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Instrumental Music Learning in an Irish Bimusical Context

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Submitted for the award of PhD

**Technological University Dublin
Conservatory of Music and Drama**

September 2018

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on bimusical instrumental learning, exploring the perceptions, beliefs and musical practices of students who are simultaneously engaged in learning classical and Irish traditional musics. The literature on bimusicality addresses how it has evolved in various social and educational contexts. This research focuses on the bimusical learning processes and practices of students, aged sixteen to twenty years, as they cross between the different learning modes associated with these two musical traditions in an Irish context.

This qualitative study adopts a collective case study approach, using a purposive sampling strategy. Data collected include: videotaped lessons, recorded practice/playing sessions, observations of a range of music-making activities, and interviews with the participants, their parents and teachers. The seven participants were chosen from various formal and informal learning contexts and represent a range of instruments: a saxophonist/traditional flute/uilleann piper; two violinist/fiddlers; a cellist/uilleann pipes/whistle player; a classical/traditional harpist/concertina player; a pianist/flute player; and a pianist/accordion player.

The research findings highlight the individuality of these students' bimusical practices and are suggestive of a more nuanced image of the natural bimusical musician than was perhaps indicated in earlier literature. There is evidence of different levels of immersion, participation, commitment and, to some extent, fluency in the participants' involvement in the two traditions. The research illustrates how issues such as diversity, choice, ease and ownership are important to these students as they sustain their musical involvements in both traditions. The communal/social dimension of music making receives special attention, particularly in the context of group music making. Such concepts as tradition, innovation and identity also emerge as the thesis explores how these young musicians negotiate the many similarities, confluences and contrasts of their individual bimusical worlds.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis which I now submit for examination for the award of PhD, is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

This thesis was prepared according to the regulations for postgraduate study by research of the Dublin Institute of Technology and has not been submitted in whole or in part for another award in any other third level institution.

The work reported on in this thesis conforms to the principles and requirements of the DIT's guidelines for ethics in research.

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Signature _____ Date _____

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABRSM	Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
AEC	Association of European Conservatories
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BMus	Bachelor in Music
DYO	Dublin Youth Orchestra
ITMA	Irish Traditional Music Archive
INTO	Irish National Teachers Organisation
CCE	Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann
CMC	Contemporary Music Centre
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
MEND	Music Educational National Debate
NPU	Na Píobaí Uilleann
NSO	National Symphony Orchestra
RIAM	Royal Irish Academy of Music
TG4	Teilifís na Gaeilge (The Irish public service broadcaster)
TY	Transition Year (intermediate year between secondary school junior and senior cycles at Secondary school)
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles

GLOSSARY

ABC notation or ABCs refers to ‘the most common simple tune notation system which is alphabetic, using the letter A-G to represent the note pitches’ (Vallely, 2011).

‘**Ag Seinn**’ (translates as ‘playing’). In this study it also refers to a local Co Cavan community based initiative which encouraged young children’s involvement in learning Irish traditional music.

Cáirde na Cruite (‘friends of the harp’) an organisation which has played a central role in the revival and development of interest in the Irish harp.

Céilí refers to a ‘social evening’ or ‘Irish dancing session’ (Ó Dónaill, 1977).

Céilí band originally accompanied céilí and/or set dancing. However, within contemporary culture these bands more often function as a purely performance ensemble akin to what Keegan describes as the ‘listening céilí band’ (Keegan and Vallely, 2011). Several students in this research attend regular céilí band practices, preparing for *céilí band* competitions.

Ceilíhouse is a radio programme of Irish traditional music and song broadcast by Raidió Teilifís Éireann (RTÉ), the national public service broadcaster of Ireland.

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ) (‘association of Irish musicians’) (often referred to as *Comhaltas*) is an organisation which promotes Irish traditional music, song, dance, language and Irish cultural traditions, through a range of activities: weekly classes and activities at local community branch level; workshops, an annual summer school, competitions, tours of performance at national level. Education and community based music making is central CCÉ’s aims.

Conradh na Gaeilge (‘Gaelic league’) is a ‘democratic forum for the Irish-speaking communities’ and is the main body promoting the Irish in every aspect of life in Ireland, through advocacy, education, empowering communities, entertainment / festivals..

Feis Ceoil (‘music festival’) is a competition / concert forum for Irish music and music in general in Ireland. The first *Feis* took place in 1897, set up by members of the

Literary Society and the Gaelic League. Since then many other *Feiseanna* were established, for example, Sligo *Feis Ceoil* (1903), *Feis Átha Cliath* (1904), Fermanagh County *Feis* (1905), Belfast Musical Festival (1908), *Feis Maitiú*, Cork, (1927), *Feis Ardmhacha*, Armagh (1932), Féile Luimnighe, Limerick (1944) (Nugent, 2011)

Fleadh Ceoil ('festival of music') is an Irish traditional music festival with concerts, céilí/set dancing, and traditional sessions. At its core is the tiered competition system consisting of local (county/regional) and provincial level competitions (known as *Fleadhs*') in music, song, language and dance. The culmination of these preliminary rounds or *Fleadhs* which take place over several months is ***Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann*** (all-Ireland music festival). (Nugent, 2011).

Gael-linn ('Irish pool') is an organisation, founded in 1953, to promote the Irish language and its heritage throughout Ireland as a living language and expression of identity, through a range of educational, language promotional schemes and through business (record publishing, concerts, drama, film making and language teaching).

Geantraí is an Irish traditional music television series, broadcast by RTÉ, the national public service broadcaster of Ireland.

Grupaí ceoil (music group) described on the CCÉ website as 'mixed musical ensembles'.

Music Manifesto is a UK government initiative which was set up in 2004 to support the creative industries and improve young people's music education.

Pléaráca is a CCÉ group competition incorporating music song and dance within the same performance.

Reel on Wheels are informal 'pop-up' Irish traditional sessions organised for teenage musicians in various Dublin locations.

Scór is a competition organised by the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), covering various aspects of Irish culture: Figure/Céilí Dancing, Solo Singing, Ballad Group, Recitation, Stage Presentation, Instrumental Music, Set Dancing and Table Quiz.

Siansa ('strains of music') is a competitive group performance activity of Irish traditional music and song launched by Gael-linn in 2001 as part of their programme of cultural activities for schools for students under nineteen years of age.

Sliabh Luachra: is a geographical area spanning parts of Cork / Kerry counties, renowned for its traditional regional style of music.

Slógadh was a performance/competition based youth arts festival series run by Gael Linn from 1969 to 2001 (Ní Chinnéide, 2013). It involved several local events and culminated in a national competition. It catered to all kinds of music. The literary and dramatic elements of the festival were equally important (Nugent, 2011).

Solfa (solfége) is a system of solmisation (sound syllables) which is used as a memory aid for reading music (Campbell, 1991).

Traditional (as opposed to **folk**) is the widely used term in the discourse of Irish traditional music (O'Flynn, 2009). The abbreviated version 'trad' features regularly in the conversation of the students in this research.

Oireachtas (assembly or gathering), established in 1897 by the Gaelic league (*Conradh na Gaeilge*), is a festival celebrating the arts among the Irish speaking communities and within the Irish language movement. It has a competitive, celebratory and social focus (Nugent, 2011).

Oireachtas na Samhna (November Oireachtas or November gathering) is the annual November *Oireachtas* gathering in various locations.

Uilleann pipes ('elbow' pipes) is the Irish form of the bagpipes. 'It is the most highly developed of all bagpipes, having a chanter capable of sounding two full octaves, as well as other features not found on other bagpipes' (Na Píobairí Uilleann, n.d.).

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INTRODUCTION

But what do we mean, anyway, when we talk about learning music? ... We learn a musical repertory (which is differentially distributed through society). And we learn, as it were, our musical culture, the things about music that everyone knows and understands, and that serve as a background for the musical activity of those who may study formally and become specialists.

(Bruno Nettl, 2007: 829)

This study is concerned with understanding how bimusical instrumental learning processes and practices operate by exploring the perceptions, beliefs and multi-musical practices of students simultaneously engaged in classical and Irish traditional music learning. This phenomenon has been addressed in academic literature in relation to its evolution in various cultures and societies and also in the context of ethnomusicological and educational research and music education contexts. This research examines bimusical learning (learning of classical and Irish traditional music) among young musicians in an Irish context. While these young people's musical worlds may well incorporate broader soundscapes reflecting a variety of engagements with other musics, this study focuses on the processes and practices of their bimusical learning in classical and Irish traditional music.

Framework for the Research

The framework for this research is based on the different learning practices and understandings ascribed in the literature to learning bimusically, with particular reference to classical and Irish traditional musics. The researcher's own insider experience also informs the research. The study encompasses the social dynamics of learning, learning processes and the experience of being bimusical.

1. The social dynamics of learning: The formal, the informal, the situational, the relational, the individual and the social aspects of the learning experience all underpin the differing streams of learning and their transmission practices.
2. Learning processes: There is considerable emphasis in the literature on oral/aural approaches typical of folk music transmission and literate pedagogies associated

with classical music learning. This aural/literate dynamic frames an exploration of learning processes, such as the role of aural learning, notational practices, memory, habits of practice, style and interpretation, analysis, acquisition of technique and improvisation.

3. Experience of being bimusical: These bimusical learning and performance settings provide the socio-cultural context in which the students experience and build their understanding of ‘musical being’ in the world, thus leading to an understanding of ‘multiple practices and conceptions of music’ (O’Flynn, 2005: 199). These multiple practices, contexts and conceptions form an important framework for the beliefs and meanings that the students construct as a result of simultaneous learning in these two genres.

Researcher Experience

I came to this topic as a result of my own music learning and teaching experiences in that I grew up in the west of Ireland in Co. Clare, ‘experiencing the world of the formally trained classical musician and the informal aural learning typical of Irish traditional music transmission’ (Heneghan, 1996). My musical world evolved around these two genres and whatever incidental background music was heard on the national television station. Music learning in these two traditions consisted of both individual and group activities. Classical music learning was secondary school-based, along with weekly solo piano lessons. These were both formally organised activities with an examination focus. ‘Classical’ school music consisted of Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate music classes—focusing on musicianship, theory and aural development—as well as group music making in the form of school choirs and Saturday morning orchestral rehearsals. The orchestra was led by two wonderfully enthusiastic, inclusive and committed musicians, Sr. Paul and Sr. Flannan, who included me in this vibrant ensemble with my traditional wooden flute. Sitting behind the music stand, following a score and a conductor, was quite different to the usual experience of the Irish traditional musician. For the most part, the world of the solo piano student featured individual lessons and home practice, along with yearly exams. Public performances were rare and generally involved competitions or family gatherings. In contrast, my traditional music learning and playing was something that

happened outside of the school context in various guises. These included mixed group instrumental lessons (and playing) and the occasional one-to-one lesson with a variety of instrumentalists (uilleann pipes, fiddle, flute and button accordion players). A variety of ensemble settings were also a feature of my Irish traditional music learning. Some of these ensemble contexts were linked to competitions and performances, such as *grupaí ceoil*, céilí bands and ballad groups as well as stage shows and tours. There was also a lot of informal playing at home with siblings, neighbours and friends, as well as music making in friends' homes, parish halls and pub sessions.

While there was a social group dimension to learning in both of these musical genres, the formality of the 'in school' classical music rehearsals of the choirs and orchestra (in an all-girls school) contrasted dramatically with the inter-generational traditional 'out of school' music making that happened in a variety of organised and informal contexts. As described above, sometimes there was a competition or performance focus but very often it was purely social, with an emphasis on participating through playing, singing or dancing. Such events afforded the opportunity to learn new tunes from peers and more experienced players.

On reflection, the emphasis in each of these musics was quite different and it is, and has been, fascinating to note (both as a learner and a teacher) how different a person can be in their musical engagement in the two musical traditions. For example, in my case, playing fluently by ear, hearing and thinking in pitch in one tradition, and yet operating completely differently, musically, in a notation-based classical tradition. Although I experienced both aural and literate approaches in Irish traditional music learning, there was always a fundamental emphasis on learning by ear, playing from memory and 'making the tune your own' through phrasing, ornamentation and variation, developed aurally. In contrast, my experience of the classical musical world was literacy dependent, even in performance contexts, and there was a solid emphasis on musicianship, notational accuracy and technical skill.

The differing emphasis of these musics impacted in other ways. A sense of being permanently in training, improving through practice, always moving on, aiming for the next grade or examination in a clearly defined classical system contrasted with an Irish traditional scene that, to me, seemed to emphasise the social aspects and playing

and ‘picking up’ tunes. Indeed, the whole notion of performance and playing differed between these musics. For me, the formality of playing and performing (both solo and ensemble) with the score and following a conductor in classical music contrasted with the *ad hoc* group playing by ear in traditional, where sets of tunes, suggested by the players, are played from memory, with musicians listening keenly and carefully observing tune changes. These two learning and playing contexts created very different social dynamics—the classical formal school music activities and the world of the solo pianist and the largely informal, communal, social, and intergenerational Irish traditional music making scene. Irish traditional music playing took up a lot of one’s free time, especially during holidays, and there were times when it seemed to be almost a way of life. Yet for me, both musics were enormously important and vast amounts of time were devoted to each genre.

Over the years, my experience of being involved in both traditions seemed very much like being part of two different worlds that, for the most part, remained distinct and separate, even to the extent that one ‘world’ often failed to acknowledge the other. I consider that I was a different person musically in each of these traditions. My involvement in these two genres posed some challenges for me as a learner, but my bimusicality also brought some advantages:

- Aural learning (in my case, playing by ear) negatively impacted on notation skills in the early stages of learning and was not encouraged in my classical studies. Aural and memory development, in my opinion, impacted positively on my classical music studies in other ways: memorising music, completing dictations, general musicality of playing.
- The lack of emphasis on technique in the informal learning of the traditional world that I grew up in was frowned on in the classical context: for example, I was banned from playing traditional piano, as my teacher believed that ‘it would ruin’ my technique.
- At times, the stylistic elements of one tradition affected the other. For example, rhythmical concepts differed and the ‘nyah’ (Veblen, 1994: 27) or lilt in Irish music occasionally ‘slipped’ into classical playing with detrimental effects. This sometimes proved challenging to rectify.
- Having—or rather not having—sufficient time has always been a factor in trying to keep up with both traditions.

- Concepts of intonation and tunings were very different in the various musical disciplines: Piano, Choral, Irish traditional—each developed at different stages and presented formative and interesting challenges and benefits along the way.
- Being literate has been advantageous to me as a traditional musician. To quote Small (1998): it is a ‘tremendous enabler’ and provides ‘ready access’ (p. 110), in my case, to Irish music and other collections. It has also enabled me in transcribing tunes readily and availing of manuscript and online notated collections. However, I feel that, at times, notational use in my formative years inhibited both my developing flute style and my aural fluency.
- Multiple opportunities to play and perform in traditional music contributed to a calm approach to performance generally.
- At times I experienced the need to be careful not to betray traditional / classical behaviour in the other world.
- Undoubtedly, both pedagogies have positively and negatively influenced teaching and learning across genres (for example, developing the aural in classical or having a more systematic / sequenced approach in traditional).

As a teacher and music educator I have been engaged in both of these musical traditions over the last twenty years and have been continually struck by the different ‘ways of being musically’ and the pedagogical uniqueness characteristic of each of these genres. These perceived pedagogical and musical differences underpin this enquiry.

Primary Research Questions

The primary research questions regarding the phenomenon of *bimusicality* in this study are:

- 1) What learning processes are involved when a student is engaged in learning music in different genres?
- 2) What are the bimusical practices, contexts and confluences involved in music learning for these participants?

3) What beliefs, meanings and identities do participants construct as a result of their experience of multi-music making?

In addition to these primary questions, a number of subsidiary questions emerging from the literature are addressed.

Overview of Thesis

The Introduction identifies the topic (bimusicality), research questions asked and positionality of the research and acknowledges its contribution to the literature. Researcher positionality in respect of topic also noted here.

Chapter 1 examines how the bimusical phenomenon has evolved in both international and Irish contexts. The literature shows that the term bimusical is used in relation to bimusical performers in various cultures/societies and to researchers who develop bimusical skills as a tool of their research practices. It is also used in the context of multicultural approaches to music learning in educational contexts, with a particular emphasis on higher music education. Research suggests that these ways of being bimusical differ in degrees of proficiency, immersion, and fluency in first and second musics, similar to bilingual continua. To date, references in the literature to bimusicality in the Irish setting refer primarily to educational contexts outlined above.

Chapter 2 focuses on learning processes in the ‘two streams of tradition’ in this research, namely classical music and Irish traditional music. Learning in classical music has been extensively researched, Irish traditional music much less so. What emerges from a range of musicological, educational, ethnomusicological and anthropological literatures are the differing conventions, beliefs and ways of learning in these traditions. Therefore discussion of learning processes in these musics encompass various ways of learning (aural / notational), varied contexts (‘formal / informal’, individual / group, expert-led / self-taught continua) and the differing contents.

Chapter 3 sets out the methodological approach of this research. The qualitative hermeneutic research framework adopts a collective case study approach, using a

purposive sampling strategy. Data collected includes: videotaped lessons, recorded practice/playing sessions, observations of a range of music-making activities, and interviews with the seven participants, their parents and teachers. Data analysis procedures are outlined and the analysis framework is explained. Ethical considerations and actions are discussed.

Chapter 4 presents the individual voices of the seven participants in the study. It addresses key aspects of the primary research questions by providing an introduction to the background and general musical profile of each student, revealing the perceptions, beliefs and meanings that each participant derives from their experience of their bimusicality. It explores their learning and playing contexts, their musical soundscapes and their practices. It focuses on the routines behind their learning and the conventions and traditions that shape their musical learning and making during the term / semester. Data is presented through narrative accounts (background, day-to-day practices) and *vignettes* (individual incidences of learning). These *vignettes* draw on the researcher's observations and are informed by interview data. This is followed with a cross-case analysis of findings, which is structured around the social-cultural aspects of the analysis framework. The chapter concludes with a summary of social-cultural findings.

In chapter 5, Individual Learning Portraits present the processes of learning of each participant, key elements of which include: learning through notation, learning by ear, listening in learning, technique, memorisation, style and interpretation and practising for different purposes. Each explores the student's perceptions of learning bimusically. These are followed by a cross-case examination of the findings, structured according to the framework of analysis discussed in chapter 3.

Chapter 6 reflects on the discussions in chapters 4 and 5, exploring the outcomes and implications of this research. The wider overarching themes are the main focus of this final chapter, which brings together and discusses issues relating to context, content, processes, ownership and intentionality. This chapter also reflects on the methodological approaches adopted and on ideas for further research.

CHAPTER 1

STREAMS OF TRADITION

1.1 Introduction

The first part of this chapter explores the literature on bimusicality, examining the phenomenon from a range of perspectives, as it occurs in its natural cultural setting, in ethnomusicological fieldwork and in educational contexts. The second part of the chapter focuses on the phenomenon as it has evolved in the Irish context, tracing the two ‘streams of traditions’ (McCarthy, 1997: 7) from a historical perspective. This section focuses in particular on social-cultural and educational issues, highlighting the contrasts and confluences that can be observed within and across the two traditions.

1.2 Bimusicality: Defining the Phenomenon

The phenomenon of a musician playing and performing in diverse musical genres is frequently described as bimusicality (Haddon 2016; Tokita, 2014; Cottrell 2007; Nettl, 2005; Cassia, 2000; Rosenberg, 1995; Titon, 1995; Davis, 1994; Peña, 1985; Sutton, 1985; Hood, 1960). The term is somewhat problematic, which will be explored and discussed in the following sections, as it has served different meanings and functions or indeed objectives, depending on the user and/or the context in which it has been used.

1.2.1 The ‘bimusical’ musician

The term bimusicality was originally coined by Mantle Hood (1960) to describe a phenomenon he encountered in his field work as an ethnomusicologist, namely to describe musicians who were musically proficient in two distinct genres. The example he cites to illustrate a ‘truly bi-musical’ person, (p. 55) is that of the Japanese court musician who had:

Undergone rigid training since child-hood, not only in the Gagaku dances and instrumental techniques, but also in the performance of Western music of the Classical period. In their capacity as official court musicians, they are required to perform both Gagaku and Western classical music. (Garfias, 1959, quoted in Hood, 1960)

The term has been used to describe many other instances of musicians in various countries and cultures playing and taking part in a variety of different music genres. Examples include: the American Indian Blackfoot people (Nettl, 2005, Witmer, 1973); urban Hindustani musicians in India (Neuman, 1978); gamelan musicians in Java (Sutton, 1985); Texas-Mexican musicians (Peña, 1985); Hungarian Vlach gypsies (Kertész-Wilkinson, 1994); folk singers of Northern Iran (Baily, 2005) and London freelance professional musicians (Cottrell, 2007). Each of these instances have either political, socio-cultural or economic underpinnings.¹ One query that has arisen when considering the varying musical involvements of these musicians is what precisely constitutes distinct musical genres or what degree of difference is required for a musician's music making to be considered bimusical? Opinions differ, but one solution arrived at by Cottrell (2007) was to coin the variant local bimusicality to denote less distinct differences, such as genres or styles more akin to dialects within a larger musical system.²

Musical genres and styles coexist in a variety of ways among individuals and societies. Martha Ellen Davis (1987) adopts the term *native* bimusicality³ when describing a particular context encompassing 'the co-existence of two musical systems within a single musical culture'⁴ (p. 39), such as *Velaciones*, a Caribbean religious event. In *Velaciones*, musicians integrate and perform European and African ritual music into a single event (p. 41). While native bimusicality arises for various reasons, Davis' view of it is as 'a common consequence of conquest and of large population movements' (p. 39). She suggests that the early phase of such conquests and resulting 'political and demographic changes often appear to give rise to bi-culturalism, of which bilingualism and bi-musicality form part' (p. 39). In the case of such culturally based bimusicality, Davis distinguishes between 'collective' (or group) bimusicality, meaning a society which has become bimusical, and 'individual bi-musicality', where some individual musicians within that society are bimusical (1994: 157). Tokita (2014) makes similar distinctions and, drawing on the linguistic roots of the word, describes the societal or collective level as bi-musicalism.⁵

1.2.2 Bimusicality as a research tool in ethnomusicology

The term bimusicality takes on a somewhat different meaning when it serves as a research tool of the ethnomusicologist.⁶ In Mantle Hood's seminal paper he proposes 'the challenge of b-musicality' (1960) to his fellow students and ethnomusicologists, whereby requiring them 'to learn to play the music of the cultures they study' (Rice, 2005). Hood's initial use of the term would seem to imply simultaneous fluency as a performer in two distinct musics⁷, or the notion of bimusicality as a cultural phenomenon. This second meaning applies to adults acquiring proficiency in a second musical genre for the purposes of research (as a research 'tool' or 'technique'), while presumably being already fluent in a particular genre, such as western classical music. Further confounding its meaning in this circumstance are a spectrum of views regarding the degree of proficiency intended in second or additional musics learned by ethnomusicologists in this way. For example, bimusicality has been described as 'acquiring ability in' (cited in Baily, 2001) or 'the possession of music performance skills in two contrasting 'cultures' (Rosenberg, 1995: 298). John Blacking, in 1972, in correspondence to fellow ethnomusicologist John Baily, describes bimusicality as a basic field technique. In terms of levels of proficiency he explains that:

I do not think it at all necessary for you to learn how play the instruments superbly [...]. I do think it very necessary for you to discover how the average tar player learns and transmits his skills.³ (reported in Baily, 2001: 88)

However, Baily's own view (2001) has been that one distinctive approach in the discipline should involve 'a stronger emphasis on learning to perform to an advanced level of proficiency', so that ethnomusicologists can, quoting Marcia Herndon, 'music, music' as well as 'speech music' (Hendron, 1974: 246). Nettl (2005) explains it in terms of how a scholar learns 'to participate as performer and maybe composer' in their field, describing bimusicality as 'developing competence somewhat analogous to being bilingual' (Nettl, 2005: 58).

1.2.3 Bimusicality in education

The concept of bimusicality becomes further nuanced in its role as a way of fostering multicultural approaches in musical education. New language emerges in the educational context in which the concept[ion] of bimusicality is seen, for example, as 'a musician schooled in two different musical cultures,' (Waldron, 2007: 89), or a more expansive view, as set out by Volk (2002) which suggests that it might encompass 'the

ability to perform, compose, improvise or listen comfortably in any two music cultures’ (p. 23). Indeed, Lucy Green could be viewed as having modified understanding of the term by extending it to encompass those who have learned music through informal as well as formal means (Green, 2002: 6). O’Flynn, in commenting on the meaning and application of bimusicality in education, notes that it ‘allows us to understand different types of music-making in our society’ as well as recognising ‘the value of both formal and informal modes of learning’ (2005: 198).

