic freedom among Finnish folk music students have been drawn from multiple musical sources. Quoting perhaps the most eminent Finnish folk music pedagogue, and chief instigator of the Folk Music Department at the Sibelius Academy, Heikki Laitinen, Hill portrays the Sibelius Academy’s ideological ethos as wholly unrestricted by musical inhibitions; “there cannot be any borders or limits, rather the folk musician must be just as free as the jazz musician and classical musician” (Laitinen cited in Hill 2009a, p.96). Interestingly, Laitinen’s relationship with avant-garde composition has influenced his folk music
pedagogy. In an attempt to remove creative barriers and inhibitions, students have been encouraged to engage with avant-garde performance practices, which have proved successful in generating an increased musical self-confidence. Keegan-Phipps (2007, 2008) observes similar approaches to folk music pedagogy in England. At the University of Newcastle, students of the BA in Folk Music are exposed to repertoires and influences from a range of folk music traditions. Cross-genre collaboration is also encouraged; performances combining English music with Finnish folk music, Irish traditional music, and jazz instrumentation and harmony exemplify the pluralism that is actively encouraged (Keegan-Phipps 2007, p.93). Both examples highlight a connection between musical creativity, artistic freedom and a willingness to engage with musical material from outside a native musical tradition.

Hill (2009b) also provides numerous examples of how the Sibelius Academy’s Folk Music Department has impacted the contemporary folk music scene in Finland. Data collected by Hill indicates that musicians who have been exposed to the pedagogy of the Sibelius Academy, or who have received tuition from Sibelius Academy graduates, are more likely to engage with variation, arrangement, the creation of musical fusions, and to compose their own tunes, regardless of their skill levels (Hill 2009b, p.231). Hill’s study informs us that musicians with exposure to the pedagogical ideology of the Sibelius Academy have stronger beliefs that folk musicians must have the freedom to express their ideas artistically. Musical results can be met with varying degrees of enthusiasm, however. Informants in Doherty’s study expressed concern that Sibelius Academy students were perhaps playing folk music that was far removed from the tradition and “the wishes of the public” and lacking the “intimate touch” discernible in the music of local musicians (Doherty 2002, p.18).
Pedagogues acting as influential mentors encourage students to adopt certain approaches to expressing themselves musically, as this example shows. The status attached to institutions as well as their ability to influence a large number of students simultaneously can facilitate the dissemination of specific aesthetic and pedagogical ideologies, as exemplified when one pedagogue at a particular Irish institution used colourful language to criticise a selection of music recordings that a student had borrowed from the college library (Talty 2017, p.103).

Institutionalising the teaching of folk and traditional musics can encourage students to look beyond the national to the transnational. Keegan-Phipps (2007, 2008) describes the multiculturalism of the folk music education provided at Newcastle University, comparable to the artistic freedom advocated by the Sibelius Academy to collaborate and fuse musical styles. There are no restrictions placed on sourcing repertoire from outside the English folk music tradition; engagement with such transnational repertoire is encouraged. As a result, the attitude towards musical material and repertoire adopted by pedagogues of the folk music degree at Newcastle influences the musical practices of students beyond the confines of the institution. This ethos is also reflected in the music that students play at sessions and in concerts (Keegan-Phipps 2007, p.93). Musical values and ideologies fostered within an institutional community are maintained when that community engages in musical practices outside of the institution.

Studies that discuss the impacts of Irish higher education on creativity in Irish traditional music are largely negligible. In discussing creativity as a theme, in terms of its relationship with tradition, I have been interested in the ways that higher education institutions promote a respect for tradition while also fostering individual creativity, in
ways that reflect the diversity of the musical traditions that they encounter in the
institution. As a result, I present literature on Irish traditional music that explores the
relationship between academic/institutional and extra-academic/extra-institutional
contextualisations of Irish traditional music, to assess the extent to which Irish higher
education is perceived to negotiate the needs and expectations of the Irish traditional
music community. Some have observed a perceived resistance towards the
formalisation and intellectualisation of Irish traditional music as an academic subject.
A brief return to Niall Keegan's earlier assertion that “[c]ritics within the [traditional
community] may not appreciate the value to the individual and the community of a
full educational term devoted to music performance” (Keegan 2011, p.234), reminds us
that the value placed on the academic study of Irish traditional music is contested, and
lacking in widespread consensus. Similarly, Colin Hamilton²⁰ implies that
practitioners frequently adopt an anti-intellectual attitude towards Irish traditional
music when he suggests that “Irish traditional musicians do not, to any real extent,
institutionalise about the music they play, and in fact tend to be rather suspicious of
those who attempt to do this” (Hamilton cited in Sommers Smith 2001, p.122). What
could be perceived as a quasi-rebelliousness has historical precedent in Irish

²⁰ Colin (Hammy) Hamilton graduated with a PhD on the role of commercial recordings in Irish
traditional music, from the University of Limerick in 1996 (Vallely 2011, p.321). Like many research
informants who contributed to this research, Hamilton has academic and research experience and
qualifications, but he does not have any direct involvement with the Irish higher education sector.
Currently, there are no studies that explore the prevalence and significance of academic qualifications
in Irish traditional music studies among Irish traditional musicians. However, it is my view that the
proportion of Irish traditional musicians with masters, and doctoral degrees in Irish traditional music is
comparably higher than that of musicians in other folk and traditional music genres that I am aware of.
It is important to state here that there is a community of masters and PhD graduates in various streams
of Irish traditional music studies (with, in many cases, considerable publishing experience) who are not
employed in Irish higher education, and who do not contribute to third-level Irish traditional music
pedagogy and curriculum design.
education. Discussing the resistance of the native Irish to a previous British-modelled educational hegemony, McCarthy recounts the widespread opposition displayed to externally imposed educational values, contending that students do not “internalise the values of such an education if they conflict with home or community values” (McCarthy 1999, p.17). The aforementioned examples illustrate, or at least aid in contextualising how practitioners of Irish traditional music value (or perhaps do not value) intellectualisation, and the academic study of Irish traditional music. This is explored further in chapter five of this dissertation.

The theorisation and formalised analysis of Irish traditional music apropos to the formulation of academic discourses and theoretical frameworks has attracted some opposition among the Irish traditional music community. According to Corcoran, one source of such hostility towards theory lies in the history of the academic discipline of Folklore Studies, which “assumed the a priori existence of something called ‘folklore’ and then set out to document it” (Corcoran 2013, p.277). Critical of Irish Folklore Studies’ preoccupation with text rather than cultural context or the aesthetics of Irish traditional music, Corcoran condemns the authoritarian selectivity exercised by agents of Irish Folklore Studies who attempted to define the “undefinable”, and who ultimately decided what was considered worthy of documentation and preservation (ibid). This supposedly nebulous, indefinable quality of Irish traditional music presents Irish higher education with numerous challenges. Labhrás Ó Murchú, Director-General of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ, see footnote 18, p.34) argues that Irish traditional music is “an expression of the people and their environment”, and “not something doctrinaire or academic” (Ó Murchú 1987, p.7). In addition, he claims that “one cannot apply statistical criteria to something which is an element of the
These opinions highlight some of the challenges involved in adequately representing a musical culture such as Irish traditional music, in a higher education environment.

Resistance towards academic discourse and the theorisation of Irish traditional music is also articulated by students engaged in Irish higher education. Some of the music students that contributed to Doherty’s report on the training and transmission of traditional music in European higher education exhibited a lack of enthusiasm for academic engagement with traditional music. Speaking specifically about Irish traditional music in higher education, students engaged in “performance-oriented courses” found academic elements of such studies to be “distracting” and found the juxtaposition of practical and theoretical studies of Irish traditional music “very hard to mix” (Doherty 2002, p.13). Doherty concludes that, “it is important that the academic elements presented to students focusing on performance are relevant to the performance aspects of the course” (ibid).

Some texts present more favourable and optimistic views on both the potential and validity of including Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. Fintan Valley posits that “it seems perfectly logical that a traditional music appropriate to its base culture should be admitted as a valid, independent area of study at all levels in the education system” (Vallely 2002). Returning to the proceedings of Crosbhealach an Cheoil, Dillane (2013) suggests that we can learn a great deal about Irish traditional music-making (and consequently provide more creative tuition at third-level) by locating Irish traditional music studies within the discipline of ethnomusicology. As a result, traditional musicians with interests beyond performance exclusively are equipped with a methodological toolkit with which to analyse both the sounds and
discourses of Irish traditional music (Dillane 2013, p.190). Highlighting a reciprocal benefit to the discipline of ethnomusicology, Dillane believes that contextualising the academic study of Irish traditional music within ethnomusicology affords international music scholars working in the discipline opportunities to draw on the rich theoretical, practical, and performative aspects of the Irish tradition (ibid). In the same volume, Paul McGettrick argues that Irish traditional music studies provide musicians with valuable notation skills, opportunities for collaborating with musicians in other genres, as well as increased familiarity with music technology (McGettrick 2013, p.197). These examples clearly demonstrate obvious and significant benefits resulting from the inclusion of Irish traditional music in Irish third-level education. It also points to the many ways in which the relationship between Irish music studies and the discipline of ethnomusicology can be mutually enriching.

2.6 My Contribution to the Literature

The theoretical framework provided by literature that problematises mainstream music pedagogy in Western higher education offers a valuable lens to explore my specific case study of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. Three important themes are explored from the broadest pedagogical vantage point. Notwithstanding the significance of the scholarship outlined in this section, I wanted my research, although focused on Irish traditional music pedagogy, to address a number of more general and universal pedagogical principles and build upon pioneering studies on the institutionalising processes of third-level music education as outlined.
One of the primary lacunae in understanding the complex processes involved in institutionalising Irish traditional music in Irish higher education results from the lack of any previous extensive studies directly focused on critiquing tertiary-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland. This is the first study of its kind in Irish higher education. Many authors have contributed important ideas to the discourse regarding impacts of music institutionalisation in Ireland, but no large-scale study has looked closely at the internal dynamics of Ireland’s higher music education infrastructure, to chart its history, offer an overview of traditional programmes available, or to assess how such programmes are designed, and subsequently perceived among external community practitioners.

In addition, among the many studies referenced throughout this chapter, none has drawn on ethnographic fieldwork to the same extent, voicing the opinions of as many representative stakeholders as my study does. Many of the texts outlined in this chapter draw on insightful personal observations, current scholarship, and utilise fieldwork interviews to some degree, but this study is pioneering in how it draws on ethnographic interview materials from 110 research consultants, consisting of pedagogues from over fifteen institutions, as well as extra-academic practitioners and commentators based in Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Finland, and the United States. One of the guiding principles outlined by Robin D. Moore (2017) in his edited volume *College Music Curricula for a New Century*, was a commitment to community whereby music colleges aim to engage more with external communities in selecting curricular materials such as repertoire, and to involve community members in research projects etc. This research offers individuals operating both within, and external to higher
education, a pioneering platform to voice opinions on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education.

This research also has the potential to provide third-level pedagogues in Ireland and elsewhere with rich and diverse perspectives on third-level folk and traditional music pedagogy, offered by academic colleagues, practitioners, students, and commentators working in different but related contexts. A recent development in this regard is a conference that was held at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow from January 18th to 20th, 2018. Titled ‘Pedagogies, Practices and the Future of Folk Music in Higher Education, the conference was organised by the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in partnership with Celtic Connections Festival and Glasgow UNESCO City of Music, and it brought together a global network of pedagogues and researchers from the tertiary-level folk and traditional music education sector. The proceedings of this conference are expected to be compiled and published in 2019, and a follow up conference took place in Helsinki in November 2018, and was hosted by the Sibelius Academy. In less recent times, Doherty’s significant 2002 report has gone some way to addressing some perceptions expressed in her

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21 The conference, lasted three days, and each day addressed one of three overarching themes. Day one focused on ‘Tradition and Change’, and encouraged delegates to individually “offer examinations of the past two decades’ developments in folk and traditional music education at their national level, thereby allowing delegates to collectively build a mutually clear portrait of the changing nature of the scene at the international level” (Pedagogies, Practices and the Future of Folk Music in Higher Education Call for Papers 2017). Day two focused on the theme of ‘Learning and Teaching’, and the call for papers invited pedagogues to “exchange brief, descriptive case studies of their own institutions’ pedagogies and practices in service to their programmes’ stated learning outcomes” (ibid). Day three addressed ‘Assessment and Feedback’ invited delegates to take part in a structured but open forum environment discussing the latest theories and practices with regard to assessment’s dual role – measuring student achievement and supporting student learning – in higher education” (ibid). This author presented a paper entitled ‘How does Irish Higher Education Negotiate Tradition and Change in Traditional Arts Pedagogy?’ on day one of the conference. The follow up conference took place in the Kallio-Kuninkala centre, just outside Helsinki, from Wednesday 28th to Friday 30th of November 2018.
interviews with research informants, and she concludes her report with some valuable recommendations, but widespread qualitative community perceptions of tertiary-level folk and traditional music pedagogy remain undocumented. It is not assumed here that such perceptions will provide the higher education sector with answers, but I suggest that they will provide willing parties with interesting questions that may serve as a foundation for considering additional curricular possibilities.

Notwithstanding the geographical and cultural specificity of this research, I believe it provides insights into how to consider developing music curricula that negotiate and respond to (a) problematising canonicity and its potential pitfalls in higher music education; (b) balancing pedagogical methodologies and theory systems that are adequately relevant to the personal performance activities of students, while also transferrable and applicable to the wider musical world that they inhabit; and (c) reflecting the diverse communal epistemologies, expectations, and needs of external musical communities of practice. In the next chapter I outline the methodological approaches adopted for this research, introducing further considerations of relevant literature as it relates to how I positioned myself in this work. I also discuss how I went about identifying consultants as well as thematically organising the insights that they provided to this research.
Chapter 3: Negotiating the Field: Methodological Considerations for this Research

3.1 Developing a Research Methodology to Address my Research Questions

This chapter details the research methodologies drawn on in order to address the three research questions of this dissertation. To recap, these are:

1. How do pedagogues negotiate canonicity in third-level folk and/or traditional music pedagogy?

2. *Lingua Franca* or genre-specific pedagogy? How do folk and/or traditional music pedagogues drawn on, adapt or depart from Western classical music pedagogy when designing curricula?

3. How do pedagogues manage community needs and expectations in balancing tradition and innovation in third-level folk and/or traditional music pedagogy?

In this chapter, I also speak about my positionality in the research as a traditional musician who grew up in a musical community in a rural region in county Clare that is synonymous with Irish traditional music22, but I also address my academic journey as a music graduate, and a doctoral student in the Irish higher education system. The rationale for undertaking this doctoral research is explained and I outline the methodologies drawn from ethnomusicology that contribute to this work. Interviews,

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22 County Clare, on the west coast of Ireland, is described as a “Mecca in matters of taste and style”, and “definitive of modern-day traditional music” (Cranford 2011, p.132).
in particular, proved to be a critical source of data and I account for the decisions made in relation to selecting research informants for interview, how I read or coded those interviews, as well as my motivations for selecting specific higher education institutions for inclusion in this study. Although the research is concerned with a specific case study of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education, I hope that, as with the research findings themselves, the research methodologies employed will also be of use to those undertaking research in other traditional and vernacular music studies contexts where what people say is given close attention. Critically, the honouring of long-established Irish music studies models also forms part of my methodological approach.

Given that this research is located at a juncture of Irish traditional music studies and particular facets of ethnomusicology (including field interviews, narrative writing, and pedagogy), much of the scholarship and thematic concerns explored throughout this dissertation emanate from musicologically and ethnomusicologically informed studies on topics as diverse as the historical relationship between Irish traditional music and phenomena such as cultural nationalism, Western classical music, institutionalisation, and national educational policies. The discipline of ethnomusicology provides me with a range of disciplinary methodological tools with which to investigate the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. In conducting this research, I have drawn on familiar ethnographic methodologies such as fieldwork interviews, and participant observation. Crucially, this dissertation is not a fine-grained ethnography of specific institutions but rather a space in which to present histories, practices and discourses. I have also drawn on archival research where necessary in institutions such as the Irish Traditional Music
Archive, and the Irish Traditional Music Archive at the School of Music at University College Cork, when compiling information about institutional practices in Ireland, historically as well as currently.

To this end, I engaged in comparative studies to inform how I contextualise my specific case study of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education, and beyond, in terms of European vernacular music pedagogy. My aim has been to explore the degree to which what happens in Ireland shares similar questions and challenges as those encountered in my international case studies, which I list later. My hope is that this process of contextualising Irish music pedagogy in third level education within comparative perspectives will result in reciprocating contributions to the wider pedagogical conversations taking places in institutions outside Ireland.

Compositionally, this thesis is structured around a range of pertinent themes that have been identified by a combination of literature and fieldwork in the Irish traditional music community, in higher education communities in Ireland, and in selected European higher education institutions. Interviewee contributions are organised and presented thematically. A discussion section concludes chapters four through eight, which is intended to reflect on the issues raised in each individual chapter.

3.2 My Positionality as Researcher

For me, it has been important to consider my position and perspective as a researcher and active practitioner in the Irish traditional music community and the higher education community under study here. I grew up and became encultured in a traditional music community in west county Clare. I also consider myself to be part of
Ireland’s higher education system. I am mindful that the many positionalities that I negotiate are not easily partitioned as discrete vantage points but are components of the diverse identity that I have as a performer, researcher, teacher, and university graduate.

I approach this research as an ethnomusicologist, engaged in “ethnomusicology at home” (Stock 2008, p.209). This dissertation presents research on a music and musical community of which I am part. I have been a performer of Irish traditional music on concertina and piano for over twenty years, working as a professional musician for the majority of that time. I’m the artistic director of Raelach Records, a record label specialising in Irish traditional music and song. I founded and co-direct a music group called Ensemble Ériu, who were awarded the Gradam Comharcheol (musical collaboration award) by Ireland’s national Irish language broadcaster, TG4. As a performer, producer, composer, arranger, and sound engineer, I have contributed to over seventy commercially-released albums of Irish traditional music. My point here is not to highlight my achievements as a practitioner, but rather to attempt to demonstrate the many interwoven vantage points from which I interface with the world of Irish traditional music. This has been helpful to me as a researcher as on three separate occasions, interviewees with perspectives that I felt were very important to this research told me that they only agreed to contribute because they knew me as a

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23 TG4 (Teilifís na Gaeilge, channel 4) is Ireland’s national Irish-language broadcaster, originally established as Teilifís na Gaeilge (trans. television of Irish) in 1996. It has become more closely associated with Irish traditional music content than any other Irish television platform. The Gradam Comharcheol (trans. musical collaboration award), is an annual award presented by TG4 at a live awards ceremony, the TG4 Gradam Ceoil (trans. music awards). Established in 1998, the awards seek “to recognise, honour and thank all those who have played a prominent part in supporting, nurturing and strengthening Irish traditional music” (TG4 2018).
practitioner, and stated quite explicitly that they would have refused to contribute otherwise.

Throughout this work, I employ a mixture of research methodologies that focus on aspects of an ethnographic methodological framework, combining *emic* (insider) and *etic* (outsider) approaches to engagement and representation.24 Researching as an active participant in a familiar field (in both the University and the perceived ‘Commons’, or traditional music community) can prejudice objectivity (Koning 1980, Rice 1994, Ó Laoire 2003, Hill 2005, Keegan-Phipps 2008) but multiple positionalities (as researcher, musician and university teacher) are treated as advantageous to the present study. In his ethnographic work in east Clare, ethnomusicologist Jos Koning concluded that “fieldworkers should be aware of observational and analytical biases and lacunae that may result [from the fieldworker who actively participates in a musical culture]” (Koning 1980, p.428). *Bi-musicality*, Mantle Hood’s concept of engaging with a music and culture through performance as well as research (Hood 1960), is perhaps a commonplace methodology today, but even in 1980 Koning remarked on how musical performance was “emphasised in many ethnomusicological curricula as a most important research tool for fieldwork” (Koning 1980, p.417). My own positionality in this research is different to Koning’s as I was known as a musician by many of my research contributors before any interviews were undertaken. However,

24 Coined by linguist Kenneth Lee Pike, the “etic viewpoint studies behaviour as from outside of a particular system, and as an essential initial approach to an alien system. The emic viewpoint results from studying behaviour as from inside the system” (Pike 1967, p.37). Pike coined the words etic and emic from the words phonetic and phonemic. In the context of ethnomusicology, Nettl refers to the emic or insider perspective as “the perspective that the culture has of itself,” whereas the outsider or etic perspective is “an essentially comparative and universalist approach” (Nettl 2005, p.153).
like Koning, I did consider how my role in this research process may have influenced my encounters with research consultants, and how they in turn engaged with my research. In practical terms, I endeavoured to manage this potential influence by designing a series of open-ended questions, to encourage and invite personal opinion, uncoloured by any conversations that we may have had prior to our interview. I also encouraged my informants to treat me like Nettl’s “ethnomusicologist from Mars”, whether those informants were academics, practitioners, or people that I knew well (Nettl 1995, p.11). By this I mean I encouraged them to think of me as somebody who was new to the world of Irish traditional music. Throughout the process, I was keen to prevent informants from speaking implicitly, and in such circumstances, I asked consultants to expand on some points, always bearing in mind that this research might be read by individuals less familiar with Irish traditional music and the Irish traditional music community. I found that sometimes, asking the most obvious questions elicited the most interesting responses.

Acknowledging ethnomusicological discussions on the importance of ‘distanciation’, that is the manner in which an ‘insider’ researcher or fieldworker ‘steps back from’ their culture or cultural encounter in order to explain and critically understand it fully (Rice 1994), this research also recognises the importance of a hermeneutical arc (ibid) that positions a researcher at varying distances from the research field at different times. Such a perspective is exemplified by Nettl’s investigation of music schools in the mid-west of America from the vantage point of ethnomusicologist/teacher, native informant, and outsider, whereby three voices are combined in one author (Nettl 1995). I implemented a similar tri-partite approach whereby (a) I acknowledged that I had an intimate familiarity with Irish traditional
music as a practitioner by asking questions that were relevant (and hopefully engaging) to the informant; (b) I interrogated a variety of views expressed towards Irish traditional music pedagogy as somebody who has been involved in a higher education community; and (c), I asked informants to speak to me explicitly as somebody who may not be familiar with the implicit native epistemologies that foreground how informants negotiate the concept of institutionalising Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. I was keen that my combined perspectives could be utilised to draw on Rice’s hermeneutical arc, in order to observe my research and research consultants with a range of proximities, personae, and priorities in mind.

3.3 Methodologies

3.3.1 Participant Observation

Throughout this research, participants were observed as research consultants from the vantage point of objective scholar, musical colleague, and Nettl’s “ethnomusicologist from Mars” (Nettl 1995). ‘Complete participant observation’ as a university PhD student and an active traditional practitioner in the Irish traditional music scene, is merged with an ‘explicit awareness’ (Spradley 1980) of information and events that are often overlooked as superfluous, to fuse nuanced, insightful engagement as an active participant with rigorous and unbiased academic enquiry. In some cases, research informants were considered and selected according to experiences that I had shared with them as a musician prior to undertaking the present research. A similar process of participant observation allowed me to identify a number of prominent musicians who had expressed various opinions on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. In the absence
of such participant observation, I would have been concerned that this research may have been dominated by voices who have either published on this topic, or who hold tenured positions in Irish higher education.

3.3.2 Fieldwork

Drawing on fieldwork and other aspects of ethnography, a principal methodology of ethnomusicology, I have collected and problematised qualitative data from a wide range of consultants in the domain of Irish traditional music. I have collected and presented the voices and perspectives of a large sample of individuals from the Irish traditional music community, which is defined in the broadest sense, as those who engage with and have a vested interest in music practice and transmission (Glassie 1995). Using Nettl’s phraseology, I have engaged in both “doing ethnography” and “writing ethnography” (Nettl 2005, p.233), not in the fine-grained sense but rather, as Nettl describes, in “trying to get a picture, as much of a panoramic picture as you can, of the culture of the society in which you’re a guest” (Nettl 2005, p.232). “Writing ethnography”, according to Nettl involves documenting in ways that “do not violate the culture’s own perspective” but that still “communicate something meaningful to the society that is your audience” (Nettl 2005, p.232). To further nuance (and perhaps complicate) the field site that I have operated in throughout this research journey, there is a considerable degree of overlap, in practice, between the culture that I am studying, and my expected audience. I have also had to negotiate the concept of being the “guest” referred to by Nettl, more specifically in higher education institutions outside Ireland, and to a much lesser extent, in my own community.
When selecting research interviewees, I was mindful of the inherent complexities in compiling a representative sample of Irish traditional music stakeholders. Ultimately, interviewees were selected as a result of their professional connection to Irish higher education, and because of documented commentary that they may have contributed in public fora and publications. An outside observer may perceive a disproportionate emphasis on the Irish World Academy, where I am based as a doctoral student. In response, I contend that the high number of interviewees affiliated in various ways, to the Irish World Academy, reflect the fact that the Irish World Academy caters for the largest number of Irish traditional music students and programmes in the Irish higher education sector. This is also reflective of the considerably high number of Irish World Academy graduates who now work with Irish traditional music in a variety of professional contexts.

In total, I conducted 110 interviews with a range of stakeholders (see Appendix A for a list of interviewees) who are categorised in the following groups:

- Irish traditional music academics (also practitioners)
- Irish traditional music academics (non-practitioners)
- Music academics not involved in Irish traditional music pedagogy
- Non-music academics
- Practitioners external to higher education
- Non-academic practitioners providing music tuition in Irish higher education
- Traditional/folk music academics (also practitioners) teaching folk and traditional musics in Scotland, Sweden, and Finland
- Graduates and Students of Third-Level Irish Traditional Music Programmes
- Non-performers with various roles in institutions dealing with Irish traditional music
- Broadcasters
- Journalists
- Commentators and enthusiasts

I made such a range of stakeholder categorisations to acknowledge the diverse interactions and engagements that various individuals have with Irish traditional music. For example, not all individuals who have written on the topic of third-level Irish traditional music are employed in higher education, and I feel that it is imperative to include such voices in this discourse, rather than confine this to individuals who do work in the higher education sector. All interviews were categorised thematically according to subject matter. In terms of the excerpts from interviews presented throughout this study, they recursively create and relate to the specific themes that this research dissertation explores, and in all cases I have permission to reproduce them.

From a methodological perspective, I have also been very careful to allow the voices to speak for themselves as much as I can, without too much mediation and critical

25 Section 8.3 (In Focus: The Irish World Academy, University of Limerick) of chapter eight “Negotiating Tradition and Innovation in Third-level Irish Traditional Music Pedagogy” presents the contributions of a number of students of the Irish World Academy. In this section, I discuss how the Irish World Academy negotiates the pedagogical balancing act of simultaneously promoting tradition and innovation. Given the Irish World Academy’s prominence as the higher education institution with the highest number of students, staff, and academic programmes pertaining to Irish traditional music, I decided to devote some space to representing the voices of Academy students. Importantly, the contributions offered by Academy students are offered in the context of a brief case study on the Irish World Academy itself. Future research in this area would benefit from the inclusion of students’ perspectives from a wider range of third-level institutions in Ireland and elsewhere.
framing, though I am cognisant of the fact my choices are not neutral and can never be. That said, the quotes were chosen precisely because these were the issues that presented themselves as most pertinent to the stakeholders. My coding methodology draws on Thematic Analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2012). Specifically, I use a combination of “inductive” and “deductive” approaches to coding and analysis, which allows me to productively allow contributions speak for themselves, but I can also critically reflect on how these contributions relate to scholarship and commentary on the topic of institutionalising traditional and/or folk musics in higher education settings.26

3.3.3 Archival Research

A portion of this study involves a historical investigation of the narrative of Irish traditional music in third-level educational contexts. Such methods consist of archival research of primary and secondary source materials, and an analysis of current academic syllabi and module content featured in the curricula of current third-level studies in Irish traditional music. In particular, my historical overview of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education was significantly informed by archival research conducted at the archive at the music department of University College Cork. Thanks to the assistance and support of Mary Mitchell-Ingoldsby, part

26 For Braun and Clarke (2012), and inductive approach to Thematic Analysis is a “bottom-up approach and is driven by what is in the data” whereas a deductive approach is a “top-down approach where the researcher brings to the data a series of concepts, ideas, or topics that they use to code and interpret the data” (Braun and Clarke 2012, p.58). Importantly, in their view “in reality, coding and analysis often uses a combination of both approaches” as they feel it is “impossible to be purely inductive, as we always bring something to the data when we analyze it, and we rarely completely ignore the semantic content of the data when we code for a particular theoretical construct” (ibid).
of the archival research at the music department involved consulting the personal papers of Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin. These contained a small but important collection of documents relating to Ó Súilleabháin’s tenure as a lecturer at the music department from 1975 to 1994.

In addition, part of my overview of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education was completed with the assistance of material sourced during visits to the Irish Traditional Music Archive. In order to complete the contemporary conspectus of current undergraduate and graduate programmes offering studies in Irish traditional music in nine higher education institutes in the Republic of Ireland, I spent a considerable amount of time consulting promotional materials distributed by higher education institutes outlining details of their programmes. Such documentation includes syllabi, institutional leaflets, brochures, and department websites.

3.4 Third-level Irish Traditional Music Pedagogy: A Contemporary Conspectus

Throughout my conversations with academics and practitioners in Ireland, it became apparent to me that there was a lack of understanding generally, about the range of pedagogical approaches and perspectives being adopted by higher education institutes offering studies in Irish traditional music. Within the higher education sector, pedagogues at one institution did not know what their colleagues at another institution were doing. This disconnect was obviously magnified among practitioners with fewer (if any) professional connections to higher education. Consequently, I thought it beneficial to overview current pedagogical approaches to Irish traditional music across the sector. First, I confined my selection to higher education institutes in the Republic of Ireland in order to compare ‘like with like’. Notwithstanding the many differences
between institutions in the Republic of Ireland, I wanted to ensure that all institutions selected were operating within a common jurisdiction, under a common overarching system of governance, namely the Higher Education Authority in the Republic of Ireland. Next, I limited my focus to universities and institutes of technology, at the exclusion of institutions engaged in teacher training, such as Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, and the Dublin City University Institute of Education (formerly St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra), Dublin.27

I contacted personnel at seven universities and fourteen institutes of technology to confirm whether or not their institution offered studies in Irish traditional music. My final selection of institutions emerged following these conversations, and these institutions (four institutes of technology and five universities) are:

- The Cork Institute of Technology Cork School of Music
- The DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama
- Section of Music, School of Informatics and Creative Arts, Dundalk Institute of Technology
- The Department of Creative and Performing Arts, School of Humanities, Waterford Institute of Technology

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27 Teacher training colleges such as Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, and the former St. Patrick’s College, Drumcondra, Dublin (now part of Dublin City University’s Institute of Education) are referred to as Colleges of Education and are primarily concerned with training teachers who wish to pursue careers in primary level education. Time and resources dictated that I exclude such Colleges of Education as I felt the context within which any Irish traditional music studies are offered would be too dissimilar, and consequently incomparable to those offered by third-level music departments with differing learning outcomes and pedagogical priorities. A list of Irish Colleges of Education is available at: http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/Teacher-Education/Initial-Teacher-Education/Providers-of-Initial-Teacher-Education/
I arranged to visit each site and conduct interviews with at least one representative of each institution. In each case, I was provided with a tour of each music department, and informed of the various programmes that each music institution offered. These interviews took place from October 2013 to June 2015. The research visits did not allow for sustained thick ethnographic description, but this was not their purpose. Instead, these research visits were undertaken with a view to acquiring a broad overarching impression of how Irish traditional music is located with the music curricula and syllabi of each institution.

### 3.5 Comparative Studies

Throughout this research, I have also drawn on the pedagogical approaches and experiences of individuals working in three higher education institutes involved in teaching folk and traditional musics outside Ireland. The institutions I selected to include in this study are the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow (RCS), The Royal College of Music in Sweden (KMH), and Finland’s Sibelius Academy. I had particular motives for including the three institutions featured here. The RCS
provided a relatable, but sufficiently dissimilar musical context; the KMH interested me initially because of Sven Ahlbäck’s idiomatic genre-specific theory systems that I had heard so much of; and finally, I felt that the Sibelius Academy was worthy of further enquiry because I had learned much from the work of Juniper Hill, and I had so many other questions to ask. In the end, I was satisfied that I was exploring three very different reputable institutions that represented very different approaches to folk and/or traditional music pedagogy, operating in three very different contexts.

Each institution has also had differing historical relationships to the musical communities and scenes in operation outside the institutional environment; the Sibelius Academy re-invigorated an almost extinct folk tradition; the KMH, moving along that revivalist continuum, had a more vibrant living tradition (never quite extinct, but still in a somewhat precarious state) to draw on, while the RCS operates at the opposite end of the scale to the Sibelius Academy as a conservatoire that institutionalises a genre of music that is a vibrant living tradition, not dissimilar to the tradition of Irish traditional music.

My rationale for choosing to explore the institutionalisation of Scottish traditional music studies at the RCS as a comparative study centred upon the international reputation of the institution, but also upon its relative proximity to Ireland, and the relative commonalities (historical and performative) between Irish and Scottish traditional music. Perhaps paradoxically, I felt that there was also sufficient distance between the worlds of Irish and Scottish traditional music, and their respective pedagogical and professional scenes, to allow me explore a comparatively new and unfamiliar pedagogical context; I was hopeful that similarities could help me draw parallels, while differences could enable me to reflect back on the Irish context
through a different lens. I visited the RCS on February 18th and 19th, 2015. First, I met with Joshua Dickson, Head of Traditional Music at the RCS, and he began by providing me with a tour of the Scottish music wing of the conservatoire. Fortuitously, my visit coincided with a number of important faculty meetings and I was kindly afforded the opportunity to audit a faculty curriculum development meeting, and a focus group meeting with three professional Scottish musicians, fiddler Adam Sutherland, piper Calum MacCrimmon, and accordionist John Somerville. This meeting was convened by Joshua Dickson in order to discuss with all three, the educational and professional approaches to Scottish traditional music that they each valued, and to identify and act upon perceived shortfalls in wider Scottish folk music pedagogy. While at the RCS, I conducted extensive interviews with Dickson, and lecturer, Hamish Napier. I was also kindly permitted to conduct a focus group interview with four undergraduate students.\textsuperscript{28} From the perspectives that I gained as a visitor to the RCS, it became apparent to me that Dickson and his team placed a great degree of value on reflecting upon, and evaluating their own performance, and the Scottish music studies offered at the RCS.

My rationale for including the KMH in this chapter stemmed from my interest in Swedish fiddler and pedagogue, Sven Ahlbäck. At an early stage in this research I learned of Ahlbäck’s efforts to both integrate Swedish folk music into a formal conservatory environment, and develop an idiomatic genre-specific music theory and notation system to adequately represent the nuances of Swedish folk music, as

\textsuperscript{28} The focus group conversation was invaluable for getting a sense of the environment that the students were working in, which helped with preparations for my second interview with Dickson on the following day.
Western classical music theory and notational systems were perceived to be inadequate. I was also attracted to the idea of including the KMH in this study because, again, it did extract me somewhat from the more familiar world of Irish traditional music. I was keen to explore another genre of folk music that was perhaps different to both the Irish and Scottish contexts. While the extra-institutional Scottish traditional music scene is quite vibrant, I wanted to transverse along a continuum to a scenario where perhaps a folk music scene depended more on the activities of an educational institution; as explained by Susanne Rosenberg, the Swedish context is somewhere between the Irish and the Finnish, as the Royal College of Music did not need to revive Swedish folk music to the same extent as the Sibelius Academy’s Folk Music Department in Helsinki did with Finnish folk music.\(^\text{29}\) I made a research trip to the KMH between the 6\textsuperscript{th} and 8\textsuperscript{th} of May, 2015, and during my stay, I interviewed Sven Ahlbäck (a Professor of Swedish folk music at the folk music department), Head of Department Susanne Rosenberg, and violin lecturer at the department, Ellika Frisell. Thankfully, my research visit to Stockholm also coincided with LÅT!, an annual three-day festival of folk music organised and performed by students and staff of the College of Music’s Folk Music Department. Attending this event heightened my awareness of the sounds, artistic objectives, and energy being produced by the folk music department at the KMH. I was given a comprehensive tour of the Folk Music Department building and facilities. It was clear from speaking to staff members that the establishment of Swedish folk music studies within the conservatory environment

\(^{29}\) My view on the revival of Swedish folk music, confirmed by Susanne Rosenberg (Personal Interview Rosenberg May 2015), was that Swedish folk music was in serious decline before its revival, but that it did not decline to the extent as Finnish folk music did. Therefore, the Royal College of Music did not revive Swedish folk music from a point of extinction.
was a relatively slow process but that the emphasis placed on negotiating tradition and archival materials, for example, was an aid to reconceptualise Swedish folk music performance in ways that had rarely been explored previously.

Although the Folk Music Department at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki was the last of the three institutions that I visited, it was the first institution that I confirmed for inclusion in this chapter. Thanks to the work of Juniper Hill, the Folk Music Department at the Sibelius Academy has been the focus of considerable academic attention and therefore I felt that I had already gained a certain familiarity with the institution. However, owing to the differences in scope and objectives between my work and Hill’s, I decided that some questions remained unanswered and that a research visit to an institution that I already felt that I knew would be invaluable. It would allow me to locate the work of the Sibelius Academy within the world of folk music pedagogy that I was exploring.\(^3\) Recalling the continuum referenced earlier in relation to the RCS, I felt that the Sibelius Academy occupied a space whereby the institutionalisation of folk music pedagogy in a university environment had a profound impact on a folk music scene. Therefore, an exploration of this institution was expected to provide different insights than those achieved through visiting my other two research sites. I visited the Sibelius Academy between March 8\(^{th}\) and 10\(^{th}\) 2016. During my stay, I was given a comprehensive tour of the Folk Music Department

\(^3\) I was especially keen to incorporate more extra-academic voices in my research than Hill did. I was also interested in further exploring the cultural differences between the historical continuity of Finnish folk music and Irish traditional music. I was aware from multiple conversations with pedagogues at the Sibelius Academy, and from the work of Juniper Hill, that the Sibelius Academy in many ways revived the Finnish folk music tradition, a narrative very different to that of Irish traditional music in Ireland, whereby Irish traditional music never suffered extinction (Hill 2005, Personal Interview Ilmonen March 2016).
by Professor of Folk Music, Kristiina Ilmonen, whom I interviewed at length. I also interviewed Vilma Timonen, a lecturer at the Folk Music Department. My impression of the Folk Music Department’s ethos towards folk music pedagogy was that it placed significant emphasis on creativity and artistic expression. Ilmonen’s goal is to encourage her students to negotiate tradition as artists, with a view to becoming “historically informed creative musicians” (Personal Interview Ilmonen March 2016).

In selecting three educational institutions as field sites to conduct research visits, I have naturally, by default, chosen not to explore other institutions. I have outlined my rationale for undertaking such decisions, and I look forward to taking the opportunity to broaden this geographical focus in future work to include the “surprising amount” of folk, traditional, and vernacular music pedagogy happening in third-level education in the United States (DeWitt 2017, p.96). I would also welcome the opportunity to explore the institutionalising processes at play in third-level traditional, folk, and vernacular musics in the non-Western world, in Asia, and Africa, for example. In addition to enriching my own interests and understanding of higher education institutionalisation, I would be particularly keen to examine the thematic convergences and divergences of non-Western educational contexts, and the research presented in this dissertation. For now, however, the focus is on this particular European context, providing ample materials for broad as well as deep comparisons.

3.6 The Interview Process

In each interview, I made an audio recording of discussions with research informants, and in all cases, I provided all contributors with a printed document outlining details of my research, which they read prior to the commencement of the interview. This
document is included in appendix B. I also requested that each informant read and sign an accompanying consent form confirming that informants agreed to have their contributions published as part of this dissertation, as per University of Limerick requirements regarding ethical research. Generally, informants were contacted by email, and in some cases, by telephone. Occasionally, interviews were arranged following face-to-face meetings. Once all 110 interviews were completed, a list of prominent common themes were identified and documented. Similar to the approaches taken by Kaul and Cotter in county Clare, and Sillitoe in New Guinea (Kaul 2009, Cotter 2013, and Sillitoe 2003), I was keen to allow a theoretical framework emerge from the contributions of my interviewees. This was especially useful as it eschewed any leading or ideologically loaded questions that may have been shaped by predetermined thematic concerns. This approach was also suited to allowing the diverse voices of my consultants be heard and expressed in this research.

3.6.1 Negotiating Informant Opinions

Each ethnographic excerpt presented throughout this dissertation has been volunteered by research consultants, as personal opinion, disclosed in response to a number of open-ended questions put to them. However, it is important to note that each participant was selected because of a demonstrated expertise and range of experiences as a prominent stakeholder in the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. For readers unfamiliar with Irish traditional music and its communities of practice, who may have a pedagogical interest in how Irish higher education negotiates traditional music pedagogy, it is conceivable that the voices, especially those of non-institutional practitioners presented throughout this
dissertation may seem a little lacking in context. As a practitioner, insider, and native researcher, I must stress that the individuals who contributed to this research, regardless of the taxonomy I have created for them as outlined above, have in common a significant degree of experiences and insights into the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education, albeit from a diverse range of perspectives and priorities. Appendix A provides some background information on each contributor.

Inherited cultural narratives on Irish traditional music in Ireland have been informed by a wide gamut of socio-cultural phenomena (White 1998, McCarthy 1999, O'Shea 2008, Vallely 2011). Authenticity, for example, is a prominent theme in traditional and folk music discourses. As Kaul states, authenticity is often evoked politically to advance particular ideologies; “[t]he notion of authenticity disguises a tangled discourse rife with personal agendas and political overtones. It does not mean one thing, although it is often presented as though it does” (Kaul 2009, p.158). Likewise, Gable and Handler suggest that “every claim to possess or represent the “real” at least implies a claim to possess or represent the knowledge and authority to decide what’s real and what isn’t” (Gable and Handler 1996, p.572).

Irish traditional music discourse, like that of any other human activity, perennially negotiates issues like authenticity. The musician and collector Breandán Breathnach referred to his interpretation of authentic Irish traditional music as the ‘real thing’, a phrase that is widely referenced by traditional musicians in my personal experience. Whether used in jest or as a marker of individual or regional identity, in many cases, it is a phrase that distances one type of music from more experimental
Irish traditional music. My point here is to both bring attention to my awareness of, and sensitivity to, the mutability and visceral nature of perceptions and belief, and to give due recognition to the significance of providing a platform for a range of stakeholders. This is the first time some people have had the opportunity to voice important opinions on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. The methodologies presented in this chapter were designed to navigate this doctoral research project with rigour and care. They are mixed and developed with a combination of sensitivity and academic objectivity, in order to explore what is a complex cultural phenomenon. I return to these voices in chapter five, but next I present a historical and contemporary overview of the narrative of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. This aims to understand the significant developments that have taken place in the history of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, and that have informed contemporary higher education practices.

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31 Breandán Breathnach (1912-1985) was a musician, author, lecturer, and collector of Irish traditional music and song. He has been described as “the single most important activist in Irish traditional music in the twentieth century” (Moylan 2011, p.83). He was a primary founder of Na Píobairí Uilleann (see footnote 19, p.46) in 1968, and a respected lecturer on Irish traditional music at Trinity College, Dublin. In 1971, he was one of the founders of the Folk Music Society of Ireland, and co-editor with Hugh Shields, of the society’s Éigse Cheol Tíre: Irish Folk Music Studies. Breathnach was director of the folk music section of the Folklore Department at University College Dublin from 1974. He edited and published the journal Ceol, and thanks in part to the publication of his Folk Music and Dances of Ireland (1971), Dancing in Ireland (1983), Ceol Rince na hÉireann (published posthumously in 1989), and his five Ceol Rince na hÉireann tune collections (published from 1963 to 1999), Breathnach was widely regarded as a distinguished authority on Irish traditional music, song, and dance. For more on Breathnach, see chapter five of this dissertation.
Chapter 4: Irish Traditional Music in Irish Higher Education:
A Historical and Contemporary Overview

Irish traditional music has been present in Irish higher education for quite some time, dating back to its inclusion in music curricula at University College Cork as early as 1922. However, early incarnations of Irish traditional music in Irish universities were very different to what we now witness in the Irish higher education landscape. To better understand the contextualisation or re-contextualisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, it is important to provide some historical grounding in the subject, with a view to sketching out a timeline of significant events, key personnel, challenges faced, and the achievements that have contributed to how Irish traditional music is located in Irish higher education today. Although I confine this overview of higher education institutions to the Republic of Ireland, it is important to note the work being carried out in third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in institutions such as Queen’s University, Belfast, and Ulster University, as well as the work of academics and researchers who integrate Irish traditional music in higher education programmes in the United States.32

The first half of this chapter focuses specifically on a historical contextualisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. Therein, owing to the prominence of the music department at University College Cork (UCC), in this narrative, a sizeable portion of discussion is dedicated to how that particular

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32 For further reading on the development of third-level Irish traditional music programmes in the United States see Harte (2015).
institution historically negotiated Irish traditional music pedagogy. In this section, I also provide a historical overview of the Irish World Academy, given its current prominence as an institution that specialises in third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy. Both institutions are also featured in the subsequent conspectus of nine higher education institutes that I discuss next, although their presence in my conspectus focuses on a contemporary overview of their Irish traditional music pedagogy rather than the historical details and trajectories provided here.

In the second half of this chapter, I provide a contemporary overview of the Irish traditional music studies offered in nine selected higher education institutions in the Republic of Ireland, namely: The Cork Institute of Technology Cork School of Music; The DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama; Section of Music, School of Informatics and Creative Arts, Dundalk Institute of Technology; the Music Department at Maynooth University; The Centre for Irish Studies, and the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance at the National University of Ireland Galway; The School of Music and Theatre, University College Cork; University College Dublin School of Music; The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick; and The Department of Creative and Performing Arts, School of Humanities, Waterford Institute of Technology. A map detailing the locations of each of these institutions is presented on page 100. My overarching aim here is not to provide an exhaustive history of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education but rather to shed light on some of the important historical moments in the narrative of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish academic institutions. A comprehensive account and analysis of this history extends beyond the scope of the present research.
4.1 A Historical Overview of Irish Traditional Music in Irish Higher Education

The first music programmes offering Irish traditional music studies in Irish universities occupied a very different position in Irish higher education than they do today. Before looking specifically at Irish traditional music studies, it is first useful to look at the establishment of degrees in music in Ireland, more generally. The University of Dublin (modelled on Cambridge and Oxford universities) had a Chair of Music from as early as 1764, and while music degrees were awarded, no teaching took place until much later, when in 1951, music became an Arts subject (in Trinity College, Dublin) (Fleischmann 1987, p.1). Although music was included in the curriculum of the Royal University of Ireland that had emerged from the Queen’s Colleges in 1800, there was a focus on examination rather than teaching (ibid). Queen’s College Belfast introduced a part-time lectureship in music in 1902, and in 1903, St John Lacy was appointed to an inaugural lectureship in music at Queen’s College Cork (Murphy 1995, p.174), named University College Cork from 1908. This lectureship was instigated by Sir Bertram Windle, UCC president from 1904 to 1919, most likely due to the influence of his wife Madoline Hudson, who wished to avail of singing instruction from Lacy (ibid). John A. Murphy hints at the convenience of the arrangement when he describes Lacy’s role as “a virtual sinecure”, with few, if any music students (ibid). In the intervening years, music studies have developed in almost all higher education institutes in the Republic of Ireland, and I chart some of this history in the earlier part of this chapter.

Irish traditional music had a fragmented existence in early higher education in Ireland, largely dependent on local, individualist leanings, rather than on any national policy or consensus. In 1904, the City of Dublin Technical Education Committee assumed responsibility for the Dublin Municipal School of Music (founded in 1890
under the aegis of the Royal Irish Academy of Music\textsuperscript{33}, and renamed Dublin College of Music in 1962), and studies in Irish traditional music, including tuition in uilleann pipes and Irish war pipes were introduced into its curriculum (McCarthy 1999, p.77). Renowned uilleann piper and pipe-maker, Leo Rowsome, taught uilleann pipes at the Dublin Municipal School (Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) since 1978 (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama 2018)), starting at the age of seventeen, from 1920 to 1970.\textsuperscript{34} The Dublin Municipal School of Music may not have contextualised Irish traditional music studies as an academic subject in the manner observed today, but the school has considerable significance as an early provider of performance classes that included uilleann pipes and Irish war pipes. The legacy of this Rowsome connection remains relevant today as DIT awards the Leo Rowsome medal to the student who achieves the highest mark in the Bachelor of Music in its Irish Traditional Music stream (Personal Interview Doris October 2014). Like DIT, University College Cork has a close association with the integration of Irish traditional music pedagogy in third-level music curricula. Considering the significance of the music department at UCC as a principal party in this history, I turn my attention next to the historical developments that have shaped Irish traditional music pedagogy at that department for close to 100 years.

\textsuperscript{33} The Royal Irish Academy of Music is a national classical music academy situated in Dublin. Established in 1848, it describes itself as “Ireland’s oldest musical institution” (Royal Irish Academy of Music 2018).

\textsuperscript{34} Leo Rowsome (1903-70) was a third-generation uilleann piper who was the first president of the Dublin Pipers’ Club, and a renowned pipe-maker, repairer, and tutor. For more, see Vallely (2011, p.583)
4.2 A History and Overview of Irish Traditional Music Pedagogy at University College Cork (UCC)

UCC, and Cork in general, has played a vital, if not the most prominent role in the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. The Cork Municipal School of Music was the first Municipal School of Music, founded in 1878, in what was then the United Kingdom (CIT Cork School of Music 2018). In 1918, Carl Hardebeck (1869-1945), a blind organist, arranger, and publisher from Belfast was appointed as headmaster of the Cork Municipal School of Music (Vallely 2011, p.324), and he subsequently became the inaugural Chair in Music in 1922. The establishment of a lectureship in music at University College Cork can be traced back to 1903 when Cork native Frederick St John Lacy was appointed as UCC’s inaugural lecturer in music. However it was not until 1922 and the formation of the Cork Corporation Chair of Music that Irish music carved out some sort of existence at the institution. Hardebeck was the Cork Corporation’s preferred candidate from the outset, and occupied the Chair of Music until 1924, when the position was relegated to a lectureship, and held by Annie Patterson, until her death in 1934.

Sean Neeson, a

35 University College Cork, situated in Cork city, the second largest city in the Republic of Ireland, was originally established as Queen’s College Cork (QCC) in 1845, and formally opened in 1849. In 1908, the Irish Universities Act abolished the preceding Royal University system (establishing a National University of Ireland system) and QCC became University College Cork (University College Cork 2018). UCC currently has a student population of over 21,000 (University College Cork 2018).

36 However, Vallely (2011, p.324) states 1918 as the date for Hardebeck’s commencement as Chair of Music at UCC.

37 For an insightful history of the music department at University College, as well as a brief historical overview of some significant early developments in Irish music departments see Aloys Fleischmann’s unpublished “The Music Department of University College Cork (Fleischmann 1987).

38 The appointment of Hardebeck in 1922 was far from unanimous. Patterson was perceived by Professor Alfred O’Rahilly, the Arts Faculty, and the Academic Council, as being more qualified for the Cork Corporation Chair of Music than Hardebeck, but nevertheless Hardebeck was appointed by the Governing Body of UCC (Fleischmann 1987, p.3). Interestingly, Patterson, “on being awarded the degree of Mus. D. of the Royal University of Ireland in 1889 became the first woman in the world to obtain an
singer and former Director of the Cork Broadcasting Station succeeded Patterson until his retirement in 1963, which also marked the end of the Cork Corporation lectureship.

In 1963, the position vacated by Neeson was filled by the influential composer Seán Ó Riada (1931-71) until his untimely death in 1971. Musician and writer Tomás Ó Canainn, a lecturer in the Department of Electrical Engineering in UCC, took responsibility for Irish music studies following Ó Riada’s death, until in 1975, UCC music graduate, musician, and composer, Micheál Ó Súilleabháin eventually filled the post that had been vacated by Ó Riada. Ó Súilleabháin occupied this post until 1994, when he accepted the role of inaugural Chair of Music at the University of Limerick where he founded the Irish World Music Centre, which became the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance. Following Ó Súilleabháin’s departure in 1994, Mel Mercier was appointed Lecturer in Music.

Other music lecturers at UCC with particular specialisations in Irish traditional music have included Aileen Dillane (now at the Irish World Academy, UL), Liz Doherty (now at Ulster University), Méabh Ní Fhuartháin (now at the Centre for Irish Studies at NUI Galway), Mary Mitchell-Ingoldsby, Matt Cranitch, and Aoife Granville (see Appendix A). In 2010, Mel Mercier became the inaugural Head of University College Cork’s newly formed School of Music and Theatre, but in 2016 Mercier left UCC to

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official as opposed to an honorary doctorate in music (Princess, later Queen Alexandra, was awarded an honorary doctorate in Music by the Royal University in 1885)” (Fleischmann 1987, p.2).

39 Seán Ó Riada (1931-71) was an influential Irish composer, musician, and academic. He began studying music with Professor Aloys Fleischmann at University College Cork in 1948. He became assistant director of music in Radio Éireann (Ireland’s national radio service) in 1953, and he also worked as music director of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Although a noted composer, Ó Riada is possibly best known for establishing Ceoltóirí Chualann in 1961, an ensemble that pioneered arrangements of Irish traditional music that eschewed the unison melody playing of céilí bands. Some of these members went on to form The Chieftains in 1963. Ó Riada also wrote and presented the influential 14-part radio series Our Musical Heritage, in 1962. See chapter five for more in this radio series.
become the inaugural Chair of Performing Arts at the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick. In 2017, Tríona Ní Shíocháin, a former lecturer in Irish at the University of Limerick, was appointed Lecturer in Music at UCC, specialising in Irish traditional music. She, along with Mary Mitchell-Ingoldsby (uilleann pipes, and whistle tutor, and UCC Irish traditional music archive director), is responsible for Irish traditional music studies. Among the traditional performance tutors at UCC are Connie O’Connell (fiddle tutor), Bobby Gardiner (accordion tutor), Conal Ó Gráda (flute tutor), and Colm Murphy (bodhrán tutor), all of whom are well-known musicians and recording artists in Irish traditional music circles. The music department at UCC also has an annual Traditional Artist in Residence programme that is offered in conjunction with the Arts Council. At the time of completion of this dissertation, I occupied the position of UCC Traditional Artist in Residence.

4.2.1 Founding ‘Fathers’: Aloys Fleischmann, Seán Ó Riada, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin

In providing a brief overview of the following agents in the institutionalisation of Irish music in Ireland, I wish to suggest that particular approaches were intrinsically tied to the values of these agents who profoundly shaped those that followed. Professor of Music at UCC from 1934 to 1980, Aloys Fleischmann (1910-92), was a UCC graduate who was born in Munich in 1910, but raised in Cork. Despite his lack of specialisation in Irish traditional music, Fleischmann supported the concept of locating Irish traditional music studies in UCC’s music department. The late Tomás Ó Canainn recalled the professor’s willingness to incorporate aspects of Irish traditional music in the curriculum:
“Aloys was good. He always had a good view of things. And even things that he would acknowledge that he wasn’t into himself, he was able to stand near them and appreciate them, and see a place for them, and make a place for them in certain circumstances. He was good from that point of view” (Personal Interview Ó Canainn February 2013).

Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin also remembers Fleischmann fondly as a student, and subsequently as a colleague at the UCC music department.

“I had a great admiration for Fleischmann. I loved his German-ness in a way, and German efficiency. Jesus was he efficient? He was always on time. You always got your exercises back in time. There was never a slip. If he had a flu he would still work through it, one of those kinds of people. Highly active, and a very ethical man” (Personal Interview Ó Súilleabháin March 2014).

An influential educator, Fleischmann was more than sympathetic to Irish traditional music. His Sources of Irish Traditional Music, published posthumously in 1998 (Fleischmann et al 1998), was a hugely significant project that sought to catalogue “every traditional tune recorded in Irish manuscript and printed collections” (Vallely 2011, p.270). Fleischmann was also undoubtedly a considerable influence on the composer and musician, Seán Ó Riada, whom I discuss in more detail next.

The name Seán Ó Riada (1931-71) is synonymous with the music department at University College Cork to this day. The department’s main performance space is named the Ó Riada Hall, and each year the music department awards the Seán Ó Riada Memorial Prize to the BMus (Bachelor of Music) traditional music student who attains the highest mark in final year. During Seán Ó Riada’s tenure at UCC, he had been widely respected nationally as a musician and composer. He had previously occupied the role of assistant director of music in Radio Éireann, and as musical director of the Abbey Theatre. Ó Riada came to national prominence as a composer following
his work on George Morrisson’s film, *Mise Éire*, in 1959. Ó Súilleabháin recalls memories of Seán Ó Riada and observes some differences between him and Fleischmann:

“[Ó Riada] had already become famous at that stage of course, and was emerging in the public consciousness as Ireland’s national composer, which of course Ireland had never had up to then and many people would say now that we haven’t had yet. Largely because of *Mise Éire*...He didn’t always turn up for his classes. Sometimes we would be sitting there and it would be 20, 25 minutes past the hour, and the secretary would come in and say ‘Mr. Ó Riada has called and unfortunately his car has broken down and he won’t be able to make the lecture today’...when he did appear, he was largely unprepared but still of course had the gift of the gab, and was a great speaker. He never had a problem finding a word, as they say, but you could see that you weren’t in the hands of someone who had planned his lesson. He was relying a lot on notes that I’d say he put together for the Our Musical Heritage series. That was the first time I remember hearing things about various ways his mind had systemised the music, thereby making it easier to talk about” (Personal Interview Ó Súilleabháin March 2014).

Ó Súilleabháin’s recollections uncover what must have been an exciting time at UCC, under the tutelage of a well-known figure such as Ó Riada who brought a new cultural capital to Irish traditional music, as well as a vocabulary and analytical frame within which to contextualise the genre within the walls of an established music department. The music department at UCC is intrinsically linked to the story of the development of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education and UCC is still considered a key stakeholder in the provision of Irish traditional music education at third-level. Although the institution has been closely associated with Irish traditional music studies and seminal figures such as Seán Ó Riada, traditional musicians were once ineligible to audition for the BMus programme unless they performed Western classical music on an appropriate instrument associated with the Western classical tradition. It was not until Micheál Ó Súilleabháin’s tenure at UCC
that traditional music, song, and dance became accepted as performance options, firstly for students who had gained access to music at UCC through classical music performance, and subsequently, for students whose primary or only performance medium was Irish traditional music, song, or dance.

Although the practice of employing expert traditional musicians as performance teachers is widespread in contemporary Irish higher education, the genesis of this pursuit in UCC in the late 1970s was met with resistance by the university’s academic community. Finding precedent in the employment of native speakers of French and Italian by the French and Italian language departments in UCC, Ó Súilleabháin insisted that music practitioners from the Irish traditional music community be employed by the music department on a similar basis. Ó Súilleabháin recalls the challenge that he faced in employing practitioners as teachers:

“Very quickly I had an instinctual belief that everybody should also perform so I started the process of hiring in traditional musicians to do part-time classes. Now that was opposed because the musicians I was going to didn’t have degrees in anything not to mention music, but I found a precedent that I was able to use in the language departments. For example, the French department were employing French natives who were living in Cork at the time, that didn’t have degrees necessarily in teaching French as a foreign language. They were there because they had natural French. The Irish department wouldn’t have been averse to having a Gaeltacht person walk in. In actual fact they were giving scholarships to students to go back and spend two weeks in the Gaeltacht but what degrees did the lads in the Gaeltacht have, and yet they were learning? A Gaeltacht person with Irish, a French native with French equals a trad musician with trad. It’s an instinctive inherited tradition. That won and the process started. The first person I brought in was Micheál Ó Riabhaigh and he taught whistle. Then after that Bobby Gardiner, and then after that Connie O’Connell, who is still teaching. And then basically, a traditional music school built up inside the music department, and that’s still there to this day” (Personal Interview Ó Súilleabháin March 2014).

40 The Gaeltacht refers to a region in Ireland where the Irish language is spoken as a first language.
Mel Mercier, current Chair of Performing Arts at the Irish World Academy, University of Limerick (a UCC music graduate, and senior music lecturer at University College Cork when interviewed for this research) recalls a period when Irish traditional music was not deemed eligible for examination at University College Cork, and he reflects on the importance of recognising Irish traditional music as a valid artistic expression.

“In hindsight, I also recognise the significance for students who were bi-musical before they came here, who were playing classical musical and who were also traditional musicians. And at that time many of them were playing classical music and traditional music. But before that time they had to leave the traditional music outside and maybe deny a part of their musical identity, or at the very least not have it fully seen and nurtured. To create an environment where any individual can come in and have the many parts of their musical identity seen and embraced and nurtured and cultivated is a very profound thing. It’s very, very significant” (Personal Interview Mercier October 2014).

Similarly, musician and lecturer, Geraldine Cotter (see Appendix A) reflects on her eligibility to study a BMus at University College Cork in 1975, based exclusively on her identity as a classical musician, notwithstanding her background as a traditional musician.

“I wanted to go and do a BMus and because I was also interested in traditional music, UCC really was the only place that I could have done it because it was the only place where there was any emphasis put on traditional music as I understood it. I suppose as well because Seán Ó Riada had been involved, I was probably drawn there anyway. I went there because of traditional music but I couldn’t have got in as a traditional musician. I got in the same way as everyone else did. I had a strong classical background” (Personal Interview Cotter March 2016).

Mary Mitchell-Ingoldsby, a musician and a current lecturer, and archivist at the music department at UCC also perceived an emphasis on Western classical music as a student at UCC. Furthermore, she encountered a pejorative attitude towards Irish
traditional music although she remembers such attitudes being prevalent among students rather than staff when she was a student at UCC from 1977 to 1980.

“There would have been attitudes [about Irish traditional music] more from the students than the staff. The staff taught what the staff taught, and you went along with it. It was the attitude of the students. Some [students] would have come from the environments where they would have looked down on Irish music. I suppose it comes from a lack of confidence that some people were experiencing in Ireland at the time. You know, you had to play piano. You had to play proper music. They would have looked down on traditional music, and perceived it to be the music of the past, the peasants, the poor. We fought that battle for a long, long time...I remember then the whole rise, and the whole Celtic Tiger\(^4\) in the early ‘90s, and Micheál Ó Súilleabháin was kind of Mr. Famous, and oh God, Irish music, there must to be something to it after all, you know? Like a rising tide, as Micheál always said, lifts all boats” (Personal Interview Mitchell-Ingoldsby October 2014).

Mitchell-Ingoldsby’s commentary on the gradually improving status of Irish traditional music due in part to the national reputation of figures such as Micheál Ó Súilleabháin cannot be underestimated. Ó Súilleabháin, as a classical and traditional musician, consequently sought to deconstruct genre boundaries at UCC. He hoped to facilitate a structure whereby traditional musicians would finally be eligible to study music through the medium of their primary performance practice, and he eventually succeeded in doing so, with the caveat of prospective students also needing to be literate in music. Ó Súilleabháin recalls the challenges that he faced at the time:

“There are always imbalances in society, in various kinds. I found myself concerned about cultural imbalances. I was a pop musician. I was a trad musician. I was a classical musician. So I could see from the inside the validity of all of these expressions. That was no big eye-opener to me. I knew it somatically. So I was on the lookout for musicology or any form of research that would resonate with what I perceived to be a

\(^4\) The ‘Celtic Tiger’ is a term used to refer to “the Irish economy (also Ireland itself), during a period of rapid growth in the 1990s and early 2000s” (Oxford English Dictionary Online 2018).
certain kind of cultural truth….and I became aware very quickly that there were a lot of
great trad musicians on the campus. They were doing nuclear physics, engineering,
medicine. I had a think about it and the penny dropped one day. I said the only
department they can’t get into is the music department. And I was thinking that was
kind of strange. If you are really good at science, you’ll get into medicine. Wouldn’t
you think that if you were really good at music, you would get into music? It was such a
simple thing. There was no committee keeping people out, you know. And yet this is
where Fleischmann thought folk music was wonderful and Ó Riada had been in there
so if there was a department where something should happen, it should be that
department. Maybe that’s partly why it did happen of course. It just happened to
happen slightly later. So I managed to introduce traditional music” (Personal Interview
Ó Súilleabháin March 2014).

Musician Connie O’Connell, from west Cork was one of the first traditional musicians
to be employed by Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin. He recalls his initial experiences as a fiddle
teacher at UCC’s music department in the early 1980s:

“Nobody associated universities with traditional music at all. I didn’t know it at the
time but I think [Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin] was under pressure from the hierarchy of
the college not to do this, not to go down that line at all. This was his brainchild
really…it was very strange to be honest. Mícheál rang me out of the blue. I don’t think I
had ever spoken to the man before in my life but he rang me and he asked me would I
come into the college just to do one day of teaching. I told him no. This was going back
to 1983 or ’84 maybe. He said “come in for one hour some day and see what you think
of it, just a once off”. I said okay. I went in and I did it for the day. I had about 10 or 12
in there in the class. I just taught them a tune and spoke about my own music and that
sort of that thing. So that was that day. Before I left that day he said: “listen will you
come up another day”? So it went from there, to the next day, to next day. And that’s
history. I’m there since” (Personal Interview O’Connell April 2017).

The Music Department at UCC is undoubtedly significant in the timeline of Irish
traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education due to its long history of
engaging with Irish traditional music and this has many implications for the
institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in higher education today as
well as for extra-institutional and extra-academic practices. Many of the Irish
traditional music academics working in Irish higher education at present are graduates of UCC’s music department. This level of interconnectivity between UCC and other music departments such as the Irish World Academy is evidenced by the fact that current Academy staff such as Chair of Performing Arts, Mel Mercier, Academy director, Sandra Joyce, Academy associate director, Niall Keegan and lecturer Aileen Dillane are graduates of University College Cork’s music department. Of particular interest is the transition of Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, a UCC music graduate also, from a lecturer at UCC from 1975, to his relocation as the inaugural Chair of Music at the University of Limerick in 1994. It is this institution that I discuss next.

4.3 A Brief History of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick

The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance (or Dámh Chruinne Éireann Rince agus Ceol in the Irish language) was originally established by Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin as the Irish World Music Centre in 1994. An initiative of Ed Walsh, founding president of the University of Limerick (president from 1970 to 1998), the establishment of the Irish World Music Centre was considered as essential to developing a “centre dedicated to the study and performance of Irish music in the context of the developing fields of world music and ethnomusicology” (Walsh cited in Fleming 2012, p.146). Walsh, considered as being “to the forefront in identifying and setting trends in third-level education” (Keogh 1992, p.8) took the initial steps towards establishing a Chair of Music at the University of Limerick in 1991. At this time, the construction of Ireland’s first ever

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42 The University of Limerick, established as the National Institute for Higher Education in 1972 by founding President Ed Walsh, is situated 5km from Limerick city, and has a student population of over 11,600 students (University of Limerick 2018)
purpose-built concert hall (opened in January 1992) was underway at UL. Prior to the establishment of the BA in Irish Music and Dance in 2002, “the first of its kind in the country to be designed for traditional musicians and dancers” (Vallely 2011, p.713), a Master of Arts in Irish Traditional Music Performance and a Master of Arts in Irish Traditional Dance Performance had been offered since 1999. Further postgraduate courses were established in quick succession. Since 1994, the Irish World Academy has attracted students from 54 different countries, and there are currently 26 faculty and staff engaged in part-time and full-time teaching and administration, according to the Academy’s self-published Of Our Times – Comhaimseartha brochure (Irish World Academy 2018, p.4).

The Irish World Academy initially occupied rooms in the University’s Foundation Building but since 2010 has relocated to an impressive purpose-built building on the north campus. The €20 million building was designed by French architect Daniel Cordier following an international design competition (Pathways to Learning 2018). During his tenure at UCC, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin had achieved a great deal of success in promoting Irish traditional music studies within the music department’s curriculum and culture. Walsh, an admirer of Ó Súilleabháin and his music had a contentious working relationship with individuals at UCC throughout his professional career and describes the relocation of Ó Súilleabháin from UCC to UL as

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43 The postgraduate degrees offered in the early years of the Irish World Music Centre included programmes in Ethnomusicology, Music Education, Ethnochoreology, Music Therapy, Contemporary Dance Performance, Community Music, Classical String Performance, Irish Traditional Music Performance, MA by Research, and PhD by Research.

44 Nine postgraduate courses were established at the Irish World Academy over just three years (at a rate of three per year in 1997, 1998, and 1999).

45 The building has been humorously given the moniker ‘Taj Mícheál’ by staff and students of the Academy, in reference to founding chair Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (Fleming 2012, p.285).
UCC retiring “from the Limerick field with a bloody nose” (Walsh 2011, p.283). In his own view, Ó Súilleabháin’s brief as Chair of Music at UL had not been fully developed by the university administration. He notes:

“They had set up a concert hall the year before, and now suddenly there was a Chair of Music, and it was almost like the sugar plum fairy on top of the cake...And I got the feeling when I came in that the best thing that people at the top might want would be that the less I would do the better, because if I started doing something, I’d be looking for money. I’d be looking for jobs. I’d be looking for this, that, and the other thing. Which I did, because I’m just not that kind of person. If I walk into a vacuum, I’ll fill it, you know” (Personal Interview Ó Súilleabháin March 2014).