Some teachers and musicologists query the actual achievability of bimusicality within the limited time parameters of formal educational settings, such as Becker (1983), in respect of tertiary level students studying gamelan alongside their classical music studies,⁸ or more recently, instrumentalist and musicologist, Elizabeth Haddon. Haddon’s (2016) experience of working with tertiary level students, led her to believe that bimusicality may ‘be the prerogative of only those who can maintain expertise concurrently in more than one musical style’ (p. 22). She proposes a new term, ‘*dialogical-musicality*’, which she describes as a ‘positive construct’ and a way of informing the type of learning gained by these students ‘participating in more than one musical culture at any level’ (p. 22).

1.2.4 An expansion of views

1.2.4.1 Polymusicality, Multimusicality

The term bimusicality is also used as a general term. As Cottrell points out, ‘despite its limitations, if only because at a purely pragmatic level, it has come to be widely understood as a way of expressing musical competence in disparate styles’ (2007: 101). Nonetheless, a number of writers have queried its usage and proposed or used other terms in describing and discussing this phenomenon. One particular difficulty or limitation in describing this phenomenon as bimusicality arises when one tries to account for musicians who are proficient in three, four and more musics. As Mantle Hood noted, many of his students at UCLA were proficient in several musics. At the time he queried the use of terms such as ‘*tri-musical*’ and ‘*quadri-musical*’. However, he left the matter somewhat unresolved, suggesting that perhaps one would ‘come close to the heart of the matter by reconsidering the ‘meaning of *musicality*’ (p. 59). Since then several different approaches have been adopted. Perhaps, given the

entomological roots of the word, the term *multimusicality* was and is sometimes adopted and, in many instances, is used interchangeably with the term bimusicality (Nettl, 2005; Clements, 2001; Schrag, 2002; Davis, 1987; Bilby, 1985, cited in Davis, 1987). Similarly, the term *polymusicality* is sometimes interchanged with bimusicality (Cottrell, 2007: 91). Polymusicality, on occasion, is also used to denote multiple music proficiency at a ‘collective’ or societal level rather than individual bimusicality (Bilby, cited in Davis, 1987).

1.2.4.2 Intermusability, Intermusicality

A number of writers, in more recent re-examinations of the meaning of the term *bimusicality*, in the varied contexts, have coined new terms. Baily (2007), when evaluating ‘the challenge of bi-musicality’, identifies particular problems with the term *bimusicality* in respect of the varying levels of competence implied in the usage of the term (from ‘fluent’ to ‘ability in’) and degrees of distance between the genres. For Baily (2007), this ‘methodology’ is about ‘learning to perform’ and gaining ‘musical ability’ (p. 136). Therefore he proposes the term *intermusability* instead of bimusicality, with ‘inter’ referring to more than one and *musability* as a contraction of musical and ability (p. 136). O’Flynn (2005), in re-examining the meaning of bimusicality and its possible function in music education, draws on the distinctions that Blacking (1987: 260 cited in O’Flynn, 2005) makes between ‘musical intelligence’, which he (Blacking) saw as universal to all societies, and ‘musical thought’, which he saw as particular to traditions of socio-musical ideas and behaviours (p. 193). O’Flynn (2005) suggests that ‘the bi of bimusicality might refer to the presence of two relatively distinct musical systems or styles among the musical practices of some groups and individuals’. He proposes that ‘musicality can be regarded as the bridge thorough which such differentiated cultural experiences are integrated’. This, he suggests, leads to an understanding of ‘multiple practices and conceptions of music within an integrated experiential plane’ which he describes as *intermusicality* (p. 199).

1.2.4.3 Bimusicality in the global context

Differing trends and emphasis have variously drawn on *bimusicality* and *multimusicality* in describing the phenomenon of multiple music making among individual and societies. In 1995, when Rosenberg tries to understand his own

experience, he describes an ‘uneasiness’ with the use of the term *bimusicality* as, for him, it ‘posits a world of boundaries’ (1995: 306). Baily (2001) views it as a question of ‘musicality’ and ‘learning to perform’, rather than focusing on the term bimusicality (p. 86). When Nettl (2005: 58-59) considers these terms, he describes and envisages a world that is multimusical, with increased accessibility to large varieties of musics. He suggests that the view of the world as a system of discrete musics ‘with centres and boundaries’ may, in the past, have been more or less acceptable, but in the twenty-first century, such boundaries become less practical (p. 58-59). He queries the idea of a multimusical world that might be interpreted as ‘the expansion of a single musical system’ (p. 59), a kind of musical neo-colonialism reflecting social and political developments, which he describes thus:

A world society learning more music, becoming multimusical, acquiring second, third, fourth musical languages, vastly increasing its musical tolerance, symbolic of the greater cultural diversity found in most societies. (Nettl 2005: 59; Keil and Feld 1994; Stokes 1994)

Many musicologists, such as Nettl (2005), O’Flynn (2005), Monson (cited in O’Flynn, 2005) and Feintuch (1995), have reviewed or queried the use of such terms / concepts as *bimusical* in light of an ever-changing global musical landscape in which musical learning no longer seems so streamlined or bounded. Yet the term bimusicality persists, and more recent discourse has seen a resurgence in the use of bimusicality as a general term (Haddon, 2016; Tokita, 2014; Adkins, 2013; Cottrell, 2007). In the context of this research, I therefore describe the phenomenon being explored as bimusical learning, which is defined as the simultaneous learning of two musics, namely classical and Irish traditional music.

1.3 Bimusicality and Bilingualism

Bimusicality has received attention within the context of the linguistic roots of the term (Tokita, 2014; Cottrell, 2007; Baily, 2001; Davis, 1994). This yields further distinctions and nuances in terminology. Tokita (2014), in her research on bimusicality in modern Japanese culture, explores these derivations, and draws on the bilingual terms consecutive, simultaneous and additive to explain their music equivalents. She describes consecutive bimusicality (M1), as acquiring one’s first musical language in early childhood in a manner similar to a child’s first language (L1), with the second

musical language being acquired later (M2). In contrast, simultaneous bimusicality is analogous to simultaneous bilinguality, in which both languages ‘are acquired together in early childhood in a mixed-lingual environment’ (2014: 16). Other effects of different music systems meeting at a societal level can result in what Tokita describes as ‘additive bimusicalism’, (parallel musical cultures) or when music merges resulting in new hybrid or creole type musical forms. In considering the ways in which people are bimusical, she also notes differences in the balance between musics, and suggests that, at least in Japanese society, it is rare to find someone who is fully bimusical, that is, equally balanced or fluent in both musics. Rather there is typically an imbalance between music involvements. She denotes this by describing various musicians’ involvements as ‘balanced’ or ‘unbalanced in favour of’ a particular music (p. 168, p. 171).

1.3.1 Code-switching

In 1979, Slobin, while not referring to bimusicality per se, paralleled the way in which people switch between languages bilingually with the manner in which musicians switch between musical styles in performance. His research draws on Labov’s (1972) linguistic definition of code-switching, which sets out the idea that different languages each have their ‘sets of consistent rules’ or ‘codes’ (1972: 134-5). Slobin believes that music can be similarly considered. More recently Cottrell (2007), in examining the way in which London freelance musicians move between different musical performance traditions, also similarly concludes that musicians code-switch when doing so. Slobin and Cottrell find that such code -switching is not confined to music style parameters, but involves other ‘non-musical’ elements. Cottrell describes this as requiring performers to have ‘social as well as musical expertise’ (p. 89), or ‘cultural proficiency’ ‘in order to be taken as accomplished participants in the performance event’ (2007: 89). He aligns such successful negotiating of different performance styles with the ability to cognitively understand the musical differences in variety of codes associated with each music (Cottrell, 2007: 88, 101).

1.4 The Experience of Multiple Music Making: The Musicians’ View

The musicians and ethnomusicologists’ first-hand views of the musics that they engaged in is ‘also significant’ (Cottrell, 2007: 102). While Cottrell notes that

‘mastering a second language later in life, however competently and fluently, is never quite the same thing’ as being equally fluent in two languages learned together during childhood (p. 87), these accounts contribute significantly to understandings of the phenomenon. In many of these accounts, there is a further dimension considered that extends beyond discussions of code-switching or music and social skills developed in the process. This dimension concerns self-conception and identity, as a result of experiencing ‘different aesthetic realities’ (Titon, 1995), developing new understandings (Titon, 1995; Howard and Blacking, 1991; Hood, 1960), cultural consciousness (Silvermann, 1995), ‘comparative perspectives’ (Rosenberg, 1995), and shifting etic / emic understandings and boundaries (Rice, 1995). Titon (1995) explains that bimusicality goes beyond ‘lessons in acquiring musical technique’. He describes it as helping him to ‘understand musiking in the world, my being in the world musically from a particular viewpoint: the musical knowing that follows from musical being’ or simply put ‘a way of being in the world’ (p. 296). Cottrell, in describing the music making of London freelance musicians, appears to take this dimension even further when he concludes that this type of bimusicality is ‘neither a research technique nor a metaphor’ but rather ‘a component of self-conception, a way of both acquainting and aligning oneself with a combination of different performance aesthetics’ (Cottrell, 2007: 101).

1.5 The Irish Bimusical Phenomenon: Streams of Tradition

This examination of understandings of the phenomenon point towards a spectrum of bimusical engagement that varies considerably in terms of degrees of participation and embeddedness in the respective musics for different people. The nature of travelling between and engaging in different musics, irrespective of contextual cross-overs (variously described as musics, traditions, systems, cultures and/or styles) incurs developing and utilising different musical and social skill sets, which are generally accepted to be culturally embedded.

In the Irish cultural context, classical and Irish traditional musics have been described as ‘the two main streams of Irish musical heritage’ (McCarthy, 1997: 5). McCarthy points to how these musics have coexisted in Ireland, albeit in different social and cultural milieu, and how any discussion of learning in either genre raises questions of

tradition and historical context. Such understandings underpin the world view of musics presented by Jorgensen (2003), who refers to ‘two streams of music traditions’ (p30) in society, differentiating between the music of the ‘common folk’, (variously described as folk indigenous, vernacular or popular) and the music of ‘the privileged elite’ (p31). Historically, in many societies, such musical traditions with their differing social-cultural roots and values have, in the past, been presented in the literature as a kind of dualism, with one described as ‘art’, ‘classical’ ‘high art’ or ‘elite’ music, while the other is generally typified as ‘common’ or ‘folk’ music. In the Irish cultural context, this folk/art interface was evident in the way in which the classical music tradition was equated with colonial, Anglo-Irish society and traditional music with Gaelic Irish - Ireland (Lennon, 2000a; McCarthy, 1999, 2004b). Harry White (1998) refers to ‘the recurring trope of cultural polarism between ethnic and colonial ideologies of culture’ (p151), and points to the consequential perceptions and place of these musics in Irish culture, both within and outside the formal education system. Nonetheless, culture and traditions do not remain polarised and unchanging, for as Mans (2009) points out, cultures are ‘constantly in motion, changing from within, and from without throughout their interactions in time and historical events’ (Mans, 2009: 9). Such change is evidenced in the narrative of these musics in Irish culture and in their generational transmission.

1.5.1 Instrumental learning in Ireland in the 1800s: contrasting contexts

Until well into the twentieth century, formal ‘classical’ music education in Ireland and informal traditional music practices were ‘worlds apart socially and culturally’ (McCarthy, 2004a: 52). Historically, this particular context was informed by many factors; political, cultural, social, local and global. For example, throughout the nineteenth century, religious teaching orders, influenced by continental Europe and a colonial heritage, promoted the ideals of classical music or ‘high art’ in formal education, a cultural practice which ‘was often to the detriment and exclusion of traditional music’ (McCarthy, 1999). As McCarthy (1999, 2004a) notes, traditional musics were generally regarded as ‘socially backward and inappropriate for use in educational settings’ (2004a: 52) in Western Europe. Various ideological agendas, trends and musical developments each have had a profound effect on the development and choice of ‘how’ and ‘what’ music was to be taught in formal institutional settings.

For example, it was well into the twentieth century before folk music emerged in the formal Irish education context, originally in the guise of Irish language song in support of an identity and language revivalist agenda in an emerging nation state (McCarthy, 1999: 103).

In these years, irrespective of the dominance of classical musical culture in formal education, instrumental music learning in both genres remained, for the most part, outside of the national school system.⁹ Learning classical music, which carried with it a heritage of aristocratic patronage from previous centuries¹⁰ (Starkie, 1952: 195), and was viewed ‘as a desired accomplishment of the educated classes’ (McCarthy, 1999: 93) took place privately, through charitable societies and, as the nineteenth century progressed, through newly established Academies and Municipal Schools of Music.¹¹ At this time, Irish traditional music learning was on a very different trajectory, taking place in a largely rural community based cultural environment, where it was ‘experienced, learned and valued in an oral context and as a dynamic form of social interaction’. McCarthy (1999: 61) has described this cultural phenomenon as constituting ‘a rich, informal system of music education’ (p. 6).

1.5.2 Musical landscapes: confluences

As the nineteenth century progressed, the lines that separated the worlds of classical and Irish traditional music ‘began to be blurred by changing sociocultural and political values’ (McCarthy, 1999: 51). Various factors, including improved literacy, greater fluency in the English language, the upwardly aspiring native Irish and an emerging cultural nationalist agenda, contributed to greater interaction and ‘cross-fertilisation’ between the different music subgroups. For example, the dancing master (McCarthy, 1999; Breathnach, 1996b; O’Donovan, 1996) taught the children of the gentry as well as teaching in the local communities, imparting ‘native and foreign dances, deportment, and social skills of the upper classes’ (McCarthy, 1999: 38). Antiquarians such as Bunting, Petrie and Joyce were involved in the preservation of ‘the ancient music of Ireland’.¹² By the 1840s, political ballads in the English language had emerged, such as those of Thomas Davis of the Young Ireland Movement. Temperance bands at one level identified with the musical values and traditions of middle class society and yet, particularly in the 1840s, also had nationalist overtones.

The *Feis Ceoil* competition, established in 1897 by a committee led by Annie Patterson and comprising members of the Literary Society and the Gaelic League, catered to both classical and Irish traditional music (Nugent, 2013). This formal, competitive performance context, with its classical music underpinnings, was not without challenges for the indigenous music, its musicians and singers. Opinions varied as to the value of such contexts for ‘traditional’ musicians. Several prominent musicians regarded this type of competitive staged performance as highly unsuitable (Taylor, 2003).¹³ Carl Hardebeck (2011) was of the view that:

The adult traditional singer in the habit of singing in the kitchen by the fireside, be he ever so good, has no business to be dragged on to the concert platform. There, he is nervous, and as uncomfortable as a fish out of water, misunderstood by the public and, usually, thoroughly unhappy. (Hardebeck, 2011, cited in McCarthy, 1999: 75)¹⁴

Discourse at the time regarding *Feis Ceoil* performances reflect the clash of very different performance aesthetics, and what was valued in both traditions.¹⁵ The challenges of such a confluence of aesthetics (in the broader performance, teaching and learning contexts) are identified by McCarthy (1999) when she states:

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: 10)

This new performance platform, while considered perhaps by many as unsuitable, can, when viewed through a different lens, be seen as advantageous in having the effect of:

Elevating the socio-political status of traditional music, bringing it into urban setting and onto the concert stage, where it was appropriated to the dominant culture of Western art music, at least where it was integrated into educational settings. (McCarthy, 2003: 222)

These latter decades of the nineteenth century also witnessed the formal setting up of uilleann pipe classes in Cork and Dublin, in branches of the pipers clubs ‘whose origins are tied up with the National Literary Revival’ (O’Connor, 1999: 110), and in the Municipal School of Music in 1904 (Cooke, 1994). Thus by the closing decade of the nineteenth century, transmission of Irish traditional instrumental music incorporated formal competitive performance contexts, as well as more formalised learning approaches in some urban centres, and in doing so began to assume ‘traits and practices of formal music education’ (McCarthy 2003: 225).

1.5.3 Changing musical and cultural landscapes'¹⁶: a first phase

The middle decades of the twentieth century evidence further changes in music transmission and access to instrumental learning in both classical and Irish traditional music. These decades could be viewed as a 'first phase' in the establishment of music networks and institutions that support and foster music and education at national level (McCarthy, 2004a: 53). The year 1951 marks the launch of the Arts Council and the government position of Director of Irish Folk Music. A register of private music teachers published in 1952 indicates that practical instrumental tuition is available in all urban centres, and to a lesser extent in every county in Ireland (Beausang, 2001). 1951 also marks the emergence of *Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann* (CCÉ), an organisation described as a 'cultural movement concerned with the promotion and preservation of the music, dance and language of Ireland' (CCÉ, n.d.). The approaches and activities of CCÉ have been described as continuations of earlier developments by such organisations as *Conradh na nGaeilge* and the *Feis Ceoil* (O'Henry, 1989). Over time, such approaches expanded and involved a mix of participatory and performance practices, instituted and organised at national and local branch levels. Of particular significance in the context of this research is how formalised class-based instrumental instruction in Irish traditional music began to take place on a more widespread community basis, with the advent of group teaching in these local branches from the 1960s onwards. Several writers have documented the changing emphasis in the transmission of the music experienced by the younger generation at this time, with its mix of participatory, more formalised class-based learning of repertoire and involvement in performance and competition (Cotter, 2013; Veblen, 1991; O'Henry, 1989; McCullough, 1977). A key element of the changing emphasis is captured by O'Henry (1989) when he says: 'older musicians were encouraged to practice and maintain a traditional art, and younger musicians were encouraged to learn how to perform' (p. 73).

1.5.4 Local and global influences: a second phase

In the latter half of the twentieth century, instrumental music transmission was impacted by several factors as a more outward looking musical-cultural landscape developed influenced by both the global and the local issues. Such influences are evident in the effects of the international folk revival movement, patterns of

immigration, mediated culture and the music industry, and how each of these factors contributed to changing processes of assimilation and dissemination in music. In the Irish context the effects of global and local influences are seen in Irish traditional music (O'Connor, 2001; McCarthy, 2003, 2004a; Hast and Scott, 2004), particularly in its 'popularisation and changing sociomusical status [...] both at home and on the world stage' (McCarthy, 2003: 220).

A blend of influences—local, national and global—can be seen in the changes in music performance, and in a sense these decades might be regarded as a second phase concerned with advocacy and an interest in the arts at local and national level which grows and gathers momentum (INTO, 2009). New supporting networks and resources emerged to promote and disseminate 'the various living musical traditions' (McCarthy, 2004a: 53). Changes transcend individual genres and include the founding of national competitions such as *Gael Linn's* multi-genre focused *Slógadh* competitions (1969), and the Gaelic Athletic Association's (GAA) Irish traditional arts *Scór* competitions (1969). Also established were such resources and organisations as the Contemporary Music Centre (CMC) (1985) and Music Network (1986). Several reports were published by the Arts Council around this time: 1976, 1979, 1985, the latter a damning indictment of the state of music provision in Irish schools (The Arts Council Report, 1985). Indeed, the Herron report sparked much controversy and eventually led to (further developments in the form of) the *Music Education National Debate* (MEND) of the mid-1990s, which, in debating the content, needs and direction of Irish education, gained (perhaps inadvertently) international status in its exploration of issues around multiculturalism and the philosophical underpinnings of what counts as music education.

This debate highlighted the Irish bimusical phenomenon. It was as part of this debate that the role of popular music and multiculturalism, including what was then described as its Irish subset, biculturalism (Heneghan, 1996), in music education was first debated. At the time Michael Ó Suilleabháin used the term bimusicality to describe musicians studying both classical and traditional music genres at University College Cork. He described such a musician as:

Someone who could be a good concert pianist but also a good traditional fiddle player. By being a good concert pianist their sense of notation would be very well

developed; however, on taking up the fiddle this repertoire in music notation is no longer relevant, but neither, it should be said, would it interfere with their performance of traditional Irish music. (Ó'Súilleabháin, 2004a).

This interfacing of classical and traditional Irish music had already come to the fore through the work of composer and Irish traditional musician, Seán Ó Riada, also a former lecturer at University College, Cork.¹⁷

This debate clearly reflected the changing face of formal music education in Ireland and the greater diversification in the range of musics included in school and third level syllabi¹⁸, what Veblen (2004) notes as a growing awareness in education of the role of multicultural and world musics in education (p. 175). This diversification and acceptance of a range of musics becomes evident at university level and college programmes, and in general music programmes at other levels but, curiously, from a practical point of view most instrumental learning, particularly pre-third level education, continues to operate largely outside formal education and is still typically provided through private or voluntary means (Kenny, 2010). One is reminded of Beausang's conclusion in *Changes in Music Education in Ireland* (2001) when she suggests that:

Plus ca change plus ca rest la même' with the exception of Irish traditional music, access is only available for children today... if they live in the right geographical area and have enthusiastic parents who can afford to play the costs of their tuition. Some children are more equal than others. (Beausang, 2001)

Thus classical and traditional instrumental learning, at this juncture takes place, for the most part, in parallel streams,¹⁹ each in its particular context and learning framework: classical instrumental learning, for the most part, taking place in private music schools, colleges and academies while the 'passing on' of Irish traditional music maintains its 'community base' (O'Flynn 2011; O'Suilleabhain, 2004a). This idea of the social / communal base of Irish traditional transmission refers principally to the way in which the music is passed on in the family or taught by community groups, including local CCE branches.²⁰

1.5.5 A changing discourse: multiple genres, multiple ways... a third phase?

Nonetheless it may be that the data collected for this research finds itself at the cusp of what might be described as a third phase. The findings and evaluations of the

relatively recent publication *Instrumental and Vocal Teacher Education: European Perspectives* (Association of European Conservatories (AEC), 2010); and the earlier *Music Manifesto* (2006), an English government sponsored strategy, signpost possible developments and transformations in the instrumental learning landscape.²¹ These documents, presenting particular European and English perspectives suggest that the discourse around music education and instrumental learning across different traditions may now point towards an ideologically more pluralist and democratic view (IOE, 2011; AEC, 2010). The Association of European Conservatories document (2010) advises that we are now in a time of ‘cultural democracy’, when no one cultural tradition should ‘be allowed to dominate and become an official culture’ (p31). This is reflected in the reality of the practice of many professional musicians as ‘many musical styles and genres co-exist, integrate and influence each other in the repertoire’ that they perform (AEC, 2010: 15).

This report also points to how ‘Another component of the idea of cultural democracy is participation. Cultural democracy proposes a cultural life in which everyone is free to participate’ (AEC, 2010: 31). The far-reaching ideological implications of cultural democracy are considered in detail in *Instrumental and Vocal Teacher Education: European Perspectives*, but at a fundamental level participation depends on access, which continues to be an issue in the Irish context (Flynn and Johnston, 2016; Berril, 2009). The English solution to universal access is *Music Manifesto* (2006), which states that every child has the right to play an instrument at some point. In Ireland, the Music Generation programme established in 2010, aims to address access and provision by providing performance (instrumental and vocal) music education across the range of genres for children and young people under eighteen years of age.

1.6 Conclusion

At the time of data collection (2011), there are aspects of instrumental learning in these genres that appear relatively unchanged in terms of the nature of learning contexts—private, voluntary or community based provision—and in terms of access to instrumental learning, though this may be changing in a general sense. Reflecting on the phenomenon of bimusicality in conjunction with its historical position in the Irish context raises a number of questions. How does one describe the student participants

in this research project? In the 1900s, they would most likely have been considered to be either bicultural or bimusical musicians. What is the range of musical experience and engagement typical of current teenagers? Even if their ‘formal’ study is confined to classical and Irish traditional musics, they are likely to have some exposure to various other musical genres, mediated through music on radio, television, and the internet. Should these musicians’ musical learning be described as bimusical, multimusical or polymusical, or is their musical learning intermusical? Further questions arise in relation to students’ musical backgrounds and learning contexts. From the perspective of their position as bimusical learners, given the history of the two streams of tradition, issues of identity would also appear to be important, along with the learners’ perceptions of the two traditions in the Irish setting. These questions will be addressed as part of this research.

¹ The term originally seemed to emphasise musicians’ engagement in different cultures, such as the American Indian Blackfoot, Vach gypsies, and folksingers of Northern Iran as recounted and observed by ethnomusicologists. In Cottrell’s study of urban London musicians, he appraises the literature and use of the term to include musicians in many urban cities globally with multiple music involvements, whose involvements are for economic rather than cultural reasons, such as urban Hindustani musicians in India (Neuman, 1978) and classically trained London musicians engaged in a host of different styles, due to economic pressures. Cottrell describes these London urban-based musicians as *Locally-bimusical* (Cottrell, 2007).

² Cottrell (2007) is documenting performers who move between performance traditions which may be closely related, as in the case of early music ensembles and string quartets, or they may be only tenuously connected, as in the case of symphony orchestras and bebop jazz groups.

³ In *The study of Ethnomusicology* Nettl (2005) talks about how many cultures are ‘natively bimusical (or polymusical), recognising and keeping separate two or more musics in the same way bilingual people handle two languages’ (1983: 58).

⁴ When Martha Davis (1987) talks of ‘individual *bi-musicality*’ or ‘*multi-musicality*’, she categorised their musical competencies as that of ‘two general musical idioms, each of which may be manifested by various genres’, thus favouring what she describes as her generalising term ‘*bi-musicality*’ (p50). She does, however, acknowledge that Bilby ‘uses the term in reference to competence in various musical genres’ (Davis, 1987: 53).

⁵ Tokita (2014), following on from Wong *et al.*, (2009) has adopted bilingual concepts as defined by Hamers and Blanc’s and essentially replacing ‘bilinguality’ (2000, p. 6) with ‘bi-musicality’. She distinguishes between individual and societal levels; thus she says that at an individual level, ‘*Bi-musicality* is the psychological state of an individual who has access to more than one musical code as a means of cultural expression; the degree of access will vary along a number of dimensions which are psychological, social, cognitive etc.’ At the ‘*societal level*’, again adopting Hamers and Blanc’s (2000, 6) definition of bilingualism, she suggests that: ‘bimusicality at a societal level as bi-musicalism, meaning ‘the co-existence of two musical systems in a society, with the result that a number of individuals in the society are bi-musical’ (Tokita 2014: 161).

⁶There are differing interpretations of what Hood meant when he proposed ‘the challenge of bi-musicality’ to students and fellow musicologists. In the 1995 Forum: ‘A conversation between two disciplines’ (Feintuch, Rice, Rosenberg, Titon, Silverman, Keil) it was viewed as ‘a technique for

acquiring knowledge of other cultures music' (Rice, 1995) or 'learning to play music as a research tool' (Silverman, 1995) and what that entails (leads to 'something wider, encompassing musical, cultural, and personal understanding' (Silverman). On the other hand, Baily emphasises the idea of 'purely learning to perform' saying that Hood's argument was simply that training in basic musicianship is fundamental to any kind of musical scholarship. The training of ears, eyes, hands and voice and fluency gained in these skills assure a real comprehension of theoretical studies, which in turn prepares the way for the professional activities of the performer, the composer, the musicologist and the music educator. (Hood 1960: 55) in Baily, 2001.

⁷ John Baily (2001) queried the accuracy of the term, in respect of the bilingual analogy and argues that being bilingual is usually taken to mean being equally fluent in two languages, perhaps having learned them together during childhood' but as Baily, Cottrell and many others point out, Hood, clearly envisioned a broader application and understanding of the term.

⁸ In Becker's (1983) view, 'bi-musicality requires the same commitment (years and years in another culture) as does bi-lingualism', and therefore she believes that 'a few years of study will produce neither' (Becker 1983: 85).

⁹ McCarthy (1999) in *Passing it on* notes that there were incidences of instrumental music as part of private education, particularly for girls, citing an 1824 account by a visitor to the Academy in Gracehill, Ballymena (McCarthy, 1999: 68-69). McCarthy (1999) also notes a report of the Powis Commission, drawing attention to instrumental music being taught to senior pupils preparing to become school teachers (p65).

¹⁰ What Brian Boydell referred to as the 'golden age' (Boydell, 1979: 18).

¹¹ In 1848 a group of musicians and music lovers came together with the aim of advancing 'the art and science of music in Ireland by affording systematic musical instruction of the highest class to pupils, both professional and amateur'. This was later reconstituted as the *Irish Academy of Music* (1856). Two municipal schools of music were also founded: one in Cork in 1878 and the second in Dublin in 1890 the latter was originally under the aegis of the Royal Irish Academy (Cooke (1994) in *Colaiste an Cheoi*).

¹² Hamilton suggests that all three: Bunting, Petrie and Joyce published collections entitled 'The ancient music of Ireland'. This was, perhaps, indicative of the view of scholars and antiquarians in the nineteenth century who 'began taking an interest in indigenous music in Ireland, initially as a remnant of ancient culture, and eventually as a symbol of the uniqueness of Irish culture' (Hamilton, 199: 294).

¹³ Barry Taylor (2003), in his article *From Flag floor to concert platform – passing on the tradition*, critiques this transition to the competition / performance context.

In 2003, McCarthy comments on how 'The founding of the Gaelic league and the *Feis Ceoil* in the 1890s began to elevate the socio-political status of traditional music, bringing it into urban setting and onto the concert stage, where it was appropriated to the dominant culture of Western art music, at least where it was integrated into educational settings' (2003: 222).

¹⁴ This refers to Carl Hardebeck, 'Traditional Singing: Its Value and Meaning' *Journal of the Ivernian Society* 3 (January-March 1911).

¹⁵ Writing in the *Journal of the Ivernian Society* on 'The interpretation of Irish music' in 1909, Annie Patteson comments on how 'it was lamentable that anyone should attempt a public interpretation of our matchless Irish melodies without a sound knowledge not only of music theory but also a correct vocal production' (p35). Commenting on the 'naturally gifted and well intentioned so-called 'traditional singers' she goes on to say having drawn a comparison with 'the beautiful and symmetric tunes of the harp that the impression, indeed, of such singing upon the ears of the educated musicians is often grievous in the extreme. To begin with, the tone emitted is, if not unpleasantly nasal, either muffled or forced owing to incorrect or unsuited use of the vocal response cavities' (p. 35).

¹⁶ Quotes the title of McCarty 2004 article in which she deals extensively with this topic. See also her 1999 publication *Passing it on*.

¹⁷ For further discussion of Ó Riada's contribution, see O'Connor, 2001; O'Canainn, 1993 (*Seán Ó Riada: His life and work*).

¹⁸ UCC introduced Irish traditional music in its courses in the 1970s, Michael Ó Súilleabháin opened UL bachelor programmes in the 1990s. The 'Education' entries in *The Encyclopedia of Music in Ireland* and *The Companion to Irish traditional music 2* document these developments in considerable detail. Also noted in McCarthy 2004b.

¹⁹ There are exceptions: Maoin Cheoil an Chláir 1994 in which classical and Irish traditional genres are taught: also degree courses such as the Dublin Institute of Technology's Bachelor of Arts (BA) in music which caters to classical and Irish traditional musicians.

²⁰ As O'Henry (1989) noted, the structure and *modus operandi* of Comhaltas has many similarities to that of the GAA, in its reliance on local voluntary participation.

²¹ This trend is also evident in the 2016 publication *Possible Selves in Music* (report on the Irish Music Generation programme for specialist vocal and instrumental music education, 2016).

CHAPTER 2

LEARNING PROCESSES: CLASSICAL AND IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSICS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the learning processes involved in the 'two streams of tradition' discussed in chapter 1. The literature highlights the differing conventions and ways of learning associated with the two musics, drawing attention to issues of context, content and process. Central to this chapter, which draws on pedagogical, musicological, ethnomusicological and anthropological literature, are issues surrounding oral / literate traditions and formal / informal contexts. Other core issues relate to concepts of style and interpretation and ways of practising / playing. The chapter discusses the confluences and contrasts emerging between the two traditions and considers them in the context of a model adapted from Folkestad's (2006) theory of formal and informal practices, which facilitates discussion of learning processes in the context of bimusical learning.

2.2 Ways of Learning

In reflecting on the diversity of ways of learning in the world's societies, ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl (2007) poses the question: 'what do we mean anyway when we talk about learning music?' (p. 829). His answer focuses on the fundamentals of 'what' and of 'how' in relation to music learning. He proposes that what is learned consists of the music content (tunes, pieces, composition, models for improvisation) which he suggests is learned 'in ways that combine formal and informal, aural and written' (1983: 389). Huip Schippers (2005) talks about the situatedness of all music learning, emphasising how music learning takes place in a particular 'context: in time, in space, in society and in ideology' (p. 30).¹ Thus, Schippers suggests that the music learner learns more than purely the content, as he or she also learns and comes to know and understand many things about the music. Nettl explains this as 'what everyone knows and understands' about a music, and suggests that this cultural learning consists of knowing and understanding the grammar (music building blocks) and the social structure of the music, as well as knowing how to behave when music is around (2007:

832). Nettl (2005) observes that different elements are intentionally taught or incidentally learned, depending on what is musically prioritised and valued in a particular society:

Here are surely things that people learn about it that are most important, and that must be carefully imparted, while others are left more or less to being picked up by chance without special attention. (Nettl, 2005: 390)

2.2.1 Learning: formal and informal aspects

Conceiving, understanding and differentiating ways of learning musics by their ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ characteristics is one of the tools used in ethnomusicological and educational research. Thus, when a spectrum of learning experiences are considered in this way, fundamental distinctions emerge, for example, between formal or institutional, school-based activities and informal learning, or the types of learning which take place ‘outside formal educational settings’ (Green: 2002: 16). Considerable attention has been given to differentiating the contrasting characteristics, practices and processes of such formal and informal learning settings. Learning framed in this way often characterises Western classical music as the example of formal learning, while the ways in which popular musicians learn are deemed to be the ‘classic’ example of informal learning. The latter is, in part, no doubt due to the ground-breaking research underscoring *How Popular Musicians Learn, and Music, Informal Learning and the School* (Green, 2002, 2008).

The range of characteristics attributed to formal / informal practices have been the subject of extensive research and are summarised in Fig. 2.1 below by Mak (2006).

Formal Learning	Informal learning
Organised and structured context, that is explicitly designed as learning	Active, voluntary, self-discovering, self-determined, open-ended, non-threatening, enjoyable and explorative
Curriculum-bound, teacher-driven or at least teacher-initiated	Self-regulated processes (spontaneous,)
On-task student behaviours expected	Explicit appeal to intrinsic motivation
Intentional learning and explicit knowledge	Mostly embedded in a social context
Incidental and implicit knowledge not formally recognised	Directed and mediated by peers
Regards teacher as all-knowing: student 'empty vessel'	Utilise objectives, materials, settings that are highly contextualised
Acquisition of relevant musical competencies specific to core business	More qualitative than quantitative, more process-orientated than product-orientated, more synthetic than analytic, more follow-driven
Structured	Unhurried in nature, self-paced and open-ended with relatively few restraints
Credential-based, leads to formal recognition	Not compulsory, lacks individual testing or assessment procedure, based on feedback
Requires specific entry competences from students	Not curriculum based
	Broader goals: considerable variability in what is learned

Fig. 2.1: Formal and informal learning (Mak *et al.*, 2006)

Green identifies five main characteristics or ways in which informal learning is different from formal learning: 1] choice: who chooses and what is chosen; 2] the ways of learning: the popular musician learns by ear; 3] learning in a group context and self-teaching approaches; 4] the often haphazard, and personal ways of assimilating skills and knowledge and 5] informal learning is seen as integrating learning 'processes' (combining listening, performing and improvising with an emphasis on creativity) (Green, 2008: 106). Green (2002) differentiates formal music education and informal learning practices as 'extremes existing at the two ends of a single pole' (p. 6), though submits that they are not mutually exclusive social practices.

Campbell (2006) points out that these differing ways of learning have perhaps been understood as a dichotomy². She suggests that they probably better conceived as the extreme ends in a 'spectrum of learning' (p. 416). For example, further differentiation can be found in the use of such terms as non-formal (Cawley, 2013; Green 2011; Mak *et al.*, 2006: 15, Campbell, 2006: 416)³, or semi-structured (Collardyn, 2002 cited in Mak *et al.*, 2006). However, findings in the literature suggest that learning is much more nuanced, as evidenced by Burt Feintuch's (1995) *Learning Music in Northumberland*, in which he describes learning bagpipes in the Northumbrian

tradition, where learning involves a mixture of formal and informal learning practices. He explains that in the Northumberland piping tradition, formal structures are emphasised, such as private and group lessons, residential weekend courses, books and instructional tapes, but informal structures are also important and include such practices as aural learning from recordings, playing at sessions, gatherings and festivals.

This ‘continuum of processes’ has also been differentiated in terms of the different types of learning experienced in society. Jorgensen’s (1997) ‘concepts of education’ (extending previous Merriam (1964) concepts), propose a model with five ways of learning or ‘concepts of education’, each of which provides a unique perspective on the educational process—namely schooling, training, education, socialisation and enculturation—and in Folkestad’s view can be considered as points in the formal / informal continuum.

In 2006, Folkestad reviewed literature on formal / informal learning by examining the work of a range of writers (Soderman and Folkestad, 2004; Saether, 2003; Johansson, 2002; Gullberg, 2002; Saar, 1999; Ericsson, 2001; Green, 2002; Jorgensen, 1997) revealing a highly nuanced narrative. He concludes that most ‘instances of learning’ fall between the extreme manifestations of the two ‘poles’:

Formal-informal should not be regarded as a dichotomy, but rather as the two poles of a continuum, and that in most learning situations, both these aspects of learning are in various degrees present and interacting in the learning process. (Folkestad: 2005a: 285)

In Folkestad’s (2006) synthesis of these literatures he identifies four key aspects that are fundamental to the ways we learn and encompass both the informal and formal in learning. These key aspects are (1) the physical context of the learning, (2) the character, nature and quality of the learning process, (often referred to as being concerned with oral and literate transmission processes), (3) ownership of the activity (what to do as well as how, where and when? This definition focuses on didactic teaching versus open and self-regulated learning) and (4) intentionality: towards what is the mind directed—towards learning how to play or towards playing. Folkestad explains that it is what Saar describes as a distinction between pedagogical framing (i.e. learning how to play music) and artistic / musical framing (i.e. playing the music).

Saar found that the formal and informal aspects were not static, but rather shifted continuously (Saar 1999, cited in Folkestad: 2006: 138).

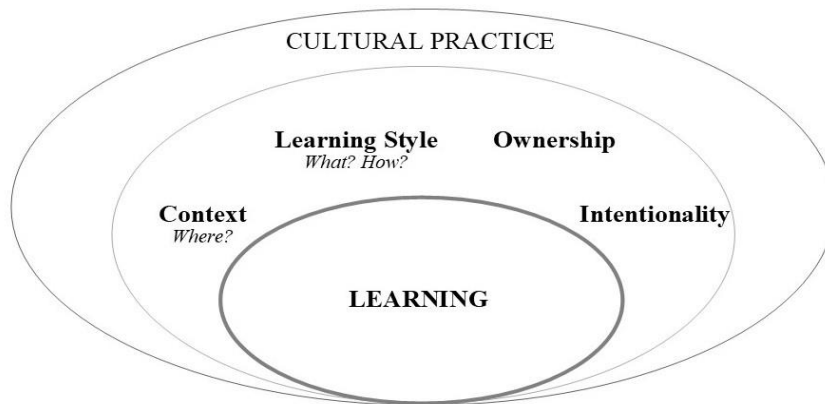


Fig. 2.2 Folkestad's aspects of learning (adapted from Folkestad, 2006)

From his synthesis of these aspects he concludes the following:

1. It is far too simplified and actually false to equate formal and informal learning with institutional and outside school settings, and that such a static view has to be replaced with a dynamic view in which both formal and informal aspects of learning are 'in various degrees present and interacting in the actual learning process' in most learning situations (2006: 143).
2. The distinction between formal and informal learning should not be seen as a primarily physical (context) (2006) ... it is rather a question of whether the *intentionality* of the individuals is directed towards music making, or towards learning about music, and of whether the learning *situation* is formalised in the sense that someone has taken on the role of being 'the teacher', thereby defining the others as 'students' (Folkestad, 2006: 142; 2005: 26).
3. Claiming that formal and informal learning is synonymous with Western classical music learned from sheets of music and popular music transmitted by ear respectively is a misconception (Saether 2003, cited in Folkestad, 2005a).
4. What is learned and how it is learned are interconnected. Choice of content and the ways in which it is approached become an 'important part in shaping of identity and therefore also an important part of music teaching' (Folkestad, 2006: 142). The most important issue might not be the content as such, but rather the approach to music that the content mediates.

Indeed Folkestad's (2006) research results in his seeing musical learning as cultural practice. He concludes that by 'participating in a practice, one also learns the practice' (p. 138), pointing to the situatedness of music learning. With Folkestad's theoretical conclusions there is an element of returning full circle to Merriam's thinking and analysis of learning as enculturation, which he defines as 'the broad and continuing process by which an individual learns his culture' (1964: 146). It also resonates with Nettl's (2007) ethnomusicological perspective on music learning, (referred to above), which considers learning in its cultural context.

Thus, in considering bimusical learning, it is useful to draw on Folkestad's key aspects of learning, and his concept of musical learning as cultural practice (See Fig. 2.2). Reconciling Folkestad's conclusions and the perspectives on learning of Merriam and Nettl, provides a framework in which to investigate the learning practices and processes of the students in this research.

2.3 Oral and Literate Traditions

In much of the literature on music learning, classical music learning is referred to as 'literacy based' while learning in Irish traditional music is referred to as 'aurally transmitted'. When viewed dichotomously, this approach negates the co-existence of a range of literate and aural processes in both of these traditions. For example, few (so called) oral traditions in the twentieth century are purely oral (Bohlmann, 1988: 30) and, in the case of Irish traditional music, printed editions, manuscripts, a variety of notational systems and, more recently, tutors and websites (utilising various aural and notational devices) also feature in various guises in its transmission. While learning in the classical music context takes place within the 'taken-for-granted framework of acquiring measurable musical literacy' (Finnegan, 2007: 138), one should not forget that this was not always the case. 'A long history of oral transmission' precedes what was the gradual development of notation (in European Art Music) during the Medieval and Renaissance eras (Campbell, 1991: 23). Furthermore, music is essentially a sonorous art (Swanwick, 1988) and, irrespective of the 'prescriptive' or 'descriptive' functions of notation,⁴ a score cannot account satisfactorily for many aspects of the music (Smith, 1999: 207). As Lennon (1997) notes, there is also 'a major aural dimension in the classical teaching learning transaction' (p210). A central tenet of this

study is an examination of the ‘dynamics of co-existence’ (Bohlmann, 1988: 30) of literacy and orality in both of these musical traditions. Various aspects of this dynamic are considered: aural / literate dimensions in the composition and creation of pieces, and the resulting transmission and performance practices, also aural / literate teaching and learning practices and performance in both traditions.

2.3.1 Composing and creating pieces and tunes

The composition and creation of pieces in oral and literate traditions can follow quite different paths and lead to different transmission practices. Historically, the creation or composition of a piece in a classical context, is generally an individual pursuit, where the composer ‘crafts’ his composition (aurally and with notation), resulting in a written template or score from which the performer builds his interpretation and performance. A folk tune, frequently anonymous in origin can be individually or communally aurally created (Nettl, 2005: 5), and indeed recreated (Barry, 1933, cited in Bohlman, 1988: 24). Creation is a continual process throughout the ‘history’ of a folk tune in that there is no ‘fixed version’, as noted by the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) regarding Irish traditional tunes:

Although items of the repertory are initially produced by individual singers and musicians, they are changed as they pass from performer to performer, and they eventually become the production of many hands, music in a sense 'of the people.'
(ITMA, 1996a: 2)

Therefore, the creation processes in these genres can lead to fundamentally different ways of learning and ‘considering music’ (Smith, 1999: 210). In one, learning is text orientated, with a musician working from a written score, a ‘version of a great masterpiece’, which was composed by ‘an individual genius’ and, according to Smith, is ‘open to only rather minimal interpretation by the performer’ (Smith, 1999: 209), or as Newman (...) suggests ‘within the allowable limits’ of the ‘style period in question’ (pp. 148-149). This contrasts with the second tradition in which one deals with ‘music as sound’, where there is ‘no abstract written text which can be studied’ (Smith, 1999: 209). In this second tradition, one is dealing with a music that exists in and is learned through performance (O’Connor, 2001: 3; Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998: 6; Smith, 1999; ITMA, 1996a: 1), involving ‘concepts of variation and improvisation’ (Smith, 1999: 209).

2.3.2 Modes of learning: the score and the tune

Very different emphases can be portrayed in the literature regarding the modes of learning associated with each of these traditions. In Irish traditional music, ‘most repertory is learned by ear’ (Hast and Scott, 2004: 43) and central to this way of learning is an emphasis on ‘memory development and ear training’ (Veblen, 1994: 26). As Smith points out, taking part in the tradition means being able to play a substantial repertoire by ear, socially with other musicians (Smith, 2005: 74). In contrast, ‘most classical musicians begin learning and practising new pieces from a notated source’ (Ginsborg, 2004: 130). Music learning in this genre is ‘associated with the drive to excel musically and technically’ as well as with developing ‘notation based music making skills’ (Creech, Papageorgi, Duffy, Morton, Hadden, Potter, De Bezenac, Whyton, Himonides & Welch, 2008: 228). Differing emphases are again evident in the understandings of transmission which underlie these aural and notation based practices. Smith (2005) describes, ‘demonstration – imitation teaching paradigms,’ (p. 69) as being at the heart of the music transmission in Irish traditional music. This is a tradition in which ‘the tune is the vehicle of learning’ (Veblen, 2004) and where ‘the teacher knows how to play the music and impart tunes’ (Veblen, 1994) by ear through demonstration and imitation. This contrasts with the classical tradition, where there is an emphasis on technical exercises, scales, and sight-reading in preparation for work on the notated piece. Demonstration – imitation is also a tool used by teachers in classical music teaching / learning, though as Lennon (2000b) notes, ‘in [...] piano teaching transactions it is not the tunes or musical pieces *per se* that the teacher imparts, but the aspects of style and interpretation and the tradition of performance’ (Lennon, 2000a: 225). These aspects include (such elements as) a ‘general approach’ to sound, ‘ways of thinking,’ ‘approaches to practice’ or ‘the process of exploring the musical work’ (Lennon, 2000a: 227).

Indeed, demonstration is understood and used very differently in these traditions. For example, in classical music learning:

Some teachers rarely or never demonstrate the pieces which their students are learning to play, and even in the case of those who do, the demonstration will often comprise only a fleeting rendition or two, sometimes of no more than a phrase or a few bars at a time. (Lennon, 1997, cited in Green, 2002)

In discussing the teaching of classical music, concern is sometimes expressed regarding the extent or the way in which demonstration might result in imitation, something that could negatively impact on a player's 'personal individual interpretation of the piece' (Green, 2002: 187). A somewhat different view of demonstration and imitation is held among Irish traditional musicians, where pieces are learned by ear, in a process where the tune (if taught) is taught *through* demonstration and modelling. In this approach 'imitating the style of some outstanding player' is viewed as 'an excellent way of making progress in the initial stages of learning' (Breathnach, 1996a: 123). However, one is expected to put one's 'own particular stamp' on the music (Molloy in Larsen, 2003: 27), something which happens as one comes to 'absorb [...] the idiom of the music' (ITMA, 1991b: 1). In Ó Canainn's opinion, making one's own of the music is the result 'of many long hours of practice, years of listening and perhaps generations of involvement in the tradition' (Ó Canainn, 1993: 40).

2.3.3 The role of notation in classical and Irish traditional musics

The aural / literate 'dichotomy' as suggested in the above paragraphs, regarding learning modes, is not necessarily typical of all Irish traditional and classical music practices. Interestingly, the above description of aural music learning in Irish traditional music draws many parallels with how Campbell (1991) describes learning in the classical tradition in earlier eras. For example, in Medieval and Renaissance times, when an 'oral tradition was partially maintained even as notation provided the musical framework' (p. 23) and performers of the time sustained a 'balance between music reading and aural learning'⁵ (Campbell, 1991: 23). Learning in classical music is nowadays notation based. In this tradition the score is often called 'the music' by performers (Hill, 2002: 129; Tagg cited in Lilliestam, 1996: 196; Small, 1977: 28), and though a misnomer, this emphasises how important the score is in the classical music making context. This emphasis on notation is also noted by Finnegan (2007) who found in her study, *Hidden Musicians*, that in classical music 'learning music means learning to read music'. However, in the literature we are also reminded of the limits of the score and many aspects of musical sound for which it cannot account (Wade, 2004: 24-26; Lennon, 2000a: 226; Keegan, 1996: 337; Smith, 1999: 207; Swanwick, 1994), that the score is but a 'set of instructions to players' (Small, 1977: 28), which includes 'exact and approximate' musical information and interpretation indications (Hill, 2002: 129). 'The music', however, is much more expansive, involving both

literate and aural dimensions and according to Hill is ‘something imagined, first by the composer, then in partnership with the performer, and ultimately communicated in sound’ (2002: 129).

Notation also plays a role in Irish traditional music, albeit with significant differences. Since the eighteenth century, for preservation and archival reasons, particular performers’ versions or setting of tunes have been collected in manuscript and print collections. Similarly, collections by musicians for musicians have existed since then, though interestingly, according to Breathnach (1996c), ‘no systematic use has been made’ of these collections in teaching (p. 93). This may, in part, be due to the fact that as Carson points out, in Irish traditional music, ‘the tune’ ‘printed in a book is not *the* tune’ (Carson, 1986: 8). There is no such thing as a definitive version of a traditional tune and a written setting of a tune is but ‘a description of one of its many possible shapes’ (Carson, 1986: 8), or as Larsen (2003) describes it, ‘a transcription of a frozen skeleton of a snapshot of a setting of a tune’ (p. 19). Given the improvisatory nature of the music, and that ‘the tune’ ‘is never the same tune twice’ (Carson, 1986: 8-9), it is probably more accurate to equate ‘the tune’ with what happens in a particular performance by a particular player. Learning in this genre is more likely to take place through a ‘process of performance’ (Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998: 6), whether it is from recorded sources (audio, internet) or the live ‘performances of others’ (O’Connor, 1981: 3) rather than purely from written notation.