Over time, Ó Súilleabháin certainly did fill the vacuum that he was presented with. Although he had ample experience of locating Irish traditional music pedagogy within a higher education framework throughout his days at UCC, Ó Súilleabháin likened the prospect of establishing the Irish World Music centre at UL as “being like a child in a sweetshop, with no sweets” (Personal Interview Ó Súilleabháin March 2014). Ó Súilleabháin recalls his initial vision for the Irish World Music Centre. He wanted to provide a new hub of academic enquiry without duplicating the undergraduate studies offered elsewhere in institutions such as University College Cork:

“I wanted it to be a postgraduate centre; it wouldn’t have undergraduate programmes. I was anxious not to compete with Cork. The last thing I wanted to do was to start competing with what I had helped to build up myself” (Personal Interview Ó Súilleabháin March 2014).46

Throughout his tenure at the Irish World Academy, Micheál Ó Súilleabháin has maintained an impressive track record of securing funding for Academy

46 For more on Ó Súilleabháin’s rationale for later establishing a BA in Irish Music and Dance in 2002, see page 282 of this dissertation.
initiatives.\textsuperscript{47} In the early days of the establishment of the Irish World Academy, Ó Súilleabháin, with financial assistance from American billionaire Chuck Feeney, through Atlantic Philanthropies\textsuperscript{48}, invited leading academic and music education philosopher David Elliott to spend a year at the Academy in 1996-97. During his time at the Academy, Elliott’s brief included “questioning [the Irish World Academy] agenda and facilitating the articulation of an educational philosophy” (Phelan 2012, p.78). Elliott’s work at the Academy during this time led to \textit{The PIPA [Postgraduate Institute of Performing Arts] Report} commissioned by the Irish Chamber Orchestra and the Irish World Music Centre (now the Irish World Academy). One of the direct results of this report was the establishment of the MA in Classical String Performance. In subsequent years, the Academy has continued to benefit from philanthropic financial investment. Atlantic Philanthropies, who have donated over €100 million to the University of Limerick were instrumental in situating the Academy in its current €20 million home.\textsuperscript{49}

Delving through the history of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, it is perhaps surprising to many that Irish traditional music has formed part of the narrative of Irish higher education for so long, albeit in fragmented and diverse

\textsuperscript{47} Walsh and Ó Súilleabháin secured funding of £500,000 from Tim Mahony, an individual who had successfully built up the Toyota franchise in Ireland. Walsh recalls the meeting; “within minutes Micheál had caught the imagination of Tim Mahony and his colleagues. Tim went on to put £500,000 on the table and he also joined the board of the foundation” (Walsh 2011, p.284).

\textsuperscript{48} Atlantic Philanthropies is a charitable organisation founded by Irish-American entrepreneur, Chuck Feeney. Between 1987 and 2016, Atlantic Philanthropies invested $1.3 billion in the Republic of Ireland “to advance higher education, human rights and services for the young and old” (Atlantic Philanthropies 2018).

\textsuperscript{49} At the official opening of the new Irish World Academy building, Ó Súilleabháin paid tribute to Feeney and Atlantic Philanthropies: "Quite simply the building would not be here without them” (Atlantic Philanthropies 2018).
manifestations. University College Cork has dominated my overview of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education due to the high-profile relationship between Irish traditional music and the UCC music department and staff. The story of the increasing status and prominence of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education is intrinsically connected to the progression of Irish traditional music in UCC’s music department. It is also significant that such a high proportion of pedagogues, academics, and researchers currently working with Irish traditional music in Irish higher education (including this researcher) are UCC graduates.

The Irish World Academy has also had a profound impact on the landscape of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. As this dissertation demonstrates, a very high proportion of individuals who engage with third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy have had contact with the Academy as students, graduates, or tutors. If UCC can be seen as the dominant institution in third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in the 20th century, the Irish World Academy can be considered to be the higher education institution having most contact with Irish traditional music practitioners, educators, and students today. This is evidenced in my fieldwork interviews whereby the Irish World Academy is invariably perceived as a representation or microcosm of the wider higher education sector. Next, my focus shifts to a contemporary overview of how nine selected Irish higher education institutes negotiate Irish traditional music pedagogy in their curricula today.
4.4 A Contemporary Conspectus of Irish Traditional Music Pedagogy in Selected Irish Higher Education Institutes

Throughout my interview conversations with my various research consultants, it became apparent to me that there was a general lack of awareness among Irish traditional music stakeholders outside the higher education site about the study of Irish traditional music in Ireland’s higher education system. Most extra-academic practitioners were simply unaware of the operational and practical modi operandi of tertiary-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland. Furthermore, it became obvious to me that even academics working in third-level Irish traditional music education were unaware of the pedagogical practices and processes at play in other educational institutions. In an attempt to redress this apparent general unfamiliarity with the inner workings of discrete tertiary-level music institutions, I provide an overview of the Irish traditional music studies offered by universities and institutes of technology in the Republic of Ireland.

Nine institutions are discussed here. Four institutions are institutes of technology50 and four are universities. The institutions discussed are: The Cork Institute of Technology Cork School of Music; The DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama; Section of Music, School of Informatics and Creative Arts, Dundalk Institute of Technology.

50 Despite their historical origins and differences, Irish institutes of technology (or ‘ITs’, but referred to as Regional Technical Colleges since their establishment in 1969, until 1997) are similar to universities. There are 14 institutes of technology in the Republic of Ireland, and since the 1992 Regional Technical Colleges Act, ITs have been permitted to “for the first time to engage in research and participate in collaborative research and the commercial exploitation of research” (Elwood and Rainnie 2012, p.108). Previous to this, ITs were mostly associated with technical training, but they have evolved “from providers of essentially technical education within a well-established binary system to one of mass higher education” (ibid, p.107). Despite the academic success and esteem enjoyed by Irish institutes of technology today, there are still pejorative and elitist perceptions surrounding their perceived lower status when compared to some of Ireland’s older universities (Humphreys 2014).
Technology; the Music Department at Maynooth University; The Centre for Irish Studies, and the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance at the National University of Ireland Galway; The School of Music and Theatre, University College Cork; University College Dublin School of Music; and The Department of Creative and Performing Arts, School of Humanities, Waterford Institute of Technology. Again, although I have discussed the Irish World Academy and the Music Department at UCC in my previous historical section, they are included here for contemporary comparability.

fig 1. Map of Selected Irish Higher Education Institutes
I visited each institution once between October 2013 and January 2015. On each occasion I met with at least one member of staff engaged in the teaching of Irish traditional music. The aims and objectives of each meeting were consistent from the outset, and on each occasion, I attempted to ascertain the following three principles:

- What study modules feature Irish traditional music in any form, and how is such material conceived, presented and assessed?
- What is your institutional ethos towards Irish traditional music in Ireland?
- What guides your approach to designing curricular content for Irish traditional music?

In all cases, staff members gave personal responses to these questions, which led to further conversations and exchanges. Their responses to these specific questions, however, form the basis of the individual institutional overviews that follow.

4.4.1 School of Music and Theatre, University College Cork

At UCC, students can engage with Irish traditional music studies at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Undergraduate programmes offered at the school include a Bachelor of Arts, and a Bachelor of Music, and postgraduate programmes include an MA in Ethnomusicology, MA in Music and Cultural History, MA in Experimental Sound Practice, MA in Music Performance, as well as an MPhil and PhD by research. The student population at the music department is comprised of musicians from a range of performance and research backgrounds. The study of Irish traditional music sits alongside the study of popular musics, classical music, and non-Western musics. Students unfamiliar with Irish traditional music have the opportunity
to take modules that explore various aspects of Irish traditional music, and students who perform Irish traditional music have the opportunity to attend classes that focus on other musical traditions and practices. In addition, all students can avail of studies in music literacy and music theory. Postgraduate research at the School of Music continues to contribute original scholarship on various aspects of Irish traditional music. A number of modules on taught postgraduate programmes also offer studies in Irish traditional music. Within the music department, classes are offered in fiddle, uilleann pipes, concertina, button accordion, traditional flute, Irish harp, sean-nós singing, set dancing, tin whistle, and bodhrán.

The School of Music and Theatre at University College Cork values all musics and musical backgrounds equally. Mel Mercier, then senior lecturer in music at University College Cork at the time of interview, echoed this attitude by articulating his ideology towards promoting individual musical creativity and identities among students, regardless of their chosen genre:

“That ethos of openness, of respect for individual journeys and choices has always being very important to me, not being too prescriptive. I don’t think that we are about creating traditional musicians, or classical musicians, or jazz musicians. I don’t think that is our purpose. We attract students who, for the most part at least, share an interest in the development of their musical identities, which are often, if not always, complex before they come to us. So while it may be possible to categorise the traditional musicians and the jazz musicians, in reality, it’s not so straightforward. It really isn’t. What we try to do I think, is strike a balance between giving students the possibility to develop and grow as musicians within their primary, or chosen genre. That might be traditional music or it might be another, but at the same time to provide them as well with an opportunity to broaden their horizons, to develop other sides of their musical identities, which already exist, or which indeed they might find anew when they come here, and that happens every year. And in there somehow or other, there is important work being done promoting respect for musical identities, even if they are not your own, and also for promoting this idea that creativity is really what’s at the heart of the matter, and that’s what needs to be celebrated, that’s what needs to be embraced, that’s what needs to be acknowledged. It’s the challenge of cultivating
that. So that instead of measuring whether somebody has become a better traditional musician or a better jazz musician in their time here, rather, what you’re trying to achieve is a growth in their creativity. For me that’s what’s important. I don’t care whether that happens in the area of traditional music or jazz music. I care that it happens but I’ve no preference for it happening in one or the other. I don’t. I happen to resonate with traditional music and traditional musicians, and the sound that they make, and the structures of those sounds, in a very particular way, a special way, because of where I’ve come from but it doesn’t mean that I value it intrinsically more than other forms of musical creativity. I don’t” (Personal Interview Mercier October 2014).

Mercier’s contribution here points to the potential of higher education to prioritise the personal development of students rather than attempt to act as a microcosm of the Irish traditional music community, whereby a whole musical tradition is transmitted generationally. Instead, traditional music is drawn on as one of many performance practices, to foster individualistic creativity and artistic exploration.

4.4.2 The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, the University of Limerick

The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance offers a total of 21 academic programmes, comprising (at the time of my research) two undergraduate (a Bachelor of Arts and Certificate), and 19 postgraduate courses. A certificate in music and dance is offered, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Performing Arts (incorporating five discrete specialisms in: Irish traditional music, Irish traditional dance, contemporary dance, voice, and world music (Irish World Academy 2018). Sixteen taught Masters Degree courses are offered consisting of an MA in Classical String Performance; MA in Classical String Performance (Keyboard); an MA in Community Music; an MA in

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Prior to 2017, the Academy offered two undergraduate BA programmes, a BA in Irish Music and Dance, and a BA in Voice and Dance. In 2017 the Academy ceased accepting students to both BAs and now prospective students register on the new BA in Performing Arts.
Songwriting; an MA in Contemporary Dance Performance; an MA in Ethnochoreology; and MA in Ethnomusicology; an MA in Festive Arts; an MA in Irish Traditional Dance Performance; an MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance; an MA in Irish Music Studies; an MA in Irish Dance Studies; an MA in Music Therapy; an MA in Ritual Chant and Song; and a Master of Education in Music. Prospective students can also study a Master of Arts by research. A Professional Diploma in Music Education is also offered. At doctoral level, a structured Arts Practice PhD is offered as well as a PhD by research (ibid).

Full-time academic faculty working with Irish traditional music and dance comprise of Mel Mercier (Professor and Chair of Performing Arts, and formerly of University College Cork), Sandra Joyce (Senior Lecturer and Academy Director and Course Director of the MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance), Niall Keegan (Lecturer and Academy Associate Director and Director of Undergraduate Studies at the Academy), Aileen Dillane (Lecturer and Course Director of the MA in Irish Music Studies), Catherine Foley (Senior Lecturer and Course Director MA in Ethnochoreology), Orfhlaith Ní Bhriain (Lecturer and Course Director MA in Irish Traditional Dance Performance), and Mats Melin (Lecturer and Course Director MA in Irish Dance Studies). The Irish World Academy also employs a number of instrumental, vocal and dance tutors who teach on the BA in Performing Arts (Irish Traditional Music strand), and the MA programmes in Irish Traditional Music Performance, and Irish Traditional Dance Performance. A number of the tutors working at the Irish World Academy are widely known as performers to audiences and practitioners alike, and frequently perform as concert and recording artists. Tutors include John Carty (banjo); Derek Hickey (accordion); Eileen O’Brien and Siobhán
Peoples (fiddle); Tommy Fitzharris (flute and concertina); Niall Keegan (flute); Michael ‘Blackie’ O’Connell (uilleann pipes); Orfhlaith Ní Bhriain, and Mats Melin (dance); Karan Casey (song); Alan Colfer (guitar); and Jim Higgins (bodhrán).

Irish traditional music features most prominently in the Certificate in Music and Dance, the BA in Performing Arts, the MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance, the MA in Irish Traditional Dance Performance, the MA in Irish Music Studies, and the MA in Irish Dance Studies, while traditional artists can juxtapose performance and research in the Arts-Practice PhD programme.52

Given the prominence of the Irish World Academy as a site for third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy, the institution reappears as a case study in chapter eight, where I explore how Irish traditional music pedagogy negotiates tradition and innovation. For now, I offer contributions from a number of Academy staff, which assists in getting a sense of how they locate Irish traditional music within their curricula. Reflecting on the ethos of the Irish World Academy towards third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy, Academy director, Sandra Joyce, describes her vision of the combined performance and academic skills that she likes to impart to undergraduate students, for example.

“We don’t all have brilliant performers. But the important thing is that they’ve undergone the journey, and the kind of graduate that we want to produce would be somebody who would have a good knowledge of what it means to perform, and also to have good academic grounding, that they can talk about what they are doing in a very real way. It’s not to set one up against the other. It’s the integration of the two that’s

52 The Arts-Practice PhD is the first of its kind in the Republic of Ireland (Irish World Academy 2018). Within the first two years of the Arts-Practice PhD programme, students take a series of taught modules in areas such as Arts Practice Research, Creative Process, Arts Practice Encounters, and individual research work. Students must also select elective modules from MA programmes on offer at the Irish World Academy. In years three and four, doctoral students focus primarily on individual research work comprising performance and academic work.
really important, I think. So that equal honouring of [performance and academic studies], is very much one of our central pillars here, and it’s something I would feel very passionately about” (Personal Interview Joyce May 2015).

Lecturer in dance, Mats Melin (see Appendix A) also believes that the integration of performance practice and academic research is essential to the work of the Irish World Academy. He feels that it is important to remind students that performance and research can indeed be complimentary:

“You kind of cross-reference all the time, and try to keep that bridge between the two disciplines [of research and practice]. To make the students understand that they are not separate entities, the academic side and the practical. They inform each other, you know. That’s what the ethos is here, making thinking performers and performing thinkers” (Personal Interview Melin November 2014).

Likewise lecturer Orfhlaith Ní Bhriain (see Appendix A) believes that it is essential to encourage students to critically examine their performance practice. Ní Bhriain also makes an important point in relation to the ethos of the Academy:

“We are facilitating the development of thinking performers. That’s why this is a university, it’s not a conservatoire. They could be brilliant musicians sitting at home in their own kitchens. That’s why they engage with the Academy so that you think about it. It’s not that you want them to over-analyse but you want to engage with them. Why am I playing that? Why am I picking this repertoire? Why do I like that? And I think that is good. So I think that whole notion of critical engagement is good” (Personal Interview Ní Bhriain May 2015).

This juxtaposition of practice and critical reflection is central to what the Irish World Academy strives to achieve. In addition, the manner in which performance tutors teach according to their own pedagogical preferences, similar to how they may teach as private teachers outside the Academy, highlights the Academy’s unwillingness to impose any limiting pedagogical strictures on tutors. Academy tutors are free to teach
as they see fit, and Western notation is only used if desired by a particular teacher. Performance tuition is offered on its own terms, as deemed appropriate by individual tutors. This has particular relevance in chapter seven, when I discuss the extent to which Irish traditional music pedagogues draw on, adapt, or depart from Western art music pedagogy when designing third-level Irish traditional music curricula.

4.4.3 The Cork Institute of Technology Cork School of Music (CSM)\textsuperscript{53}

Students of the BMus at the Cork School of Music, based in Cork city, engage with Irish traditional music studies through performance on their chosen instrument, and by studying modules in aspects of Irish traditional music organology, social history, and repertoire, for example. At postgraduate level, traditional musicians who fulfil application criteria and pass an audition are eligible to complete a MA in Music performance on their chosen instrument, and postgraduate programmes such as the MA and PhD by research provide for self-directed academic studies that include research on Irish traditional music.\textsuperscript{54}

At the CSM, Irish traditional music pedagogy is tailored to fit a classical music conservatory model. Irish traditional musicians are encouraged to achieve high levels

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{53} The Cork School of Music was founded in 1878, and in 1993, it partnered with the Cork Regional Technical College, which became the Cork Institute of Technology in 1998 (CIT Cork School of Music 2008). “Cork Institute of Technology is one of the largest and longest established technological education centres in Ireland. Its courses span five main fields: Science, Business, Engineering, Art and Music. The qualifications awarded vary from Post-graduate Doctorates, to Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates, as well as thriving and internationally recognised trade craft courses” (The Technological Higher Education Association 2018). In total, CIT is home to approximately 12,000 students (Cork Institute of Technology 2018).
\item \textsuperscript{54} According to Johnny McCarthy, the BMus started in CSM in 1995, “in which lectures in traditional Irish music were included” (Personal Interview McCarthy May 2018). The taught MA started in 2000, and the first student taking traditional music as their primary performance component was in 2007. The first taught MA student in traditional registered in 2008 (ibid).
\end{itemize}
of instrumental and/or vocal proficiency, and to adopt a practice ethic comparable to that associated with the Western classical music tradition, according to Johnny McCarthy (see Appendix A), musician and lecturer with special responsibility for Irish traditional music at the CSM. McCarthy’s own classical training informs how he views his role as an Irish traditional music lecturer. He believes that it is vitally important that high technical demands are placed on Irish traditional musicians who take the BMus, for example:

“The classical music standard here is very high. I mean it’s conservatory level, and I studied in a conservatory. I studied in Zurich, and I’ve gone through the conservatory system, and this is even more concentrated to be honest with you, in some ways, but I think it’s great to see that the level required from the classical player is expected of the traditional player as well, and I think that’s the big thing really. You have this high standard. I mean as a teacher on both [classical music and traditional music], I don’t want anybody saying, oh the traditional thing is way easier, I don’t want that to happen, do you know what I mean? I’m adamant the traditional thing would be as equally high a level and so far we’ve had some very high standards” (Personal Interview McCarthy November 2014).

Syllabi have been adapted from classical music technical studies to develop specific technique exercises for traditional musicians, including sight-reading exercises as well as the performance of scales and modes.

“I’ve written a syllabus for the traditional musician, and so for example, when a classical player comes in to do their performance exam, they have to do a twenty-minute performance. They have to play a certain number of pieces. They have to do a study. They have to do scales and all of that, so what I did was I adapted that for the traditional player. I’ve written a book of studies, which are awkward things, right? They do some scales but they also do all the modes, and they do sight-reading of course as well, and then they also have to do an extra one; they have to do a listening exercise where you email them a tune and they have to come in and play that tune” (Personal Interview McCarthy November 2014).

McCarthy also is a strong advocate of providing Irish traditional music
performance and academic studies within the context of a more general music education, rather than offering students a specialised undergraduate degree in Irish traditional music. For McCarthy, such an ethos is required, as he feels that graduates who aspire to become post-primary level music educators will need a rounded music education to fulfil such a role, irrespective of their performance specialisation.

“When you come to study traditional music, it’s not just a stream of traditional music. There was an attempt made actually to make just a traditional music degree here, and I was against it because I’m a firm believer that it should be a broad musical education....you should be exposed to everything, and as well as that, if somebody does a BMus, if there’re going to be teaching in secondary schools or what have you, they should have a foundation in Western art music, they should have all the history covered, they should know about harmony, they should be very well able to read and all of that” (Personal Interview McCarthy November 2014).

In summary, Johnny McCarthy is keen to draw on aspects of his own Western classical music education when designing curricula for Irish traditional music at CIT. Keeping an eye to the professional pathways that his students may take following graduation, McCarthy is keen to prevent the development of an Irish traditional music pedagogy that too closely focuses on Irish traditional music at the expense of providing students with a more general music education.

4.4.4 The DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama

Irish traditional music features in the course content of the BMus (formed as a Graduate Diploma in Music in 1987), the Bachelor of Music Education (BMusEd)

55 The DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama began its life as the Municipal School of Music in 1890, and was renamed the Dublin College of Music in 1962. It became part of the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) in 1978 (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama 2018). The wider DIT community comprises over 20,000 students (Dublin Institute of Technology 2018).
formed in 1986), and the Master of Music in Performance (MMus) (which began including Irish traditional music performance in 2006). Students can explore original research on various aspects of Irish traditional music through MPhil and PhD studies. There is a considerable focus on the performance of Irish traditional music at DIT, and a number of eminent traditional musicians provide regular tuition; tutors have included well-known musicians such as Peter Browne (uilleann pipes tutor), Mícheál Ó Raghallaigh (concertina tutor), Kevin Glackin (fiddle tutor), Seosaimhin Begley (singing tutor), John O’Regan (accordion tutor), and Kieran Hanrahan (banjo and ensemble tutor).

Students of the Bachelor of Music at DIT spend years one and two focusing on a common programme of study before having the option to specialise in a stream of Irish Traditional Music Studies in years three and four, subsequently graduating with a Bachelor of Music in Irish Traditional Music Studies. In this two-year general music education, students can also explore performance and academic studies in Irish traditional music. Third and fourth years of the bachelor of music are spent in one of the five areas of specialisation (in a stream of performance, pedagogy, composition, musicology, or traditional Irish music studies), although performers of Irish traditional music are not confined to only pursuing the Irish Traditional Music Studies strand. Through the BEd. (Bachelor of Education) programme (shared by the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Trinity College Dublin, and the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama 2018).

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56 As an earlier section of this chapter states, Irish traditional music has a long historical association with DIT. As early as 1920, the aforementioned Municipal School of Music employed renowned uilleann piper Leo Rowsome as a tutor. In 2006, Irish traditional music was introduced as a performance option for postgraduate students undertaking a Master in Music (MMus) (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama 2018)
Drama), students focus on both solo and ensemble performance of Irish traditional music and song. At postgraduate level, as well as engaging with Irish traditional music studies through original academic scholarship in various aspects of Irish traditional music, students can also explore Irish traditional music through performance in the Master of Music in Performance or the Postgraduate Diploma in Music Performance.

At the Conservatory of Music and Drama at DIT, Irish traditional music is contextualised on its own terms, as being a distinct genre with its own set of unique principles. Yet it is seen as central to, and a constituent of the overall music education landscape at the institution. There are specific guidelines attached to various aspects of Irish traditional music pedagogy that are distinctly different from approaches to Western classical music and jazz, for example. Head of Orchestral Studies (the department that is home to Irish traditional music studies) at DIT, Cliona Doris (see Appendix A) is very aware of the specific needs of traditional artists but suggests that, in her view, Irish traditional music studies works best as part of a wider music education. However, the BMus in Irish Traditional Music Performance allows students to receive both a foundational general music education (as in years one and two), and to focus more intensively on Irish traditional music as a specialism in years three and four.

“I wouldn’t like to see [Irish traditional music] as separate, but there also is a danger that it can get subsumed, and there are special requirements for traditional musicians...[Irish traditional music at DIT] is sort of standalone, in that, in the BMus, you get a BMus in Irish traditional music performance, whereas [programmes elsewhere] would be just be a bachelors of music, and you would happen to be a traditional musician; it has a slightly different feel...our programme has an identity as Irish traditional music, where some of the others would just be more generic” (Personal Interview Doris November 2014).
Although DIT values the identity of one of its bachelor of music streams as an Irish traditional music programme, Doris also believes that students should be rounded as musicians, irrespective of their chosen genre. Primarily influenced by the institution’s ethos towards music education, DIT’s approach to Irish traditional music pedagogy is mindful of the requirements of the national Teaching Council.57

“We feel very strongly that we want to produce graduates who have a very broad range of skills, and a lot of them actually do go into teaching, and I don’t mean just instrumental or vocal, but some do want to do the HDip58, so we need to make sure that we meet the teaching council’s requirements, so that’s very important. And they also do a number of generic music modules that everybody does, so they would be familiar with harmony and counterpoint. They would be familiar with Western music. That’s a requirement of the teaching council. We are also aware that they need to find their place. Within that there is also a very specialised Irish traditional music programme, but we do want to make sure that they have a very wide skill base, in arrangement and orchestration, and they can also take a lot of other options, like they can do conducting; there a number of things that they can do” (Personal Interview Doris November 2014).

The requirements of accreditation bodies such as the National Teaching Council are significant here, as they inform how curriculum are designed and taught. Critics of the pedagogical approaches of those who teach Irish traditional music in higher education may not be aware of the practical limitations that require curriculum designers to make decisions based on the overarching demands of bodies such as the National Teaching Council. I return to this point in the discussion section of this chapter.

57 The National Teaching Council is the national professional standards body for the teaching profession in the Republic of Ireland. It was “established in 2006 under the Teaching Council Act 2001” (The Teaching Council 2018).
58 The HDip or Higher Diploma is a level 8 qualification that is invariably sought by those who wish to pursue a teaching career in second-level education in Ireland.
4.4.5 Section of Music, School of Informatics and Creative Arts, Dundalk Institute of Technology

Irish traditional music features on the BA in Applied Music and on the taught MA in Traditional Music Studies. In addition, Irish traditional music can also form the basis of research at postgraduate level in both the MA by research in Music, and the PhD by research. The BA in Applied Music is open to students from a diverse range of performance backgrounds, including performers of Irish traditional music. The degree is unique in the sense that students perform three genres of music (popular music and jazz (merged), classical music, and traditional music) regardless of their primary genre. Postgraduate research in various aspects of Irish traditional music can be undertaken at masters and doctorate levels.

Within the BA in Applied Music programme at Dundalk Institute of Technology, Irish traditional music is presented in the context of a multi-genre music degree, and consequently, is attributed equivalent status and value to classical music, popular music, and jazz. Central to the institution’s ethos towards traditional music pedagogy is the belief that all musics are equal, and significant emphasis is placed on students’ engagement with each of the four music genres offered. For Daithí Kearney (see Appendix A), course director of the BA in Applied Music, the multi-genre experience available to performers of Irish traditional music provides young traditional musicians

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59 Situated in Dundalk, in county Louth, the Dundalk Institute of Technology was originally established as a Regional Technical College in 1970, and became an institute of technology in 1998. The IT has a student population of over 5,000 (Dundalk Institute of Technology 2018).

60 The BA in Applied Music began in 2003, while the MA in Traditional Music Studies began in 2015, although it had previously been validated in 2010 (Personal Interview Kearney January 2015). Music was first introduced to DkIT in 2003 (within the Department of Humanities), before the Department of Music and Creative Media was established in 2004. In 2015, music was located in the newly formed Department of Creative Arts, Media and Music (ibid).
with the skills required to engage collaboratively with their peers, and encourages students to appreciate other genres of music.

“Take the trad fiddle player from Donegal who comes in here. She has got her own distinctive style. She has learnt from James Byrne, and she has got her own particular repertoire. She goes to her hour and a half lecture in Western art music, and she goes in next door and she plays the violin line in, it won’t be a string quartet, but they might pick a string quartet and arrange it for violin and guitar, recorder, and double bass, for example. And she is there, and she has to develop her sight-reading and her skills that way. She will then go into pop and jazz, and they are going to do an Ella Fitzgerald song, and there’s usually a sax solo in it, and she will play the instrumental solo in that, on her fiddle, or she might become the vocalist in that group, or she might become the drummer on the pop song. Equally then she will have her pop history and culture, jazz history and culture lecture as well. They will all experience a lecture in each genre and a performance group in each genre. There are no barriers to broadening your music. You can choose to keep it narrow. You can choose to follow quite a narrow path if you wish but you have to experience other things. So again, it goes back to this idea; it’s not lip service that every music or every student is treated the same. It is actually the same” (Personal Interview Kearney January 2015).

Traditional musicians are given the opportunity to broaden their respective musical horizons, but are also free to focus more intensively on a given specialism within their chosen genre. Conversely, performers of other genres are exposed to Irish traditional music studies, both in practical and academic contexts. According to Kearney, such exposure to Irish traditional music is significant in that it equips performers of musics other than Irish traditional music with the critical and analytical skills to appreciate performances of Irish traditional music, and it also provides aspiring secondary level music teachers with an increased familiarity with the genre of Irish traditional music. In addition, the pedagogical ethos of DkIT is significantly informed by its geographical location and a connection to the traditional music and regional identity of the place that it inhabits. Kearney describes how the rich local heritage of the Dundalk region and its environs contributes to the ideological and pedagogical approaches adopted by
the section of music:

“O’Carolan\textsuperscript{61} was only born 15 minutes down the road. Look up to south Armagh. You’ve this great Oriel\textsuperscript{62} poetry tradition. As I said, this semester, I’m looking towards Monaghan. Reavy is only, not even half an hour from here. You’ve got this wonderful collection, and legends of Cooley to do with Cú Chulainn and all of that. There’s a fantastic local heritage here, so I’ve put that back in here as well in my approach, and I think that existed before I came here. We take the name Ceol Oirghillia as a section of music, the music of Oriel. That sense of tradition exists again across genres, it’s not just about the genre of trad” (Personal Interview Kearney January 2015).

The process of incorporating local resources and a regional focus into course materials provides students with a rich place-based learning environment but it can also contribute to raising wider awareness of, and interest in, the identity of that region, as exemplified by Kearney’s commentary on Oriel identity\textsuperscript{63}:

“Just because we’re on the east coast doesn’t mean that we don’t have music like they have on the west coast. I can say that as a Kerryman coming across, where I experienced great culture. When I do give that lecture on regional styles, you are looking at Donegal, and maybe the Dohertys and the Byrnes and things like that. Or you’re looking at Sligo and talking about Coleman and Killoran, and those. But it doesn’t mean that we have to forget about Louth, and Meath, and south Armagh, you know, that Oriel region. I think what the section of music does, very much, is, it has contributed to maybe a greater awareness of Oriel identity, probably more through the

\textsuperscript{61} Turlough Carolan (or frequently, O’Carolan) (1670-1738) was an influential and celebrated blind itinerant Irish harpist and composer from county Meath. For a comprehensive collection of Carolan’s work, see Carolan: The Life, Times and Music of an Irish Harper (O’Sullivan 1984).
\textsuperscript{62} “Oirialla, known in English as Oriel, is an undefined cross border region, straddling two provinces of Ireland, extending from Carlingford on the east coast of the Cooley peninsula in County Louth, across south Armagh, through the south drumlins of Monaghan; north from the borders of County Down, south to the hinterlands of Drogheda” (Oriel Arts 2018).
\textsuperscript{63} Regional identity and style has invariably been a topical issue in Irish traditional music discourse. Commins describes regional style as “a literate term imposed onto an oral tradition, often describing the music originated by only one musician, or by a small group of musicians from an area who have gained national popularity and thereby ascribed regional identity” (Commins 2011, p.571). Regional style is a contested phenomenon, and media productions such as Ó Riada’s 1962 Our Musical Heritage, discussed earlier, contributed to the regional compartmentalisation of disparate musical styles when he thematically demonstrated the differences between the fiddle music of Kerry and Clare, by showcasing individual key exponents as exemplars.
traditional concerts than anything else, but as I say, it has recognised success in other forms of music as well” (Personal Interview Kearney January 2015).

For Kearney, while it is important to teach key exponents like Sligo fiddle masters, Coleman and Killoran, who are central to the history and development of Irish traditional music, it also essential to localise the department’s focus, to concentrate on its own locality, and why it may be different to other musical regions. Drawing on Moore (2017) and his assertion that higher education institutes should better reflect their regional identities, Kearney’s emphasis on the Oriel tradition, in which his department is situated, is significant as it highlights the idiomatic and unique perspective from which DkIT can offer its own take on third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy.

4.4.6 Music Department, Maynooth University

At undergraduate level, the department’s BMus offers studies in Irish traditional music in the context of a general music education juxtaposed with modules such as music history, theory, analysis, and composition, for example. Students engage with Irish

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64 Maynooth University, situated in Maynooth, county Kildare became a formal university in 1997, although its origins date back to 1795, and the foundation of St. Patrick’s College Maynooth, a seminary for educating priests that had become the largest seminary in the world by 1850 (Maynooth University 2018). It has a student population of over 9,000 students. Following the 1997 Universities Act, the National University of Ireland, Maynooth (Maynooth University) became “a university in its own right, independent of St. Patrick’s College of Maynooth” (ibid).

65 The Bachelor of Music at Maynooth University was originally a Bachelor of Arts that did not feature any studies in Irish traditional music. From 1993, Irish traditional music began to be offered, before the BA transitioned to a BMus. By 2000, Irish traditional music performance was eligible for performance examinations. In 2006, an Irish traditional music ensemble was established as a recognised department ensemble, and in the same year, the music department began employing tutors to teach Irish traditional music on specific instruments (Personal Interview Scahill April 2018). These teachers included Paul O’Shaughnessy (flute tutor), Micheál Ó Raghallaigh (concertina tutor), Roma Casey (fiddle tutor), Aideen Martin (harp tutor), and Aisling Ni Choisdealbha (fiddle and ensemble tutor).
traditional music in a number of ways, in a variety of performance and academic modules. At postgraduate level, Mlitt and PhD candidates can explore original research on a diverse range of topics, including research on Irish traditional music.

In terms of adopting a disciplinary lens with which to contextualise Irish traditional music, Adrian Scahill (see Appendix A), traditional musician, and music lecturer at Maynooth University, largely engages with Irish traditional music through the discipline of ethnomusicology, and draws significantly on his experience as a traditional musician to inform his pedagogical approaches to traditional music pedagogy.

“I suppose seeing as my position is tied to ethnomusicology then there is the perception that Irish traditional music [at Maynooth University] is seen as connected to ethnomusicology, that the study of Irish traditional music involves ethnomusicology, includes an ethnomusicological approach, which is linked to but separate from ‘musicology’ in its classically-defined sense...In taught modules, [Irish traditional music pedagogy] is informed by ethnomusicology, but isn’t presented as such. I suppose this is in the sense of me emphasising the emic, in sometimes not using transcriptions, but asking students to listen, in positioning myself as a performer who has an insight due to my playing of the music at a reasonable level” (Personal Interview Scahill October 2013).

Irish traditional music studies are located in a multi-genre context within the music department’s general pedagogical framework. Scahill believes that Maynooth University’s approach to music education is one that holistically offers a broad music education to its students that covers core areas of study, while also catering for specialisation, an approach that he perceives as unique.

“The selling point of this place is always in terms of its breadth. In terms of a general music degree, very few places offer the ability to do composition, performance, musicology, you know to cover those different areas, and technology as well, as a BMus. Our nearest competitors don’t offer those things. That’s what we provide, a
broad music education, and the ability to do certain specialist topics like popular music, or trad, if you want to do that” (Personal Interview Scahill October 2013).

Irish traditional music enjoys a relatively prominent position at the Music Department of Maynooth University today. Scahill suggests that the status of Irish traditional music in a music department may depend on the demographic of faculty at a given time. Also, Irish traditional music has frequently and visibly featured in various Maynooth University events.

“... because I am involved with performance, Irish traditional music has a slightly privileged position in the department, as unlike jazz and pop it can be played by performance students...In a broader sense, Maynooth University, as we’re known as now, has over the past few years often used traditional musicians at official receptions, and talks, so there is an official recognition for the music in that sense” (Personal Interview Scahill October 2013).

The manner in which Irish traditional music and musicians are publicly foregrounded as a musical representation of Maynooth University points somewhat to the respected status of Irish traditional music in the wider institution, even if the purpose of Irish traditional music in such scenarios is more ceremonial than artistic.

4.4.7a The National University of Ireland, Galway

The National University of Ireland, Galway is in somewhat of a unique position in this overview of third-level Irish traditional music education as it features Irish traditional music studies in undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in two separate

66 NUIG, the National University of Ireland Galway first opened its doors as Queen’s College in 1849. In 1908, the university became University College Galway, and in 1997, UCG became the National University of Ireland Galway, or NUIG. At present, NUIG has a student population of over 18,000, and is considered the largest and oldest university in the west of Ireland (National University of Ireland Galway 2018).
departments. NUIG is also home to the Republic of Ireland’s newest undergraduate music degree, a four-year BA in Music, which commenced in September 2018. The BA in Music is offered by the College of Arts, Social Sciences, & Celtic Studies, School of Humanities, under the direction of Head of Music and senior lecturer, Aidan Thompson. Many of its modules that offer Irish traditional music content, are drawn from the Centre for Irish Studies, which I discuss next.

4.4.7b The Centre for Irish Studies at the National University of Ireland Galway

Irish traditional music studies at the Centre for Irish Studies are delivered through the disciplinary lens of Irish Studies (which explores Irish music in conjunction with cultural studies such as Irish literature, and history) and form part of the centre’s BA in Irish Studies. Graduates who wish to pursue postgraduate academic research in areas related to, or in Irish traditional music and dance studies may undertake such research through an MA in Irish Studies. Similarly, original research in Irish traditional music and dance studies and related areas may also be explored at doctoral level.

Lecturer at the Centre for Irish Studies, Méabh Ní Fhuartháin (see Appendix A), although trained as an ethnomusicologist, feels that Irish Studies brings an important disciplinary lens to research on Irish traditional music, song and dance. Free from

67 In June 2017, NUIG invited applications for a senior lecturer position in music with a view to establishing a department of music to commence accepting students in September 2018. The post of Head of Music was filled by Aidan Thomson, a musicologist “with a particular interest in British and Irish music of the early twentieth century” (National University of Ireland Galway 2018) who formerly specialised in teaching music history, theory and analysis at Queen’s University Belfast.

68 The Centre for Irish Studies at the National University of Ireland Galway was established in 2000. Its director is Dr. Louis de Paor, and it engages in “interdisciplinary research and advanced teaching on the cultural, social and political endeavours of Irish people” (National University of Ireland Galway 2018).
what Ní Fhuartháin perceives as the historical institutionalisation inherent in other institutions and programmes, the Centre for Irish Studies combines a range of disciplines and vantage points in exploring Irish traditional music studies.

“I think [locating Irish traditional music studies in Irish Studies] is distinguishable, I suppose, by virtue of the fact that it is not coming out of a music department. In some ways that’s a limitation but in other ways, it’s a liberation. So that you don’t have the historical institutionalisation of traditional music such as in UCC, or indeed in Limerick at this point. And so the only possible development that could actually have weight is a scholarly engagement. And I suppose I would feel that Irish Studies as an interdisciplinary space allows for all of these other things as a way of bringing a variety of tools, and that’s not to say that they are not deployed judiciously, but a variety of enquiring tools and methods to the project of Irish music studies. Now I think there are interesting things happening in lots of places. That’s not just happening here, but I suppose we don’t have the architecture of a music department. We don’t have that organising structure...so what Galway can provide, I think, is a space for those who don’t neatly fit into single disciplines elsewhere, and I include myself in that category” (Personal Interview Ní Fhuartháin October 2013).

Although the Centre for Irish Studies does not cater for the performance of Irish traditional music, Ní Fhuartáin’s commentary relating to weighty scholarly explorations of Irish traditional music studies is interesting. Perhaps, in the absence of such performance studies, there is an interesting potential for emphasising the study of cultural strata around Irish traditional music, potentially unshackled by what some may perceive as an overemphasis on the musicology and/or performance study of Irish traditional music. It also seems valuable to create an educational environment that views Irish traditional music through a number of inter-disciplinary lenses.
Studies in Irish traditional music also feature in modules offered to undergraduate drama, theatre, and performance students at NUIG. The modules are currently designed and delivered by singer and lecturer, Mary McPartlan (see Appendix A) at the Centre for Theatre and Performance. Although performance tuition is not available to students, modules historically contextualise Irish traditional music, and students are obliged to attend and reflect on McPartlan’s weekly *Arts in Action* concert series, which includes performances by well-known traditional artists.

McPartlan delivers studies in Irish traditional music to students with invariably little or no prior familiarity with Irish traditional music, song, and dance. Consequently, she uses Irish traditional music as a methodology to connect students with Irish traditional music as an expression of cultural identity.

“I would say that I am creating space for students to consider their cultural identity rather than reject it or be very passive about it and not consider it. I feel that they go forward with a sense of it. By the time they have a degree, or they do a masters, or unfortunately now when young people have little choice and they are going abroad, that they will realise when they hear any traditional musician or any example of Irish culture abroad, they will say “that’s me. That’s my culture. This is me. This is my identity”. And that’s a strong base for them to have, especially when they go away...I believe that I’m involved in creating a situation where there is knowledge, and there’s a sense of Irish cultural identity, and creating new audiences ultimately, down the line” (Personal Interview McPartlan October 2013).

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69 The Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance, (the O’Donoghue Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance since April 2017) is home to research and training in Irish theatre at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
The pedagogical context that McPartlan finds herself in reminds us of the diverse ways in which Irish traditional music is, and can be, located in Irish higher education. For some, Irish traditional music is not contextualised as a performance specialism but as a cultural entity that is experienced from a multitude of perspectives. It is important to consider this type of student demographic when considering the perceived purpose of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education.

4.4.8 University College Dublin School of Music\textsuperscript{70}

The Department of Music at University College Dublin features undergraduate studies in Irish traditional music in both a BMus and BA programme.\textsuperscript{71} Although the department mainly attracts performers of classical music, traditional musicians are eligible for entry and perform examination concerts through their primary performance genre, Irish traditional music. Academic studies in aspects of Irish traditional music are available to students of all genres through the BA and BMus programmes. At postgraduate level, original research on research related to Irish traditional music may be undertaken through PhD studies.

Thérèse Smith (see Appendix A), Professor of Music with responsibility for Irish traditional music studies, predominantly delivers academic studies in Irish traditional music to students who do not perform Irish traditional music. Therefore,

\textsuperscript{70} Originally founded in 1854, UCD is Ireland’s largest university, with a student population of over 33,000 students (University College Dublin 2018). Established as the Catholic University of Ireland, and later referred to as the Royal University, the university became University College Dublin in 1908, and in 1997, UCD became an autonomous university (University College Dublin 2018).

\textsuperscript{71} Irish traditional music has a long tradition at UCD. Professor Thérèse Smith states: “I think that as UCD was seen as the Catholic University in the capital city, trad was always deemed an important part of the curriculum” (Personal Interview Smith May 2018).
she sees her role as one that focuses more on equipping listeners with critical and analytical skills rather than on the training of traditional performers.

“I don’t train performers, and therefore I don’t train young traditional musicians. It’s not what I do but what I hope to do with the students that I do get is to create educated listeners because I think that’s what the tradition needs. The tradition will always have a crop of performers but if it doesn’t have educated listeners, it fails to have an audience. So, when they go to sessions, for example, I try to push them in the direction of The Cobblestone, or somewhere, as opposed to [places] where they always get sort of a Molly Malone, ballad-type session. The Fields of Athenry and all that kind of stuff. And explain to them what the difference it. Not downplaying the ballad session but trying to explain to them the difference between that and what I would consider a traditional music session” (Personal Interview Smith December 2014).

As a trained ethnomusicologist, Smith draws on that discipline in her approach to Irish traditional music pedagogy to some extent but introduces her students to the fundamentals of Irish traditional music before locating the genre in wider ethnomusicological conversations.

“I suppose peripherally, ethnomusicology is my approach. But I don’t give them any ethnomusicological theory, other than looking at general writings by Victor Turner…the majority of them have had so little exposure to traditional music that really what I’m trying to pack it with is traditional music. Just introduce them to the instruments, introduce them to the dance types, and the various song types. Get them to learn a little bit about the language, ornamentation, variation, regional styles. Those kinds of things…it’s really not until I move them into 3rd and 4th year, and look at the African-American modules, and again at Masters level, that I look at ethnomusicological theory at any great depths. But it informs all my teaching because that’s how I am trained” (Personal Interview Smith December 2014).

Although aware of the significance of understanding Irish traditional music as sound, Smith is also keen to contextualise the socio-musical practices inherent in the making of Irish traditional music. Drawing once more on her training in ethnomusicology, she
encourages her students to go out to music sessions and conceptualise Irish traditional music as an active culture rather than solely an audible phenomenon.

“Ethnomusicologists always stress the importance of music in context and I certainly lose patience with those who stress context over music, and don’t talk about the sound. But equally, the idea of me standing and talking at them for 2 hours a week about traditional music, even playing very fine recordings, doesn’t really give them a sense of what traditional music is. And to understand what traditional music is, because it exists in performance, they have to attend a performance...to understand the music, you have to understand the musical context. And once [students] get the sense of the fun of an Irish session and why people do it, as opposed to looking at it as these ‘diddley-ey-dle’ tunes that all sound the same, that’s how I approach it as an ethnomusicologist, and I think that comes across in my teaching” (Personal Interview Smith December 2014).

Similar to Mary McPartlan, Smith is teaching Irish traditional music to those who rarely have a pre-existing in-depth knowledge of the genre, and as a consequence, the pedagogical parameters of what is taught is different to what may be found in a conservatory-styled institution that emphasises Irish traditional music performance. Smith’s observations here also illustrate the potential of higher education to eschew the promotion of pejorative attitudes towards Irish traditional music, among those who are external to the Irish traditional music community.

4.4.9 The Department of Creative and Performing Arts, School of Humanities, Waterford Institute of Technology

At undergraduate level, Irish traditional music studies are offered in the context of a

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72 WIT is located in the southeast of Ireland, in an area not serviced by any major university to date. Founded in 1970 as a Regional Technical College, it was the first such college to be awarded Institute of Technology status in 1998. WIT is considered “the major provider of higher education in the South East region of Ireland”, and it has a student population of just over 10,000 (Waterford Institute of Technology 2018).
multi-genre music education in a BA in Music programme. Performers of classical music, Irish traditional music, jazz, or popular music, engage in the study of various core and elective music modules as one student body. At postgraduate level, students may pursue research studies on Irish traditional music at masters and doctorate levels. Among the staff at the Department of Creative and Performing Arts, School of Humanities, Waterford Institute of Technology, is uilleann piper Jimmy O’Brien-Moran (see Appendix A), who received his PhD from the University of Limerick. O’Brien-Moran is responsible for teaching Irish traditional music through performance and academic studies. With regards to a pedagogical ethos, O’Brien-Moran considers the juxtaposition of Irish traditional music studies with other genres of music at WIT as an important approach at undergraduate level.

“I think one of the things that I like about the degree at WIT is that it is a general music education, which I think is very important. A primary degree is not for specialisation. You might have areas of special interest, but I don’t think it’s for specialisation...if you study music theory and general music history, it puts your own subject into context so that’s actually very important” (Personal Interview O’Brien-Moran January 2015).

O’Brien-Moran also believes that it is vital to encourage students to critically engage with discourse on Irish traditional music, and that in-class contact forms only part of what he feels should be a somewhat autonomous holistic educational experience. In

73 The BA in Music at WIT was first ratified in 1987 (Waterford Institute of Technology 2018). The department in which music studies are located at WIT, namely the Department of Creative and Performing Arts was established in September 2005 (ibid). Irish traditional music was a performance option for WIT lecturer and uilleann piper, Jimmy O’Brien-Moran when he began his undergraduate music studies at WIT in 1988, and jazz and popular music studies became part of the BA subsequent to Irish traditional music. Classical music performance was also offered when the BA was established in 1987 (Personal Interview O’Brien-Moran May 2018).
his view, students should continually challenge and critique knowledge that is transmitted to them.

“I’m always trying to get [students] to be curious. To point out to them that no matter what class they are in, what they do in class is really the roadmap of what they should be studying outside of class for the next week. I mentioned the iceberg. There is only a small bit of it showing, and that’s your classroom, and all the rest below the surface is what they are supposed to be doing themselves. And to try to give them an idea that they should be life-long learners, as well. I also encourage them to disagree with me if they believe themselves to have information that I don’t have, or if they don’t agree with what information I have, so they at least engage in some kind of a discussion. By fourth year they should be questioning and saying: “well how do I know this is accurate? Does this sound logical? Does this seem right? Wikipedia actually looks more accurate than the Comhaltas website”, or something like that, you know. They should be questioning” (Personal Interview O’Brien-Moran January 2015).

As an experienced performer of Irish traditional music who has experienced his own form of enculturation in the world of Irish traditional music, O’Brien-Moran is keen to give his students insight into the many socio-cultural aspects of Irish traditional music, empowering them to become active participants of a large and vibrant music community that invariably embodies and shapes the living tradition that is Irish traditional music.

“One of the things I really try to get across is that to play this music at any level actually makes you a member of a community that is the most incredible network of people. It’s up to yourself to make those connections and so on, but it’s such a readymade network. I think it’s one of the more attractive things about Irish music, and it’s one of the more important things that it’s folk music, and it’s social, and that, I think, is terribly important...I also try to give them the impression that [Irish traditional music] isn’t institutionalised, it isn’t to be institutionalised. It’s still evolving. It’s still fresh. We call it traditional music but it is live music for so many of us. It’s the living culture. It’s not something that we’ve revived. It never died. It’s as relevant to me musically as maybe good old Beyoncé is to some of them” (Personal Interview O’Brien-Moran January 2015).
O’Brien-Moran’s views here certainly suggest that his ethos towards third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy is one that draws significantly on his own life experiences as a practitioner. He is keen that his students see Irish traditional music as a relevant artform, with an accompanying vibrant musical community that engages on a social, as well as musical level.

4.5 Discussion
This contemporary overview of Irish traditional music studies offered by nine higher education institutions cannot exhaustively represent the diversity and entirety of each institution discussed, but it does aim to provide a comparable overview of each institution informed by the responses of key personnel in each institution to questions posed by the researcher. Irish traditional music has had a fragmented yet relatively (and perhaps surprisingly) lengthy history in Irish higher education. No discernible national policy or consensus guided how Irish traditional music was located in the institutions that did provide for studies in Irish traditional music, song, or dance; institutions operated as discrete entities, according to individual institutional predilections. Key personnel have shaped pedagogy and curricula according to their own individual preferences and ideologies. In many ways, the most significant parts of this narrative are closely associated with the department of music at University College Cork. Many key personnel have shaped the trajectory of Irish traditional music pedagogy at UCC, which can be viewed as an early microcosm of the wider narrative of tertiary-level traditional music in Irish higher education; the increasing status of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education mirrors its journey within the
walls of UCC, an institution that has contributed significantly to the gradual prominence of Irish traditional music in wider Irish higher education.

An obvious pedagogical lineage has shaped how Irish traditional music has been contextualised within the music department of UCC, and subsequently, in music departments and tertiary-level institutions throughout the country. Aloys Fleischmann’s acceptance of Irish traditional music carved a space for the pioneering academic contextualisation of Irish traditional music achieved by Seán Ó Riada, a high-profile musician and composer, whose reputation validated the study of Irish traditional music in higher education, at least from the perspective of those who sought such legitimisation. The Sisyphean pursuits and subsequent successes of another high-profile musician and composer, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, relentlessly and emphatically challenged how the music department at UCC viewed Irish traditional music and traditional musicians. Ó Súilleabháin for the first time, made third-level music education accessible to traditional musicians whose primary performance genre was Irish traditional, music, song, or dance; traditional artists were no longer required to perform classical music as their primary genre. This gradual shift in how Irish traditional music was located in the pedagogical ethos of UCC’s music department is an important part of the general narrative of the development of traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education, and aids us in understanding many of the challenges faced by pedagogues striving to develop pedagogical frameworks for Irish traditional music in Ireland.

The transition of Ó Súilleabháin from University College Cork to the University of Limerick set in motion another important chapter of the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, when the Irish
World Academy was established in 1994. The Irish World Academy, as this research shows, currently engages with more Irish traditional music practitioners, educators, students and teachers, than any other higher education institution in the sector. Ó Súilleabháin’s capacity to attract funding and social capital for Academy projects has assisted in constructing the Academy as an imposing and impressive physical space, that signifies the esteem in which Ó Súilleabháin’s pedagogical endeavours are held among wealthy philanthropists and university administration. This is quite a transition from what Ó Súilleabháin encountered in his earlier days at UCC when attempting to foster an identity for Irish traditional music at the UCC music department, especially in the 1970s and 1980s.

My contemporary conspectus of Irish traditional music studies offered in nine higher education institutions suggests that there is no overwhelming consensus or uniformity to how Irish traditional music is located in the institutions that I selected for this study. However, a number of significant themes have emerged in the process of attempting to ascertain why each institution ‘does what they do’ in the domain of higher education pedagogy for Irish traditional music in Ireland. Perhaps the most salient difference between the pedagogical approaches adopted by each institution results from the performance profile of the student taking each programme. For example, Thérèse Smith (UCD) and Mary McPartlan (NUIG) attempt to make non-practitioners culturally aware of Irish traditional music, while students who attend UCC, UL, or DIT (for example), are frequently very competent traditional musicians prior to commencing their third-level music studies. Such a contrast has significant and understandable implications for how a tertiary-level music institution will negotiate Irish traditional music pedagogy. Therefore, we should be cognisant of the
fact that the diversity of pedagogical attitudes and policies observed in my overview of
nine academic institutions is invariably a consequence of an institutional effort to
manage the needs and expectations of the student population that it has attracted. Of
course, we encounter a pedagogical ‘chicken and egg’ scenario. Does institutional
pedagogy respond to student expectations or is it responsible for them? Does
institution X’s ambivalence towards music theory attract students who just want to
perform? Perhaps institution Y has a history of attracting Western classical musicians
or musicologists, so less emphasis is placed on Irish traditional music at an
institutional level?

My selected institutions observe Irish traditional music pedagogy through a
number of disciplinary lenses. Apart from NUIG, all institutions engage with the
performance of Irish traditional music to some extent, and traditional musicians are
eligible to study at each institution. However, there are variations in how institutions
negotiate Western classical music pedagogy, and its relationship to Irish traditional
music. Johnny McCarthy (CIT) tailors classical music exercises to the needs of his
traditional music students who learn in a conservatory environment. Clíona Doris
(DIT) acknowledges the importance of negotiating Irish traditional music pedagogy on
its own terms but also believes that traditional musicians should develop general
music theory and analysis skills as presented through the Western classical music
tradition. At DkIT, students must engage with three musics; performance studies in
traditional music, popular music and jazz, and classical music are each mandatory for
all performers. Notwithstanding the potential recoil of mandatory studies, this
approach surely broadens horizons that may have been hitherto inaccessible. This
pathway also contrasts with the approach of Mel Mercier (then of UCC) who is
primarily interested in facilitating the development of students’ artistic identities, irrespective of their chosen genre.

Returning to the idea of disciplinary lenses, apart from conservatory-styled institutions such as UL, CIT and DIT (who arguably locate Irish traditional music studies within a musicological framework), ethnomusicology emerges as the most identifiable and prominent area of expertise among faculty in tertiary-level institutions offering Irish traditional arts studies. Adrian Scahill (NUIM) and Thérèse Smith (UCD), explicitly referred to the discipline in our conversations, but the majority of academics named in this overview contribute as ethnomusicologists, to ethnomusicological publications and conferences both nationally and internationally. The discipline of Irish Studies is the only other area of study explicitly discussed and is referred to by Méabh Ní Fhuartháin (NUIG), who convincingly speaks to the discipline’s inter-disciplinary diversity. Despite the myriad of disciplinary approaches referred to here, there seems to be consensus among academics consulted for this overview that Irish traditional music studies should not be provided as a specialist stream, removed from the study of other musics.

Among the key recommendations made by Liz Doherty’s Needs Analysis of the Training and Transmission of Traditional Music in University and Professional Level Education Throughout Europe (Doherty 2002), was a suggestion that a network of traditional music educators be developed. In her view, such a network would provide a platform for educators to collaborate in a sector that she perceived as “fragmented and without any national or international cohesion or strategy” (Doherty 2002, p.20). Discussions with contributors from each institution discussed here gave me a brief insight into the exciting and valuable work being carried out at each institution.
However, it was clear from these same conversations that each institution was unsure as to how other institutions in the same sector provide for Irish traditional music studies. Although each institution offers its own specific approach to Irish traditional music pedagogy, I believe that a national platform of the sort suggested by Doherty would be invaluable in providing tertiary-level institutions with a forum to discuss models for best pedagogical practices, keeping in mind the regional, cultural, and institutional specificities of each stakeholder. In identifying a perceived need for pedagogical change in North American music education, Robin Moore suggests that music colleges need to further reflect and respond to the needs of their local community and region (Moore 2017). As Daithí Kearney responds to the Oriel tradition around the locale of DkIT, perhaps others can offer studies in Irish traditional music that are informed by the cultural and geographical location of the higher education institute.

This chapter has attempted to shed light on aspects of Irish traditional music’s historical and contemporary narratives in Irish higher education. By tracing this history, we can also chart how perceptions, attitudes, and policies towards traditional music pedagogy have changed throughout history. Highlighting the important and compelling trajectory of traditional music pedagogy at UCC, makes us aware of the obstacles that impeded Irish traditional music’s development at tertiary-level, and we are consequently more attuned to the importance of challenging institutional policy, should it conflict with what are generally perceived as best practices for designing traditional music curricula. The overview presented here of the history of the Irish World Academy is useful in highlighting the development of a new context for third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy whereby a specialist BA in Irish Music and
Dance, and MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance, were introduced to respond to the educational needs of a new generation of Irish traditional musicians, who could previously not engage with higher education without a need to demonstrate conventional musical skills such as sight-reading and a familiarity with Western classical music, for example.

My aim in the second section of this chapter, a contemporary overview of traditional music studies offered by nine higher education institutions, has been to provide a snapshot of the tertiary-level Irish traditional music options available to those wishing to pursue undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate studies in Irish traditional music. Presented through the voices of institutional personnel, each snapshot provides important perspectives on how each discrete institution discussed here contextualises Irish traditional music as a higher education subject. Each institution has its own particular approach and ethos to Irish traditional music pedagogy, but nevertheless, a number of noteworthy points of discussion have been highlighted and considered here. Among these are the diversity of approaches taken by respective institutions, motivated by individual pedagogical preferences rather than by any national or sector-wide policy; the diverse and demographically contrasting makeup of students with varying degrees of experience with Irish traditional music; the variety of disciplinary and academic lenses with which Irish traditional music is contextualised; and what I have observed as the general unfamiliarity of many institutions and pedagogues with how other higher education institutions in the tertiary sector teach Irish traditional music. Such observations contribute to discussions on how to negotiate the many streams of Irish traditional music in
Ireland's higher education system according to the needs and expectations of students, staff, and the wider traditional music community in Ireland and abroad.
Chapter 5: Locating Community Perspectives in Extra-Academic Irish Traditional Music Discourse

Community perspectives have been central to how this research has identified and interrogated the ways in which the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education is perceived to impact upon the practices of stakeholders in the wider Irish traditional music community. This chapter looks specifically at the interwoven relationship between higher education/academic research, and the extra-academic (community-based) Irish traditional music community. The opening section of this chapter explores the ways in which discourse on Irish traditional music has interfaced with the Irish traditional music community in extra-academic environments, external to higher education. Again, by discourse, I refer to “ways of speaking about the world of social experience” that “is a means of both producing and organising meaning within a social context” (Edgar and Sedgwick 2008, p.96). Essentially, in using the term discourse, I am describing documented discussions and opinions expressed by a variety of stakeholders on a diverse range of topics relating to Irish traditional music. The second section of this chapter explores public discourse offering commentary on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education more specifically, but I begin now with an exploration of how infrastructures external to higher education and academia have been developed to publicly discuss a range of Irish traditional music topics in a variety of platforms, from public lectures to publications.
As I have outlined, the concept of an Irish traditional music community is indeed problematic as it suggests the existence of one, unified, consensus-forming entity that agrees on what constitutes Irish traditional music, which is an over-simplification. Nonetheless, the concept of ‘the community’ is often evoked as a vehicle that shapes the artistic and cultural trajectories of Irish traditional music. As Sommers Smith suggests, in such instances, the community acts as a musical gatekeeper by gradually shaping a collective consensus on what is deemed as appropriate repertoire, for example.

“It is the musical community, acting as audience and arbiter, that decides whether a new composition shall remain in the repertoire, be played and replayed, and thus be admitted into the tradition” (Sommers Smith 2001, p.122).

Although an in-depth exploration of what is meant by the traditional music community in Ireland extends beyond the scope of this research, it is useful to consider a number of definitions of community that have been proposed. Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, founding Chair of Music, and Professor Emeritus at the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick, offers the following definition:

“...a music community is a group of interested participants who agree on the form and content of the music and its social contexts” (Ó Súilleabháin cited in Sommers Smith 2001, p.122).

It is difficult to assess the extent to which community agreement can be achieved or evaluated, but on a theoretical level, it is fair to state that in general terms, the music community is a porous and dynamic social grouping that forms some manner of consensus as to what constitutes a musical tradition. The trajectory of a music tradition, especially in the context of Irish traditional music in Ireland, is ostensibly
less prone to significant influences of individuals, and more to collective evolution over time, though undoubtedly there are always individual performers that push the boundaries.

Of course, it is helpful to be mindful of the subjectivity inherent in conceptualisations of community, as such constructions are invariably contested. The Irish traditional music community is invariably discussed as a ‘singular’ entity and few have challenged or deconstructed this idea. One exception, as found in the work of Australian scholar Helen O’Shea, refers to a “mythology of Irish traditional music with its old men, its ideals of musical continuity and communication, of shared values and generosity” (O’Shea 2008, p.122) in her critique of the absence of gender discourse and mechanism of social exclusion. Anthony P. Cohen describes community, in relation to identity, as:

“a largely mental construct, whose ‘objective’ manifestations in locality or ethnicity give it credibility” (Cohen 1985, p.108).

In contrast, Mel Mercier’s views of the Irish traditional music community focuses on plurality as he states that “the community itself is multi-faceted and is not a unified thing or voice” (Personal Interview Mercier October 2014). Yet throughout my research, community is an idea that is reiterated over and over again so it undoubtedly has purchase and though nebulous, informs how many people think about Irish traditional music. Next, I move from the concept of community to explore how community stakeholders engage with intellectualisation and discourse surrounding Irish traditional music.
5.1 Irish Dancing about Architecture?\textsuperscript{74}

My primary aim in this section is to explore manifestations of discourse and intellectual dialogue in extra-academic (community-based) contexts, in order to establish the extent to which academics and academic institutions may or may not contribute to such instances. I want to tease out the extent to which extra-academic discourse has existed both independent of, and in co-operation with academic institutions/academia to understand just how interwoven discourse and the intellectualisation of Irish traditional music are within academia, higher education institutions in Ireland, and the ‘community’. A key question that I pose is whether or not Irish traditional music academia has been solely responsible for the ‘academicisation’ of Irish traditional music? Conversely, has a particular discourse on Irish traditional music existed independently of the higher education sector in Ireland?

It is important to note that this ostensible binary, seemingly positioning community-based contexts as separate to higher education, does not fully reflect the significant intra-communal overlap that has existed (and continues to exist) between academic institutions and the wider Irish traditional music community.

Discourse, analysis, and intellectualisation around Irish traditional music frequently divide opinion among traditional music stakeholders. As referenced earlier, musician Colin Hamilton insists:

“Irish traditional musicians do not, to any real extent, intellectualise about the music they play, and in fact tend to be rather suspicious of those who attempt to do this” (Hamilton cited in Sommers Smith 2001, p.122).

\textsuperscript{74} In referencing the ‘dancing about architecture’ analogy, said to be coined by Elvis Costello (Cook 2000), amongst others, I am pointing to the existence of tensions towards discourse and verbal intellectualisation about music, rather than supporting the belief that discussion and discourse on music is in any way futile.
This is a crucial and commonly made point speaking to a resistance that is possibly connected to ownership, or it could also be suspicion as a result of how mediators are perceived to represent (or mis-represent) Irish traditional music.

To better understand perceptions on intellectualisation and discourse on Irish traditional music, perhaps it is useful to differentiate between two separate issues. The proverbial ‘dancing about architecture’ preoccupation, said to be coined by Elvis Costello (Cook 2000), does little to nuance the specific relationship between Irish traditional music and the discourse that surrounds it, but it does point to wider issues in how we formulate and articulate discourse about music more generally. However, there is a distinct difference between anti-intellectualism and appreciating the shortcomings of language and verbal description in representing musical experiences, commonly referred to as ‘verbal overshadowing’ (or VO) in cognitive psychology. “[The] use of language may effectively hinder our recall of performers and performances” owing to the fact that “[in] music, the modality of the stimuli (aural) does not match the task (verbal description)” (Mitchell and MacDonald 2009, p.46). Consequently, focusing on language and discourse exclusively to interpret a musical performance can impact upon how one experiences the immediacy of that performance.

Hamilton’s earlier reference to intellectualisation acknowledges practitioners’ preferences for experiencing music intuitively in performance more than it signals the prevalence of anti-intellectualism in the Irish traditional music community (remembering Hamilton is a renowned flute maker, musician and he has a doctorate in music). Does apathy towards non-performance-based discourse and academic theorisations of the Irish traditional music equate to the kind of anti-intellectualism
that stubbornly resists academic or intellectual frameworks, or are language and theory simply perceived as secondary to experiencing music as live performance?

Discursive practices have played a role in the enculturation of many traditional musicians. By enculturation, I refer to “the process by which the individual learns his/her culture, and it must be emphasised that this is a never-ending process continuing throughout the life span of the individual” (Merriam 1964, p.146). In traditional music in Ireland, as in musics across the world, enculturation involves more than the transmission of repertoire and style; enculturation includes learning social and cultural norms and practices, and the discussions and exchanges that surround the lifeworld of traditional music, song, and dance (see Smith 2005, and Cawley 2013 for more). Discourse and discussion have traditionally formed part of experiencing enculturation in Irish traditional music. For example, musician and teacher Paddy Ryan recalls the analytical and reflexive attitudes that he observed among older musicians, even if the term ‘analysis’ was perhaps alien to them:

“These older musicians. They would play tunes and then they would talk about the tunes and they would talk about who did such a thing with the tune, and the various versions and the styles that various people used to play. If you mentioned the word analysis to them, they wouldn’t know what you were talking about, but they were analysing of course, all the time. The ideas that they had about music, and the way they used to think about the music. I found that they were very well informed on the music and the various styles and techniques, and all this. They had it all. It wasn’t passed on to them through any classes either because classes weren’t being held in their day. It was all a case of passing the whole thing from one person to another. But it worked, though. I was always marvelling at the amount of musical knowledge that they had, seeing as they never got any kind of training or any kind of formal tuition” (Personal Interview Ryan July 2014).

Conversely, musician Tony MacMahon articulates why he feels that discourse is somewhat superfluous to Irish traditional music and practitioners:
“Well in my opinion, traditional musicians have neither respect nor time for theory\textsuperscript{75} in relation to their art, which is Irish traditional music performance. [Discourse] has been of very little importance I would say, in my experience. I’m going back to the likes of Séamus Ennis, or Joe Cooley, Roger Sherlock, or Seamus Tansey, or Tommy Potts. There seemed to be an aversion to using the English language to describe music. I always had the impression that it was a solitary thing that went on in the musician’s head, and it was sufficient to know by the exchange of glances between people that they understood. The level of understanding didn’t generate an equivalent language of worldly description. It was understood that you felt the music...words did not seem to be appropriate for the experience one had had. Words seemed to be irrelevant” (Personal Interview MacMahon June 2014).

MacMahon’s acceptance of thinking and intellectualising about music (and possibly articulating such thoughts in language as an eloquent commentator), despite his unwillingness to value theorisation illustrates the complexity of this issue.

A number of key events and developments where discourse and the extra-academic Irish traditional music community have converged are discussed in the following pages, ranging from academic-styled public seminars on Irish music at music festivals, to publications, and radio and television broadcasts discussing Irish traditional music as a theoretical or academic subject in contexts that are accessible to the general public, rather than to an exclusively academic audience. In the following sections, I list festivals that programme public lectures and talks on various aspects of Irish traditional music. I then discuss significant publications such as Fintan Vallely’s \textit{Companion to Irish Traditional Music}, which includes a significantly large amount of contributions from extra-academic and extra-institutional practitioners of Irish traditional music. I also focus on some of the achievements of the renowned Dublin musician, author, collector, and commentator Breandán Breathnach. Radio and TV

\footnote{In this interview, MacMahon used the term theory to denote discourse rather than music theory.}
broadcasts such as *Our Musical Heritage* (1962), and *A River of Sound* (1995) are discussed, including their subsequent reception. I also examine the influential *Crossroads Conferences*.