‘The nature of a notation system depends on the purpose which people want it to serve’ (Wade, 1994: 19) and in Irish traditional music a range of notation systems have evolved largely as mnemonic devices (Smith, 2005; Haste and Scott, 2004; Larsen, 2003; Keegan, 1996), as ‘teaching aids’ (Cotter, 2009; McMathúna, 2009; McCarthy, 1999; Breathnach, 1996c; Keegan, 1996), and indeed sometimes, as Larsen (2003) summarises, as a supplement, ‘a convenience, and a shorthand guide’ (p. 19). While it is generally held that the transmission of Irish traditional music ‘is originally and essentially independent of writing and print’ (ITMA, 1991a: 1), nowadays a mixture of aural/literate approaches exist in Irish traditional music learning. There are those for whom the tune is acquired aurally with no reference to notation, where the tune is learned from the playing of others, for example, from a teacher, a musician at a session, or from various audio sources (Wallis and Wilson, 2001: 5; ITMA, 1996b; O’Connor,

1991; Veblen, 1991; Ó hAllmhurnáin, 1982; O’Canainn, 1978). However, different degrees of use of notation in formal group and individual lessons have been documented; from tunes being taught aurally and notation given out afterwards for mnemonic / practice purposes (Ward, 2008; Breathnach, 1996c; Veblen, 1991, 1994) to a variety of notational forms, graphic, alphabetic, staff, solfa,⁶ used during the learning of the tune (Cotter, 2009, 2013; Cranitch, 2000; Breathnach, 1996c; Keegan, 1996, 2012; Veblen, 1991, 1994). Interestingly, in more recent years, perhaps since the advent of group teaching, and self-teaching practices, an array of resources are available that support aural, notational and combined approaches. These range from tutors using a variety of notational systems, (and sometimes combinations of notations e.g. staff and alphabet notation), to web based learning with varying degrees of interactive websites, and chat rooms, (Waldron and Veblen, 2008).

Keegan (1996) examines in some detail the differences in the use of notation in learning Irish traditional and classical music. One fundamental distinction that he makes is between notation as a model *for* and *of* performance, i.e. ‘operational’ and ‘representational’. He suggests that in classical music the score is both ‘operational’ and ‘representational’ in the sense that the score signifies ‘the majority of elements that construe performance’. In Irish traditional music he suggests that the score is not operational, as it ‘plays no role in the performance of the music’ (Keegan, 1996: 338). However it is ‘representational’ but ‘in very few essential elements’ as it ‘signifies’:

A truncated version of only one componential element of the performance. Most of the information required for traditional performance, even elements of repertoire, is not transferred in notation but is done so aurally in both formal and informal modes of transmission. (Keegan, 1996: 338-9)

Thus, Keegan concludes that it is ‘incorrect’ to describe the way in which traditional musicians use notational as representational and suggests describing the use of notation in learning as ‘directional’:

It is used as a signpost in the processes of transmission, providing essential information for the traditional rendering of a tune (that is the basic outline of the tune) but only being a small part of a transmission process. (Keegan, 1996: 339)

2.4 Ways of Listening and Hearing

The ear is recipient and controller of sounds, appreciation of which is at the foundation of all musical study. (Dalcroze, 1925 / 1999: 4)

A myriad of words and phrases are used in describing listening processes in classical music and pedagogical literature: ‘intelligent listening’ (Slenczynska, 1961: 105); ‘active’ and ‘passive’ ‘listening’ (Green, 2002: 186; Hallam, 2001: 2; Kim, 2001: 152; Gordon, 1995: 31); ‘listening with/without conscious cognitive attention’ (Hallam, 1998: 181; 2001: 20); ‘a keen listening sense’, ‘hearing’, ‘hearing but not listening’, ‘pre-hearing’ (Matthay, 1964: 5-10); ‘inner hearing’ (McPherson and Gabrielsson, 2002: 103; Chapell, 1999: 256; Swanwick, 1994: 157); ‘internalisation’ (Chapell, 1999: 225); ‘thinking in sound’ (McPherson and Gabrielsson, 2002: 103; Priest, 1989: 175); critical listening (Lennon, 2000a: 226); ‘critical self-hearing’ (Geiseking and Leimer (1932, 1972: 10); aural development (Juntunen and Westerlund, 2001: 212; Hallam, 1998, 2001; Gordon, 1995; Swanwick, 1994: 159; Taylor, 1991: 29); ‘aural image’ (Whiteside, 1995 / 1961); ‘aural perception’ (Lhevine, 1924 / 1972) and ‘to auralise’ (Matthay, 1964: 5-10). Of these various distinctions and processes, aspects given special attention in educational and classical instrumental literatures are inner hearing, internalisation, critical hearing and aural development. Listening or a ‘keen listening sense’ is documented in the literature as ‘a principle trait of a performing musician’ (Campbell, cited in Lennon, 2000a: 228).

The language of listening in traditional Irish music reflects a differing emphasis, indicative, perhaps, of a different range of learning practices and is encapsulated in such phrases as ‘learning by osmosis’ (Hast and Scott, 2004: 43); ‘learning simply by hearing’ (Veblen, 2004: 3) and ‘picking up the music naturally’ or ‘inquisitive listening’ (Larsen, 2003: 19). In Irish traditional music, listening has been described as ‘the key to all insight’ (Larsen, 2003: 19). Curiously, apart from such references, listening receives little detailed discussion in Irish traditional music literature as, perhaps, the centrality of listening is assumed or taken for granted, with learning processes inevitably or simply described as ‘aural or oral’ (Smith, 2005: 70; Larsen, 2003: 19; Cranitch, 2000: 205; Ó hAllmhuráin, 1998; ITMA, 1996a; 6; O’Connor 1991: 3, Veblen, 1991; 1994; Ó Riada, 1982: 19; Ó Canainn, 1978).

2.4.1 Active and passive listening

Several distinctions are made in relation to listening to one's self and others in practice, playing, performance and also in learning classical and Irish traditional or other vernacular musics. A particular theme in classical music literature is the significance of 'having or lacking' conscious attention while listening. Conscious aspects of listening are valued and stressed by phrases such as 'intelligent listening' and 'critical self-hearing' (Geiseking and Leimer, 1972: 10; Slenczynska, 1961). As Lennon points out, 'this type of critical listening is viewed as a necessity in one's own practice and playing, as well as in listening to others performances', for example, in a teacher's playing, in live performances and in recordings (2000b: 5-6). The converse, a tendency to '*hear* musical sounds without really listening to them' has been described as 'passive hearing', 'listening without conscious attention' or simply 'hearing but not really listening' is something that is warned against in classical music literature (Matthay, 1964). Pianist and teacher Matthay goes further, connecting conscious listening with cognition and analysis and emphasising the importance of analysing 'the stream of aural impressions pouring in upon us' (Matthay, 1964). In Irish traditional music 'attentive listening' is viewed as enabling one to 'to make [one's] own of the idiom of the music, and thus to perform items in a good traditional style' (ITMA 1991b). 'Truly attentive inquisitive listening' is viewed as 'the corner stone of effective practice' by another traditional musician (Larsen, 2003: 19). This sense of the importance of cognitively active listening is emphasised in both traditions, particularly in relation to the fuller meaning and the deeper aspects of these musics (Larsen, 2003; Campbell, 1991). As Campbell observes, while notation conveys much, 'the fuller meaning of music, as an expressive art, can be ascertained only through careful listening' (p. 282).

2.4.2 Sonic landscapes: 'learning by hearing'

Listening in a different enculturative sense is discussed by Green (2002) in the context of 'informal learning practices', where 'listening and copying' combined with 'close watching' are 'the main means of learning in all folk and traditional musics' (p. 186). She examines in detail the listening modes of informal learning, with particular reference to the way popular musicians learn and, as a result, distinguishes between three types of listening: purposive (in order to put it to use), attentive (detailed, but

without a specific aim) and distracted (attending on and off as is typical where the aim is entertainment and enjoyment) (Green, 2002: 23-24). She suggests that with 'distracted listening' we can also include 'hearing', which occurs 'when we are aware that music is playing but are barely paying any attention to it' (p24). Such informal learning and listening practices are part of enculturative processes that have been defined as 'the acquisition of musical skills and knowledge by immersion in the everyday music and musical practices of one's social context' (Green, 2002: 22).

In Irish traditional music the enculturative aspects of listening receive considerable attention in the accounts of several traditional players (Berrill, 2009; Campbell, 2006; Haste and Scott, 2004) and are highly valued as an important part of learning in the traditional music context. Biographical details of musicians' learning (Campbell, 2006; Haste and Scott, 2004; Veblen, 1991, 1994) encapsulate these 'enculturative' ways of listening in phrases such as 'participation as a child [...] consisted mostly of listening' (Campbell, 2006: 420) and 'part of their natural sonic fabric' (Campbell, 2006: 420). Haste and Scott (2004) describe the learning processes of traditional musicians growing up in a musical community as 'learning by osmosis' (p. 40). Similarly, Larsen (2003: 20) suggests that it is through 'immersion in listening to the fine players of the past and present' that the 'tune seeps in', and Veblen refers to Irish traditional musicians learning tunes 'simply by hearing them' (Veblen, 2004, 3). For many players, years of listening in such a manner forms 'the basis of their repertoire and sense of style' (Campbell, 2006: 420) in later years. Indeed, Campbell (2006) suggests that, as a result of enculturative processes, 'performance can advance more rapidly than if they had not absorbed the music' (p. 420).

In classical instrumental practices, learning through listening as part of an enculturative process appears, according to Green (2002), to be generally overlooked (Green, 2002: 187). Activities such as demonstration of whole pieces, listening purposively and attentively to recordings as part of tuition or use of recordings as a central teaching aid, aspects typical of informal learning are not generally aspects of a classical instrumental approach (Green, 2002: 187). Green does however note that nowadays listening is an aspect of practice for advanced classical musicians who, in a more formal way, 'regularly build [...] programmes of listening to recordings into their regime, in preparation for performance' (Green, 2002: 186).

2.4.3 Inner hearing

Another aspect of ways of listening/hearing that is discussed, particularly in music education and classical music literature, is that of hearing *inwardly* (Langer, cited in Lennon 2000b) or ‘inner hearing’ (McPherson and Gabrielsson, 2002: 103; Chapell, 1999: 256; Dalcroze, 1999; Gordon, 1995: 35; Swanwick, 1994: 157). Gordon emphasises the importance of that ‘powerful inner generation of sound’ as a vital component of listening from the early stages of learning. He also describes it as essential to ‘both technical security and success in projecting a musical idea’ (1995: 31). Without this foundation he believes that:

Clear musical realisation, technical security, and artistic independence can never be more than imitative processes, and emerging young musicians will always experience an elusive sense of anxiety in all they pursue. (Gordon, 1995: 35)

This internalising of sound or hearing inwardly is described as a mental activity, an inner process which draws on listening, concentration, memory and the imagination (Matthay, 1964). According to Swanwick (1994), inner hearing ‘is essentially the forming of musical images’ (p. 155), a process or an activity described by Chappell (1999) as the mental manipulation and creation of ‘sounds, feelings and images’ (p. 255). As Gordon (1995) points out, ‘thought processes which result in inner hearing take place to some degree in all music making’. As noted, inner hearing is viewed as essential to technical security and the ‘success in projecting a musical idea’ as well as being a critical element in creating mental images of the music, and in aural training, playing by ear and notational fluency.

2.4.4 Inner hearing and notational learning processes

An aspect of listening and inner hearing explored in classical pedagogical literature is how these processes are affected by the use of notation process in learning. McPherson and Gabrielsson (2002) suggest that, in some cases, listening is displaced by the reading process as the young musician struggles to bring together the technical and literate elements of their instrumental practice. Mainwaring (1951) reflects on the relationship between inner hearing and reading notation (see Fig. 2.3 below).⁷ He points out that, when reading notation, to ‘think in sound’ or to truly ‘hear what one sees’ involves the ability to inner hear and comprehend the notation separately from playing or performance. In his discussion of learning to read music, he identifies two

ways in which notation is processed: 1) the player sees the notation and responds mechanically to produce the notated sound, thus working from symbol to action to sound; 2) the player first sees the musical notation, and is able ‘to hear the notation inwardly before reproducing it on an instrument’ thus working from symbol to sound to action (see Fig. 1 below) (Mainwaring, 1951).

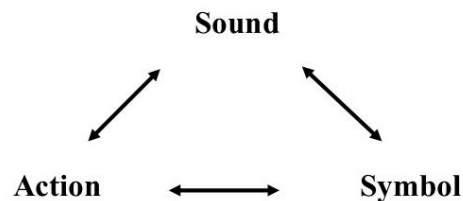


Fig. 2.3 Learning to read music (Mainwaring, 1951: 20)

The first process, which does not draw particularly on inner hearing, has received negative comment from both within and outside the classical tradition and has been described as reading without meaning. It is probably what Pratt is referring to when he notes that:

The professional training of musicians and teachers has cultivated the eye and certain types of paper and pencil ‘analysis’ at the expense of oral fluency and aural sensitivity. We have already seen this tendency in instrumental teaching and it has been noticed by those working within the western traditions. (Pratt, 1990, cited in Swanwick, 1994: 169)

According to Mainwaring, this approach to reading is typical of most instrumental teaching practice in western classical music. He views the second way of working as ‘the most efficient and effective means for developing a young player’s overall musicianship’. This idea of sound before action, hearing before playing, is at the heart of such teaching methods as the Kodály method. To quote *Kodály’s Principles in Practice*: ‘a good musician will imagine the score in his mind before attempting it on his instrument’ (Szönyi, 1990: 29). Thus it would seem that how one creates mental images of the music is in some way bound up in the visual notation. For the traditional musician who learns orally / aurally (Hast and Scott, 2004: 43), how is the inner sound and action connected? In the absence of notation, how is the music imagined?

Fundamentally what is in question here is the degree to which the age-old adage ‘sound before symbol’ is being observed: how is inner hearing being developed in such students? In Irish traditional and other folk music literature, passing references to listening (inner hearing?) in the learning process, would suggest its centrality is presumed in learning (Campbell, 2006; Hast and Scott, 2004; Rice, 1994; Veblen, 1991) and that such references as ‘learning by hearing’ (Veblen, 1991, 1994) and ‘learning by osmosis’ (Hast and Scott, 2004: 40; Veblen, 2004: 4) might suggest that inner hearing is integral to the aural learning approach.

2.5 Memorisation Practices

The role that memorisation plays in the performance traditions and learning practices of Western Classical and Irish traditional musics are, and have been, markedly different. As Williamon (2002) points out, it was only at the end of the nineteenth century that playing from memory in the classical tradition ‘came to be regarded as a serious practice and not mere sensationalism’ (p. 114). Nowadays, while performing from memory has become standard performance practice for some instruments and indeed ‘a measure of professional competence for the concert soloists of all types’ (Williamon, 2002: 114), there are many areas in performance where memorisation is not necessarily required. Chamber music, for example, and even sometimes solo performances of unusually long, taxing traditional works such as the *Goldberg* variations of Bach (Gordon, 1995: 78) or complex contemporary works are often performed with the score. Gordon qualifies this use of the score when he notes that:

Chamber and orchestral musicians, may [...] have the music in front of them, but they cannot be tied to the score to the extent of reading it; their attention must be focused not just on the sound, but also on ensemble precision and balance and in some cases on responding to a conductor or listening for intonation. (Gordon, 2006: 85)

However, in the Irish traditional music tradition, performance is always entirely from memory, by ear and without notation. The idea of an Irish traditional musician performing with a score would be ‘regarded as an object of curiosity’ (Breathnach, 1996c: 94). Indeed, a major element in performance and playing in this tradition is the manner in which musicians gather in sessions and other informal contexts and ‘jam’ together, drawing on an extensive repertoire resulting from highly developed aural and memory skills. As Smith explains:

Because *trad* is a quintessentially melody orientated music with something like 12,000 tunes extant, developing a repertoire that permits playing with other musicians in a pub session requires aural facility and an adept musician memory. (Smith, 2005: 74)

2.5.1 Memorisation and learning processes

Regarding learning practices, the emphasis on and the approach to memorisation, as well as the stage of the learning process in which it takes place, differs greatly in both traditions. In general, in instrumental learning for the younger classical music student, memorisation is viewed as something that takes place at the end of the learning process. However it can be argued that rote or automatic memorisation is ongoing throughout the learning process (Ginsborg, 2004: 128; Hallam, 1998: 147-8). Aiello and Williamon (2002) note that discussions on how to memorise music repertoire ‘tend not to be an integral part of the music lesson’ and that little time is spent on such with students (p. 176). On the other hand, for the more advanced classical music student, memorisation is ‘the final acid test in determining their readiness to perform’ (Gordon, 1995: 79). In contrast, various writings regarding Irish traditional music would suggest that memory development is seen as an essential and integral part of learning (Smith, 2005: 69; McCarthy, 1999: 101; Breathnach, 1996c: 94; Veblen, 1994: 26). Accounts of traditional musicians’ learning attest to the fact that internalising and aspects of memorisation take place, for some, years in advance of learning an instrument. For example, many musicians who have grown up in the tradition describe having ‘absorbed’ (Hast and Scott, 2004: 44) the music before ever learning it on an instrument. As Campbell notes:

Years of listening to the elders in their informal playing together form the basis of their repertoire and sense of style, so that performance can advance more rapidly than if they had not absorbed the music. (Campbell, 2006: 420)

More recent learning resources, such as *The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle* (2003) advocate this ‘enculturative’ approach as a strategy in the learning and memorising of Irish traditional music, suggesting:

A natural and effortless way to learn a tune is to simply hear it many times, over a long period of time. Without making a conscious effort to learn it the tune seeps into you [...] now it’s only a matter of transferring it to your instrument. (Larsen, 2003: 20)

Indeed memory and ear training are seen as ‘necessary attributes for traditional musicians’ (Veblen, 1994: 26). The inextricable link between the ear, memory (and listening) in the aural learning process is again highlighted by Nugent (2008) when she says that ‘learning relies heavily on memory because with ornaments and anything like that, [...] you learn a lot quicker, just by listening (Nugent in interview with author, 2008).

2.5.2 Memory: theories and strategies

In recent decades there has been considerable discussion about and investigation into how classical musicians memorise and the types of memorisation strategies that are used by musicians in readiness for performance (Ginsborg, 2004; Williamon, 2002; Aiello and Williamon, 2002; Gordon, 1995, 2006). In a classical music context it has been suggested that there are generally three principal modes— auditory, kinaesthetic and visual—that performers use to learn, memorise and prepare for performance.⁸ Much of the research also stresses that aural, visual and kinaesthetic memory ‘cannot function properly without’ what is described as ‘conceptual’ or ‘analytical’ memory’⁹ (Ginsborg, 2004: 128; Williamon, 2002: 119).

Research tells us that memorisation strategies used by classical musicians can differ with age, expertise, context and purpose. Indeed, many novice musicians and professional orchestral players find it difficult to explain how they memorise and report memorising ‘almost without conscious awareness’, regarding it as something that happens ‘initially [...] as they learn their parts’ (Hallam, 1997). At a fundamental level, irrespective of individual learning preferences and styles, Ginsborg (2004) reminds us that one essential in memorising is ‘sensory information’ for building ‘mental representations’¹⁰ or a ‘memory for a piece of music’ (p. 128), and therefore kinaesthetic, visual and aural memory all have a part to play in memorisation. She summarises thus:

Sequences of musical events are usually memorised and automatized via rote repetition using ‘kinaesthetic’ memory. However they could not be learned in the first place without the use of ‘visual’ memory of the notated music and of the way the music is created, and ‘aural’ memory of sounds that are imagined, heard, or produced by the performer for the first time. (Ginsborg, 2004: 128)

2.5.2.1 Rote and kinaesthetic memorisation

In considering the different strategies used by classical musicians, rote memorisation, which relies on kinaesthetic memory and repetition, is considered the most common (Ginsborg, 2004: 129). In studies conducted by Aiello (2000) and Hallam (1997) 'kinaesthetic memory' was considered as possibly being the most helpful to enable children to perform without the score' (cited in Aiello and Williamon, 2002: 175). For example, where instrumental technique is more advanced than theoretical understanding, rote learning 'can bring immediate results' (Aiello and Williamon, 2002: 176). They also found that kinaesthetic memory was what adult music students and inexperienced or novice musicians reported relying on to memorise (Ginsborg, 2004: 129 also Aiello and Williamon, 2002: 175). Expert musicians use rote memorisation differently in that they use it to 'overlearn' their performances, albeit in conjunction with other memory strategies (Ginsborg, 2004: 129), such as 'multiple coding of information' (combination of aural, visual, kinaesthetic memory and analytical strategies) (Williamon, 2002: 120).

2.5.2.2 Chunking, visual, and aural strategies

A strategy combined with rote learning, by some musicians, is that of 'chunking', where sections or 'chunks' requiring attention are taken out, worked on, gradually working towards larger chunks or reintegrating sections back into the framework of the piece (Ginsborg, 2004: 129; Reid, 2002: 105). Hallam (1997) also found that different strategies are employed depending on the nature of the task. For example, in shorter pieces a musician might confidently rely on automated processes, whereas for a longer, more complex work, a more analytical approach would be utilised (cited in Williamon, 2002: 120). Several writers note various combinations of visual and aural memorisation strategies. For example, Giesecking and Leimer (1972) emphasise the importance of mental rehearsal and visualisation, suggesting 'memorising pieces by visualising them though silent reading' (which for effectiveness relies on inner hearing and auditory memory). Visualisation is also used as a memory strategy by pianists and other players in terms of remembering positions of hands and fingers, 'the look of chords as they are struck' and 'the patterns made upon the keyboard as they are played' (Aiello and Williamon, 2002: 167). Many musicians also report 'knowing where they are on the page' when they play from memory (Ginsborg, 2004: 130). Preferences are expressed in respect of the use of the various 'sensory' strategies in memorisation and

in discussing the memorisation of piano music, and Matthay (1964) and Giesecking and Leimer (1972) place greater emphasis on the importance of auditory and visual memory above that of kinaesthetic memory.

2.5.2.3 Conceptual / analytical memory strategies

The literature would suggest that there are considerable differences in the way in which novice and professional classical musicians use conceptual / analytical memory. Aiello (2000) found that students ‘do not question at all how they memorise’ (Aiello and Williamon, 2002: 176), and in spite of good levels of technical proficiency, often simply memorise by rote. They also found that ‘it is not unusual for some students to start memorising a composition without having analysed the overall plan of the piece’ (Aiello and Williamon, 2002: 176). Professional classical musicians take a different approach. In ‘Memorising Music’, Aaron Williamon quotes research by Marcus (1979) and Noyle (1987), which suggests that most professional pianists report:

Relying mainly on the analysis of the musical structure, some also describe using aspects of auditory, visual or kinaesthetic memory to memorise. Others reveal using a combination of these types of memories. (Marcus, 1979; Noyle, 1987, cited in Aiello and Williamon, 2002: 175)

Indeed Williamon suggests that the studies by Hallam and Aiello, as well as anecdotal ‘claims’ by Hughes and Matthay would indicate that ‘the most highly skilled musicians [...] rely heavily on analytical strategies when memorising’ (Williamon, 2002: 121).

2.5.3 Memorisation practices in Irish traditional music

It is clear that much of the literature discussed above mainly focuses on memorisation in classical music. There is little documentation regarding memorization processes in Irish traditional music, apart from general comments attesting to it as a necessary attribute or skill and as an intrinsic part of the music which is closely linked with aural processes and learning by ear (Smith, 2005: 69; Veblen, 1994: 26). However, one study which focuses on teaching in Irish traditional music would suggest that teachers adopt a range of individual approaches towards memory development (Veblen, 1991). While the teachers interviewed in this study all emphasise ‘the importance of memory development’ as a ‘necessary attribute’ for traditional musicians (Veblen, 1991: 75), their methods of memory development incorporate a range of aural and literate

approaches. These range from memorising a tune aurally through rote learning from a performance or an aural recording, rote learning where some form of visual ‘notation’ was used either during the learning or used after learning as a mnemonic aid, and learning the tune with some form of notation and memorising it later. While the scope of Veblen’s study does not allow for a description of the types of memory being used, a more recently published tutor by Larsen (2003), *The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle*, details memory development in flute playing. In it Larsen reflects upon the various strategies of aural, kinaesthetic and visual memory development. Interestingly, Larsen discusses memory in the context of aural learning, and he considers the visual and kinaesthetic strategies in relation to hand position and patterns on instruments rather than notation (p. 20). Memory development is also considered in terms of knowledge of structure and elements of music theory (Larsen, 2003: 21), though these later suggestions may or may not reflect general practice.