5.2 Extra-Academic Discourse on Irish Traditional Music

Irrespective of perceptions of discourse, intellectualisation, and analysis around Irish traditional music, institutions and individuals outside Irish higher education structures have frequently instigated and facilitated public discourse on various aspects of Irish traditional music, through the publication of books and papers, and by organising lectures and seminars.\(^{76}\) Academic-styled lectures and presentations are commonplace at many Irish traditional festivals and events today. Popular music schools and festivals such as the Willie Clancy Summer School, the South Sligo Summer School, The Concertina Cruinniú, and The Joe Mooney Summer School, each programme public lectures on Irish traditional music, song, and dance. Since 2014, *Handed Down*, a series of presentations by traditional musicians on Kerry music and musicians has been organised in Scartaglen, county Kerry. Na Píobairí Uilleann (NPU, trans. the uilleann pipers, see footnote 19, p.46), host *Notes and Narratives*, subtitled *The Live Hand of Tradition*, a performance-based series of monthly lectures on traditional music (Na-

\(^{76}\) For example, lectures have formed part of the Willie Clancy summer school history from the outset. The inaugural school in 1973, which took place from July 28\(^{th}\) to August 4\(^{th}\), included a public lecture on ‘Willie Clancy – the man and his music’ by Clare musician and singer, Seamus MacMathúna, a ‘Lecture on Modes’ by Pilib Ó Laoire (1910-76), a music inspector with the Department of Education, and a lecture on ‘Traditions and Folklife of Clare by school founder, Muiris Ó Rócháin (1944-2011). That same year, Seán Óg Ó Tuama (1926-2006) delivered a lecture on ‘Sean-nós singing’, and broadcaster Ciarán MacMathúna (1925-2009) delivered a lecture on ‘Collecting Folk Music in Co. Clare’ (Willie Clancy Summer School Brochure 1973). In addition to these public lectures, there was also time allocated to ‘Group Discussion’. To this day, public lectures form part of the school’s schedule.
Piobairí Uilleann (2018). In addition, the Willie Clancy Summer School offers a week-long immersion in Irish traditional music called *Scope of Irish Traditional Music (Dúchas an Cheoil)*, run by fiddler Paddy Glackin and Cathal Goan, former Director General of *Raidió Téilifís Éireann* (Ireland’s national TV and radio broadcaster). The course, which has run at the school for over 30 years, aims to “introduce students to the essential elements of Irish Traditional Music Dance and Song” (Blas International Summer School of Irish Traditional Music and Dance 2018). For the first time in its history, in 2017, the *Scope* programme was officially accredited by the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick. This means that students can obtain three undergraduate credits once they take a subsequent week-long programme at *Blas*, the Irish World Academy’s residential summer-school, and once participants complete a written exam at the end of the *Blas* course.

5.3 Extra-Academic Literature on Irish Traditional Music

A number of prominent texts on various topics on Irish traditional music have been published by organisations and individuals operating external to Irish higher education. Rather than provide an extensive bibliographical overview of Irish traditional music publications, my primary focus here is to examine the publishing platforms that have interfaced and engaged with extra-academic writing and individuals, but again, I do not intend to disregard the significant intra-communal

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77 According to Willie Clancy Summer School documentation, the *Scope* course, at the time simply titled a ‘Foundation Course’, began in 1986 (Willie Clancy Summer School Brochure 1986).
78 *Blas* is an annual residential summer school established and operated on-campus by the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick. For more, see [http://www.blas.ie/](http://www.blas.ie/).
79 For a comprehensive bibliography of studies relating to Irish traditional music, song and dance, see Williams 2010 and Vallely 2011.
overlap that has existed (and continues to exist at unprecedented levels) between academia and the wider Irish traditional music community. Here, I discuss some major publications and individuals who have located discourse on Irish traditional music, song and dance, in primarily extra-institutional environments. I look at books which are regularly used by traditional music scholars, but which have a life outside institutional contexts as part of a public discourse on Irish music.

5.3.1 The Companion to Irish Traditional Music

Fintan Vallely’s *Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (editions 1 and 2 published in 1999 and 2011, respectively), described as “the first encyclopaedia of Irish traditional music” (Quinn 2000), locates discourse and analysis on Irish traditional music beyond the confines of institutional walls. The publication itself is an alphabetised volume that covers a wide spectrum of knowledge on Irish traditional music that includes musical instruments, key practitioners and personnel, events, publications, institutions, types of repertoire, historical developments in Irish traditional music, and musical terminology, for example.

Although this publication appears in my review of literature and scholarship in chapter two, I have also located the *Companion* in this discussion because of the editor’s ethos of drawing on so many practitioners as writers. Contributors to both editions of

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80 In contemporary Irish academia, many third-level lecturers, tutors, and researchers involved in third-level traditional music education are traditional music practitioners, and/or active members of a traditional music community. Breandán Breathnach, discussed later, lectured on Irish traditional music in Trinity College Dublin, and was Director of Irish Folk Music at the Department of Irish Folklore at University College Dublin from 1974 to 1977. Breathnach’s association with higher education institutes has not been overlooked here. However, his involvement with public discourse on Irish traditional music through platforms extending beyond academic communities positions him as a key individual in this extra-academic narrative.
Vallely’s publication include a significant number of traditional music practitioners not connected to higher education or music institutions. As observed by Toner Quinn, musician and publisher of the Journal of Music:

“Vallely has somehow managed to rise above the commercial maelstrom that makes a mockery of the music and inject a bit of discernment and intelligence into the whole affair. How did he do it? Simple, he asked the musicians and those intrinsically involved in the music to do the contributing! For they are the people that know more about it than anyone, and in this volume their writing is very clear, thoughtful and constructive. Furthermore, there is no dogma” (Quinn 2000).

However, despite its apparent democratic inclusionary ethos, the publication of the first volume of Vallely’s Companion to Irish Traditional Music was met with a degree of resistance among certain stakeholders. Vallely recalls how he perceived the initial reception of the Companion:

“A lot of criticisms of the first book were by people who themselves had written nothing over the years...all the people that attacked me when I did the book, they all criticised it, they all slandered and abused it. Then after a while they all calmed down and they just regarded it as being a fact. Then the second time it came out, there were over 200 hundred people writing, so there were fewer people to be criticising this time around. I didn’t do it deliberately to insulate myself. I did it so I might get a different type of information, like people’s own opinions, and musicians were becoming more articulate. A lot of younger musicians involved in writing the second book were the experts in the instruments. A lot of them had done degrees in the meantime” (Personal Interview Vallely November 2014).

Vallely’s text remains a prominent feature on reading lists for Irish traditional music programmes around the world and is considered widely as a reliable and compendious reference text for Irish traditional music.
5.3.2 Breandán Breathnach

Musician, author, collector, and lecturer Breandán Breathnach (1912-1985) played a central role in connecting the worlds of Irish traditional music and academic discourse. Breathnach, described as “the single most important activist in Irish traditional music in the twentieth century” (Moylan 2011, p.83), was considered a doyen of Irish traditional music studies due to his prolific and extensive engagement with Irish traditional music as a collector and publisher of traditional melodies, as a primary founder of Na Píobairí Uilleann (see footnote 19 on p.46) in 1968, as a lecturer on Irish traditional music at Trinity College, Dublin, and as an author and editor who contributed to a wide-ranging gamut of publications on Irish traditional music. Although Breathnach was a noted lecturer, he is located in this section as his work was largely accessible to, and published for, the general public, rather than confined to an academic or research community.

In 1971 Breathnach was one of the founders of the Folk Music Society of Ireland, and co-editor with Hugh Shields, of the society’s Éigse Cheol Tíre: Irish Folk Music Studies, first issued in 1973. He was director of the folk music section of the Folklore Department at University College Dublin from 1974, and he also established Cláirseóirí na hÉireann (trans. the harpers’ association) with harpist Janet Harbison in 1983. Breathnach edited and published the journal Ceol, a publication on Irish traditional music aimed at the general public, intermittently from 1963 until 1985, making “Irish folk music a subject for serious published study for the first time since the Journal of the Irish Folk Song Society virtually ceased publication in the early 1920s” (Carolan 1986,
Thanks in part to the publication of his *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland* (1971), *Dancing in Ireland* (1983), *Ceol Rince na hÉireann* (published posthumously in 1989), and his five *Ceol Rince na hÉireann* tune collections (published from 1963 to 1999), Breathnach was widely regarded as a distinguished authority on Irish traditional music, song, and dance. He also contributed 56 writings to *An Piobaire*, the bulletin of *Na Piobairí Uilleann*, first published in 1969, and now printed quarterly.

In addition, Breathnach contributed to *Dal gCais*, a Clare-based cultural magazine founded by editor Harry Hughes and published in eleven volumes from 1972 to 1993. *Dal gCais* “became a magazine for those interested in local history and traditional music; with poetry as a permanent feature”, and “the first of its kind in Clare, maybe the first of its kind anywhere in the country” (Hughes 1991, p.5). The publication remains synonymous with the Willie Clancy Summer School, due to its geographical positioning, and the cohort of key individuals involved. The magazine’s editor Harry Hughes and contributor, business manager, and producer, Muiris Ó Rócháin (1944-2011) were primary organisers of the school from its establishment in 1973. Breathnach was a central cog in many important initiatives that promoted Irish traditional music, and this section exploring the multi-faceted ways in which he worked on behalf of Irish traditional music underscores his significance as an advocate who engaged with discourse and intellectualisation on Irish traditional music, from a largely extra-academic perspective.

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81 Nicholas Carolan describes *Ceol* as a publication that “made Irish folk music a subject for serious study”, bringing a “new accuracy to the study of the music, and kept a critical eye, usually constructive, on its progress in a period of popularity and revival” (Carolan 1986, p.10).
5.3.3 Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann’s Treoir

*Treoir* (trans. index), *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann’s* quarterly magazine was established in 1968, and has been edited from the outset by CCÉ Director-General Labhrás Ó Murchú. Described as an “internal information outlet and morale-booster” (Vallely 2011, p.149), the publication details national and international CCÉ events, occasional album reviews, eulogy-like pieces on deceased musicians, musical notation for selected tunes, song lyrics, as well as commentary pieces and articles on a variety of topics on Irish traditional music, song, and dance. Over the years, *Treoir*, through Ó Murchú’s editorial has, not unlike the organisation more generally, surrounded itself in controversy. On occasion Ó Murchú has used the editorial as a platform to criticise organisations such as the Arts Council as well as “[take] stands on morality and the family (against divorce, contraception and abortion) and on national politics” (Vallely 2011, p.523). Although becoming more concise in recent years, Ó Murchú’s editorial pieces have given an insightful snapshot into the organisation’s ideology throughout different periods in Irish history. Any further discussion of *Treoir* is beyond the scope of this research, as, despite its longevity, the publication has only really served its own membership and interests, in a somewhat parochial manner, and rarely does its material relate to anything that happens in the wider world of Irish traditional music that is not affiliated to CCÉ.

5.3.4 The Journal of Music (in Ireland)

Founded in 2000 by writer and traditional fiddler, Toner Quinn, the *Journal of Music* is an online journal that publishes critical essays, and reviews of albums, live performances, and publications. In addition, it also publishes daily updates in
newsletter form, on upcoming events and opportunities relating to music. When founded in 2000, the journal, then called the Journal of Music in Ireland, was also published bi-monthly in print, but from April 2009, the publication removed its reference to Ireland, “to accommodate a broader international focus” (Quinn 2011, p.374) Focusing on Irish traditional music, Western art music, contemporary music, jazz, and popular music, the Journal of Music became an online-only platform in 2010. Toner Quinn, the journal's editor describes “the employment of musicians and composers as writers” as “a key editorial trait of the magazine”, with a “core aim of increasing dialogue among practitioners” (ibid). Today, the Journal of Music receives financial support from the Arts Council of Ireland. Its commentary often reflects on music’s relationship to social and political issues, and because of the support of the Arts Council, it is free to access, although advertising is available for a fee.

5.4 Radio and Television Productions on Irish Traditional Music

In addition to publications and public events, a number of seminal media productions have facilitated a public forum for wider discourse on Irish traditional music. Television and radio productions have contributed much to public discourse on Irish music through highly visible and accessible platforms. Although Irish traditional music has featured to varying degrees in television series such as The Pure Drop, The Raw Bar, Sé Mo Laoch, and Canúintí Ceoil, for example, developments such as Our Musical Heritage, and A River of Sound, contextualised Irish traditional music within

82 The Journal of Music can be accessed online at www.journalofmusic.com
academic discourses to unprecedented levels.\textsuperscript{83} Given their particular importance, it is necessary to look more closely at the latter two productions in terms of their origins, content, reception, and impact upon the practices of the wider Irish traditional music community.

\section*{5.4.1 Our Musical Heritage}

Sean Ó Riada’s ground-breaking radio series \textit{Our Musical Heritage}, comprised 14 programmes broadcast between July 7\textsuperscript{th} and October 13\textsuperscript{th}, 1962. It spoke for the first time about Irish traditional music “as an art form in its own right” (Carolan 2005, p.12), with a view to making traditional musicians conscious of their own art (Ó Canainn 1982). It also critiqued the condition of Irish traditional music of that time to suggest some kind of standard (ibid). The series discussed, analysed, and theorised foundational elements of Irish traditional music and song, outlining stylistic characteristics and repertoire associated with various regions throughout Ireland. Utilising recordings to demonstrate regional variances between sean-nós singers and traditional fiddlers, Ó Riada defined characteristics of music and song traditions as he observed them, constructing a theoretical and analytical vocabulary with which to describe and communicate traditional music in terms of dynamics, melodic intervals,

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{83} The \textit{Pure Drop} was broadcast on RTÉ (\textit{Raidió Teilifís Éireann}, trans. radio television Ireland) television from 1989 to 1996 and was produced by musician Tony MacMahon. \textit{The Raw Bar} (2003-2004), presented by Donegal fiddler Dermot McLaughlin, directed by Philip King and Nuala O’Connor of \textit{Hummingbird Productions}, was broadcast by RTÉ, as an “interrogation of traditional music and its current state of health” (Irish Film and Television Network 2018). \textit{Sé mo Laoch} (trans. he is my hero) has been broadcast by TG4 since 2001, and honours Irish traditional musicians and singers, in the style of biographical documentary. The current series is produced for TG4 by Niamh Ní Bhaoill of Kerry-based production company \textit{Sibéal Teo}, and directed by Donegal fiddler, Ciarán Ó Maonaigh. \textit{Canúintí Ceoil} (trans. musical dialects) was broadcast in 2007 by TG4, and produced by \textit{Sibéal Teo}, and its six episodes focused on different regional styles of Irish traditional music.}
melismatic ornamentation, and melodic variation, for example. He also demonstrated such musical rudiments on piano. Ó Riada describes the series' rationale as follows:

“[M]y intentions were mainly two: to introduce to those not acquainted with it already, the rich and comparatively untouched pastures of Irish traditional music, both vocal and instrumental; and for those who already know the subject, to criticise (to some extent) the present condition of Irish traditional music with a view to suggesting some kind of standard” (Ó Riada 1982, p.19).

Ó Riada’s rhetoric throughout the series did not eschew controversy, and in one infamous instance, he described céilí band music as “meaningless noise with as much relation to music as the buzzing of a bluebottle in an upturned jar” (Ó Riada 1982, p.74), a contentious statement to make given the popularity enjoyed by a number of reputable céilí bands such as the Tulla and Kilfenora céilí bands from county Clare.Ó Riada had familiarised himself with representative exponents of music and song throughout various regional musical strongholds but he also benefitted from the consultancy of key musicians, and personal acquaintances such as John Kelly, the Clare fiddler and concertina player who undoubtedly shaped how Ó Riada experienced and understood Irish traditional music.

Ó Riada’s approach to academically describing and categorising characteristics of Irish traditional music and song was novel and unprecedented. In 2011, *The Rolling Wave*, a weekly Irish traditional music radio programme presented and produced by

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84 Céilí bands are typically dance bands consisting of piano and drums, combined with various melody instruments played in unison. For more on the history and development of céilí bands, see Vallely 2011.

85 John Kelly (1912-87) was a fiddler, and concertina-player from Loop Head, in west county Clare. Kelly, who moved to Dublin in 1945, played in the Castle Céilí Band and in Ceoltóiri Chualann, formed by Seán Ó Riada. Kelly’s shop ‘The Horse Shoe’ was a hub of activity for Dublin traditional musicians, as well as for visiting musicians who congregated there during trips to Dublin.
musician Peter Browne on RTÉ Radio 1, the national radio station of Ireland, dedicated 15 programmes to replaying and reflecting upon Our Musical Heritage, inviting a well-known individual from the traditional music community to discuss Ó Riada’s programme each week. In that 2011 feature, Seán Ó Riada’s son Peadar reflected on the significance of his father’s pioneering work on Our Musical Heritage:

“If you like, the 1916 Proclamation of Irish music is this series in a way because it was the first time that a language was found to explain what it was...there was nothing there before him. There was not analysis in that way of Irish music. Therefore, he had to start and dream up concepts, in a way, to explain a very, very difficult concept” (Ó Riada 2011).

Irrespective of the veracity of such a claim that no analytical vocabulary previously existed for Irish traditional music, Ó Riada’s assertion resonates with many others when he credits his father with pioneering such analytical frameworks. Ó Riada’s use of language when referring to the ‘1916 Proclamation’ also highlights the political connotations inherent in his father’s quest to provide an analytical framework for Irish traditional music, comparable to Western art music in Ireland at the time. On the same

86 Contributors to this series, but who are not discussed in this chapter include singer, harpist, and academic, Síle Denvir; musician and Hot House Flowers frontman, Liam Ó Maonlaí; piper and broadcaster, Robbie Hannan; piper, academic, and author of Seán Ó Riada’s biography, Tomás Ó Canainn; fiddler and member of The Gloaming, Martin Hayes; fiddler Dermot McLaughlin; musician and composer, Emer Mayock; singer and flute player, Muireann Nic Amhlaoimh; accordion player, Paudie O’Connor; Riverdance composer, Bill Whelan; and musician, composer and academic, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin.

87 The ‘Proclamation’ refers to the 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic, a document that was read by teacher, poet, and writer, Pádraig Pearse, one of the leaders of the 1916 Easter Rising, outside the General Post Office in Dublin on April 24th, 1916. The document, penned by seven signatories who were subsequently executed by the British military in Dublin, was addressed to the people of Ireland, and it acted as a call to citizens to reclaim ownership of an Irish Republic from the control of Britain.

88 Perhaps Our Musical Heritage offered the wider public an accessible analytical and theoretical framework for Irish traditional music for the first time, but Henebry’s Irish Music (1903) and WH Flood’s A History of Irish Music (1905) both discussed characteristics of Irish traditional music such as modes, scales, and tonality, for example.
topic, on the Rolling Wave programme, sean-nós singer Áine Uí Cheallaigh gave her response to Ó Riada's portrayal of the Munster region sean-nós singing tradition, noting in particular the technical vocabulary he employed to communicate his observations and his compelling style of presentation:

“I love the authority in his voice. He could command the attention of people who had never before attended to traditional music...here he is putting a language of classical analysis on something that he knows isn’t classical. It’s pioneering, bringing those new concepts to a new audience and really bringing traditional singing to its rightful place. He’s also establishing an aesthetic and he’s not doing it in any form of apologia that I think traditional singers maybe felt. But here he is talking about the singer as a composer. He is using words like coloratura, which the traditional singer may not understand, but to a new audience, it gave it a whole new context” (Uí Cheallaigh 2011).

Uí Cheallaigh’s interpretation of Our Musical Heritage is significant and revealing. First, the status, conviction, and authority demonstrated by Ó Riada was perceived as powerful. Second, we can see that Ó Riada had the ability to speak convincingly to those who were not familiar with Irish traditional music. Third, he drew on the analytical frameworks, and the social prestige of Western art music when discussing musical characteristics of Irish traditional music, thereby expanding the cultural capital of Irish traditional music in the process, as Uí Cheallaigh suggests.

Another respondent to The Rolling Wave commemorative series, musician and broadcaster Jackie Small89, proposed that in addition to Ó Riada’s stated target

89 Uilleann piper, fiddler, accordion player, collector, and broadcaster, Jackie Small, is a graduate of the MA in Ethnomusicology at the Irish World Academy, at the University of Limerick. Following the death of Breandán Breathnach in 1985, Small edited and posthumously published volumes 4 and 5 of Breathnach’s Ceol Rince na hÉireann, a publication of notated repertoire that had been collected by Breathnach.
audience, he also attempted to contextualise Irish traditional music for those involved in academic studies, in disciplines such as musicology:

“He announced at the beginning of the series that it was directed at a target audience that comprised of two prongs: people who knew nothing about traditional music, and people who knew a little, but would like to know a little more. But I also suspect that there was a third unannounced target audience there because Ó Riada came from the world of classical music and he knew that all the explication, all of the academic research in Irish music in his day, was into classical music. And I sense that he wanted to establish Irish traditional music as a valid subject for treatment in an academic setting and perhaps for those reasons he overstated, maybe, some of the aspects of what he talked about. The technical musical terms like ‘melismatic’, intervallic, which would have been, shall we say, beyond the vocabulary of his target audience. But Ó Riada was a pioneer not alone in Irish traditional music and in granting status to Irish traditional music, but also in granting status to the explication of Irish traditional music” (Small 2012).

Again, Small’s contribution provides an example of how Ó Riada’s motivations were perhaps influenced by a desire to raise the prestige of Irish traditional music, while using analytical methodologies more usually associated with Western art music. Small’s opinion also signals an important development in the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education when he quite rightly highlights the predominance of Western art music in Irish higher education in the 1960s in Ireland.

Ó Riada’s Our Musical Heritage was a pioneering, daring, and seminal development in the timeline of Irish traditional music in Ireland for many of the reasons outlined here, but the series also has specific relevance for this research. Our Musical Heritage constructed a vocabulary and an analytical methodology for Irish traditional music. However, the series was also the first significant platform that presented academic-styled discourse and analysis to an extra-academic demographic.
This moment of interface between Irish traditional music and a broad radio audience, presented facets of academic discourse to a general population through the widely accessible medium of radio. Such an original and significant development would naturally attract some degree of resistance, but literature and documented commentary suggest that many contentions with Ó Riada’s programme content were valid and worthy of analysis. To dismiss such concerns as conservative or proprietorial would belie the pedagogical and philosophical potential of understanding the complex nuances of how Irish traditional music in Ireland is represented and mediated. Ó Riada’s controversial statements about céilí band performance, and his authoritative ‘essentialising’ of Irish traditional music conflicted with how many practitioners experienced Irish traditional music. Certain elements of Irish traditional music were ‘canonised’ as representative portrayals of style and repertoire etc. by an individual who was perceived by some practitioners as unfamiliar with the wider idiomatic nuances of Irish traditional music.

Ó Riada’s unapologetically authoritative tone, coupled with his divisive rebuke of céilí bands, accordions (and accordionists), and piano accompaniment (wryly lampooned by Ó Riada in the series) were met with varying degrees of disapproval and resistance. According to Tomás Ó Canainn, those who disagreed with Ó Riada’s assertions were either “pseudo-experts [who] felt threatened by Seán’s adoption of a position of authority” or those who “felt that he was a brash newcomer, with little background in the standard ways of traditional musicians playing almost by instinct” (Ó Canainn, 1982, p.14). Author Barry Taylor is reluctant to dismiss the concerns of traditional practitioners and is quick to state that “among their number were a goodly
slice of Ireland’s most venerated musical practitioners” (Taylor 2007, p.331). Rationale and judgement aside, the reception of Our Musical Heritage was entangled in controversy and stakeholders diverged into “pro- or contra- Ó Riada camps” (ibid). Ó Riada inevitably constructed a manifestation of canon in Irish traditional music by prioritising and showcasing a sample of regional stylists. For example, in selecting performers for Our Musical Heritage, Ó Riada’s focus was largely limited to instrumentalists from areas such as Clare, Sligo, North Kerry, and West Limerick. Intimating that Ó Riada was not adequately familiar with Irish traditional music and song to adopt such an authoritative positioning as that portrayed in Our Musical Heritage, Taylor suggests that the selection of exponents chosen to illustrate Ó Riada’s arguments relied excessively on John Kelly’s personal and musical networks throughout the west coast of Ireland (Taylor 2007, p.356). Taylor also highlights the manner in which each musical example is presented to support Ó Riada’s postulations, rather than present their own beliefs and experiences (ibid). Breandán Breathnach found the series to be deficient to such an extent that his review of the subsequent 1982 publication of Our Musical Heritage in book form described the series as “[not living] up to the claims made for it by its editors”, and added that “regrettably it cannot be recommended as a reliable introduction to Irish music and song” (Breathnach 1982, p.90). If Our Musical Heritage provided a controversial interface between academic-styled discourse and the wider public in the 1960s, reaching people by the democratic

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90 Barry Taylor is an author, and fiddle, banjo and concertina player from Manchester, England. He is author of ‘Music in a Breeze of Wind’, (Taylor 2013) a publication that explores Irish traditional music in rural west Clare from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.
and widely popular technology of radio, the television series *A River of Sound* did the same in the 1990s. It is to this production that I now turn my attention.

5.4.2 A River of Sound

*A River of Sound* was a seven-part television series broadcast in Ireland, Britain, and the United States in 1995, and presented by Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin. Part documentary, part academic lecture, and part music video, the series introduced its general audience to Irish traditional music, while also showcasing a small group of what Anthony McCann has termed ‘avant garde’ Irish traditional musicians (McCann 2010, p.3). The series focused primarily on the performance of Irish traditional music, song and dance, and showcased specially commissioned music by Ó Súilleabháin and the well-known musician and producer Dónal Lunny⁹¹, featuring traditional instruments juxtaposed with chamber orchestra, saxophone and kora, a type of African harp (Vallely 2011, p.577). The production proved to be quite divisive and polarised stakeholders in the traditional music community, many of whom occupied various positions on the proverbial tradition-innovation spectrum as would be addressed in *The Crossroads Conference* (1996). Ó Súilleabháin provides some insight into the origins of the series, and reflects on its reception:

“A River of Sound came about from my involvement as an interviewee in *Bringing It All Back Home*, which of course is from *Hummingbird* as well. Philip King and Nuala O’Connor. Philip and Nuala approached me after that and asked me if I would like to do a separate series. I said that was fine and that I’d sketch it out. And I came up with the title *A River of Sound* thinking that it was new. And then Nuala reminded me that it

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⁹¹ Dónal Lunny is a musician, arranger, composer, and record producer. He has been a member of many influential Irish traditional music bands such as *Planxty*, the *Bothy Band*, and *Moving Hearts*. He is also considered one of the primary exponents to popularise the bouzouki in Irish traditional music.
is a term I had used with them in my interviews for Bringing It All Back Home. So, the metaphor of the tradition as a river came out of that...of course it sparked a national debate. The subtitle of it was 'the changing course of Irish traditional music'. I was more interested in taking a snapshot of the tradition as it was changing rather than taking a snapshot of the tradition as it had come down to us. Obviously, both of them are there. I think that came from a number of things. Obviously working in higher education all the time, I was working with a 17 to 21, 22-year-old age group already for 20 years at that stage. So, I was very much in touch with a younger generation of traditional musicians although they were a generation of traditional musicians that were interacting with academia. [A River of Sound] activated The Crossroads Conference. It activated a lot of anger. It activated a lot of negativity. Some of it was unpleasant. I wasn’t at all impressed by the stance of most of the people that were objecting to the series and at one point I famously got what I term an audio hate-cassette, which unfortunately has gone missing, or maybe fortunately, although [Niall] Keegan says it’s still doing the rounds” (Personal Interview Ó Súilleabháin March 2014).

Ó Súilleabháin is correct in his assertion that A River of Sound caused debate among the Irish traditional music community. The contributions of academic and singer Anthony McCann and musician Tony MacMahon below, give an insight into why the series caused such debate.

A number of connections can be observed between A River of Sound and Our Musical Heritage. Both were produced and presented by musicians and composers working in Irish higher education, and both productions targeted a mainstream general audience. There is also a direct line between Ó Riada and Ó Súilleabháin, as Ó Súilleabháin was a student of Ó Riada at UCC. However, while Ó Riada proposed to define and create a vocabulary for Irish traditional music as it existed up to 1962, A River of Sound, subtitled ‘the Changing Course of Irish Traditional Music’, aimed to showcase to the general public, experimental or “Third Stream” developments in the

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92 Micheál Ó Súilleabháin used the term ‘third stream’ in reference to new ‘progressive’ artistic directions being explored in Irish traditional music. Drawing on the writings of Gunther Schüller on explorations of jazz and classical music, Ó Súilleabháin’s ‘third stream’ in the Irish context refers to
performance of Irish traditional music, while also providing a more general introduction to Irish traditional music as a whole. To some, this ambitious approach obscured the primary objective of the series to some degree and caused considerable controversy among musicians and enthusiasts who criticised the manner in which the production was perceived to misrepresent how a wide range of individuals experienced Irish traditional music. The musicians featured on *A River of Sound* were not presented merely as working within a particular experimental or progressive stream of Irish traditional music but were ostensibly presented as reflective of the wider evolution of the genre. As Anthony McCann observes:

“If the ‘third stream’ had been a foregrounded narrative in *A River of Sound*, outlining a separatist and somewhat marginal development within Irish traditional music, it would have caused little controversy. Without it, *A River of Sound* can easily be understood as both a vehicle for avant-gardist claims and as a showcase for Ó Súilleabháin himself, both ushered in under the auspices of a general introduction to the genre. It is little wonder that *A River of Sound* caused consternation” (McCann 2010, p.6).

Although the production may have unintentionally (or otherwise) obfuscated its own rationale, the series was deemed to have alienated a significant proportion of the Irish traditional music community, as suggested by musician and broadcaster Tony MacMahon, who claims to have received correspondence in the form of 168 calls and letters in connection with his appearance on *The Late Late Show* in February 1995, in connection with his appearance on *The Late Late Show* in February 1995, in

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“young experimental musicians” who are “on a different course that veers off the mainstreams of Irish traditional music and jazz to form a new river of their own” (McCann 2010, p.2).

*The Late Late Show* is a weekly television chat show broadcast on RTÉ 1. Described by RTÉ as “Ireland’s most popular and prestigious television show” and “the longest running chat show in the world”, the show first aired in 1962, and was hosted by the iconic Gay Byrne (RTÉ 2018). It is significant that *A River of Sound* and the subsequent debate that it attracted, was given such a public and mainstream platform on what is still considered Ireland’s flagship television programme. At the time of
which he responded to a portion of the specially-commissioned music featured in *A River of Sound* (MacMahon 1999, p.113). Echoing McCann’s misgivings on the apparent theme of the series, MacMahon challenges what he perceives as the misrepresentative and misleading *modus operandi* of the production:

“After all if a man spends thirty years playing the fiddle for his neighbours in east Clare, he will not be impressed by one individual’s personal speculation on the likely development of his music in the next century, delivered as Gospel whether by musician or Mullah...what seems to have made this more galling still...was a perceived hidden agenda, that the innovators claiming to chart the course of traditional Irish music...happen to belong to one or two small musical cliques, representing part of the top end of the commercial folk music sector” (MacMahon 1999, p.114).

Widely respected for its production values, *A River of Sound* was an important piece of work, presented by a well-respected musician and academic, and produced by a respected production company, *Hummingbird Productions*, to the highest of standards. Ó Súilleabháin’s proximity and access to fresh developments in Irish traditional music undoubtedly placed him in an optimum position to showcase what he felt were exciting developments in Irish traditional music in Ireland, and perhaps if this production was marketed as a peripheral insight into one stream of Irish traditional music, few could have argued with its remit, notwithstanding the unprecedented status and opportunity afforded to the production due to its audience reach. It is unlikely that a production showcasing other ‘non-experimental’ approaches to Irish traditional music could have competed with the marketability of *A River of Sound*, and consequently, the series as a privileged mediator, carried prestige, authority, and

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this *A River of Sound* feature, the *Late Late* was a very significant platform on one of Ireland’s two television channels, both operated by the national broadcaster, *Raidió Teilifís Éireann* (RTÉ).
considerable cultural capital. I return to this point in my concluding section of this chapter, where I discuss how the reception of *A River of Sound* may well impact upon perceptions of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education, given the significant role played by Micheál Ó Súilleabháin in both *A River of Sound*, and in seminal curricular developments in tertiary-level Irish traditional music pedagogy.

5.5 Community-based Conferences

5.5.1 The Crossroads Conference I

Responding in part to the controversy stimulated by *A River of Sound*, *Crosbhealach an Cheoil*, or *The Crossroads Conference*, held in 1996, (described as the first ever conference within Irish traditional music (Vallely 1999, p.7)) and subtitled ‘Tradition and Change’ was instigated by Cormac Breathnach and Fintan Vallely, and held at the Temple Bar Music Centre, Dublin, from April 19th to 21st, 1996. This *Crossroads Conference*, for the first time located academic-styled conferences around what Fintan Vallely describes as “the new academia of the Traditional music scene, on its oral-tradition intelligentsia, and in particular, its players” (Vallely 1999, p.5). Members of the organising committee also included Liz Doherty, Hammy Hamilton, and Eithne Vallely, and a range of topical issues relating to Irish traditional music were discussed.\(^{94}\) The conference featured over 40 presenters, and had a total of 350 participants throughout the

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\(^{94}\) Topics covered at the conference included: “1. Tradition and change: who we are and the way we were, sensitivity toward and respect for the past, innovation and development, professionalism. 2. Education and organisations: state support, the music Diaspora, political identity in music, gender in music practice, the oral tradition. 3. Commercialisation: history and myths, music fashions, revival and revitalisation, commoditisation” (Vallely 2011, p.173).
weekend (Vallely 2011, p.174). Owing to the debate resulting from *A River of Sound*, and in particular, a special aforementioned feature on the series on RTÉ’s *The Late Late Show*, in which musician and broadcaster Tony MacMahon challenged aspects of the production, both MacMahon and *A River of Sound* presenter and producer, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, were invited to present keynote addresses on the opening night of the conference.

Significantly, the 1996 *Crossroads Conference* provided a well-attended conference platform with which to facilitate and encourage discourse on Irish traditional music among practitioners and enthusiasts, a platform that was provided and coordinated by individuals outside of academic and higher education structures and “essentially free of any tenured institutional ties which might compromise independent thinking or suggest that the academic world was any kind of superior habitat for good music” (Vallely 2013, p.11). However, many participants that contributed papers to the conference held positions in third-level institutions at the time. Regardless of occupation, the vast majority of presenters were also practitioners who engaged with traditional music through performance. In essence, the first *Crossroads Conference* yielded yet another significant interface between the discourse of the academic world, and that of the extra-academic “oral-tradition intelligentsia”

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95 Speakers included: Pat Ahern, Fenella Bazin, Margaret Bennett, Georgina Boyes, Deasún Breathnach, Barry Burgess, Nicholas Carolan, Barra Ó Cinnéide, Sean Corcoran, Matt Cranitch, Catherine Curran, Martin Dowling, Martin Gaffney, Cathal Goan, Reg Hall, William Hammond, Robbie Hannan, Janet Harbison, Áine Hensey, Harry Hughes, Lillis Ó Laoire, Cathy Larson Sky, Caomhín Mac Aodha, Roibard Mac Goráin, Dermot McLoughlin, Mick Moloney, Robin Morton, John Moulden, Tom Munnelly, Joe O’Donovan, Máire O’Keeffe, Muiris Ó Rócháin, Paschal Preston, Rina Schiller, Thérèse Smith, Sally K. Sommers Smith, Seamus Tansey, Janet Topp Fargion, Johanne Trew, Rionach Úi Ógáin, and Desi Wilkinson.
referred to by Vallely (Vallely 1999, p.5). As an event, the 1996 Crossroads Conference was not as controversial as either Our Musical Heritage or A River of Sound and in some ways can be seen as a platform that democratised debate on Irish traditional music to some extent, as a call for papers invited presentations from a range of contributors and involved a large cohort of the Irish traditional music community.96

5.5.2 The Crossroads Conference 2

Following on from the first, the second Crossroads Conference or, Crosbhealach an Cheoil took place at the Magee Campus of the University of Ulster, Derry from 25th to 27th April 2003. Drawing on a more international base than the previous 1996 conference, the 2003 conference, organised by Desi Wilkinson, Thérèse Smith, Colette Moloney, and Paul McGettrick, focused on traditional music and education. Two keynote addresses were delivered, one by author and University of Chicago academic, Philip Bohlman, and the other by musician and teacher Caoimhín MacAoidh. Ten speakers were invited to participate while 24 others were selected to present following a call for papers (Vallely, 2013, p.18). The ambitions of the conference, as detailed in a subsequent publication of the conference proceedings (on the tenth anniversary of the conference) were to explore (i) the variety of teaching contexts, (ii) the goals of teaching in music, and (iii) teaching for the future (ibid, p.17).97

96 The proceedings from this 1996 conference were published in 1999. Interestingly, one of the keynote speakers, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin replaced his keynote with a paper on Dublin fiddler Tommy Potts.

97 The following presented papers at the conference: Alistair Anderson, Margaret Bennett, Philip V. Bohlman, Barry Burgess, Frank Claudy, Seán Corcoran, Mick Coyne, Matt Cranitch, Pierre Crépillon, Johanne Devlin Trew, Aileen Dillane, Liz Doherty, Martin Dowling, Janet Harbison, Caoimhín Mac Aoidh, Séamus Mac Mathúna, Karen Marshalsay, Anthony McCann, Marie McCarthy, Paul McGettrick, Mel Mercier, Jo Miller, Colette Moloney, John Moulden, Tom Munnely, Bob Newton, Siobhán Ni Chonaráin, Frode Nyvold, Jimmy O’Brien Moran, Conal Ó Gráda, Muiris Ó Rócháin, Stan Reeves, Tes
Representing interests in areas such as university music programmes, post-graduate research, teacher-training colleges, graded examinations, and instrumental teaching, contributors from Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, USA, Sweden, Israel, France, and Canada (between 90 and 100 delegates in all), attended and presented 34 papers thematically structured in six sections (Vallely 2013, p.19). Section one explored ‘Issues in Oral Teaching and Learning’; section two looked at ‘Organisational Teaching’; section three discussed ‘Third Level Approaches in Traditional Music’; section four looked at ‘Print and Technology in Teaching’; section five dealt with ‘Policy in Traditional Music Education’; while the final section six problematised ‘Concepts of “Traditional”’ (ibid, p.6). The 2003 Crossroads Conference presented a wide-ranging and important miscellany of experiences of, and critical reflections on, the ways in which traditional and folk musics are located within educational structures. While the conference provided an invaluable platform for presenting interesting individual case studies, there is little evidence to suggest that the conference initiated any form of collective revaluation of how best to institutionalise traditional folk and traditional musics in structured educational environments. As conference attendee, Barry Ó Séaghda remarks in a review of the event:

“One of the disappointments of the conference was that time and time again debate was cut off in order to accommodate the next speaker. As the issues raised were potentially very interesting, and as this kind of event contributes to public as opposed to institutional life only if it really engages with fundamental issues, it might have been better, though cruel to some potential speakers, to have reduced the number of speakers and opened up the space for debate. We could have done with more debate

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Slominski, Sally Sommers Smith, Gunnar Stubseid, Barry Taylor, Eithne Vallely, and Cinzia Yates-Curtis.
on the compatibility between traditional music values and institutional values, and on what the academy can give to the wider music community” (Ó Seaghda 2003).

In essence, Ó Seaghda argues that the structure of the event somewhat precluded discussion, rather than provide fresh insights into how to negotiate the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in a variety of contexts.

Notwithstanding these observations, the second Crossroads Conference responded to, and facilitated a willingness to share insights into experiences and perspectives on comparative instances of locating traditional and folk musics within formalised educational environments. A third Crossroads Conference took the form of a conference meeting in 2012 at NAFCO, The North Atlantic Fiddle Convention. Titled Ó Cos go Cluas (trans. from leg to ear), this meeting (comprising 80 papers in 20 sessions) explored the transition of dance music (of fiddle music in particular) from a social, dance music, to a music that is enjoyed for its aesthetic qualities as an autonomous artform, not exclusively performed for dance. The proceedings of this conference were expected to be published in late 2017. According to email correspondence sent to this researcher by Vallely, (May 2017), a fourth (and possibly final) Crossroads Conference on the theme of “The classless aesthetic: the dogged persistence of Traditional-music style” has been considered, although no definitive arrangements have been made to date. Next, I turn my attention to perspectives shared by community stakeholders in research interviewees that discussed the general concept of institutionalising Irish traditional music in Irish higher education.
5.6 Community Perspectives on Third-Level Folk and Traditional Music Pedagogy

Community perspectives and their associated discourses have frequently informed the narrative on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. The nature and tangibility of such perspectives can often be regarded as anecdotal as they are commonly perceived to be missing from the public or academic record. The purpose of this section of the chapter is to present and critically reflect on instances where community perspectives have interfaced with academia, higher education and academic discourse on Irish traditional music in a variety of media. Here, I focus on three primary concerns. First, I outline how community perspectives have been contextualised in existing research on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional music pedagogy. Second, I discuss a significant seminar event entitled “Trends in Traditional Music in the Late Twentieth Century”, held at the Willie Clancy Summer School on July 6th 2000.98 The event was of particular significance to this research as it marked a pioneering first step in providing a forum for discourse and debate on Irish traditional music in Irish higher education between members of the Irish traditional music community and a prominent academic. I also draw on discourse on this issue published in the Journal of Music in 2007. The third concern of this section focuses specifically on my fieldwork interviews with research informants who respond freely to open-ended questions seeking their opinions on the concept of institutionalising Irish traditional music in Irish higher education.

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98 The Willie Clancy Summer School is an annual summer school for Irish traditional music, song, and dance, held in Miltown Malbay, county Clare, each July. The school, “the first and biggest of such events” (Ó Rocháin 2011, p.754) combines traditional music tuition, recitals, lectures, and céilis over a week-long celebration of local uilleann piper, Willie Clancy (1918-73). It has been described as the “unofficial university for Irish music” (ibid, p.756).
Literature discussing the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in Western higher education systems highlights the existence of a number of views on such institutionalising processes among external practitioners and other stakeholders operating inside and external to higher education. Hill’s work on the folk music department at the Sibelius Academy, demonstrates how some consultants responded negatively towards what they perceived as the Sibelius Academy’s role in making folk music “too academic” and “only for elite tastes” (Hill 2009a, p.108). Of course, individuals working within higher education are also sensitive to such concerns. Discussing the issue of educating students of English folk music, musician and a chief instigator of the English folk music degree at the University of Newcastle, Alistair Anderson, is also aware of the potential of folk and traditional music courses to produce elite performers with virtuosic technical abilities, but who lack any real connection to community and grassroots contextualisations of the music that they perform (Anderson 2013, p.160). In A Needs Analysis of the Training and Transmission of Traditional Music in University and Professional Level Education throughout Europe (2002), Liz Doherty draws attention to the increased proliferation of academic qualifications in folk and traditional musics and wonders if the sector as a whole will become over-institutionalised; will a juncture be reached where the validity or credibility of a folk or traditional music will be assessed only in formal or academic terms (Doherty 2002, p.18)?

Throughout this dissertation, I present commentary and opinion offered in fieldwork interviews with a wide range of individuals engaged in tertiary-level folk and traditional music pedagogy, as well as practitioners, educators, and other stakeholders operating external to the higher education sector. The vast majority of the ‘community
discourse’ presented here is offered by stakeholders engaged in Irish traditional music in Ireland. Before I begin to critically reflect on community opinions of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education, it is important to engage with literature that has acknowledged that stakeholders have expressed concerns about the institutionalising processes inherent in locating Irish traditional music in academia and higher education. Returning to Liz Doherty (2002), she importantly documents the existence of some tensions among community members (as well as those in institutions) surrounding the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in higher education:

“The introduction of traditional music into the institutional environment has been the topic of much debate both within the institute and among the traditional music community. Concern is expressed that the move from the traditional environment will have negative implications on the tradition at all levels of activity. It is the responsibility of those involved in the institute to handle such concerns sensitively and to respect the music as part of a wider cultural entity” (Doherty 2002, p.17).

Likewise, in the Companion to Irish Traditional Music (2011), Niall Keegan musician, academic, and associate director of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick suggests that the Irish traditional community is somewhat suspicious of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education:

“Problematic for Institutions that are focused on developing high standards in performance practice, however, are the perceptions of the traditional music community which they are attempting to serve. Critics within the latter may not appreciate the value to the individual and community of a full educational term devoted to music performance, and often appear to suspect that the institutions have a stylistic and aesthetic agenda which favours third-level classical music values and is dismissive of traditional music-values” (Keegan 2011, p.234).
Like Doherty, Keegan points to a certain degree of tension between Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education and the Irish traditional music community but he also suggests a rationale for such tensions.

Negotiating and critiquing stakeholders’ opinions and perceptions about Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education is a complex task that warrants careful methodological attention. Opinions expressed anecdotally, however valid, must be rigorously interrogated. In an attempt to unravel the complex narratives of stakeholder discourse on Irish traditional music, I decided, at the outset of this research, to interview 110 research informants comprising a diverse sample of the wider Irish traditional music community. For more information on selection criteria and methodological concerns around choosing contributors, see Chapter three. I return to the discourse contributed in interviews later in this chapter. However, it is useful to discuss some of the theoretical background to focusing so significantly on fieldwork, and especially, to understand why I asked the types of questions that I put to my research informants. In particular, my next section focuses on a significant and pioneering public seminar that offered to the record, a range of opinions on recent developments in Irish traditional music, including numerous contributions from invited speakers and audience members who expressed various opinions on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education.

5.6.1 “Trends in Traditional Music in the Late Twentieth Century”, at the Willie Clancy Summer School

One particularly seminal event in the narrative of the relationship between third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy and extra-academic Irish traditional music practices
took place in the form of a public seminar as part of the Willie Clancy Summer School, on Thursday, July 6th, 2000. Entitled “Trends in Traditional Music in the Late Twentieth Century”, the seminar comprised of contributions by fiddler Paddy Glackin, and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin of the University of Limerick, and the seminar was chaired by musician, writer, and music lecturer, Fintan Vallely. In his introduction to the seminar, Muiris Ó Rocháin99, described the seminar as “a retrospective look back at the last century and developments in Irish music” (Ó Rocháin 2000). The discussion, which facilitated a significant degree of input from the audience in attendance, lasted for over two-and-a-half hours, and concluded with closing remarks from both Glackin and Ó Súilleabháin.

Following an additional introduction by the chair, Fintan Vallely, Glackin spoke first, discussing his personal observations on the developments that he has witnessed in various aspects of Irish traditional music. Among these observations was the changing status of solo traditional music performance, to a state whereby he perceived that ensemble music of a more experimental nature was being prioritised over solo performance by concert promoters and the media. Also, Glackin spoke of the critical discourse and debate prevalent among practitioners throughout the 1970s, and how this trend had subsided in the following decades. In addition, Glackin remarked upon the inevitable requirements of professional Irish traditional musicians to engage with music industry structures such as publicity, promotion, marketing, and meeting audience expectations, but he also spoke positively about his view that this does not

99 Muiris Ó Rocháin (1944-2011) was a founder of the Willie Clancy Summer School in 1973. A major promoter of the Irish language, Ó Rocháin was president of Oireachtas na Gaeilge (an Irish-language-centred annual arts festival first held in 1897), and chair of Comhairle RTÉ Raidió na Gaeilge (an advisory council of RTÉ RnaG, see footnote 115, p.231) from 1999 to 2006.
necessarily result in an artistic compromise, asserting that the Willie Clancy Summer School was an example of an event where professional and amateur musicians alike congregate to play music together irrespective of music industry demands. Glackin also spoke about the role played by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (see footnote 18, p. 34), and how the institutional processes of that organisation sometimes conflicted with musical practices as he experienced them.

Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin spoke next, and he primarily spoke about his philosophy towards, and experience of, Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. Recounting his early experiences as a music lecturer in University College Cork, Ó Súilleabháin recalled the challenges that he faced from within the university community when attempting to carve out an educational space for Irish traditional music at UCC. Ó Súilleabháin also spoke about the benefits to both higher education, and Irish traditional music, arising from its presence and future prevalence in Irish higher education, and urged members of the Irish traditional music community to see higher education as being of the Irish traditional music community, and as an environment that the Irish traditional music community should take ownership of, while acknowledging the resistance to third-level institutionalisation existing among members of that community. Making reference to the institutionalisation of jazz in higher education in the United States, Ó Súilleabháin was keen to avoid a similar development whereby higher education was criticised for formalising and threatening the diversity of jazz practices, recalling the notion that “jazz was born in a brothel, and died in a University” (Ó Súilleabháin 2000). He was keen to avoid an analogous situation whereby Irish traditional music was deemed to “have been born in west Clare and died in the University of Limerick” (ibid).
Following the contributions of Glackin and Ó Súilleabháin, the chair Fintan Vallely invited questions from the audience, which were responded to by Glackin and Ó Súilleabháin before they each made closing remarks to bring the seminar to its conclusion. A number of observations and questions were contributed by audience members and themes ranged from concerns about learning Irish traditional music through what were perceived as inappropriate formalised notation systems, to apprehension about an overemphasis on musical innovation, cross-genre experimentation, and a decline in solo performance. Others welcomed the capacity of Irish higher education to make educational pathways available to traditional musicians by recognising their talents as musicians, in ways that were not previously facilitated. Some audience members expressed their disapproval of what they considered to be an overemphasis on intellectualisation about Irish traditional music in academia, at the expense of listening carefully to who they considered to be key historical and living exponents of Irish traditional music.

The seminar, as its title suggests, was programmed to discuss a diverse range of topics on Irish traditional music, and its recent trajectory, and it was successful in exploring many developing trends in Irish traditional music, as observed by the selected speakers, the chair, and audience members. While many of the observations contributed did not focus on Irish traditional music in Irish higher education exclusively, a number of very significant points were made that have particular relevance to this research. If, as Vallely asserts, the Crossroads Conference of 1996 represents the first conference of Irish traditional music, and a very significant and pioneering platform for community discourse and debate on various aspects of Irish traditional music, then the public seminar held at the Willie Clancy Summer School in
July, 2000, can be considered a significant first step in providing a platform for the
Irish traditional music community (represented by the audience, speakers, and chair),
and Irish traditional music academia (represented by Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin,
audience members, and the chair) to publicly and discursively problematise issues
relating to the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher
education. In his contribution, Ó Súilleabháin outlines his views on the importance of
discussion and debate, and views such an appetite for discussion and debate as
representative of the vitality of Irish traditional music and its community of
practitioners and enthusiasts:

“The really interesting thing about Irish traditional music at this point, turning into the
21st century, and into a new millennium, is that it has sparked this current debate,
which is surely a sign of great health and great wealth. That this kind of debate isn’t
just happening within research institutions or universities, or that particular kind of
environment, which isn’t automatically open to everybody. People don’t have the
inclination or the time, or the energy, or the opportunity to find out that space. So, to
find a debate like this happening within the traditional music community itself is
highly significant. To find that this hall is full on a very nice day is highly significant as
well” (Ó Súilleabháin 2000).

Ó Súilleabháin is referring to the public interest that he observes in the wider themes
of the seminar on general trends in Irish traditional music, but his comment on how
such debate is not confined to research and academic institutions is significant, and it
echoes Vallely’s reference to an “oral-tradition intelligentsia” (Vallely 1999, p.5)
comprised of a diverse range of stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community.
Importantly, Ó Súilleabháin also acknowledges the existence of barriers to higher
education at that time, even if such barriers are not imposed by the institution
exclusively, but rather a result of practitioners not having the time (or perhaps
interest), to pursue academic studies in Irish traditional music at third-level. In
essence, Ó Súilleabháin is suggesting that traditional music practitioners’ lack of engagement with Irish traditional music in Irish higher education does not equate to an apathy towards discussion and intellectualisation about Irish traditional music, and he acknowledges that there may well be numerous reasons why Irish traditional musicians may not engage in higher education studies of Irish traditional music. In terms of the existence of institutional obstacles facing Irish traditional musicians who wished to study music at third-level, Ó Súilleabháin was certainly aware of barriers to normalising Irish traditional music as an accepted performance practice with which to enter music programmes at UCC and elsewhere:

“In the University system people would argue against the inclusion of traditional music and say “look, isn’t that okay out there, leave it alone, that’s grand, that’s happy out there, it doesn’t need to be in here, we’ll continue to do Bach and Beethoven, and Mozart. We may even do traditional in the sense of talking about it but don’t actually upset not just the university system by bringing in these musicians on an equal level, but don’t upset the music either”. I don’t believe in that argument. I don’t believe in it at all. I think it denies the right to enter the educational domain and to make what they would of it, and to empower themselves and change the educational domain” (Ó Súilleabháin 2000).

In Ó Súilleabháin’s view, such decisions on whether or not to engage with Irish traditional music in higher education should be in the hands of the prospective student. His statement also highlights his belief that Irish traditional musicians must engage with higher education if it is to thrive and be shaped according to the priorities and values of the Irish traditional music community rather than by a centralised higher education hierarchy.

Declaring what he feels as a necessity to take ownership of the university education system and how it negotiates Irish traditional music pedagogy, Ó
Súilleabháin identifies one significant potential barrier that he feels hinders the Irish traditional community’s willingness to fully engage with research and academic studies in Irish traditional music. It is his view that Irish traditional musicians and stakeholders, operating in post-colonial Ireland, conflate the higher education system with cultural hangovers surrounding establishment conformity and colonial authority.

“The university belongs to us. It is not somebody else’s. We have to take ownership of that. The university system is ours to take. I know people can talk about postcolonial mentality and their attitudes to authority. All that is true. I have a lot of it in my own psyche. I get nervous every time I see a guard. I can’t get rid of the feeling. It’s a post-colonial situation. It’s what you come from but it’s wrong. And the essential thing is taking ownership of that” (Ó Súilleabháin 2000).

Although Ó Súilleabháin’s assertion is personal and anecdotal, and is offered without much scholarly/academic context, it is significant, as it attributes some reasoning as to why practitioners who are engaged with a music that has traditionally thrived external to (and perhaps in spite of) organisational and institutional interventions, may be resistant to institutional authority.

Before offering audience members the opportunity to contribute observations and questions to the speakers, the seminar chair, Fintan Vallely offered his own thoughts on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, while acknowledging what he perceives as resistance to the contextualisation of Irish traditional music within the tertiary-level system:

“There’s a terrible resistance to traditional music being accepted into formal education because we think it will destroy it. Maybe in defence of it, I might say that nobody ever said that teaching people the English language or Irish language in schools and in universities destroyed our ability to be novelists and short story writers, and talkers, and speechifiers” (Vallely 2000).
Perhaps novelists are comparable to professional and avocational (i.e. hobbyist) Irish traditional musicians but this analogy may be complicated by the elements of Irish traditional music that still rely on informal and generational transmission of a musical and cultural practice that mainly exists in communities of practice with less emphasis placed on professionalism and public performance, in the type of participatory model described by Thomas Turino in *Music as Social Life* (Turino 2008).

A number of audience contributions to this seminar also focused on the contextualisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. Dublin flute player, collector, and photographer, Mick O’Connor made reference to pejorative attitudes among higher education personnel towards Irish traditional music and the culture that surrounds it, a point I consistently encountered from informants throughout the research period:

“There was a resistance [to Irish traditional music among those in higher education]. I think there was a clique of people there who thought that it was an accomplishment to be ignorant of our own music and language. And the result was you could get a degree in music in Trinity without being required to play a jig or a reel. And until people started putting pressure on the system to play Irish music for their intermediate or leaving certificate, these things were ignored” (O’Connor 2000).

For O’Connor, it seemed wholly inappropriate that a student of Trinity College Dublin could graduate without gaining some kind of knowledge of Irish traditional music. Interestingly, this echoes the views of Hormoz Farhat, a retired professor of music at

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100 According to Turino, *presentational* music “is a field involving one group of people (the artists) providing music for another (the audience) in which there is pronounced artist-audience separation within face-to-face situations” (Turino 2008, p.51). He describes *participatory* performance as “a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role” (Turino 2008, p.26).
Trinity (Professor of Music from 1981-95), who lamented the fact that students of an Irish institution such as Trinity College Dublin would not be familiar with Irish traditional music, and who instigated measures to introduce lectures in Irish traditional music during his tenure at TCD (Personal Interview Carolan March 2015).

Additional observations and questions from audience members centred on what they perceived as inappropriate higher-level educational models for Irish traditional music that were deemed to pre-emphasise notation systems. One contributor, Jim Hughes expressed the following concern:

“[My fear is that] if musicians are educated through the institution that they will learn notation, and everyone will be playing the same notes according to a language of notation, and therefore the soul and the osmotic way of learning the music [will suffer]” (Hughes 2000).

In Hughes’ view, the idea of tertiary-level Irish traditional music education seemed to be conflated with Western art music pedagogy, and its notation systems. Later, Ó Súilleabháin responded to this by stating that tertiary-level Irish traditional music pedagogy could subvert and shape these pedagogical conventions by developing idiomatic pedagogical methodologies specific to Irish traditional music.

Other contributors offered their opinions on the effectiveness and necessity of critical and analytical vocabularies for Irish traditional music. Renowned musician, Seán Potts (1930-2014) questioned the role of academic discourse in Irish traditional music, evoking the construction of a table as an analogy:

“I think I prefer the man making the table, and looking at the table, than the man writing the dissertation on the table. I think traditional music is the same. I don’t agree that it should be channelled into the hallowed walls of a university and certain stamps put on it. I could imagine in a few years’ time, people emerging from Limerick
Likewise, fiddler Mícheál Ó Catháin suggested that excessive emphasis was being placed on finding appropriate terminology to discuss Irish traditional music, at the expense of internalising the emotional aspects of the music:

“There was a comment about where do we get out critical language, earlier on? And a lot of the discussion is hugely technical, about something that is not technical at all. Music when played from the heart, there is nothing technical about it. And if you’re listening from the heart...things get very simple. It’s either worth listening to or it’s not. Things become a lot simpler” (Ó Catháin 2000).

In response to these observations, Ó Súilleabháin offered the following statement, signifying his view on the relationship between practice and theoretical discourse and language around that practice:

“The notion of critical language, the notion of how we talk about it, is actually less important than the performance, which is complete in itself. It doesn’t need to be read, or talked about, or reflected on, really in the end. That’s a primary point that must never be forgotten. And it is very frequently forgotten in university systems” (Ó Súilleabháin 2000).

This statement could be read as an appeasement of sorts to an audience comprising mainly of practitioners operating external to formalised higher education structures, but nevertheless it is significant that a key stakeholder in third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy and academic research should acknowledge the pre-eminence of the practical elements of Irish traditional music.
Singer Sean Garvey offered the analogy of the Sufi masters, practitioners of Sufism\(^\text{101}\), whose subjectivity masked their interpretation of their own mastery, to suggest that masters of Irish traditional music are often unaware of, or indifferent to their own proficiency as practitioners. He also suggests that analysis and discourse may be deemed superfluous to musical practices, as value judgements and musical evaluations are determined in informal contexts rather than in educational institutions exclusively:

“This always reminds me of the business of Rumi, the Sufi poet. This business of who are the people who decide what’s good about any particular artform. The Sufi people were very difficult to trace, Sufi masters. And one of the chief reasons it was so hard the trace them was, those who were masters, didn’t know it. And it’s often the truth about traditional music and musicians as well. People have this indefinable ‘it’. And the arbiter, who is deciding what good quality sean-nós singing or good fiddle playing is. These things are being decided at levels like people meeting on a street corner after having bought a newspaper. That’s where it’s being decided” (Garvey 2000).

Responding to an earlier point made by musician Seán Potts, Sandra Joyce of the then Irish World Music Centre at the University of Limerick, and currently Director of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick, outlines her views on the supremacy of performance, over analysis or academic qualifications arising from studying Irish traditional music in higher education structures. She laments the prospect posited by Potts that musicians would need academic qualification to gain entry to a session in Miltown Malbay during the Willie Clancy Summer School:

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\(^{101}\) Sufism is “Islamic mysticism” (Lings 1999, p.15), and “throughout history a Sufi was most often understood to be a person of religious learning who aspires to be close to Allah” (British Broadcasting Corporation 2018).
“It would be a terrible thing if anybody couldn’t get into the Central Hotel without a degree from the University of Limerick. At the end of the day, if you are listening to a musician playing, or a singer singing, or watching somebody dance, the music, song and dance speaks for itself. And whether they have an MA or a PhD doesn’t make any difference because the music is the most important thing but if a traditional musician wants to go and study and research and spend time with that music then that is their right” (Joyce 2000).

However, like Ó Súilleabháin, Joyce feels strongly that musicians who wish to actively pursue academic studies in various aspects of Irish traditional music should be given opportunities to do so.

Audience contributors echoed Paddy Glackin’s sentiments in expressing concern at the diminished prominence of older musicians in the narratives of Irish traditional music. Many lamented the void that such key musical and cultural exponents of Irish traditional music had left behind them, lacunae that people felt were not being adequately addressed by educational institutions. In response to such perceptions, Ó Súilleabháin was unambiguous in how he articulated his views on how universities can and should negotiate authority and the continuity of tradition:

“The reality today is that the older rural voice [of traditional musicians] for whatever reasons is less present. So therefore, where does the authority reside? And what I would say there is that it does not reside in universities, and I speak as a university person. The function of the university is to remind the traditional music community that it still has the authority. The authority in my opinion resides in the community of practicing traditional musicians themselves, young and old. And that’s the way it should stay” (Ó Súilleabháin 2000).

This statement from Ó Súilleabháin was met with applause from the audience, and possibly alleviated some concerns regarding the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in higher education institutions such as the University of Limerick. Further responding to concerns about how best to fill the gaps being left by the passing of
significant senior musicians, and the role of higher education in this transition, Ó Súilleabháin states unequivocally that an educational institution such as a university can never address that gap, but rather provide a space to articulate the same concerns and interrogate the same questions as the Irish traditional community:

“I don’t see UCC as filling the gap, or the University of Limerick, or any university, but what I do see UCC doing is asking the same question you are asking, which is who is going to fill the gap? Because it’s a very important question. So, we mustn’t make the mistake of thinking that just because a university or an educational system gets involved in the music that they think that they’re going to fill the gap. The whole point is that they know they’re not, and that they’re there to ask the question, and encourage in the asking of that question” (Ó Súilleabháin 2000).

The approach taken here by Ó Súilleabháin may well have aided in mitigating some of the concerns of members of the Irish traditional music community on the trajectory of Irish traditional music in music departments such as that at the University of Limerick and University College Cork. Such concerns would certainly have been influenced by Ó Súilleabháin’s own musical persona as an innovator and pioneer of juxtaposing elements of both Irish traditional music and Western art music. The emphasis placed on experimental approaches taken by younger Irish traditional musicians on A River of Sound would also have shaped opinions on how Ó Súilleabháin’s perceived artistic priorities would influence the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in institutions like the University of Limerick and University College Cork. The significance of this public seminar at the Willie Clancy Summer School must be understood in this context. The seminar provided the first opportunity for a leading and pioneering academic to acknowledge, to a sample of the Irish traditional music community, that authority and expertise on Irish traditional music resides primarily in the Irish traditional music community.
Beyond the elements of the seminar relating to Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, a number of significant points emerged from the contributions of Paddy Glackin, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Fintan Vallely, and contributors in the audience. One point addressed by Paddy Glackin of relevance to this dissertation, and the concept of canonicity, in particular, focused on the constitution formulated by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. Glackin acknowledged the inevitability of codification resulting from institutionalisation but argues that such institutionalising processes may conflict with the perspectives and experiences of practitioners.

“In the development of Comhaltas, based on the loose structure of the GAA, there’s the idea of a constitution, the idea of rules, the idea of things being laid down in stone, I think it was inevitable. It happens when people have to organise themselves. They have to operate by a set of rules, and sometimes these rules wouldn’t be compatible with music. And one of the offshoots of this is the establishment of competitions” (Glackin 2000).

Glackin is essentially describing canonicity and its effects here, and he echoes the views of contributors in other chapters of this research when associating competitions with standardisation and the construction of an Irish traditional music canon.

Glackin also makes reference to another issue of particular relevance to my research when speaking about the type of debate and critical reflection that he witnessed in the 1970s. This reference suggests that analysis and discourse on Irish traditional music was not confined to higher education, academic and research institutions, or media productions such as Our Musical Heritage, and A River of Sound. It

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102 The GAA, or Gaelic Athletic Association, established in 1884, is Ireland’s largest sporting organisation. Its main sports are Hurling and Gaelic Football, although Handball and Rounders are also promoted by the organisation. The GAA consists of over 2,200 clubs in 32 counties across the island of Ireland (GAA 2018).
also challenges the concept that traditional musicians have invariably been hostile towards discourse and discussions about various aspects of Irish traditional music.

“Right through the ‘70s, there was a wonderful time of questioning. We questioned things. Tony MacMahon, through his programme, The Long Note. Sometimes Tony is cast in the role of being a defender of a particular way of thinking about the music, but in the ‘70s, anybody who was around and had anything to do with the music at the time would remember the impact that a programme like the Long Note had. They would also remember the way in which things were questioned. And serious questioning went on, serious debate went on, and there was serious criticism in the ‘70s, and I think that was really important” (Glackin 2000).

Glackin went on to state that he felt that such an environment of critical reflection and debate largely diminished in the early 1980s, with the arrival of new trends in ensemble playing and cross-genre collaboration.

Discussing this public seminar has considerable relevance to understanding precedents in how the Irish traditional music community has interfaced with academic discourse, institutions, and academics, on record. In the next section, which deals with charting commentary on Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education, either in print, or on public record, I discuss an interview, published in the Journal of Music on September 1st, 2007, and a subsequent written response to that interview, which was published on November 1st, 2007. Interestingly, two contributors to the public seminar at the Willie Clancy Summer School, discussed above, were directly involved as the primary protagonists in the Journal of Music exchange, which I discuss next.
5.6.2 Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh and Fintan Valley in the Journal of Music

At the aforementioned Willie Clancy Summer School public seminar, Dublin traditional musician, Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, was the first audience member to contribute an observation, and was referenced many times at the same meeting by other contributors, as a positive exemplar of why the future of Irish traditional music was in safe hands. In September 2007, the Journal of Music published an interview with Ó Raghallaigh, conducted with the publication’s editor, writer, and fiddler, Toner Quinn (Quinn 2007). The interview focused mainly on a recent solo recording of Ó Raghallaigh’s, but it quickly transitioned to covering aspects of his musical background, and musical influences. Among the many points raised was Ó Raghallaigh’s opinion on third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy. Responding to Quinn’s question about why he didn’t study music in college, Ó Raghallaigh offered the following:

“I was aware I didn’t want to study music because I don’t think there is anybody coming out of the third-level traditional music education system doing anything interesting. In other countries, such as Sweden, I have seen the education system produce incredibly interesting music from folk traditions, but not in Ireland... The third-level music education system in Ireland in general is mind narrowing rather than mind expanding... Actually, third-level students and educators in Stockholm – I travelled there in March – perceive our third-level traditional music courses in Ireland as not particularly innovative: mind narrowing rather than exciting. What we might consider as being innovative here, they perceive as being hard-line traditional... I went [to Stockholm] to try and figure out why there is interesting contemporary folk there. I met the products of the system and the educators, the designers of the system, and talked to them, and had amazing conversations, and we are basically at the point they were thirty years ago. They put in place a system to deal with the gaping holes in their then system of education. And it basically boils down to a handful of people realising what needs to be done and just doing it” (Ó Raghallaigh cited in Quinn 2007).
Ó Raghallaigh’s evaluation of the state of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy is far from complimentary, and his assertion that educators outside Ireland view it negatively is telling of a particular kind of experience. As a relevant aside, as a visiting researcher to Stockholm and the Royal College of Music during this research process, I did not encounter any pejorative attitudes towards Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland, but it is conceivable that the individuals I met were conscious that our discussions were ‘on the record’, even if they extended to social and informal meetings at music events. It is also possible that they, rightly or wrongly, viewed me as a representative of, or at least a product of third-level Irish traditional music education.

In response to Ó Raghallaigh’s interview, lecturer, writer, and musician, Fintan Vallely, wrote a letter that was published in the Journal of Music on November 1st, 2007, in which he laments and deconstructs the content of the interview between Quinn and Ó Raghallaigh. The majority of Vallely’s criticism is aimed at Ó Raghallaigh’s claims that there were no worthwhile experimental artistic approaches emanating from within the Irish tradition. However, Vallely does take aim at what he perceives as Ó Raghallaigh’s failure to explicate what elements of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy that he disapproves of: “[h]e perceives Irish universities as doing it all wrong, but just what is ‘it’ is not identified”. In addition, he asks: “[b]efore criticising them, should this performer not find out first what ‘universities’ actually do teach – and the reasons ‘why’?” (Vallely 2007). It is worth noting that at the time, Vallely was a lecturer in Irish traditional music at Dundalk Institute of Technology.

For me, one consequential value of such an exchange is that it publicly documents perceptions towards third-level Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, in a respected publication of record. Valley’s responses to the interview
appear quite reasoned in many respects, but my objective throughout this chapter is to document and present examples of public record perceptions towards third-level Irish traditional music rather than to discredit, or conversely, unconditionally accept those perceptions. In surveying other instances of engagement with the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in third-level education, similar arguments surfaced, but in more partial and ad hoc ways. It became incumbent upon me to generate data through engaging with informants across the Irish traditional community. To this end, in my next section, I look beyond the public record to discuss fieldwork interviews conducted exclusively for this research dissertation.

5.7 Perspectives from the Field

Before I address specific themes emerging from my fieldwork interviews in later chapters, I begin here by presenting contributor responses to an open-ended question asking my interviewees to describe their personal understanding of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. What follows is a sample of general responses from academics, practitioners, educators, graduates, students, commentators, and other stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community, interviewed between February 16th, 2013, and July 3rd, 2018. For context, the role of my research consultants, and the vantage points that they observe Irish traditional music from, are outlined in Appendix A.

One central motivation for attempting to gather current opinions on Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education among the wider Irish traditional music community has been inspired by a radio interview conducted by broadcaster Áine Hensey with Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin on June 24th, 2013. Among the many
questions put to Ó Súilleabháin by Hensey was one related to perceived tensions among the Irish traditional music community to the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education programmes. Ó Súilleabháin’s response was eloquent and insightful, but I was equally taken by the question. When I discussed with Hensey her rationale for asking this question, she offered the following response:

“You had this feeling, which I think was quite widespread, certainly from my experience of hearing people talking within the traditional music community. I think again you have to remember that you’re talking about maybe slightly older people. I think the younger generation of traditional musicians regard it as a fact of a life, and it’s part of the traditional music world now that so many of them go to college to study traditional music...but I do think that within the traditional music community, there was a feeling of “we don’t need this”, that traditional music is fine as it is. Why do we need to study it? Why do we need to break it down? Why do we need to analyse it? Why do we need to contextualise it? It’s there. We play it, or we listen to it, or we dance to it...there was a feeling there that the music would somehow become contaminated maybe if it was brought into the universities...of course each artform is equally valid and each artform is as entitled to a place within academia and I’m not sure how much resistance there is to it now. I certainly think it has broken down to a huge extent” (Personal Interview Hensey September 2013).

In her response, Hensey suggests that perceptions towards Irish traditional music in Irish higher education may be influenced by age, and familiarity with higher education as an institution. Hensey also suggests that pejorative and suspicious attitudes towards Irish traditional music studies in Irish higher education are largely a thing of the past. In addition, Hensey points to a more universal cultural phenomenon when she highlights a resistance among practitioners to formalised music analysis and pedagogy, more broadly. Many are dubious of the value of formally studying a music that has been traditionally transmitted in informal communal practice-based contexts, and frameworks designed to structure an epistemology around Irish traditional musics are deemed by some as trivial.
Likewise, musician, flute-maker, and researcher, Colin (Hammy) Hamilton believes that attitudes towards Irish traditional music in Irish higher education are not as negative as they may have been previously due to a changing demographic of traditional musicians:

“I think it’s much more widely accepted now than it would have been say 20 years ago. And that’s simply because, if you think of the generations that are there, there are a lot less of the older musicians around who might have criticised the idea. There are a lot more younger musicians who have been through the process so I think it is becoming totally accepted. I have no objection to that at all because it’s great to see traditional music up there as an academic discipline alongside everything else because it was the poor relation for a very long time” (Personal Interview Hamilton December 2014).

Returning to Hensey’s observations on a perceived resistance to formalised studies in Irish traditional music, many contributors to this research communicated a general uncertainty as to the requirement and value of studying Irish traditional music at third-level. Musician, and composer, Charlie Lennon acknowledges that he has experienced comparable perceptions, but like Hensey, he feels that such attitudes change over time:

“People can’t understand what [traditional music students] are doing in college....so there is kind of a view there: “why would you have to go to college to improve your playing” and “sure what is there to study. You just learn to play, and get on with it”. So, there’s a bit of confusion there I think and that will pass with time. It’s just a natural thing” (Personal Interview Lennon October 2013).

Like Lennon, Nicholas Carolan, Founding Director Emeritus of the Irish Traditional Music Archive, refers to a suspicion and confusion among the wider

103 The Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) was established in 1987 following a proposal made to the Arts Council of Ireland by Harry Bradshaw (see footnote 106 on p.193) and Nicholas Carolan, the ITMA’s
Irish traditional music community as to what Irish traditional music programmes at third-level do:

“Well initially, and this is just anecdotal, I think there was a general suspicion partly, bemusement partly, you know the idea that this would be something that would be studied because it’s not that long ago since it wasn’t studied at second level” (Personal Interview Carolan March 2015).

Musician, composer, and broadcaster, Ellen Cranitch feels that tertiary-level Irish traditional music pedagogy may perhaps be unnecessary as a transmissional process, but she sees it as an opportunity to foster musical development in higher education students. She also feels that perceptions towards third-level pedagogy and pedagogues can be sometimes unfair:

“There are a lot of people who will criticise the whole notion because this is the way we’ve been always doing it. And that’s absolutely fine. They are absolutely right. There is no necessity. It’s not a vital thing but it’s an enhancement thing. It’s kind of a developmental thing as a human being...I think [some perceptions are] ungenerous, and I think it’s churlish sometimes. And I think it’s cynical because I think nobody goes into establishing a traditional music third-level course or institution with anything other than good intentions, and I think those good intentions have to be honoured” (Personal Interview Cranitch February 2017).

Uilleann-piper Ronan Browne feels that it is a commonly held view that Irish traditional music in Irish higher education is not taken seriously by the wider Irish traditional music community:

“Everybody thinks [Irish traditional music in higher education] is limiting and unrepresentative of the bigger picture of Irish traditional music. Except the people

founding director emeritus. Since 2006 it has been situated in its permanent home at 73 Merrion Square, Dublin, and “it holds there the largest collection of Irish traditional music in existence, and the largest collection of information on this tradition” (Irish Traditional Music Archive 2018). The ITMA website can be accessed at http://www.itma.ie
who are doing it. We always have felt that. When the whole thing started, we were all rolling around laughing, and everybody I knew was. For a long time at the beginning, it didn’t really matter but it sort of matters now because it’s been there so long, the infection has grown and it’s very hard to wander happily and aimlessly through one’s life without coming up against a fascist who came from one of those places, who knows everything...lots of people who I converse with in my world of Irish music don’t have respect for third-level-institutionalised music” (Personal Interview Browne March 2015).

In a similar vein, musician John Blake feels that pejorative opinions towards Irish traditional music in Irish higher education are common among his peers, and that it is not taken seriously:

“I suppose it’s all hearsay, you know but I think most musicians that I come in contact with, and it is a regular occurrence that it crops up, it’s kind of looked on as a bit of a joke to be honest, you know? To be honest if I’m going to give an idea of generally what musicians tend to think of people going to do these courses is, especially if they are living away from home, is that they are going to go on the tear for 3 years and play music because they love music. Great, you know, but what use is it afterwards? Really, what are you going to do with a traditional Irish music degree? What is the point? I’d say 95% of people I would talk to about it has a negative perception of it, that it’s a joke” (Personal Interview Blake November 2014).

Staff and graduates of Irish traditional music programmes with whom I spoke also perceive a resistance towards Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. According to Adrian Scahill, traditional musician and music lecturer at Maynooth University.

“There are a lot of criticisms of the concept [of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education]. The criticisms are not just about institutionalisation. The criticisms are about the perceived effects of institutionalisation, which are standardisation, a replacement of, for want of a better word, authenticity, or soul, or blas\textsuperscript{104}, you name it, with technicality, with innovation, with any type of the breaking or challenging what

\textsuperscript{104} Blas is the Irish word for accent or taste.
are the perceived boundaries of traditional music...most, a lot of people that I have played with have had that perception” (Personal Interview Scahill October 2013).

The ubiquity of unfavourable opinions on third-level Irish traditional music studies among Scahill’s peers is surprising and gives us an impression of how widespread opinions of this nature are. For Irish World Academy graduate, Paddy Cummins, there was also a palpable pejorative attitude towards third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy, that he heard expressed as a young student entering university.

“It’s difficult to pinpoint it exactly but there’s definitely an opposition from the traditional music community in parts to a traditional music institution. There’s definitely an opposition there. I knew about that opposition before I went [to the University of Limerick] because I’d heard about it. I wouldn’t have known about the opposition if it didn’t exist...there was already that feeling that what they were doing down there is negative to what the Irish community was actually doing, and obviously not reflective. So, there is definitely an opposition there from the community. I don’t necessarily think it’s true of a majority, but I think it’s probably about 50% from my experience” (Personal Interview Cummins October 2013).

Other contributors to this research suggest that third-level Irish traditional music studies are still at somewhat of an embryonic state, and need time to develop, to be understood by the wider Irish traditional music community.

“As a concept, I think it’s still finding its way. I don’t think it’s quite there yet. Maybe there’s a couple of generations of students to go to legitimise it. After all, it’s really in the last 10 years, that the first real wave of people have come through it so it’s a whole new concept, so I think it has a while to go to almost be understood” (Personal Interview Hanrahan April 2016).
John Carty, musician and tutor at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, also feels that third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy is still developing an identity in Irish higher education at present:

“It is in its infancy. It’s like anything that starts off. Some things fizzle out but hopefully this will be strong enough to sustain. I feel that in all the courses all around the country, there is no body, of course above these, but I do feel like they need tweaking having worked in a university programme for twenty years now. I feel sometimes it hasn’t really just found its feet just yet” (Personal Interview Carty July 2015).

For musician and teacher Conal Ó Gráda, there are certain vocational advantages to studying Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, but he feels that as a sector, third-level Irish traditional music institutions are not effectively communicating their modi operandi to the wider Irish traditional music community:

“I suppose in general, I think [Irish traditional music in Irish higher education] is yet to find a completely credible identity, you know? Is it like a classical music conservatoire where only the top talents are admitted and they are [aiming] for a professional career as a musician, and it’s very focused on that. Is it that? I suppose the answer is currently, it’s not that. The other one is, isn’t it a great opportunity to play music for a few years, and get a general degree, and then become a teacher afterwards, and I think it does that well...I don’t see doing a degree in music having a huge impact on your ability to play music at the end of three years. I think your average musician who doesn’t go to college to do music, but is very active in terms of playing, will probably develop at the same rate. I don’t see progress that wouldn’t have happened otherwise...the best musicians are not coming out of universities. We know that” (Personal Interview Ó Gráda August 2015).

Ó Gráda’s final point regarding the purpose of Irish traditional music degrees is telling, given that he does not see progress that is a direct result of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy. This observation, reminiscent of Niall Keegan’s view on the low impact the Irish World Academy has had on external Irish traditional music
practices (Hill 2009b), has also been expressed by other contributors to this research.

Colin Hamilton points to the valuable academic work being carried out by individuals external to Irish higher education who do not identify as academics or pedagogues:

“If you think about it, a lot of the major figures in academic research are not academics...Tom Munnelly...Harry Bradshaw...Sean Gilraine...there are loads of people who are happy to do that sort of work and don’t seem to need the accolade of a degree to hang around their necks at the same time. It sometimes seems to me that they are doing more valuable work than some academics” (Personal Interview Hamilton December 2014).

Liz Doherty, musician, academic, and author of the 2002 Needs Analysis report discussed many times in this dissertation feels that Irish traditional music programmes in Irish higher education are not adequately addressing the needs and expectations of the wider Irish traditional music community:

“I am completely committed to the idea of traditional music belonging in and having a place in the world of higher education, but I am still not convinced that we have got it right and that the wider world of third-level education still gets what we are about. So, I’m still not convinced that we are doing the tradition a full and proper service...I am

105 According to Hill, Keegan “maintains that the programme in Limerick has had little impact on the traditional music scene outside of the University, joking that if the building and everyone in it were to suffer a nuclear attack the Irish traditional music scene at large would not be seriously impacted” (Hill 2009b, p.239).

106 Examples of such research includes work done on the Leitrim flute player John McKenna (1880-1947) by Leitrim flute player Sean Gilraine of the John McKenna Traditional Music Society, research that Gilraine has presented at various public events such as Na Píobairí Uilleann’s ‘Notes and Narratives lecture series, and the Return to Camden Town festival held each October in London. Similarly, researcher, and radio and record producer, Harry Bradshaw, from Wicklow, has presented research on archive and commercial recordings of numerous traditional musicians at public seminars at events such as the Willie Clancy Summer School. Tom Munnelly (1994-2007) was a celebrated collector, archivist, and singer from Dublin, and founding member of the Folk Music Society of Ireland. A prolific collector of songs and Irish folklore, Munnelly was chairman of the Willie Clancy Summer School from 1984 to 1991 and was a member of the Arts Council. He founded Cumann le Béaloideas agus Ceol Tire an Chláir (the folklore and folk music society of Clare) in 1982, for which he organised public lectures on song, folklore, and music over nine years. In 2007, Munnelly was made an honorary Doctor of Literature by the National University of Ireland, Galway (Vallely 2011).
obviously 100% committed to it. This is my life. This is my world. I’m frustrated by it in equal parts and disillusioned by it as well. It’s a rare mix. I wouldn’t give it up for anything, but I tear my hair out over the whole idea of it on a daily basis...what is the impact it is having? Is it really creating more people who are engaging and enriching the tradition and the traditional music world? I say that from wearing my other hats, from my work in arts administration, the Arts Council, various boards. When bigger positions have opened up in recent years, having [had] conversations with people who keep the tradition almost on an even keel, who have been the activists, and are always the lobbyists, and who are at the forefront of keeping the tradition where it needs to be in terms of politics and all of that. [We wonder] who are the people who can go for these jobs? Who are the next generation of voices coming up and who can do all of this? How many people are walking around with traditional music degrees in their back pockets yet none of us are saying that we have so many people to choose from, that we would love to see in these small number of positions of power. There’s definitely a disconnect between what’s happening within third-level institutions and the real world of traditional music. And that definitely worries me” (Personal Interview Doherty May 2016).

Doherty is a key figure in the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, and her commentary here is significant as a traditional musician, traditional arts consultant, former Arts Council official, and somebody who is actively engaged with higher education as a third-level teacher. Importantly, the fact that Doherty is committed to the potential of Irish traditional music in higher education, suggests that her concerns can be alleviated by addressing what she perceives as deficiencies in how Irish traditional music is currently located in Irish higher education. Although these are the opinions of only one individual, Doherty’s expertise in the area of third-level Irish traditional music in Irish higher education suggests that her perspective should be taken seriously.

A prominent theme emerging from literature on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional music in Western higher education systems is the increase in social, cultural, and musical status that occurs when higher education programmes are designed and delivered for folk and traditional musics. Hill’s work in Finland
illustrates how the institutionalisation of Finnish folk music in the folk music department of the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki has elevated the “status and esteem of folk music in society at large” (Hill 2005, p.31). The institutionalisation of English folk music through the folk music degree at Newcastle University, and the work of Folkworks, has had a similar impact on the popularity of English folk music.

According to Alistair Anderson, one of Folkworks’ primary aims was “to widen the bottom of the pyramid all the time”, and increase participation in, and the social status of, English folk music (Anderson cited in Keegan-Phipps 2007, p.102). Contributions from my research interviewees also provided valuable insights into the potential of higher education to influence how Irish traditional music is perceived generally.

Many musicians attest to the fact that Irish traditional music was not popular in their youth, and many recall how they invariably hid the fact that they were traditional musicians. For musician and teacher, and PhD graduate of UL, Máire O’Keeffe, higher education has had a positive impact upon how society now generally perceives Irish traditional music. As a younger musician, O’Keeffe recalls how she didn’t even take her fiddle to school as she didn’t want her schoolmates to know that she played Irish traditional music:

“I think [Irish higher education] legitimised traditional music. It kind of gave it a new standing in Ireland. I think abroad, in America and places like that [Irish] traditional music had more of a standing than it had here in Ireland. Certainly, in the late ‘70s, early ‘80s. For instance, I wouldn’t take my fiddle to school. There was no way. Most of my friends didn’t know I played the fiddle for a long time. So, I think [Irish higher education] gave [Irish traditional music] a legitimacy” (Personal Interview O’Keeffe February 2017)

Musician Martin Hayes also remembers a time when Irish traditional music was not viewed favourably by his peers. Hayes feels that Irish higher education plays a
positive role in encouraging society to reappraise historical perceptions towards Irish traditional music:

“There was a point when in certain company [Irish traditional music] was not really a good calling card. It was really something that was laughed at...[Irish traditional music] was regarded in an inferior way by the thought-makers in our society, the media at a certain point in time, the writers and newspapers. They had very clear ideas about what was unacceptable, you know? So that has changed a lot...for the music [higher education] is good because it kind of endorses it out there in the larger world to people who are not initiated. It offers respectability and credibility. That’s a good thing” (Personal Interview Hayes January 2014).

Musician Paul Brock experienced similar negative perceptions towards Irish traditional music as a young musician. He feels that institutions working to promote Irish traditional music have contributed considerably to improving the social status and respectability of Irish traditional music:

“You almost kept it quiet at school that you had an interest in Irish music because Irish music in that era was considered very second-class and was associated with travellers...for somebody who grew up in the Dark Era when there was no focus on Irish music, to where you see it centre stage and part and parcel of academic programmes in a place like the University of Limerick, and when you go in and you see the level to which the Irish Traditional Music Archive has gone, it makes me immensely proud that it has gone in that direction, and that the recognition is now there” (Personal Interview Brock December 2013).

Musician and Irish language lecturer at the University of Limerick, Máire Ní Ghráda similarly reflects on the status of Irish traditional music when she was growing up. While she didn’t openly admit to playing Irish traditional music, she celebrates the fact that today young musicians have opportunities to participate in what has become a much more widely respected artform than ever before:
“Times have changed. I’m of an age where I can see the huge change that has happened. When I was a kid playing music, I didn’t make that widely known in the particular city school I attended…I welcome the fact that because it has now got this status and recognition that it didn’t have before, that a whole load of kids have now got an outlet that they wouldn’t have had...some kids see this as what they want to do. They love the music and now they have a chance to take it to third-level” (Personal Interview Ní Ghráda January 2017).

Likewise, musician, lecturer, and ethnomusicologist, Aileen Dillane, points to how Irish higher education has contributed to legitimising Irish traditional music, at least in the eyes of non-practitioners, and wider society, but she also suggests that pejorative references to Irish traditional music can still be observed in the media:

“I think definitely, in the culture of the nation, [Irish higher education] has legitimised [Irish traditional music] as an artform. I think that the era of the diddley-eye [is gone]. You still get those scathing comments from a particular set of media people but there’s this real sense that it occupies a real place, and it’s a central part of Irish cultural economy. So, I definitely think you don’t have to hide. I did have to hide. When I went to UCC, I used to be teased about being a trad musician...It’s kind of sexier, it’s more dynamic, it’s cooler now. There are more people participating than ever” (Personal Interview Dillane April 2015).

Echoing the sentiments of Dillane on both the increasing status of Irish traditional music (partly due to traditional music studies in Irish higher education), and the existence of pejorative attitudes towards Irish traditional music in the media today, musician Frankie Gavin feels that Irish higher education contributes to a wider respect towards Irish traditional music. Although he feels that pejorative perceptions of Irish traditional music exist, Gavin feels that higher education can alleviate some of the misconceptions that exist around Irish traditional music:

I think it’s important how we develop the idea of Irish people in general having a greater respect for Irish music, I’m not sure how that is going to pan out, if you have
people like Ray D'Arcy\textsuperscript{107} on the radio calling the music ‘diddley-eye’, you know? There was a programme around the St. Patrick’s Day parade, and the number of times he mentioned ‘diddley-eye’. Each time he mentioned it, I felt it was offensive…I don’t like people using dismissive terminology like that about Irish music…I think that [higher education] will heighten the respect element of it, and it will give the dignity to the music that it deserves” (Personal Interview Gavin March 2015).

Paddy Cummins, musician and graduate of the BA in Irish Music and Dance at the Irish World Academy echoes the views of Dillane and Gavin, as he feels that negative perceptions towards Irish traditional music exist in Irish society. Like many other contributors to this research, Cummins feels that the contextualisation of Irish traditional music higher education positively influences how society views Irish traditional music in Ireland:

“There is definitely still a very engrained negative perception towards traditional Irish music, and I think that certainly one way of dispelling that is through having an increasing status and recognition, and the respectability that goes with that in an academic context…there is a whole respectability that goes with something becoming an academic subject” (Personal Interview Cummins October 2013).

Musician and New York-based academic, Mick Moloney, highlights the ability of higher education and academic structures to communicate value to non-specialists and wider society. According to Moloney, traditional music programmes such as those developed at the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick have contributed significantly to garnering respect for Irish traditional music:

“[Irish traditional music at the Irish World Academy] was an extraordinary validation of some of our core values at a level that the general population take seriously. As much as I can question the validity of knowledge imparted in a higher education situation versus the instinctive knowledge you get from your neighbour or family, I

\textsuperscript{107} Ray D’Arcy is a radio and TV chat show host who presents mainstream, popular shows on RTÉ, Ireland’s national broadcaster.
have to say the process of reflection that it has gone through is a really positive one...obviously if you are working within a larger society that respects and buys into the notion of higher education...then by definition people who go through that process get societal recognition from people who wouldn’t know anything about the arts. It’s a validation by definition, as long as the institutions are respected and respectable” (Personal Interview Moloney February 2017).

Musician and teacher, Brendan Mulkere, based in both London and county Clare, Ireland, also recalls a time when Irish traditional music was considered to be of low social status and while he feels that such associations still exist, it his is view that academic studies in Irish traditional music can mitigate against pejorative attitudes to Irish traditional music:

“Irish traditional music was [perceived as] farmers’ music, from the hills, and looked down on...it was looked down on as paddywhackery. That needs to change. And I think taking Irish traditional music into universities as a study certainly would challenge that. And there’s a remnant of opinion out there that still regards it as not serious. Like, it’s all the ‘diddley-dee’ stuff, and they still hanker after the idea of opera and classical music as being the music. And I think that’s a great shame because there are tunes that I play in the traditional repertoire that would match anything that I have heard in classical music...they are so rich, absolutely stunning” (Personal Interview Mulkere March 2017).

This perceived low status of Irish traditional music tallies with the recollections of Mary Mitchell-Ingoldsby, musician and lecturer at the music department of University College Cork. As we heard in chapter four, she remembers attitudes towards Irish traditional music among her colleagues as a music student at University College Cork. She recalls, “you had to play piano. You had to play proper music. They would have looked down on traditional music and perceived it to be the music of the past, the peasants, the poor” (Personal Interview Mitchell-Ingoldsby October 2014).
Musician and teacher, Paddy Ryan feels that academic programmes offering studies in Irish traditional music signify a respect for Irish traditional music that did not exist when he was younger. Interestingly, he also feels that higher education offers a type of validation for all the past traditional musicians who kept Irish traditional music alive in times when it was less popular:

“I think that it’s great that the music is respected enough to have a degree obtainable in it. It gives a lot more recognition to the music and to musicians than used to be there. There was a time when musicians were looked down on by people who should have known better, I suppose. There was no respect for musicians. They were kind of an oddity. But [higher education] brings a bit of respect and recognition. The fact that a traditional musician can get a degree in that music. I think it’s a great thing. And not only a bachelor’s degree, they can go on and do a masters degree in it, which is great” (Personal Interview Ryan July 2015).

Also alluding to the existence of current misconceptions as to the high quality of Irish traditional music and musicians, traditional fiddler Zoë Conway believes that higher education programmes in Irish traditional music and academic scholarship in Irish traditional music can communicate such artistic quality to wider Irish society:

“People in Ireland often don’t appreciate the level of quality that the actual tradition has, and I think by having [third-level] courses and by producing brilliant scholars, that will bring an awareness to the quality of Irish traditional music” (Personal Interview Conway April 2016).

Irish traditional music has frequently been perceived to be inferior to Western classical music by Irish society, according to many authors (McCarthy 1999, Vallely 2002, Vallely 2011). Musician and academic, Dermot Diamond feels that such sentiments are still in existence:
“I still think that in traditional music there are issues about acceptance and of its respectability. I think that’s still there. I know it’s changing. It has changed a lot, but it still is regarded by some people as the music of the common folk. Quaint music. You might get a few performers in around a conference to show them how the locals enjoy themselves. There’s still an element of that. It’s not as strong as it was” (Personal Interview Diamond October 2013).

Musician and composer Charlie Lennon recalls how more value was placed on Western classical music than Irish traditional music when he was learning as a young musician, a typical experience for most of the informants in this study. Lennon, who is in his eighties, notes:

“In the general public [Irish traditional music] was frowned upon. There was still kind of a social status associated with it, which meant that that type of music wasn’t real music, you know? And so, in the public at large you were hesitant about playing unless you knew people because all the value was on classical playing or on arrangements, or on people who went and took lessons, and so on. Traditional music was not popular in the majority of the population, if you like. There were pockets of it that were very rich, and people were very enthusiastic about it but in the country at large, it wasn’t highly regarded as proper music” (Personal Interview Lennon October 2013).

Fiddler Paddy Glackin also remembers significant developments at UCC whereby an atmosphere of improved respect for Irish traditional music was being cultivated by Ó Súilleabháin and his colleagues. As a visiting tutor, he recalls being positively impacted by the invitation to share his music with students at UCC:

“That was the sort of atmosphere in Cork, this acceptance that created an atmosphere, which was absolutely fantastic. For someone like me going down there, it kind of gave me a certain validation as well you know, if I’m to be perfectly honest about it. To be asked to do that. To go in to a college and perform to students who were probably superior in terms of their music education than me. It was bold at the time. It was good” (Personal Interview Glackin February 2015).
Dancer, and academic, Catherine Foley, senior lecturer at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, reflects on the status of Irish dancing long before the Riverdance phenomenon. She also outlines her ethos towards Irish dance pedagogy at the Irish World Academy that places traditional dance on a level playing field with other genres of dance and music:

“Irish dance at the time I was doing it wasn’t well respected. This was way before Riverdance. So therefore, it was necessary to bring it on to the academic level, where it might be validated. And that was coming from my love of it. To get it recognised. And here at the University of Limerick, and at all third-level, if traditional arts are in there, it’s recognising the traditional arts. It means it’s non-hierarchical. You are hoping that as much as you can study ballet, or contemporary dance, or as much as you can study classical music or the world musics, that Irish music is included in it. If they weren’t included, we would be feeling not valued. So, in some ways, it places value on it, the fact that they are recognised and validated at third-level education. That’s really what we are about. We just want the playing field to be fair to everybody” (Personal Interview Foley November 2014).

Foley’s colleague at the Irish World Academy, Mats Melin, a dancer, lecturer, and ethnochoreologist, agrees that higher education assists in placing traditional music and dance on a level playing with other musics and genres of dance located in music academies and departments:

“I think it’s about value and awareness. That the traditional arts, traditional folk musics, are valued and on a level playing field with, let’s say classical music, popular music, ballet, whatever it is being taught in conservatoires...I think that an education system that is supposedly being fair should encourage that kind of access to it, and by default place a value on it, saying that it is worth preserving, encouraging, promoting” (Personal Interview Melin November 2014).

Riverdance, premiered as part of a Eurovision Song Contest in 1994, is a “spectacular Irish step dance stage show” that, according to its producer Moya Doherty, attempted to “promote a modern image of Ireland” (Foley 2011, p.578). The show has been performed worldwide and Michael Flatley and Jean Butler were the show’s initial primary dancers (ibid).
Likewise, fiddler Liam O’Connor feels that the presence of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education places Irish traditional music on an equal footing with other genres of music, while also offering practitioners with opportunities to devote time and space to their artform. For O’Connor, it is significant that performers also have their practice formally recognised by the validating processes that accompany higher education:

“I think [Irish higher education] offers a great opportunity for a parity of esteem with other genres of music. It’s an important step for traditional music in this country. It’s studied in plenty of other countries. It’s important that [Irish traditional music] is given a place at third-level. It’s a great opportunity for making it accessible for people to take time out to focus on their music and to have formal recognition of that as well” (Personal Interview O’Connor March 2016).

Musician and lecturer in traditional music, Paul McGrattan views the acknowledgement provided by higher education in similar terms, whereby he feels that academic validation bestows recognition on the kind of work that practitioners are already engaged in:

“When people are researching an album, you’re doing a massive amount of research. So, I think what higher education is doing is actually acknowledging that...traditional music never needed to be validated but it’s actually just allowing people to get academic accreditation for the huge work that they are doing. I think that’s very valuable” (Personal Interview McGrattan April 2016).

Broadcaster, musician, and third-level Irish traditional music teacher, Kieran Hanrahan, also feels that higher education contributes to the legitimisation of Irish traditional music, especially in the case of student populations who, in his view, now value Irish traditional music as being as artistically valid as other genres of music:
“I think [higher education] gives a legitimacy too to traditional musicians. I see the students interacting and whether they are classical or trad, they all interact on the same level, which I think is pretty good. So that’s something that certainly third-level can do” (Personal Interview Hanrahan April 2016).

Although musician and academic Síle Denvir still observes a lack of understanding and parity of esteem of Irish traditional music in the wider tertiary-level sector, she feels that it is essential that Irish traditional music studies occupy a place in higher education in order the redress the imbalances that she perceives:

“There’s a tokenism there. There is a disconnect between some music departments and Irish music. It’s seen as separate and not necessarily as respected as classical music or other types of music. I think that’s the reason we need to have Irish music at third-level, so we can engage with that so that we have the discourse, the rhetoric that we need to have to be able to sit at that table and have those discussions, and say “this is our music, this is why it’s as good as any other music, and this is why it deserves to be here at this third-level institution”, and unless you have the people who can talk the talk, that respect won’t be there” (Personal Interview Denvir August 2015).

Returning to Ellen Cranitch again, she accepts that all practitioners may not embrace higher education, but she believes it can contribute to improving the status of Irish traditional music as a genre that has been misunderstood by many:

“[Part of the Irish traditional music community] will embrace academic input and see academic interest in what they do as a validation, as a kind of recognition. I think a lot of the time [Irish traditional] music and the folk arts have been regarded, and I was guilty of this myself, as kind of simplistic art forms” (Personal Interview Cranitch February 2017).
Fiddler and Director of the CCÉ SCT examinations,¹⁰⁹ Oisín MacDiarmada maintains that the recognition and validity bestowed on Irish traditional music by higher education also has the potential of promoting Irish traditional music studies in secondary-level education as students feel that there is a further educational pathway available should they wish to continue Irish traditional music studies in third-level education:

“It feels great that third-level embraces traditional music, that validity that it gives it. I think it’s helpful to all of us, no matter what style of music we are in engaged in. It probably encourages a lot of young people who are in secondary school learning music. It feels like it’s probably worth devoting precious time to music because it has a place [in higher education]” (Personal Interview MacDiarmada July 2013).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the contributions offered here by research interviewees resonate in many ways with literature on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in higher education structures. Next, I contextualise these research contributions in the wider framework of what this chapter has sought to achieve, which is to chart and reflect on public, extra-institutional and extra-academic discourse on Irish traditional music, as well as instances where community perspectives and opinions on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Ireland’s higher education system have been offered to the public record.

¹⁰⁹ For more on the SCT examinations established and operated by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, see the most recent (2016) SCT syllabus, which can be downloaded at: https://comhaltas.ie/images/press_room/sct_syllabus_2016_english.pdf
5.8 Discussion

As the first section of this chapter suggests, intellectual discussions on Irish traditional music have not been confined to the realms of academia and higher education. Although attitudes towards discourse, analysis, and theoretical frameworks as applied to Irish traditional music in Ireland are invariably mixed for a variety of reasons, discourse and Irish traditional music have interfaced in many contexts outside of higher education for some time, and in many guises. Such convergences of public extra-academic discourse and the Irish traditional music community have been facilitated in public seminars, publications, and media productions. Lectures programmed at events such as the annual Willie Clancy Summer School provide regular accessible public platforms for Irish traditional music discourse outside higher education institutions. Of course, such events do not function to exclude engagement from the academic community. In many cases, lectures are presented by academics working in Irish higher education, or in higher education settings outside Ireland. Consequently, the extra-academic public lecture platform is an important overlap between the practices of higher education research, and the extra-academic Irish traditional music community. However, the key point is that many of the contributors to such events are not employed in academia, and form part of the well-established Irish traditional music ‘intelligentsia’ referred to by Vallely (Vallely 1999, p.5).

In many ways, it was Breandán Breathnach who was the original pioneering insider extra-academic authority to connect the wider Irish traditional music community with discourse on Irish traditional music. His achievements are numerous and well documented. Breathnach’s work in its various forms, along with Fintan Vallely’s visionary work on *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* and the *Crossroads*
Conferences, and the numerous aforementioned events, publications and initiatives outlined that provide fora for public discourse on Irish traditional music, have undoubtedly normalised the concept of discourse and analysis on a wider scale than ever before. Importantly they also show a theoretical and intellectual ardour among an already existing ‘oral tradition intelligentsia’, as Vallely puts it. Consequently, this indicates that first, the Irish traditional music community is not unaccustomed or averse to intellectualisation, and second, there exists an extra-academic intellectual cognoscenti among the Irish traditional music community. It is important to consider these points when problematising any criticism of discourse and intellectual dialogue around Irish traditional music in Ireland. Extra-academic practitioners have been central to publications like Fintan Vallely’s *Companion to Irish Traditional Music*, which has provided a significant overlap or interface between the Irish traditional music academic, and extra-academic communities. Invariably utilised as an invaluable reference in Irish traditional music programmes globally, the publication draws on academics and extra-academic practitioners alike as contributors, reflecting the diverse expertise of the Irish traditional music community as a whole. Returning to Toner Quinn’s review of the *Companion’s* first volume, we are reminded of the reviewer’s assertion that one of the primary achievements of the publication was its ability to provide a breadth of insightful and immediate information on Irish traditional music, contributed by practitioners, or, in other words “the people that know more about it than anyone” (Quinn 2000). It is significant that such an important, relevant, and widely referenced piece of literature pertaining to Irish traditional music in Ireland features such a large proportion of contributions from
Irish traditional music practitioners, rather than specialist researchers and academics exclusively.

Vallely, also one of the primary instigators of the *Crossroads Conferences*, both a respected academic and celebrated musician and singer, convened the conferences to provide a platform for discussion outside of academic contexts. Assessing the success of the event, Vallely recalls that it “opened up many hitherto closed minds to the idea of intellectualising about music” (Vallely 2013, p.11). Again, it is important to recall Vallely’s agenda that deliberately opened discussion to communities of practice operating outside academia, as conference instigators were “essentially free of any tenured institutional ties which might compromise independent thinking” (ibid). In a similar manner to his edited tome, the *Companion to Irish Traditional Music*, Vallely has endeavoured to provide and promote platforms that locate discourse and academic research beyond the realm of academia exclusively, thereby empowering disposed individuals to further engage with discourse on Irish traditional music. The connection between the *Crossroads Conferences* and my research is important, and relatively unambiguous. These conferences afforded non-academics and academics an opportunity to contribute to and observe academic-styled discourse and discussion on Irish traditional music for arguably the first time ever.

Few public discourse platforms discussing Irish traditional music have attracted the mainstream attention achieved by productions such as Seán Ó Riada’s *Our Musical Heritage* and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin’s *A River of Sound*. The public platform afforded to these productions undoubtedly benefitted the visibility of Irish traditional music, but both proved divisive and controversial. Both productions presented Irish traditional music to a general non-specialist audience on a widely
accessed privileged platform, undoubtedly gaining a considerable degree of notoriety for Irish traditional music in the process. However, what motivated the controversial reception of both productions, and what can we learn from the rationale of the Irish traditional music community’s resistance to how the Irish traditional music was portrayed in each?

It is conceivable that the perceived misrepresentation of Irish traditional music by Ó Riada, who was perceived as an outsider academic with a privileged public platform, has impacted how some view the relationship between Irish traditional music and public discourse, and of particular relevance here, it may well influence how academia is perceived more generally. The significance of Ó Riada’s close association with Irish traditional music in Irish higher education is somewhat overlooked in the literature focused on the content and reception of *Our Musical Heritage*, but this link has particular relevance to the research presented in this dissertation. First, *Our Musical Heritage* marked a pioneering first step in constructing a theoretical academic framework for Irish traditional music and song that could be accessed by the general population, on Ireland’s only radio platform at that time. This instance of ‘applied ethnomusicology’ (however potentially disavowed by Ó Riada as a concept) located academic discourse on Irish traditional music in Ireland beyond the confines of academic fora. “Couched in the music of the conservatoire” (Taylor 2007, p.356), the methodological lens employed by Ó Riada in communicating theoretical observations on Irish traditional music and song was greatly informed by his institutional training in Western classical music, and the content of *Our Musical Heritage* was very similar to the lectures that Ó Riada prepared for his music students at University College Cork (Personal Interview Ó Súilleabháin March 2014).
Consequently, in my view, *Our Musical Heritage* also provides a significant, early, and archetypal precedent whereby resistance to a perceived authoritative, and methodologically compromised analytical discourse for Irish traditional music is conflated with the concept of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. Were criticisms levelled at Ó Riada and *Our Musical Heritage* motivated by the stubborn inertia of a regressive Irish traditional music community, or by the justified concerns of expert practitioners and enthusiasts who had the experience and intellect to distrust the incomplete but authoritative proclamations of a perceived outsider?

As is the case with *Our Musical Heritage*, the connections between *A River of Sound* and Irish higher education have significant import for this research. Its presenter Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin had recently been appointed the inaugural Chair of Music at the University of Limerick in 1994, and many of the musicians featured were part of a new generation of traditional musicians who had access to studies in Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, in institutions such as University College Cork. More important perhaps is the relationship between the series’ predilection for experimental approaches to Irish traditional music and the role of higher education in creating and promoting this ‘third wave’ of Irish traditional music. Ó Súilleabháin used the term ‘campus trad’ to represent this third wave of exploration that he saw emanating from a new generation of young traditional musicians who were now occupying third-level music departments. Of particular interest here is the manner in which the reception of *A River of Sound* informs perceptions of third-level pedagogy for Irish traditional music. Is the concept of ‘campus trad’ somehow associated with the misrepresentation perceived by critics of *A River of Sound* (criticism evidenced by Tony
MacMahon’s 168 correspondents, as well as Vallely et al 1999, and McCann 2010)?

Musician Martin Hayes, a contributor to *A River of Sound*, observes how approaches to teaching Irish traditional music in Irish higher education may once have been (and perhaps still are) conflated with the perceived progressive agenda behind *A River of Sound*:

“I understand where [critics of experimentation] are coming from because if you love this music deeply in its traditional form, and I do too, you can feel very protective of it and you can feel like it’s being damaged or it’s been changed, and I think that’s a heartfelt thing. It’s not necessarily ignorance because I think you can’t feel that way without a lot of deep love and understanding of the music...Mícheál as the figure head of the institution, because of his political and ideological positioning in the debate in the ‘90s in Irish music would have, I suppose, put the university on one side of the fence of that debate, which is largely healed now” (Personal Interview Hayes January 2014).

*A River of Sound* signified a notable milestone in presenting discourse on Irish traditional music, song, and dance to a non-specialist, mainstream audience, utilising a privileged media platform. Progressing along a continuum instigated by *Our Musical Heritage*, Ó Súilleabháin and the producers of *A River of Sound*, attempted to both provide an overview of Irish traditional music while also showcasing (and perhaps prioritising) one particular stream of artistic activity that was based very much on experimentation. Both productions were met with considerable contention, (as evidenced earlier by Taylor (2007) and Breathnach (1982) in the case of *Our Musical Heritage*). In a similar way to how *Our Musical Heritage* prioritised, canonised, and lionised certain performers and regions, *A River of Sound* prioritised and privileged the selected voices of a particular cohort of musicians, who espoused a particular attitude towards the changing course of Irish traditional music. Like *Our Musical Heritage*, *A River of Sound*, through a widely accessible media platform, presented a narrative of
Irish traditional music that conflicted with the views of a large proportion of the Irish traditional music community.  

Throughout this chapter, themes such as canonicity, authority, standardisation, homogeneity, experimental/progressive bias, mediation, and anti-intellectualisation have emerged, exemplified by how various publications and media productions have been received. Many shared opinions have been expressed in relation to the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education and in the institutionalisation of music in academia more generally. Are such perceptions simply universal concerns, related to wider manifestations of institutionalisation rather than specific to higher education contexts? To fully understand the relationship between extra-academic traditional music practices and traditional music pedagogy/academia in Irish higher education, it is imperative that these complex perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes towards traditional music in academia are unravelled. The hub of extra-academic intellectual activity exemplified throughout this chapter attests to an intellectual fervour among the wider Irish traditional music community, but this also suggests that critics of the manifestations of institutionalisation presented throughout this chapter must look beyond academia exclusively, if themes such as canonicity and ideological bias (among many others) are to be interrogated rigorously and productively.

A primary aim here is to acknowledge and contextualise the precedents that have informed why and how I have conceived of my research questions, and the

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110 Again, this is supported in one instance by the volume of correspondence stated to have been received by Tony MacMahon, after his commentary on RTÉ’s Late Late Show, in response to his concerns about A River of Sound. According to MacMahon, he “received 168 letters and calls from traditional musicians all over the country” (MacMahon 1999, p.113).
interview questions that I posed to research interviewees. For me it is a valuable opportunity to demonstrate that such questions have not been constructed arbitrarily. I have also sought to establish that community commentary on Irish traditional music in Irish higher education has been expressed on public record and has not been confined to informal, anecdotal, and private conversations.

The contributions of Paddy Glackin, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, Fintan Vallely, and audience members at the Willie Clancy Summer School in 2000, have also provided this research with appropriate questions. Significantly, the event also signals a pioneering instance whereby community perspectives on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education interfaced with academic discourse and representatives of higher education in a public forum. Although the seminar focused on other issues such as a diminished prevalence of solo performance, a decline in critical debate, and concerns about cross-genre collaboration and fusions, a number of crucial statements were made during the seminar relating to some of the challenges and benefits involved in institutionalising Irish traditional music in Irish higher education.

One of the most salient points made by Ó Súilleabháin, in response to questions about who he felt could occupy the vacuum left by influential older musicians, stated that he felt that true authority resided in the Irish traditional music community, and not in higher education. He acknowledged that the higher education sector posed challenges to the transmissional values of Irish traditional music, but he also called for traditional musicians to take ownership of higher education and to realise that the educational models perceived to be in conflict with Irish traditional
music processes can and should be subverted and shaped to more appropriately reflect the needs and expectations of the wider Irish traditional music community.

Of course, it is difficult to ascertain the extent to which rhetoric like that offered by Ó Súilleabháin translates to practical curricular change, but it is significant that, in this particular public debate of consequence, Ó Súilleabháin stated on record, that he felt ownership, authority, and general consensus should be primarily negotiated outside of higher education environments. As difficult as it is to establish concretely, judging from audience responses on the audio recording of the seminar, the concerns of those present were somewhat mitigated by the openness and candour demonstrated by Ó Súilleabháin when speaking about how he views the role of higher education in the promotion of Irish traditional music. In theory at least, it seems that some sort of milestone was reached in terms of opening channels of dialogue between representatives and pioneers of higher education, such as Ó Súilleabháin, and a relatively representative sample of the Irish traditional music community who were present at the Willie Clancy Summer School seminar. Have individuals tasked with designing third-level curricula and pedagogy for Irish traditional music, reflected on the outcomes of this public seminar? Perhaps it is time to instigate a forum that explores some of the issues around the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland today?

Another significant milestone in this narrative was the *Journal of Music* interview with musician Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, highlighting another practitioner perspective on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. The interview may have lacked substantive evidence in its critique of higher education – which, of course, was not the purpose of the interview - but nonetheless it
marked and influenced further debate and discussion on how Irish traditional music is located within the institutional structures of higher education in Ireland. Fintan Vallely, a respected academic and musician, gave this discussion additional momentum in his retort, published two months later, in the same publication (Vallely 2007). Notwithstanding the fact that Ó Raghallaigh simply presented his personal opinions in the interview, it is noteworthy that a musician both respected for his intimate immersion in Irish traditional music, and as an artistically curious innovator, should have such a poor impression of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education.

The question of whether Ó Raghallaigh’s sentiments should (a) be dismissed as unrepresentative, (b) be considered as being potentially based on a cursory familiarity with what third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy entails, or (c) should form the basis of critical reflection on curriculum design, is perhaps less important than the fact that it represents a particular kind of view that needs to be aired and understood as crucial to the overall discourse. It is unlikely that even Vallely, as the respondent seeking more detail from Ó Raghallaigh on the aspects of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy that troubled him, was aware of the discrete institutional approaches to teaching, learning, and researching various aspects of Irish traditional music across the sector. This point further illustrates the value of presenting, in chapter four of this dissertation, a contemporary conspectus of Irish traditional music studies offered in selected institutions in the Republic of Ireland.

Instances of (a) community commentary on the higher education institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics, (b) the Willie Clancy Summer School public seminar in 2000, and (c) the Journal of Music pieces in 2007, have each
demonstrated precedents where members of the Irish traditional music community have expressed views on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education, on public record, moving beyond what is often perceived as anecdotal commentary. These contributions along with the literature have informed a research framework with which to construct my three primary research questions, as well as the set questions asked in my fieldwork interviews. Consequently, the third section of this chapter, which outlines the responses of my research informants to interview questions on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, is based on previous instances of community commentary.

In the final section of this chapter, I have presented and discussed a range of themes emerging from the opinions and reflections of research informants comprising a variety of stakeholders in Irish traditional music community. These contributions are invaluable for a variety of reasons. They document perspectives that have invariably been absent from the academic record, and they acknowledge that the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education is a subject of conversation among members of the Irish traditional music community. Áine Hensey, Hammy Hamilton, and Charlie Lennon each speak to the tensions surrounding third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy but suggest that such tensions have been alleviated over time, as third-level Irish traditional music programmes become more popular, and common. Is any perceived resistance to Irish traditional music in Irish higher education analogous perhaps to opposition to the introduction and subsequent prominence of accompaniment instruments such as the guitar and bouzouki in Irish traditional music? Or is this an over-simplified comparison that fails to address stakeholders’ informed opinions?
Unsurprisingly, at the centre of discussions on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, is the view that higher education studies in Irish traditional music are perhaps superfluous to the community-based processes of Irish traditional music. Ellen Cranitch feels that some critics of third-level Irish traditional music programmes may be unfair and cynical when criticising what are good intentions, but she accepts that commentators are justified in thinking that Irish traditional music does not need higher education institutionalisation. Ronan Browne declares that he and his colleagues find higher education programmes in Irish traditional music somewhat laughable, and states that only those involved in higher education feel differently. John Blake portrays a similar image and feels that the vast majority of his peers do not take third-level Irish traditional music programmes seriously. As an academic, Adrian Scahill feels that pejorative attitudes towards third-level Irish traditional music studies are widespread; his peers outside higher education are concerned about the standardising effects of higher education institutionalisation. Paddy Cummins, an Irish World Academy graduate, suggests that 50% of the Irish traditional musicians he has encountered are critical of third-level Irish traditional music programmes.

Other contributors to this research feel that third-level Irish traditional music studies need time to develop. Kieran Hanrahan believes that higher education programmes in Irish traditional music may become legitimised after further generations of traditional musicians engage with them. Likewise, John Carty feels that third-level Irish traditional music programmes haven’t developed fully and suggests that it may be of benefit to have an overarching umbrella body that unites the sector. Moreover, Conal Ó Gráda isn’t convinced that third-level Irish traditional music
programmes have found a credible identity, and as an active practitioner, he doesn’t see their contribution to Irish traditional music as of yet.

Interestingly, the prominence of research done outside of higher education structures, such as biographical-styled studies and projects on various historical traditional musicians, was referenced by some contributors to this research. Hammy Hamilton highlights important work done on Irish traditional music by people that he feels do not need the formal qualifications offered by academic studies, including researchers such as the aforementioned Sean Gilraine, Tom Munnelly, and Harry Bradshaw. Liz Doherty feels that the type of specialist referred to by Hamilton is in decline, and although a committed academic and lecturer, she feels that higher education is not addressing this shortfall and is therefore not meeting many of what she perceives as the needs of the Irish traditional music community.

Resonating with the work of Juniper Hill (2005, 2009a, 2009b) and Simon Keegan-Phipps (2007, 2008), interviewees celebrated the increased status of Irish traditional music in contemporary society, aided in their view by its presence in Irish higher education. While Martin Hayes, Máire Ó Keeffe, Paul Brock, and Máire Ní Ghráda recall being shy about publicly acknowledging, in their youth, the fact that they played Irish traditional music, their contributions to this research celebrate how the social status of Irish traditional music has increased. They each feel that the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education has partly contributed to the legitimisation of the artistic and social value of Irish traditional music. In addition, Aileen Dillane, Frankie Gavin, Paddy Cummins, Mick Moloney, Brendan Mulkere, and Zoë Conway, go further and highlight the potential of academic and higher education to interrogate (and influence) how the media industry perceives
and represents Irish traditional music in wider society. Paddy Ryan sees higher education, and formal accreditation in Irish traditional music as a celebration and legitimisation of traditional musicians of previous generations who were responsible for transmitting Irish traditional music generationally. Paul McGrattan welcomes the formal acknowledgement and recognition that higher education provides to individuals who are already undertaking significant work in Irish traditional music. Importantly, Oisín MacDiarmada feels that the recognition bestowed by higher education on Irish traditional music will consequently impact second-level music education in a positive way and encourage traditional musicians to view Irish traditional music as a viable pathway for further education at both second and tertiary level.

Many discussions around the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education invariably touch on the relationship between Western art music and Irish traditional music. Charlie Lennon recalls the low status of Irish traditional music throughout his life as a traditional musician in comparison to the prestige associated with Western art music. Mary Mitchell-Ingoldsby remembers similar perceptions on the status of Irish traditional music as a student at the music department of University College Cork, and recalls the impact made by Mícheál Ó Súilleabáin in terms of rebalancing attitudes that previously placed more value on Western art music. Paddy Glackin recounts his memories of being invited to University College Cork in the 1980s to perform and speak about his music and recalls how this experience felt like some form of validation. Liam O’Connor, Kieran Hanrahan, Ellen Cranitch, Síle Denvir, Catherine Foley and Mats Melin see the validation offered by higher education to Irish traditional music as an opportunity to
counteract the hegemonic dominance of Western art music, and place Irish traditional music on an equal footing with other genres.

The research presented in this chapter is significant in acknowledging and reflecting on community perspectives on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. I have outlined how the literature deals with such community perspectives, and I have sought to illustrate the ways in which community commentary extends beyond private anecdote. Keegan and Doherty’s work offers perspectives on how the Irish traditional music community feels about third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland. Throughout this chapter, I have endeavoured to find and discuss other pathways where community commentary has interfaced with higher education, academia, and public discourse. In demonstrating facets of the public discourse on Irish traditional music as evidenced in and facilitated by the 2000 Willie Clancy Summer School public seminar, along with a critical appraisal of two pieces in the Journal of Music from 2007, I have also attempted to chart how such instances have informed and inspired this research.

The recursive nature of my engagement with such materials, people, and ideas is important to acknowledge. These events have provided me with a range of themes that have subsequently constructed my three research questions, and by extension, the set questions that I posed to my research interviewees. As important as these questions are to pose, it is the responses offered by research informants in the third section of this chapter that are the most invaluable in terms of contributing to the academic record. Such perspectives are largely previously under-explored and constitute a representative cross-section of stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community whose voices are a critical part of this research.
It is significant that the stylistic standardisation and homogenisation observed by Keegan-Phipps and Doherty is also of concern to my research informants. This chapter also showcases some opposition to canonicity in the form of cross-genre fusion and experimentation, as evidenced by discussions at the Willie Clancy Summer School public seminar. On a positive note, my research informants' views on the legitimacy and recognition that higher education bestows on Irish traditional music (even if only in the eyes of the outside observer), resonates with Hill’s work in Finland, and Keegan-Phipps’ work in the UK.

Contributions to this chapter extend beyond what is offered in literature on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional music in higher education however. My research confirms the existence of the “oral-tradition intelligentsia” posited by Fintan Vallely (Vallely 1999, p.5). Individuals operating external to, and independent of, higher education and academia engage in research and debate to an extent not demonstrated by Hill and Keegan-Phipps in their work. Not only is this research community often separate from higher education, but contributions from active musicians and academics such as Liz Doherty, in her interview with me, suggest that third-level Irish traditional music programmes are not producing the next generation of advocates and lobbyists that Irish traditional music has invariably relied on.\textsuperscript{111} It is

\textsuperscript{111} However, it is important to acknowledge here some of the advocacy work being undertaken by individuals working in or connected to higher education in Ireland. For example, one recent movement, FairPlé, established to promote gender balance in “the production, performance, promotion, and development of Irish traditional and folk music” (FairPlé 2018), although not affiliated with any higher education institution, has among its founding members, a number of academics, and third-level students. Karan Casey, a primary founding member of the organisation is a doctoral student at the Irish World Academy, while members such as Úna Monaghan (a PhD graduate of Queen’s University Belfast), and Síle Denvir (an Irish lecturer at Dublin City University) are directly connected to the higher education sector. The majority of founding members do not have a connection to higher education and academia, but nonetheless, it is important to state that individuals engaged in higher education as academics, researchers, graduates, and students, are engaging in Irish traditional music advocacy on a
important to note that so many of the musicians with national and international profiles, interviewed for this research do not think that third-level programmes in Irish traditional music are taken seriously, and furthermore, they perceive pejorative attitudes to third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy to be widespread among their peers. Of course, it is not the objective of this research to simply validate or debunk this commentary, but rather to acknowledge its existence and what that might mean.

In conclusion, apart from demonstrating important precedents in community commentary about third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy that have informed this research, this chapter provides a useful point of departure in considering how to further integrate community commentary in academic contextualisations of Irish traditional music, such as those found in third-level Irish traditional music curricula and academic research. The public seminar held in 2000 at the Willie Clancy Summer School provided an important opportunity for Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin to outline his modus operandi for third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy, and to reassure members of the Irish traditional music community by highlighting their potential to take ownership of Irish higher education. Perhaps it is time to provide another forum of this kind, in the higher education site, to rekindle discussions on how community perspectives on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music can interface with, and ideally contribute to, the approaches of pedagogues who design and implement Irish traditional music curricula in Irish higher education. There is potential for this type of intra-communal collaboration to awaken all stakeholders to the mutual

variety of levels. This is only one example of the type of collaborative engagement that members of the Irish traditional music community (of both academics and non-academics) become involved in. Such activities are not exclusively undertaken by an extra-academic, extra-institutional community.
richness that community perspectives can provide to the higher education sector, and vice versa. Undoubtedly, such an approach would optimise third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy, and could, in turn, contribute significant insights to international conversations about music education taking place with other genres of music. I discuss such considerations more fully in chapters six to eight.

Although many instrumental, song, and dance tutors working in higher education are active practitioners, interviews with such individuals suggest that they do not have any influence on traditional arts curricula and are tasked with teaching their respective performance specialisms exclusively. Similarly, the numerous active practitioners who do engage with third-level Irish traditional music studies as students, according to my research, are not presented with opportunities to contribute to how traditional arts curricula are developed. In summary, the intra-communal overlap that does exist between higher education and the Irish traditional music does not currently facilitate any collaborative platform to discuss how third-level Irish traditional music curricula are formed.
Chapter 6: Encountering Canonicity in Third-Level Irish Traditional Music Education

In this chapter, I investigate the operations of canonicity as a practice, a potential consequence of, and structuring strategy in, Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. By canonicity, I mean the construction of a canon, which can be considered to be a body of accepted repertoire, or an accepted style of performance, that may be prioritised at the expense of others. “Canons are yardsticks of value” and the canon “solidifies for lay people, critics, scholars, and practitioners of the form, who’s who and what’s what” (Thomas 2002, p.288), creating limiting “textbook narratives of musical orthodoxy” (Talty 2017, p.102), that determine what we should study and should perform (Caswell 1991, p.12). This echoes Bohlman’s view that musicologists invariably codify musical meaning and ascribe value when he states that musicologists choose a few musical repertoires and musical experiences and then justify “those few for others not in the business of cultural arbitration” (Bohlman 1992, p.199). He adds that “[c]reating canons is a normative task for musicologists” (ibid). Canons and canonicity define our experiences. As Citron states, “the canon creates a narrative of the past and a template for the future” (Citron 2000, p.1). However, canonicity is not confined to formalised institutional settings and can manifest in any extra-institutional environment, as I discuss later in this chapter. By Irish traditional music pedagogy, I refer here to the transmission of knowledge in a variety of modes, to include performance, and research/academic studies in Irish traditional music (Talty 2017). I am interested in how the institutionalisation of Irish traditional pedagogy
(through its many specialisms, streams and disciplines, including performance, ethnomusicology, musicology, and Irish studies etc.) in Irish higher education interfaces and interacts with wider literature on canonicity in music education.

First, I seek to understand the prevalence of perceptions of canon-forming processes (valuing particular styles, people, practices, etc.), both within, and external to higher education institutionalisation. Is canonicity a ubiquitous phenomenon that is manifest in all forms of institutionalisation, however formal or informal? Second, I introduce and discuss literature that discusses canonicity as it applies specifically to Irish traditional music in Ireland (McCarthy 1999, Doherty 2002, O’Shea 2008, Corcoran 2013). I subsequently locate the commentary of a number of research participants in this discourse in order to identify the extent to which the literature and stakeholders’ opinions converge and diverge. A list of interviewees is included in Appendix A. Third, I discuss the perceived challenges inherent in institutionalising a process-oriented, communal art form in a higher education environment, as proposed by a range of authors (Smith 1999, Heneghan 2001, Doherty 2002, Hill 2005, McKeon 2007, Corcoran 2013, Cranitch 2013, McGettrick 2013), as well as by my research consultants drawn from the Irish traditional music community and the tertiary-level traditional music sector in Ireland and overseas. Fourth, I present the opinions of a number of music pedagogues working within higher education systems in Ireland, and at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow (RCS), the Royal College of Music in Stockholm (KMH), Sweden, and the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland, with a view to understanding how they each conceptualise and negotiate canonicity in their music education systems. This brings a valuable comparative perspective to the
research and helps identify trends as well as location-specific challenges, opportunities and general approaches.

I conclude the chapter with reflections on how elements of canonicity (such as the standardisation of repertoire, or stylistic homogenisation, for example), if left unchecked, may be detrimental to folk and traditional music pedagogy. I also discuss how my research consultants have informed my thinking on how to best negotiate canonicity in Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education specifically, and in the wider arena of general music education in Ireland and abroad. Finally, by exploring how canonicity manifests in structures and practices in wider music education circles, I hope to identify and understand both differences and parallels in third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education.

Irish traditional music, as a practice, is a diverse cultural and artistic activity and consequently, efforts to authoritatively codify it will invariably be contested and divisive. Mantle Hood’s observations on the discipline of ethnomusicology are equally applicable to the diversity found in the traditional music community in Ireland when he describes ethnomusicology as “a field that has almost as many approaches and objectives as there are practitioners” (Hood 1971, p.1). Drawing on wider ethnomusicological literature (primarily that of Kingsbury 1988, Nettl 1995, Hill 2005, and Keegan-Phipps 2007 and 2008), I interrogate such ideas in my case study.

6.1 Canonicity

Many authors have expressed concern at how Western classical music pedagogy constructs musical canons by privileging certain composers and masterworks over others (Kingsbury 1988, Caswell 1991, Nettl 1995). Formalised and structured music
curricula inevitably prioritise certain components of a musical culture over others. The extent to which they accommodate diverse perspectives on a given music determines the extent to which music education eschews the construction of inflexible canons. Describing canonicity as “the belief in a canon, the set of ideas about how the canon functions in musical life, and the ideology governing how and by whom the canon is determined”, Caswell refers here to the narratives and epistemologies that we accept, create and/or sustain around a given practice such as music (Caswell 1991, p.143). Thomas demonstrates the propensity of institutions such as higher education and academia to create and enshrine canons of interpretation and value:

“Canonization is the process by which a person, a work (or oeuvre), or a form is assessed by institutional elites and experts as of high value, value so high that the person, the work, or the form will be remembered and studied over long periods of time. Canons are yardsticks of value used especially in academia...although canons change, the very process of delineating the fundamentals of a form, and the individuals and works that drive a form’s development, solidifies for lay people, critics, scholars, and practitioners of the form, who’s who and what’s what” (Thomas 2002, p.288).

Caswell is critical of how the concept of canonicity has developed and is fearful that canonicity, “as instilled in the academy, is destructive of our critical faculties” (Caswell 1991, p.129). Canonicity is for Caswell “a flawed paradigm for pedagogy” as, again, it tells consecutive generations what we should study and what we should perform (ibid). Entire music histories can be created and sustained through canonising processes. Discussing the institutionalisation of jazz in higher education, Marquis asserts that its introduction in American higher education has led to the development of an “official history and an official canon, perhaps even an official music” (Marquis 1998, p.121). Nettl’s observations on the convenient “six-period-plan” associated with European classical repertoire (medieval, Renaissance, baroque, classical, romantic, and
twentieth century) highlights the propensity of music education to categorise and codify musical knowledge, quite possibly at the expense of presenting diverse and nuanced educational experiences. The codification and systematisation of musical knowledge may seem an inevitable consequence of music pedagogy practices given that a curriculum needs to be delivered. However, educators, as what Bohlman terms “canonizers” (Bohlman 1992, p.205), must be vigilant so that the systematisation of knowledge does not facilitate the construction of an accepted or official music that conflicts with how such music is experienced by practitioners outside formalised education systems.

Critics of education systems in music genres other than Western classical music are also dubious of canonicity in music education. For many, canonicity manifests itself through homogeneity and standardisation of repertoire; it threatens stylistic individualism, a hallmark of most traditional musics (Doherty 2002, Hill 2005, Keegan-Phipps 2007). In his study of the institutionalisation of English folk music, Keegan-Phipps discusses the homogenisation of its musical style in performance. What he terms as a ‘clone’ phenomenon appears to result from students “engaging in the emulation of an unhealthily small number of musicians” (Keegan-Phipps 2007, p.102). Similarly, according to Hill, a pedagogical ‘feedback loop’ is created when graduates of the Sibelius Academy are engaged to teach Finnish folk music at the same institution where they studied and advance only the pedagogical practices they received as students (Hill 2005). This is something worth reflecting upon in an Irish context where

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113 In *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music*, Bruno Nettl suggests that the oversimplified delineation of what he terms the “six-period plan” in music historiography is evidence of canonicity in action. In his opinion, transition periods occurring between the “six-period plan” are neglected due to music historians’ emphasis on stability rather than change (Nettl 1995, p.99).
many graduates of institutions such as University College Cork or the University of Limerick, are not only sometimes employed as tutors at their respective alma mater, but they also invariably teach Irish traditional music in their own regions following graduation.

Canonicity, although a prominent theme in discussions on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in higher education environments, is not confined to that arena, and is in fact a ubiquitous phenomenon that can pervade many processes of folk and traditional musics. In the historiography of Irish traditional music from Grattan Flood (1905), up to more recent publications such as Vallely’s Companion (2011), perceptions of the canon of Irish traditional music (such as what is considered as traditional repertoire, style, and accepted instrumentation, for example) have gradually evolved over time. Founding Director Emeritus of the Irish Traditional Music Archive, Nicholas Carolan points to how ideologies evolve, as evidenced by this recollection of the important Irish folklorist and tune scholar Breandán Breathnach, in relation to his attitude to polkas:

“I’m reminded that when Breandán Breathnach was alive and was working on his index of traditional tunes, and I was helping him, that he excluded polkas. At the beginning he was only dealing with various kinds of jigs, reels, and hornpipes. And I persuaded him that polkas are part of Irish traditional music and he eventually did accept that, but it wasn’t part of his thinking in the ‘50s when he started the process. He regarded polkas as European ballroom imports, which they were as a tune type but then we evolved in this country, a very indigenous form of polkas, especially in the south...I think no one would now exclude polkas, and if Breandán was alive himself, he wouldn’t...For quite a while I remember at times when Donegal music in total was excluded and dismissed as not being Irish, as being Scottish, but of course again there were all these processes of importation and naturalisation, and development. You know a strathspey becomes a highland in Donegal. These are all Irish musical processes so I think that people would not exclude Donegal highlands, mazurkas, barndances, schottisches, all of that kind of material now. In the 19th century the canon was wide because musicians were just interested in good tunes and you can see that in
manuscript collections. But then with the Gaelic League (see footnote 17 on p.34) exclusivity it was a parallel attitude to the foreign games idea. We can play Gaelic football but not soccer or rugby even though they all came from mediaeval football” (Personal Interview Carolan March 2015).

As Carolan sees it, it would seem foolhardy and naive to exclude polkas from the repertory of Irish traditional music today, and yet, Breathnach’s thinking at that time highlights a different attitude to what repertoire was deemed ‘traditional’. Carolan’s recollections not only draw attention to the many possible manifestations of canonicity but they also demonstrate the mutability of such canons over time, in accordance with tastes and trends. Referring to Scottish-influenced Donegal repertoire, Carolan reminds us of the potential disadvantages of framing musical elements such as repertoire as objects, rather than as processes, shaped and ‘indigenised’ by practitioners over time. Instead, canonicity can be understood and mitigated by understanding the process-oriented characteristics of Irish traditional music in Ireland.114

Canonicity also occurs when traditional artists produce recorded works. Musician, researcher, writer, and flute-maker Colin Hamilton, a former ethnomusicology masters student of John Blacking at Queen’s University Belfast, and a PhD graduate of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick, points to the ‘canonising’ potential of the far-reaching recording industry to construct standards and norms in Irish traditional music:

“I would say that commercial recordings would have a much bigger influence on creating a canon of music than third-level education. Look at it simply in terms of

114 For more on the creative processes of Irish traditional musicians, and the development of an accompanying vocabulary and analytical framework, see Ó Súilleabháin 1990.
statistics. How many people do recordings reach and how many people study traditional music at third-level? It might have an effect amongst the people that are involved in third-level education but even with that I would think of all the recordings they listen to as well...When I was doing my research there was no such thing as Google. Now you can't keep information in. Even if you wanted to create a canon, it would be a very difficult thing to do because people have got so much access to everything” (Personal Interview Hamilton December 2014).

Hamilton’s suggestion that the recording industry, and online media more generally, have a considerable influence on musical tastes is a valid one. Access to such a diverse range of traditional music in various media currently has undoubtedly democratised and diversified the traditional music canon in Ireland and abroad. Historically, this may not have been the case. Therefore, as Hamilton states, it is currently difficult to construct and maintain a definitive traditional music canon in a globalised traditional music community.

Academic, fiddler player, and former lecturer in Irish traditional music at Queen’s University in Belfast, Martin Dowling suggests that online and media representations of Irish traditional music, across Ireland and the UK, play a significant part in establishing and normalising trends and narratives of what people consider Irish traditional music to be:

“I don’t think [higher education is] having any effect on the canon of Irish music. I think YouTube, TG4, RnaG, RTÉ, and BBC Alba115 are having a much greater effect on what’s cool and what isn’t, what’s central and what isn’t, than the universities or the people who are coming out of them” (Personal Interview Dowling February 2016).

115 TG4 (Teílifís na Gaeilge, channel 4) is Ireland’s national Irish-language broadcaster, originally established as Teílifís na Gaeilge (trans. television of Irish) in 1996. It has become more closely associated with Irish traditional music content than any other Irish television platform. RnaG (Raidió na Gaeltachta, trans. radio of the Gaeltacht (a region where the Irish language is spoken as a first language)), is Ireland’s national Irish-language radio service, and like TG4, features a significant amount of Irish traditional music in its programming. BBC Alba is a Scottish Gaelic language television service that showcases a considerable amount of Scottish traditional music and song, as well as the music and song of Ireland.
As Dowling suggests, canonicity pervades processes of institutionalisation external to higher education that include media representations of Irish traditional music in radio and television broadcasting. Musician, broadcaster, and radio producer, Peter Browne, acknowledges the capacity of broadcasting to select, prioritise, and consequently ‘canonise’ aspects of Irish traditional music, in a similar manner to higher education.\textsuperscript{116} Browne presented \textit{The Rolling Wave} (possibly the flagship Irish traditional music radio programme today), broadcast weekly on Ireland’s national broadcaster, \textit{Raidió Teilifís Éireann} (RTÉ, trans. radio television Ireland), Browne retired in August 2018 after a career of over four decades with RTÉ. However, he suggests that self-awareness and professional responsibility can safeguard against codifying traditional music at the expense of representing its diversity:

“[Canons in higher education] are analogous to broadcasting. It’s something you’ll never guard against because in some strange way, that’s just fashion. So again, it’s back down to the people you have doing it. There will always be preferences, but you’ve seen it, and I’ve seen it, where something becomes fashionable where it actually shouldn’t. But who does that? That’s done by some sort of ill-informed process and that is people, so I suppose in a sense, you just have to make sure that everyone maintains a level head about it. That’s it...It’s just up to everybody to be self-responsible about that, I think. You’re always going to have it. It is true that one strong person can alter the direction. It’s a checks and balances thing. Otherwise you don’t do it at all” (Personal Interview Browne November 2014).

Irish traditional music, as the above contributions suggest, can be prone to codification and canonising processes, whether institutional or individual. Many of the contributors referenced above have affiliations to institutions like the Irish Traditional

\textsuperscript{116} Browne also has direct experience with third-level Irish traditional music studies. He is employed by the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama as a tutor, and he received an MA from that institution in 2007. His masters thesis explored Irish traditional music on Irish radio from 1926 to the 1960s (Valley 2011, p.90)
Music Archive and the national broadcaster, RTÉ, and have experiences of, and opinions on, canonicity as it manifests outside higher education. The purpose of this section of the chapter has been to explore this possibility – that canonicity may simply be an inevitable by-product of organising knowledge in a variety of forms. Later in this chapter, I locate these ideas within the context of higher education by asking pedagogues how they deal with the possibility that canonicity in music education is inevitable, and that canons are constructed, accepted, and maintained in everyday contexts outside academia and higher education environments.

6.2 Constructing an Irish Traditional Music Canon

As wider ethnomusicological literature suggests, the concept of canonicity is somewhat ubiquitous in music education, and it has comparable relevance to the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Ireland. Issues such as the standardisation of style, repertoire, and even conceptualisations of creativity, are to the fore in such literature, as are concerns around institutional power and authority (Vallely et al 2013). Examples of literature problematising the existence and the creation of an accepted canon of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education specifically are relatively negligible apart from a few fragmented, albeit important works.