2.6 Style, Interpretation and Improvisation

Different views are expressed with regard to what constitutes style and interpretation within these two musical traditions. There is also divergent use of the language regarding concepts of style, interpretation and performance practice. Broadly speaking, style is concerned with both composing and performance elements, though with considerably different emphasis in classical and Irish traditional music. In each of these traditions, any discussion of style must take into account the role of the performer and their individual style in their expression of a particular composition, tune or piece and therefore, this section of the literature review is concerned with style and its interpretation in performance. Given the sometimes improvisatory nature of styles of performance in Irish traditional music, this discussion will extend to a consideration of style, interpretation and improvisation. [Style (and sub-style) in sociological terms is also used in the literature to express categories or genres of music, for example classical music as a style, Baroque music as a sub-style, Irish traditional music styles, popular music styles and its various sub-styles]. In this research, style is not used taxonomically but with reference to elements of teaching and learning.

2.6.1 Composing and performing: issues of style

In the classical context, various definitions and categorisations of the term style place differing emphasis on its compositional, performance and interpretative aspects / characteristics. From a compositional view, Stravinsky (1942) suggests that it has to do with ‘the particular way a composer organises his conceptions and speaks the language of his craft.’ Pianist and pedagogue Agay (1982: 457) defines style as ‘the collective *characteristic traits* of musical works in reference to a certain period or a certain composer’. He sees style as being concerned also with performance practice, i.e. renditions that adhere ‘to musicologically proven *performance practices* of an era’ Cooper emphasises the compositional characteristics when he subdivides style into ‘the composers style, the style of his country, the style of the times in which he lived, of the piece itself, of the instruments for which it was written’ (cited in Lennon, 1997: 9). The interpretative aspects of style and the role of the performer are focused on by Jakūd (1997: 126) when he suggests that ‘style is understood as a method of interpretation through which the characteristics of a certain period and author are shown.’ He also, along with others, underlines the importance of authenticity in interpretation. Many contemporary authors incorporate both compositional and performance aspects in discussions of style, for example when Lennon (2000a) defines style as relating ‘to both the compositional process culminating in a musical work, its characteristic, and the style of performance’ (p. 224). The importance of personal style in classical musical interpretation is another dimension that is highlighted. (Lennon, 2000a; Brendel, 1976). Within a discussion of teaching and learning, Lennon emphasises the importance of the personal style of a player ‘as revealed in their individual responsiveness to the expressive character of the music’ (Lennon, 2000a: 222).

Categorisations and definitions of style in Irish traditional music very often place emphasis on performance with abundant references to individual, regional (or dialect) and instrumental styles of playing (Haste and Scott, 2004; Larsen, 2003; Vallely, 1999; Veblen, 1994; Ó Canainn, 1978; Breathnach, 1996a). Few writers define precisely what is meant by style, though rich discussion of the characteristic traits of the various styles are plentiful.¹¹ Keegan (2010) sets out five conceptual categories through which style in Irish traditional music is seen to exist, namely:

1. The style which is the Irish music tradition
2. The style associated with a particular instrument
3. The style of any one of the musical 'dialects' which are characterised by different levels of predominance of certain techniques, methods and repertoire
4. The style of an individual musician
5. The style of an individual performance

There are interesting parallels in this categorisation with that of Cooper's subdivisions of style in classical music. Both identify country or regional characteristics and instrumental factors as style determinants but differ in terms of compositional /performance focus, which takes us perhaps to a core stylistic difference in these two traditions. Style is concerned with the composition (or tune) and its performance (the performer's interpretation) but the balance between these elements is different in each of these traditions. In classical music, the composition / tune is written by a composer in a particular style (country/era/composer's particular voice) for a particular instrument that the performer then interprets within stylistic limits. What is particularly interesting in Irish traditional music, in contrast to classical music, is the lack of emphasis on the tune (whether composer is known or unknown) or composition. Style is very much considered in relation to the adaptation of the tune to a particular instrument, dialect and/or 'the individual musicians way' (Ó Canainn, 1978: 40) and may involve interpretation, variation, improvisation or composition on the part of the performer.

As Ó Canainn (1978) notes, in the case of the 'very best' or 'virtuoso performers', their ability to improvise distinguishes them as 'part composer as well' (p. 40): what Breathnach (1996a) describes as involving 'a degree of instant composition (p. 98). Historically, style in classical music was also linked to improvisation as in the time of Mozart, when all composers and performers could extemporise cadenzas and such as required. In modern times this latter skill is no longer widely developed or generally required by a classical musician / music learner, although more recently there has been a growing interest in incorporating improvisation as part of a classical music training.

2.6.2 Stylistic interpretation: the role of the performer

Interestingly, in classical music, different periods in history are associated with very different practices in relation to the degree of freedom experienced by performers in interpreting and realising the music. The pendulum has swung to both extremes, from the highly subjective interpretations at the turn of the twentieth century, which have been described as ‘distortions so grotesque that the spirit was destroyed in the opinion of many’ (Gordon, 1995: 99), to a period following in which the mantra or ‘the watchword of teachers, students and many performers’ became ‘follow the score’ (Gordon, 1995: 99). In this later understanding, ‘true interpretation’ depended ‘solely on scrupulously exact reading’ (Hofmann, cited in Ritterman, 2002). When taken literally, such an approach can, according to Agay (1982), lead to an ‘obsessive rigidity’ in performance (p. 460). Nowadays, a more moderate approach prevails and it is generally held that style and interpretation is ‘not simply a matter of accurately reproducing the score [...] but one of bringing the score to life in sound’ (Hill, 2002: 129).

Gordon suggests that for the performer this involves working both objectively and subjectively. This he describes as integrating and balancing ‘one’s personal emotional response to the music with a more objective study of its musical and historic aspects’ (Gordon, 1995: 100). The elements in such a balancing act are set out more expansively by Walls (2002), when he says that:

Most performers would think in terms of being true to the work, of exploring its emotional content, of attempting to honour the composer’s intentions. We value imagination, and originality in performers, but recognise that (normally) this serves the music they perform, helping to illuminate its character or make palpable its emotional content. (Walls, 2002: 17)

Alfred Brendel sums up the role of the performer regarding interpretation and style when he says that ‘musical notes can only suggest, [...] expression marks can only supplement and confirm what we must, first and foremost, read from the face of the composition itself’ (Brendel, 1976: 23). He concludes that the process also demands ‘one’s own engaged emotions, one’s own sense, one’s own intellect, one’s own refined ears’. (Brendel, 1976: 23)

Analysis plays a very important role in stylistic interpretation for the classical musician. In the context of this study, the focus of analysis is on what Rink (2002)

describes as ‘performer’s analysis’ (p. 36), that is, the types of analysis that performers engage in, in learning and performing (as opposed to musicological published analysis). To quote Rink (2002), ‘This sort of analysis is not some independent procedure applied to the act of interpretation’ but rather ‘an integral part of the performing process’ (p. 36). Differing views are expressed in relation to analysis and musical performance, from the ‘intuitive’ type of analysis explicit ‘in what a performer does’ (Schmalfeldt, 1985; Cone, 1968) to ‘the rigorous and theoretically informed analysis’ as recommended by Narmour (1988) and Berry (1988), as well as current views on role analysis with regard to style and interpretation (Ritterman, 2002: 81–8; Lennon, 1997: 11–13; Swanwick, 1994). In probing ‘performers analysis’, Rink frames his discussion within ‘prescriptive’ (analysis prior to) and ‘descriptive’ (‘post facto’) categories of performance. In relation to ‘prescriptive’ analysis, he suggests that key elements include ‘informed intuition’ and music’s ‘temporality’ and the importance of ‘shape’ rather than structure (as applied in musicological analysis) (p. 37).

Although extensive literature deals with musicological analysis in both music traditions, the focus on the performers’ use of analysis means that this section is largely based on classical music literature, as Irish traditional music sources appear not to extend to a consideration of ‘performer’s analysis’ at this time. What we know of style in the Irish traditional music context is based largely on writings from the last fifty years and folk knowledge passed on through the generations. Much of this focuses on musicological analysis of particular regional and individual styles. What one gleans from these writings regarding interpretation is that it would seem to focus on the performer’s (personal) interpretation, ‘as expressed through ornamentation and tune variation’ (Veblen, 1994: 27). This interpretative focus can be seen from such phrases as: ‘putting your own particular stamp on it’ (Molloy in interview with Larsen, 2003: 36); ‘the freedom that a performer enjoys in interpretation’ (Ó Canainn, 1978: 94); ‘an individual’s music expression can be given form and substance’ (McCullough, 1977: 97); ‘the individual musician’s way’ (Ó Canainn, 1978: 42); ‘personal rendition’ (Breathnach, 1996a) and ‘solo expression’ (Wallis and Wilson, 2001).

2.6.3 Elements of style

Writers in each of these music traditions outline the factors or building blocks through which style is developed, taught and/or discussed. Common to both traditions is an emphasis on such factors as phrasing, articulation, rhythmic and melodic elements and sound. Tempo and dynamics have been important stylistic elements in classical music for centuries. In more recent times these ‘minor factors’ in Irish traditional music (Keegan, 2010) have also received some attention. Tone, intonation and sound quality are factors governed by very different aesthetics. Repertoire, in Irish traditional music, is seen as a factor in regional and individual styles. Harmonic elements, such as the ‘characteristic features of various forms, textures and compositional techniques’ (Agay, 1982: 458), are regarded as essential stylistic knowledge in classical instrumental playing. As Irish traditional music is essentially viewed as monophonic or melodic, most discussions of style focus little on harmonic elements. Ornamentation is interpreted and realised differently in the various classical music eras. In traditional music it is seen as a tool in the ‘larger pursuit of variation and interpretation’ (Larsen, 2003: 112) and as ‘a decisive stylistic determinant’ (McCullough, 1977: 85-6). In the following paragraphs a number of these factors are considered in greater detail.

2.6.3.1 Phrasing, articulation, rhythmic and melodic elements

Common to both traditions is a view that certain music elements such as phrasing and articulation can, to quote Breathnach (1996a) ‘be acquired properly only by ear’ (p. 90). Keegan further elaborates on elements that cannot be learned directly from the score such as sound and phrasing suggesting that ‘ways of interpreting them could be described as part of the folk-knowledge’ (Keegan, 1996: 337). Lennon, in the context of comparing classical and Irish traditional musical heritage, speaks similarly of the ‘folk-knowledge’ passed on in the classical tradition. (Lennon, 2000a: 226).

There are rhythmic elements that are viewed as ‘elusive’ for the new comer in both of these traditions. In Irish traditional music it is often referred to as the ‘nyah’ or the ‘lilt’ in the music, or what might be described as ‘patterns of variance’ or ‘playing unevenly’ (in the sense of what one would see in a written version of a tune). Larsen (2003) discusses this in some detail, noting that Irish traditional music:

[...] is rarely if ever played in an absolutely even rhythmic fashion, [...] something that is true of many varieties of folk, ethnic and popular musics. In traditional Irish music this pattern of variance is known as the *lilt* or *swing* in the music. He points out that classical players, who are generally used to playing fairly straight, tend to notice this uneven quality right away and often find the *lilt* to be somewhat elusive. (Larsen, 2003: 40)

Conversely, Larsen notes that musicians who are used to playing unevenly sometimes are not aware that they are not playing straight (Larsen, 2003: 40-41).¹² Different periods in classical music present similar challenges, for example, *inequale* in Early Music or *rubato* in Chopin. Again, these elements are acquired aurally.

2.6.3.2 Ornamentation

The purpose, understanding of and inclusion of ornamentation in pieces and tunes nowadays is quite different in these two traditions. While the word ornament implies something added, decorative, something enhancing, Denes Agay (1982) reminds us that the root of ornamentation in music lies, in fact, in improvisation. Ornamentation is interpreted and realised differently in the various classical music styles. It would have retained some of its improvisatory practices in earlier styles of the Renaissance and Early Baroque and the creative interpretative contribution of the performer would have been viewed as essential. Gradually the practice of writing down ornamentation developed. Particularly from the second half of the seventeenth century onwards, ‘ornaments previously intended to be improvised by players were written out with increasing detail and care’ (Agay, 1982).

Thus for most classical music students, ornamentation in classical music is read as part of the score and is interpreted as an add-on concept (Larsen, 2003: 112); ‘the practice of adding notes to a melody to allow the music to be more expressive’ (Lloyd and Bigler, cited in Larsen, 2003: 111). This is fundamentally different to the manner in which a traditional musician approaches ornamentation in a traditional tune. Traditional music is built on the principle of variation (Ó Riada, 2012), a process which is built aurally without notation and depends on a particular musician’s knowledge of the tradition and creativity. In this context, ornamentation isn’t seen as an add-on concept but as:

[...] ways of altering or embellishing small pieces or cells of a melody’ [...] These alterations and embellishments are mainly created through the use of special

fingered articulations and inflections, not through the addition of extra, ornamental or grace notes. (Larsen, 2003: 112)

This process is to varying degrees planned or improvised in a traditional musician's playing. O'Canainn clarifies this point somewhat when he explains that:

An important part of a performer's style is concerned with his use of ornamentation. Some employ hardly any, others use ornamentation which are completely pre-planned and lack spontaneity, while the very best players are able to ornament at will, giving an imaginative and spontaneous performance. (O'Canainn, 1978: 46)

Also it is worth noting that the more experienced traditional musician 'is not aware of ornamentation as being a separate constituent of the music itself' (Carson, 1986: 62-3).¹³

2.6.3.3 Tempo, dynamics and harmonic factors

The student of classical music has to become knowledgeable of a whole range of performance practices suited to their particular instrument and the era of the particular composition which they are working on. Tempo, dynamics and harmonic factors have, through the ages, received particular attention in the transmission of the concept of style in the classical tradition. This is evident in a bewildering array of treatises, method books and essays documenting performance practices for different instruments and periods. A student needs to be able to stylistically interpret and perform pieces observing these very different stylistic conventions of the differing eras. For example, a Baroque piece might be performed with a 'generally steady [tempo], and a pronounced metric pulse, retards in concluding measures [could] be taken for granted' (Agay, 1982: 461). Whereas, when playing a piece from the classical era, the approach to tempo would be quite different for 'within a section, the pace [would be] generally uniform and steady, but without the constant, firm, and unyielding metric pulse underlying much Baroque' (Agay, 1982: 465).

In Irish traditional music, these elements, if considered at all, receive minor attention. There are many who view dynamics and harmonic factors as not relevant in Irish traditional music style. As Carson notes, (probably referring to the classical music understandings of crescendo and diminuendo), 'it is also generally true that the concepts of crescendo and diminuendo are utterly foreign to traditional music' (Carson, 1986: 11).

2.6.3.4 Sound

Another factor on which style depends in each of these traditions is sound. Differing sound ‘aesthetics’ seem to be associated with classical and Irish traditional music styles. This is particularly evident when we look at, for example, the flute and the violin, instruments used in both traditions. Regarding the flute, Larsen notes that:

[...] traditional musicians rejoice in the asymmetries of the simple system instruments, what classical flutists might consider to be tonal ‘oddities’ or inconsistencies. Most trad musicians are not after a homogeneous sound. (Larsen, 2003: 54)

While some players have adapted the Boehm system effectively to Irish traditional music, the ‘modern [classical] flute’s homogenous, wide-open sound’ (Larsen, 2003: 54) is not a quality generally sought after by Irish traditional musicians. Regarding the differing ‘art forms’ (Breathnach, 1996a: 92) of classical violin and the Irish traditional fiddling¹⁴, different aesthetics also exist also. An aspect of this is the way in which sound is produced and in the use of vibrato. One view expressed is that the use of vibrato, a classical technique, ‘is completely out of place in Irish traditional music’ (O’Canainn, 1978: 101). However, as Carson notes, in more recent years, there has been an ‘observable shift towards classical violin technique’ (bowing, fiddle hold, fingering techniques) in traditional fiddle playing, and such elements as vibrato have made ‘incursions into Irish music’ in particular types of tunes (Carson, 1986: 19). Interestingly, the sound world of the classical musician is considered in its own right. This sound world is determined by a myriad of factors: instrument, technique, period of composition and particular composer.

2.6.3.5 Pitch, tuning and intonation

Another factor to consider when interpreting the music and playing in style in these two traditions are the pitch systems and resulting intonation that the musician negotiates between. The pitch system in Irish traditional music, while similar to classical music, is based on modes (ionian, dorian, myxolydian and aeolian and pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic scales). As Larsen (2003) explains, these modes lend themselves more naturally to ‘pure intervals’ rather than of ‘equal tempered intervals’ (p. 106). Also, some of the instruments used in Irish music, such as the simple-system flute and the uilleann pipes ‘do not naturally play an equal-tempered scale’ (p. 106), and will sound out of tune if compared to equal temperament. These

‘pitch distortions’ are typical of the uilleann pipes and tin whistle and are even observed in Irish fiddle playing. As Larsen remarks:

There is a kind of natural intonation ‘profile’ or ‘dialect’ that is inherent in the design of the simple-system instruments which is also inherent in the nature of traditional [Irish] music regardless of the instruments on which it is played. (Larsen, 2003: 54)

Hood (1960), in his observations of the UCLA students, noted that their rootedness in the equal tone temperament thinking of Western classical music presented them with particular challenges when they engaged in other musical genres. He noted that there was:

[...] the tendency of Westerners to ‘correct’ unfamiliar intervals’ and suggested that these students needed to extend their aural perceptive abilities to hear and discriminate tone temperaments other than those typically used in western classical music e.g. equal tone temperament. [...] An individual must come to realise that in the world of micro-tonal inflections his sense of pitch is actually imperfect. (Hood, 1960: 56)

2.7 Practising for Different Purposes

Practising seems to be almost a universal. One reads about the incredible energy of Indian, Persian, and European musicians who practice throughout their lives. (Nettl, 2005: 394)

Practice is a recognised requirement in the Western Classical music tradition, a ‘fact’ famously immortalised by Ignacy Jan Paderewski when he was noted as saying, ‘If I miss one day of practice, I notice it. If I miss two days, the critics notice it. If I miss three days, the audience notices it’.¹⁴ That many also view practice as a ‘requisite of the musician in all societies’ is, in Merriam’s (1964) view, a fact, that has to some extent gone unrecognised (p. 159).

Practising in classical music is considered in detail in the literature. References to instrumental practice in Irish traditional music suggest a range of different understandings and approaches to practising, perhaps reflective of participatory and performance aspects of the tradition.

2.7.1 Independent practice: classical music

In the context of western classical music, which is strongly performance orientated and taught in formal structured contexts, practice is understood as a vital facet of the

process of learning. Within a western classical music construct, Cayne (1990) defines practice as ‘repeated performance or systematic exercise for the pursuit of learning or acquiring proficiency’ (cited in Barry and Hallam, 2002) Practice is viewed as an essential ingredient in order ‘to gain technical proficiency, learn new repertoire, develop musical interpretation, memorise music, and prepare for performance’ (Barry and Hallam, 2002: 151). Practice strategies have received much attention in the research literature, the results of which suggest that ‘practice is more effective when musicians engage in metacognition, [and] employ mental practice in combination with physical practice’. (Barry and Hallam, 2002: 151, as set out in figure 2 below). The literature suggests that time spent on practice should be well organised, goal-orientated and planned as short, regular sessions. Emphasis is also placed on the importance of the study and analysis of scores and the role of intrinsic motivation (Rink, 2002). The importance of listening to appropriate musical examples, such as professional recordings and/ or teacher demonstrations, is also highlighted as an important element of practice (Kim, 2001; Lennon, 2000a; Hallam, 1998). Other practice activities that receive attention include practising activities when learning a new piece (Barry and Hallam, 2002; Gordon, 1995) or preparing for performance (Jorgensen, 2004; Barry and Hallam, 2002; Oura and Hatano, 2001; Gordon, 1995). Two studies explore the effects of taped performance for individual practice (Linklater, 1997, cited in Barry and Hallam, 2002, Zurcher, 1975).

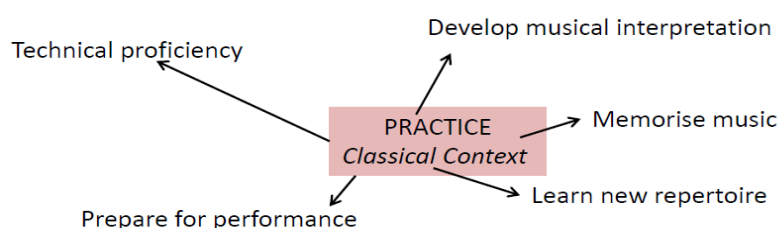


Fig 2.4: Purpose of practice: Western classical music context

2.7.2 Independent practice: Irish traditional music

In Irish traditional music literature, there is some documentation of formalised one-to-one or group lessons (Veblen, 1991, 1994) in which practice activities focus on gaining technical proficiency, on repertoire development and on musical interpretation. In one particular account Veblen (1991) noted that the teacher, Maura

O Keefe, in her beginner group fiddle class, assigned activities such as bow work and tune learning for practice and that in the class, the teacher explained, modelled and individually assigned the various practice activities for children. In general, in this study Veblen found that, ‘unlike other systems, there are no scales, exercise or practice pieces’ and ‘dance tunes serve as both repertoire and a vehicle for learning about the music’ (1994: 27). McUilleagóid (2008) pointed out that students attending both his individual and group lessons would be given a structure for practice and, contrary to Veblen’s findings, it was his opinion that:

There should be scales, there should be arpeggios, there should be the tunes you are working on, and then finish off with a tune you already know, a tune you enjoy playing. (MacUilleagóid, in interview with author, 2008)¹⁵

Indeed in several more recently published instrumental tutors, (McCormick, 2009; Larsen, 2003; Nesbitt, 2003) practice exercises and activities are prescribed, covering a range of technical, cognitive and interpretative strategies. In one unusually detailed flute tutor (Larsen, 2003), technical considerations highlighted include; tone quality and clarity, scales, ornamentation, breathing and phrasing, followed by Larsen’s advice that ‘effective practice is at least 90% attention, mental focus, and listening’ (2003: 299). Unusually, this tutor also makes suggestions regarding the organisation of and length of practice periods, practice space, development of ‘muscle memory’ as well as memorisation of sounds, ornaments and tunes, sound production and physical aspects of playing (Larsen, 2003: 299-301).

2.8 Practising, Playing, Participating

Modes of learning and performance in Irish traditional music range from formalised performance orientated contexts, such as one-to-one lessons, stage performance, competitions and examinations, to informal participatory contexts where the music is ‘picked up’ or learned by ‘osmosis’ and played in a variety of communal contexts such as sessions, house parties, festivals and other social gatherings. In these latter more informal contexts, Green (2002) found that popular / vernacular musics use other approaches to developing proficiency, in which instrumental practice is ‘much less rigorous and more sporadic’ (Green, 2002: 197). She also reminds us that in informal modes of learning, very often, musicians may see ‘no particular distinction between practising and playing’ (2002: 197). This seems partly to be the case in Irish traditional

music, and Veblen (1991) found with an adult class she observed that tune review and practice after the class took place in the informal atmosphere of the local pub in the form of a 'session', thus blending formal and informal modes of learning and rehearsal. While perceptions of practice are little documented in Irish traditional music, one view reiterated by Larsen (2003) is that while 'clearly practice is essential', he draws attention to less orthodox understandings of what practice entails in comparison with how practising is understood in classical music. Larsen explains that while it can refer to 'doing your homework' it can also refer to:

Venturing out of your practice space to play with other people so that you can partake of the entire experience of community music making, which is an essential part of the 'practice' of Irish music. (Larsen, 2003: 299)

2.9 Emerging Issues

A central concern in this research project is the impact on the musician of different modes of learning. The literature would suggest that a musician most likely learns classical instrumental music from a notated source. Learning in Irish traditional music may incorporate both oral and literate means. Such different modes set up two very different learning frameworks; what Lars Lilliestam (1996) identifies as learning with a notational 'frame', where notation acts as 'a tool for remembering, for instruction and for analysis', in comparison with a very different framework when learning by ear. In such aural learning there is 'no original work', 'it does not have an *urtext*', 'it cannot be a physical object' or 'a musical work', and he suggests that, as a result, there are differences in the way we conceive of a music (p. 198). For example, as highlighted earlier, the way in which listening is discussed and the 'types' of listening associated in the literature with classical and Irish traditional music would suggest differing conceptions across they varying ranging learning contexts. Similarly, other elements of the learning process suggest further differences. In discussing memorisation, there seemed to be different routes to a memorised performance, with conceptual differences arising when the 'mental image of a piece' informed by a notational or aural framework. The literature also raises questions in relation to practice in the two genres. What is the role of practice in each of these traditions? How is the notion of practice conceived? Are conceptions of practice affected by the oft-times formal nature of performance in classical music or the participatory emphasis experienced by musicians in Irish traditional music?