The ability of Irish traditional music competition structures such as those established by organisations like Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (see footnote 18, p.34), to influence approaches to musical style, repertoire, and technique etc. is specifically recalled by musician and teacher, Máire O’Keeffe when she notes: “you had to know the way to play, and you had to know who was adjudicating, and you tailored your
playing” (Personal Interview O’Keeffe February 2017). The implication is that rather than playing in your own style, you played according to the preferences of the judge, especially if you wanted to win, and that such knowledge was commonplace, and was as such, a strategy. The question becomes, how do individuals tasked with institutionalising Irish traditional music today in Irish higher education specifically, negotiate uniformity and standardisation?

Reflecting on the fluid, polysemous nature of Irish traditional music, Helen O’Shea suggests that when an organisation involved in institutionalising Irish traditional music “reifies the process of tradition, it attempts the impossible” (O’Shea 2008, p.24). In her view, such a process attempts to “construct, canonise and control the protean nature of culture and its constant reinvention and reinterpretation” (ibid). The extra-institutional, communal processes of a traditional music community are so diverse and individualistic that it is undoubtedly challenging to represent such processes within the reifying and codifying mechanisms of an institution such as Irish higher education.

Singer, song collector, and lecturer, Seán Corcoran, who studied a PhD in ethnomusicology with John Blacking in Queens University Belfast, raises a number of very relevant issues on the subject of Irish traditional music curricula in formal education when he asks: “[w]ho decides what should be taught? Who decides the contents of the curriculum and who decides the preferable modes of performance? Who decides what this thing called ‘Irish Traditional Music’ actually is?” (Corcoran 2013, p.277). Corcoran describes what he perceives as the construction of an Irish traditional music canon that is of a “strongly prescriptive nature”, and that holds a “surprising consensus across a wide range of fields” (ibid). According to Corcoran, the
construction of a canon “only attains any significance when it is operated by social formations that have a certain amount of social dominance - e.g., organisations that are closely associated with the State; third-level educational departments, etc.” (ibid).

Interestingly, Corcoran also suggests that the imposition of such canons are never complete as they are met with resistance from the wider community (ibid). His reference to third-level education, and its powerful and privileged status is significant here, as are his observations on the tensions that result when the traditional music community respond to the formulation of a traditional music canon in an institution such as a third-level music department.

A key part of my research endeavoured to find out how members of the broader Irish traditional music community view canonicity, a topic that came up in so many of my interviews. Those willing to talk about canon formation were also asked whether they thought this was a facet of higher education and if so, how they imagined it happened. Responses were numerous and varied. I offer a selection of them here. The well-known Clare fiddler and music teacher Brendan Mulkere, responsible for teaching innumerable London traditional musicians throughout his career from the early 1970s to the present, echoes O’Shea’s sentiments, speaking to the unsuitability of attempting to institutionalise creativity, and the fluid, diverse, and context-dependent nuances of Irish traditional music-making:

“You wouldn’t want to create a canon because you are then actually stifling the creative process, in the interpretation and playing of the tune, and in the actual compositions themselves. So, to try to establish a degree in traditional playing? No, because it would do just that. If a performance of traditional music is regarded as [the performance of Irish traditional music], everything is dead after that. Standardisation would absolutely destroy the whole notion of [Irish traditional music]. It’s a contradiction...with traditional music you have a discipline about the analysis of it, and all of that, but you would never say, “this is it, this is the thing here, I’m putting it in a
box for you. Open that box and you’re going to find it all in there”. That’s a nonsense” (Personal Interview Mulker March 2017)

Mulker’s remarks can be interpreted here as being applicable to a general suspicion of canonicity, rather than a pejorative critique of higher education exclusively. Mulker has worked with students on the BA in Irish Music and Dance and MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance programmes at the Irish World Academy, which makes him part of the education process within the university. He also suggests that the formulation of Irish traditional music degrees may magnify some of the potentially damaging characteristics of canonicity, as he views them. It is likely that Mulker is adopting a custodial ideological position here that is wise to the potential limiting nature of excessive codification and standardisation, but his enthusiastic engagement with teaching at the Irish World Academy suggests that, on a practical level, he sees the value of the Irish traditional music programmes offered at the Academy.

In a similar fashion, traditional guitarist, researcher, and recording artist, Steve Cooney (see Appendix A) asserts that perhaps our eagerness to understand traditional music and codify whatever is considered as its essential elements, can blind us to peripheral, or less ‘accepted’ perspectives on traditional music. Consequently, such canonising processes impinge upon individuality, according to Cooney:

“We have come to imagine Irish music as a certain thing, and I just don’t believe Irish music is what people say it is. I think Irish music is a myriad of different things. And the institutionalisation of Irish music has [lead to] this homogenous style of music that is the accepted form of Irish traditional music. I just don’t hear an awful lot of individuality (Personal Interview Cooney November 2014).

Like Mulker, and Cooney, Texas Tech-based academic and musician, Christopher Smith (a former external examiner of the BA in Irish Music and Dance at
the University of Limerick, see Appendix A) is also mindful of how constructing canons can conflict with extra-institutional traditional music processes. Just as Cooney criticises how people view Irish traditional music as a singular and ‘certain thing’, Smith points to the challenges of conceiving traditional music as a canon of objects that can be fully understood and quantified in institutional settings:

“Philosophically, I feel that the vernacular or the traditional is not about objects. It’s not a body of objects. It’s not a body of recordings. It’s not a body of repertoire. It’s not even a body of techniques. The traditional or the vernacular is a set of processes for learning and teaching...Canons tend to enshrine objects. Oftentimes they enshrine objects in order to delegitimise other objects. It’s no coincidence that the canon of classical music is mostly old dead white men. They can enshrine processes. You should only learn it this way...universities like objects because they can be quantified. It’s much more difficult to quantify a process, or even just to assign metrics of accomplishment on a process, but that’s why you do things like recitals, and you have annual hearings. Objects are risky. The way that most vernacular musicians work outside the academy is they select their own model” (Personal Interview Smith May 2015).

Likewise, musicologist and Chair of Music at University College Dublin, Harry White (see Appendix A), outlines how he perceives the challenges inherent in canonicity as it applies to Irish traditional music pedagogy, and offers his view on how Irish traditional music pedagogy differs to Western classical music in terms of its pedagogical relationship to an established canon:

“[Canonicity] is a challenge. The biggest problem with the idea of a canon in regard to traditional music is first of all traditional music is more and more difficult to define...In classical music or art music we tend to select. And one of the reasons we select is because there is so much going on. In traditional music it’s harder to do that because, of course one can recognise individual pieces, but it’s more of a practice than a set of extensive compositions. So, if you’re talking about a canon, you’re talking about canonising a practice rather than individual works” (Personal Interview White March 2016).
These contributions made by just a fraction of my research interviewees point to existing concerns surrounding the standardising effects of institutionalisation. This leads to a number of questions including: how common are such perceptions and understandings and do academic institutions reflect the same level of reflection and critique as research contributors seem to suggest they should? As academic, musician, and music lecturer at the National University of Ireland Maynooth, Adrian Scahill points out, criticisms of approaches taken in third level institutions are prevalent: “most, a lot of people that I have played with” have had suspicions of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education (Personal Interview Scahill October 2013). It is significant that Scahill, as a traditional music lecturer working within higher education, has experienced such widespread tension towards the institutionalisation of traditional music in Irish higher education. Conversations with other academics working in third-level Irish traditional music education suggest that they are also aware of some tension towards what they do, emanating from communities of practice external to higher education.

The themes of standardisation and homogeneity are clearly identified by many contributors to my research as being one by-product of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. Uilleann piper, composer, and recording artist, Ronan Browne (see Appendix A), describes what he views as the ‘box-ticking’, object-oriented priorities of higher education, a system that he also feels conflicts with how he learned Irish traditional music:

“[Irish higher education] is churning out generic people who have studied a very small part of what is Irish music, and it’s not half broad enough. What they’ve come out with has blinkered them to everything else. My problem with official education is that once you have it, you feel a lot less the urge to learn more, and I think that is a very
dangerous thing. The way we all learned about Irish music, our life was an apprenticeship and if we were to be really honest with ourselves, if we lived to a great old age and died happy, we would still be learning. Whereas once you institutionalise something, it becomes about gaining particular pieces of knowledge, like ticking boxes” (Personal Interview Browne March 2015).

Browne’s reflections are significant as he is a prominent professional traditional musician with a considerable degree of pedagogical experience, both within, and external to third-level education environments.

For musician and graduate of the BA in Irish Music and Dance (2014) at the Irish World Academy, Liam O’Brien, who in 2017, was awarded the TG4 Ceoltóir Óg na mBliana117 (trans. young musician of the year), tensions around standardisation in traditional music education in institutions such as the Irish World Academy are commonplace, but he feels direct criticisms are largely unwarranted:

“As I was doing the course, and you’re playing with people, the same old stuff gets thrown around. I was told that we were all trained to play like robots by the end of fourth year, and we all come out playing the same shit. This was said to me by people who would have nothing to do with the institution. I just think it was ignorance really more than anything. If they actually came down and saw what was going on here, it’s mostly good. At the end of the day it’s music. You hear [pejorative commentary] every weekend. It doesn’t really bother me to be honest” (Personal Interview O’Brien December 2013).

117 The TG4 Ceoltóir Óg na mBliana is awarded annually to an exceptional young Irish traditional musician. Now run and broadcast by TG4, Ireland’s national Irish-language broadcaster, the award is one of many awarded to prominent traditional practitioners each year. TG4 have presented and televised the awards since 1998. The categories for this year’s awards (2018) were ‘Musician of the Year’, ‘Young Musician of the Year’, ‘Lifetime Achievement Award’, ‘Singer of the Year’, ‘Special Contribution Award’, ‘Musical Collaboration Award’, and for the first time, a ‘Special Award’ was awarded to The Field Marshall Montgomery Pipe Band. Awardees are selected by a panel of peers, selected by TG4 (TG4 2018).
O’Brien’s experience illustrates that many preconceived notions about what happens in university change when one actually engages with the course and that dire warnings of standardisation are, in fact, somewhat misrepresentative. Again, this raises important questions: is it the case that individuals less familiar with the internal mechanics of traditional music pedagogy in higher education are more suspicious of the concept? Or, do individuals working within the higher education sector also have concerns about the institutionalisation of traditional music in Irish higher education? My research shows that the answer to both questions is yes.

Máire Ní Ghráda, musician and Irish language lecturer at the University of Limerick, who interacts with the Irish traditional music students at the Irish World Academy, is dubious of the potential of higher education to standardise traditional music processes, fearing that standardisation is inherently endemic to institutions, and that the privileged position of higher education may wield a disproportionate and ideologically challenging influence on a musical canon:

“There is a very heavy editorial hand from a massive system that is shaped by dynamics radically opposite to the dynamics of the living tradition itself. That has to have an effect. That could be contained. Or if there is a critical awareness of it, maybe that’s all that is needed. I would also be aware too of the disproportionate influence that [Irish higher education] may have on the tradition itself, that styles become favoured or not favoured. What is blessed or given imprimatur by [higher education] may be at variance in some way with how the tradition works” (Personal Interview Ní Ghráda January 2017).

The processes of the ‘living tradition’ are perceived to be ideologically shaped and mediated by a university department, privileged with the opportunity to codify and conceptualise the canon of Irish traditional music for successive groups of students. Ní Ghráda candidly acknowledges the potential pitfalls of traditional music
institutionalisation but she is also hopeful that academic rigour and critical awareness can safeguard against any potentially damaging impacts on traditional music processes. Is standardisation in higher education structures inevitable? Is this inevitability confined to the arena of higher education or is standardisation inherent to other manifestations of canon that are created and promoted in the wider traditional music community in Ireland? I explore these very issues in the following section.

6.3 Canonicity in Third-Level Folk and Traditional Music Education

Doherty (2002), Hill (2005), and Keegan-Phipps (2007) are unambiguous in how they view the standardisation and homogenisation of folk and traditional musics in third level educational institutions. Practices include the standardisation and prioritisation of selected repertoire, the emulation of certain styles, and the potential exclusion of individualistic and idiomatic approaches to folk and traditional music processes promoted in extra-institutional community settings (see chapter two for more).

Significantly, in the specific context of traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education contexts, multiple contributors to this research have expressed concerns about the homogenising potential of tertiary-level educational pathways, with some wondering whether canonicity is simply an inevitable and/or natural corollary to higher education.

By selecting and organising a body of knowledge, namely the traditional music of Ireland, the question arises whether pedagogues invariably disproportionately shape the canon of Irish traditional music more broadly and not just inside the institution. Furthermore, it is worth considering whether the higher education sector is, and should be, responsible for the creation and promotion of new canons. To begin
exploring these ideas, I next present stakeholder insights, and contextualise these
discussions in wider conversations held with music pedagogues working in three
European sites of higher folk and traditional music education that I conducted
fieldwork in. They are the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow (RCS); the Royal
College of Music in Stockholm (KMH); and the Folk Music Department at the Sibelius
Academy in Helsinki. My aim here is to attempt to locate my specific case study on the
institutionalisation of traditional music in Irish higher education within a wider
pedagogical framework with a view to drawing on the experience of pedagogues and
practitioners overseas, in institutions dealing with the same challenges, while also
connecting and contributing my research observations and findings to wider
pedagogical research.118

6.4 How do Folk and Traditional Music Pedagogues Negotiate Canonicity?
Curriculum design appears to necessitate the formation of a canon of
literature/subjects, etc. due to the selectivity inherent in pragmatically designing a
programme of study, irrespective of the subject area. The individual pedagogue plays a
key role in this process. As Jorgensen states, a curriculum “expresses the philosophical
assumptions of its maker(s) much as an art work expresses the ideas and feelings of its
creator(s) and performer(s)” (Jorgensen 2002, p.49). Selecting curricular materials
invariably results in excluding others. Musician and academic Tim Collins (see

118 My interviews in Glasgow, Stockholm, and Helsinki were all conducted with individuals employed by
their respective institutions. Not all interviewees are holders of PhD degrees but are engaged in
performance tuition, academic teaching, and/or research at their institutions. Understandably, the
makeup of this sample group is quite different to that of the Irish context, as in each case, contributors
were often suggested by their institution rather than sought out by me.
Appendix A) notes an innate dilemma in selecting representative aspects of a given musical culture, such as that of Irish traditional music:

“It is such a diverse cultural field now, Irish music. Do you try to cover everything, or do you try to prioritise what you regard as the key components of this tradition?...It’s almost like the role of the Gaelic League (see footnote 17, p.34) and Comhaltas in terms of codifying practice, and what you regard as being the key components of that practice. You can’t cover every possible element of Irish traditional music. I think it would be an impossible task. So, you have to prioritise. The problem is when you prioritise, it’s like it becomes a canon. You’re kind of saying look you have to study this” (Personal Interview Collins March 2014).

Collins’ observations are another clear example of the difficulties expressed by multiple contributors to my research. Is it possible to select curricular material without privileging a selected representation of a given tradition? If selectivity is inevitable, how do pedagogues ensure that they offer traditional music studies that are relevant to and representative of, the wider traditional music community? Should the higher education sector even be expected to fulfil this task, or is the role of higher education instead to offer a pathway to unravelling and problematising the many canons of traditional music in Ireland?

Acknowledging the somewhat inevitability of prioritising certain people and styles and thereby creating a canon from a selected representation of traditional music, Swedish academic, dancer, and lecturer at the Irish World Academy with expertise in Irish, Scottish, and Cape Breton music and dance, Mats Melin, refers to an Irish World Academy canon, but suggests that a canon might be a pragmatic and useful ‘middle ground’ with which to engage with students from such diverse backgrounds:

“I think we are [both avoiding and producing a canon] here because of the big number of different tutors that we bring in that influence the students directly. It’s not a specific canon. We are exposing the students to a wide variety of styles, and people,
and teaching experiences. But at the same time I think that because they are in a class group, and we have ensemble groups who are led quite often by a faculty member, or someone that we have picked, when we do a performance, it becomes a slightly particular style to how we perform...but because we have a wide variety of students that come from different backgrounds we find some kind of middle ground, and that perhaps you could call the Irish World Academy canon. We have to find that [level] where they are all comfortable. They haven’t all found their individual paths yet” (Personal Interview Melin November 2014).

Melin offers a valid argument for the necessity of some form of canon as a pedagogical framework with which to educate students who may arrive to the Irish World Academy from a number of different musical and cultural backgrounds. Equally, Melin is frank about the potential of an institution such as the Irish World Academy to produce an institutional canon that is ideologically influenced by its own staff exclusively. In referring to a pedagogical ‘middle-ground’, Melin also highlights an important distinction between higher education and the socio-cultural dynamics of a musical community. Perhaps higher education should not be judged on its ability to microcosmically replicate a musical community, but rather on its capacity to offer academic and performance studies to a diverse cohort of students with a wide-ranging gamut of experience and priorities.

In discussions with Joshua Dickson, Head of Traditional Music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), he too refers to how a canon is perhaps necessary to establish a body or programme of study. Dickson’s use of the term ‘canon’ in the quoted text and in other instances throughout our conversations reminds us of the relative interdependence between pedagogy and the construction of some form of canon. In response to my initial question on canonicity, where I asked how he and his team at the RCS negotiate the very concept, Dickson made the following point:
“Is [canonicity] something that needs to be avoided? I think there’s a certain timelessness to the idea of a canon of something, a repertoire or a certain style. In the day of instant communication, and the Internet, regional styles become fairly fluid, but it doesn’t mean they disappear. It just means that you can be a top Shetland fiddle player without having set foot in Shetland. So I think canons of repertoire and style are absolutely important and need to be acknowledged but at the same time, and mutually interwoven within that, is an equally important and crucial idea of the personal canon, the idea that a student or any emerging traditional musician, or any musician at all, needs to have a good articulate explicit understanding of who they are, and to be able to craft their own identity and their role within the wider traditional music scene, and their contribution to it” (Personal Interview Dickson February 2015).

Dickson’s point illustrates the importance of distinguishing between the concept of canonicity and the idea of a text with certain artistic and educational parameters (Scottish traditional music being the ‘text’ in this instance). Scottish music has its established conventions and a suspicion of canonicity should not suggest that these must be destroyed and recreated to eschew canonicity. Instead, Dickson’s approach suggests that canonicity is only problematic when elements of that very same canon (as interpreted by Dickson), are either prioritised or neglected according to pedagogical, personal, or institutional agendas. In this instance, the canon of Scottish traditional music is viewed as a foundational and core pedagogical principle that must be understood by students at the RCS. Of course, one could ask who gets to decide what the canon is? This question is central to my entire research. Dickson’s consultation with his colleagues at the RCS, as well as with external practitioners suggests that the RCS canon of Scottish traditional music is diverse and informed by many voices.

In response to similar questions on the construction of musical canons in higher-level music institutions, pedagogues at The Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden, (KMH), provided an array of insights into how they view canonicity in music pedagogy. Head of the Folk Music Department, Susanne
Rosenberg acknowledges that her proximity to the discipline of music education and to her own institution may influence how she perceives canonicity in KMH music curricula and institutional practices. However, she is satisfied that the diversity and individuality that she sees in KMH graduates is a result of an ethos promoted by the folk music department whereby students are encouraged to embark on very personal and individualised artistic journeys throughout their studies.

“I think in a way that you do [create canon]. You have your favourite things, and repertoire, and of course that creates a kind of a canon. On the other hand, we have these meetings in the villages, where everyone plays together. That is another canon. Like the things that are suitable for playing together or singing at singing sessions. There is the outer canon also. There is a lot of influence from the Celtic or the Irish. That is very much in the Swedish context now. But there are people that say that when you put folk music in a department in The Royal College of Music, it’s like conforming it, and it’s all going to be the same, but I really don’t feel that. But I’m inside it so maybe I’m not the right person to ask. When people come to this department, they are very much alike, but when they leave, they are not alike at all. And you can really hear this in different exam concerts”, (Personal Interview Rosenberg May 2015).

Rosenberg’s reference to alternative canons reminds us that canonicity is far from confined to formal educational structures. This echoes the contributions made earlier by Carolan, Collins, Dowling, and Hamilton. Canonicity may well be a universal process, not confined to higher education, but the perceived social status of the higher education institution is certainly critical to the discussions presented throughout this research, and central to how canon is disseminated. Canonicity involves more than selecting aspects of a body of knowledge. It is also dependent on the promotion (deliberate or otherwise) of what is accepted as the canon, and the higher education institution is a potent vehicle for disseminating ideology and influencing successive generations of students.
Pedagogues at the folk music department at the Sibelius Academy are also well aware of the challenges of canonicity in music education, and faculty strive to circumvent the unchallenged acceptance of canon by its students. Melin’s reference to a canon as a pedagogical ‘middle-ground’ again comes to mind as Kristiina Ilmonen, of the Sibelius Academy, outlines how her students actually seek the definitiveness that an established canon can provide:

“We have tried to avoid canon. It takes a lot of discussion and a little bit of fighting because the students would like to have a canon. They would like to have it written down. What is right and what is wrong? What is folk music? What do I have to do?” (Personal Interview Ilmonen March 2016).

Importantly, this dilemma reminds us once more of the interwoven relationship between canonicity and curriculum design, and the selectivity and prioritisation that is invariably inherent in building a pedagogy around a cultural process that originates outside of institutional structures. Rather than provide students with a narrative with which to understand (and perhaps codify) Finnish folk music, pedagogues such as Ilmonen and her colleague Vilma Timonen aim to assist students in critically interpreting the innate diversity of folk and traditional musics.

6.5 Eschewing Canonicity Through Critical Reflection

In negotiating canonicity in music education, music pedagogues must be mindful of the power relations inherent in all educational settings. The seminal studies of Kingsbury (1988) and Nettl (1995), (overviewed in chapter two), suggest how ideologies and biases are disseminated, as exemplified by the hierarchical relationship between students and teachers. Ideological biases in terms of what is considered important to a
musical canon can be transmitted in a hierarchical relationship, from teacher to student. At one particular Irish institution, I overheard a lecturer using colourful language to comment disapprovingly upon the selection of Irish music recordings a student had just acquired from the university library. In this case, the subjective values expressed by the lecturer revealed his personal biases regarding what he/she felt the student should be listening to. Reminding me of this particular, possible ‘once-off’\textsuperscript{119} instance that hinted at an unbalanced pedagogical hegemony, broadcaster, musician, and composer Ellen Cranitch states that educators should responsibly consider and appreciate their influence on students who are at a formative stage of musical and intellectual development:

“I think it’s an obligation to encourage students to look outwards and not take everything as gospel. That’s a kind of a general university thing anyway, the Cardinal Neumann thing. You’re encouraged to question all the time, you know. Questioning is important...when you leave school at 17, you do your primary degree, you do your masters until you’re 22 or 23, you’re still a kid really, you know? A kid, a 17, 18, 19-year-old person going into university is still like a sponge, and of people in positions of great power and influence are saying “this flute player is poor”, something in you will absorb that, and that’s not right. I don’t like that at all” (Personal Interview Cranitch February 2017).

Cranitch characterises a potentially damaging by-product of music pedagogy that is informed and undermined by teacher biases, whereby students’ artistic and academic journeys can be adversely affected by the prejudices and preferences of their teachers. Cranitch also suggests however that higher education, when delivered in a responsible and ethical manner, has the potential to broaden horizons, and consequently,

\textsuperscript{119} It is significant however that two students from that same institution spoke to me about how they feel that there is an artistic agenda imposed at their institution that, in their view, prioritises experimentation over what they term ‘more traditional’ Irish traditional music.
challenge the pedagogical stagnation that can occur when canonicity pervades music education.

Similarly, Irish World Academy lecturer, Orfhlaith Ní Bhriain believes that critical reflection is paramount to recognising and representing the true diversity of traditional music in Ireland in Irish higher education. For Ní Bhriain, it is also important to respect the diversity of views held by students on repertoire etc.:

“I think [higher education] should enable [Irish traditional music] in a way that it recognises diversity and variety. I think it needs to define it in really broad terms. I think sometimes we might get criticised for having too broad a definition of tradition. But I think you can flip that over and I think you’ve got to think about the notion of respect rather than broadness. It’s to respect that somebody else’s take on a polka might not be yours. So, we have got to be two things; you’ve got to be respectful and critical. But I would see those things going in tandem. I think those parallels are really important” (Personal Interview Ní Bhriain May 2015).

If musical canons and ‘official’ music narratives, histories, and practices are also created and maintained outside educational and institutional contexts, how might higher education and scholarship contribute to interrogating topics such as authenticity, tradition, and other inherited values that are prevalent in discourses surrounding many traditional musics? Given the ubiquity of such attitudes, can music pedagogy hope to confront canonicity rather than construct it? At the Irish World Academy, ethnomusicologist and musician Aileen Dillane endeavours to instil critical engagement, academic rigor, and curiosity in her BA students; she encourages them to honour the tradition they study while being “unafraid to interrogate it” (Personal Interview Dillane April 2015). Dillane firmly believes that pedagogues have a responsibility to encourage students to critically engage with perceptions of what constitutes musical traditions:
“The university is supposed to open up new ways of thinking and reflecting about your practice, hitherto unquestioned discourses around ownership, authenticity, and identity. What should this place or any place do for the tradition? The university should certainly honour the tradition but must be unafraid to interrogate it. We don’t do our job as university lecturers if we don’t do that.” (Personal Interview Dillane April 2015).

Mel Mercier, musician, composer and Chair of Performing Arts at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick is also aware of higher education’s privileged opportunity to shape traditional music practices but like Dillane, he feels that it is important to be relevant to the traditional music community while not being completely beholden to it. For Mercier, the very conceptualisation of a unified traditional music community is a problematic one, and he feels a responsibility to respectfully consider the many communities of practice that engage with traditional music in Ireland:

“The community itself is multi-faceted and is not a unified thing or voice. It’s important for the university to listen to the community, or communities, or to people, so that the university can be informed because that feeds into its relevance. I think that is true. But it can’t be determined by it. The university has the possibility to also shape, not just be shaped by, to be innovative. The university and the music department is its own community as well and it has a very particular opportunity, I think, and a privilege some would say, it is a privilege, to influence and to shape. I think as long as it does that in a constructive way that is respectful of the many different communities of practice that we intersect with, that our students come from, as long as the ethos of respect is cultivated, and also that the different perspectives from within any one particular community of practice are also respected, then I think it’s okay” (Personal Interview Mercier October 2014).

The capability of higher education to shape traditional music practices suggests its potential to create a traditional music canon. However, Mercier’s attitude towards the potential of higher education to critique concepts such as community implies that it
can play a significant role in understanding and reappraising the constructs that may contribute to canonicity.

At the Royal Conservatory of Scotland (RCS) in Glasgow, Joshua Dickson and his team avoid promoting narrow interpretations of Scottish traditional music by providing undergraduate students with a diverse selection of educational resources drawn from the world of Scottish music. Students are encouraged to immerse themselves in elements of the Scottish tradition that may be new to them. Regardless of students’ previous performance or research specialisms, their musical and educational horizons are broadened as new students of the RCS:

“You could consider it as something like a cultural platter where there are a great many items of fact, established repertoire, or particular approaches and attitudes, that are essentially handed on a platter to a student when they enter the programme, and they are assessed on the extent to which they can absorb and adopt it. So, we are really saying to students that you must have a really good functioning knowledge of *Gallic* language, and Scots language. You must be able to sing, and you must have a good functioning knowledge of the history of Scotland, not necessarily the history of music in Scotland but the history of Scotland. We say that you must be able to dance a certain canon of repertoire of dances, historical or contemporary...You must have a knowledge of folklore...Even if you are an accordionist or a singer, you must have a good working knowledge of the history of the fiddle tradition and its various regional styles (Personal Interview Dickson February 2015).

Consequently, students develop a sensibility about aspects of the Scottish music tradition that may have been unfamiliar to them. Rather than focus and excel in one area, Scottish music students develop a wider appreciation for the many strands that comprise Scottish traditional music. So, a canon assists in providing a pedagogical foundation. Of course, constituent elements of this canon have been selected and prioritised by course designers. What is of primary interest here are the methodologies
employed by Dickson and his team at the RCS to formulate this pedagogical canon. How does Dickson decide what should be taught?

The extent to which Dickson and this team at the RCS connect with external members of the wider Scottish traditional music community significantly influences the diversity of pedagogical approaches employed at the RCS. Rather than concretising or canonising the views and ideologies of a select number of faculty members, Dickson has collected extensive feedback on pedagogical practices from a range of individuals, using a combination of online questionnaires, student feedback forms, and focus group discussions with musicians. Dickson engages in this process to “get a range of opinion so as to conclude definitively what we do well, what we don’t do so well, and, crucially, what works well in other aspects of the conservatoire’s teaching and learning” (Personal Interview Dickson February 2015). Developments are currently underway at the RCS to integrate much of the feedback received through this consultation process into the undergraduate curriculum. Topics raised include suggestions as to how pedagogy could better reflect the historical development of Scottish traditional music; a belief that in a conservatory environment a Bachelor of Music should be offered in traditional music rather than a Bachelor of Arts; and calls for greater emphasis on creativity in all facets of coursework.\textsuperscript{120} By consulting a variety of resources, diverse insights into what educational approaches practitioners value are accumulated, guaranteeing a locally grounded perspective.\textsuperscript{121} Dickson’s approach in

\textsuperscript{120} The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland’s undergraduate programme in Scottish music is currently in a state of significant transition from a Bachelor of Arts programme to a Bachelor of Music. Other feedback received from the consultancy process will be incorporated into the curriculum in the near future.

\textsuperscript{121} While Dickson and his team strive to embrace practitioners’ voices and local musical values and perspectives, the diverse collaborative consultancy process employed at the RCS circumvents any form of pedagogical provincialism. For more discussion on some of the scholarly pitfalls arising from a
this regard contributes to ensuring that the experience of Scottish traditional musicians in the RCS environment is one that offers many pathways into interpreting, understanding, and respecting the many fibres of the Scottish traditional music fabric.

RCS staff offers a diverse range of specialisms and philosophical perspectives to Scottish traditional music. Despite the valid observations made in the literature concerning the ‘clone debate’ and the homogenisation of folk and traditional music practices in formalised educational structures (see Keegan-Phipps, 2007), my visit to the RCS once more reminded me of the variability of ideologies, priorities, challenges, and opportunities inherent to each unique process (and site) of institutionalising folk and traditional musics in higher education. Suspicious of the discourse around homogenisation in higher music education, musician and RCS lecturer Hamish Napier feels that it is important to acknowledge the diversity of perspectives that lecturers (as individuals) bring to educational contexts:

“If you look at a sample of 20 RCS students, you are hardly going to meet 20 more different people from different backgrounds. How can you generalise? [You cannot] brand RCS teachers. We’re all so different. We don’t always agree. That was a perception in the past [that there] was a particular type of student that would come out. They are all individual people, you know? I think people think that there is homogenisation, and everybody is going to come out the same, learning the same thing. I think I try to teach a variety of approaches and I think you need to learn all forms of communication” (Personal Interview Napier February 2015).
Conceptually, it is conceivable that formalised educational structures may potentially constrict the fluidity, diversity, and protean characteristics of phenomena such as folk and traditional musics, but we must consider the potential individualistic and idiosyncratic pedagogical methodologies and ideologies that a collective of faculty members can contribute to how a particular institution negotiates folk and traditional music education.

Similar to the views of Dillane and Mercier on higher education’s responsibility and capacity to interrogate inherited narratives on traditional music, pedagogues at the Royal College of Music (KMH) in Sweden, Stockholm, view their work as an opportunity to challenge canonicity, manifested in what they perceive as the ‘mystification’ of Swedish folk music. Renowned pedagogue and fiddler Sven Ahlbäck learned folk music aurally in rural Sweden. He uses his background to deconstruct and challenge what he believes are unrepresentative and exclusionary ideologies about who can and cannot learn folk music. Consequently, Ahlbäck is keen to integrate and promote the individualistic and personal interpretation of tradition and musical expression into his teaching.

“People like me were in the countryside playing with and learning from old people. But there was a big discussion about all these new folk musicians there. Which was the right way of playing tunes from a specific part [of Sweden]? And also, there were a lot of connections between geography, culture, and music. What they were saying was that you cannot play tunes from this place if you do not speak the dialect or if you haven’t grown up in the area. There was a lot of discussion about these things. And I think it was a big mystification because the fiddlers I learned from were really music professionals, like any other musicians. It was basically for them [not just] a manifestation of culture or history, or identity, but rather it was a means of musical expression like any other musical expression, that reflected them. They loved the music. I had that path into the music. So, I was very annoyed about this mystification” (Personal Interview Ahlbäck May 2015).
Ahlbäck’s insights into the exclusionary narratives surrounding Swedish folk music, and his desire to challenge these attitudes, again demonstrate the potential of folk music pedagogy, and higher education institutions to confront canonicity, as it existed/exists in the everyday narratives of the traditional and folk music communities.

The concept of the perceived mystification and romanticisation of tradition permeated many conversations that I had while visiting KMH. Jonas Hjalmarsson, fiddler and KMH faculty member echoes the familial, communal, and geographical references mentioned earlier by Sven Ahlbäck:

“There are fairytales and ideas, very romantic ideas around tradition. That you’re from an area or a family. I hope that [studying folk music at university level] has made it possible for a lot of people to grow and get really good, even though you’re not born in the right area, or have the right parents, and so on. I hope and I think that we treat it with facts and not fairytales” (Personal Interview Hjalmarsson May 2015).

By deconstructing some of the discourse around Swedish folk music’s connection to older musical communities exclusively, teachers at KMH are empowering young music students to perform Swedish folk music, and identify freely as Swedish folk musicians, irrespective of where they come from. KMH has made Swedish folk music accessible to aspiring young musicians who may not have a familial connection to previous generations of Swedish folk musicians. Again, we can see the potential of higher education institutions to unpack complex instances of canonicity in folk music.

Ellika Frisell, a fiddle lecturer at KMH, suggests that we must also be cognisant of changing contexts for the transmission of folk and traditional musics in contemporary society. Folk and traditional musics by their nature are invariably closely related to cultural processes of the past, but they now prosper in modern societies often far-removed from those societies in which they originated.
“Sometimes people have a very romantic view about folk music, [believing] it is something that you have to learn [while] milking a cow with your fiddling teacher. The problem is that the fiddling teachers are not milking cows anymore, they are living in the cities. If I’m really honest and think back to the time that I started playing, it was so full of myths around music. There were no good myths. It was like this tradition, you could only learn it if you really have it in your blood, and things like that. And now there are so many people who can play a polska of [a certain] style because they have become good at understanding, and how can that be a bad thing? It is a very good thing, I think. I think that there are more people now who are at a high level in playing because they have learned a lot of possibilities, how to practice, how to learn, how to listen, and things like that” (Personal Interview Frisell May 2015).

Musicians and teachers like Frisell provide students at KMH with a direct connection to older traditional processes of transmission as she and her colleagues were taught by master folk musicians in rural settings. However, Frisell is also keen to facilitate and promote the contextualisation of Swedish folk music in contemporary Swedish society. Literature on Irish traditional music demonstrates an awareness of similar trends in Ireland. Authors such as Helen O’Shea (2008) have suggested that certain myths have also surrounded discourse on Irish traditional music, when she refers to “the mythology of Irish traditional music with its old men, its ideals of musical continuity and communication, of shared values and generosity” (O’Shea 2008, p.122). These examples offered by KMH staff once more highlight the potential of third-level music education to unravel inherited perceptions around folk musics. Rather than contribute to canonicity, the rigour displayed by KMH faculty eschews the acceptance of an unchallenged Swedish folk music canon. The fervour demonstrated by the KMH faculty that I spoke with, to critically examine issues such as ownership, authenticity, nostalgia, and modernity, and how they relate to contemporary Swedish folk music, suggests to me that students at KMH are very sensitive to the pitfalls of canonicity in music education.
Canonicity in music education relies on the establishment, promotion, and acceptance of a set of approaches to such things as curriculum design, pedagogical ideology, and artistic preferences, or biases, (Caswell 1991, Nettl 1995, Kingsbury 1988, Marquis 1998, McCarthy 1999, Doherty 2002, Hill 2005, Keegan-Phipps 2007). Striving to provide as wide an educational experience as possible, pedagogues at the folk music department at the Sibelius Academy guide students through a diverse range of musical, cultural and educational experiences while honing their critical faculties. Students are encouraged to think critically at all times. In an attempt to promote creativity Kristiina Ilmonen describes the democratic dynamic fostered in teacher-student power relations at the Sibelius Academy:

“We don’t give any kind of orders of what is the right way to play, what is the right way to make music, what is the right music... If we would just say that this is the right thing to do, to do this, it would maybe make people more obedient and we don’t like them to be too obedient. We like them to be a little crazy and creative and have a mind of their own” (Ilmonen, cited in Hill 2009a, p.89).

Undoubtedly, this approach would certainly militate against the promotion of canonicity, and narrow ‘textbook’ definitions of folk music. Critical thinking and self-reflexivity is encouraged above all, as Sibelius Academy folk music lecturer Vilma Timonen outlines:

“We teach them to be critical about their work. To be able to articulate what am I doing, and why? So being reflective towards your own work. As far as I am concerned, that is the only thing we can teach them. There is no right or wrong way. All we can teach them to do is to be critical, and reflective, and determined. As a musician, what is the feedback that you get? It’s the critics. And you can’t base your career according to what someone else says. There are as many opinions as there are people. But you have to find a way to stand on your own two feet” (Personal Interview Timonen March 2016).
Like Ilmonen, Timonen firmly believes that students should be actively encouraged to critically engage with their art. She wants to teach a reflexive methodology that equips students with the skills to communicate their art effectively while also acknowledging the fact that there is no correct or incorrect way to teach students the process of being an artist.

6.6 Discussion
Throughout this chapter I have endeavoured to problematise canonicity as it applies to music education, and subsequently to Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education contexts. Literature on wider music education and Irish-focused commentary contributed to this research are aligned in their concerns on the limiting and narrowing potential of canonicity in higher education institutionalisation. For example, Marquis’ reference to the potential of higher education jazz studies to construct an “official music” resonates with Máire Ní Ghráda’s observations on the higher education institute’s authority to give imprimatur to particular approaches to Irish traditional music performance and ideology. Just as Nettl, Kingsbury, and Caswell remark on the propensity of higher education to prioritise and canonise specific repertoire, Marie McCarthy, and Máire O'Keeffe, attest to similar occurrences within the context of traditional music in Ireland. Importantly, this signals a consensus between wider literature on the institutionalisation of music education, and the opinions and perspectives of contributors to my research. Canonicity is potentially damaging to music education, and it is a phenomenon that invariably pervades traditional music pedagogy in Ireland as much as it does Western classical music pedagogy, generally. To problematise the impacts of canonicity in the
institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, it is essential to specifically understand how canonicity manifests itself in music departments throughout Ireland’s higher education sector.

Studies focused on the institutionalisation of folk musics outside Ireland also identify canonicity as a potentially damaging by-product of higher education, despite higher education’s perceived dependence on epistemological organisation, as evidenced by Mats Melin and Joshua Dickson in this chapter. Standardisation, and homogeneity in performance, ideology, and repertoire emerge as the most prevalent themes in such studies (Doherty 2002, Hill 2005, Keegan-Phipps 2007). In the context of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education specifically, critics of canonicity take exception to efforts to codify and compartmentalise a protean, fluid, and diverse extra-institutional community-oriented tradition, in an attempt to design and deliver programmes of study. Keegan-Phipps’ ‘clone debate’ is echoed by contributors to my research. Again, wider literature on folk music institutionalisation outside Ireland is aligned to concerns expressed by individuals who have offered their insights to my research. As evidenced by interview contributions to this chapter, and by literature, many in the traditional music community in Ireland view standardisation, and homogeneity as a threat to traditional music, and are weary that traditional music institutionalisation, and specifically Irish higher education, contributes to standardising and compromising the diversity inherent in traditional music in Ireland.

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122 By this, I am referring to Melin’s suggestion that a canon is a necessary ‘middle-ground’, a pedagogical tool with which to provide students from diverse backgrounds with a body of study materials. Likewise, Dickson sees the canon as an organisational device that can productively encapsulate a diverse range of practices and process, in a digestible manner that can be communicated to students.
However, canonicity as a process is not confined to higher education institutions, and canons are created and maintained by the policies of institutions such as *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann*. McCarthy warns us of how uniformity and standardisation have been a consequence of competitions and examinations in Ireland. Again, Máire O’Keeffe and Oisín MacDiarmada outline their views on how CCÉ competitions and examination structures have exalted certain regional repertoires and stylistic approaches at the expense of others. CCÉ exams suggest appropriate repertoire for assessment, while competitions encourage prospective competitors to select repertoire and technique deemed appropriate for assessment. This important point demonstrates that canonicity is not confined to higher education and academia. Canonicity also occurs in numerous extra-institutional socio-musical settings, as suggested by contributors that I interviewed for this research. For example, Colin (Hammy) Hamilton points to the potential of the recording industry to enshrine certain canons of performance, while Martin Dowling suggests the internet, and media representations of traditional music have more influence on trends than university departments do. Peter Browne reminds us that canonicity also pervades radio broadcasting, as producers and presenters invariably select what gets airplay, and what doesn’t. Nicholas Carolan recollects that Breandán Breathnach didn’t consider polkas to be appropriate to the Irish traditional music canon, demonstrating the mutability and fluidity of perceptions of canons, and how they evolve over time. Likewise, in Sweden, Susanne Rosenberg feels that musical communities operating external to institutions also create their own canons of what is acceptable practice, and what isn’t. It is fair to suggest that canonicity is therefore possible in many forms of mediation that have a platform to reach a large proportion of traditional music practitioners and
enthusiasts. Consequently, it is necessary to unpack canonicity as a discrete phenomenon that occurs on a more general level, external to higher education. Given the focus of this research however, it is essential to explore the extent to which higher education can mitigate canonicity, as well as how it may contribute to the establishment and promotion of its own traditional music canons.

Curriculum design is not a passive and neutral process. Recalling Jorgensen’s views on how curricula reflect the assumptions and ideas of their designers (Jorgensen 2002), it is inevitable that curricula are shaped according to the preferences and priorities of faculty. The selection of curricular materials, however motivated by pragmatism, is invariably as exclusive as it is inclusive. Although canonicity is a feature of many extra-academic musical processes, there is a direct link between curricular design and canonicity. This is also true in the context of traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. In an attempt to find a pedagogical ‘middle-ground’, for students from diverse musical backgrounds, Mats Melin of the Irish World Academy understandably feels that some form of canon is required to act as a unifying frame of reference, but he also accepts that the preferences of he and his colleagues can contribute to creating an Irish World Academy canon. However, Hamish Napier of the RCS points out that employing staff with diverse perspectives, such as that of the Scottish music department at the RCS, assists in providing a broad musical education to RCS students. Napier’s colleague Joshua Dickson sees a Scottish folk music canon as a foundational body of knowledge that he uses as a ‘cultural platter’ rather than as an exhaustive representation of the Scottish tradition; he feels that a pedagogical canon is inevitable and somewhat necessary. While Kristiina Ilmonen and Vilma Timonen of the Sibelius Academy endeavour to resist canonicity, it is important to note students’
appetite for codifying Finnish folk music in a manner that facilitates their understanding of it as a concrete programme of study. This important final point in particular illustrates that the proclivity of higher education to canonise folk music is not always ideologically motivated by pedagogues in an actively top-down process of transmission.

Notwithstanding the ubiquity of canonicity outside of higher education structures, and its perceived inevitability in curricular design, folk and traditional music pedagogues working in third-level education have a significant role to play in how canonicity occurs. The hegemonic social dynamics between students and staff (as observed by Kingsbury 1988 and Nettl 1995) can result in the top-down transmission of authoritative ideology from teacher to student. My earlier example of the encounter between one third-level pedagogue and a traditional music student at one particular Irish university, where a selection of commercial recordings borrowed from the university library were ridiculed, serves as an example of the possibility that faculty can exert considerable influence on students. In this instance, canonicity manifested itself when a student was challenged because it was believed that he should not listen to a particular album. This event supports assertions like Máire Ní Ghráda’s about higher education’s heavy editorial hand (both in teacher-student relations, and curriculum design) that gives imprimatur to certain strands of Irish traditional music. Further related observations include those of musician and teacher, Mary Bergin, who in chapter eight, is critical of what she views as an unrepresentative bias towards musical experimentation as a basic “starting point” at the expense of what she perceives as more fundamental and important foundations of Irish traditional music (Personal
Interview Bergin November 2014).\textsuperscript{123}

Ultimately, my research suggests that agents in Irish higher education have a considerable role to play in constructing and promoting canonicity in traditional music in Ireland. At present, there is no study focused on the impact that traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education context has had on Irish traditional music, comparable to \textit{Where are they now? The First Graduates of the BA (Scottish Music) degree} (2007), by Jo Miller and Peggy Duesenberry.\textsuperscript{124} It is also difficult to assess the extent to which third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy is considered to be part of the tradition today, despite the eagerness of its supporters and critics alike, to suggest that it is, or it is not.\textsuperscript{125}

Pedagogues need to be mindful of their privileged positions of authority when transmitting discourse and performance practice in traditional music to their students.

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\textsuperscript{123} Notwithstanding the diversity of approaches to, and conceptualisations of, the practice of Irish traditional music, my fieldwork highlighted a surprisingly widespread consensus as to what is perceived to constitute the foundational fundamentals of Irish traditional music as a body of knowledge. Names of key historical practitioners such as Michael Coleman, Willie Clancy, James Morrison featured frequently in discussions with research interviewees, as exemplars of canonic exponents of Irish traditional music, who are deemed worthy of study in areas such as Irish higher education. Other contributors to this research view certain repertoire as essential foundational knowledge, and this material is invariably associated with the same category of exponents referred to above. Incidentally, a significant number of contributors interviewed for this research feel that Irish higher education, as a sector, does not sufficiently emphasise this body of knowledge that is perceived as being foundational to Irish traditional music. I return to this issue in detail in chapter eight.
\textsuperscript{124} In \textit{Where are they now? The First Graduates of the BA (Scottish Music) degree} (2007), Jo Miller and Peggy Duesenberry look at the career paths of the first 10 graduates of the BA in Scottish Music at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Dance (now the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), to establish the impact that their studies has had on their professional development following graduation (Miller and Duesenberry 2007).
\textsuperscript{125} In Juniper Hill’s \textit{The Influence of Conservatory Folk Music Programmes: The Sibelius Academy in Comparative Context} (2009b), Niall Keegan is quoted as suggesting that, at least by 2009, “the programme in Limerick has had little impact on the traditional music scene outside of the University, joking that if the building and everyone in it were to suffer a nuclear attack the Irish traditional music scene at large would not be seriously impacted” (Hill 2009b, p. 239).
\end{flushright}
Although my research suggests that Irish higher education may contribute to the problem of traditional music canonicity, scholarship, and third-level education also have the potential to rigorously and academically problematise the concept of canonicity in all its forms, within, and external to Irish higher education. Academic critical thinking is central to mitigating canonicity in music education. Musician, and Irish World Academy lecturer, Aileen Dillane, encourages students to interrogate inherited narratives about tradition, irrespective of whether such narratives originate outside or inside a music department. Her colleague in the Academy, Orfhlaith Ní Bhriain suggests that combining critical analysis with respect for the diversity of the traditional music community ensures that traditional music pedagogy is representative of the community that it serves. Such an approach is similarly reflected at the Royal College of Music in Sweden. Ellika Frisell and Sven Ahlbäck challenge their students to unravel and confront inherited narratives about ownership, repertoire, and exclusivity in Swedish folk music. At the Sibelius Academy, Kristiina Ilmonen encourages critical thinking by ensuring that her students are “not too obedient” (Hill 2009a, p.89).

The philosophy and ethos espoused by pedagogues working in higher education folk and traditional music pedagogy, as presented throughout this chapter, is vitally important in challenging the construction and promotion of canonicity in music education. Important values on academic rigour and critical reflection are transmitted from teacher to student. Contributors to this chapter, from a variety of traditional music teaching perspectives, agree that a critical awareness of canonicity, and its potentially debilitating impacts, can adequately alleviate the creation of oversimplified and un-nuanced historical and music narratives. What may be more potent however is
the way in which pedagogues actively apply a philosophy or ethos. The outreach and consultancy mechanism adopted by Dickson at the RCS, whereby feedback is sought from a diverse range of stakeholders in the Scottish folk music scene is undoubtedly a significant factor in eschewing the development of a rigid and inflexible Scottish folk music canon at the RCS. Focus group meetings with active Scottish traditional musicians provided an opportunity for dialogue to ensure that Scottish folk music studies remain relevant to the Scottish folk music community. From attending and witnessing a meeting at first hand, it became obvious to me that this counter-hegemonic dynamic facilitated by Dickson in inviting external critique and consultancy not only provides a platform for the opinions and voices of Scottish folk music practitioners to be heard, but it also enriches the Scottish folk music studies offered at the RCS.

Exploring canonicity in general music education has provided a useful framework to investigate folk music institutionalisation in higher education structures, and specifically, to explore my case study on traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. Casting a wide net on music education literature on canonicity has provided me with insights that informed the questions that I posed to my research consultants. It is significant that there is consensus between the work of Kingsbury, Nettl, Keegan-Phipps, and Hill, among others. However, an understanding of how canonicity is negotiated in a higher education system designed to teach a traditionally extra-institutional, extra-academic community-based artform such as traditional music in Ireland, can in turn, contribute fresh insights into how to problematise canonicity in music education for many other genres in Ireland and abroad. As Citron states, interrogating the impacts of canonicity “opens up possibilities for change” and
“has the potential to demystify the concept and clear a space for alternative historiographic models” (Citron 2000, p.1). Challenging the processes and consequences of canonicity in music education is absolutely necessary in order to optimise the diversity, inclusivity, and relevance of third-level music curricula.
Chapter 7: Idiomatic Pedagogies or *Lingua Franca*? Negotiating Western Art Music in Irish Traditional Music Pedagogy in Irish Higher Education: Comparative Studies

Historically, the Western art music tradition has pervaded manifestations of music pedagogy in the West.\textsuperscript{126} Even today, many music theory and notation systems for non-classical musics are derived from classical music models.\textsuperscript{127} In this chapter, I examine the extent to which folk and traditional music pedagogues working in higher education negotiate Western art music educational principles when designing folk and traditional music curricula. Do pedagogues strive to develop idiomatic pedagogies born out of the nuances of the music tradition under study, or do they see music theory and notation as a musical *lingua franca*, whereby universalised systems are favoured because of their communicability and translatability across music genres? In using the term ‘idiomatic pedagogy’, I am referring to teaching systems that are drawn from

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\textsuperscript{126} While I am primarily concerned with the influences of Western art music pedagogy on selected Western folk and traditional musics, valuable scholarship has explored the influence of Western art music pedagogy in non-Western contexts. Bruno Nettl’s *The Western Impact on World Music* (1985), and Jonathan Stock’s essay entitled “Peripheries and Interfaces: the Western Impact on Other Music” (2004) discuss how Western art music pedagogical frameworks have influenced non-Western education systems, resulting in an emphasis on notation rather than oral transmission; the canonisation of repertoire, particular composers, and performers (particularly in the media); elitism and perceptions of local and folk musics as inferior; and the adoption of Western art music theory for non-Western musics. \textsuperscript{127} In particular, I am referring to what is considered typical Western art music theory, such as that examined by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, in the United Kingdom (see Taylor 2007). As an ENT (Ear, Notation, and Theory – essentially a class dedicated to theory and sight-reading at that time) teacher at the Irish World Academy in 2012, I was provided with a class outline in both semesters, that didn’t make reference to the Associated Board publication by name, but contents common to both suggest that Taylor’s Associated Board theory guide was consulted when developing the course outline for the ENT class that I delivered to fourth year students on the BA in Irish Music and Dance.
musical characteristics of a given genre rather than more generalised systems drawn from the Western art music tradition. I firstly outline discourse on what is perceived as the privileging of Western classical music tradition in wider music education, and more specifically, I examine how scholarship on folk and traditional music pedagogy negotiates a classical-music-oriented pedagogical world that has its own educational priorities and aesthetics. Second, I present the opinions of a range of stakeholders in Ireland and in music institutions overseas on how they feel folk and traditional music pedagogy should draw on, adapt, or depart from Western classical music pedagogy. I attempt to unravel and understand the general consensus towards developing (a) theory and notation systems that, like a lingua franca, are relatable and universally communicable, and (b) idiomatic genre-specific pedagogies focused on musical characteristics of the particular music being studied.

Throughout this chapter, a discussion of literature on general, classical, folk, and traditional music education is combined with the contributions of research consultants with a view to ultimately trying to identify some sort of consensus as to how best to locate folk and traditional music (and consequently, Irish traditional music in Ireland), in a pedagogical world that equips students to negotiate the wider musical world that they inhabit, while also addressing their idiomatic and specific needs as folk and/or traditional musicians. Although this study is primarily focused on Irish higher education, I also discuss discourse emerging from literature (reports, commentary

128 Examples of idiomatic pedagogy includes teaching and remembering melodic intervals using popular Irish traditional music melodies and motifs as mnemonic devices to aid in understanding general musical principles through the medium of prior and familiar musical knowledge in students’ chosen genre. Educational objectives focused on idiomatic learning in Irish traditional music can be utilised to meet generalised musical aims that are communicable to colleagues working in other genres.
pieces, and academic research) and interview contributions on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in primary and secondary level education in Ireland, in order to explore wider opinions on educational institutionalisation among stakeholders in Ireland. As well as consulting pedagogues, practitioners and academics in Ireland, the second half of this chapter, presents the opinions of folk and traditional music pedagogues working outside Ireland. These include Joshua Dickson of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), Glasgow, Susanne Rosenberg and Sven Ahlbäck of the Royal College of Music (KMH), Stockholm, Sweden, and Kristiina Ilmonen and Vilma Timonen of the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, Finland, all of whom participated in my field research. The individuals selected for this comparative study element from institutions outside Ireland are all involved in significant and developing conversations that are happening around folk and traditional music pedagogy more generally. Since interviewing these individuals, they have been among a number of researchers, academics and performance teachers, central to the development of an international forum that discusses best practices in folk and traditional music pedagogy. In January 2018, an international conference entitled ‘Pedagogies, Practices and The Future of Folk Music in Higher Education’ was held at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow between January 18 and 20.129

I have arranged materials thematically throughout this chapter, weaving between contributions organised by subject matter, rather than by any institutional affiliations of the contributor. Interviews with academics are interspersed with the

129 A follow up conference took place in Helsinki, Finland, on 28th to 30th November 2018. Information on the Glasgow conference in January 2018 can be accessed at https://www.rcs.ac.uk/about_us/aboutus/conferences/pedagogies-practices-future-folk-music-higher-education/
contributions of practitioners, and vice versa. Although some of the literature that is most relevant to this discussion may have been published as far back as 1988, the opinions and models offered therein reflect the more recent concerns of stakeholders that contributed to this research.

7.1 The Perceived Supremacy of Western Art Music in Western Music Education

Conventional mainstream higher music education often attaches a certain prestige to the Western art music canon not enjoyed to the same extent by other genres (Kingsbury 1988, Caswell 1991, Nettl 1995, Talty 2017). As a result, musical styles other than Western art music are often made to “march to the drummer of the central classical tradition” (Nettl 1995, p.144). Courses on other music genres and repertoires may be offered, but frequently with the implicit understanding that they do not equal the Western classical tradition in terms of sophistication and artistic merit.130 The very term ‘music’ is often conflated with Western art music in educational environments and modifiers such as “serious music” and “good music” function to differentiate it from other genres (Kingsbury 1988, p.17). Crucially, such perceptions are a source of contention among those who write about folk and traditional music pedagogy, and many are sceptical of the suitability of applying dominant Western classical music educational models to folk and traditional musics that largely emanate from oral, extra-institutional, community-based contexts (Smith 1999, McCarthy 1999, Doherty 2002, Hill 2005, Smith 2005). The relevance of considering the historical predominance

130 In *Heartland Excursions*, Nettl provides practical examples of how music genre hierarchies are constructed in music education, when he observes, “even now, some voice teachers discourage their students from singing jazz or non-Western music because it might harm their voices” (Nettl 1995, p.82).
of the Western art music tradition in mainstream music education (and furthermore in folk and traditional music pedagogy) centres on the consequent difficulties in interrogating the ideologically-charged relationship between Western art music pedagogy and that of folk and traditional music. How might the prestige and supremacy historically attached to Western art music impact upon how its pedagogical conventions and systems are perceived when applied to traditional and folk musics, as genres with differing performance and socio-cultural practices?

One of the most prevalent ways in which Western art music methodology pervades the pedagogy of non-Western-art music is through notation systems. As evidenced later in this chapter, contributions such as that of Swedish fiddler and pedagogue, Sven Ahlbäck, demonstrates the alienation felt when folk musicians are not provided with analytical and theory systems that idiomatically represent a student’s given genre. In this particular case, Ahlbäck, found that the microtonal characteristics of Swedish fiddle music could not be adequately represented by the Western art music notation that he had to learn as a student at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. As highlighted earlier (see footnote 126, p.267), Stock (2004) and Nettl (1985) demonstrate how Western art music notation has impinged upon oral/aural practices in non-Western musics in non-Western regions. In a European context, the situation is more complex, given many folk and traditional musics of the region have long been transmitted via staff notation and that staff notation itself is a part of the community of practice.131

There is consensus among scholars who explore the institutionalisation of folk

131 For further reading on the use of music notation in the transmission of Irish traditional music, in particular, see Breathnach (1986), ’notation’ in Vallely (2011), and Keegan (2012).
and traditional musics in higher education that applying Western classical music educational models to folk and traditional music pedagogy is not always the best practice and, in many instances, proves inappropriate or unsuitable (Smith 2005, Hill 2005). As I discuss later, in Finland, pedagogues at the Sibelius Academy’s folk music department felt so compelled to distance themselves from the Western classical music educational culture in its own institution that it decided to locate its premises in a different location to that of the Sibelius Academy’s classical music department. For the instigators of this move, it was important that folk musicians formed a separate music community, isolated from the “influences and judgements of classical musicians” (Hill 2009b, p.215). This example may seem extreme, but it does give a clear indication of the value placed by pedagogues at the folk music department, on folk musicians carving out a distinct community of practice, separated from the classical music community.

Music pedagogies drawn from the Western classical music tradition are still deemed unsuitable for Finnish folk music education and performance practices currently (Personal Interview Ilmonen March 2016). Instead, emphasis is placed on a freedom to be creative and push boundaries, while remaining true to practices that are unique to the transmissional methodologies of folk and traditional musics (Hill 2009b). This echoes the view of fiddler and traditional music lecturer, Liz Doherty that “traditional music must, in effect, find its own ways to survive and flourish in the institutional environment” (Doherty 2002, p.18). An acknowledgement of the intrinsic differences between Western classical music and folk and traditional musics facilitates

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132 In practice, pedagogues at the Sibelius Academy strive to achieve these goals today by teaching performance in a way that fosters “historically informed creative musicianship” in order to “produce traditional musicians who are capable of working as professionals in today’s world” (Personal Interview Ilmonen March 2016).
the development of specific pedagogical methodologies that are unique to the music tradition being taught, although this does not suggest that elements of Western classical music pedagogy cannot be useful to folk and traditional music students.

7.2 Negotiating Western Art Music Pedagogy in Irish Education

Literature on Irish traditional music education calls attention to the unsuitability of Western art music values as a model for Irish traditional music pedagogy. One of the most salient arguments made for requiring an idiomatic pedagogy specific to Irish traditional music in Ireland centres on accepting and embracing the prominence of primarily oral rather than notated processes of transmission. Reflecting on the application of Western classical music educational values to Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland’s primary (pre-secondary level) education system Marie McCarthy’s *Passing it On* historically contextualises a significant development in Irish education that witnessed a shift from informal music transmission to a more systematic and formalised educational environment, that was a consequence of the increased status of Irish traditional music:

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133 The most salient points made to highlight the difficulties in observing Irish traditional music through the lens of Western classical music, include the use of ‘classical’ performance techniques deemed to be un-idiomatic to Irish traditional music (Breathnach 1971, O Canainn 1977, Cranitch 2013), and the unsuitability of evaluating and assessing Irish traditional music using models drawn from Western art music (McCarthy 1995, Smith 2005, McGettrick 2013, Corcoran 2013).

134 However, it is important to note that music notation has been employed to descriptively represent Irish traditional music throughout its history. One prime example of this is the publication of Francis’ O’Neill’s *The Dance Music of Ireland – 1001 Gems* (1907). Such was its popularity, this publication simply became known to practitioners as ‘the book’ (Doherty 2011, p.525), and was a source of material for Clare musicians such as fiddler Hughdie Doohan, who consequently disseminated much of the publication’s repertoire to his neighbours (Collins 2011, p.475). In addition, iconic figures such as Kerry fiddler Padráig O’Keeffe (1887-1963), developed individualistic music notation systems designed to teach fiddle and accordion. For more on the development and use of notation systems in Irish traditional music, see ‘notation’ in Vallely (2011, p.491).
“In the context of passing on musical traditions, the change in status and new educational contexts highlighted the problems in transferring a set of musical practices from primarily rural communities, transmitted for the most part orally, and with a strong social context, to academic, classically oriented settings which valued literacy, uniformity, and contextual independence” (McCarthy 1999, p.10).

McCarthy’s observation here illustrates how a set of idiomatic musical practices rooted in informal, mainly oral-based transmissional contexts face challenges when re-contextualised in a mainstream dominant music education system removed from the cultural processes of Irish traditional music-making.135

Western art music values have also been perceived to dominate Ireland’s secondary level music education system (McCarthy 1999, McKeon 2007). Writing in the *Journal of Music* in 2007, musician and Central Executive Officer of *Na Píobairí Uilleann* (trans. the uilleann pipers, see footnote 19, p.46) Gay McKeon suggests that Irish traditional music is largely neglected and treated superficially in the secondary school music curriculum. This, in McKeon’s opinion is due to the fact that music curricula in Ireland are shaped by classical music cognoscenti rather than by Irish traditional music specialists. In addition, McKeon stresses what he perceives as some of the fundamental differences between the genres of classical and Irish traditional musics, while emphasising the incompatibility of imposing classical music evaluation and validation structures such as graded examinations, on Irish traditional music. McKeon feels that Irish traditional music has been well served by alternative methods of transmission (McKeon 2007). Notwithstanding its focus on secondary education, this reference

135 Here, McCarthy was primarily discussing the challenges faced by those involved in developing pedagogical and analytical methods to successfully locate Irish traditional music in the Irish primary school curriculum, a system that had only prior experience of evaluating Western art music.
provides another interesting insight into the concerns of traditional musicians surrounding the ideologies that inform mainstream music education curriculum design generally.

7.3 Locating Irish Traditional Music in Higher Education Settings

Throughout this chapter, I engage with the challenges and benefits of locating Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. As outlined in chapter two, the work of authors such as Thérèse Smith (1999) discusses some of the challenges inherent in locating an aural-based music tradition within a music education system that has not traditionally drawn on oral/aural methodologies in designing music pedagogies. Although Smith focuses very generally on oral traditions rather than concentrating on Irish traditional music exclusively, her views on locating oral-based musics in traditionally literate education systems, contribute considerably to the discourse surrounding the pedagogical challenges involved in institutionalising Irish traditional music in a higher education system that has traditionally been heavily influenced by Western classical music educational values (Smith 1999, McCarthy 1999, Vallely 2002). Smith observes challenges inherent in re-contextualising oral music traditions in third-level academic environments that primarily emphasise the value of the written text. She suggests that resolutions to what she perceives as an orality-literacy binary are further complicated by the fact that oral traditions (including Irish traditional music) frequently lack a comprehensive documented catalogue of “masterpieces”, or an abundance of documented biographical information on individual genius composers (Smith 1999, p.209). According to Smith, this can result in a lack of understanding or appreciation for the artistic depth of an oral music tradition.
While perhaps more closely thematically linked to conversations on canonicity, this point does highlight a clear divergence between the theoretical and analytical frameworks traditionally available to Western art music pedagogy and Irish traditional music pedagogy, respectively. Smith adds that the academic environment itself is also more compatible with the Western art music tradition as lecture halls and classrooms more closely resemble art music performance spaces rather than those traditionally associated with oral-based traditional musics.

Among numerous themes discussed in the second *Crosbhealach an Cheoil* (2003) conference proceedings (see page 163 of this dissertation for more) is a brief but nonetheless important focus on the relationship between the pedagogies of Irish traditional music and Western art music. To recall and summarise some of the observations made in relation to the second *Crosbhealach an Cheoil* conference in chapter two of this dissertation, Marie McCarthy’s historical survey of traditional music transmission in schools makes many references to the efforts of educational ideologues to impose the values of the perceived ‘high art’ ethos of classical music upon Irish mainstream music education (McCarthy 2013). Seán Corcoran fears that “‘Classical’ music techniques, intonation, timbre preferences and aesthetics have been prestiged over vernacular practices” (Corcoran 2013, p.282). Matt Cranitch exemplifies some fundamental differences between Western classical music and Irish traditional music by recounting many of the challenges faced by Classical violinists who wish to learn or perform Irish traditional music, for fun, or in professional contexts. In the same publication Paul McGettrick warns against imposing classical music assessment templates on Irish traditional music (McGettrick 2013, p.197).

Institutions that aim to integrate Irish traditional music in Irish higher education
face a range of operational challenges. Summarising observations made by Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin of the Irish World Academy, UL, Frank Heneghan, author of the Final Report of the Music Education National Debate\textsuperscript{136} (2001), discusses a number of principal issues, beginning by questioning whether or not the general music education system is the “appropriate and natural ambience” for Irish traditional music. Key to the present discussion are the references to Western art music education in Ireland, and the contextualisation of Irish traditional music within an “already overloaded curricula” in “an educational system hitherto dominated by the norms of method and repertoire derived mainly from Western art music” (Heneghan 2001, p.20). The process of “removing traditional music from its natural community settings” to be placed within “Western-type” formal music education is carefully considered, and those involved in designing strategies to incorporate Irish traditional music in higher education are encouraged to carefully consider the implications of such processes (ibid, p.21). In terms of assessment and evaluation, the report wonders how methods of transmission in Irish traditional music equate to “understandings of achievement targets such as composition/performance and listening in formal education settings” (ibid, p.20). Although the report outlines various difficulties inherent in institutionalising Irish

\textsuperscript{136} The MEND report, conducted by Frank Heneghan in 2001, in its own words “provides a commentary on current Music Education in Ireland in addition to presenting a final analysis of the proceedings of The Music Education National Debate (MEND), an initiative sponsored by the Dublin Institute of Technology and held between February 1994 and November 1996” (Heneghan 2001, p.13). The report was conducted in response to Deaf Ears?, a 1985 Arts Council publication by Donald Herron, subtitled A report on the provision of music education in Irish schools (1985). Deaf Ears was essentially a music education policy document designed to address a perceived deficiency in music education in Irish primary and secondary-level education at a national level. The MEND report drew on the proceedings of a number of associated conference events that attracted in excess of 1500 national and international attendees, and its remit included documenting the findings and recommendations of its author. For more, see Heneghan (2001).
traditional music in higher education, the insights presented therein presumably provide educational strategists with a set of important guiding principles.

The traditional orality/literacy dualism perceived in literature (Smith 1999, Folkestad 2006, Nolet 2007) provides a challenge to institutions involved in the transmission of traditional music, but can also provide traditional music education with a unique and idiomatic pedagogical toolkit to develop educational strategies specific to traditional musics (Doherty 2002, p.10). Pedagogies drawn from Western classical music education are “deemed inappropriate in most respects for the training and transmission of traditional music” (ibid, p.18), but Doherty states that traditional music pedagogy can “learn from the mistakes of the classical music community” by recognising and avoiding the potential dangers of institutionalising Irish traditional music in higher education (Ó Súilleabháin cited in Doherty 2002, p.18).