The conscious and reflective practice of learning second music genres, as documented by several anthropologists, folklorists and ethnomusicologists, brings these learning differences into sharp focus. Many of these authors, who are themselves highly skilled classical musicians, have commented on the diverse skill sets and differing conceptual understandings (or ‘cognitive shifts’ as termed by Rice, 1994) required when they learned other musics, for example, Northumbria small pipes (Feintuch, 1995), Bulgarian *gaida* (Rice, 1994), banjo and old-time fiddle (Rosenberg, 1995; Titon, 1995; Frisch, 1987). Particular differences in the learning process and approaches to learning highlighted in these accounts parallel with those described in this chapter: music as sound, ‘seeing the music’, ‘learning through playing’ as well as conceptions of rhythm, intonation, melody and ornamentation. Reflecting on this in the context of this study, several questions arise: How do the musicians in this study negotiate between aural / literate practices? To what degree do their listening practices reflect ‘traditional’ ways in which listening is associated with these two music genres? How do they conceive of the music in these differing traditions and is it different from general practices as a result of their involvement in both traditions? Do factors outside either music genre contribute to change (media / YouTube / availability of recordings) and are they more likely than most to avail of ‘other ways’ outside what is typical in either tradition?

2.10 Conclusion

Chapters 1 and 2 have examined the literature on bimusicality (in relation to both defining the phenomenon and contextualising it in the Irish setting) and the literature on learning processes in both classical and Irish traditional music. Each chapter has highlighted pertinent issues to be explored in this research on instrumental learning in a bimusical context. These issues can be seen to coalesce into the following primary research questions:

- 1) What learning processes are involved when a student is engaged in learning music in different genres?
- 2) What are the bimusical practices, contexts, and confluences involved in music learning for these participants?

3) What beliefs, meanings and identities do participants construct as a result of their experience of multi-music making?

¹ While Schippers (2005) uses ‘space’ non-specifically, it can apply to both physical and virtual contexts.

² Other earlier research refers to formal and informal learning situations (Feintuch, 1995). Ruth Finnegan’s references to the ‘two separate modalities she encountered in her study of music making in the English city is also suggestive of dichotomous interpretations.

³ Campbell (2005) also discusses formal - non-formal and enculturative continua.

⁴ Considering notation in terms of its prescriptive and descriptive functions of notation are also considered in Seegar (1958), Caws (1974) and Smith (2001). Keegan (1996) examines the applicability of these terms to Irish traditional music.

⁵ Campbell (1991) recounts how apprentice musicians in medieval times learned their trade through a seven-year apprenticeship and how only a small portion of their music was laid out in notation. Also a blend of oral/ notational practices was evident in medieval choral practice with both notational learning of polyphonic music as well as from improvisation practice’ (p. 30).

⁶ Veblen (1991) in her research found that musicians referred to solfege as ‘solfa’ or ‘tonic solfa’.

⁷ While writing in 1951, Mainwaring’s work still holds currency today. Authors such as McPherson and Gabrieleson (2002) and Varvarigou and Green (2014) draw on his thinking. His model which describes the processes of learning to read music will provide a framework through which to discuss cognitive processes which emerge from the data in this research.

⁸ Aural memory (i.e. auditory memory) enables individuals to imagine the sounds of a piece, visual memory: consists of images of the written page and other aspects of the playing environment, kinaesthetic memory (i.e. finger, muscular or tactile memory) enables performers to execute complex motor sequences automatically.(Williamon, 2002: 118/9).

⁹ This refers to an in-depth knowledge of the music, its style and structure, including harmony, counterpoint and form (Aiello and Williamon, 2002: 167).

¹⁰ Musical Memory as a ‘mental representation’ stored in long-term memory, on which the musician can draw when performing. (Ginsborg, 2004, 128).

¹¹ For example the following description: ‘Northern players from Antrim across to Donegal favour what may be described as a single-note style. They produce strong vigorous music of clear tone with an economy of ornamentation. Rolling is wholly absent, the triplet played staccato is preferred. There are exceptions of course to this general principle’ (Breathnach, 1996a: 92).

¹² Issues of tempo and timing are considered in accounts by Blacking (1991), Feintuch (1995), Rice (1994), and Wade (2004), in relation to other world musics. For example, Feintuch (1995) found that his initial sense of timing was described as ‘a bit unconventional, [...] not wrong, but different.’ In *How musical is man*, Blacking (1974) comments on the somewhat elusive timing quality in the music of the Transvaal Venda people. Possession dance (p. 44-45).

¹³ Timothy Rice (1994) similarly found that that melody and ornamentation were not separate concepts when he learned Bulgarian *gardia*.

¹⁴ Sourced at www.Smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/paderskis-piano-164445847.

¹⁵ This interview was part of a study conducted by the author in 2008, which explores the musical practices of three adult musicians, variously engaged in classical and Irish traditional musics. Findings from this research were presented at The Sixth International Research in Music Education conference in Exeter, 2009.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodological Framework

The choice of research approach or framework in any study ‘depends upon the questions that are asked, and the questions depend on the context’ (Nelson *et al.*, 1992: 2). I have adopted a qualitative hermeneutic research framework for this study as this research project focuses on gaining insight and depth of understanding of multi-music learning. A qualitative research approach allows a phenomenon to be explored as it unfolds during a research study to obtain a ‘deeper understanding’ of the processes involved (Creswell, 2008: 62). The epistemology or theory of knowledge that informs this approach is constructionism. The theoretical perspective is interpretivism, and the methodological approach used is hermeneutic (Crotty, 1998: 3).

Hermeneutic means ‘the art and science of interpretation’ and was derived from the Greek god ‘Hermes’ (Bentz and Sharpio, 1998: 105). Hermeneutics involves a number of processes, including recollective processes where experiences are recalled verbally and / or aurally in the case of this research project, self-reflective processes by both the researcher and participants, collective processes to integrate meanings from the data collected, an empathic approach from the researcher to understand the experiences of the participants, intuition, imagination from the mind of the researcher and ultimately an interpretative approach (Hiller, 2016). The researcher must also draw on his/her own understandings and contexts in order to ‘interpret the contexts, artefacts and meanings of the other’ (Hiller, 2016: 113). Therefore, a hermeneutic methodological approach appeared to be the most suitable methodology to use for this study to find a deeper meaning and understanding of the lived experience of multi-music learning.

3.2 Sampling Strategy

As outlined in the literature review, there is little research currently available with regard to *bimusicality* in an Irish ‘classical/traditional’ context. This research project therefore takes an exploratory approach, adopting a sampling strategy that attempts to

capture a broad picture by focusing on different dimensions of this phenomenon. Purposeful sampling was used, in that ‘information rich’ (Patton, 1990: 169) individual participants and sites were intentionally selected in order to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of this phenomenon. It was considered that such a strategy would reveal a range of perspectives through the individual case studies chosen. Thus the sample has been chosen to represent ‘maximal variation’ (Creswell, 2008: 215).

The research presents seven cases of bimusical learning of a particular student between the age of sixteen and twenty years. In order to reflect ‘traditional’ practices in both musics, it was felt that these students should be located at different sites, reflecting a range of institutional, private and informal settings, with various sites in Dublin and its surrounding area chosen. It was felt that such an approach would help reveal the diversity of learning experiences typical of students engaged in simultaneous learning of classical and Irish traditional music. A further factor that needed to be considered in attempting to collect data reflecting the varied dimensions of this phenomenon was that of the teacher. It seemed important to access teachers who reflected a range of teaching / learning practices, in other words those with formal / informal, rural / urban learning backgrounds, and to include teachers who, in some cases, had themselves also learned bimusically. The strategy for locating such individual participants and contexts involved approaching various sites, music teachers and individuals involved in both classical and Irish traditional music circles and involved a certain amount of ‘snowballing’ (Creswell, 2008: 217) or ‘word of mouth’, whereby some of these contacts recommended other potential participants. A pilot study was created and the findings from this study were used to refine criteria for the final selection of the main study sample.

3.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in June 2011. It provided an opportunity to review and tailor methods and strategies for the main project. For example, data gathered were reviewed, particularly, in terms of sequence, number and timing of interviews as well as purpose and focus of video footage. It was also an opportunity to refine interview questioning skills and consider how coding and analysis of material might proceed.¹

Several overarching themes / subtopics emerged in the structuring and analysis of findings in the pilot study. For example, sub-themes of learning (listening, notation, and repertoire) emerged in student and teacher accounts. Student / parent accounts identified several sub-themes related to socio-cultural aspects (musical identity, enculturation, musical worlds).

3.4 Participants

The seven participants have been drawn from varied formal and informal learning contexts, studying with teachers, who themselves reflect a different teaching/ learning practices. Pseudonyms have been used to preserve anonymity. The participants play a range of instruments as presented in Fig. 3.1. The participants are grouped according to whether both musics are played on the same or different instruments. Please note that in relation to Irish traditional music, the principal instrument is listed first:




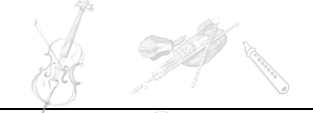

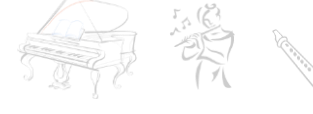
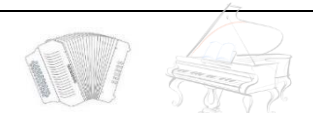
Maebh	<i>Classical:</i> concert harp Irish lever harp <i>Traditional:</i> concertina, Irish button accordion <i>Other:</i> choral singing	
Nóra	<i>Classical:</i> violin <i>Traditional:</i> fiddle <i>Other:</i> electric fiddle, bass & vocals (<i>rock band</i>)	
Áine	<i>Classical:</i> violin <i>Traditional:</i> fiddle <i>Other:</i> concertina, banjo (<i>traditional</i>) singing – (<i>various</i>)	
Conal	<i>Classical:</i> cello <i>Traditional:</i> uilleann pipes, tin whistle <i>Other:</i> singing – (<i>various</i>)	
Seán	<i>Classical:</i> saxophone <i>Traditional:</i> uilleann pipes <i>Other:</i> flute & tin whistle (<i>traditional</i>)	
Ellen	<i>Classical:</i> piano <i>Traditional:</i> flute <i>Other:</i> tin whistle, piano/keyboard, singing – (<i>various</i>)	
Bríd	<i>Classical:</i> piano <i>Traditional:</i> button accordion <i>Other:</i> piano/keyboard, guitar, singing (<i>various</i>)	

Fig. 3.1: Participants' instruments

The participants were all actively learning and playing classical and Irish traditional music, and between them, they represent:

- a range of instruments
- learning of different genres on the same instrument, i.e. violin
- learning of different genres on different instruments
- learning with teachers who are / are not, themselves, bi / multi-musical
- a range of formal and informal learning practices and contexts
- engagement with purely classical and traditional music or with a wider range of musical engagement, such as pop, church music and ‘light classics’
- both rural and urban backgrounds
- both genders

The case studies have been drawn from different learning contexts and these contexts range from Academy / Conservatory / College students who are engaged in either classical or Irish traditional music learning to those learning informally (including students who have always learned informally and others who have previously attended regular lessons). Other learning contexts include a CCÉ Branch and private tuition in various settings. Feedback when locating participants for this study would suggest that there are many younger bimusical learners, but by age sixteen, many will have dropped one instrument for a variety of reasons (style preference, time constraints, other interests, academic schedules). Of the student participants chosen for this study, three were at secondary school level and the other four were third-level students majoring or part-majoring in music or studying music extraneous to their academic studies. Of the two majoring in music, one was studying for a BMus (traditional) and the other a BA (single honor) degree. Two of the participants were not taking lessons in Irish traditional music at the time, while a third had always learned Irish traditional music informally in the home, or attending the occasional summer school (See Appendix 4: Additional Vignettes for examples of playing contexts).

Participant’s teachers represent:

- a mix of rural / urban background
- a range of teaching and learning backgrounds
- instrumentalists and teachers of one or both genres

- both male and female

This fact was important to the researcher, who wanted ‘maximal variation’ in as many factors as possible throughout this study (Creswell, 2008: 215).

3.5 Main Study: Data Collection

The design I adopted is a *collective case study* approach (Stake, 1995: 4), where ‘description and comparison of multiple cases provide insight into the issue’ (Creswell, 2008: 477). Using this approach, data collection used ‘multiple sources of evidence’ (Yin, 2003: 97) for each case study, listed as follows:

- observations and videos of individual lessons relating to participants’ principal classical and traditional instruments and other music activities, which included orchestral rehearsals, grupaí ceoil and céilí band practices, rock band practice, classical and traditional performances, traditional sessions.
- videos of student self-directed learning.
- audio recorded multiple individual interviews with student participants, including one stimulated recall session as part of the final interview (based on videotaped lessons/independent learning).
- one initial audio recorded interview with parents of student participants.
- one audio recorded interview with teachers following lesson observations.
- other relevant documents and artefacts:
 - Field notes that recorded impressions, thoughts, ‘insights, hunches, broad ideas or themes that emerge during the observations’ and interviews (Creswell, 2008: 225) were noted in a written diary.
 - Text, audio and audio visual material that emerged in the course of conversations and interviews, as well as observations at the various lessons and events, including television programmes in which participants had taken part, CD recordings and concert fliers and programme notes.
 - Website information regarding learning sites.
 - Documents/artefacts related to pedagogy, such as homework / home practice guides, ‘tune’ sheets, students annotated copies of the pieces being studied.

Data sets were then prepared from the above-mentioned multiple sources for each case study.

Data for the main study was collected during the 2011 autumn semester. As previously outlined, data included video-taping and observation of classical and Irish traditional music lessons for each of the seven participants, interviews with these participants at different intervals during the semester (coinciding with different stages in the learning process), as well as observations of various types of music making activities engaged in during the semester by the participants. The parents and music teachers of the participants were also interviewed.

3.5.1 Observations: lessons

Observations allow the researcher the opportunity to ‘look directly at what is taking place *in situ* rather than relying on second-hand accounts’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2008: 386), in order to record information as it was happening in the actual lessons. Six of the participants’ lessons (three in each genre), were observed and recorded in the course of the autumn semester 2011. Time spans of the observations ranged from one to two months. In one case, a lesson was cancelled and rescheduled for after the holiday period, resulting in a longer time frame. As the focus of the study is on bimusical learning, lessons observed were chosen in conjunction with the student and teacher. In general, two successive lessons were observed at the early stages of learning a particular piece, with a further observation at a more advanced stage of learning. These lessons were chosen for both practical and pedagogical purposes, with the primary aim of reflecting different stages of learning an individual piece, rather than technical exercises that focused on skill acquirement.

During observations, data was recorded in the form of field notes and video footage. Field notes recorded data that was both ‘descriptive’ (a description of events and activities) and ‘reflective’ (insights, hunches, themes) (Creswell, 2008: 225). A general observation sheet was used for this purpose (See Appendix 1: General Observation Sheet). With regard to lesson observations, the video acted as a ‘reality check’ (Cooper and Schindler, 2001: 374), an opportunity to review and confirm what had been observed, and an opportunity to further develop ‘thick description’, including

details of learning sequences, ‘time and timing of events’ (Carspecken, 1996: 47), approaches, methodologies, description of behaviours, physical settings and contexts.

The role I adopted throughout these lesson observations was that of a non-participant, in that I aimed to ‘visit the site and record notes without becoming involved in the activities’ (Creswell, 2008: 222). This was not always entirely possible, as in some lessons where I was previously known to the student or teacher as fellow musician, attempts were made to interact with me during the lesson. This was more prevalent in lessons where I was previously known to the teacher or a student as a fellow musician. Interaction included being drawn into discussions about names and origins of tunes in ‘trad’ lessons or a point of methodology in a classical lesson. In one particular chamber music lesson, I had to abandon note taking completely and act as page turner.

3.5.2 Observations: music activities

In all of the other observed music activities I tried to adopt the most natural role available to me, depending on the circumstances of the particular music event. For me, this meant adopting such roles as: being an audience member, a gallery observer, a CCÉ branch member, a fellow musician or a ‘fly on the wall’. In each of these roles, remaining as ‘natural’ and as ‘unobtrusive’ as possible presented challenges in terms of data collection, as I am aware that ‘there are degrees of participation’ (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993: 93–94), no matter the observation stance taken. Although participants, their parents and teachers knew that I was there to observe, recording notes at the scene proved almost impossible in most cases (apart from being the gallery observer or audience member at the more formal concert events). Therefore, where possible, I collected concert programmes, texted notes to myself on a mobile phone (where permissible) and/or recorded notes and a *vignette* in writing or audio file directly after observations.

3.5.3 Student videos: informal learning

In three of the cases, the participants did not attend any formal traditional music lessons. These participants were asked to videotape themselves when learning new music (for example at home, or at a session). These videos then formed the basis of the second interview, which focused on Irish traditional music learning processes.

3.5.4 Interviews

Data was also collected in the form of one-to-one interviews with participants, their parents, and their classical and Irish traditional music teachers. It was felt that an interview approach would offer a greater flexibility and insight, as they are of an ‘open-ended nature’ (Yin, 2003: 90). It was hoped that such an approach would also ‘encourage cooperation and help establish rapport’ and ‘give a truer assessment of what the respondent really believes’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2008: 357). With qualitative research, one can expect ‘questions to change and to emerge during a study to reflect the participants’ views of the central phenomenon and [the researcher’s] growing and deeper understanding of it’ (Creswell, 2008: 143). I therefore adopted a semi-structured interview approach with a mixture of focused questions, questions in ‘an open-ended conversational manner’ that allowed new understandings and facts to emerge and further questions following up on issues raised by the interviewees to gain an in-depth understanding of a topic or phenomenon (See Appendix 3 for list of focused questions).

3.5.4.1 Interviewing Participants, their Parents and Teachers

Of the thirty-nine interviews conducted in this study, twenty-one were conducted with students, eleven with teachers and seven with parents. Interviews in general lasted for approximately 60 minutes and were recorded on audiotape. As Creswell (2008: 226) notes, ‘one-to-one interviews are ideal for interviewing participants who are not hesitant to speak, are articulate, and who can share ideas comfortably’. Based on the experience of the pilot study, it was noted that the adults (parents and teachers) were highly articulate, confident and eager to give their opinion, thus the open-ended questioning format was effective with them. The younger student, on the other hand, needed greater encouragement and support and open-ended and more specific subsidiary questions were asked to probe particular themes and to help develop their thinking with regard to the bimusical learning phenomenon. Consequently, questions in these semi-structured interviews were tailored somewhat differently in terms of style (language, open-ended / more specific questions) and focus (what was being probed) with the differing groups.

For example, initial interviews with parents, were open-ended and focused on the participant’s background, music experience and their own views regarding their

teenagers' approach to learning in classical and traditional music practices (See Appendix 3. Interview Questions: Parents). With student participants as the main focus of the study, interview questions focused on learning processes, context and their own backgrounds and beliefs. While questioning was open-ended, scaffolding or more specific questioning was used if needed with the younger participants. In addition, language was tailored to accommodate each particular age group (See Appendix 2: Interview Questions: Student Participants and Teachers). Student participants were interviewed three times during the observational period. The first interview took place after the second observed classical lesson and focused on classical learning and general background. The second interview took place after the second observed Irish traditional music lesson or, in the case of those learning informally, after the submission of the video, and focused on traditional music learning as well as clarifying any issues that may have arisen in the first interview. The third interview took place at the end, following all observations. This interview includes a stimulated recall session, using video footage from all three observed lessons. The approach in this third interview was open-ended, probing student beliefs and understandings. It was also an opportunity to thank participants and to bring closure to the process.

This approach allowed the researcher an opportunity to review and analyse material from the first lesson while also asking questions based on the sequence of the two lessons. From the point of view of the participant, it was felt that the researcher's presence the second time around might be less intrusive and thus an interview at that stage might be more natural and relaxed.

Both classical and Irish traditional music teachers were also interviewed at the end of the observational process. These interviews include a stimulated recall session, using video footage from the observed lessons. When interviewing the teachers, questions focused on the learning processes of the students, well as their own teaching and learning experiences and beliefs. An open-ended approach to questioning was adopted with teachers. Probes were used 'to enable the interviewer to ask respondents to extend, elaborate, add to, provide detail for, clarify or qualify their responses' (Cohen *et al.*, 2008: 361) and this was important in the context of students who may have been

a little less forthcoming (see Appendix 3). Fig. 3.2 below outlines the Data Collection schedule, including details of the interview schedule.

	Lesson Observations	Interviews: participants	Interviews: Parents & teachers	Other musical activities observed	Other data
Aine	CL1 12.09.11 CL2 19.09.11 CL3 24.11.11 TL1 15.09.11 TL2 22.9.11 TL3 17.11.11	Interview 1 <i>after</i> CL2 19.09.11 Interview 2 <i>after</i> TL2 22.09.11 Interview 3 (following all observations) 07.12.11	Parent Interview 22.09.11 Teacher Interviews Classical 09.12.11 Traditional 6.12.11	Grupa Ceoil rehearsal CCÉ Christmas concert End of term Recital (Classical) ...	Field notes re: lesson observations, musical activities Annotated music scores
Seán	CL1 5.10.11 CL2 18.10.11 CL3 16.11.11 TL1 18.10.11 TL2 25.10.11 TL3 29.11.11	Interview 1 <i>after</i> CL2 18.10.11 Interview 2 <i>after</i> TL2 25.10.11 Interview 3 (following all observations) 11.12.11	Parent Interview 18.10.11 Teacher Interviews Classical 30.11.11 Traditional 7.12.11	<i>Trad</i> Christmas concert (uilleann pipe solo) Aonach na Nollag (tin whistle, trad saxophone)	Field notes re: lesson observations, musical activities Annotated music scores NPU international day *flyer /information Seamus Ennis Youtube clip
Nóra	CL1 18.10.11 CL2 25.10.11 CL3 29.11.11 TL1 05.10.11 TL2 23.11.11 TL3 ..30.11.11	Interview 1 <i>after</i> CL2 25.10.11 Interview 2 <i>after</i> TL2 23.11.11 Interview 3 (following all observations) 20.12.11	Parent Interview 19.11.12 Teacher Interviews Classical 19.12.11 Traditional 02.12.11	Rock band rehearsal (bass guitar, vocals)	Field notes Re: lesson observations, musical activities Annotated music scores
Conal	CL1 09.11.11 CL2 16.11.11 CL3 07.12.11	Interview 1 <i>after</i> CL2 16.11.11 Interview 2 <i>after</i> traditional video 18.12.11 Interview 3 (following all observations) 23.12.11	Parent Interview 10.11.11 Teacher Interview Classical 14.12.11	<i>Siamsa</i> practice (uilleann pipes, TW, sean nós singing) Orchestral Rehearsal Christmas Recital (cello)	Field notes re: lesson observations, musical activities Annotated music scores TG4 programme Thar Sáile
	Informal Learning Student video				

Fig. 3.2: Data collection schedule (page 1) [CL = classical lesson], [TL = traditional lesson].

Ellen	CL1 3.11.11	Interview 1 <i>after</i> CL2 11.11.11	Parent Interview 05.11.11	Lunchtime recital (<i>flute</i>)	Field notes re: lesson observations, musical activities Annotated scores CD Canaigi Amhrán don Tiarna
	CL2 11.11.11 CL3 01.12.11				
Brid	Informal Learning <i>Student video</i>	Interview 2 after trad video 01.12.11	Parent Interview 08.11.11	Halloween Concert DIT	Field notes – lesson observations, musical activities Annotated scores DIT Concert programme
	CL1 20.10.11	Interview 3 (following all observations) 05.12.11	Teacher Interviews <i>Classical 16.12.11</i> <i>Traditional 14.12.11</i>		
	CL2 26.10.11	Interview 1 <i>after</i> CL2 26.10.11			
	CL3 14.12.11	Interview 2 <i>after</i> TL2 26.10.11			
	TL1 19.10.11	Interview 3 (following all observations) 14.12.11			
Maebh	CL1 22.09.11	Interview 1 <i>after</i> CL2 30.09.11	Parent Interview 14.09.11	Session / Ceili house re- hearsal Foias na Gaeilge Concert <i>cancelled</i> Christmas Choral Concert TCD	Field notes – lesson observations, musical activities Annotated scores Concert Programme & Youtube clips TG4 Geantraí
	CL2 29.09.11	Interview 2 <i>after trad</i> video 10.12.11	Teacher Interview <i>Classical 31.01.12</i>		
	CL3 26.01.12	Interview 3 (following all observations) 04.02.12			
	Informal Learning <i>Student video</i>				

Fig. 3.2: Data collection schedule (page 2)

* ~~Foias na Gaeilge Concert~~ (cancelled)

3.5.4.2 Audio visual recordings and the interview process

In this study both audio and visual recordings were used. From the literature, it has been documented that the use of either audio or video recording can ‘yield more accurate data’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2008: 364) rather than, for example, note taking during the interview. While audio or video taping an interview can sometimes feel constraining or have a ‘cooling’ effect on the respondent (Merton, Fiske and Kendall, 1956), as Cohen *et al.*, (2008) point out, ‘there is a tradeoff between the need to catch as much data as possible’ and the need to avoid creating an environment that ‘impedes the potential of the interview situation’ (p. 364).