Fintan Vallely, editor of The Companion to Irish Music, argues that Irish traditional music can indeed make a worthwhile contribution to Irish higher education but must overcome challenges presented by the education system’s emphasis on classical music. In Knocking on the Castle Door: A Place for Traditional Music at Third Level?, Vallely, echoes earlier references to dominant Western classical music values, and laments the supremacy of Western classical music in Irish music departments, suggesting that Irish traditional music is continually facing challenges from what he terms as the “‘imperial’ hegemony of ‘art’ music” resulting from “Ireland’s inherited classical music ‘establishment’” (Vallely 2002). Vallely’s confidence in the potential for meaningful

137 For scholarship challenging the perceived dichotomy between orality and literacy, see Folkestad (2006), Nolet (2007), and DeWitt (2017). Each work advocates for the potential to integrate both oral-based and literacy-based models into music education systems for the betterment of the overall educational experience.
engagement with Irish traditional music studies in Irish higher education at that point in time stemmed from the belief that pedagogical requirements in music education can be fulfilled through the study of any of several genres of music, and he goes on to suggest that educational methodologies that embrace oral transmission could be of significant benefit to wider music education, in areas such as teaching style, for example (Vallely 2002). Although Vallely focuses more on negative perceptions of Western art music rather than suggesting best practices for integrating Irish traditional music in higher education, he nonetheless presents an insightful historical backdrop to the development of a Western art music establishment in Irish education.\textsuperscript{138}

Concerns regarding the application of Western art music pedagogical values and agendas (such as an emphasis on notation, theory, assessment systems, and certain performance practices relating to fiddle bowing (see McGettrick 2013, and Cranitch 2013)) to Irish traditional music education do also exist in the wider traditional music community. In the \textit{Companion to Irish Traditional Music} Niall Keegan, Course Director of the BA in Performing Arts at the Irish World Academy, with responsibility for the Irish traditional music and dance stream, refers briefly, albeit as far back as 2011, to suspicions among the community that higher education institutions have a “stylistic and aesthetic agenda which favours third-level classical music values and is dismissive

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\textsuperscript{138} It is important to note that in the year Vallely’s article was published (2002), the BA in Irish Music and Dance was established at the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick. Given the significance of this BA, “the first of its kind in the country to be designed for traditional musicians and dancers” (Vallely 2011, p.713), it is fair to say that Vallely’s article does not reflect significant changes (both at UL, and in the higher education sector more generally) that have occurred since its publication. For more insights into how more Irish higher education institutes involved in Irish traditional music pedagogy negotiate Western art music pedagogy in their teaching, see my contemporary conspectus of Irish traditional music programmes outlined in chapter four. It is also worth noting that Fintan Vallely himself lectured regularly on Irish traditional music in Maynooth University, The University of Ulster, Trinity College Dublin, and Dundalk Institute of Technology from 1999 (Vallely 2011, p.728)
\end{flushleft}
of traditional-music values” (Keegan 2011, p.234). Keegan also alludes to criticisms of higher education from quarters that may fail to see the value of devoting time to the academic study of Irish traditional music. This reference is significant insofar as it signals an awareness and acknowledgement (from within Irish traditional music academia) of wider community perceptions of the activities of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, even if such perceptions are not critiqued in this instance.\textsuperscript{139}

Numerous contributors to my research have expressed a range of opinions on how they view the relationship between Western art music education and Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. Some feel that the aesthetic and pedagogical priorities of Western art music conflict with those of Irish traditional music, while others feel that theory and notation studies forming part of the Western art music canon are important foundational tools deemed valuable to the musical development of Irish traditional musicians (as suggested in interviews with Sandra Joyce, Johnny McCarthy, and Jimmy O’Brien-Moran, among others).

The conspectus of Irish traditional music programmes and studies offered by Irish higher education institutes presented in chapter four provides a broad snapshot of educators’ opinions on the relationship between Western art music education and third-level Irish traditional music education. Unsurprisingly, institutions and pedagogues differ in how they negotiate the canon of Western classical music education in their own traditional music curricula. Johnny McCarthy of the Cork

\textsuperscript{139} It is difficult to understand the extent to which the kinds of perceptions outlined by Keegan have changed since the publication of those comments in 2011, as there is a lack of literature that documents how community perceptions have changed since then. I believe that some of the contributions offered to this research by community stakeholders will ultimately help enrich this discourse and offer an updated range of current ideas on the topic.
School of Music locates traditional music in a conventional classical music conservatory environment and expects his students to focus on their respective performance studies, as a classical musician would. Clíona Doris of the Dublin Institute of Technology feels strongly that traditional musicians should study core Western classical music studies such as harmony and counterpoint, in order to optimise career prospects and fulfil criteria outlined by the National Teaching Council. At Dundalk Institute of Technology, traditional musicians must also perform Western classical music (along with popular music and jazz). At Maynooth University, traditional music students take core studies in the musicology of Western classical music. At University College Dublin, Thérèse Smith mainly teaches modules on Irish traditional music to students who specialise in the performance of Western classical music. At Waterford Institute of Technology, Jimmy O’Brien-Moran teaches studies in Irish traditional music within a music programme that offers studies in Western classical music. Such a range of approaches evidences a diversity in how individual institutions view Irish traditional music pedagogy. This diversity is perhaps productive, but the lack of any official fora facilitating dialogue between such institutions suggests that individual methodologies are informed by personal ideology rather than guided by any national strategic framework.

Founding Chair of Music at the Irish World Academy, the late Micheál Ó Súilleabháin was acutely aware of the need to develop a pedagogy for Irish traditional music that emerges from the music itself. Prior to establishing the now winding down BA in Irish Music and Dance, Ó Súilleabháin anticipated that a national academy of performing arts would be established with what he feared would be inadequate and unsuitable provision for Irish traditional music. As an outspoken critic of the initiative
that involved the Royal Irish Academy of Music (see footnote 33, p.84) in alliance with

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, (who would oversee examinations in Irish traditional

music), Ó Súilleabháin believed that it was necessary to establish an undergraduate
degree in Irish traditional music that would exist in a university environment, but that
would develop a pedagogy specific to the idiomatic performance practices of Irish

traditional music:

“In the year 2000, approximately, there was an announcement by Government of

IAPA, the Irish Academy of Performing Arts...And there was something of an unholy

alliance in there, and the notion that an academy of performing arts would be

established in Dublin with really no mention of trad, so I attacked the idea full frontal

in the Irish Times at the time with several big articles in there. And I got up
everybody’s nose by calling it a 19th century idea for the 21st century...You couldn’t start

a national academy without traditional music in it. It wouldn’t make sense. Obviously,
you had to have Western classical music in it as well, and maybe other forms of music.
The Government appointed a London consultant. So, he came and visited me, and I
said to him well there’s a need nationally for an undergraduate degree for traditional
music...It’s got to be done by people who understand the nature of the music, who are
not going to trample all over it...We’re not going to be borrowing terminology from
classical music. You have to actually dream up a pedagogy out of the music itself that’s
natural to it. I could see that if we didn’t get in and design and offer an undergraduate
programme that it could pop up somewhere else so I proposed we would do a BA in

Irish Music...When the IAPA started to crumble I persuaded the university here at the
time: I said ‘We need to get in here and do this. And this is how we do it...the rest is
history” (Personal Interview Ó Súilleabháin March 2014).

Ó Súilleabháin’s account of the IAPA project highlights a relatively recent instance

where Irish traditional music was perceived to be excluded from a proposed national
academy for music. Not only was Ó Súilleabháin adamant that a genre-specific
programme of study was required to develop an undergraduate pedagogy for Irish

traditional music, but he successfully established an undergraduate programme for

Irish traditional music at the University of Limerick as a direct response to proposals
that he considered to be excessively deferential to the canon of Western classical music, while detrimental to Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland.

Designing new pedagogical methodologies that are sensitive to, or even wholly founded upon on the musical characteristics of a specific genre of music, is a challenging prospect. Of all musical systems, music notation is invariably the most prominent Western classical music educational methodology utilised in music departments throughout the world. Adopting Western classical music notation in the instruction of aural musical cultures is a divisive practice. Western notation can be viewed as a common musical *lingua franca* with which to engage with other musics globally, but it is also commonly regarded as an inappropriate tool with which to transmit traditional and world music idioms.\(^{140}\) Despite prevalent attitudes towards preferences for designing music theory and literacy pedagogies from within a musical genre or tradition rather than using conventional systems most suited to Western classical music, some view Western classical music theory and notation as a form of universal system that works effectively and pragmatically across genres.\(^{141}\) At the Irish World Academy, current academy director Sandra Joyce, acknowledges the value of designing a music theory specific to Irish traditional music but suggests that focusing on Western classical music theory and methods of analyses remains the most practical and uniform strategy when negotiating theory for Irish traditional music students, especially where such students may go on to teach in a variety of capacities:

\(^{140}\) This is particularly true in Ireland. Marie McCarthy’s historical survey of when and how school music and traditional music transmission have interfaced makes many references to ideologues who impose the perceived “high art” ethos of Western art music upon Irish music (McCarthy 2013, p.220).

\(^{141}\) See Talty 2017, for more on how pedagogues in selected world music and popular music programmes negotiate Western art music notation and theory in their respective music programmes.
“When we had loads more energy and the idealism of youth, we had an idea. Let’s re-invent theory for the traditional musician. We were thinking let’s turn it on its head and let’s be more creative in our use of it. And then slowly reality dawned. We realised that to operate in the real world you just need a good sound knowledge of the notation system that’s established, that most people use. You can be as open-minded as you want and think you’re going to transform things but you’re not doing students much of a service by trying to re-invent it, because that’s the world that people operate in” (Personal Interview Joyce May 2015).

However, the Irish World Academy recognises the importance of contextualising Irish traditional music in aural transmissional models. The Academy does not require prospective undergraduate students to have studied music formally at secondary level. Additionally, the Academy does not have a music theory or literacy component to its entrance exams. Also, music tutors there (in instrumental and vocal music) are not required to use Western notation when teaching; instead, many transfer musical knowledge in ways similar to those found outside higher education structures. Importantly, the Irish World Academy does provide for music notation and theory training in its Irish traditional music curriculum.

Musician, composer, and broadcaster, Peadar Ó Riada (see Appendix A), feels that it is ineffective to conceptualise, and consequently to teach Irish traditional music in Ireland using analytical and aesthetic parameters drawn from an inherently dissimilar musical culture, namely that of the European classical music tradition:

“Irish culture is completely different to European culture. And all the language, and techniques of description and analysis, and understanding, and parsing, and dissecting

142 Undergraduate Irish traditional music students do encounter music notation and theory on a regular basis, however, in mandatory notation and theory classes where sight-reading is included in all end-of-semester assessments. Teaching contexts for Irish traditional music performance (both within and outside higher education) vary considerably and depend on the idiosyncratic approaches of individual teachers. This trend is mirrored in the Irish World Academy by allowing experienced tutors to teach using whatever methodologies they deem appropriate.
of culture is done in the European language and mind-set...In European culture, music has been vertical, chordal, polyphonic...In Irish music there is only one note at a time. Any harmonic process is implied. In the analysis of Irish music, and therefore in the teaching of Irish music, it’s all based on the European model of the vertical, and you can’t describe the horizontal with the language of the vertical, and you can’t use the methods of the vertical to teach the horizontal” (Personal Interview Ó Riada March 2014).

Ó Riada’s commentary, however conceptual and phenomenological, demonstrates a resistance to contextualising Irish traditional music in Ireland within an analytical framework that is primarily designed to teach Western classical music principles. For Ó Riada, the harmony-centric architecture of Western classical music (referred to as ‘vertical’ by Ó Riada), is incompatible with the melody-centric principles of Irish traditional music in Ireland (described by Ó Riada as ‘horizontal’). Although a BMus graduate of University College Cork, and an advocate of rigorous tertiary-level musical training for Western classical musicians, Ó Riada feels that a traditional music pedagogy that acquiesces to Western art music educational parameters will ultimately fail to understand the idiomatic characteristics of Irish traditional music in Ireland.

For traditional fiddler, and classical violinist, Aoife Ní Bhriain (see Appendix A), it is important to appreciate the idiomatic differences between Western classical music and Irish traditional music when designing Irish traditional music pedagogies. As a musician who successfully combines two musical identities to a very high level,\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{143} Ní Bhriain has won prizes for both Irish traditional and classical music including All-Ireland Titles at the Fleadh Cheoil, Bonn Óir Sheáin Uí Riada, The Fiddler of Dooney, a TG4 Gradam Ceoil Award, Camerata Ireland Young Musician of the Year Award, the Campus Internazionale da Musica, Pontino Festival Young Musician Award and 2nd Prize at the Concours International du Violon Marie Cantagrill, and 3rd Prize at the Vasco Abadjiev International Violin Competition. Other awards include the Bill Whelan Bursary for exceptional musicians, and the Prix d’Or from the Conservatoire de Pays de La Loire, Nantes.
she feels that traditional music cannot be conceptualised within the performance parameters of Western classical music:

“In traditional music, although the technical elements of the music may not be as high a standard as the classical technical elements, and I want to put that ‘technical’ in inverted commas because honestly, to be a great traditional musician, there is so much technique involved. But it’s just so different. It’s more about the notes that you don’t play. The simplicity of the music is what’s so difficult. You can give me a piece of music with a hundred million notes from a classical composer, and it’s a lot easier for me to play that than [traditional] music with four notes. You have to put your own print on it...I think to be able to play the simple tunes well is the first sign of true musicianship...So for me, if my hypothetical course was in place, absolutely I would take the classical idea that you have to practice, you have to build up your technique, you have to sit down and think about your music, you have to do all of those things. But just because you play a thousand notes per minute does not mean you will walk away from that course deemed a musician. You would walk away from that course deemed a technician” (Personal Interview Ní Bhriain June 2015).

For Ní Bhriain, it is somewhat futile to locate Irish traditional music within the pedagogical frame that Western classical music provides, although she does value the rigorous work ethic towards technique and rehearsal, that Western classical music has instilled in her.

Likewise, musician and composer, Martin Tourish (see Appendix A) feels that it is important not to conflate what he views as two very different music genres.

Furthermore, although he performs classical music, Tourish feels strongly that it is essential to completely avoid Western classical music aesthetics when conceptualising a pedagogy for the Irish traditional music:

“We have a completely different set of aesthetics. There is this whole aim to try and get Irish traditional music to be seen to be as good as classical music. It’s a completely different thing with a completely different range of aesthetics. The richness in our music is the variation, the ornaments that are used. It’s a different set of criteria altogether so you can’t view them as being the same thing. If I was to take anything
[from Western classical music education], it would be what not to do” (Personal Interview Tourish October 2013).

Conversely, other commentators feel that Irish traditional music should be located within a pedagogical framework that includes musics such as the Western classical tradition. Rationale for such an approach includes a desire to broaden students’ musical horizons. In Jimmy O’ Brien-Moran’s work at Waterford Institute of Technology, he encourages his students to appreciate Irish traditional music as it relates to other musics, as this provides an objective and comparative framework to help understand Irish traditional music in a wider musical context. O’Brien-Moran is also keen that students of Irish traditional music are equipped with musical skills and knowledge attained from a music pedagogy not confined to a specialist traditional music degree:

“[I’d like to see] a general music education that would include music theory. I’d like to see a bit of classical [music] history because that’s important...that also broadens your horizons...I would not like to see a specialised Irish music degree because I think it’s almost incestuous. It’s too narrow a field. It’s like the colour-wheel. A colour stands out against its opposite and you can only see it in context if you put it against other musics. You can’t understand basic Irish music theory without understanding music theory: keys, modes, and possible chords” (Personal Interview O’Brien-Moran January 2015).

Likewise, piper Mick O’Brien144 views a broader music education, extending beyond Irish traditional music, as being of value to traditional music students in Irish education.

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144 Mick O’Brien is an uilleann piper, flute and whistle player from Dublin. Incidentally, in 1977, he became the first secondary-level music student to perform Irish traditional music for a state music examination. Mick has performed as a soloist with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and the Irish Memory Orchestra, and has not received any classical training, but his aforementioned commentary points to the skills that he would value should he have decided to engage with Irish traditional music studies in Irish higher education. For more biographical information, see Appendix A.
higher education. Reflecting upon what he would hypothetically value as an undergraduate student, he also feels that a specialised degree in Irish traditional music may fail to broaden students’ musical horizons:

“I would give a broad [musical education]. I’d definitely include theory and I’d like to see that [students] were playing a traditional instrument but I would like to see that they would maybe take piano, or something in a different field that would give them a taste of maybe a bit of jazz, definitely a bit of classical music. So that they’re not coming out with only a traditional Irish music degree. For me, I would hope it would broaden their musical knowledge. Because that is what I would love myself. So, I could sit down at the piano and explain what is happening in traditional music. Not that I’d have to be an expert in classical music” (Personal Interview O’Brien February 2016).

Conceptualising music notation or theory as a universal *lingua franca* in music education is indeed fair and rational, and undoubtedly empowers music students to analyse and communicate musical ideas to colleagues working in other genres of music. But is it possible to teach general, transferrable, foundational music theory and notation skills through music students’ primary genre of music rather than through theory systems more appropriate to Western art music pedagogy? For example, can traditional music students use traditional melodies as an aid to understand melodic intervals to the extent that they can communicate such principles universally to musicians working in other musics? In an attempt to broaden the scope of this conversation, to folk music institutions outside Ireland, I explore how three overseas higher education institutions draw on, adapt, or depart from Western classical music pedagogy when designing music theory and notation systems. I achieve this aim by putting a range of questions to folk and traditional music faculty at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow (RCS), the Royal College of Music (KMH) in Stockholm, Sweden, and the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland.
7.4 Comparative Study: The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

At the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, Scottish folk musicians are exposed to other genres of music given the fact that many music genre departments are housed under a single conservatoire roof. Understandably, a conservatoire environment that offers studies in many genres of music facilitates a degree of cross-genre collaboration, experimentation, and collegial understanding. This has certainly been the case with the RCS. If Western classical music notation and theory is employed to teach all musics, especially Scottish traditional music, I was keen to unravel the rationale behind such decisions and ascertain how the use of Western classical notation and theory (as opposed to a tailored genre-specific system) impacts upon Scottish traditional musicians’ engagement with literacy and theory.

As an institution, the RCS has actively sought to increase collaborations across genres and artforms. Head of Scottish music, Joshua Dickson feels that increased collaboration between Scottish traditional music and other artforms and genres reflects the evolution of Scottish traditional music to where it is today, and believes that collaboration has contributed positively to a mutual interest and respect among musicians at the RCS:

“There’s been a huge push in the last three years to actually formalise the opportunities for collaboration between students of different art forms. So that extends drastically between quite disparate elements. So, between, say, acting, and jazz, or stage prop makers and traditional music...There has always been some degree of collaboration. Going back years and years, I think it would be fair anecdotally to say that there was a feeling of ‘us and them’, and I wouldn’t say that that’s exclusively the fault of the classicists, in a way. There was always a kind of reverse psychology going on where the ‘traddies’ would smugly go “Oh, they have their noses up at us so we’re putting our noses up at them”, but that hasn’t been the case for a long time, and that again is down to the changing nature of traditional Scottish music today, because traditional music has become more mainstream, more commercialised, more digitised, and even I would say, more de-territorialised, it means that [Scottish
traditional music] is more on a par of esteem with classical, or jazz, or other ‘mainstream’ types of music, and therefore it's almost a given at this stage that a classical musician would be quite interested in learning more about how traditional musicians work, and exploring the repertoire. And just as much, a traditional musician in our ranks, is quite often interested in exploring what it takes to come up with string quartets” (Personal Interview Dickson February 2015).

While acknowledging the historical tensions between classical and traditional musicians, Dickson suggests that the pluralistic environment created when multiple music genres occupy a shared music department, fosters respect, curiosity, and understanding for all genres. Subsequently, cross-genre collaboration seems to make Scottish traditional music accessible to non-traditional musicians who do not have any other pathways into understanding Scottish traditional music. Of particular relevance here is the possibility that the type of cross-genre collaboration referred to by Dickson, facilitated by the multi-genre musical environment at the RCS, may influence how generalised and non-idiomatic the department’s Scottish traditional music theory and notation systems must be, in order to be utilised by Scottish traditional music students as a *lingua franca*, to communicate with their peers working in other genres and departments.

Given the multiplicity of music genres offered at the RCS, Scottish folk music students tend to engage with general, mainstream music notation and theory. In particular, pedagogues have noted that students respond most effectively to music theory classes when they are presented in conjunction with performance. Dickson believes that the best guarantor that students of the BA in Scottish Music will engage effectively with Western music theory and appreciate its relevance is to align it more
closely with how they experience performance on their principal instrument and/or voice.\textsuperscript{145}

For Dickson, mainstream theory and notation systems are employed in the Scottish traditional music programme in order to develop students’ abilities to communicate musical ideas universally, to musicians in other genres, an opinion that, as we have seen, is shared by Irish pedagogues such as Sandra Joyce. In his view, this approach both facilitates artistic collaboration, and optimises graduates’ employability as professional musicians:

“Well there are two worlds that are kind of colliding, or two priorities. One is to equip traditional or folk music students with the analytical and practical skills necessary to actually communicate intent, and to engage with other musicians and other types of music in a variety of media. Essentially, it’s the exact same criteria as it would be for a classical or jazz musician, to be literate in the widest sense of the word, in respect of their own particular genre. But coupled with that is the necessity in today’s professional music world that they have a theoretical and a conceptual vocabulary and literacy that is shared with classical, or jazz, or any other genre of music, in order to facilitate that kind of meaningful collaboration, and by inference, playability” (Personal Interview Dickson February 2015)

The approach taken by Dickson and his team to equip students with general, non-genre-specific literacy and theory skills undoubtedly increases graduates’ professional skills. Furthermore, the presence of jazz, and artforms other than Western classical music at the RCS suggests that it is highly unlikely that Western classical music would exert a disproportionate influence on the pedagogical approaches adopted by Dickson

\textsuperscript{145} The BA in Scottish Music curriculum at the RCS (currently undergoing revision) hopes to further incorporate this approach to theory through folk ensemble class sessions; students will engage in describing and understanding the theoretical manifestations of the many musical phenomena that they explore as a group.
and his staff. Literacy and theory systems associated with the Western classical tradition are utilised as a way to communicate musical ideas across genres rather than as a generic, un-nuanced tool destined to homogenise musical practices across non-Western-classical-music genres. Therefore, it seems that a useful balance is struck between (a) learning a relatable, common music vocabulary to communicate musical ideas, and (b) learning and experiencing that vocabulary through one’s own performance specialism. Interviews with representatives of Irish traditional music programmes in Irish higher education did not provide any evidence of similar approaches been adopted in the Irish context.

7.5 Comparative Study: The Royal College of Music, Stockholm, Sweden (KMH)
Although Swedish folk musicians have studied at the Royal College of Music, Sweden for quite a long time, Swedish folk music has traditionally occupied an unusual position in the institution. The experiences, and frustrations of current pedagogues such as Sven Ahlbäck, himself an alumnus of KMH, have effected considerable change in how teaching methodologies for Swedish folk music are devised. At KMH, Swedish folk music has existed alongside classical music for a considerable amount of time. However, until the establishment of a dedicated folk music department, fiddlers who may have been Swedish folk musicians were offered very few studies relating to the genre. Instead, folk fiddlers studied Western classical music, and the folk music subjects that were offered were presented within the framework of classical music pedagogy. KMH pedagogue Sven Ahlbäck recalls his own experiences as a young fiddle student of violin pedagogy at KMH:
“When I myself went through this education system, we were very disappointed that some of the subjects didn’t have any connection to our own music. For instance, music theory and music history didn’t mention folk music at all. And when we studied violin pedagogy, it was all terminology from the classical world. And then we started to become more and more irritated with this, that they weren’t taking our background, and interest, and skills into account. What we studied was violin pedagogy, but with the competence, with the skills of a folk music fiddler. We didn’t need to show anything when we applied [to do the course] in classical playing. We started as fiddlers. But we didn’t study folk music, just a few of our subjects had to do with folk music” (Personal Interview Ahlbäck May 2015).

The frustration experienced by Ahlbäck during his student days led to many curricular developments when he became a member of staff at KMH. Perhaps most notably, Ahlbäck went on to design a theoretical framework for Swedish folk music that dealt with the specific nuances of the genre, and one that unshackled itself from the Western classical music pedagogy that it had previously been located in.

Ahlbäck’s nuanced music theory system has been designed to adequately represent what he feels are the idiomatic characteristics of Swedish folk music. He set about designing this system in order to analyse the music of Sweden’s master fiddle players whose music featured micro-tonality and unique rhythmical elements:

“I started to try to notate the music that I learned by ear from my fiddle master and then I came across a lot of strange things. I suddenly realised that okay, these notes are not on the piano. So, what are these? And I also started to read about it. Well we play polskas, and we play waltzes, we play different kinds of tunes, but what really is the difference between different polskas? And I looked at the literature, and there was nothing. It said that the polska is a dance in ¾ time but that a waltz is a dance in ¾ time, and I knew that there was a lot more [to know]...I was forced actually to try and produce a theory [to explain] the swing and the groove in different dance tunes, for instance. It turned out that there was no theory for that. And that was essential to our playing. If you don’t have the right kind of swing, they won’t dance. I needed to develop a theory that articulated these things and be useful for teaching and also communicating between musicians” (Personal Interview Ahlbäck May 2015).
Ahlbäck’s system, which remains in use at KMH, has successfully equipped students with a means of analysing folk music that was not previously provided by the Western classical music theory and notation tuition offered at KMH. Micro-tonality and unusual rhythmic techniques are now discussed, notated, and performed as part of a unique musical language, although students also have general musical vocabulary that they can use to communicate with students of other genres.

Such an approach resonates with that of Ahlbäck’s colleague Susanne Rosenberg. For her also, it is essential to develop performance pedagogies drawn from specific genres or musical traditions. Along with using an idiomatic system that can represent Swedish folk music characteristics such as micro-tonality, for example, Rosenberg feels that techniques such as vocal inflection and string bowing, or articulation drawn from the Western classical tradition can fail to sufficiently express the characteristics of Swedish folk music style. For example, fiddle students are encouraged to avoid bowing with a whole bow (as promoted in classical violin technique), and instead use idiomatic quick bowing techniques and directional changes appropriate to playing rhythmical dance music.

“[How we teach technique] is connected to the tradition so it’s not like we look at the classical department to see what they do. We try to develop the skills needed to be good folk musicians. And maybe if you want to be a good folk musician, you don’t need to learn how to play with the whole bow. You cannot use the classical practice because they use the bow in a way that you don’t hear when you change the bow, for example...I think that is an important thing in our ethos, that we make the methodological aspects of playing and singing from the tradition. We don’t borrow things from other genres. We make it up” (Personal Interview Rosenberg May 2015).

In addition, Rosenberg believes that theory should be presented to students as a performance-based study, rather than just a theoretical subject. Furthermore, the
alignment of such performance-based learning with folk and traditional music performance optimises how students engage with music theory. Therefore idiomatic, genre-specific pedagogy can resonate with the performance specialisms of students while simultaneously providing generalist analytical and communication skills. For example, students learn about micro-tonality by performing it on their chosen instrument:

“Our philosophy is that as teachers we want to keep [the aspects of Swedish folk music] that we think are valuable. In Sweden, we say that playing folk music is basically a solo tradition, solo singing, solo playing and it has a special tonality, we have micro-tonality. And from that we have built the curriculum. So, we have a big chunk of studies about folk music theory. But the folk music theory is not a theoretical subject; it’s a practical subject. So, you learn the tonality of the music by improvising over the tonality and you learn micro-tonality by playing music that has micro-tonality” (Personal Interview Rosenberg May 2015).

Perhaps the selection of aspects of the tradition that are of value to KMH teachers suggests a form of canonicity, but focusing on appropriate methodologies (rather than imposing Western classical methodologies on Swedish folk music) with which to teach micro-tonality, for example, ensures that the idiosyncrasies of Swedish folk music are not diluted in an effort to understand them within the context of the Western classical music canon.

The establishment of a folk music department at KMH has been instrumental in securing a sense of identity for folk music at KMH. However, the folk music department also benefits from sharing a building with the classical music, and jazz departments; folk music students may study modules offered by the other KMH departments, as Susanne Rosenberg explains:
“You could as a student say, “but I want to learn about jazz harmonisation because, I want to use that”, and there are some that do that...And that is the good thing about being in a school like this. Of course, because you have all this in the same building. And you could as a student choose courses from [different departments in the KMH]” (Personal Interview Rosenberg May 2015).

Rosenberg also recalls the division of KMH music studies into a number of discrete music departments:

“Suddenly, we could say: “we are the folk music department, we do this”. At the same time [the classical music department and jazz department] could say “we are the classical department, we are the jazz department”, and that is an important thing. So, all of these departments were created at the same time. Before that it was just the Royal College of Music, and as a student you felt very, very small. So, for us, being a department made us stronger. So, the folk music department could talk to the jazz department and you could do things together, for example...The identity thing with being a department is the good thing. It makes it work” (Personal Interview Rosenberg May 2015).

It would appear that the establishment of a specific folk music department within the KMH has assisted in carving out a space and an identity for folk music that means the genre can be more clearly understood as being separate to the other musical structures that had traditionally dominated music pedagogy at KMH. Now, although the folk music department draws on the expertise of other departments, its status as a separate department allows it to design pedagogies specific to Swedish folk music, as it sees fit.

7.6 Comparative Study: The Folk Music Department, The Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, Finland

Given the history of the Sibelius Academy’s folk music department, it is perhaps unsurprising that pedagogues such as Kristiina Ilmonen and Vilma Timonen design curriculum content to represent the considerable differences between the pedagogical
requirements of folk music students and those of their colleagues studying other
genres at the Sibelius Academy. Ilmonen feels that the career prospects and
professional demands placed on folk music students also differ greatly from students
of other genres, and as a consequence, folk music pedagogy at the Sibelius Academy is
tailored to reflect that.

“We use different methods [to classical music pedagogy] and of course, we also have
different demands in the professional life of the [folk] musician. We aim to provide the
student with that, and classical education aims for their goals...The situation in
Finland, is that the main positions for classical musicians who graduate from the
Sibelius Academy, they mainly aim for either a career as a soloist, as an
instrumentalist, or vocalist, or as a player in an orchestra. Or as a teacher, and there are
several posts in Finnish music schools all around the country opening up once in a
while to classical musicians. There are very few posts available for folk musicians. So, a
folk musician graduating has to create their own job, so to speak, and we have to
provide them with much more creativity and working life skills for them do be able to
find their own way in professional life. They don’t have readymade jobs, or posts,
almost none. That’s the main difference. Of course, a classical music player has to be
very, very skilful in sight-reading, for instance, but a folk musician might benefit more
from very good ear training and versatility in their education” (Personal Interview
Ilmonen March 2016).

Ilmonen’s views on the irrelevance of locating Finnish folk music pedagogy within a
classical music educational framework are not based on concerns over the quality of
classical music education in Finland, as she actually feels that classical music pedagogy
has developed positively at the Sibelius Academy in recent years. Instead, Ilmonen’s
desire to develop idiomatic genre-specific pedagogies for Finnish music is motivated
by what she perceives as the specific needs of folk music graduates who wish to work
as professional musicians.

Historically, references to Finnish folk music were theorised within a classical
music pedagogic framework at the Sibelius Academy. As a student, Kristiina Ilmonen
recalls that there was no theoretical framework for teaching Finnish folk music theory, and so I was interested to hear how she felt about experiencing Western classical music theory and history as a Finnish folk musician:

“When I was a student here, we used to go to classical music theory. There was not yet folk music theory at all. Very soon we started to realise that this wasn’t answering our needs. Because if I listen only to Romantic composers and try to analyse that, and do counterpoint, I am not acquiring the skills I would need as a folk musician, so folk music has been established and it is developing. Now, all the material used is folk or world music material” (Personal Interview Ilmonen March 2016).

Perhaps the study of Romanticism and compositional techniques drawn from the Western classical tradition may be of some benefit to non-classical musicians, but it is clear from Ilmonen’s recollections that her development as a folk musician, and her appetite for a theoretical vocabulary would have been better served by a music theory that was tailored to her specific requirements as a folk musician.

In keeping with policies that develop specific folk music pedagogies at the Sibelius Academy, Ilmonen is keen to maintain the oral, and aural characteristics of folk music transmission. She also believes that non-notation-based transmission and performance represents more than a methodology; it shapes how folk musicians view and experience their artform, and the musical world around them:

“One thing that I would like to mention also is oral tradition, and memory-based tradition, which are concepts that we like to keep alive. Not to rely on sheet music and not to rely on written sources but to train our musicians to understand how oral tradition is different from this kind of notebook culture. And what does it mean if you have a memory-based tradition inside your head. Again, this influences the whole musicianship of the person” (Personal Interview Ilmonen March 2016).

Naturally, folk music students are taught how to read Western classical notation but are also reminded that Finnish folk music has its own set of established performance
and transmissional characteristics that do not rely on the use of music notation. Therefore, a balance is struck between providing students with necessary communication and analytical skills while also eschewing any sort of alienation that may arise from studying folk music through the lens of Western classical music.

At the Sibelius Academy, folk music theory is designed to be functional, and applicable to situations where students may need to analyse and understand archive material, for practical rather than theoretical ends. The approach taken to music theory pedagogy is one that prioritises experiencing theory through performance rather than presenting it as a merely theoretical concept. For Ilmonen, it is important that folk music students see the relevance of music theory by experiencing Finnish folk music characteristics such as modes and micro-tonality through the medium of their instrument of choice.

“Folk music analysis is included in the theory as well, so you have to be able to transcribe. You have to be able to understand the transcriptions of the late 19th century, early 20th century, and you have to be able to understand why the transcriptions are like this. It’s a larger concept of understanding folk music as a concept, I would say, and all the phenomena that are inside like micro-tonality, and different modes, and stuff like that. And a big issue is that we try to incorporate doing as much as possible, playing, so the instruments are brought to the lessons, often, and the students are made play the theoretical issues” (Personal Interview Ilmonen March 2016).

Not for the first time, a folk music pedagogue contributing to this research espouses the importance of engaging with music theory through practical performance. Consequently, musical theory is internalised and conceptualised as a performance activity and is therefore seen as applicable to the everyday needs of folk music students.
7.7 Discussion

Western art music has enjoyed a privileged position in mainstream higher education music programmes (Nettl 1995, Kingsbury 1988, Talty 2017). This dominance has a significant impact upon how folk and traditional musics, with different artistic and cultural origins, social dynamics, and performance practices, are contextualised in higher education, as evidenced not only in my Irish and Northern European case studies, but further afield. Not only are Western classical music pedagogical methodologies deemed inappropriate for folk and traditional music education, but the predominance of the Western classical music canon continues to pervade contemporary music education for many musics outside the Western classical tradition. This pedagogical ‘hangover’ has been observed by literature on mainstream music education (Kingsbury 1988, Caswell 1991, Nettl 1995), on European folk music education (Doherty 2002, Hill 2005, 2009a, 2009b), as well as in Irish traditional music in Ireland (Smith 1999, Vallely 2002, Doherty 2002, McKeon 2007, McCarthy 2013, Corcoran 2013, McGettrick 2013).

Among the issues faced by higher education institutes tasked with designing folk and traditional music programmes is a perceived orality-literacy binary that complicates how oral and aural music traditions are contextualised in settings that have traditionally focused on musical literacy and documented historiographies. Another hurdle facing folk and traditional music pedagogues working in higher education centres upon the prestige and ‘high art’ ethos bestowed on Western classical music, and consequently on Western classical music pedagogy. In addition, the traditional music community in Ireland is suspicious of the motivations of higher education pedagogies teaching Irish traditional music in Irish higher education
(Keegan 2011). Informed by literature and a wide range of research consultants, throughout this chapter, I have sought to interrogate the complex relationship between Western classical music education and folk and traditional music education. To what extent do folk music pedagogues, and specifically traditional music pedagogues operating in Irish higher education, draw on, adapt, or depart from Western classical music education? Also, how do other stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community in Ireland perceive the relationship between traditional music pedagogy and Western classical music pedagogy?

My conspectus of Irish traditional music programmes offered in Irish higher education (chapter four) sheds light on the diverse range of opinions and approaches adopted by pedagogues in negotiating Western classical music education in their respective curricula in Ireland. As that chapter highlights, there is a lack of general consensus on how traditional music pedagogy should relate to the Western classical music tradition. Some Irish institutions demand that prospective undergraduate students are fluent in Western classical music theory and notation before commencing their studies, while other institutions do not. Widening this conversation to stakeholders in the traditional music community in Ireland, and to folk music pedagogues working in European higher education institutions has provided me with a diverse range of opinions on how to optimally negotiate Western classical music pedagogy when designing curricula for folk and traditional musics.

Consensus is divided on whether folk and traditional music pedagogy should be developed as a specialist and idiomatic system. Valid points are made regarding the advantages and disadvantages of developing specialist and idiomatic curricula derived from within the practices of a given genre, such as traditional music in Ireland. Sandra
Joyce refers to a reality that students need a *lingua franca* when it comes to music notation and theory systems when she states, “that’s the world that people operate in” (Personal Interview Joyce May 2015). Despite this valid and pragmatic argument, Joyce also refers to a previous desire between her and her colleagues to develop an idiomatic theory system for the traditional artist in Ireland when she “had loads more energy and the idealism of youth” (Personal Interview Joyce May 2015). Joyce’s commentary does leave room for the suggestion that perhaps pragmatism is not the sole rationale for relying on the established Western classical music pedagogical tradition for a music theory framework. Perhaps the negotiation of institutional change is also a challenging prospect, given the number of voices and opinions involved.

Contributors to my research who are dubious of framing Irish traditional music pedagogy within in a Western classical music education paradigm are critical of the pitfalls of superimposing a culturally, artistically, and socially incompatible system of music education on Irish traditional music in Ireland (in resonance with the observations of Vallely 2002, Doherty 2002, McKeon 2007, and Keegan 2011). As both a classical violinist and traditional fiddler, Aoife Ní Bhriain, is acutely aware of the necessity to conceptualise traditional music pedagogy on its own terms, which for her means understanding the underlying deceptive simplicity of traditional melodies, and pre-emphasising emotional feeling and expression over technical proficiency alone. Again, this is evidenced by her earlier reference to being more about the “notes that you don’t play” and her view that the “simplicity of the music is what’s so difficult” (Personal Interview Ní Bhriain June 2015). Martin Tourish is vehement in his assertion that he would use his experience of classical music to identify “what not to do” when designing third-level pedagogy for traditional music (Personal Interview Tourish
October 2013). Likewise, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin speaks of learning from the “mistakes of the classical music community” (Ó Súilleabháin cited in Doherty 2002, p.18). On a phenomenological and philosophical level, Peadar Ó Riada, considers Irish higher music education to be predisposed to the conventions of European classical music education, and therefore, he views the modus operandi of tertiary-level pedagogy for Irish traditional music to be ultimately flawed.

However, a number of contributors to this research declared a preference for locating traditional music studies within a music education framework that includes studies in classical music and other musical studies drawn from outside the Irish traditional music canon. Some found the concept of a specialist undergraduate degree in Irish traditional music to be limiting. Again, WIT-educator and piper Jimmy O’Brien Moran feels that locating Irish traditional music within a wider music education spectrum facilitates in appreciating how Irish traditional music relates to other music genres and idioms. Decrying what he feels would be an “incestuous” and “narrow” music education, O’Brien-Moran sees a grounding in universal musical rudiments as beneficial to students of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education (Personal Interview O’Brien-Moran January 2015). Likewise, uilleann piper and teacher Mick O’Brien reflects on what he would value as an undergraduate student, and he includes studies in aspects of jazz and classical music, and piano skills in his idealised programme of study.

Consulting folk music pedagogues in European higher education institutes outside Ireland has been invaluable in assisting me to extend these conversations beyond the higher education sector in Ireland. In the case of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, the relationship between Scottish traditional music and Western classical
music is one of mutual respect. The close physical proximity of both music
departments at the RCS facilitates collaboration and mutual musical curiosity. Head of
Scottish music at the RCS, Joshua Dickson acknowledges a historical tension between
Scottish folk music and Western classical music but believes that the improved artistic
status of Scottish traditional music has dispelled many of the pejorative views that
classical musicians were perceived to have had towards Scottish traditional music.
Perhaps more relevant to the present discussion is the manner in which Dickson
problematises music theory and notation for Scottish traditional musicians at the RCS.

In Dickson’s experience, students engage more meaningfully with theory and
notation (although derived from Western classical music) when it relates to their
primary performance instrument. Dickson encourages his students to understand and
contextualise music theory and notation through performance, an arena that his
students are comfortable with. Mindful of the need to acquire skills that optimise
students’ employability, Dickson accepts that his students must be musically literate
and capable of analysing and communicating general musical ideas to prospective
collaborators working in genres other than Scottish traditional music. Here, an
effective balance is struck between developing a relatable, communicable musical
vocabulary, and internalising a music theory and notation system through the medium
of one’s particular performance specialism. Despite interviewing numerous
pedagogues working with Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education,
there was no evidence offered to suggest that similar pedagogical practices were in
place in the Irish context.

Similarly, pedagogues at the Royal College of Music, Stockholm, who also
occupy a music institution with other music departments, are sensitive to the need to
develop an idiomatic Swedish folk music pedagogy, but also feel that sharing a music building with musicians studying other genres can be educationally beneficial. Emanating from a historical frustration surrounding a previous dearth of pedagogical and analytical tools for Swedish folk music, Sven Ahlbäck and Susanne Rosenberg outline their views on the necessity of developing educational methodologies with which to describe Swedish folk music characteristics, such as micro-tonality, irregular rhythms, and bowing techniques, for example. Previously, whatever Swedish folk music studies were offered at KMH (when Ahlbäck and Rosenberg were students146), were located within a Western classical music pedagogy that failed to adequately represent the idiomatic features of Swedish folk music. Consequently, current Swedish folk music pedagogues at KMH are keen to develop and maintain a genre-specific pedagogy of notation and theory systems that reflect the specific needs of Swedish folk music students.

In a similar manner to Joshua Dickson at the RCS, Rosenberg feels that theoretical studies must be supported by practical application; she encourages students to learn the theory of micro-tonality by playing melodies that feature micro-tonality. However, KMH folk music faculty also celebrate their proximity to other musics and feel that cross-genre communication and collaboration is facilitated by the shared space within which all KMH music students work. In addition, Rosenberg sees the proximity of a jazz department, for example, as a pedagogical resource that can be utilised by her students should they wish to gain an understanding of a musical vocabulary different to that of Swedish folk music.

146 It is important to note at this point that, similar to the Irish context, the majority of pedagogues who contributed to this research are also themselves products of a higher education system.
Likewise, pedagogues at the Sibelius Academy’s folk music department feel it is very important to develop a music pedagogy that recognises the significant differences between Finnish folk music and Western classical music. For Kristiina Ilmonen, acknowledging such differences are artistically important, but she also feels that there are vocational and professional needs specific to folk musicians in Finland that cannot be met by Western classical music pedagogy. On completion of their folk music studies, Sibelius Academy graduates face a folk music scene with specific demands; they do not have access to a range of existing music positions, as is often the case for classical musicians, and so, Ilmonen believes that it necessary to develop specific folk music pedagogies that equip her students to be versatile and creative, as to create their own opportunities in the music industry. Resonating with the beliefs of Dickson at the RCS, and Rosenberg at KMH, Kristiina Ilmonen feels that students should be encouraged to engage with music theory through performance. Furthermore, Ilmonen describes the need to include idiomatic studies on Finnish folk music characteristics such as micro-tonality and specific modes, not generally taught within the parameters of a conventional Western classical music pedagogy.

Locating the discourse offered by pedagogues in Scotland, Stockholm and Finland within my specific case study of the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education has provided me with a number of important models of comparison. How does the Irish context compare to the other sites consulted in this research? Despite the prevalence of non-equal-tempered tuning in fiddle performance, and in the tuning systems utilised by Uilleann pipers and makers etc., it is my view that there is no significant consensus among the Irish traditional music community on
intonation and tuning systems.\textsuperscript{147} Many reed instruments such as the concertina and accordion are tuned to equal temperament.\textsuperscript{148} In essence, Irish traditional music, despite many historical deviations from such a temperament, is invariably played in equal temperament (or close to it), and consequently, notation systems that represent microtonal intervals, while useful in transcribing intervalllic characteristics of sean-nós singing, are unlikely to be embraced by instrumentalists to any great extent. A discussion on the merits of encouraging traditional musicians to re-engage with deviations from equal temperament is beyond the scope of the present research, but it is fair to state that the adoption of a microtonal notation system such as Ahlbäck's, designed to represent musical characteristics that conventional Western art music notation does not, is possibly (and perhaps justifiably), low among the pedagogical priorities of those who design curricula for Irish traditional music studies in Irish higher education. When it comes to integrating music theory and performance practice, I found no evidence to suggest that the policies adopted by pedagogues at the Royal Conservatoire, the Royal College of Music and the Sibelius Academy (whereby music theory is linked to performance), are in operation in third-level Irish traditional music programmes in Ireland.

My research suggests that it is possible, and even optimal, to develop music

\textsuperscript{147} As Martin Hayes writes in the \textit{Companion to Traditional Irish Music} (Vallely 2011), “[t]he non-adherence to the Western tempered scale was common in much of the fiddle music of Clare, Sliabh Luachra and other regions. In the context of Western music, this has often been misunderstood and simply confused with poor intonation, they were operating inside a world of aesthetics that derived value from the use of slightly flattened or sharpened notes” (Hayes 2011, p.9)

\textsuperscript{148} Lindley describes equal temperament as a “tuning of the scale based on a cycle of 12 identical 5ths and with the octave divided into 12 equal semitones, and consequently with 3rds and 6ths tempered, uniformly, much more than 5ths and 4ths” (Lindey 2001). In practice, this means that each major (or minor) scale is mathematically comparable to another major (or minor) scale, as the frequency ratio between any two intervals, is mapped universally to all other scales.
pedagogies that are idiomatically tailored to the artistic, educational, professional, and vocational needs of traditional music students in Ireland. It is also necessary to connect such an education with a more universal, and non-specialist music education. What is perhaps of most value here is to identify an important distinction between pedagogical aims, and objectives, as they relate to theory and notation for Irish traditional music in Ireland, for example. Yes, music theory and notation should be relatable and communicable as a musical lingua franca. Pedagogical aims can be seen as a set of desired educational outcomes and could undoubtedly include a foundational training in a more universal music theory and notation system. However, I feel strongly that this foundational grounding (the aim) can be achieved by teaching music theory and notation through the lens of the Irish traditional music in Ireland (the objectives).

Undoubtedly students of Irish traditional music in Ireland should be encouraged to objectively contextualise Irish traditional music in a wider pedagogical, cultural, and artistic framework, and should be equipped to analyse and communicate general musical ideas to musicians working in other genres. Many contributors to this chapter have made compelling arguments to this effect. I see the attainment of such transferrable musical skills as a necessary and rewarding aim.\(^{149}\) To further facilitate students’ engagement with music theory and notation, performance should be used as much as possible as a learning tool. The external pedagogues consulted for this research unanimously champion the application of performance to theoretical

\(^{149}\) Again, I believe Irish higher education can encourage students to learn and internalise foundational concepts such as melodic intervals (for example) through the medium of analysing traditional melodies as mnemonic devices, in both written form, and performance. This is certainly how I taught melodic intervals as a theory teacher at the Irish World Academy, and I observed a considerable degree of success with this approach. Although such practices may be utilised throughout the higher education sector, I found no evidence of such pedagogy.
learning to ultimately provide graduates with an optimal combination of musical skills that prepares them to pursue careers as professional artists, and session musicians, but also to interrogate cultural phenomena around tradition and authenticity as critical citizens, who have the potential to transmit social, musical, and cultural knowledge to successive generations.

Although scholarship offers valid insights into the complications inherent in institutionalising aural/oral folk and traditional musics in higher education institutions previously dominated by literate Western classical music pedagogy, it is my view that folk and traditional music pedagogues face exciting opportunities, rather than challenges exclusively. The pedagogical conversation should focus not on what components of orthodox Western classical music pedagogy must be excluded and eschewed in the development of folk and traditional curricula, but rather we should ask in the future, what can pioneering pedagogical advances made in the design of folk and traditional music curricula contribute to rethinking general music education, including that of the Western classical music tradition?
Chapter 8: Negotiating Tradition and Innovation in Third-level Irish Traditional Music Pedagogy

This chapter explores the ways in which folk and traditional music pedagogues operating in higher education environments honour musical traditions while promoting creative expression and artistic innovation. Again, I’m particularly concerned with my case study on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, but I also draw on literature and ethnographic material focused on tertiary-level education settings outside Ireland. I begin this chapter by introducing how my research consultants view the relationship between higher education and the Irish traditional music community, and how these views relate to wider literature.

Second, I contextualise these findings through the lens of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick, as a case study, through discussions with Academy faculty, graduates, and staff. Third, I locate these same themes in three European third-level music institutions with a view to problematising how non-Irish institutions negotiate authenticity, creativity and experimentation in other folk and traditional music traditions. Fourth, I summarise the key points made throughout this chapter, and

150 Although I interviewed representatives of third-level music programmes in five universities, and four institutes of technology in the Republic of Ireland (see chapter four), I decided to focus on one particular institution, namely the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick as a particular case study in this chapter, given its prolific engagement with traditional music students. In practical terms, this involved conducting interviews with staff, graduates, and students, whereas I did not speak to students in other higher education institutions. I felt justified in this decision as the Irish World Academy’s BA in Irish Music and Dance was “the first of its kind in the country to be designed for traditional musicians and dancers” (Vallely 2011, p.713). Therefore, I felt that it was advantageous to focus more intensively on the work done at the Academy in order to explore how the practices of that institution relate to themes drawn from literature and my ethnographic research.
finally, I conclude with a section that discusses the broader implications of the research presented throughout this chapter.

A prominent theme discussed in this dissertation deals with the impact that the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education has on negotiating the artistic balance between tradition and innovation. Of course, it is important that this concept is not perceived as inherently binary, as a significant degree of overlap can and does occur, when for example, tradition and innovation are juxtaposed by individuals who use their in-depth familiarity with the Irish musical tradition, to explore new artistic pathways. However, commentary and literature on Irish traditional music pedagogy has suggested this thematic duality, even if it only has a theoretical rather than practical basis. The “artistic war” (see footnote 6, p.11) referred to by Carolan when recalling the fallout from A River of Sound (see page 157) reminds us of this perceived duality between tradition and innovation (Carolan 2000).

Literature on folk and traditional music pedagogy highlights the potential of higher education structures to foster creativity through the provision of time and space to reflect meaningfully on performance practice. A number of scholars suggest that folk and traditional music pedagogy encourages creativity through engaging with diverse repertoire, by reducing students’ creative inhibitions, and by participating in cross-genre collaborations (Doherty 2002, Keegan-Phipps 2007, Hill 2009a, 2009b). Discussions on the concept of creating such creative environments frequently refer to pedagogical ideologies that emphasise musical experimentation and the revaluation of perceived musical boundaries (Doherty 2002, Keegan-Phipps 2007, Hill 2009a). Doherty points to the potential of higher education institutions to develop a creative environment that encourages experimentation and innovation in traditional and folk
music performance (Doherty 2002, p.10). Folk music pedagogues at the Sibelius Academy like their students to be “a little crazy” and expose them to avant-garde performance practices in order to deconstruct creative inhibitions (Hill 2009a, p.96).

Various scholars also suggest that music education institutions promote creativity by providing a safe environment and structure within which musical experimentation and artistic growth is facilitated (Doherty 2002, Keegan-Phipps 2007, Hill 2007, Hill 2009a). Some highlight the perceived potential of institutions to stifle creativity through what are viewed as ‘standardising’ processes (McCarthy 1999, Keegan-Phipps 2007). Doherty wonders if an over-emphasis on creativity and artistic experimentation can sometimes alienate the wider folk and/or traditional music community by producing musical results that do not resonate with community expectations. Respondents to Hill’s work have outlined the ways in which the Sibelius Academy has “had a good influence” but is “killing pelimanni-ness” (Hill 2005, p.334), referring to a pelimanni, a “folk musician in the Western Finnish style” (ibid, p.xii).

Some contributors to my research have expressed concerns at what they perceive as conflicting divergences between the dynamics of the traditional music community in Ireland, and Irish higher education. In each case, discussion with my research consultants (see Appendix A) on this topic was prompted when I sought personal reflections on the relationship between the perceived evolutionary dynamics and trajectory of Irish traditional music, and academia’s quest for exploration and, in many cases, progress and innovation. More specifically, I asked respondents to consider how their experiences of Irish traditional music (and the Irish traditional music community) in Ireland related to a quotation from Alfred Lord Tennyson’s Ulysses that is inscribed at the entrance to the library at the University of Limerick, an
institution that is inextricably linked to Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. The quotation, in the context that it appears, signifies determined academic enquiry and scholarly advancement. It is taken from the final line of the poem, and it reads: “To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield” (Tennyson 1842). Considering this reference, I asked my consultants to comment on how they viewed the relationship between such academic enquiry, and their conceptualisation of Irish traditional music in Ireland. How can higher education balance a respect for tradition and perceptions of authenticity with creativity and artistic exploration?

The research informants who contribute to this chapter, as in previous chapters, comprise a range of stakeholders from the world of Irish traditional music but the order that they appear in is determined by the thematic content of the views that have been expressed in this research. I am mindful that research informants have varying degrees of experience with, and proximity to, higher education, but my aim here is to organise material thematically, as this research does not focus exclusively on the specific practices of higher education institutes, but instead, on the intra-communal relationship between academic/tertiary-level and extra-academic/extra-tertiary-level contextualisations of Irish traditional music. Therefore, I have avoided the construction of a hierarchical taxonomy of contributions based on the academic/institutional experience of a contributor.

8.1 “To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield”

In our research interview, musician, academic, and author, the late Tomas Ó Canainn expressed his views on the relationship between academia’s quest for exploration, and the world of Irish traditional music as he experienced it:
“In the academic life you would be looking for change, looking to push it this way or that way, whereas you mightn’t [with Irish traditional music]. You might let [Irish traditional music] take you along rather than you taking it along, which is important. I think the traditional scene, it’s sort of taking you, and you follow where it goes. It follows a certain logic of its own which is good. Call it tradition. Call it what you will” (Personal Interview Ó Canainn July 2013).

As a former dean of engineering at University College Cork, and lecturer in music at UCC’s music department, Ó Canainn had a direct professional familiarity with academia, and his observation on the relationship between traditional music and academia is a highly significant one. The ‘scene’ referenced by Ó Canainn is the traditional music community in Ireland, which is considered to be responsible for forming consensus in defining ‘the tradition’, and the role of community is seen as key to ensuring the generational continuity of such musical traditions (Breathnach 1971, Ó Canainn 1977, Carson 1986, Ó hAlmhuráin 1998, Sommers Smith 2001). For more discussion on the concept of community, see chapter five.

Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin feels that the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education results in re-contextualisation, rather than any sort of de-contextualisation, and is keen that higher education programmes should be cognisant of being of, and for the Irish traditional music community. He recalls a tense encounter early in his tenure at the Irish World Academy when he jokingly compared the prospect for traditional music pedagogy in Ireland to parallels that he observed in jazz education in the United States:

“I said we would have a seminar in the first week. And I was joking of course, but the joke had a point to it. The subject to be debated was ‘Irish traditional music was born in Miltown Malbay and died at the University of Limerick. Discuss’. That was picking up on the jibe in America that jazz was born in a brothel and died in university. Louis Armstrong was supposed to have said it, but everybody was supposed to have said it...then people would say you were de-contextualising the music. You were taking it
out of its central context. And our answer to that would be that there is certainly a change of context happening but not one at the expense of the other. It’s not just de-contextualising, it’s re-contextualising it. So, it’s creating a new context for it. [It wasn’t problematic] as long as it was part in a way of the wider community and didn’t separate itself from it, and as long as people didn’t start playing power games” (Personal Interview Ó Súilleabháin November 2014).

For Ó Súilleabháin, it is important that Irish higher education does not become a separate stream of activity, removed from the practices of the traditional music community. His reference to ‘power games’ also suggests that perhaps institutional hierarchies can impose practices on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music that may not be representative of, or compatible with, the dynamics of the traditional music community in Ireland. Perhaps this relates to the duality observed by Ó Canainn between the organic evolution of the traditional music community and the quest for ‘change’ that he perceived in the academic environment.

Renowned musician, teacher, and visiting tutor in institutions such as the Irish World Academy, Mary Bergin (see Appendix A), feels that contextualisations of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education are often removed from the traditional music community, and do not adequately draw on the extra-institutional expertise to be found therein. In her view, traditional music programmes in Irish higher education do not provide a sufficiently broad representation of Irish traditional music, and perhaps prioritise some artistic approaches and artists over others:

“My understanding is that I am not alone in my concern regarding these courses. Many other musicians also have concerns about the level of depth, understanding and knowledge attained. Little value is placed on the importance of delving deep into the fundamentals of the music or the artistry of the musicians. Many students are completely unaware of some of the great older musicians or their music. Basic tunes at the core of the music are not even known or required to be known by the students during or on completion of their studies. The importance of a clear understanding of
the basic elements of the music is not emphasised or may be even overlooked with the starting point for exploration being increasingly and detrimentally placed prematurely on the development of the music” (Personal Interview Bergin November 2014).

Bergin’s criticism of tertiary-level Irish traditional music education in Ireland is not based on a disapproval of the concept of tertiary-level traditional music pedagogy, but rather on what she perceives as a failure to represent the diverse opinions and perspectives of practitioners operating external to academia. Bergin feels that her views are shared by many of her peers in the Irish traditional music community.

Noel Hill (see Appendix A), concertina player, and TG4 Musician of the Year 2011 (see footnote 23, p.62), is also of the opinion that fundamental characteristics of Irish traditional music are being underexplored, and in his view, this is due to an overemphasis on what is misconceived as innovation in Irish traditional music:

“My impression is that innovation is presented to the student as something that has more value than music played by who I consider to be real innovators. That is the music of subtlety where the talented musician is innovating at a level, which is often missed and not even considered by those who propagate the concept of innovation in third-level education in the first place. It sounds like an effort to make a presentable product, a finished saleable product. It’s like wallpaper standing alone, with no wall behind it, through which you can see, through which you can walk. Without a depth. Without a foundation. Without a wall. Instead of the whole concept of innovation opening one’s mind, it has the opposite effect” (Personal Interview Hill July 2017).

Fiddler, broadcaster, and board member of the Arts Council of Ireland, Paddy Glackin (see Appendix A), also feels that many aspects of Irish traditional music are not adequately represented in Irish higher education, and suggests that students are not familiar with key practitioners:
“I think that there’s an element of [Irish traditional music] that doesn’t get covered in [higher education]. And that is the thing I touched on earlier, social context. It’s not just about dots on the page. It’s part of a community...To understand about Micho Russell.\textsuperscript{51} I mean I’ve heard stories about people coming in and being asked if they’ve heard of Willie Clancy?\textsuperscript{52} ‘No’. And they’re doing a masters in traditional music. You might get an answer: ‘he’s the fella they called the summer school after’, but they wouldn’t have a clue who Willie was. Now, there’s something missing there” (Personal Interview Glackin February 2015).

Glackin feels that there is certainly a dearth of foundational knowledge being transmitted to students taking programmes in Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, as evidenced by students’ unfamiliarity with key exponents such as uilleann piper Willie Clancy.

Liam O’Brien, musician and graduate of the Irish World Academy’s BA in Irish Music and Dance recalls a similar experience of speaking to classmates about the aforementioned Willie Clancy and musician and composer, Charlie Lennon (see Appendix A):

“If you asked a lot of my class who Charlie Lennon was, they would say ‘who’? I remember in first year, I was so surprised, I was talking to a girl, and she said, ‘where are you from’? I said Miltown Malbay in west Clare. [I asked her] ‘did you ever go to the Willie Clancy week?’ And she was studying Irish traditional music, and she had never heard of Willie Clancy in her life” (Personal Interview O’Brien December 2013).

\textsuperscript{51} Micho Russell (1915-94) was a traditional flute and tin whistle player, and singer from Doolin, county Clare. A very influential and individualistic musical stylist, he was perhaps unusual in the sense that he was one of the first musicians of his generation to tour internationally following the 1960s revival in interest in Irish traditional music.

\textsuperscript{52} Willie Clancy (1918-73) was an uilleann piper, whistle, and flute player, and singer from Miltown Malbay in county Clare. Considered a major individualistic stylist, Clancy’s name is synonymous with the famous week-long Willie Clancy Summer School, held each July in Miltown Malbay, deemed to be “the first and biggest” school of its type (Ó Rócháin 2011, p.754).
Similarly, musician and recording artist, John Blake astutely describes his view that students should be exposed to fundamental aspects of Irish traditional music, even if such content may seem peripheral to what students are attracted to:

“You’ve got to eat your greens as well. There is no point just getting what you want. You need to be given a bit of what you don’t know you might want” (Personal Interview Blake November 2014).

Fiddler and academic Matt Cranitch has also observed a lack of what he considers to be foundational knowledge on key traditional music exponents in his interactions with third-level traditional music pedagogy, although he acknowledges that students are frequently very competent performers:

“If you have a four-year course, there needs to be a firm grounding in knowledge. And I know this is complicated by the fact that some of the students who go to university to do a BMus, some of these people are highly accomplished performers, wonderful flute players, wonderful pipers, concertina players, or whatever the case may be. But that somehow is given the status of knowing all about the music. Yet you ask those people who was Paddy Cronin\(^{153}\)? Or ask them ‘tell me a bit about Séamus Ennis\(^{154}\), for example’? And nobody knows who Séamus Ennis was. I’d a discussion recently with a group of students. Nobody knew who Kevin Burke\(^{155}\) was. I was stunned at that…I feel that a bit more rigour with regard to fundamental material would be of benefit to everyone” (Personal Interview Cranitch March 2014).

\(^{153}\) Paddy Cronin (1925-2014) was an iconic fiddle player from Kerry who spent many years of his life in the United States. He was awarded the TG4 Gradam Saol (lifetime achievement award) in 20117.

\(^{154}\) Séamus Ennis (1919-82) was a leading uilleann piper, tin-whistle player, singer, music collector and broadcaster from Dublin. He worked the Irish Folklore Commission and was the presenter of the BBC’s As I Roved Out in the 1950s.

\(^{155}\) Kevin Burke is a fiddle player from London who was a member of the celebrated Bothy Band.
Cranitch suggests that core foundational knowledge is essential to any studies on Irish traditional music and should not be viewed as merely ancillary or supplemental to performance.¹⁵⁶

Musician and Irish World Academy tutor, John Carty feels that a lack of awareness about key exponents is not only regrettable, but also possibly damaging to students’ learning potentials:

“I think they should be made listen to a musician play, you know. This is very frustrating for people that teach in university as well. Just doing my own bit of research, [I’ve found] when people come in to share their music with them, the students haven’t a clue who they are. They’ve never heard them play. It’s a wasted hour really. They get someone like Kevin Burke or Frankie Gavin (see Appendix A). I think it would be great if two weeks before they know they are coming in, to study them. And say like, “you played the Queen of Sheeba”, say if it was Frankie, “where did you get that from, how did you pick that up”? (Personal Interview Carty July 2015).

For Carty, students would gain a greater insight into the pedagogical and musical experience offered by a tutor if they were familiar with their music. Carty also proposes a helpful approach to optimising the learning experience of a student with a particular tutor through advance preparation and research.

Notwithstanding the subjectivity inherent in lionising a canon of iconic performers of Irish traditional music, there was a surprising degree of consensus among contributors who were critical of the lack of such foundational knowledge, on who they considered to be key exponents worthy of study. Names such as Willie Clancy, Séamus Ennis, Michael Coleman, James Morrisson were mentioned frequently in interviews with contributors. It is beyond the scope of this study to aesthetically evaluate the emphasis placed by research contributors on such musicians. It is fair to say that the aforementioned traditional musicians represent what is often termed pre-revival Irish traditional music. For more on what is considered the revival period of Irish traditional music, see Ó hAllmhuráin 1998. Perhaps a useful starting point for the kind of historical information on Irish traditional music and musicians suggested by my research contributors is the edited volumes of *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (Vallely 1999 and 2011).
Musician and graduate of the Irish World Academy’s MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance, Paul Brock (see Appendix A) recalls a similar experience of teaching accordion to a class of third-level students at the Irish World Academy:

“I was astonished at good box players who hadn’t a clue who Kimmel\(^\text{157}\) was. Do you know what I mean? But it’s just the hard work of sitting down and systematically analysing. Listening. Studying the repertoire and seeing how the whole thing has evolved. It’s work. But to me, it’s essential work” (Personal Interview Brock December 2013).

Brock’s reference to the work and time involved in becoming familiar with a musician such as John Kimmel also highlights a possibility that students may find it difficult to devote adequate time and resources to such learning, in what may be an already demanding curriculum.

Paddy Cummins (see Appendix A), a graduate of the Irish World Academy’s BA in Irish Music and Dance also points to what he perceived as an inadequate knowledge of historical traditional musicians, although he does value the other curricular materials that he experienced as an undergraduate student:

“They delved into identity, cultural identity, gender theory, and all this stuff, which is fascinating, and brilliant to talk about. But really, I think it’s a shame when a qualified Irish traditional musician or dancer doesn’t have any familiarity at all with the music of Michael Coleman, P.J. Conlon, James Morrison.\(^\text{158}\) Maybe I’m being a bit biased

\(^{157}\) John Kimmel (1866-1942) from Brooklyn, New York, and a son of German immigrants, was an influential accordion player who made a number of iconic recordings of Irish traditional music in the United States.

\(^{158}\) Michael Coleman (1891-1945) was a traditional fiddle player from Sligo who emigrated to the United States of America in 1914. There, his recording career established his reputation as a virtuoso exponent of Sligo fiddle music and commercial recordings of his that were sent home to Ireland had a profound impact on fiddle performance throughout the island of Ireland. P.J. (or Pete) Conlon (1892-1967) was a melodeon player from Galway who emigrated to the USA in 1912 and became one of the first musicians anywhere to record Irish traditional music, as early as 1917 (Milltown Heritage Group 2018). James Morrison (1893-1947) was a fiddler from Sligo who emigrated to Boston in the USA in 1915. He began his
towards Connaught, Paddy Cronin, John Doherty,\textsuperscript{159} they’ve never heard of them...So I would put a focus on previous masters. And I think it’s important as an Irish musician, especially getting a degree in a major of Irish music, that you’ve got to know this stuff. It’s not right that people don’t know it” (Personal Interview Cummins October 2013).

Worthwhile studies on cultural identity and gender undoubtedly demand considerable time and resources. Perhaps the necessary time required to study past masters (as outlined by Brock when discussing the music of Kimmel) is minimised in a curriculum that places diverse time demands on students?

Uilleann piper Ronan Browne makes reference to what he perceives is a superficial approach to Irish traditional music pedagogy at one particular institution:

“Every 3 or 4 years, I get invited down to UL, and I don’t see any change whatsoever. I don’t see any guiding of the people. I find that they go for that scratch-the-surface, easy-to-access type of music. They are not being exposed to the incredible depth and richness of Irish music that exists” (Personal Interview Browne March 2015).

Musician and academic and former Irish traditional music lecturer in Queen’s University Belfast, Martin Dowling (see Appendix A) recalls his experience of meeting traditional music graduates in music sessions:

“I met [UL graduates in Chicago] and played a few sessions with them and then they went home again...they were so well rehearsed. They had decent enough chops. They knew enough tunes, but they didn’t know who Michael Coleman was. Or you start the Tarbolton Reel, and they didn’t know what comes afterwards...that’s to my mind what you should be doing in higher education if you’re doing anything at all” (Personal Interview Dowling February 2016).

\textsuperscript{159} John Doherty (1900-80) was a Donegal fiddle player from a musical family of note. He is considered one of the most influential Donegal fiddlers of all time.
Although Dowling remembers their performance competencies, he was surprised at their level of insight into fundamental repertoire and key musicians such as Michael Coleman.

Some contributors to this research are less concerned by third-level students’ level of awareness of past musicians. Fiddler, teacher, and doctoral researcher Aidan O’Donnell (see Appendix A), a graduate of the BA in Irish Music and Dance at the Irish World Academy is aware of perceptions that tertiary-level students are deemed to be unfamiliar with what are considered significant exponents of traditional music, but he is not certain that this will have a detrimental effect on performance standards:

“One thing that does come up time and time again is the whole notion of the level of understanding of some of the students there. I don’t think that’s necessarily UL’s fault. I’ve heard certain purists, who are very much on the side of safeguarding the tradition, which I am myself...people aren’t impressed with [students’] level of knowledge of older musicians. So, for example, maybe a lot of people wouldn’t ever have heard of Michael Coleman, or John McKenna, or any of these older musicians...I don’t know if that’s a good or a bad thing either. I don’t know, do you need to listen to Michael Coleman to become a better player? I’m not sure. I don’t know” (Personal Interview O’Donnell February 2016).

Interestingly, O’Donnell also constructs a possible binary between critics of students’ familiarity with past musicians (purists), and those in higher education (students, and those who teach them). Are so-called purists the only stakeholders in the traditional music community concerned with how Irish higher education contextualises historical manifestations of Irish traditional music? I discuss this in more detail later.

Kieran Munnelly (see Appendix A), musician and a graduate of the BA in Irish Music and Dance at the Irish World Academy, has also observed that third-level students he has encountered are unfamiliar with musicians and bands that he deems
as central to Irish traditional music. He doesn’t apportion blame for this phenomenon to institutions such as the Irish World Academy however:

“I see a big difference every year that I go down to UL, and I don’t think it has anything to do with UL. I think it has got to do with the bands that are seen, and the most popular in Irish music. At least in my year I would have known who the Bothy Band were, and further back, back to the ‘20s. I go into UL now and they don’t know further back from the early 2000s. And that to me is just like, how in the hell did this happen? How in the hell do people not know who De Dannan are? And I don’t think that has anything to do with UL because the same level of musicianship is there as when I was there...I think it’s the bands that are bringing these young people into music in the first place [are perhaps the cause]. They are getting [Irish traditional music] from different places. I don’t know. Maybe it’s finally becoming really, really cool. I just don’t know” (Personal Interview Munnelly December 2013).

For Munnelly, there are many factors other than Irish higher education influencing the tastes and priorities of students of Irish traditional music.

8.2 Higher Education as a Creative Space for Irish Traditional Music

Many commentators contributing to my research assert that higher education should (and does) provide students with a platform to explore their artistic expression in ways that may not be facilitated in settings outside of the academy. For Paul McGrattan (see Appendix A), musician, and lecturer in Irish traditional music on the Ceoltóir

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160 The Bothy Band, who performed between 1974 and 1979, featured musicians such as Dónal Lunny (bouzouki, guitar, and bodhrán), Micheál Ó Domhnaill (guitar and vocals), Triona Ní Dhómhnaill (clavinet and vocals), Matt Molloy (flute and whistle), Paddy Keenan (uilleann pipes), Tony MacMahon (accordion), and Paddy Glackin, Tommy Peoples and Kevin Burke (fiddles) over the course of its relatively short existence.