I therefore used audio-visual technology in the observations to capture as much as possible of the first-hand learning process data. In the interview situation, I used audio recording as it was considered to be the most effective as it would be less obtrusive and therefore, less constraining for the participant. Video footage was also used in a stimulated recall session at the beginning of the third interview with student participants. It was felt that the audio-visual material would bring an added depth and richness to the data collected. Also, at this later stage, the students would be more at relaxed with the process and with being interviewed.

Video footage was also used to help focus the interviews. As there were multiple interviews, it allowed the researcher to review materials, thus acting as a reflective tool in developing and focusing questions in subsequent interviews and contributing to the ongoing developing nature of qualitative research.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

All qualitative research has an ethical dimension. Three of the main areas regarding ethical issues concern ‘informed consent, confidentiality, and the consequences’ of the research (Cohen *et al.*, 2008: 382). In preparation for this qualitative research project, ethical clearance was sought from the Ethics Committee, Dublin Institute of Technology. This involved examination and detailing a range of issues including: risk assessment, academic approval for consent sheets to be circulated to all participants

in the data collection process and confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Pseudonyms were used to preserve anonymity.

Regarding the participants:

- Informed written consent was sought from all parties taking part in the data collection: student participants (and fellow class members in the case of group lessons), parents or guardians, participating teachers and directors of the various sites.
- Information sheets were distributed to all, informing them of the nature of the research, what it would entail in terms of interviews, observations, time, use of video and audio recording, issues of confidentiality, and anonymity, data storage, benefits and purposes of the research, as well as who would have access to data and the results of the research.
- Written consent forms were distributed and collected before data collection commenced (see Appendix 2: Consent forms).

In practical terms this involved several conversations, phone calls and meetings with the various parties, with slightly different approaches adopted with participants aged under eighteen and over eighteen as outlined below:

- For participants under eighteen, the initial point of contact was through a gatekeeper (Director of institution/ CCÉ branch, parent or teacher).
- Parents were contacted by phone call to outline the project, their role, and issues of consent forms addressed.
 - Arrangements were made for the interview process once there was confirmation that teachers were willing to take part. I also explained in the initial phone conversation that I (the researcher) would also meet with their son/daughter so that he/she would be fully aware of what would be involved.
 - The parents were also contacted by phone to ascertain their son/daughter's lesson times and group music making activity schedules.
- The participant's main music teacher was contacted to establish their willingness to be involved in the study, with the project being outlined and their role in the project and any issues of consent addressed.

Participants who were over eighteen years of age were contacted directly before speaking with parents. Arrangements were made with the participant rather than with the parent although I also contacted parents at the initial stages as well.

3.7 Analysis of Data

As outlined above, the database consisted of transcribed interviews, observational field notes of lessons and other musical activities, as well as video, audio tapes, concert programme notes and website data. Interviews were transcribed and coded based on Creswell’s use of codes to build, layer and interlayer themes as presented in Fig. 3.3 (Creswell, 2008: 259).

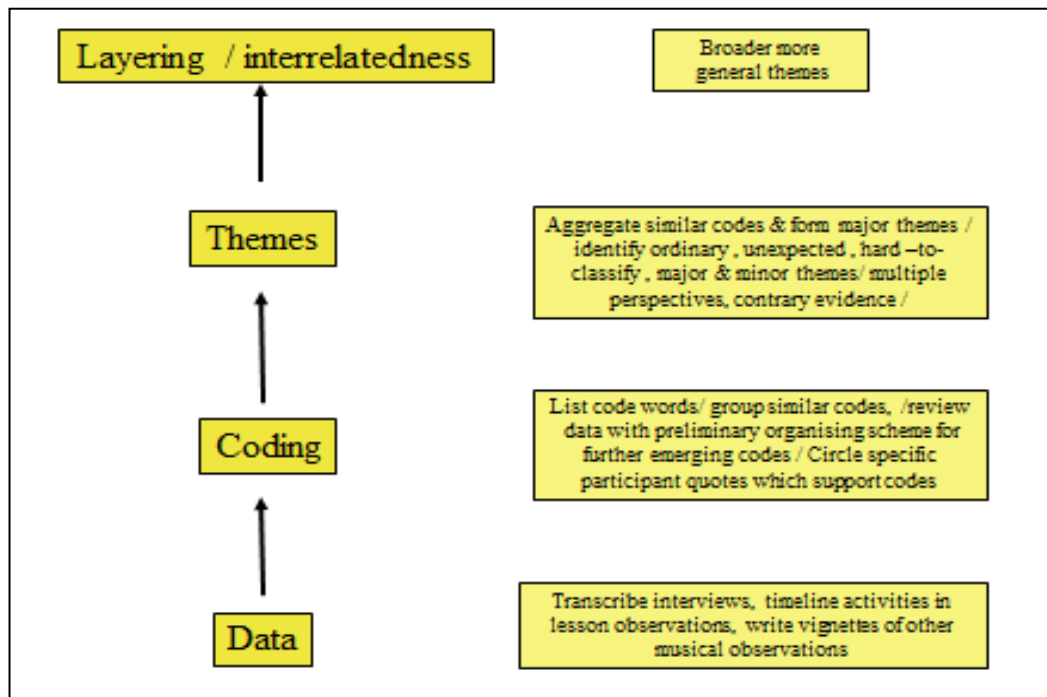


Fig. 3.3: Data analysis: Coding and identifying themes

The themes that emerged from the coding were grouped into two main headings: 1) the social dynamics of bimusical learning and 2) learning processes. These findings are presented in more detail in Figs. 3.4 and 3.5.

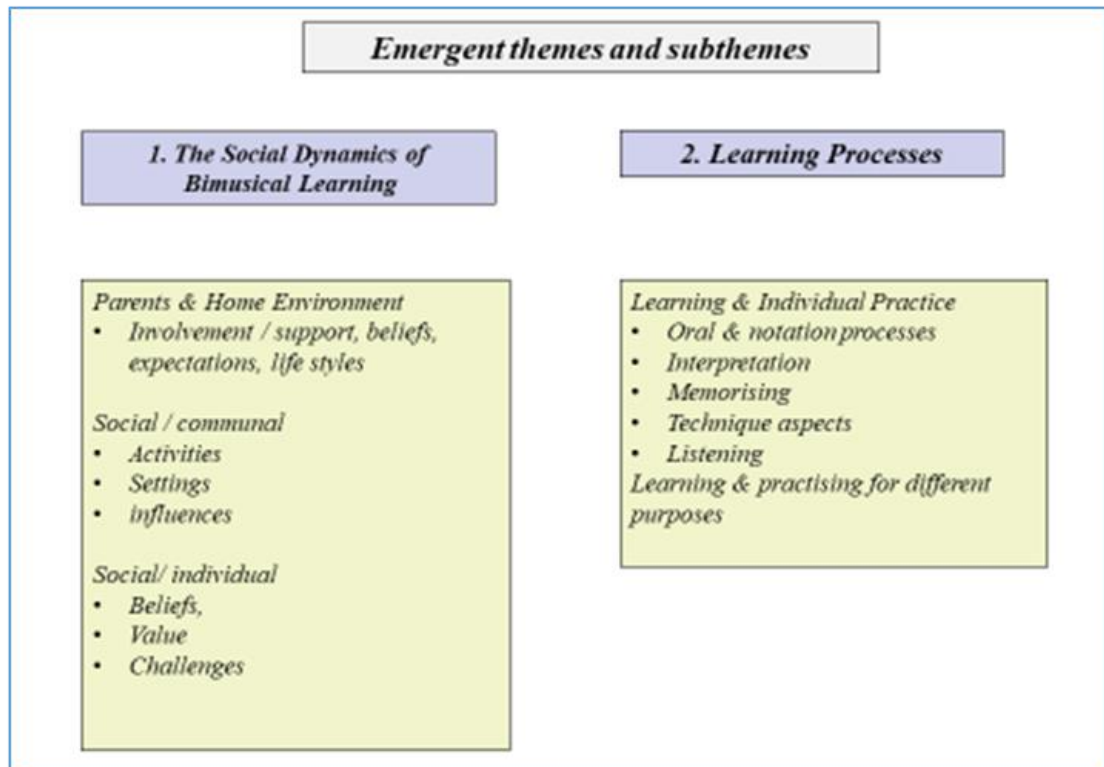


Fig. 3.4 Emergent themes and subthemes

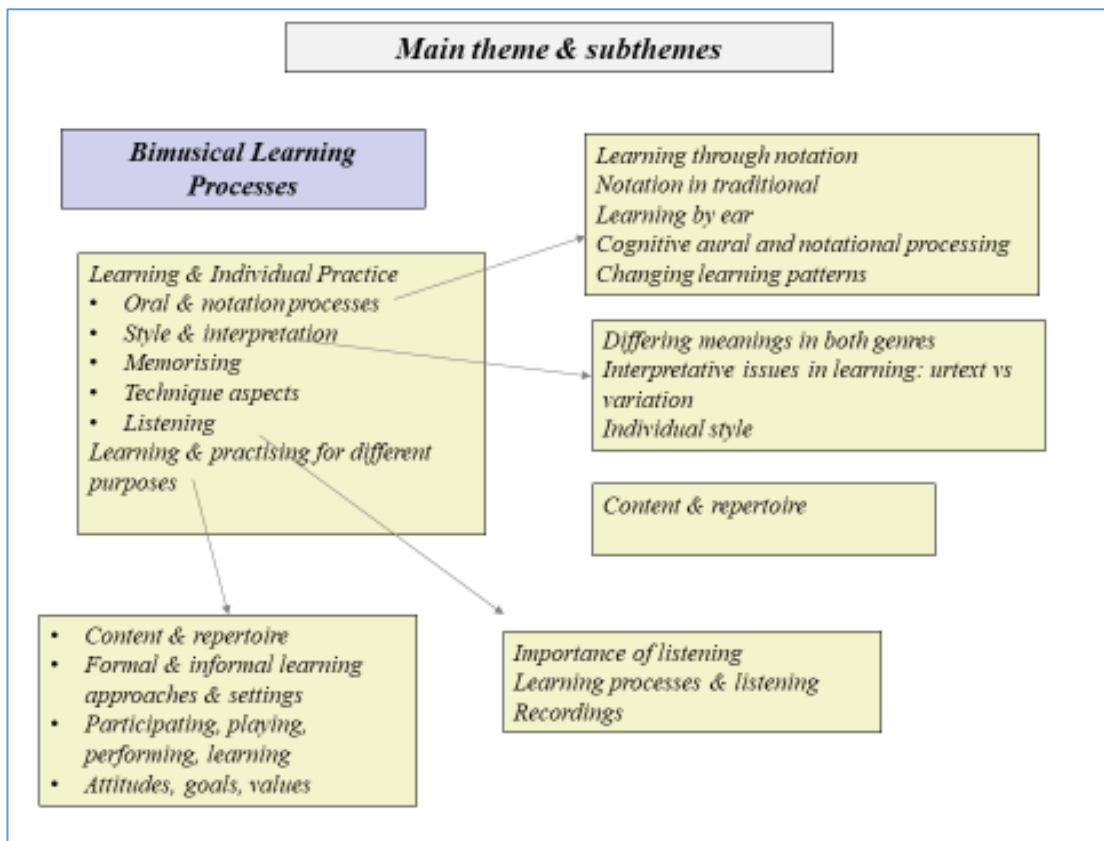


Fig. 3.5 Main theme and subthemes

Cross analysis of the two main themes and their subthemes, identified using the Creswell coding process, did not truly reflect the individuality of the original data collected, and I therefore chose a different strategy. I needed a strategy by which I could consider various learning processes and diverse transmission practices in multiple musics through the holistic lens of the bimusical individual. At this point, coded data were reorganised as thematic individual data maps (see Fig. 3.6 Sample section of Individual Data Map) to facilitate analysis. Folkestad's (2005, 2006) writings on the synthesis of formal and informal learning literature (as outlined in Chapter 2) provided the basis for the creation of a personalised framework for further analysis of the data collected.

3.7.1 A framework for analysis

The framework for analysis is informed by the literature presented in Chapters 1 and 2. One of the challenges of the research process was identifying an analytical framework that would facilitate examining the bimusical aspects of students learning in a unified way. The themes and subthemes emerging from the coding of data suggested that Folkestad's (2005, 2006) synthesis of a range of formal and informal learning literatures (as presented in Chapter 2) which identifies four key aspects of learning appeared to have the potential to provide a holistic analytical approach. These four aspects of learning are *context*, *processes*, *ownership* and *intentionality*, in which goals, purposes, decision making and organisation of learning can be considered from the basis of the analytical framework presented below (see Fig. 3.7). The rationale for this model can be argued as follows:

1. Equating formal and informal learning with institutional and outside school settings (static view) is, as Folkestad suggests, 'far too simplistic and false'. Given the range and sometimes overlapping settings in this research—for example, learning both musics at the same institution or with the same teacher—adopting a dynamic rather than a static view of learning contexts, as Folkestad (2006) suggests, reflects the interaction of these elements in the varied learning situations.
2. Analysing learning from the point of view of *intentionality* allows for differences in the pedagogical and artistic framing of the musics in this research. It also meaningfully frames the students' various learning, practising, playing, participating or performing activities. In addition, such an approach contributes to understanding the differing goals, purposes and roles of the musics in these individual students' practices.
3. One of Folkestad's (2006) conclusions emphasises the 'interconnections' between what is learned and how it is learned, but particularly the 'approach to music that the content mediates' (p.142). Content and approaches (processes) are particularly relevant in this research, particularly in terms of the cultural context (traditions) that underpin the approaches mediated by the content. In this research, *cultural context* is particularly relevant in view of the music traditions underpinning these students' musical practices and their 'fuller meaning'

(Schippers, 2005). Therefore, in this analysis, Folkestad's four 'aspects of learning' are expanded to include *Content*, thereby facilitating an exploration of a wider spectrum of issues relating to bimusical learning (Fig. 3.5: Learning Sphere). The individual learner is the focus of this research, therefore the *bimusical learner* replaces *Learning* at the centre. (Fig. 3.7 below).

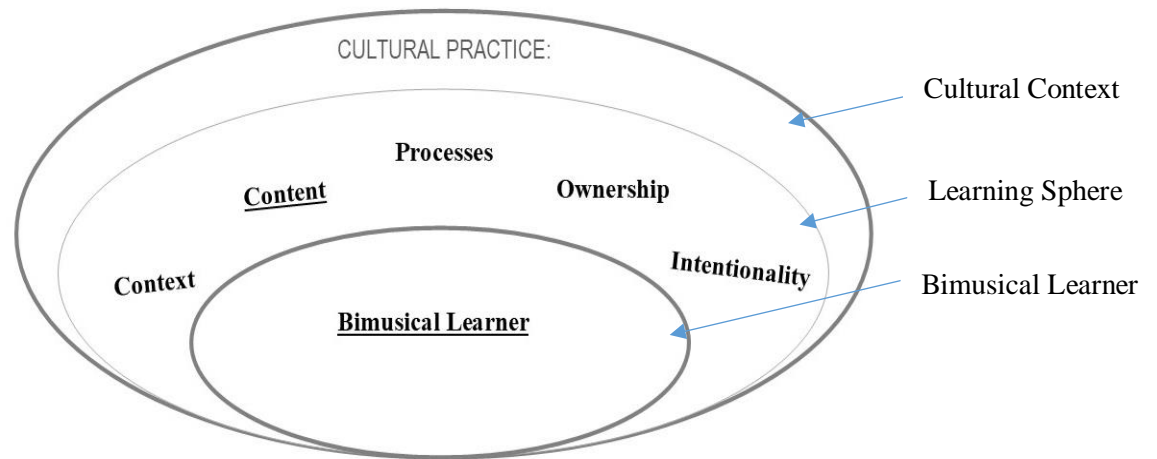


Fig. 3.7 Aspects of learning music (adapted from Folkestad, 2006)

4. Finally, *Ownership* (and choice) plays a significant role in understanding the diverse range of activities with which these students engage. There are individual and social dimensions to their learning, and ownership brings to the fore both the element of choice and the transactional nature of learning in many of these activities. In doing so, it highlights the social dimension and the involvement of others: parents, teachers, peers, community and institutions. In analysing learning, the influence of others becomes an intrinsic element and is therefore included in the analysis framework considering the data as 'Sphere of Influence'. (see 'Learning Influences' in Fig. 3.8 below)

The individual bimusical learner is at the core of this research. As noted in the literature review, the phenomenon of bimusicality has been discussed from various perspectives, such as the ethnomusicologist's or anthropologist's emphasis on proficient or fluent performance (depending on one's viewpoint) and musical culture understanding. In the world of the professional portfolio musician, bimusical

performance emphasises the ability to switch (socially, musically and behaviourally) between two different sets of codes (Cottrell 2007). In the absence of substantial research on bimusical *learning*, the framework in this research draws from these views and places musical, social and behavioural elements to the fore in learning as set out in Fig. 3.8 Bimusical Learning below).

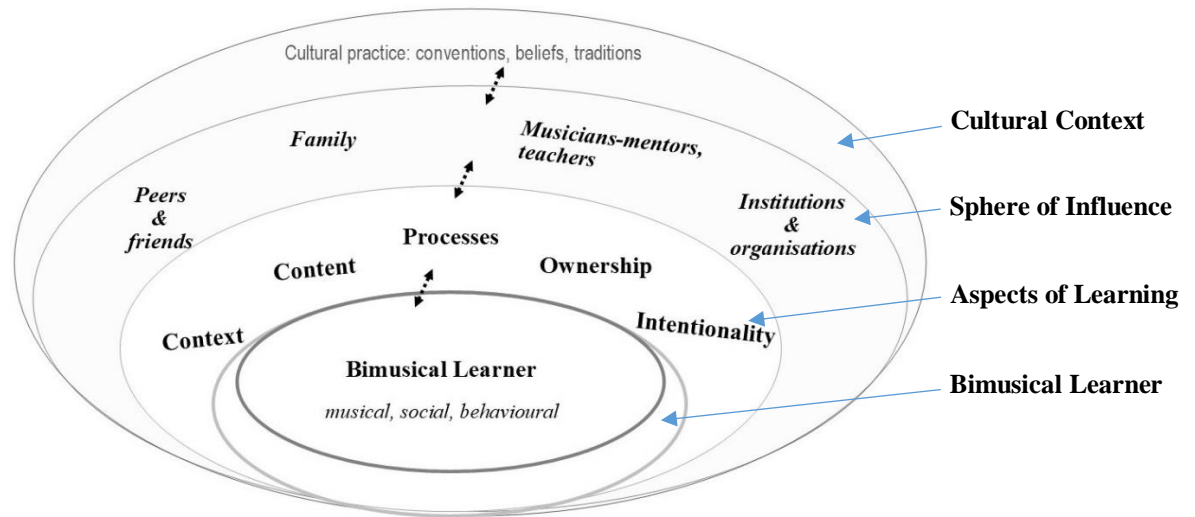


Fig. 3.8 Bimusical learning: Analysis framework

3.7.2 Presenting the data and analysis

Using this framework, individual narratives were created for each of the seven participants and these are presented in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively for each participant's sociocultural data and formal and informal learning processes. Chapter 4 focuses on the social-cultural data. Chapter 5 focuses on learning processes data. Chapter 6 explicates the outcomes of the research.

¹ One pilot case was conducted in May - June 2011, prior to data collection for the main study. It consisted of classical and traditional music lesson observations with one participant aged 18 years. Observations were followed by interviews with the student, both teachers and with the parents. While this pilot largely focused on methodological issues or 'procedures to be followed' (Yin, 2003: 79), it also contributed to substantive themes in providing insight into the topics being studied (Yin, 2003).

CHAPTER 4

INDIVIDUAL MUSICAL WORLDS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the phenomenon of bimusicality through the individual voices of the seven participants in the study. It addresses key aspects of the primary research questions by examining the background and general musical profile of each student, revealing the perceptions, beliefs and meanings that each participant derives from their experience of multiple music making. It also explores their learning and playing contexts (their soundscapes) and practices (social, behavioural) by identifying the routines behind the learning, which is shaped by conventions and traditions in their musical activities during the term / semester. This gives a sense of their day-to-day practices as bimusical learners and makers, and the more in-depth sense of their musicing is given through the lens of vignettes which describe individual incidences of learning for each individual. These vignettes draw on the researcher's observations and at times incorporate student, teacher and parent comments from interviews.

Two vignettes are included for all of the students, representing their primary bimusical leaning contexts and practices in both traditions. In the case of Conal, Seán and Bríd, additional vignettes focusing on wider aspects of participatory music making are included in the text, as being highly representative of the range of music making activities observed in this research. Noteworthy in Seán's additional *vignette* is his use of saxophone in a cross-genre context. Further vignettes portraying other performances and rehearsal contexts are included in Appendix 4.

The participant portraits are based on the data in the student's interviews. Brief in-text quotations from these interviews are not individually referenced. Additional standalone quotations, or quotations from parent or teacher interviews, are individually referenced. The participants' portraits and vignettes are ordered as follows:

Nóra	<i>Classical</i> : violin <i>Traditional</i> : fiddle	<i>Vignette 1</i> : Classical violin lesson
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	<i>Other: electric fiddle, bass & vocals (rock band)</i>	<i>Vignette 2: Irish traditional fiddle lesson</i>
Áine	<i>Classical: violin Traditional: fiddle Other: banjo (traditional) singing – (various)</i>	<i>Vignette 1: Classical violin lesson Vignette 2: Group fiddle lesson Vignette 3: Grúpa ceoil practice</i>
Maebh	<i>Classical: concert harp Irish lever harp Traditional: concertina, Irish button accordion Other: choral singing</i>	<i>Vignette 1: Concert harp lesson Vignette 2: Learning a tune at home</i>
Conal	<i>Classical: cello Traditional: uilleann pipes, tin whistle Other: Singing – various</i>	<i>Vignette 1: Cello lesson Vignette 2: Learning a tune at home Vignette 3: Siansa competition group practice</i>
Seán	<i>Classical: saxophone Traditional: uilleann pipes Other: flute & tin whistle (traditional)</i>	<i>Vignette 1: Saxophone lesson Vignette 2: Uilleann pipes group lesson Vignette 3: Aonach na Nollag</i>
Ellen	<i>Classical: piano Traditional: flute Other: tin whistle, piano/keyboard, singing - various</i>	<i>Vignette 1: Classical piano lesson Vignette 2: Learning a tune at home</i>
Bríd	<i>Classical: piano Traditional: button accordion Other: piano/keyboard, guitar, singing (various)</i>	<i>Vignette 1: Classical piano lesson Vignette 2: Irish traditional music lesson Vignette 3: Traditional music ensemble concert</i>

Fig. 4.1: Participant Portraits & Vignettes

4.2 Nóra

(violin – classical & traditional music, electric fiddle, bass player and vocals (rock band))



In Nóra’s extended family, practically everyone plays a musical instrument. She talks about how at Christmas, at birthday parties and on special occasions there are lots of sessions and singing, so much so that she concludes that ‘music is kind of part of everything in a way’. She regards involvement in both musics—classical and traditional music—as almost a family ‘tradition’, as many of the younger and older generations of the extended family are, or have been, involved in both musics. Formal music making and learning commenced for Nóra with one-to-one classical violin lessons at seven years of age. Irish traditional fiddle music classes began with group

Comhaltas lessons at the age of ten. Nóra has played in a number of orchestras and Irish traditional music groups, and solo violin performance was part of her formative music learning experience. More recently, performance and group music making has taken a ‘popular’ turn, as she currently rehearses with her rock group, in which she plays bass and electric fiddle, sings backing vocals and composes.

Nóra describes music as having ‘a huge role’ in her life. Her involvement in both musics has varied over the years, marked by fluctuating immersion in solo and group music making and performance in both genres, with very varied recollections of her experiences in both. As a young violinist she was involved in the School of Music’s orchestra and yearly solo (assessment) performances. Nóra describes the latter as the ‘most terrorising event’ of her ‘life’. Conflicting commitments eventually resulted in her dropping out of orchestra. In contrast, while she didn’t initially take ‘the trad’ seriously, she explains that what really got her motivated and determined to stay involved in playing Irish traditional music was watching others in her secondary school playing in *Siansa* bands and having so much fun with it. As a result, during her secondary school years she got involved in this type of group playing and performance. When Nóra projects forward and thinks about what role music will have in her future years, she says that while it is hard to know, she is hopeful that ‘it will still be very much part’ of her life. She explains that with Irish traditional music she expects that she will ‘still be playing away’, listening and learning. Classical music involvement is harder for Nóra to predict:

You’re either, a star or you kind of let it go and I don’t want to let go but I’m not a star so, what do you do? ... I suppose I’ll keep playing away at it, maybe just in my own time... like learning the odd piece and I think, learning, doing... keep up the technical thing... technical exercises, doing pieces... just doing it... doing it for myself, yeah!
(IntN1)

Nóra sees many advantages and challenges to learning and playing both musics, and she refers to ‘two ways of learning’. She acknowledges that maintaining the focus on both has, on occasion, been ‘hard’, sometimes ‘a chore’, but also ‘fun a lot of times’. Maintaining both has meant that every so often one has ‘slipped a little’ due to a greater focus on the other and she describes how, when younger, she could get stressed because of not practising enough. She identifies not having the ‘time’ to do both as a determining factor. However, Nóra is unequivocal in her belief that if she were only doing one, she would be ‘very much missing out’.