161 De Dannan, “one of the twentieth century’s most significant bands” (O’Regan 2011, p.204) was formed in 1974 by Frankie Gavin (fiddle), Alec Finn (bouzouki), Johnny ‘Ringo’ McDonagh (bodhrán), Charlie Piggott (bouzouki and banjo) and Dolores Keane (vocals). Since the split of the original line-up, many re-incarnations have appeared using variants of the De Dannan name.
programme at Ballyfermot College of Further Education in Dublin, higher education provides a creative space free from the distractions of everyday life:

“I think [higher education] provides a framework for a creative space. So, people come to any of the colleges and they are following an academic pathway. But the fact that they are thrown in there with other people of like mind, and that part of their assignments is the creation of music, sometimes leads to great music coming from it. It often doesn’t but it gives people the space to do this. I always say to our students when they come in that we have a two-year programme. It will go very fast. Grab it with both hands because when in your life again are you going to actually have two years to dedicate to your music?” (Personal Interview McGrattan April 2016).

The effect of placing students in a creative environment with other musicians cannot be underestimated. In addition, consistent and regular engagement with a chosen traditional artform, however structured, invariably provides a stimulus for creative work that many find intermittent when managing an active working life.

Musician Martin Hayes (see Appendix A) expresses a similar point. For Hayes, the higher education institution provides space and time to devote to exploration and creativity:

“The big advantage is that people get to spend devoted amounts of time to their craft, to their music, to think about it, to explore it, to develop it. That’s certainly something that was more difficult to do without the institution, but I feel I had a few years on my own where I managed to do it. But generally speaking, that’s difficult to find. I think that’s the main advantage. It just provides that incredible break and opportunity for people to pursue these things” (Personal Interview Hayes January 2014).

Musician Niall Vallely (see Appendix A) feels that higher education should fulfil a dual role, whereby key information is transmitted, but he also feels that the institution should provide a safe exploratory place for students to experiment with musical ideas:
“[Higher education] should provide some sort of a place where people can both get their heads filled with the stuff that is already there, acquiring the knowledge of the music that is actually there, and acquiring the skills to be able to play it. But to me it should also provide a safe place for people to do what they want, and to be able to play stuff without the notion of having to get an audience, or to sell a record, or to have somebody adjudicate you, and have somebody say that’s not traditional enough, that’s not this style, that’s not that style” (Personal Interview Vallely March 2014).

The concept of developing music and a musical identity in a manner that is not dictated by market forces is a significant observation here. Vallely’s view of the potential of higher education to possibly undermine commercialisation is important, and it is a point that I return to in my concluding discussion section at the end of this chapter. Can higher education provide a space for exploring creativity on its own autonomous merits, and therefore provide a non-utilitarian approach to pedagogy?

Musician and broadcaster, Ellen Cranitch (see Appendix A) echoes Vallely’s views when she refers to a need to provide third level students with more than knowledge and information, but rather a pathway to explore individual creativity:

“A third-level teacher’s obligation and duty is not only to impart knowledge, but to actively stimulate curiosity, and to encourage investigation, and discourage insularity. And it’s a particularly skilled thing because you need to develop a personality as a musician” (Personal Interview Cranitch February 2017).

A range of community stakeholder views have been presented in order to explore opinions of how Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education negotiates tradition and innovation. Perhaps for traditional musicians, higher education institutions should prioritise performance. Researchers may feel that higher education should focus more on academic research, while music educators may feel that pedagogy should be located more centrally in traditional music programmes. How do we decide what traditional music pedagogy is for? I find the contribution by
academic and musician, Christopher Smith (see Appendix A), to this research particularly useful:

“[Universities] are bodies of people who hold degrees, that argue. We can be articulate and thoughtful and insightful, and help to guide and nuance and facilitate conversations...I think the contribution that universities can make is the contribution that universities have always made, which is to nuance, and concretise, and provide both a vocabulary and a theory for understanding what is actually happening, sociologically, economically, and historically...forgive me for sounding like a musicologist but I still think that if you receive a degree in music, even if it is a performance degree, part of the literacy needs to be the ability to read and write, to be able to generate a hypothesis and argue cogently on behalf of that hypothesis because it’s something that you don’t learn by yourself. It is, in my observations, very difficult to teach yourself to write expository prose. You need teachers. You need to read a lot of good prose. You need to write a lot of good prose. You need to be edited rigorously. That’s something that I think an academic setting does very well, which is very difficult or impossible to do in a self-teaching setting. And I don’t think that makes you a better musician, but it makes you a way better advocate and it provides you with an ability to step across worlds” (Personal Interview Smith May 2015).

For Smith, performance is important but not exclusively central to what higher education should do. Smith’s assertion on what higher education should do for Irish traditional music is compelling, notwithstanding the many diverse priorities of Irish traditional music stakeholders. Smith undoubtedly values performance but he is justified in placing a great deal of value in empowering students to be effective advocates through a rounded education that extends beyond performance alone.

8.3 In Focus: The Irish World Academy, University of Limerick

Up to this point, I have presented the opinions of a range of traditional music stakeholders on the issue of how higher education negotiates the complex inter-woven relationship between tradition and innovation. Invariably, both artistic perspectives
are perceived to be disparate.\textsuperscript{162} My previous section problematised this issue on a general conceptual level, and while one institution was referenced, my research contributors offered their opinions on how they view the pedagogical priorities of institutions that they have directly experienced. In this section, I locate these observations within the specific context of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick. I identify how faculty at the Academy negotiate this complex pedagogical pathway that negotiates concepts such as authenticity; respect for tradition; perceptions on what higher education should provide for Irish traditional music; creativity; and artistic experimentation. For some, perhaps such a focus on the Irish World Academy and its staff, graduates, and students, may appear to show bias that excludes the voices and approaches of other institutions. It is my view that this case study of the Irish World Academy is a valuable insight into how higher education as a structure negotiates the relationship between tradition and innovation.\textsuperscript{163}

In response to opinions on a perceived lack of emphasis on foundational traditional music knowledge among third-level students, Sandra Joyce (see Appendix A) of the Irish World Academy accepts that concerns are valid, but she suggests that negative perceptions of ideological and artistic biases in higher education would be mitigated if critics looked closely at how faculty at the Irish World Academy negotiate

\textsuperscript{162} For further discussion on a spectrum of artistic approaches to Irish traditional music, ranging from 'pure traditional', to 'Nua Trad' (trans. new traditional), see Ó Snodaigh (2001).
\textsuperscript{163} In the development of this research dissertation, I had initially planned on writing half a chapter of a case study on the Irish World Academy, given its prominence as the institution with the highest number of traditional music students and staff in the sector. Although I have subsequently reduced the scope of the Academy case study, I feel justified in including some of the contributions provided by Academy staff, students, and graduates at that earlier phase of my research. Excluding these contributions from the academic record would have deprived this research of invaluable perspectives and experiences directly connected to how some stakeholders view the role of higher education in balancing respect for tradition and artistic innovation.
authenticity, tradition, and creativity. Joyce also reminds us of the logistical challenges inherent to designing music curricula that must find compromise and reflect the expertise and preferences of a collective faculty, rather than those of traditional music specialists exclusively:

“[Concerns are] legitimate. Far be it for me to say people's concerns are not legitimate. I think people think there is a political agenda that we are not promoting the traditional thing enough. I think anyone could come in and come to any of our performances and student performances. The vast majority of our students are actually very traditional in their outlook...some of our best performances here and some of the students who have done the best have been the ones who have played solo, the ones who have been very grounded in the music of their local area. We've had some on the other spectrum as well, people being very innovative, and doing brilliantly too. What I think a lot of the fear is about as well is maybe what they think we are teaching. And very much what's taught is dependent on the expertise we have around us. I know some people might say “why don't you do more teaching about individuals, or something”? But then you have some staff members who put you under pressure saying we need to do more ethnomusicology in this module, so you've always got that tension and I do think maybe we do need to be more proactive in making sure that people feel they have a voice...maybe we should be doing a bit more groundwork in the community. I think we did that very much at the beginning, but we are all so busy, maybe we need to mind that a bit more and make sure people feel like they can contribute. The course means nothing if it doesn't reflect something that is happening in the traditional communities that are out there” (Personal Interview Joyce May 2015).

The broad artistic spectrum portrayed by Joyce suggests that the Irish World Academy does not impose an artistic bias on its students, and suggests that critics would witness this, if they were to visit and observe students' performances at the Academy. Joyce does however candidly acknowledge that concerns expressed by contributors to this research on the perceived low level of consultation and collaboration with individuals in the extra-institutional traditional music scene are valid and accepts that Irish traditional music programmes at the Academy must reflect what happens in the Irish traditional music community.
Like Joyce, Niall Keegan (see Appendix A) of the Irish World Academy is keen to highlight that the role or ethos of the Academy is not to instigate change against the wishes and organic trajectory of the wider traditional music community. He does however suggest what he views as an important role higher education should fulfil as a site that promotes what he feels is much needed critical engagement:

“We are not about changing anything. We are not about destroying anything, replacing anything. We are about understanding, and we are about providing an environment for the critical engagement of performance practice. And I think that’s lacking. I think in performance practice, even in third-level institutions, critical engagement can be very lacking, and I think the tradition does need that. Because otherwise all you have is Irish Music Magazine. And [higher education] is not the only critical environment, but I think there is a paucity of critical environments” (Personal Interview Keegan October 2014).

For Keegan, the traditional music community benefits from the critical platform provided by higher education. In its absence, he fears other forms of critique that he places less value in, would assume sole responsibility for critiquing and discussing Irish traditional music.

Keegan’s point is valid, and higher education can provide an important space to interrogate inherited narratives on Irish traditional music, but it is not accessible to the general public as an open forum for debate and discourse. Perhaps, as Joyce suggests, higher education can do more to engage with the extra-institutional traditional music community and facilitate platforms to discuss issues that are of importance to stakeholders in the traditional music community.
8.3.1 The Irish World Academy as a Creative Space

Many graduates of the Irish World Academy that I interviewed speak favourably about the opportunities that completing either the BA in Irish Music and Dance or the MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance at the Irish World Academy presented. Such opportunities include availing of the space and time provided by the Academy to focus comprehensively on performance and related research activities. This place (and consequently a parity of esteem with other genres) provided to Irish traditional music and musicians within higher education is a phenomenon that is welcomed by practitioners who engage with higher education. In this sense, the creative space offered to Academy students has certainly contributed to challenging hegemonic perceptions that sometimes viewed Irish traditional music as less developed than genres such as Western classical music.

Catherine Foley (see Appendix A), senior lecturer and course director of the MA in Ethnochoreology and the MA in Irish Traditional Dance Performance, sees the Irish World Academy as a space where performers can devote time and energy exclusively to the performing arts and research, while being exposed to other artists and researchers. Foley describes her ethos towards dance pedagogy as follows:

“I think, in the field of dance, [the ethos at the Irish World Academy] was always to provide a safe environment for people to do things that they would like to do, but which they probably can’t do elsewhere. It’s an exploratory place. It’s about re-investigating, researching. It’s about looking back, looking forward. It’s about giving you the time to do all that. It’s about giving you the time to work with other musicians, other dancers, other singers, to rethink the tradition” (Personal Interview Foley November 2014).

As Foley suggests, many MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance graduates, for example, state that the positive experience they had throughout the MA programme
was a result of setting a very focused agenda before entering the programme; consequently, the structure provided by the MA programme allowed students to complete studies and projects that would have been otherwise disrupted by everyday life outside of an institutional milieu. Traditional musician Paul Brock recalls his experience as an MA student at the Academy:

“Some musicians openly said to me “what the hell are you doing a music masters for in UL?” And I explained what the year allowed me to do. I set my agenda, and I achieved my agenda. It was an excellent year for me, a year that I thoroughly enjoyed. I had access to the library. I did projects that I could not otherwise have done because it gave me a framework and allowed me to achieve things” (Personal Interview Brock December 2013).

Part of Brock’s agenda at the Academy materialised as *Humdinger*, a critically-acclaimed album with banjo player Enda Scahill, and pianist Ryan Molloy. Likewise, Donegal fiddler Ciarán Ó Maonaigh felt that the MA presented opportunities to prepare and ‘pilot’ musical ideas and new repertoire that he would later draw on:

“I managed to put together a lot of material that I’ve worked with since, in television, in music performance, and on our latest CD. A lot of sets of music were tested in there. I used it as a kind of a guinea pig situation. And I suppose that’s what colleges are for” (Personal Interview Ó Maonaigh July 2015).

Catherine Foley’s depiction of the Irish World Academy as an “exploratory place” and “safe environment” within which to explore artistic ideas certainly reflects the experiences of those Irish World Academy graduates who have contributed to my

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164 *Humdinger*, released by Claddagh Records in 2006, is a collaboration between Paul Brock and Enda Scahill, inspired by Irish traditional music recorded in the USA in the early 20th century. Piano accompaniment is provided by Ryan Molloy. Enda Scahill is a banjo player from Galway, and member of We Banjo 3. See Appendix A for additional information on Ryan Molloy.
research. Being part of a higher education community affords musicians access to a vast catalogue of literature and other academic resources. In addition, the institutional structures imposed on students seem to provide a focus with which to achieve research and artistic goals in a way that is not easily replicated in the everyday lives of those graduates that I spoke with. It seems apparent from the graduates quoted herein that the Irish World Academy provided a dedicated time and space to reflect on practice and research without imposing any kind of pedagogical or aesthetic ideology on students.

8.3.2 Artistic Innovation at the Irish World Academy

Pedagogues at the Irish World Academy view artistic innovation as an important facet of what Academy students should be exposed to. Niall Keegan views the Academy as a conduit within which students can explore creativity in ways that they may not be accustomed to:

“We’ll never win everyone over, and we’ll always try things that are good, bad, and indifferent. And I do like putting students into situations where they do things that are a little bit off the wall or a little bit different just for the heck of it, and see what they think, and what people think. That’s the beauty of an Ivory Tower” (Personal Interview Keegan October 2014).

Keegan’s portrayal of the Academy as a space to try out new ideas aligns with the experiences of BA graduate Liam O’Brien (see Appendix A), who recalls the opportunities that he had to explore musics other than Irish traditional music. O’Brien suggests that students ultimately have the agency to perform according to their own musical preferences however:
“With ensemble stuff. It was something that I had never played before. I got to try it and I stuck with it. This year I was doing Indian ensemble, playing in keys that I wouldn’t have been comfortable in before. I liked that kind of stuff...At the end of the day, it’s music...You need to try stuff to know how to do it, and then you can choose not to do it” (Personal Interview O’Brien December 2013).

The ‘Ivory Tower’ described by Keegan affords students the possibility to experiment with new musical ideas within a safe familiar environment. Moreover, Sandra Joyce views the Irish World Academy as a platform with which to experiment without shaping to the perceived expectations of music markets. Echoing the experience of MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance graduate, Ciarán Ó Maonaigh, (and earlier commentary by Niall Vallely) Joyce believes the Academy allows students to concentrate on conceiving of and preparing a programme of music without the added pressures of attracting large audiences.

“In here, you can put on a concert and you don’t have to worry about selling tickets. You can try things out. It can provide an experimental space where somebody can experiment and deepen their knowledge. And also, experiment as an artist. I think universities should help traditional musicians to recognise themselves as an artist and to explore their artistry in that particular way. And if it can provide a space for that, I think it’s great” (Personal Interview Joyce May 2015).

In light of this commentary, it is not surprising that some of my research informants should perceive the Irish World Academy as an institution that prioritises musical innovation and experimentation over ‘straight-ahead’ interpretations of Irish traditional music.165 Interestingly, many from outside the Irish World Academy

165 Here I draw on the term ‘straight-ahead’ as used in reference to straight-ahead jazz, which describes jazz performance that does not feature musical fusion or experimentation but is guided by historical jazz traditions.
community made reference to a perceived homogenisation of style and repertoire among Irish World Academy students and graduates, with one in particular terming his observations as ‘University Style’. Similar perceptions on the emergence of an ‘Academy style’ also emanate from within the Irish World Academy community. Irish World Academy tutor, Alan Colfer discerns what he sees as a certain UL style of performance:

“I think there is UL style coming through... It’s all band-work, high-octane, newly-composed tunes, or tricks, sometimes. To me they just sound like tricks, in 7/8, 11/8, or in 5/8. It seems mandatory now to have those tunes in your recordings, or part of your set” (Personal Interview Colfer May 2014).

Offering a diverse range of tutors can sidestep whatever institutional ideologies may or may not exist in the Academy. BA graduate Cillian King remembers his experience of studying at the Irish World Academy as a rewarding experience that brought him into contact with high quality tutors and performers. For King, the diversity of regular and visiting tutors engaged by the Academy ensured that a variety of musical ideologies and perspectives were offered to students:

“I don’t think [the Irish World Academy] goes too far with experimentation at all. If you look at the tutors there, they’re all equally pushing the boundaries as well as maintaining the tradition, I think. From my experiences there, I thought it was a very healthy balance. You were always encouraged to know where the music came from but you were equally encouraged to try and make it your own too, to make it personal... I think you were encouraged in the right way to be yourself, and to make your own music, but at the same time you had one on one contact every day with masters of the tradition. You could take away what you wanted” (Personal Interview King March 2016).

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Ronan Browne uses the term ‘University style’ to describe the stylistic and ideological homogeneity that he observes in many third-level students and graduates who have studied in the higher education sector, more generally, rather than at the Irish World Academy exclusively.
Graduates and current students of the BA in Irish Music and Dance also perceive that the Academy prioritises musical experimentation and innovation over performing what is perceived as more traditional contextualisations of Irish traditional music. BA graduate Bryan O’Leary describes how he views the Academy’s negotiation of musical experimentation and creativity:

“There are a lot of modern influences [at the Irish World Academy]. It’s like a different music, if you ask me. A lot of people play tunes in 7/8, which has no impact on me. And maybe it’s swaying that way too much, and taking for granted the older traditional music...I think if you’re coming into the course with a genuine interest in music but you haven’t grown up going to sessions or anything, I think your perception will sway more towards the contemporary rather than the traditional, because that’s seen as more popular...A lot of young musicians are swaying towards the modern side of things and are taking the old traditional music for granted. There should be a stronger influence on getting people back to their roots, I think. I think there should be a bit more on the likes of Coleman, Morrison, Paddy Cronin, Tony MacMahon, and all of those great players too. I think [the students] should get exposed to their music a bit more” (Personal Interview O’Leary December 2013).

Likewise, BA in Irish Music and Dance graduate, Paddy Cummins recalls his experiences of this perceived innovation-purism binary:

“I did get the impression that it was about innovation for the sake of innovation, not for the sake of an emotional experience. And some people tried to make it appear that you’re innovating because you shouldn’t feel a boundary. What if I feel that I’m playing music that has parameters that I need to follow? Why can’t I just be creative within that? Why do I need to innovate outside that? There are people here who can play in 7/8 and play in 12 keys but get them to sit down and play the Connaughtman’s Rambles and make it interesting, and they won’t do it, which I think is a shame. The Irish traditional music community have this opposition towards it and although it might seem ignorant, I don’t think it’s far off being accurate. I’m not saying that it’s not good to innovate and that we shouldn’t be exposed to it. But we’re getting all this and not getting enough of the fundamentals. I’m lucky that I know the fundamentals, the foundations, because I’ve always studied them so I can look at [experimental approaches] and take it or leave it. Unfortunately, not everybody can” (Personal Interview Cummins November 2013).
Cummins raises an interesting issue here concerning the Academy’s balance of artistic innovation and what is perceived as foundational knowledge. His view that students are not provided with sufficient fundamental or foundational knowledge about Irish traditional music, is consistent with the opinions of many practitioners, including those who visit the Irish World Academy as visiting tutors. Most prominently, practitioners perceive this lack of knowledge as a result of students being unfamiliar with key personnel that they perceive as significant performers, and from students being unfamiliar with common Irish traditional music repertoire. Academy fiddle tutor and traditional musician Eileen O’Brien makes the following point:

“I don’t know how many times that I have said to students, both masters and undergraduate, “have you ever heard of Séamus Connolly?" “No”. “Have you heard of Paddy Fahy”? “No”. These are serious students who I’m asking the question of. They don’t know anybody. Obviously, that’s not being addressed. So, it would be an idea to address things like that” (Personal Interview O’Brien December 2015).

While taking his MA in Irish Traditional Music at the Irish World Academy, fiddler Ciarán Ó Maonaigh observed a similar unfamiliarity with what he considers as fundamental knowledge of Irish traditional music:

“I found a very low level of basic knowledge of traditional music with those entering the course. I found that to be a fault with the course. There were three or four people really engaging with it, and knew their stuff going in, and they weren’t helped by the fact that 70% of the year didn’t have enough basic knowledge. They nearly should have

167 Séamus Connolly is a fiddle player from county Clare. He won many competitions as a performer and he emigrated to the United States in 1976, and began a tenure at Boston College in 1990, where he held the Sullivan Artist in Residence in Irish Music from 2004 to 2015. In 2013, Connolly was awarded a National Heritage Fellowship by the National Endowment for the Arts (The Séamus Connolly Collection of Irish Music 2018)

168 Paddy Fahy is a fiddle player and composer from Galway. Although a very prolific composer, unusually, he does not give titles to any of his compositions.
been made do a month’s crash course before joining the rest of us” (Personal Interview Ó Maonaigh July 2015).

As has been suggested by contributions throughout this chapter, the Irish World Academy has become associated with artistic innovation and experimentation. For musician Martin Hayes (see Appendix A) it is important that a diverse range of perspectives influences the approaches of an institution like the Irish World Academy:

“...I think there should be competing forces in the institution, like competing ideas, so it can’t become one thing or the other. I think that might be the better way to do it if it can be done like that. Maybe that traditionalist view can be something that competes there as well, that it can be a place to explore that. I think the idea needs to be out there that it’s not about creating new things or making change all the time, that it can be about going all the way back in, and deep, and down into it as well. That should be a real possibility. To not have that as a possibility would be to already have put on some blinkers, you know. So, I think [the Irish World Academy] could benefit from making sure that happens...that it could be a place that Séamus Ennis would have walked in to and felt good. They might want to do the thought experiment on that. How would Séamus be in here? What would he say? What would Tommy Potts say? What would make them comfortable if they were here?” (Personal Interview Hayes January 2014).

Like Joyce, Hayes suggests that perceptions about how the Academy balances tradition and innovation may well be informed from a distance, this time by the musical ideologies of its main instigators.

In a similar vein, BA and PhD graduate of the Irish World Academy, Éamonn Costello (see Appendix A) outlines his views on why the Irish traditional music community may perceive the Irish World Academy as emphasising experimentalist approaches to Irish traditional music:

169 Tommy Potts (1912-88) was a fiddler and noted improviser from Dublin. His style was deeply personal and unlike that of any of his contemporaries, in the way in which it improvised around traditional melodies.
“Limerick, I think in one sense, is a victim of its own success. It has been very good at media manipulation and getting out there. So, when people hear about Irish traditional music in third level, they think straightaway, and sometimes solely about Limerick...I think that because Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin was seen as an innovator there has been a perception that I have come across, completely based on falsehoods, that Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin must be in every day trying to teach us all to become experts at fusion. That's something that I come across. And I think it's solely based on Mícheál's own experiments with the tradition. I had one class with Mícheál in four years here. And also, maybe people who might know Niall Keegan, and might know Niall's work with Mícheál, might assume that the whole thing is based on trying to fuse Irish music with other elements” (Personal Interview Costello May 2014).

Undoubtedly, the musical profiles of two key Irish World Academy individuals, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin and Niall Keegan, influence how Irish World Academy ideology is perceived from outside the institution. Both are known as musical innovators who have pushed the boundaries of Irish traditional music, and my research suggests that commentators and research consultants conflate such individual musical personalities with the ideological ethos of the Irish World Academy.

Contextualising overarching commentary on a perceived tradition/innovation binary, within the dynamics of a music institution such as the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick is useful in problematising the origins and rationale of those who express concern about what is perceived as a bias towards innovation, at the expense of foundational learning. It is evident from the contributions of Joyce and Keegan that the Academy are sensitive to what they perceive as the needs and expectations of the Irish traditional music community but perhaps the processes inherent in designing curricula demand a diversity and compromise that invariably leaves less capacity for experiencing Irish traditional music in a manner that exists outside higher education structures. What is clear from my research is that on a
general level, practitioners value the creative time and space afforded by higher education. Individuals who have studied at the Irish World Academy also express this point. What is perhaps surprising here is the extent to which the commentary of Academy students, graduates, and tutors, resonate with concerns expressed by outside stakeholders regarding the Academy’s perceived bias towards artistic innovation and experimentation. This suggests that perceptions of an artistic bias should not be dismissed as misinformed, as they are not simply confined to external stakeholders who may be unfamiliar with the inner workings of the Academy.

8.4 Comparative Studies: Tertiary-Level Folk and Traditional Music Pedagogy outside Ireland.

In this next section, I explore how three higher education music institutions outside Ireland negotiate the complex and interwoven relationship between tradition and creativity. Again, I locate and problematise research findings derived from my study of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland within the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), Glasgow, the Royal College of Music (KMH) in Stockholm, Sweden, and the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland. As with my previous section focused on the Irish World Academy, my discussion with pedagogues at each of these three institutions were informed by discourse contributed by my research consultants in fieldwork interviews.

8.4.1 The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow.

Joshua Dickson and his team at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland emphasise how they constantly negotiate the balance between creativity and tradition in Scottish
traditional music pedagogy at the RCS. What does Dickson and the RCS view as the optimum balance between promoting creativity and interpreting tradition? How do such views resonate with the wider Scottish traditional music community? What steps does the RCS take to remain relevant to the wider context of Scottish traditional music? Pedagogues at the RCS emphasise the duality of interpreting and understanding tradition while being personally creative. Dickson feels that creativity should be emphasised from an early stage in students’ education, rather than seen as a specialist focus that is introduced later as students develop throughout their studies at the RCS:

“Pedagogically, and philosophically, conceptually, there is a step-change now in place that assumes that the student creates from day one, from year one, and is contributing to the tradition, while at the same time on a parallel track, they are determining themselves through interaction with their peers and the staff, what their particular personal authenticity and identity really is, their role in the tradition” (Personal Interview Dickson February 2015).

Dickson makes an interesting point about negotiating authenticity here. He suggests that authenticity is achieved through developing a personal identity or voice (that is of course informed by a tradition and contributes to it) rather than through emulating that tradition as accurately as possible.

Promoting creativity while respecting tradition is a balance that Dickson works to optimise, and he is acutely aware of the potential tensions that can exist between folk music pedagogy and the concerns of the wider Scottish folk music community:

“It’s always tricky, as you can imagine but in terms of this institution, and its relationship to the community at large, and in particular the traditional music community at large, it has always been a fairly tricky relationship because the old [Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Dance] always had this reputation amongst the traditional music community of being fairly elite, and for that reason, a little detached.
The inclusion of Scottish traditional music in the programmes from 1996 alleviated that to some extent but there are always your hardcore folkies, or traddies, who just scoff at the very idea of traditional music being a subject at all in a formal education sense. I think that is in the minority, but you do still find that. So one thing that I wanted to do my best to avoid was the impression of the conservatoire being dictatorial, in some way, and in fact, what makes us effective in any way in teaching and learning traditional music is based on the input and contributions from the community inward to us, rather than us dictating outward to the community what would be best” (Personal Interview Dickson February 2015).

Dickson’s acknowledgment of the potential ideological clashes inherent in the concept of institutionalising Scottish traditional music at the RCS has resulted in some important community outreach initiatives which have lasting impacts on how Dickson and RCS faculty negotiate the many challenges of institutionalising Scottish traditional music.¹⁷⁰

Echoing Dickson’s ethos on the importance of keeping RCS pedagogy relevant to the Scottish traditional music community, musician and RCS lecturer, Hamish Napier outlines one particular way in which the RCS has responded to the evolution of Scottish traditional music:

“We’re offering a wider range of instruments. We’re trying to keep up with the times. There are wooden-flute players in Scotland now, when there weren’t before. The course has to develop as the scene develops and changes. The course has to go with it” (Personal Interview Napier February 2015).

Resonating somewhat with Tomás Ó Canainn’s (see Appendix A) suggestion that the tradition is something with an internal logic that you ‘go with’, Napier suggests that he

¹⁷⁰ In chapter six, I discuss how these measures have contributed to avoiding canonicity in Scottish traditional music pedagogy at the RCS, and it is also important to appreciate how maintaining contact with a music community, as a music institution, can result in alleviating community concerns surrounding the formal institutionalisation of folk music pedagogy.
feels studies at the RCS should respond to the evolution of Scottish traditional music rather than instigate change.

Creativity is central to Joshua Dickson’s ethos at the RCS, and he feels that creative expression and identities should be fostered at an early stage of students third-level journey. Students are encouraged to consider their personal authenticities that not only draw on the Scottish tradition, but also contribute to it. The relationship that has been forged between the Scottish traditional music department at the RCS and the wider Scottish traditional music community optimises the extent to which Scottish traditional music pedagogy at the RCS reflects the needs, expectations, and evolution of Scottish traditional music and the music community outside the RCS. Next, I explore how the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden, negotiates that pedagogical balance of simultaneously representing tradition and artistic exploration in programmes that offer studies in Swedish folk music.

8.4.2 The Royal College of Music, Stockholm, Sweden

Folk music pedagogues at The Royal College of Music (KMH) seek an optimum balance between fostering artistic creativity while also immersing their students in the Swedish folk music tradition. At KMH, music pedagogues aim to both inspire artistic creativity in their students, and provide an immersive foundational, and detailed education in the Swedish folk music tradition. For fiddler, and KMH lecturer, Sven Ahlbäck (see Appendix A), it is essential that students experience and listen to archival material regardless of their artistic preferences. Ahlbäck sees the study of such recordings as an essential tool with which to both understand tradition, and to develop
a unique musical identity, an identity that can freely interpret tradition in order to
shape a personal artistic voice:

“We feel that what we are trying to do with the students is to give them a knowledge
about tradition, and force them to actually listen to traditional recordings for instance,
and to relate to traditional playing, but also to interpret it in their own way...The music
that is produced by students today is very different to what has been produced before
but I think our challenge and our responsibility as educators in what we are doing is to
present and confront them with tradition. The interpretation of tradition has always
been, for every generation, and every musician, something that you do in your own
time. So, the idea that folk music has stayed in a fixed form before is totally
wrong...We try to give them the tools to interpret tradition, and also the tools to
develop their personal style” (Personal Interview Ahlbäck May 2015).

Similarly, Susanne Rosenberg (see Appendix A), singer and lecturer at KMH,
considers a foundational grounding in Swedish folk music to be invaluable to artistic
development, however individualistic. She seems somewhat sceptical of musical
experimentation that she perceives as being created without a very developed
rationale, although she is keen to support experimentation that she
deems to have
artistic integrity.

“If I feel that if a person hasn’t tried to invent experimentation for the sake of
experimentation but are experimenting because they need it; they feel that “this is my
path”. Then I will say, “fine, that’s wonderful”. We feel very secure in that we provide
the traditional tools, and therefore, it’s ok to do what you want with those. It’s not
about preserving. It’s about the way you look at tradition. What you are yourself is the
tradition. Not something else besides” (Personal Interview Rosenberg May 2015).

Rosenberg also makes an important point on personal authenticity here when
she asserts that students ‘are’ the tradition, in that they actively contribute to it, rather
than observe it as outsiders. Resonating with Rosenberg’s representation of the
Swedish folk music tradition as a necessary toolkit, fiddler, and KMH lecturer, Ellika
Frisell (see Appendix A) believes that students need to understand their ‘home’ genre
in great detail in order to relate to other genres, and other approaches to music making:

“If you are secure in a language, you are open to other languages. But if you are on the surface on everything, you are just a poor musician. You need a home, and then you are happy, and you can invite other people to your home” (Personal Interview Frisell May 2015).

In a similar vein, fiddler, and member of staff at KMH, Jonas Hjalmarsson (see Appendix A) uses language as an analogy to articulate his views on the importance of gaining an in-depth grounding in the Swedish folk music tradition before endeavouring to produce new or experimental folk music:

“I think in our genre, to be interesting you need to know the language [in terms of music foundations]. It’s not enough to have something to say. You need to know the grammar, and the words to use. It takes quite a long time to get to know the music and play it well...The more you know about the context, the better. The more things you understand, the more things you explore, the more things you learn, the better you are to express, I would say. There are always interesting things to dig up” (Personal Interview Hjalmarsson May 2015).

Mindful of education’s capacity to yield a significant ideological influence on students’ learning experiences, and views, Frisell is careful not to impose her wishes on a student, as exemplified by her printing anecdote below. Yet she sees her role as an opportunity to open up artistic pathways to students, which may have otherwise not been considered: “If you just make your own choices you will never taste the food that you have not been told to taste” (Personal Interview Frisell May 2015).

“When I was in India, I went to a family that had their own printing house and I bought paper that they made that was fantastic because it was handmade. Then one year after the youngest boy in that family called me from India and said, “Ellika, I want to go to Europe to learn how to print in a modern way”, and I said, “oh no, don’t do
that”, but how can I say that to him? I cannot say that to him. I gave him help and he went to England and learned how to print in a modern way. Of course, I said that “I really appreciate your beautiful paper. Maybe you can do both or something.” But, I mean, you have to give everybody the same possibility that I got” (Personal Interview Frisell May 2015).

In this instance, Frisell had to set aside her individual preferences in favour of appreciating how another individual chose to personally develop. Applying this scenario to Swedish folk music pedagogy at KMH highlights an ethos that guides students’ artistic journeys without imposing pedagogue’s individual biases.

Folk music pedagogues at the KMH balance the promotion of artistic creativity and representation of tradition by encouraging students to interpret tradition on their own terms, once they have studied the Swedish folk music tradition comprehensively. Rather than reproduce faithful renditions of previous folk musicians, folk music students use resources such as archive recordings as resources to locate themselves within the Swedish folk music tradition. This quest for personal authenticity is based on interpreting Swedish folk music as an artistic resource to create music as a process, rather than focus on the end result, or product. Pedagogues draw on their own experiences as musicians when guiding students along artistic pathways, but my discussions with staff suggest that while music tutors may have specific artistic preferences or ideologies, they do not impose their individual beliefs on their students; a process-oriented approach to folk music pedagogy at KMH facilitates the artistic development of students who are free to produce whatever musical results they wish, once they have studied Swedish folk music in detail. Next, I explore how folk music pedagogues at the folk music department of the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland, problematise the juxtaposition of respect for tradition and artistic expression.
8.4.3 The Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, Finland

From discussions with Kristiina Ilmonen and Vilma Timonen (both folk music performers and lecturers at the Sibelius Academy), it was apparent that this topic of simultaneously emphasising the importance of tradition while promoting creativity and experimentation is one that has been carefully considered by them and their colleagues at the Sibelius Academy. Certainly, the interpretation of balancing tradition and innovation is a theme that dominates pedagogical thought at their department.

For Kristiina Ilmonen, it is important to equip students with musical and artistic training through the lens of Finnish folk music. Folk music students at the Sibelius Academy must engage with the Finnish folk music tradition but they are not creatively beholden to it; the tradition is seen as a living tradition that ebbs and flows according to how its community (including folk music students) engages with it.

“How our curriculum is built is that we have two focuses. On one hand we have tradition, and the importance of an awareness and skills that come directly from the tradition. And on the other hand, we have creativity, and the capacity for making your own music and building your artistic identity. So, I would say that historically informed creative musicianship is a big issue that runs through all of our courses. We don’t treat [Finnish folk music] as a museum object. We see a possibility to carry on a living tradition. So, we are aiming to produce traditional musicians who are capable of working as professionals in today’s world” (Personal Interview Ilmonen March 2016).

Folk music students engage with the Finnish folk music tradition through extensive and detailed study. Apart from studying practical elements of playing style and technique, for example, Vilma Timonen expects her students to attempt to phenomenologically understand the conceptual context in which past practitioners have performed Finnish folk music. Once students have become familiar with core
instrumental material, they are encouraged to develop their own individualistic interpretations of that music:

“In my instrumental classes, we learn historical playing styles, of particular players, their individual style. We discuss. We practice. We try to be very accurate in discovering how to do that but [we also focus on] the heart, and the mind, and the context, and what it was about. But then the process goes, “okay, now you make your own composition out of that style”. It is so integrated. They go hand in hand” (Personal Interview Timonen March 2016).

While Ilmonen and Timonen are keen that students experience foundational Finnish folk music studies in a very particular way (through analysis of previous generations of players and styles etc.), they are also aware that students will need a degree of artistic autonomy if they are to develop as creative musicians. However, Ilmonen underlines the benefits of drawing on the tradition as a means of expression:

“We have to constantly balance between pushing students towards their own path, finding their own personal artistic style. They want to do that very badly, and they want to do that from the start of their studies, but we try to make them understand that you actually have to learn the tradition well enough before you have a vocabulary to express something” (Personal Interview Ilmonen March 2016).

For Ilmonen, the Folk Music Department at the Sibelius Academy strives to balance respect for tradition with individualistic artistic expression. Students are required to be knowledgeable about the ‘tradition’ of Finnish folk music, but they must also be creative as artists, and have an ability to work as music professionals in a competitive music industry. As well as drawing from the Finnish folk music tradition, students are made aware that they are part of it, and thus, they shape its artistic trajectory. While pedagogues at the Sibelius Academy certainly have a discernible ethos towards instilling a sense of pride in tradition in their students, they are also aware of the
necessity to facilitate a level of artistic autonomy that allows students to use their grounding in Finnish folk music to express a personal artistic voice.

8.5 Discussion

Literature on the institutionalisation of traditional and folk music in higher education settings frequently comments on higher education’s capacity to provide time and space to creatively focus on artistic expression and exploration, free from the distractions of everyday life (Doherty 2002, Keegan-Phipps 2007, Hill 2009a, Hill 2009b). In addition, discourse has also problematised the implications of providing such a structured framework to folk and traditional musicians to explore their creativity in ways not generally paralleled in the extra-academic community of practitioners that they inhabit (Doherty 2002, Keegan-Phipps 2007). The purpose of this chapter has been to further interrogate how themes drawn from this literature on balancing a respect for tradition with creative expression relate to: (a) the perceptions of practitioners and stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community; (b) the experiences of faculty, students, and graduates of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick; and (c) the experiences of pedagogues at three European music institutions outside Ireland. What parallels can be drawn between literature and the opinions of those who contributed to my research?

Notwithstanding the inherent complications of accepting the existence of some unchallenged unified traditional music community, it is clear that stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community who have contributed to this research have concerns about how the perceived dynamics and processes of the traditional music community are represented and reflected in traditional music programmes in Irish
higher education. Central to such concerns is the privileged and powerful position held by higher education, and its ability to wield considerable influence as an educational institution with priorities and a social structure perceived by some to be in conflict with how a traditional music community operates. More specifically, some contributors to my research have expressed a view that Irish traditional music programmes in Irish higher education have an ideological and pedagogical agenda that prioritises artistic experimentation and innovation over providing what is perceived as a firm foundational grounding in the fundamentals of Irish traditional music. Throughout this chapter, a surprisingly high number of leading traditional artists have criticised what they have perceived as a lack of knowledge among third-level traditional music students, about key musicians and repertoire. What is the purpose of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy? Should it merely act as a microcosm of a traditional music community or should it be free to select its own *modi operandi*?

Many contributors to this research also value the space and time afforded by higher education to focus on the development of performance practice. In addition, research consultants have also spoken favourably about how higher education provides a safe, exploratory place to explore personal creativity without having to pander to the expectations of a market of music consumers. Research on the institutionalisation of traditional and folk musics in higher education environments in Finland and the UK has suggested that professionalism and commercialism are invariably promoted by higher education, and that avocational or amateur engagements with folk and traditional musics are somewhat overshadowed (Doherty 2002, Hill 2005, Keegan-Phipps 2007, Hill 2009a, Anderson 2013). Is it possible that Irish
higher education subverts this by providing traditional music students with a platform to develop and explore their creativity in ways that are not determined by commercial tastes?

To locate themes on balancing tradition and innovation, as expressed in literature and in my fieldwork interviews, within the context of a music department, I spoke to faculty, graduates, and students of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick. A number of significant insights were gained from this process. Academy director, Sandra Joyce, candidly spoke to the validity of community concerns about how the Academy negotiates tradition and innovation and acknowledges that perhaps the Academy can do more to engage external stakeholders in dialogue about how best to reflect the needs of the Irish traditional music community. However, Joyce also feels that practitioners would be less critical of the Academy’s perceived bias towards experimentation and innovation if they visited the Academy and observed the extent to which student performances are informed by a respect and in-depth knowledge of Irish traditional music. Are perceptions simply informed by one’s proximity to what happens in an institution? Does Joyce’s willingness to engage community stakeholders suggest that the Academy will instigate some form of community consultancy in the future?

Niall Keegan, associate director of the Irish World Academy, feels that there is an onus on Irish higher education to provide a platform for critical engagement with the traditional arts that he fears would be otherwise lacking, and left in the hands of what he feels are less critical platforms. The potential for higher education to provide space and time for personal creativity, espoused by contributors to this chapter, aligns with the experiences of faculty, graduates and students of the Irish World Academy.
Studies at the Academy have provided many graduates with an opportunity to conceive of and pilot a range of artistic projects. However, graduates and students of the Academy invariably agree on a perceived institutional bias towards innovation and experimentation, to the detriment of basic knowledge on key traditional artists and repertoire. Is higher education an elitist platform that provides a critical platform to a closed community? Can higher education do more to engage external stakeholders to attend events and academic fora?

Further locating the theme of negotiating innovation and tradition in three higher education institutes outside Ireland has provided a range of interesting insights into how other institutions developing pedagogies for other traditional and folk musics negotiate a balance between tradition and innovation. Joshua Dickson at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow feels that a personal authenticity and an individualistic engagement with tradition are important. This results in students simultaneously juxtaposing a respect for tradition and foundational learning with artistic creativity and innovation. Dickson partly attributes the RCS’ success in this regard to the input of Scottish traditional music practitioners working external to Scottish higher education. For Dickson’s colleague Hamish Napier, it is important that Scottish music programmes at the RCS reflect the evolution of the Scottish traditional music scene rather than purely instigate change.

At the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden, pedagogues promote creative expression and artistic experimentation as a subsequent development of acquiring fundamental knowledge about the Swedish folk music tradition. While acknowledging the mutability of tradition, pedagogues such as Sven Ahlbäck believe students should learn and subsequently interpret tradition on their own terms.
Susanne Rosenberg is dubious of experimentation for the sake of experimentation but feels that the KMH ethos encourages students to already consider themselves as part of tradition. Ellika Frisell and Jonas Hjalmarsson also encourage experimentation and creative artistic exploration but are keen that students learn the fundamentals of Swedish folk music, to an in-depth standard (which they view as requisite grammar), before exploring more experimental artistic pathways.

At the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland, pedagogues Kristiina Ilmonen and Vilma Timonen promote what they term 'historically informed creative musicianship’ that equips students to draw on an in-depth knowledge of the Finnish folk music tradition to explore personal artistic identities. Ilmonen and Timonen view foundational knowledge about the Finnish folk music tradition as a vocabulary that students must learn should they wish to express themselves artistically, and/or explore the innovative and experimental possibilities of their artform. For example, students must learn historical playing styles and are required to subsequently create new musical compositions drawn from those styles. How do the insights attained from visiting these three institutions relate to the specific case study of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education? How can my research trips outside Ireland inform what happens in Ireland? Conversely, what can Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland contribute to wider folk and traditional music pedagogy?

The research presented in this chapter highlights consensus between literature on the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in higher education, and the perceptions of a range of individuals who were interviewed by the researcher. My interviewees overwhelmingly value the creative space, time, and framework provided by Irish higher education to focus exclusively on creative practice but research
informants operating within and external to Irish higher education also overwhelmingly lament the low level of familiarity that third-level Irish traditional music students seem to have with foundational knowledge on key practitioners and repertoire, for example. It is clear from the many contributions to this chapter that higher education faces a considerable challenge in representing the many preferences of a diverse range of stakeholders. Higher education must fulfil so many criteria. Can it ever satisfy the needs and expectations of so many? Should it have to? Perhaps clearer communication from the higher education sector as to what it views as its Irish traditional music pedagogy brief would mitigate the alienation experienced by many external stakeholders. As musician Martin Hayes reflects (in the case of the Irish World Academy):

“I’d say there is a degree of confusion out there in the Irish music world about what UL is, and what potential it has, and what value it has because you always had the argument that we did fine without it, which is true, I suppose on some level but I think maybe making the world at large a little more aware of what it is and what it’s trying to do wouldn’t hurt. Maybe they could drag in some more hardcore traditionalists. If they could arm-wrestle in the people who are not eager to be there. I’d say there are a share of them out there with very strong opinions that they are unwilling to voice generally but maybe they could be coaxed. There are dissenting voices too that probably need to part of it” (Personal Interview Hayes January 2014).

Perhaps some of the tensions towards Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education would be mitigated by a clearer understanding among all stakeholders as to what higher education’s agenda is. For me, undergraduate programmes offering studies on Irish traditional music successfully provide access to higher education through the medium of Irish traditional music. Students gain access to an academic pathway through their chosen artform. Such a conceptualisation is in my view, much less problematic than interpreting higher education as a vehicle for
learning Irish traditional music, song, and dance. In this instance, Irish traditional music studies are not provided or accessed via higher education. Higher education is provided and accessed via Irish traditional music. When conceived in this light, it is my view that higher education should not be contextualised as a substitute for Irish traditional music transmission, but rather a pathway to academic studies made accessible through Irish traditional music.

The commentary of practitioners, Irish World Academy staff, graduates, and students seem to point to a surprisingly widely-held consensus that higher education and the Irish World Academy does not adequately familiarise its students with the foundational and fundamental knowledge of key performers and repertoire deemed essential by my research consultants. It is also evident that contributors to this research feel that such foundational knowledge is being supplanted by ideological and pedagogical biases towards innovation and experimentation. It is fair to suggest that some proportion of such perceptions are formed from a distance; some commentators, as Sandra Joyce suggests, may view the Academy differently if they were to observe just how ‘traditional’ many student’s performance are. In addition, the public persona and musical identities of performers such as Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, the founding chair of the Irish World Academy has undoubtedly influenced how the Academy is perceived to favour artistic innovation, given the focus of his own artistic work. Contributions to this chapter have highlighted the inherent flaws in this assertion. However, it is also important to note that many criticisms of this perceived tradition/innovation imbalance were voiced by tutors, graduates, and students of the Irish World Academy.
Despite the challenges involved in representing diversity in third-level curricula, my comparative studies in three European institutions outside Ireland illustrate, at least on a conceptual level, the possibilities of using an extensive knowledge of a music tradition as a springboard for further creative experimentation. A comprehensive understanding of repertoire and playing styles, for example, are perceived as an essential toolkit with which to form new artistic identities that are drawn from a music tradition. Foundational learning is seen as analogous to learning a vocabulary or grammar. Without such a toolkit, innovation and experimentation are deemed to be uninformed. One of the most significant successes observed on my research visits outside Ireland was the extent to which Joshua Dickson and the Scottish music department at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, interact with external members of the Scottish traditional music community to ensure that Scottish traditional music pedagogy at the RCS remains relevant to the needs and expectations of practitioners. Despite the absence of a comparable consultancy framework in the Irish institutions that I visited, the views expressed by Sandra Joyce in this chapter at least suggest an acknowledgement of its importance, and an appetite for developing such a dialogue at the Irish World Academy.

The discourse contributed by literature and the ethnographic contributions offered by my research consultants suggest that it is perhaps optimal to accept the inherent divergences of the Irish traditional music community and Irish higher education; they are different entities with differing priorities and dynamics. Higher education does not and perhaps should not provide a microcosm of the traditional music community within its institutional walls. Contributions to the discussion in this chapter from high profile, successful professional Irish traditional musicians celebrate
how higher education provides the creative space, time and framework that aren’t generally available in community settings outside higher education structures. Also, higher education, according to academics/scholars such as Chris Smith in Texas, must equip students with critical and academic skills, not easily transmitted in extra-institutional or non-institutional environments. Sandra Joyce, Niall Keegan, and Catherine Foley, all from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance in Limerick, firmly believe in the potential of higher education to provide an exploratory space for students to develop their artform in an environment free from commercial (and community) pressures. Students can therefore experiment in a non-judgemental environment. Such an environment does not exist to the same extent in an extra-institutional community that is perceived to evolve according to wider community consensus. While higher education can (and should) reflect the processes of what happens in a music community, it is entirely different in its construction, social dynamics, and scope.

The overwhelming majority of contributors to the discussion in this chapter are concerned about the level of familiarity that third-level traditional music students have with key exponents and repertoire of Irish traditional music. These accounts are a source of concern and perceived deficits in foundational knowledge should be addressed. Discussions with pedagogues working in Glasgow, Stockholm and Helsinki have convinced me that it is possible to simultaneously foster creative innovation and provide a comprehensive fundamental grounding in a musical tradition. Particularly in the case of the Royal Conservatoire in Glasgow, dialogue between faculty and external stakeholders has optimised the extent to which Scottish folk music pedagogy reflects the diverse needs of its community. In my view, a comparable relationship
between Irish higher education and the Irish traditional music community is necessary. Such a structure would enrich the experience of higher education faculty and students. Dialogue between higher education and the wider community would alleviate perceptions of biases towards experimentation at the expense of foundational knowledge. In addition, the wider traditional music community would benefit from the rigour and critical mechanisms offered by academic enquiry. Developing a dialogical framework of this type is undoubtedly a daunting prospect for those working in Irish higher education. Through open academic seminars, additional artist-in-residence initiatives, and focus group meetings, the inevitable divergences between higher education and the wider traditional music community can be transformed into mutually beneficial discourses. The acknowledgement of the validity of community concerns by academics such as Sandra Joyce of the Irish World Academy, and her willingness to endeavour to connect more with the wider traditional music community, suggests that the Irish World Academy, and the higher education sector more generally, may explore ways in which to further locate community voices in the development of Irish traditional music curricula in Irish higher education.
Chapter 9: Conclusions

This dissertation has explored the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education, and in particular, I have examined the relationship between academic/higher education and extra-academic/community-based approaches to transmission, enculturation, creativity, authenticity, and performance practice in Irish traditional music through observations, the presentation of some examples of values and practices, and the analysis of interviews and broader discourses. I have addressed this area of research through the theoretical lens provided by the following three research questions, which have been informed by literature on the wider field of music pedagogy, as well as by the documented commentary of a diverse range of stakeholders (see Appendix A) in the Irish traditional music community:

1. How do pedagogues negotiate canonicity in third-level folk and/or traditional music pedagogy?
2. *Lingua Franca* or genre-specific pedagogy? How do folk and/or traditional music pedagogues drawn on, adapt or depart from Western classical music pedagogy when designing curricula?
3. How do pedagogues manage community needs and expectations in balancing tradition/innovation in third-level folk and/or traditional music pedagogy?

Although rooted in my particular case study on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, this research has been significantly
informed by international studies and scholarship in music pedagogy. I also hope that this research can in turn contribute to many of the international conversations happening in the area of folk and traditional music education today. Drawing on the methodological toolkit of the discipline of ethnomusicology, particularly in terms of observation and fieldwork interviews, along with acknowledging the importance of critically engaging with Irish Music Studies, my aim has been to contribute to current scholarship on the higher education institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics by documenting and analysing the contributions of a range of key personnel, comprising academics, researchers, folk and traditional music practitioners, graduates, and students operating in the field of third-level folk and traditional music studies in Ireland and overseas.

Before addressing concluding thoughts on each of these three research questions, it is worthwhile revisiting the primary findings of the preliminary chapters that have provided background to this narrative on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. First, I reflect on the historical and contemporary overview of the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. Second, I recap on observations suggested by chapter five, a discussion on precedents where public discourse and community commentary on third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy have been facilitated. Third, I discuss the degree to which extra-academic stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community have engaged with intellectualisation, discourse, and debate on a range of issues relating to Irish traditional music. Fourth, and finally, I follow this discussion by reflecting on the findings of chapters six to eight, which deal directly with the research questions presented at the beginning of this chapter.
A Historical and Contemporary Overview of Irish Traditional Music in Irish Higher Education

In charting the historical development of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, my ambition has been to explore the trajectory of third-level Irish traditional music studies from its initial integration in higher education curricula in University College Cork (UCC) as early as 1922. UCC has played one of the most significant roles in the narrative of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, and a clear pedagogical lineage within that institution has shaped, more than any other Irish higher education institution, third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in the wider higher education sector. As someone who was sympathetic to Irish traditional music, Aloys Fleischmann, UCC’s Professor of Music from 1934 to 1980, built on the department’s history of engagement with Irish traditional music by fostering an environment in the music department that facilitated the development of Irish traditional music studies. Seán Ó Riada, and later, Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, were central to increasing the cultural and artistic status of Irish traditional music within the higher education system, which eventually led to significant changes in admissions criteria around the eligibility of Irish traditional music as a primary performance practice.

During Ó Súilleabháin’s tenure at UCC from 1975 to 1994, Irish traditional musicians were eventually admitted to the music department at UCC and performed Irish traditional music at audition. In addition, master practitioners such as fiddler Connie O’Connell, and accordionist Bobby Gardiner were employed as tutors as a result of their teaching and performance acumen exclusively, although they were not academically trained performers. This practitioner-led teaching approach was also
implemented by Ó Súilleabháin when he transitioned to the Irish World Music Centre (now the Irish World Academy), in 1994 to take a position as an inaugural Chair of Music, which marked the beginning of a new and important chapter in the story of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy. This historical overview is helpful in gaining an understanding of the challenges and successes of personnel who set momentous milestones in Irish traditional music’s journey in Irish higher education.

Initially motivated by a personal desire to become more *au fait* with the various third-level Irish traditional music studies and programmes offered in the Republic of Ireland, the overview I provide of contemporary Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education has been central in identifying the diverse pedagogical approaches, priorities, ideologies and agendas of nine higher education institutes operating under the remit of the Higher Education Authority in Ireland: The Cork Institute of Technology Cork School of Music; The DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama; Section of Music, School of Informatics and Creative Arts, Dundalk Institute of Technology; the Music Department at Maynooth University; The Centre for Irish Studies, and the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance at the National University of Ireland Galway; The School of Music and Theatre, University College Cork; University College Dublin School of Music; and The Department of Creative and Performing Arts, School of Humanities, Waterford Institute of Technology.

The contemporary conspectus of Irish traditional music studies and programmes outlined in this research should ideally be of use to academics, higher education students, practitioners, and prospective students alike. It is the first extensive collation of its type, and it highlights a number of points that warrant further discussion. For example, chief among the observations made by this institutional
overview is the absence of any overarching policy, ethos, or consensus on how best to contextualise Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. So, not only are practitioners of Irish traditional music unfamiliar (as evidenced by fieldwork interviews) with the extent of Irish traditional music studies offered in the Irish higher education sector, but academics, and representatives of the Irish institutions featured in this dissertation are largely unaware of how their colleagues in other institutions negotiate Irish traditional music pedagogy.

9.2 Community Perspectives on the Institutionalisation of Irish Traditional Music in Irish Higher Education

In chapter five, I presented and discussed instances whereby a range of stakeholders in the wider Irish traditional music community have engaged with public discourse on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education. The rationale for this chapter has been to acknowledge precedents of public debate and discussion that have informed my central research questions, as well as the questions that I put to those interviewed for this research. My ambition has been to acknowledge pioneering developments that have provided fora for discussion on third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy, but I also wanted to demonstrate that the core issues and questions identified by this research are not arbitrary but formulated in response to previous events.

In discussing previous instances of public community commentary on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, exemplified by a seminal public seminar at the Willie Clancy Summer School, by publications in the *Journal of Music*, and by fieldwork interviews, I have attempted to demonstrate that
such perspectives are more than merely uninformed anecdotes confined to private discussions in the dark corners of public houses. By presenting significant events in this narrative of when community commentary on third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy have been offered to the public record, I have identified a number of key concerns expressed by stakeholders in the Irish traditional music community that resonate with scholarship addressing the institutionalisation of folk and traditional musics in Ireland and abroad. Among these themes are: concerns about the standardisation of musical styles, in favour of artistic experimentation and ensemble work, at the expense of regional and individual style and repertoire, and a diminishing emphasis on solo performance; the adoption of pedagogies drawn from the Western art music tradition, such as Western music theory and learning by notation, processes that are deemed inappropriate for the transmission of Irish traditional music; a perceived deficit in the core elements of Irish traditional music that are considered to be foundational and fundamental, such as a basic grounding in key historical exponents, and repertoire; uncertainty among the wider Irish traditional music community as to the, credibility, validity, value and benefit of studying Irish traditional music in Irish higher education; positive reaction towards the artistic and musical legitimacy and status attributed to Irish traditional music due to its presence in Irish higher education; the welcome academic recognition bestowed on the work that Irish traditional musicians do, thereby encouraging successive generations of traditional musicians to explore higher education through the medium of Irish traditional music; and the acknowledgement of an extra-academic community “intelligentsia” (Vallely 1999, p.5), that engages in research and discourse in a diverse range of subject areas within Irish traditional music.
9.3 Extra-Academic Intellectualisation and Discourse on Irish Traditional Music

In this dissertation, I have also attempted to explore attitudes to the intellectualisation of Irish traditional music, as well as examine various fora for, and instances of, debate and critical engagement amongst the wider Irish traditional music community, external to academic institutions. As this research shows, discourse, debate, analysis, and intellectualisation about Irish traditional music has not been confined to academic institutions. Public seminars, publications and media productions on various aspects of Irish traditional music have drawn the aforementioned “intelligentsia” (Vallely 1999, p.5) of the Irish traditional music community. This has been particularly evident in Fintan Vallely’s *Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (Vallely 1999 and 2011), a publication that relies significantly on the written contributions of practitioners who do not work in academia or higher education. The *Crossroads Conference* of 1996 provided a similar platform for the convergence of Irish traditional music community commentary and academic discourse on the traditional arts in Ireland. Media productions such as Seán Ó Riada’s *Our Musical Heritage* (1962), and Míchéál Ó Súilleabháin’s *A River of Sound* (1995), were seminal productions that constructed as well as presented discourse and analysis on Irish traditional music to wider audiences, but they also elicited resistance from elements of the Irish traditional music community. Considering the close associations of the primary personnel involved, Seán Ó Riada, and Míchéál Ó Súilleabháin, respectively, with academia and higher education, it may not be unexpected that the reception of *A River of Sound* especially, somewhat exacerbated community concerns about misrepresentative, university-led artistic experimentation, conflating such productions with the more specific activity of integrating Irish traditional music in third-level music departments.
This research suggests that academic-styled debate and discourse existed, and continues to exist independent of academia, although a considerable number of practitioners also engage with academic research and third-level teaching as active members of an academic community. This research has endeavoured to nuance a distinction between anti-intellectualisation and informed concerns about authority, tracing how academic discourse represents Irish traditional music in published research, academic conferences, and in third-level classrooms. It is also important to note that this research has also highlighted the ways in which criticism about the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music, in the form of standardisation, and canonicity, should not be levelled at higher education exclusively, as competitions, such as those organised by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, are also deemed to codify and limit the diversity inherent in Irish traditional music practices. Resistance to the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music more generally should not be conflated with discontent as to how Irish higher education negotiates Irish traditional music pedagogy historically or currently.

9.4 Negotiating Canonicity in Third-Level Folk and Traditional Music Pedagogy

The concept of canonicity and the processes by which musics, traditions, practices and people are canonised in music education has been a prominent theme throughout this dissertation. Drawing on international trends and scholarship relevant to jazz and Western art music education, I have identified and discussed some of the potential pitfalls of constructing and promoting official canons, or ways of doing, and thinking about, music. Canonicity in music education manifests in the selection and prioritisation of certain aspects of a musical culture over others, and consequently,
textbook narratives are created that favour specific musical styles, repertoire, composers, and musical histories, for example. Focusing on Irish traditional music more specifically, this research has drawn parallels between international concerns about pedagogical canonicity and the views of writers and research interviewees alike and suggests that a diversity of approaches and epistemologies are needed to prevent Irish traditional music curricula from becoming unrepresentative of the wider community that it serves. Otherwise, pedagogues potentially impose personal biases and perspectives that may be at odds with the expectations and values of the wider community for whom ownership of this music remains a considerable concern. There is no doubt that charges of canonicity can be mitigated against somewhat by integrating community perspectives and input in curricular design, in a similar way to the consultancy processes developed by Joshua Dickson at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Undoubtedly, the involvement of a wider network of individuals, whether from within the institution, or from the wider community, would assist in developing folk and traditional music curricula that better reflect the diversity of approaches of practitioners.

It is also imperative that canonicity is not considered to be a by-product of higher education pedagogy exclusively. Contributors to this research have suggested that the recording industry, festival promoters, and institutions such as Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, and the Irish traditional music community itself, have also shaped how the canon of Irish traditional music is perceived. So, while academia and higher education should not be singled out as being solely responsible for the promotion of canonicity, there is no doubt that academic and research centres have a significant role to play in identifying and interrogating canonicity as process and practice, and to
mitigate against its potentially damaging impacts on third-level education and musical practices outside the academy, as well as within its walls. As a consequence, this research suggests that, as long as community/practitioner perspectives are embraced and considered, academia and higher education has the potential not only to interrogate and undermine its own propensity to construct limiting canons, but it can also diversify how traditional and folk music and education is experienced and transmitted to successive generations in community-based settings. The perspectives on canonicity in Irish traditional music education offered here by research informants not only provide fresh insights into how to optimise the breadth of Irish traditional music experienced by third-level students in Ireland, but these perspectives may also have beneficial impacts on music education systems in other genres and jurisdictions.

9.5 Idiomatic Pedagogies or Lingua Franca? Negotiating Western Art Music Pedagogy in Third-level Irish Traditional Music Studies in Irish Higher Education: Comparative Studies

The legacy of the privilege bestowed on Western art music in mainstream music education has had a lasting effect in how folk and traditional music curricula have developed. Reflecting the findings of Hill in Finland (Hill 2005, 2009a, 2009b), a large proportion of literature and commentary that discusses the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music is focused on the relationship between Irish traditional music and Western art music. The conflation of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy with what is perceived as a third-level music education system that privileges Western art music and educational values is a phenomenon that fails to fully nuance the efforts of those working in higher education in Ireland. Perhaps historically, there was merit in
the argument that Irish traditional music was perceived as artistically inferior to the Western classical tradition by individuals tenured in third-level music departments around the country, but a new generation of academics has certainly sought to address this imbalance.

As my overview of third-level programmes offering studies in Irish traditional music demonstrates, there is no overwhelming consensus among Irish traditional music pedagogues as to whether an ‘idiomatic pedagogy’ should be drawn from musical characteristics specific to Irish traditional music, comparable to the methodologies specifically devised by Sven Ahlåck for teaching Swedish music theory at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. Some educators assert that the notation and theory systems used in Western classical music are a lingua franca that must be used to universalise the analytical and descriptive skills of traditional music students, in a manner that facilitates cross-genre communication and vocational training. Western music notation has an established history in the preservation and transmission of Irish traditional music, and it functions efficiently as a method of transmitting repertoire.

As outlined in this research, music theory systems directly drawn from the Western classical traditions have the capacity to alienate Irish traditional music students who engage with them, as evidenced by interviews and more informal discussions with informants. This has also been my direct experience as a music theory tutor, and I believe that developing a music theory system constructed on the specific musical characteristics of Irish traditional music, could more adequately and purposefully equip third-level students with invaluable analytical and communication skills required to negotiate the musical world around them. Global musical skills
(aims) can be taught using local methods drawn from the genre of Irish traditional music (objectives). Furthermore, integrating music theory with performance would further encourage students to see music theory as relevant to their specific needs and experiences as traditional musicians.

9.6 Accommodating Tradition and Innovation.

This dissertation has demonstrated how Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education has provided space, time, and resources for traditional musicians to engage fully in their artistic practice, in an environment that fosters creativity and provides a buffer from the distractions of everyday life. Many contributors to this research have attested to the value of higher education in facilitating this type of creative environment. Such contributions resonate with the significant, albeit scarce scholarship on the institutionalisation of traditional and folk musics outside Ireland especially in Finland, as evidenced by the work of Juniper Hill (2005, 2009a, 2009b). Since the higher education environment provides traditional musicians with the time and space to work in ways that are not often mirrored in the Irish traditional music community, beyond the walls of the academic institution, there is a clear, albeit welcome (according to my research informants), divergence between how the wider community and the academic institution respectively, relate to the concept of creativity and artistic exploration. In Hill’s work, this is paralleled by the “space, community support, institutional support, and alleviation from commercial demands”, the Sibelius Academy provides for its students in order to facilitate and foster creativity (Hill 2005, p.348).
Although many graduates have welcomed the creative opportunities that they accessed through third-level studies in Irish traditional music, many contributors to this research expressed concern about what they perceived as the prioritisation of experimental approaches to third-level Irish traditional music performance practices, at the expense of immersing students in what are considered foundational and fundamental studies about key historical and contemporary exponents of Irish traditional music performance and repertoire, for example. Of particular concern to those who offered opinions on this subject was the status, authority and influence bestowed on an institution such as a university music department, to develop, without external input or challenge, whatever Irish traditional music curricula that it deemed appropriate.

One important point that has emerged from all of my discussions is whether or not certain higher education environments, especially those with a more performance-oriented approach, privilege artistic experimentation and innovation in Irish traditional music over things such as history, lineage, and ‘passing it on’. It suggests that staff, students and graduates with closer proximity to higher education, and who have experience of third-level studies in Irish traditional music, are less critical of the potential of third-level Irish traditional music studies to be dismissive of ‘straight-ahead’ (i.e. ‘traditional’ rather than ‘experimental’) Irish traditional music performance. However, the overwhelming consensus among contributors to this research is that there seems to be a bias among those who design third-level Irish traditional music curricula towards musical experimentation and cross-genre fusion. As a response to this, perhaps higher education institutions can promote intra-communal dialogue and understanding by exploring collaborative events and
performances that provide external stakeholders with an opportunity to witness first-hand the types of performances that third-level traditional music students are producing. This is already happening in some instances (e.g. in UCC and UL) but it seems that many community members are not fully aware of the invitation. Such platforms could also provide an opportunity for third-level pedagogues to describe their *modus operandi* to the wider Irish traditional music community. At present, this research suggests that the wider Irish traditional music community are confused about the rationale and motivation for embedding Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education. My finding also suggests that there is a conflation of the type of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education with the reception to Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin’s *A River of Sound* (1995), with its focus on experimentation and fusion. To a lesser extent, the resistance to Seán Ó Riada’s *Our Musical Heritage* (1962), as evidenced by Taylor’s reference to “pro- or contra- Ó Riada camps” (Taylor 2007, p.331), has implications for how the pedagogical agendas of higher education institutions are perceived by external Irish traditional music community stakeholders.

Comparative studies conducted outside Ireland, in Glasgow, Stockholm, and Helsinki, have provided this research with useful parallel avenues of inquiry, allowing a broader contextualisation of what is happening in Ireland, as well as helping to identify possible shared trends, not to mention offering models for best practice. At the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow, head of Scottish Music, Joshua Dickson has earnestly engaged professional Scottish musicians as external consultants to ascertain what modifications could be made to Scottish music studies at the RCS, to reflect what they value as active practitioners. Such an open platform for dialogue has optimised the ways in which Scottish folk music studies at the RCS honour both
tradition and innovation, in line with the insights of external stakeholders. At the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden, pedagogues are keen to educate students about tradition and historical playing styles in order to better equip students with a ‘home’ genre, like a language, that they must master before being confident enough to explore experimentation or other genres of music. At the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, pedagogues see an understanding of tradition as an essential vocabulary that must be learned before students can express themselves artistically. However, it is worth noting that the Finnish folk music tradition was essentially revived via the educational pursuits of key personnel at the Academy. Consequently, the number of extra-academic stakeholders with no relationship with third-level Finnish folk music education is proportionally much lower than in the Irish context, where a significantly high proportion of these practitioners, teachers, journalists and other stakeholders have not engaged with Irish traditional music studies in Irish higher education.

Academics and academic institutions in Ireland have a significant role to play in wider conversations about balancing tradition and innovation in Irish traditional music performance practices both within and beyond their institutional walls. As previously discussed, third-level Irish traditional music studies, as evidenced by the contributions of Irish World Academy graduates, for example, facilitate self-reflexivity and creativity by providing a dedicated space and environment. Although some third-level institutions are perceived to promote experimentation and innovation at the expense of providing an immersion in the basics of Irish traditional music, according to academics and some graduates, many third-level institutions can also undermine industry or market-led trends that may otherwise promote fusion and experimentalism for commercial reasons. As certain third-level programmes in Irish
traditional music allow students to safely explore and pilot creative projects without
the need to sell tickets (as would be the case in the music industry), this research
suggests that a student who wishes to perform a recital of historically-informed,
‘straight-ahead’ (i.e. non experimental) Irish traditional music would be encouraged to
do so, and would perhaps not feel the need to shape that performance to pander to the
expectations of a festival audience, for example. This has been the impression
garnered from the contributions of those Irish World Academy graduates with whom I
spoke, and I believe the responses would be replicated elsewhere in Ireland.

Research presented in this dissertation suggests an appetite among pedagogues,
researchers, and academics working in Irish higher education, and stakeholders in the
wider Irish traditional music community, for a greater degree of intra-communal
collaboration in third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy. Academics such as
Sandra Joyce, Director of the Irish World Academy, acknowledge that further dialogue
between the Academy and the Irish traditional music community would benefit Irish
traditional music pedagogy there, while touring musician Martin Hayes feels that
community practitioners who do not currently engage with third-level Irish traditional
music, would perhaps value third-level Irish traditional music programmes more if
they were coaxed to become more involved, thereby diminishing confusion among the
wider Irish traditional music community as to the motivations and rationale of those
central to institutionalising Irish traditional music in higher education in Ireland.
Although both of these observations emanate from the Irish World Academy
specifically, they are easily applicable to wider Irish traditional music curricula across
the sector more generally.
9.7 Final Thoughts

The positioning of the broader, grass-roots Irish traditional music community as somehow in opposition to the Irish higher education sector and academic community using the terms ‘ivory tower’ and ‘commons’, may be seen as provocative and not accommodating the considerable degree of overlap that exists, now more than ever, between the worlds of the Irish traditional music community and Irish traditional music academia/higher education. It is fair to say that there are many diverse communities of practice contributing to an overarching global Irish traditional music community. However, to suggest that there is negligible or no resistance, even today, towards the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, and towards current practices in universities, would be naïve. Similarly, the presumption that concerns expressed by non-degree holding Irish traditional musicians towards third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy might be somehow uninformed or based on conservatism or an unwillingness to accept contemporary trends in the world of Irish traditional music, is not an accurate position to take. Extensive interviews with various stakeholders have evidenced a variety of perspectives and for many, the debate still continues.

As many of my informants have suggested, those involved in higher education do not set out in any way to deliberately undermine the values of the Irish traditional music community. This research has shown instances where academics such as Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin have acknowledged the pre-eminence of the community as the authority and arbiter of how Irish traditional music should evolve. He has publicly called for traditional musicians to take ownership of higher education to shape its trajectory rather than view higher education as a threat to Irish traditional music. The
degree to which this has been accepted by stakeholders or could be legitimately enacted remains debatable and will be something I hope to study in the next phase of my research.

The conspectus of contemporary Irish traditional music programmes and studies offered by the Irish higher education sector, as well as the historical overview of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education (presented in chapter four of this dissertation), have both uncovered some significant findings. Charting this narrative for the first time, the chapter presented the journey of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, with a view to establishing how Irish traditional music pedagogy has evolved over time to a point where it is now predominantly curated by individuals with direct experience of Irish traditional music as active practitioners with shared or different disciplinary boundaries. This history informs and contextualises some of the resistance towards the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education, particularly when considering the perceived inferiority of Irish traditional music and musicians among academics who previously occupied music departments throughout Ireland. This was evidenced by the fact that, until 1977, despite the prevalence of traditional musicians in the wider campus community, traditional musicians wishing to pursue music studies at University College Cork, for example, were compelled to exclusively focus on their identities as Western classical musicians at audition, and largely throughout the course of their studies.

By offering an overview of contemporary third-level Irish traditional music programmes and studies offered in nine selected higher education institutes in Ireland, I have illustrated how increased sector-wide communication and collaboration would enhance discussions on how best to negotiate Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish
higher education. At present, there is no consensus on how best to manage the needs and expectations of students, and the wider Irish traditional music community. It is my view that an academic convention similar to the “Pedagogies, Practices and the Future of Folk Music in Higher Education”, presented at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in January 2018, would be of considerable benefit to facilitating critical reflection within the wider sector in Ireland, and would provide a platform for sharing ideas on how to optimise the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education in Ireland today. Attaining a greater familiarity with what each institution in the sector does in relation to third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy may also provide an opportunity for external stakeholders to become more aware of the ambitions and agendas of third-level institutions. Perhaps a collaborative sector-wide forum like the one suggested here could also provide opportunities for external stakeholders to offer input to the sector in a similar manner to the consultancy processes instigated by the Scottish Music Department at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

My focus in chapter five was also on the existence and prevalence of discourses and popular commentary occurring separate from third-level academic research. It demonstrated that the wider Irish traditional music community is not as averse to intellectualisation as may be imagined. First, this suggests that those who lament the discourse, analysis, and intellectualisation about various aspects of Irish traditional music should not attribute this development to third-level institutions exclusively. Discussion, analysis and research have taken place beyond institutional walls from at least as early as 1973, evidenced by the brochure for Willie Clancy Summer School in Miltown Malbay, county Clare that year. Second, resistance towards the
institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education should not be conflated with a perceived unwillingness among the Irish traditional music community to engage with intellectualisation of Irish traditional music, and an unwillingness to engage in critical analysis. This dissertation has shown that any resistance towards third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy is, in fact, more nuanced and considered.

The section dealing with canonicity in music education, and in particular, my primary interest in how canonicity manifests in third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy in Ireland, raised a number of noteworthy issues. The authority, student-teacher power relations, social and artistic prestige, and assessment structures of higher education environments all contribute to the potential dissemination of whatever personal preferences and particular ideologically-informed pedagogical positions (even perhaps biases) staff and curriculum developers may hold. When designing Irish traditional music curricula, pedagogues invariably select and prioritise elements of the tradition, thereby constructing what is deemed as an acceptable canon of Irish traditional music. Pedagogues interviewed for this research have accepted the inevitability of constructing canons as necessary bodies of knowledge and have also acknowledged that not all aspects of a musical tradition can be accommodated due to constraints on time and resources.

It is important to note that canonicity and the forces that contribute to it are not confined to higher education. Canonicity can be observed in the form of competitions and exams organised by the Irish music and dance organisation Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. As Susanne Rosenberg of the Royal College of Music in Stockholm suggests, communities also create canons, as arbiters of what is deemed traditional and what is
not. Third-level studies in folk and traditional musics are not solely responsible for canonicity but academic institutions can and do foster critical environments that can play an important part in preventing manifestations of canonicity that are perceived to be educationally limiting. Similarly, academic rigour and nuanced and methodologically-informed research practices also have a significant role to play in challenging canonicity in whatever context that it occurs in. Discussions with staff, students and graduates of third-level Irish traditional music programmes suggest that third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy has the capacity to fulfil this important role, and in many respects, is already involved in the kind of critical reflection that is challenging inherited narratives on what tradition is and is not.

Pedagogues and academics who teach Irish traditional music in Irish higher education are divided in how they view the adoption of Western classical educational models in Irish traditional music pedagogy. Some favour Western classical music conservatoire models, while others contextualise Irish traditional music through the lens of ethnomusicology, or Irish studies, for example. Each discipline is equipped with its own set of established methodologies. In terms of music notation, I accept the contributions of academics and teachers to this research that state their views on the necessity to utilise Western music notation in Irish traditional music pedagogy. In fact, Irish music has long been represented in music collections through the medium of conventional staff notation. Notwithstanding the complications inherent in representing musical characteristic such as micro-tonality, Western music notation is a useful and well-established methodology for transmitting Irish traditional music in many instances. Community concerns about the imposition of Western notation on Irish traditional music, while in some ways valid, do not account for the awareness of
experienced pedagogues about the pitfalls of prioritising music notation over aural transmission. As discussed in chapter seven, institutions such as the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick, use music notation as a valuable tool of analysis and transmission in the context of music theory classes, but practitioners who are employed to teach performance at the Academy are free to teach their students as they see fit, in a manner that is representative of their teaching outside that higher education institution. This is an instance of commons practice and university requirements meeting in a particularly accommodating way.

The subject of music theory for traditional musicians is perhaps more problematic however, and it is my contention that more needs to be done to design and implement music theory systems that more closely reflect the needs of Irish traditional musicians. As somebody with experience of teaching music theory in higher education, and as a composer and practitioner who regularly engages with music theory in professional contexts, I contend that it is possible and optimal to design music theory systems that are based on idiomatic performance practices specific to Irish traditional music. Such an approach would equip students with genre-specific, yet transferrable and universal music theory skills. For example, universal principles of harmony can be taught through the medium of Irish traditional music, through its modes, melodic intervals, and a thorough training in harmonic accompaniment as used in Irish traditional music performance. There is no evidence that this is happening in any university in Ireland in an integrated and systematic way. One of the benefits would be that traditional musicians would not feel alienated by a system of music theory that does not relate to their skills and experience in Irish traditional music. This type of idiomatic music theory has been implemented.
successfully by Sven Ahlbäck at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden, and undoubtedly similar approaches to designing music theory in a manner that teaches global and universal musical skills through local knowledge in Irish traditional music would be of considerable benefit in not only engaging traditional musicians with music theory, but also in developing an analytical and descriptive vocabulary for Irish traditional music.

Undoubtedly, the creative space and time provided to traditional musicians by higher education institutes has been welcomed by students, graduates and staff who have contributed to this research. Such contributions suggest that higher education is having a positive effect on creativity and artistic exploration in Irish traditional music. Students have the freedom to explore creativity in ways that may not be otherwise feasible due to the constraints of everyday life. This is one positive example of a divergence between the experiences of higher education and the external Irish traditional music community. This research has shown that community commentary conveys a suspicion of what is perceived as the biases in higher education institutes towards experimentation and fusion at the expense of providing students with an immersion in the lived tradition, and in what might be deemed to be valuable foundational understanding of what constitutes Irish traditional music. It is likely that some are justified in being concerned with what is viewed, by many of my informants currently and in the past, as the privileging of experimentation over ‘authentic’ interpretation and the conflation of creative freedom with an institutional agenda that favours experimentation. Such concerns are valid given they are deeply felt and consistently expressed (as evidenced in my interviews) and have been articulated by practitioners and graduates with direct experience of higher education. This is no way
to suggest that higher education institutions in any way intentionally and systematically discourage performances of Irish traditional music that would be considered by many to be ‘straight-ahead’, traditional, authentic, or not focused on experimentation but rather that some musicians do feel disenfranchised and this needs to be addressed.

Again, the national profile of third-level figures such as Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, as an innovator who juxtaposes Irish traditional music with elements of Western art music and jazz, has significantly influenced how external stakeholders view the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher educational contexts. My research shows that the artistic pursuits of Ó Súilleabháin, as well as his involvement with *A River of Sound*, become conflated for some with what happens with the treatment of Irish traditional music in third-level contexts across the board and not just in the institutions in which he was involved. Such perspectives may fail to nuance the diverse ways in which Ó Súilleabháin has approached third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy. More generally, such views do not consider the diverse range of Irish traditional music studies and pedagogues in the wider Irish higher education sector generally. However, I must return to my earlier experience of the Irish pedagogue who chastised his student’s selection of Irish traditional music recordings as representative of countless other encounters informants have shared with me, outlining that their artistic approaches and preferences were deemed by them to be less valued in their institution. However inclusive an institution’s projected approach to the teaching of Irish music may claim to be, the authority of its staff can play a significant role in influencing the performance practices and values of students. This, of course, is not unique to music departments, but the ways in which individuals shape experiences of
students cannot be underestimated, from both positive and not so positive perspectives.

To conclude, the commentary presented in this research, contributed by a diverse range of stakeholders in the Irish traditional community has both resonated with and ideally augmented academic scholarship on the institutionalisation of traditional and folk musics in higher education environments in the Northern European context in general, to which this study has deliberately limited its comparative scope. A significant amount of original data has been offered for the first time to the academic record. My ambition has not been to suggest that there is a divide between higher education/academia in Ireland, and the wider Irish traditional music community but to acknowledge and further interrogate existing discussions and exchanges on the relationship between Irish traditional music, as it is contextualised in extra-academic community settings, and in higher education contexts. It is especially important to remember that the consistent themes and areas of debate uncovered by this research are not unique to Irish higher education (as the comparative studies show). Equally important is the fact that the same concerns are found in the exchanges among members of the broader Irish traditional music community. What is clear is that the Irish higher education sector has a vital role to play in challenging what are perceived as the pitfalls of institutionalisation both within and beyond its own walls.

The popularity of Irish traditional music in Ireland and abroad with its large number of practitioners complicates the narrative presented in this thesis. It is a traditional music that boasts a vibrant, diverse, populous, and expert community of practitioners who mostly engage with Irish traditional music in extra-
institutional/non-institutional contexts within and outside of Ireland. This poses a number of challenges for the very concept of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy, considering that so much expertise exists among the wider national and international Irish traditional music community. The local and global Irish traditional music community can facilitate an enriching and pioneering intra-communal collaboration that encourages community-wide input on how best to locate Irish traditional music in contemporary Irish higher education and, indeed, in institutions outside of Ireland, including the UK and North America (a topic for further consideration). Ultimately, community reception of third-level Irish traditional music pedagogy may well depend on how those in Irish higher education communicate their respective modi operandi. Is the purpose of third-level Irish traditional music studies to provide access to higher education through the medium of Irish traditional music, or to teach Irish traditional music through the medium of higher education? This distinction may well dominate conversations on the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education over the next decade.
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Appendix A: List of Interviewees

Ahlbäck, Sven  Fiddler, and lecturer at The Royal College of Music, Stockholm, Sweden.

Bergin, Mary  Professional musician (tin-whistle) and music teacher. Awarded the TG4 Gradam Ceoil Musician of the Year in 2000.

Blake, John  Professional musician (flute, guitar and piano), producer, audio engineer. Former Gradam Ceoil judge, and former member of the board of the Irish Traditional Music Archive.

Brock, Paul  Accordion and melodeon player from Westmeath. A graduate of the MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick.

Browne, Peter  Retired RTÉ radio producer and broadcaster, uilleann piper, with an MA from the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama. Tutor at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama.

Browne, Ronan  Uilleann piper, producer, composer, and teacher from Dublin. He has performed internationally with Riverdance and the Afro Celt Sound System. He performs regularly as a soloist, with his band Cran, and he also performed and recorded with Clare flute, fiddle player, and uilleann piper, Peter O’Loughlin (1929-2017).

Carolan, Nicholas  Founding director emeritus of the Irish Traditional Music Archive.

Carty, John  Professional musician (banjo, fiddle, and flute), and tutor at the Irish World Academy.


Collins, Tim  Concertina player from Limerick. He graduated with a PhD in Irish Studies from the National University of Ireland, Galway, in 2013. He performers regularly with the renowned Kilfenora Céili Band and teaches concertina throughout county Clare.

Commins, Verena  Musician (accordion and piano). Lecturer and PhD graduate of the Centre for Irish Studies at the National University of Ireland, Galway.
Conway, Zoë  Traditional fiddler, classically-trained violinist, composer, and singer from county Louth. She has performed internationally with Riverdance.

Cooney, Steve  Professional guitarist, producer, and audio engineer. PhD graduate of UCD. Occasional visiting tutor to the Irish World Academy.

Corcoran, Seán  Singer, collector, and ethnomusicologist. Member of the band Cran. Ethnomusicology student of John Blacking at Queen’s University, Belfast.

Costello, Éamonn  BA and PhD graduate of the Irish World Academy. Currently a teaching assistant in Irish at the School of Culture and Communications at the University of Limerick. Current chair of ICTM Ireland.

Cotter, Geraldine  Traditional pianist, tin-whistle player, and academic from Clare. She is a doctoral graduate (2013) of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick and she currently lectures on music education at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick city.

Cranitch, Ellen  Musician, composer, and presenter of Verspertine, a music show broadcast on RTÉ Lyric FM, a national public radio service predominantly associated with Western classical music, but it also features Irish traditional, contemporary, and world musics. Artistic Director of the Galway Jazz Festival.

Cranitch, Matt  Professional musician (fiddle), teacher and lecturer. PhD graduate of the Irish World Academy.

Cummins, Paddy  Musician (banjo, mandolin), and radio presenter. BA graduate of the Irish World Academy.

de Grae, Paul  Professional musician (guitar), author, and researcher.

Denvir, Síle  Singer and harpist. Lecturer in Irish at Dublin City University.

Diamond, Dermot  Traditional fiddler and academic from Belfast. He is a board member of the Irish Traditional Music Archive and a Professor of Science at Dublin City University, where he works as director of the National Centre for Sensor Research (Dublin City University 2018).

Dillane, Aileen  Lecturer at the Irish World Academy. Musician (piano, flute), singer, and ethnomusicologist. PhD graduate of the University of Chicago. BMus graduate of University College Cork. Previously, music lecturer at University College Cork. A former board member of the Irish Traditional Music Archive.

Doherty, Liz  Traditional fiddler, academic, and lecturer from county Donegal. She studied music at University College Cork under Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (graduating in 1991), and subsequently lectured in music at UCC from 1994 to 2000. She was awarded a PhD from the University of Limerick in 1996 and was appointed as a traditional music lecturer at the University of Ulster, Derry in 2007.

Doris, Clíona  Harpist, and Head of Orchestral Studies at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama.

Dowling, Martin  Fiddle player and historian. Former music lecturer at Queen’s University, Belfast.

Egan, Claire  Traditional fiddle player and classical violinist. PhD student at the Irish World Academy.

Flynn, Dave  Composer and guitarist. Artistic director of the Irish Memory Orchestra. PhD graduate of the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama.

Foley, Catherine  Dancer, ethnochoreologist, and senior lecturer at the Irish World Academy. Awarded the first PhD in the field of Irish dancing from the Laban Centre for Movement and Dance at Goldsmiths’ College, London.

Frisell, Ellika  Professional Swedish folk fiddler and fiddle lecturer at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden.

Gardiner, Bobby  Professional musician (accordion and melodeon) and teacher. Accordion tutor at University College Cork.


Glackin, Paddy  Fiddle player from Dublin. He is a former member of the Bothy Band, and a current member of the board of the Arts Council. In addition, he is a former board member of the Irish Traditional Music Archive. With Cathal Goan, he lectures on Irish traditional music at the annual Willie Clancy Summer School. He was the
Arts Council’s first traditional music officer from 1985 to 1990, and he presented a number of series of the seminal Irish traditional music television programme, *The Pure Drop*.

Granville, Aoife  Flute player, fiddler, and singer. PhD graduate of University College Cork. Lecturer on Irish traditional music and Irish folklore. Organiser of Dingle Trad Festival.

Hamilton, Colin (Hammy)  Flute player, flute maker, singer, writer, and researcher. PhD graduate of the Irish World Academy. MA graduate of Queens University, Belfast, where he studied ethnomusicology with John Blacking.

Hanrahan, Kieran  Banjo and mandolin player. Former member of Stockton’s Wing. Presenter of *Céilí House* on RTÉ Radio 1. Artistic Director of Temple Bar Trad Festival. Member of the Expert Advisory Committee of Culture Ireland. Director of *Scoil Éigse*, an annual school run by *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann* at *Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann*.

Hastings, Gary  Flute player and author. Currently Rector of Holy Trinity, Killiney, Dublin. Previously a lecturer at the Irish Studies Department at the University of Ulster.

Hayes, Martin  Traditional fiddler from east county Clare. He has toured extensively internationally with long-time guitar accompanist, Denis Cahill, and more recently, he has recorded and performed with the award-winning band, The Gloaming. In 2008, he was awarded the *Gradam Ceoil* TG4 Musician of the Year.

Hensey, Áine  Historian, and radio producer and presenter with *RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta*. Hensey graduated with a PhD in history from Maynooth University in 2012.

Hickey, Derek  Professional musician (accordion), and teacher. Accordion tutor at the Irish World Academy.

Hill, Juniper  Ethnomusicologist and lecturer with interests in music education and performance practice studies. A PhD graduate of the University of California, Los Angeles (2005), her dissertation explored the institutionalisation of Finnish folk music at the Sibelius Academy, in Helsinki, Finland.

Hill, Noel  Professional musician (concertina), and teacher. Awarded the TG4 *Gradam Ceoil* Musician of the Year...

Hjalmarsson, Jonas  Fiddle tutor and administrator at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden.

Hynes, Michael  Flute and whistle player, and composer.

Ilmonen, Kristiina  Musician, composer, researcher and teacher. Professor of folk music at the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki, Finland.

Jarman, Freya  Lecturer in popular music at the University of Liverpool. PhD graduate of the University of Newcastle.

Jones, Jaime  Ethnomusicologist and lecturer. Currently Head of School at the music department of University College Dublin.

Joyce, Sandra  Singer, bodhrán player, and director of the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick. Joyce is also course director of the Academy’s MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance. A graduate of University College Cork, who also studied with Professor Micheál Ó Súilleabháin, Joyce is married to Academy associate director, Niall Keegan. Both Joyce and Keegan were founders of the Irish World Academy’s BA in Irish Music and Dance in 2002.

Keane, Tommy  Professional musician (uilleann pipes, whistle, and flute), and teacher. Graduate of the MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance at the Irish World Academy. Honorary President of Na Píobairí Uilleann.

Kearney, Daithí  Banjo player, singer, dancer, and academic from county Kerry. He graduated with a PhD from University College Cork in 2009, which was co-supervised by Mel Mercier, the Chair of Performing Arts at the University of Limerick, who was a lecturer at University College Cork at that time.

Keegan, Niall  Flute player, traditional music lecturer, associate director, and director of undergraduate studies at the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick. He is also the course director of the Irish traditional music stream of the Academy’s BA in Performing Arts. He completed an MA focused on traditional flute styles at UCC in 1992, under the guidance of Professor...
Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin. He graduated with a PhD from the Irish World Academy in 2012.

Keville, Claire
Concertina player and music teacher. Former radio presenter on Clare FM.

King, Cillian
Professional musician (concertina and guitar).
Graduate of the BA in Irish Music and Dance from the Irish World Academy.

Lawlor, Helen
Lecturer in music at Dundalk Institute of Technology.
Harpsit, researcher, and teacher. A PhD graduate of University College Dublin.

Lennon, Charlie
Fiddler, piano player, and composer from Leitrim. He is widely regarded as one of the most prolific composers of Irish traditional melodies. His PhD from the University of Liverpool was in the area of nuclear physics. While in Liverpool, he performed with the famous Liverpool Ceili Band until 1968, later returning home to Ireland in 1969. In 2006 he was awarded the TG4 Gradam Ceoil Composer of the Year award.

Leonard, Marion
Senior lecturer at the Department of Music at the University of Liverpool, and a member of the University’s Institute of Popular Music.

MacDiarmada, Oisín
Fiddle and piano player from Sligo, Ireland. He founded the band Téada, (the Irish language word for strings) in 2001. In 2000, he graduated with a Bachelor of Music Education from Trinity College and the Royal Irish Academy of Music. A professional performer, teacher, and recording artist, Oisín became the Director of the Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann SCT examinations in 2012.

MacMahon, Tony
Musician, and retired radio and television broadcaster and producer. His radio and TV output includes seminal shows such as Aisling Geal, Ag Déanamh Ceoil, and The Long Note. An iconic accordion stylist, he was predominantly influenced by Galway accordionist, Joe Cooley.

McCarthy, Johnny
Flute and fiddle player, with training in Western classical music. Lecturer in Irish traditional music and music technology at the CIT Cork School of Music.

McGrattan, Paul
McKeon, Gay  Uilleann piper and teacher. CEO of Na Píobairí Uilleann.

McPartlan, Mary  Singer, and promoter. Director of the Arts in Action concert series, and lecturer at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Melin, Mats  Swedish dancer, teacher and academic. Lecturer in dance at the Irish World Academy.

Mercier, Mel  Performer, composer and academic from Dublin. He is a B.Mus graduate of UCC (1989), and he graduated with a PhD from the Irish World Academy in 2011. Mercier lectured at the music department of UCC from 1992 to 2016, and he was appointed as the inaugural Head of School at the School of Music and Theatre in 2009. He was appointed the inaugural Chair of Performing Arts at the Irish World Academy in 2016.

Mitchell-Ingoldsby, Mary  Lecturer in Irish traditional music at University College Cork. Uilleann piper, whistle-player, teacher, and archivist. First Irish traditional musician to perform a traditional instrument for the Irish Leaving Certificate, and subsequently the first Irish traditional musician to perform Irish traditional music as a primary performance specialism in third-level music education (as a student at UCC).

Moberg, Pär  Lecturer and Course Director of Folk and World Music Programs at Lund University, in Lund, Sweden. Performer (saxophone, flutes), composer, and arranger.

Molloy, Ryan  Performer (piano, and fiddle), composer, and lecturer. Lecturer in composition at Maynooth University. Occasional visiting tutor to the Irish World Academy.

Moloney, Mick  Performer, academic, arts administrator, and broadcaster. He graduated with a PhD in folklore and folklife from the University of Pennsylvania. In 1999, he was awarded the prestigious National Heritage Award from the National Endowment for the Arts, the highest official honour a traditional artist can receive in the USA. In 2013, Moloney received the Presidential Distinguished Service Award from the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mulkere, Brendan</td>
<td>Traditional fiddler and renowned teacher, originally from county Clare, but synonymous with the Irish traditional music scene in London, where he was responsible for teaching innumerable London traditional musicians from the 1970s to the present day. He frequently teaches fiddle masterclasses at the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munnelly, Kieran</td>
<td>Professional musician (flute, whistle, percussion). A graduate of the MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napier, Hamish</td>
<td>Flute, whistle, and piano player. Composer, arranger, producer. Music tutor at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ní Bhriain, Aoife</td>
<td>Traditional fiddler and classical violinist from Dublin. She is a masters degree graduate of HMT Leipzig in violin performance, and she has received numerous awards for performance in both classical and traditional music. Aoife is also currently a board member of the Irish Traditional Music Archive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ní Bhriain, Órfhlaith</td>
<td>Musician, dancer, academic, and lecturer in dance at the Irish World Academy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ní Cheannabháin, Saileog</td>
<td>Professional musician (traditional and classical piano, fiddle, viola, sean-nós singer), and teacher. Music graduate of University College Cork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ní Chonghaile, Deirdre</td>
<td>Researcher, academic, writer, broadcaster, and fiddle-player. A PhD graduate of University College Cork. Director of the Amhráin Árann – Aran Songs project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ní Fhuartháin, Méabh</td>
<td>Ethnomusicologist, academic, teacher, musician. Lecturer at the Centre for Irish Studies at the National University of Ireland, Galway. PhD graduate of NUIG. Former lecturer in music at University College Cork. Music graduate of University College Cork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ní Ghráda, Máire</td>
<td>Uilleann piper, and lecturer in Irish at the University of Limerick. She is the coordinator and developer of applied Irish modules for students of the Irish World Academy, and in 2016, Ní Ghráda was involved in the establishment of ULRnaG, a radio series performed and presented by students of the Irish World Academy and Scoil Chultúir agus na Cumarsáide (trans. school of culture and communications), in collaboration with RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Profession and Contributions</td>
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<tr>
<td>NicGabhann, Caitlín</td>
<td>Professional musician (concertina), and dancer. BA graduate and MA (ethnomusicology) graduate of University College Cork.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó Canainn, Tomás (1930-2013)</td>
<td>Uilleann piper, singer, composer, arranger, writer, academic, and a former lecturer in the Department of Electrical Engineering at University College Cork. Former Dean of Engineering at UCC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó Gráda, Conal</td>
<td>Professional musician (flute), composer, and teacher. Author of the flute tutor, ‘An Fheadóg Mhór...Irish Traditional Flute Technique’. Member of the band, The Raw Bar Collective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó hAllmhuráin, Gearóid</td>
<td>Author, musician (uilleann pipes, and concertina), cultural historian, and academic. Johnson Chair in Québec and Canadian Irish Studies, Concordia University School of Irish Studies, Montréal, Québec. PhD graduate of Queen’s University, Belfast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó Laoire, Lillis</td>
<td>Sean-nós singer, writer, academic, and ethnomusicologist. Senior lecturer in Irish at the National University of Ireland, Galway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó Raghallaigh, Caoimhín</td>
<td>Professional musician (fiddle, hardanger d’amore). Member of The Gloaming and This is How we Fly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó Riada, Peadar</td>
<td>Professional musician (piano, organ, concertina, accordion). Director of Cór Chúil Aodha. Composer, arranger, and broadcaster on RTÉ Raidió na Gaeltachta. Founder of the Bonn Óir Seán Ó Riada prize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ó Súilleabháin, Míchéal (1950-2018)</td>
<td>Pianist, composer, academic, and founding director and professor emeritus of the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, established in 1994. Ó Súilleabháin is particularly noted for his integration of traditional and classical musics as a performer, composer, and arranger. Possibly the most influential and prolific figure in the development of Irish traditional music pedagogy in Irish higher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O’Brien-Moran, Jimmy</td>
<td>Musician (uilleann pipes, saxophone), and teacher. Lecturer in Irish traditional music at Waterford.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institute of Technology. PhD graduate of the Irish World Academy.

O’Brien, Eileen Professional musician (fiddle, piano), singer, composer and teacher. Fiddle tutor at the Irish World Academy.


O’Brien, Mick Professional musician (uilleann pipes, flute, and whistles), and teacher. First to perform traditional music for inter-cert (now junior certificate, usually taken after three years of second-level education) music examination in 1977. A recipient of the TG4 Gradam Ceoil Musical Collaboration Award in 2014 for a project with his daughter, Aoife Ní Bhriain, and musician, and composer, Emer Mayock.

O’Connell, Connie Professional fiddle player, teacher and composer. Fiddle tutor at the music department of University College Cork.

O’Connor, Liam Fiddle player, and teacher from Dublin. Classically trained as a violinist, O’Connor is a researcher, a former panel member of TG4 Gradam Ceoil’s selection committee, and a former board member of the Irish Traditional Music Archive. He is an occasional visiting tutor at the Irish World Academy, Dublin Institute of Technology, Dundalk Institute of Technology, and University College Dublin. In 2002, O’Connor was awarded TG4 Gradam Ceoil Young Musician of the Year.


O’Keeffe, Máire Fiddler and teacher based in county Galway. She graduated with a PhD from the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick in 2010.

O’Leary, Bryan Professional accordion player, teacher, and researcher. A graduate of the Irish World Academy’s BA in Irish Music and Dance, and MA in Irish

Rosenberg, Susanne Singer, and folk music lecturer at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden.

Ryan, Paddy Fiddle player and teacher from county Roscommon. He is the national music officer with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and he presents an Irish traditional music programme called The Heathery Breeze, on Shannonside Northern Sound Radio, which broadcasts to “the Border Counties, Midlands and West” (Shannonside Northern Sound Radio 2018).

Scahill, Adrian Musician (accordion and piano), ethnomusicologist, and lecturer in music at Maynooth University.

Shannon, Garry Flute player and teacher. Member of the Kilfenora Céili Band. Director of the Meitheal residential summer school. Graduate of the MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance from the Irish World Academy.

Smith, Christopher Musician, teacher, author, and Professor of Musicology and Director of the Vernacular Music Centre at Texas Tech’s School of Music, in the United States. He is a former external examiner of the BA in Irish Music and Dance at the Irish World Academy and a former visiting lecturer at the Irish World Academy, University College Cork, and Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Smith, Thérèse Ethnomusicologist, researcher, lecturer and Deputy Head of School at the School of Music at University College Dublin. She was the inaugural chair of ICTM Ireland, the Irish national committee of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM).

Taylor, Barry Author, researcher, and musician, with a special interest in the traditional music of west Clare.

Timonen, Vilma Kantele player from Finland. Lecturer in folk music at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland.

Tourish, Martin Professional musician (piano accordion), composer, and musicologist. Member of the band, Altan. A PhD (music) graduate of the Dublin Institute of Technology. Awarded TG4 Gradam Ceoil Young Musician of the Year in 2008.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Profession and Contributions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Vallely, Fintan</td>
<td>Traditional flute player, songwriter, and writer. He lectured regularly on Irish traditional music in Maynooth University, The University of Ulster, Trinity College Dublin, and Dundalk Institute of Technology from 1999. He was one of the primary instigators of both seminal Crossroads Conferences that focused on a variety of topical issues in Irish traditional music, and he is the editor of the Companion to Irish Traditional Music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vervelde, Leo</td>
<td>Bandonéon player and Artistic Director of the Rotterdam World Music Academy at Codarts University, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White, Harry</td>
<td>Professor of Music at University College Dublin. He is general editor with Barra Boydell of The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland (2013). A critical eye on the relationship between Irish traditional music and discourses around issues such as cultural nationalism, White's A Keeper's Recital, is an important starting point in deconstructing the symbolic and political use of music in Ireland, at the expense of what he views as the development of “a durable aesthetic of comparable significance to that which infused the Literary Revival” (Cork University Press 2018).</td>
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Appendix B: Interview Questions

Higher Education Representatives/Academics/Pedagogues presented in Overview of Irish Higher Education Music Programmes

- Can you describe the ways in which folk and/or traditional music feature in your institution’s music curricula?
- Could you speak about your institution’s ethos towards Irish traditional music pedagogy?
- Can you speak about your work at your institution?
- What attracted you to a career in higher education?
- In your opinion, how has the teaching of Irish traditional music in higher education impacted upon the genre?
- Could you speak about your views on the relationship between Irish traditional music in higher education and the wider Irish traditional music community?
- What do you hope that higher education can and/or should do for Irish traditional music?
- In what ways do you engage with, adapt, or depart from Western classical music education in your programme?
- As a performer, can you describe your experiences of combining performance and research?
- Have you personally encountered perceptions of any kind, to the presence of folk and/or traditional music in higher education?
  - If so, what do you believe motivates such perceptions?
Pedagogues/Academics (not featured in institutional overview) employed in Irish Higher Education

- Could you speak about your institution’s ethos towards Irish traditional music pedagogy?
- Can you speak about your work at your institution?
- What attracted you to a career in higher education?
- In your opinion, how has the teaching of Irish traditional music in higher education impacted upon the genre?
- Could you speak about your views on the relationship between Irish traditional music in higher education and the wider Irish traditional music community?
- What do you hope that higher education can and/or should do for Irish traditional music?
- In what ways do you engage with, adapt, or depart from Western classical music education in your programme?
- As a performer, can you describe your experiences of combining performance and research?
- Have you personally encountered perceptions of any kind, to the presence of folk and/or traditional music in higher education?
  - If so, what do you believe motivates such perceptions?
Stakeholders not employed in Higher Music Education

- What comes to mind when you think of Irish traditional music in Irish higher education?
- Could you speak about any involvement you have had with Irish traditional music in Irish higher education?
- What in your opinion, can and/or should higher education do for Irish traditional music?
- What would you include in an undergraduate Irish traditional music programme?
- Have you perceived any impacts on Irish traditional music due to its presence in Irish higher education?
- Have you personally encountered perceptions of any sort towards the institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in higher education?
  - If so, what do you believe motivates such perceptions?

Comparative Study Representatives/Academics/Pedagogues

- Can you describe the ways in which folk and/or traditional music feature in your institution’s music curricula?
- Could you speak about your institution’s ethos towards folk and/or traditional music pedagogy?
- Can you speak about your work at your institution?
- What attracted you to a career in higher education?
• In your opinion, how has the teaching of folk and/or traditional music in higher education impacted upon the genre?

• Could you speak about the relationship between folk music academia and the wider folk music community?

• What do you hope that higher education can and/or should do for the folk and/or traditional music?

• In what ways do you engage with, adapt, or depart from Western classical music education in your programme?

• As a performer, can you describe your experiences of combining performance and research?

• Have you personally encountered perceptions of any kind, to the presence of folk and/or traditional music in higher education?
  
  o If so, what do you believe motivates such perceptions?
Appendix C: Example of Coding Methodology

Transcript

JT: Could you speak about any involvement that you have had with the teaching of Irish traditional music in higher education?

MH: My only involvement has been at UL, well I’ve done a few other things in the States as well like, but I’ve come in and given masterclasses and workshops and things like that over the years and have enjoyed it. I’ve done the same in the Berklee School of Music in Boston and in the New England Conservatory as well, just once. I like it. I like the dialogue that goes on in those places and I like the fact that Irish music exists freely in those places now because that was another thing that didn’t happen way back also, you know? I read a book, I think it was called “Reading Jazz”. It was kind of about all that had been written about jazz up through the ’50s and blah, blah, blah, right up. But the music critics used to write about it in a way that they would have written about Irish music as well, you know, and the institutions were very resistant to it. The classical institutions in America were very resistant to jazz, and now it’s in them all. And I’ve seen the same thing happen with Irish music. It’s in the universities now. Like, it’s everywhere. And that’s a good thing. I mean it comes with some risks of course, but you probably have questions for that right? (laughs)

JT: What kind of risks?

MH: Well, it’s not a familiar environment for it to begin with. It’s now in a different social context as well. I think the big advantage is that people get to spend devoted amounts of time to their craft, to their music. To think about it, to explore it, to develop it. Now that’s certainly something that was more difficult to do without the institution, but I feel like I had a few years on my own where I managed to do that. Anyway, I was so in that world, that was all I did. But generally speaking, I think that is difficult to find so I think that is the main

Coding

Previous involvement/experience teaching Irish traditional music in a higher education environment

Perceived benefits of Irish traditional music in third-level education

Perceived challenges of Irish traditional music in third-level education

Valuable time and space afforded by higher education to focus on Irish traditional music practice – not available to the same extent externally
advantage. It provides that incredible break and opportunity for people to pursue these things. On the other hand, I think there is always the institutional risk, you know, of becoming very systematic, or becoming very dogmatic, maybe. I don’t know. One of the problems in institutions is that they want quantifiable results and quantifiability is difficult in this. It also leads to the risk that people will push for quantifiable results. That you will want measurable results, which means that the artistic end of things in a vague arena can become difficult to measure. The technical elements of one’s playing or the technique, or blah, blah, blah, becomes a very quantifiable thing that people can measure. I think that has happened with other musics, maybe not so much with Irish music, but I think it has happened with jazz and classical music where you have a vast supply of highly technically sophisticated musicians who are not sure what they’re doing and why they’re doing it, and not sure what they want to achieve beyond having a career. I think the institution always has some risk that it will create something like that, you know?

JT: You’ve made a great point about the platform or the time that the institution can give you to focus on your own artform. Hypothetically, if you were to turn the clock back and if you were to enrol on a music course, what would like to see, or what would you expect to see included in a curriculum in terms of Irish traditional music content?

MH: I would like it not to have any kind of any ideological bent or agenda implicit in the programme to begin with. I would like to see it very open with lots of possibilities and opportunities. And I would like the opportunity to meet and hear lots of musicians. And I think UL provide that, like. If I were to have that opportunity, I think I would like that. And I think also, in my own way I would have liked to have learned how to write music properly or how to score something. That would have been an advantage at this point, I think. I haven’t learned to do that. Maybe I can still do that.
Things like that. Basic elements of the music. But I think beyond that then, open and free, you know. You can be a traditionalist. You can be whatever you want you know because I'd be pretty independent-minded and mildly subversive myself so I wouldn't want too much imposed on me, ideologically anyway.

JT: And given the diversity and different approaches that we see in the thing we call Irish traditional music, how do you think that diversity is represented in third-level programmes?

MH: Well, I think UL are doing a pretty good job in terms of bringing in lots of different players, and fairly indiscriminately, you know? I mean from the traditional world as far as I can see. What I mean by indiscriminate is that, like, there are people who might be teaching at the local Comhaltas branch who are also coming in, so the political lines are being blurred in that sense. I'd say there's a good degree of confusion out there in the Irish music world about what UL is, and what potential it has, and what value it has, because you always had the argument that we did fine without it, which is true I suppose on some level, but I think maybe making the world at large a little more of what it is and what it's trying to do wouldn't hurt, but I think they have as much diversity as they can have in there, you know? Maybe they could drag some more hard-core traditionalists in there. Maybe if they could arm-wrestle the people who are not eager to be there. I'd say that there are a share of them out there with very strong opinions that they are unwilling to voice generally, but maybe they could be coaxed you know? Because there are dissenting voices to that probably need to be part of it you know? It's not something that you need to follow but it's no harm to hear it, and know that it's there, and understand why it's there.

JT: In a related question, what do you believe higher education can or should do for Irish traditional music?

MH: Well I think, for example, the amount of time that people had on their hands at one
point to congregate, to talk. They had more of it. We don't have it anymore in our lives now, so I think institutions make time and space for those kinds of things to happen. That's how I would like to imagine it you know? And maybe it could go even a little wider than the programme as it is. Even more open. Anybody could come in. Any time. Do you know what I mean? I don't know. You could just walk in and out of there. Why not? That other people could just be there. Just look. Just see. Just a play a tune. It's not something that I've given a lot of thought to so I'm really talking off the top of my head here but that could be a possibility.

JT: You've mentioned resistance to traditional music in higher education. Have you encountered this resistance yourself? Is it something that you have experienced or heard about?

MH: Oh yeah. I've heard plenty of comments about that. I probably don't want to go naming names at this point, but we wouldn't have to stretch ourselves to far to figure who may not like it and why. There is still a lot of politics in all of this. I suppose there is a fear of having kind of institutionalised the thought process around the music or there is a fear that a particular approach may become institutionalised and empowered through the process, and that it might marginalise other viewpoints, other viewpoints that don't have the weight of the institution behind them. They just have their own weight, you know? And some people feel a little threatened by it. Some people might not like the kind of musicians that are coming out of UL. They may not like the style. Some people don't like it to be all progressive and experimental. Some people have a problem with that. I don't. But some people do, and I understand where they are coming from too because if you love this music deeply in its traditional form, and I do too, if you love it deeply you can feel very protective of it and you can feel that it's being damaged or is being changed. And I think that is a heartfelt thing. It's not necessarily ignorance. I think you can't fell that way
without a lot of deep love and understanding of the music. If you don’t really love and understand the music in that way, you can’t feel that kind of passionate experience about it. I would heed what they say. On the other hand, as I said earlier, you can’t restrict what this is supposed to be about. It’s like you open a door and you’re not going to pre-determine the results here. It will get to where it will get but I think traditionalists’ view of the music should be part of it and should be allowed to flourish. I think it shouldn’t be seen as a challenge to the institution and what it’s about or a risk or anything.
Dear Participant,

My research involves an exploration of the Institutionalisation of Irish traditional music in third-level education systems in Ireland. In telling the story of Irish traditional music in third-level education, I plan to devote some of my time to gathering and documenting the opinions, sentiments and approaches of a range of individuals who have been chosen according to their experience and insight in this area of study, as well as those who have a strong association with Irish traditional music education, discourse and performance.

If you agree to contribute to my research, you will be asked to answer a number of questions in a recorded interview setting. Participation will simply involve a conversation based on a set of prepared questions. Each interview will be recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interview should only last for one hour in total, unless you wish to extend this for any reason. The interview will take place at a time and venue that is convenient to you. Each participant is entitled to refuse to reply to a given question.

Although the purpose of interviewing relevant figures in my research area is to document personal opinions and sentiments, I guarantee that anonymity will be granted should you request it and in such instances, a pseudonym will be used for you in the research text.

If for any reason, you wish to withdraw from my research at any stage, I guarantee that I will respect this wish and exclude your contribution from my work.

Should you have any questions or concerns about participating in this research, you are welcome to contact the University of Limerick Research Ethics Governance (ULREG) Committee at:

Chairperson of ULREG
c/o Dr. Maria Connolly
Corporate Secretary’s Office
University of Limerick
Castletroy
Limerick
Phone: 061 23 43935
If you have any questions relating to my research please do not hesitate to contact me at:

Jack Talty  
Irish World Academy of Music and Dance  
University of Limerick  
Email: jack.talty@ul.ie  
Tel: +353 87 612 0937

Should you wish to speak with my research supervisor, you can do so by contacting:

Dr. Aileen Dillane  
Room IW1.18  
Irish World Academy of Music and Dance  
University of Limerick  
Email: aileen.dillane@ul.ie  
Tel: +353 61 2029186
Consent Section: I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in research for the project entitled “The Ivory Tower and the Commons: An exploration of Irish Traditional Music in the Irish Tertiary-Level Education System in Ireland”.

- I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role in it and have been given the opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate.
- The nature of my participation has been explained to me and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used.
- I am also aware that my participation in this study may be recorded (video/audio) and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time I can request that the recording equipment be switched off. I am entitled to copies of all recordings made and am fully informed as to what will happen to these recordings once the study is completed.
- I fully understand that there is no obligation on me to participate in this study.
- I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without having to explain or give a reason.
- I am also entitled to full confidentiality in terms of my participation and personal details.

Signature of Participant: ________________________________

Date: __________________
The level of detail provided for each institution and programme varies according to the amount of information made available by each institution. It is possible that the following table does not contain all of the Irish traditional module content offered at each third-level institution, but it does reflect available institutional websites and syllabus materials and is accurate at the time of writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Title of Programme Featuring ITM Content</th>
<th>ITM Module Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Cork Institute of Technology Cork School of Music</td>
<td>Bachelor of Music</td>
<td>Instrumental/vocal performance tuition on a chosen instrument is provided in each semester of the four-year programme. This can include the performance of Irish traditional music.</td>
</tr>
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“Performing Traditions”

A mandatory module entitled Performing Traditions explores “the issues relating to context-sensitive performance practice in early music, and to foster an awareness, knowledge and understanding of Irish traditional music” (Cork Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Music (Honours) 2019).

“Advanced Studies in Irish Traditional Music”

Students can avail of an elective entitled Advanced Studies in Irish Traditional Music which explores form and structure, modes, tunes and tune-types, ornamentation, the historical and social contexts of Irish traditional music, cross-fertilisation and outside influences on the tradition, and an exploration of other types of folk musics (Cork Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Music (Honours) 2019).

“Instrumental Folk Tradition”
In this module, students examine traditional instruments and instrumental styles, and survey a range of important traditional music ensembles. The module examines “the instruments and instrumental styles used in Irish Traditional Music” and surveys “the various ensembles which played an important role in the rebirth and development of the music” (Cork Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Music (Honours) 2019).

"The Irish Folksong Tradition"

In semesters six and eight, an elective entitled *The Folksong Tradition* is offered. This module is a “study of Irish folksong from historical and social perspectives, incorporating a detailed study of the sean nós tradition and the various regional styles” (Cork Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Music (Honours) 2019).

"Innovation in Folkmusic"

This module aims to “explore past and present innovations in the field of folkmusic and to show an awareness of such innovations” (Cork Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Music (Honours) 2019).

"Dissertation"

Students may also take a dissertation elective, which involves undertaking research in a variety of areas, including Irish traditional music.

Master of Arts in Music

"Professional Studies"

At postgraduate level, traditional musicians who fulfil application criteria and pass an audition are eligible to complete a Master of Arts in Music performance on their chosen instrument. This postgraduate degree involves preparing and performing three public recitals as well as taking a course in Professional Studies, a module that prepares students for a professional performing career (Cork Institute of Technology, Master of Arts in Music (Taught) 2019).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Program/Module</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Music Dissertation”</td>
<td>This dissertation component “offers the learner the opportunity to extensively investigate a particular issue (or issues) related to music pedagogy or performance or other appropriate area of interest” (Cork Institute of Technology, Master of Arts in Music (Taught) 2019).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Master of Arts and Master of Science in Music and Technology | “Core Instrumental Studies”  
Both the Masters of Arts and Master of Science in Music and Technology feature an elective on Core Instrumental Studies, which can include the performance of Irish traditional music (Cork Institute of Technology, Master of Arts in Music and Technology) 2019). |
| MA and PhD by Research              | Various research topics relating to Irish traditional music and dance can be pursued. |
| The DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama | Bachelor of Music  
“Performance Studies”  
Performers of Irish traditional music engage in a Principal Study and Seminars and Specialist Recitals, which largely focus on the performance of a chosen instrument or voice (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, Bachelor of Music Programme Document 2019). |
<p>| “Ensemble”                          | Irish traditional musicians perform as part of the DIT Traditional Ensemble. This module aims to “develop the skills necessary for ensemble playing/singing”, to “provide the opportunity to explore the repertoire for the various ensembles in as many different styles as possible” and to “develop the necessary social skills to perform successfully in an ensemble” (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, Bachelor of Music Programme Document 2019). |
| “Irish Traditional Music: Repertoire, Style and Interpretation” |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish Traditional Music: Repertoire, Style and Interpretation 1 and 2</td>
<td>are offered in years one and two respectively and aims to “provide a wide-ranging overview of the Irish traditional musical repertoire, both vocal and instrumental, of the 19th and 20th centuries, and to consider its socio-historic context” (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, Bachelor of Music Programme Document 2019).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Introduction to Irish Traditional Music”</td>
<td>Introduction to Irish Music module is also offered in year one, and its goal is to “provide students with an introduction to the various aspects of Irish traditional music from the sixteenth century to the present day” (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, Bachelor of Music Programme Document 2019).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Instrumental Tradition”</td>
<td>According to programme documentation, this module “introduces the student to traditional Irish instrumental music and provides a general history and background. It will include tune types, repertoire and instruments with an overview of playing styles and techniques and an acquaintance with the main features of the traditional idiom” (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, Bachelor of Music Programme Document 2019).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Stylistic and Socio-historic Issues in ITM”</td>
<td>Both modules critically explore Irish traditional music and song from a socio-historic perspective (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, Bachelor of Music Programme Document 2019).</td>
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<td>Module</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“The Song Tradition”</strong></td>
<td>This module overviews traditional singing in Ireland (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, Bachelor of Music Programme Document 2019).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Dissertation”</strong></td>
<td>This <em>Dissertation</em> module involves completing an essay of between 8,000 and 10,000 words on a topic relating to their Irish Traditional Music Studies strand. Research methodology classes are also taken as part of this module (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, Bachelor of Music Programme Document 2019).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor of Music Education (in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin and The Royal Irish Academy of Music)</td>
<td><strong>“Instrumental Performance”</strong> In the <em>Instrumental Performance</em> module, students focus on both solo and ensemble performance of Irish traditional music and song (Trinity College Dublin School of Education 2019).</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>“Music History”</strong> In a <em>Music History</em> module, students explore both Art Music and Irish Traditional Music. Among the topics covered in the Irish Traditional Music component are general surveys of the song and instrumental tradition, the Bardic tradition, the Harp, the history, form, and structure of dance music, the collectors, and modes. The module also focuses on the Irish traditional music element featured in the Junior and Leaving Certificate curricula (Trinity College Dublin School of Education 2019).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In a <em>Major Option</em> module, students can engage with the performance of Irish traditional music through a number of recital options (Trinity College Dublin School of Education 2019).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Master of Music in Performance and Postgraduate Diploma in Music Performance.</strong></td>
<td>The performance of Irish traditional music and song features in both the masters degree and diploma programme in such modules as <em>Performance Studies, Analysis and Performance Practice, and Ensemble.</em> Masters degree students can also pursue research interests in Irish traditional music in a research project module that produces a dissertation of between 12,000 and 15,000 words with an accompanying commentary report of 5,000 to 7,000 words. In <em>Performance Studies</em> students focus on voice or primary instrument. In <em>Analysis and Performance Practice,</em> students reflect on their own performance practices in the contexts of musicology, and performance practice scholarship, and <em>Ensemble</em> involves preparing and performing Irish traditional music in group settings (DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama Master of Music (Performance) Student Handbook 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MA and PhD by research</strong></td>
<td>Various research topics relating to Irish traditional music and dance can be pursued.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Section of Music, School of Informatics and Creative Arts, Dundalk Institute of Technology** | **“Performance Skills”**

These are mandatory modules that provide students with tuition in Irish traditional music, Western classical music, and jazz and popular music. This module also involves performance in an ensemble focused on one of the above genres, as well as participation in choir and vocal training (DkIT Department of Creative Arts, Media & Music 2019). |
| **BA in Applied Music** | **“Music Studies”**

*Music Studies,* a mandatory module that features an exploration of styles and genres within Irish music (DkIT Department of Creative Arts, Media & Music 2019). |
| | **“Irish Music History”**

In semester two of first year, students take a module entitled *Irish Music: History,* which provides an historical overview of Irish traditional music that includes social and political impacts |
upon Irish traditional music as well as its repertoire, instrumentation, and dance tradition. Topics discussed include: Carolan and other harpers; harp festivals and collectors; harp revival: the harp in the 19th century; dance in social and cultural contexts; solo dance forms; dance stage shows and professionalism; the uilleann pipes: introduction, styles and construction; and the piping tradition - historical and modern (DkIT Department of Creative Arts, Media & Music 2019).

**“The Irish Song Traditions”**

A mandatory module entitled *The Irish Song Traditions* is offered in the second semester of year two. According to course documentation “the aim of this module is to provide students with a thorough understanding of the elements of and inter-relationships among the Irish song traditions” (DkIT Department of Creative Arts, Media & Music 2019).

**“Performance Development 1 and 2”**

These are mandatory modules offered in semester one, and two of year two respectively. Similar to *Performance Skills*, students focus on performing on their primary or secondary instrument, ensemble playing, choir, and participation in popular music and jazz, classical music, and traditional music (DkIT Department of Creative Arts, Media & Music 2019).

**“Irish Music: Styles and Aesthetics”**

This is a mandatory module taken in semester two of year two, and it aims to provide “students with a knowledge and understanding of the uses and applications of Irish Traditional music into the twenty-first century” (DkIT Department of Creative Arts, Media & Music 2019).

**“Tradition, Innovation and Politics”**

“This module provides students with an understanding and appreciation of the
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Module</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>relationship between music and politics with a focus on folk and traditional musics. It informs on the roles of the State and extra-State agencies in shaping present-day music forms and standards” (DkIT Department of Creative Arts, Media &amp; Music 2019).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>“The 'Celtic' Music Worlds”</td>
<td>“This module introduces the student to Celtic music forms and traditions. It informs in detail on Scottish music and Folk music of England, observes the similarities in ethos among Irish traditional music and the music of other Celtic traditions, and introduces students to performance aspects of all material covered” (DkIT Department of Creative Arts, Media &amp; Music 2019).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Irish Music: Solo and Ensemble Style”</td>
<td>This module aims to “expand the students’ overview of Irish traditional music in performance and develop through listening, discussion and analysis an appreciation of stylistic elements and styles in solo and ensemble performance” (DkIT Department of Creative Arts, Media &amp; Music 2019).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Master of Arts in Traditional Music Studies (Taught) | According to the course documentation for this 2-semester online masters programme, students will study:  
  - “Irish Traditional music performance style and contexts”  
  - “Traditional music collection and archiving”  
  - “Scottish music style, forms and repertoire”  
  - “Popular music aesthetics and sociology”  
  - “English Traditional music and song”  
  - “Folk musics of Europe”  
  - “Transmission, education and technology”  
  (DkIT Department of Creative Arts, Media & Music 2019). |
<p>| MA and PhD by research | Various research topics relating to Irish traditional music and dance can be pursued. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Music Department at Maynooth University</th>
<th>Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts</th>
<th>&quot;Performance&quot;</th>
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<td>In semesters one and two of second year, a module entitled <em>Performance II</em>, gives traditional performers the option of performing in an Irish traditional music ensemble and students are also assessed on their first-study, or primary instrument (Maynooth University Bachelor of Music 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<th>&quot;Ensemble&quot;</th>
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<tr>
<td>In semesters one and two of year two, <em>Ensemble II</em> again affords performers of Irish traditional music the opportunity to perform Irish traditional music in a group context. <em>Ensemble III</em>, taken in year three, again facilitates a focus on Irish traditional music in the context of ensemble playing. Opting to pursue a double recital option in third year provides a performer of Irish traditional music with the possibility of preparing and performing a 25-30-minute recital, amounting to 20 credits, or a third of all credits for third year (Maynooth University Bachelor of Music 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<th>&quot;Introduction to Irish Traditional Music&quot;</th>
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<tr>
<td>This module, offered in semester one of year two, and again in semester one of year three, provides “a general introduction to the various forms of Irish traditional music, both instrumental and vocal, through a historical survey of the tradition” (Maynooth University Bachelor of Music 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<th>&quot;Critical Studies in Irish Traditional Music&quot;</th>
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<tr>
<td>According to course documentation, this module “focuses on recent musicological work on Irish traditional music, particularly concentrating on aspects of the contemporary tradition. Students will engage with a range of key traditional recordings and musicological texts, critically examining the music through topics such as style, gender, tourism, globalisation, and innovation” (Maynooth University Bachelor of Music 2019).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA in Irish Traditional Music</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
|  |  | • “Fieldwork and Source Studies”  
• “Theory & Practice in Irish Traditional Music”  
• “Sound Recording Techniques”  
• “Music in Ireland”  
• “Irish Musical Critique”  
• “Music Recording Project”  
• “Major Project (Performance or Recording)”  
• “Minor Thesis”  
• “Major Thesis”  
• “Minor Performance” |
| MLitt and PhD by Research | At postgraduate level, MLitt and PhD candidates can explore original research on a diverse range of topics, including research on Irish traditional music. |  |
| Centre for Irish Studies at the National University of Ireland Galway | Bachelor of Arts in Modern Irish Culture Studies | Irish traditional music studies at the Centre for Irish Studies are delivered through the disciplinary lens of Irish Studies. |
|  |  | Included among the modules that explore Irish traditional music content are: |
|  |  | “Traditional Music and Dance since 1893”  
According to course documentation, this module surveys the “development of traditional music and dance in Ireland from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. It will explore the key moments |
and leading figures in the movement of these expressive forms from a traditional setting to a modern context and examine the consequences of these changes. In particular, revival, as a process and ideology, will be explored” (National University of Ireland Galway, Irish Studies (Literature and Music) 2019).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Irish Music and Emigration”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This module examines “Irish music and migration from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first century. In particular, the module will explore music and cultural practices as they evolved and responded to migrant contexts in North America and Britain. The reciprocal influences of Irish traditional practices and American folk and popular music will also be investigated. Finally, key developments such as the advent of music recording and folk music revival of the 1960s will be assessed” (National University of Ireland Galway, Irish Studies (Literature and Music) 2019).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Other module subject areas include:

- “Festival, Ritual and Commemoration”
- “Constructing Identities in Music and Dance”
- “Music, Gender, and Ireland”

MA in Irish Studies (Literature and Music)

According to course documentation, the “MA Irish Studies (Literature and Music) offers two alternative, academic pathways. All students share modules in both Literature and Music and select additional modules in their specific area of interest, weighting their studies towards Literature or Music” (National University of Ireland Galway, MA in Irish Studies 2019).

Modules relating to Irish traditional music include:

“Writing Irish traditional music: The development of Irish music studies, 1792-1950”

This module “will critically examine the ways in which Irish music lives and practices are written in literary, scholarly and popular cultural domains
from 1792 to 1950” (National University of Ireland Galway, MA in Irish Studies 2019).

| “Representing Irish Traditional Music” | According to course documentation, “in the first instance, this module surveys literary, scholarly and popular culture representations of Irish traditional music in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Parallel to that, through a survey of ethnographic methodologies, processes and products, the module will also investigate ethnography as a model for the representation of Irish music lives” (National University of Ireland Galway, MA in Irish Studies 2019). |
| | “Tuning the Archive” |
| | This module “investigates cultural and theoretical perspectives on the archival paradigm in order to develop strategies for presenting and interpreting archive material. It will critically examine Irish traditional music and related archives held at the James Hardiman Library (JHL), and in other repositories held both nationally and internationally” (National University of Ireland Galway, MA in Irish Studies 2019). |
| MLitt and PhD by Research | Graduates who wish to pursue academic research in Irish traditional music and dance studies may undertake such research as an MLitt candidate. Similarly, original research in Irish traditional music and dance studies may also be explored at doctoral level. |
| O’Donoghue Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance at the National University of Ireland Galway | Some electives from the BA in Irish Studies are offered. These include: |
| Bachelor of Arts in Drama, Theatre and Performance | “Traditional Music and Dance since 1893” |
| | In addition, Drama students attend introductory lectures on Irish traditional music provided by lecturer Mary McPartlan and visiting lecturers. |
| College of Arts, Social Sciences, & Celtic Studies, School of Humanities at the National University of Ireland Galway | Bachelor of Arts in Music | According to the programme overview, this course “offers a BA in Music and one other subject. It allows students to develop an understanding of the history, theory and practice of music. It is especially well suited to those who wish to teach music after graduation; students also receive training in arts management and other transferrable professional skills” (National University of Ireland Galway, Bachelor of Arts (Music) 2019). The BA in Music can include studies from the BA in Irish Studies, and the following Irish traditional music modules are offered:

- “Irish Music and Emigration”
- “Performing Ireland: Traditional Irish Music & Dance since 1893” |

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The School of Music and Theatre, University College Cork</th>
<th>Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts</th>
<th>“Performance”</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Irish traditional music, song and dance classes are provided, and assessments of performance are made.</td>
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<tr>
<th>“Exploring Irish Traditional Music”</th>
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<tr>
<td>This module consists of “an examination of Irish traditional music in its historical and cultural contexts” with a view to developing “students’ critical engagement with Irish traditional music” (University College Cork Book of Modules 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<th>“Irish Traditional Music Studies and Introduction to World Music”</th>
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<td>The aim of this module is “to develop understanding of ideas and methods in the study</td>
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<td>Module Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Irish Traditional Music Ensemble&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Uilleann Pipes in Irish Traditional Music&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Exploring Irish Traditional Arts&quot;</td>
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</table>
| "Collectors, Collections and Fieldwork in Irish Traditional Music"        | “This module examines a number of collections within the Irish musical tradition. It explores the work and lives of some of the most important music collectors including Bunting, O'Farrell, Goodman, O'Neill and Ennis. The collections
themselves are examined together with the social environment and historical context in which the work was carried out, i.e. pre-famine, post-famine and the American recording era of the early 20th century. Students will also be introduced to the art of fieldwork where they will have hands-on practical experience in making their own collection” (University College Cork Book of Modules 2019).

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<tr>
<th>The Irish World Academy, University of Limerick</th>
<th>BA in Performing Arts (Irish Traditional Music) and BA in Performing Arts (Irish Traditional Dance)</th>
<th>“Performance”</th>
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<td></td>
<td>“Here students will develop core skills with one-on-one instrumental classes, classes with visiting performers, theory and keyboard classes” (Irish World Academy Undergraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Irish World Academy Practicum”</td>
<td>“Here students will engage in ensemble work with in-house and visiting tutors well as have the opportunity to select other collaborative performance practices in other folk, world and popular music and dance traditions” (Irish World Academy Undergraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Critical Encounters with Irish Music and Dance”</td>
<td>“Issues addressed in this module will be taken from current research engagements with the native Irish music and dance traditions. These will critically engage historical narratives, conceptual structuring and evolving identities of the traditions in question. Students will be introduced to concepts of research as a creative, scholarly practice” (Irish World Academy Undergraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Irish Music and Dance Studies”</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>This module</strong></td>
<td>“will more deeply engage issues in Irish traditional music and dance studies and, in this context, to apply cultural theory to Irish music and dance Studies in a deeper and more creative way. Themes of difference and identity as relevant to traditional musicians in the past and present will be interrogated. Issues will be focused on in the areas of Irish and English Language Song; the multitude of Irish dance styles as well as instrumental practice. These are to be addressed using a thematic approach which will engage theoretical areas such as identity, ethnicity, globalisation and the meaning of tradition. As such this is a research led module” (Irish World Academy Undergraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Skills for the Performing Arts</strong></td>
<td>“This module will examine issues pertinent to the lives of professional musicians and dancers. Issues such as promotion, effective communication, industry structures, touring, dealing with statutory arts bodies and funding structures will be practically engaged. Classes may feature professionals working in these fields and regular faculty with relevant experience. This aspect of the module is supported by a lecture series and assessed through attendance and written assignments in the form of professional portfolios and resources” (Irish World Academy Undergraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“Irish World Academy Final Year Project”</strong></td>
<td>“The student works in a one on one context with supervisor in this module while receiving certain skills training to enable them to fill out the structure of the FYP started in the previous semester. Students will produce their own unique piece of research in a genre and disciplinary approach to the performing arts of their own choosing (Irish World Academy Undergraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>MA in Irish Traditional</strong></td>
<td><strong>“Traditional Irish Music Practicum”</strong></td>
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<td>Module</td>
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<td>Music Performance</td>
<td>“In this module students create, design and manage their own performance programme under the supervision of the Course Director. To this end students attend instrumental / voice classes with tutors in a variety of teaching contexts, adopted in accordance with the needs of the student and the optimum teaching environment for the tutor. These classes will be masterclass style. As part of this module there is also an emphasis on various ensemble performances, which are constructed in workshops led by the students and visiting tutors” (Irish World Academy Postgraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Professional Development for the Performing Arts”</td>
<td>“This module engages with aspects of planning and management for professional artists, Students learn about the development of business plans, effective communication and pitching strategies, stakeholder development and core skills for the creative industries, such as financial management and planning” (Irish World Academy Postgraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Independent Study”</td>
<td>“This module provides a space to engage in the study of a topic/subject of their own choice. Students organise their tuition and the assessment mechanism in consultation with their course director. A broad range of existing modules from the various postgraduate offers at the Academy is also available for students to choose from” (Irish World Academy Postgraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Irish Traditional Music Project”</td>
<td>“This module has two parts. In the first part, students will study the history, theory and practice of Irish traditional music. Additionally, students will study and develop skills in vocational areas associated with the performance of traditional music in a contemporary context” (Irish World Academy Postgraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Final Presentation”</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA in Irish Traditional Dance Performance</td>
<td>“Repertoire and Style in Irish Traditional Dance Performance”</td>
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<td>“This module will introduce students to the repertoire of Irish Traditional Dance within a variety of historical, theoretical, and dance performance contexts; performance/lectures based on repertoire and style will be taught and academically contextualised; the development of different dance genres including the development of performance practices and contexts, structures, kinetic vocabulary, aesthetics, gender issues, the body; relevant literature and audio-visual dance material. In addition, students are encouraged to participate in relevant dance workshops” (Irish World Academy Postgraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>“Dance Practicum”</strong></td>
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<td>“Intensive tutorials with master dance teachers. Students will design and rehearse a performance programme under the supervision of the course director” (Irish World Academy Postgraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<td><strong>“IWAMD Autumn Elective”</strong></td>
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<td>“This module offers students the opportunity to pursue self-directed learning of an academic or performance-based project, under the guidance of the course director and an elective supervisor. The student may wish to use the elective to pursue more specialised study in his/her area of specialisation, or to access the other areas of”</td>
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<td>Course</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA in Irish Music Studies</td>
<td>The MA Irish Music Studies caters for people who wish to study Irish Music (traditional, folk, classical and related genres) from critical, cultural, historical, musicological, and analytical perspectives. The programme draws upon considerable expertise from across the Academy’s wide range of disciplinary approaches, exploring and expanding ideas of what constitutes ‘Irish music’, from historical and contemporary perspectives. The Irish World Academy of Music and Dance has become a leading centre for the study of Irish traditional music in particular, and while this genre informs some of the content of this MA, it is one of a number of Irish musics that may be pursued as part of the programme. You are also encouraged to engage with the discourse through your own performance/compositional practice, if desired and where appropriate (Irish World Academy Postgraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Final Presentation”</td>
<td>The final presentation involves the final submission – academic, performance or combination of both, offered by the student as the culmination of his/her work during the course of the programme. The presentation is designed in consultation with the course director and is weighted at nine credits (Irish World Academy Postgraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Framing Irish Music: Sources and Discourses”</td>
<td>No information available online.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Irish Traditional Music Performance Research Seminar”</td>
<td>No information available online.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Critical Engagements with Irish Traditional Music”</td>
<td>No further information available online.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Final Presentation”</td>
<td>“(A written thesis or a combination of a thesis with performance)”</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA in Irish Dance Studies</td>
<td>“The MA Irish Dance Studies is a one-year, full-time taught postgraduate programme. It considers Irish dance practices and related idioms within cultural, historical and practice-based perspectives. Students on the programme critically engage with relevant literature and dance practices and undertake field research in a relevant Irish dance study of their choice. The aim of the programme is to provide students with contextual, historical, dance notation, and embodied knowledge relating to different Irish dance practices. It also provides an invaluable foundation for those wishing to pursue dance research to doctoral level” (Irish World Academy Postgraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>“History of Irish Traditional Dance”</td>
<td>No further information available online.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Repertoire and Style in Irish Traditional Dance Performance”</td>
<td>See module description in MA in Irish Traditional Dance Performance above.</td>
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<td>MA and PhD by Research</td>
<td>Various research topics relating to Irish traditional music and dance can be pursued at MA and PhD level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>University College Dublin School of Music</td>
<td>PhD Arts-Practice</td>
<td>“The PhD Arts Practice is a four year, structured PhD programme, designed to meet the needs of professional performing artists who wish to engage in academic and practice-based reflection on their own artistic practice. The programme involves a combination of taught modules and independent research” (Irish World Academy Postgraduate Programmes 2019).</td>
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<tr>
<td>University College Dublin School of Music</td>
<td>Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Arts</td>
<td>Although the department mainly attracts performers of classical music, traditional musicians are eligible for entry and perform examination concerts through their primary performance genre, Irish traditional music.</td>
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<tr>
<td>University College Dublin School of Music</td>
<td>“Studies in Irish Music”</td>
<td>No further information available online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University College Dublin School of Music</td>
<td>MLitt and PhD by Research</td>
<td>In addition, postgraduate research may be explored at masters and doctoral levels</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Department of Creative and Performing Arts, School of Humanities, Waterford Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts in Music</td>
<td>“Performance”</td>
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<td>The Department of Creative and Performing Arts, School of Humanities, Waterford Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>This module involves solo instrumental and vocal lessons, and group music activities. General Musicianship also focuses on Irish traditional music through a practical performance examination. In semester 2, performance and musicianship modules are retained while new opportunities to study Irish traditional music history are offered. In the remaining semesters, up to graduation at the end of year four, students engage with Irish traditional music through ensemble and solo performance, and further modules on the history of Irish traditional music are also offered. Students also engage with Irish traditional music in a “Music History” module (Waterford Institute of Technology, Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Music 2019).</td>
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<td>University College Dublin School of Music</td>
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