The cross-over effects from playing both musics on the same instrument have impacted differently on her learning and playing at various stages, but now, as a more advanced player, she views playing both as ‘completely beneficial’ and does not feel that either one is incompatible with the other. Nóra views playing both musics as ‘a serious kind of advantage’ and she recounts how, when she started to play Irish traditional music, she already knew technically how to play the violin and therefore needed only to focus on the style and way of playing (‘learning by ear’) and the repertoire (‘the tunes’). However, playing both styles (as she describes classical and Irish traditional music) on the same instrument is not without its challenges and while she can separate the two music styles, she describes how there are times when her classical playing can sound a bit ‘traddy’ and her traditional playing a bit ‘classical’. She feels that these types of cross-overs are particularly evident in bowing and the ability to play up to speed in Irish traditional music. Nonetheless, another cross-over advantage becomes evident in her rock band music-making, where she feels that ‘it’s kind of great to have both classical and trad to bring into the band ... its two different things, two extra things’.

When asked to describe herself musically, she seemed somewhat uncertain as to what the answer to such a question is. She explains that she sees herself as a ‘mixture of a lot of things’ but fundamentally as someone who is ‘learning’. On reflection, she realised that she sees herself ‘differently depending on what she is playing’, but describes herself initially as being ‘maybe more a fiddle player than a violinist’. When this question is re-visited in a later interview, she says that she is ‘a bit of both [...] fiddle and violin as two separate things maybe... and then bass [guitar]’.

4.2.1 Nóra’s music practices

As a first year student on a Bachelor of Science degree programme, Nóra balances college commitments alongside music-making and learning in several genres: classical, traditional and rock. She identifies the following current music-making activities:

Learning, practice, rehearsals:

- Weekly classical violin lessons (working towards the ABRSM Grade 7 examination)

- Weekly one-to-one traditional fiddle lessons
- Home practice for classical violin and Irish traditional fiddle
- Rock band rehearsals up to three evenings a week.

Music making/playing, performance, competition

- Informal music making with cousins, uncles, and aunts at family gatherings, special events, and the occasional Irish traditional music session
- Rounds 1 and 2 of the *Battle of the Bands* competition

Music practices take place after her day in college. Nóra talks about how she has always had the ideal of maintaining a 50:50 balance between classical and Irish traditional music practice, though it has rarely worked out. In reality she finds that she does more of one or the other, depending on what she is ‘more under pressure for’. Keeping pace with her classical and Irish traditional musical commitments alongside rock band rehearsals in her busy evening practice schedule is not without its challenges. Whereas Nóra’s current classical violin studies have an examination focus, music making in Irish traditional music concentrates on expanding and maintaining an existing repertoire largely through class participation. The classical violin lesson described in *Vignette 1* has a particular focus on ‘technique and studies’ in preparation for repertoire at this level.

4.2.2 Learning in action

Nóra, *Vignette 1*: Classical violin lesson

This *vignette* focuses on the first of three one-to-one violin lessons with teacher Michael.

Playing commences with a g minor scale in three octaves. It is bowed in a number of different ways, such as a note per bow, with slurring and with an octave to one bow stroke. Nóra’s sound is the focus and initially attention is paid to how general posture and finger placement on the fingerboard can affect the sound. Following this, issues around maintaining a continuous sound and vibrato are developed. Throughout, there is emphasis on listening to where the sound is going, the use of the bow, bow speed and finger work.

Teacher Michael explains in detail what is happening and what they are trying to achieve, and he sings, gestures, watches, listens and demonstrates. For Nóra, her playing is constantly being refined through listening, watching, doing and repeating.

Attention then turns to the Sevcik, Study No.8 Andante Expressivo. Nóra plays the opening section. Michael responds, focusing on phrasing and use of the bow to express the phrase with particular emphasis on bow speed. The focus momentarily switches to a rhythmic inaccuracy. It is firstly identified and examined on the score, then discussed and visually and aurally counted out. Nóra plays it once more, following which Michael demonstrates and she echoes it back before re-incorporating it into the larger phrase. A new section of the study is sight-read. Nóra reaches a difficult section. Michael joins in with her. They play together for a time. Nóra drops out and listens. They replay the new section together, following which Nóra continues, playing alone once more. There is some further support from Michael as he joins in on insecure sections and drops out once they are mastered. The study is gradually built in this way. Throughout the process Michael pays attention to the score, explaining, singing, demonstrating, watching and listening. Finally with notes secured, attention once again reverts to Nóra's technique and to her sound. Exactness, intense listening, watching and detailed unrelenting attention are the hallmarks of the technical work here. A further new section is assigned as homework.

Nóra, Vignette 2: Irish traditional fiddle lesson

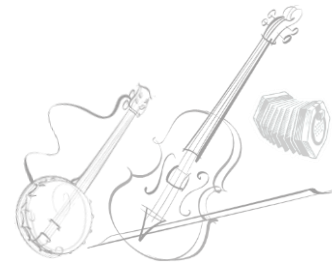
This vignette describes Nóra's individual weekly Irish traditional music lesson with teacher Liam, which takes place in the back room of a city public house synonymous with Irish traditional music.

Today Liam has decided to bring along an old 1920s recording of the reel 'Cornel Frasier'. His plan is that both he and Nóra will learn the tune together from the recording. The violins are tuned and they start with a review of a few tunes they have previously worked on. They move quickly on to a new reel, the main focus of this lesson. Firstly they listen together to the recording of the

tune. The tempo is very lively on this recording. Liam tries the opening section and together they learn the tune, trying to catch notes and details, phrase by phrase, by listening and re-listening to snatches, playing and replaying the audio track and then echoing it on their fiddles. A phrase the teacher uses several times is ‘see if you can get what he did on that?’ and in a sense this epitomises the focus of this lively verbal and musical dialogue in which layer upon layer of what is happening musically in the recording is gradually revealed to both players and indeed the researcher!

4.3 Áine

(Violin/fiddle, banjo, singing)



Music is an important activity in Áine’s extended family, with Irish traditional music featuring particularly—her grandad and uncle and several of her mother’s brothers have played traditional music. As the youngest of four girls, Áine heard various musics (popular, Irish traditional and some classical) in the home and the extended family circle from a very early age. Formal music learning started at eight years of age, with Irish traditional fiddle lessons at the local *Comhaltas* branch. Two years later she commenced classical violin lessons at a nearby music school. She has been involved in classical ensemble playing—rehearsing and performing with several orchestras including in her secondary school, in Music College and with the Dublin Youth Orchestra (DYO)—and has played in a string quartet. She attributes sports involvements and state exams to her current lack of involvement in classical ensemble. In contrast, her involvement in Irish traditional group music activities has not diminished and includes a range of formal performance contexts, such as concerts and competitions with her under eighteen *grúpaí ceoil* and *céili* band. Informal music making includes traditional music sessions with friends at Summer schools, festivals and other venues, particularly in the summer months. Violin / fiddle is her main instrument, but she also plays Irish traditional music on banjo and concertina, for which she has taken a few lessons.

Áine describes playing both musics as ‘grand’; it is something that she ‘doesn’t mind’. Indeed she thoroughly enjoys the differing challenges that both musics pose, contrasting for example, the individual challenge of perfecting a classical piece with playing in a group of friends to compete successfully in Irish traditional music competitions. She believes that being involved in both classical and Irish traditional music contributes to her spending more time with her instrument and being more ‘in tune’ with it than others who might only be involved in one particular music genre. Still, going between both musics on the same instrument is not without its challenges and at times Áine describes practising and concentrating on both Irish traditional and classical music on the same instrument and ‘switching’ between the two ‘modes’ as ‘tiring’ and ‘difficult’. For example, she describes the challenge of the seasonal ‘switch’ at the beginning of the new academic year after a summer of playing Irish traditional music at festivals and *fleadhs*, explaining how she has to focus on her classical technique to get it ‘back up’ to where it was before being able to moving forward.

She also comments on how some people involved exclusively in the Irish traditional music world describe classical music as ‘boring’. She regards her classical music involvement very positively; as something that has helped her ‘a lot’, as something that she ‘doesn’t mind’, and as something that she really ‘loves’.

While Áine does not expect that music will be a full-time career, she sees various possibilities for different types of violin / fiddle playing in the future. She describes herself as currently busiest with classical violin, as it is ‘more on the line’ due to exams, and the fact that it is what will ‘help’ her get into college. Áine believes that she will ‘always be playing’, though not touring as a violinist, but perhaps following other possibilities, which might include playing for weddings and perhaps teaching as a ‘part-time after work’ activity. However, she ultimately sees Irish traditional music as having the bigger role in her life, as it is something that she can do into old age. As she says, ‘I will go on playing until the day I die’.

4.3.1 Áine’s music practices

Áine explains how her musical involvement at present is focused on her secondary school subjects, in preparation for the Leaving Certificate State examinations. While

she is keeping the ‘social bit’ going, she is only going to classes and is not engaged in ‘extra’ activities. She says that typically she would be in the following musical activities:

Learning, practice, rehearsals:

- Weekly one-hour violin lesson with a view to taking her grade 7 violin examination (ABRSM) in the following semester, (see *Vignette 1* below)
- Weekly half hour group fiddle lesson at the local *Comhaltas* branch,
- Home-practice (classical and traditional violin)
- Weekly one hour group rehearsals: under eighteen *grúpaí ceoil* (local *Comhaltas* branch)
- Extra-curricular Leaving Certificate music lessons on Monday evenings

Performances, exams, music-making / playing, teaching:

- Christmas class concert: solo classical violin
- Christmas CCE branch concert: under eighteen *grúpaí ceoil* performance
- Teaching junior fiddle students (other local *Comhaltas* branch) on Wednesdays
- Leading a performance with her pupils at another local *Comhaltas* branch’s Christmas concert
- Informal playing

Áine adopts very different approaches to keeping pace with her classical and Irish traditional music activities. For Áine, classical learning involves regular practice, most days for half an hour (and she is currently trying to extend these practice sessions). She likes to practice classical violin in a quiet space, in the sitting room or her bedroom, away from other family members, where she has her music stand and music books set out. In contrast, her way of keeping up with her Irish traditional music would seem to involve a mixture of impromptu playing—something that can take ‘anything from five minutes to hours’—with a focus on learning and practising of elements of the tunes and ornaments.

I just pick up my fiddle and play loads of tunes, probably every second day ... and if my fiddle is lying there or on the couch or something, I love when I'm watching TV, play[ing] tunes, and try and get ornamentation that I can't get, or really hard stuff. (IntA2)

4.3.2 Learning in action

Áine Vignette 1: Classical violin lesson

This vignette focuses on the first of three one-to-one violin lessons with Eleanor, her violin teacher.

Áine takes out her violin and places her music books on the music stand. The study 'The Bee's knees' is opened. As they tune their violins Eleanor reminds Áine about how to bow when checking tuning so as not to distort the sound (i.e. 'longer strokes at the tip'). Playing commences with Áine reading the study 'The Bee's Knees' from the music score. Áine has worked on this study in the previous week. Then Eleanor draws attention to several elements of the performance. Harmonic notes are taken out and refined in terms of bow speed and weight. A number of note sequences are refined in terms of fingering position shifting and intonation. Throughout this lesson a lively and rich array of aural and visual teaching strategies are used as Eleanor highlights, explains, queries, gestures, sings and/or demonstrates by playing a motif or phrase on her violin. This is an intense musical dialogue in which student and teacher in turn listen or play or at times play together as they work through the various details. To conclude their work on the study for this particular session, Eleanor suggests that it should be practiced at a faster tempo for the coming week, which she demonstrates from memory, conducting, gesturing, singing and then playing a little of the opening. Finally both teacher and student play through the study together at the new tempo. After this they look through a new study called the 'Skaters Waltz'. Again the teaching and learning approach is highly visual and aural. Attention is paid to many elements, especially the tremolo bowing, which is used throughout the piece. They read through this new study together and this, along with the other study, is assigned as homework for the coming week.

The remaining approximately thirty-five minutes of the lesson focuses on Allegro from Vivaldi's Concerto in A minor, which Áine has been working on for a number of weeks. It is one of the current ABRSM's grade 7 exam pieces. The approach here is similar. Eleanor summarises what has been played, highlighting both positive elements and aspects that need further work.

Fingering, position shifting, accurate note playing / reading, aspects of bowing and an occasional intonation issue all receive attention, and there is a focus on issues of Baroque style. At times, student and teacher play together, maintaining a convincing musicality and flow. They also explore a new section of the piece and Eleanor points to ways of practising various motifs and phrases. Note reading, accuracy, practice suggestions, and various interchanges in respect of the best fingering/position shifting desirable are all hallmarks of this learning transaction, which has taken place in a good-humoured fashion, reflecting a well-established understanding between teacher and student

Áine Vignette 2: Group fiddle lesson

This second vignette describes a thirty minute group traditional fiddle lesson, led by fiddle teacher Frank.

This group of four fiddlers review Tommy Peoples' reel 'The Green Fields of Glen Town' that they worked on during the week. Initially they play it together and then each, in turn, gives their particular individual rendition while the others listen. Frank offers suggestions to each student as to how s/he might develop their own playing of the tune. Attention is paid to various issues, such as ways to bow triplets, note emphasis, additional ornamentation including short and long rolls as well as further variation ideas that could be included. Frank looks for each student's ideas as well as to how s/he might consider developing her/his own playing of the tune. They conclude work on 'The Green Fields of Glen Town' and then a chat ensues about the new tune to be learned in this lesson. Frank explains that he is going to teach the hornpipe, 'The Queen of the West', also composed by Donegal fiddler Tommy Peoples. The conversation now seems to focus on their collective knowledge of the regional style in question (i.e. Donegal fiddle style) as well as developing a greater understanding and awareness of its characteristics. The teacher plays his own rendition of the tune, which the group of four teenage fiddlers audio record on their iPhones or digital recorders. Often it is up to the students to learn the tune themselves during the week, but on this occasion the teacher decides to

aurally teach the first part of the tune during the class session, focusing on the stylistic nuance of this particular Donegal player. The first part of the tune is then learned through a process in which the teacher plays a phrase which the group or an individual echoes back. The phrases of the first part are gradually chunked together in a continuous rhythmic flow of play and echo until the A section of the tune is in the group memory of this little ensemble. There are many comments about the tune and ways to remember elements. All play together one last time and the lesson concludes.

Áine Vignette 3: Grúpa ceoil practice

This third *vignette* describe an hour long ensemble rehearsal. These twenty young musicians and their teacher Frank are preparing their *grúpa ceoil* (meaning ‘music group’) arrangement for CCÉ’s annual *Fleadh Ceoil* Competitions.

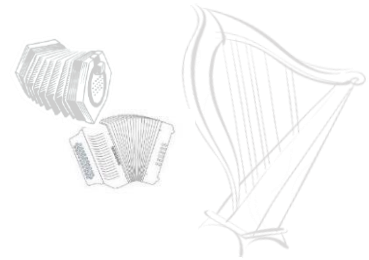
It is a wet, windy and blustery November evening as Áine and her peers make their way to the classroom for their weekly grúpa ceoil practice. Some are late arriving due to the bad weather and traffic. The teacher is upbeat and asks those who have arrived to arrange the chairs and desks so as to have a double row semi-circle. Fiddles are grouped together at one side, flutes at the other, reed instruments (concertinas / button accordions) and the banjo are in the centre. Instruments are tuned with some help from Frank. A page with harmonies (in ABC notation) is distributed again for those who have lost, forgotten or require notation and the practice is underway!

All play ‘With a Love that’s True’ in unison. Frank quietly gets down to the task of sorting harmonies. Fiddle harmonies for this tune are reviewed. Three of the fiddlers are asked to take on the task. Frank demonstrates their part while the concertina plays the melody. Three fiddlers then play harmonies while the ‘melody’ is played by the other fiddlers and the concertina player. An accordion bass accompaniment is quickly added, followed by the right hand melody accordion part, the flutes and finally the banjo to complete the textures. This arrangement is then practised and refined. They move on to a second piece called ‘The Boys of Ballisodare’. This second piece is worked similarly with instruments and textures gradually built in ten minutes,

resulting in quite a modern arrangement, including syncopated counter melodies played by all fiddlers. This hour-long rehearsal is led and directed entirely by ear.

4.4 Maebh

(Concert and Irish harp, concertina, Irish button accordion)



Maebh has always been immersed in Irish traditional music, much of which she has learned informally from ‘hearing’ it at home, picking up tunes at sessions or learning tunes herself. There are also formal aspects to her Irish traditional music learning, and when she was seven and a half years of age, she began to attend formal tin whistle lessons with her cousin, progressing to button accordion lessons at the age of ten. Formal traditional music lessons continued in various guises, such as regular or occasional one-to-one instrumental and group lessons, until about the age of eighteen years. As a teenager, Maebh took an interest in the Irish harp and the concertina, initially as the instruments were at home and she heard other family members playing them. At first she taught herself, but after a time, she took some lessons for both instruments. Maebh’s music making became ‘multi-genre’ when she commenced Irish harp lessons at the School of Music at age fifteen, initially to ‘correct’ her technique. She also started to learn the concert harp. In many ways Maebh can be seen as traversing three harp worlds, that of the concert harp, the lever harp in a formal music college context and the lever harp as it functions in an informal traditional session context, something she describes as another different ‘style’.

Maebh places her involvement in these musics differently. For example, she associates classical music with her academic studies, in which she is currently immersed through her university course and her classical instrumental studies at the School of Music. Irish traditional music is the soundscape of home, and is something that she says she hears ‘yeah, all the time’, created by visiting musicians, house sessions, recordings and collections. Her father describes the musical ambiance of the home place as ‘a way of life’ (IntN5). Although Maebh enjoys both musics, she connects with them differently. Classical music is associated more with a ‘sense of achievement’ from working with it. In contrast, for Maebh, Irish traditional music is

something that ‘you’re just playing for enjoyment’ (IntM3), something you do ‘for yourself, for fun and relaxation’. She suspects that, if asked to describe herself musically, she would talk about the harp first, possibly as it takes up more of her time, but believes that ‘I would always say that I play the harp and concertina’. However, when considering the Music College context, she pauses and says ‘I suppose it depends who you’re saying it to as well’.

When Maebh reflects on the reality of negotiating learning in both musics, she sometimes thinks back to when she started studying classical instrumental music and how she felt that, initially, the aural, non-literate basis of Irish traditional music wasn’t helpful. However, now, at her current stage, when asked what it is like doing both musics, she says that she definitely sees an advantage in doing both, adding that she ‘wouldn’t choose one over the other’. Maebh’s academic studies and instrumental music workshops, have brought her into contact with further musics, including jazz and other folk musics. She regards such music involvements positively, saying that:

It exposes you to loads of things, and then you know you have a basis to go and look for stuff, you can go and look them up after and that links you to other different things and stuff as well. (IntM3)

Maebh perceives her involvement in both musics as ‘equal’, though she feels that there are times when she doesn’t really balance them well, due to a tendency to be working on either ‘one or the other’. She is very busy with university work, classical music activities and instrumental rehearsal during the academic term, but she feels that she still succeeds in playing a lot of Irish traditional music as well. During the holiday period, involvement in Irish traditional music increases and she describes how she travels with her friends to play at Irish and international Summer schools and festivals, such as the *Joe Mooney* or *Willie Clancy Summer School* or festivals like *Interceltique de Lorient*.

4.4.1 Maebh’s music practices

At the time of data collection for this research, Maebh was studying both concert and Irish harp, and was a second year student on a Bachelor of Music Degree programme in one of the universities. She described the following activities:

Learning, practice, rehearsals:

- Weekly harp lesson (Irish and Concert) with her teacher Siobhán (see *Vignette 1* below)
- Harp practice: four to five mornings a week in the School of Music in preparation for exams, competitions and concerts
- Weekly two hour rehearsals as a member of both the University's student led Chamber Choir and the larger Choral Ensemble
- Learning tunes of her choice on the concertina on occasions at home

Performances, exams, music making / playing,

- Successfully sitting for the RIAM Grade 8 Irish harp examination
- Performances:
 - *Oireachtas na Samhna*, in Co.Kerry (harp competition)
 - North Kerry Music Festival (played concertina / concert performance)
 - Christmas Concert (Irish harp duet performance)
- Choral Performances including:
 - Annual University Christmas Concert
 - Galway Choral two day tour
 - Recording with National Chamber orchestra
- Broadcasts and Recordings (concertina and harp):
 - *Ceilihouse* RTE Radio 1 programme
 - *Geantraí* TG4 television series
 - Recorded harp on tracks for friends' 'pop-rock' band
- Informal Irish traditional music making at home or in sessions with her friends, siblings and her father

Keeping pace with both musics on a daily and weekly basis involves different methods and routines. Depending on her university schedule, Maebh explains how she practises in the School of Music for one and a half to two hours most mornings:

Because I don't have a concert harp at home, I would like to be there or go in for a good while, take a break, maybe and do like my keyboard for college, something I was working on in the Irish harp and come back to it just to take a brain break... kind of' (Maebh / concert & Irish harp practice).

In these sessions she practises both concert and lever harp. There is a sense of maintaining or reviewing older repertoire as well as working on new repertoire. Maebh

comments that ‘it’s nice to play something that you know you know’, placing emphasis on her need ‘just to play’ alongside what she describes as ‘the kind of struggle’ there can be ‘with the new stuff’. The focus of her current harp studies (concert and lever) is on repertoire and technique with a view to taking the Grade 8 Irish harp and Grade 5 concert harp RIAM examinations, as well as preparing further repertoire for a Christmas concert performance (Irish harp) and spring *Oireachtas* and *Feis Ceoil* competitions. Keeping pace with Irish traditional music is essentially self-motivated and home based. Maebh also had a number of radio and television performances to prepare for. In general, she practises concertina a few times a week for ‘about an hour’ (IntM2). When practising Irish traditional music she distinguishes between what she describes as ‘learning’ (as described in *vignette 2*) and ‘practice’ sessions. In practice sessions she reviews known tunes, describing how such a session consists of ‘whatever I feel like practising’, and explaining ‘I wouldn’t have a structured plan’. However, she observes that it would probably consist of working on technique and other activities, such as organising and rehearsing tunes sets.

4.4.2 Learning in action

Maebh, *Vignette 1*: Concert harp lesson

Vignette 1 describes a forty minute lesson in which Maebh and her teacher Siobhán focus primarily on Tournier’s *Prelude* No.3 in Eb, from *Quatre Préludes*. Maebh learned the *Prelude* earlier this year for a masterclass and is now preparing it for the School of Music examinations.

The opening eight minutes of the lesson consists of warm-ups, scales and technical exercises. These warm-ups cover a broad range of technical elements, embracing postural issues, approaches to finger work and hand position, including developing good finger action and articulation techniques. Meticulous attention is paid to tone quality and evenness of playing as Maebh practises the exercises in a variety of tempi, dynamics and rhythmic patterns. Practice approaches are suggested to advance skill and fluency in pedalling. With warm ups and technical exercises finished, the next twenty minutes focus on the Prelude by Tournier. Firstly Maebh performs the piece from memory.

Siobhán is very complimentary and verbally summarises what has gone well, in addition to highlighting certain things that need attention. She emphasises the importance of understanding and knowing what needs to be worked on, and tells Maebh that ‘hearing it is half the battle, if you’re not conscious of it then it’s always going to be the same’. Some errors are quickly identified and remedied such as a rhythmical error which Siobhán notes on the score and then performs correctly. A pedalling issue is deftly dealt with. However, much of the time is spent focusing on Maebh’s sound, aspects of articulation, the balance of fingers and hands, with an emphasis on the resulting musical qualities and phrasing. Throughout Siobhán sings, conducts, gestures, explains, as well as demonstrating on either the concert or the lever harp. They debate several musical markings and what their possible interpretations might be. Maebh is encouraged to think about shaping and interpretation. While different possibilities are demonstrated by Siobhán, in the end it is up to Maebh to choose.

Maebh, Vignette 2: Learning a tune at home

Vignette 2 describes a learning session, in which Maebh focuses on learning a new jig ‘Quilty Shore’. This could be described as an independent learning session in which she uses a recording by a well-known concertina player.

Armed with a cup of coffee and her phone Maebh goes into the music room at home, settles the cup of coffee on the floor, gets her concertina, and warms up by playing through a few sets of reels and jigs. About five minutes into the ‘learning session’ she takes out her mobile phone, finds the audio recording of ‘Quilty Shore’, balances the phone on her knee, attends to her coffee, presses play and listens to the whole recording of the jig. She then replays the recording but this time pauses it after the first two bars. There is a moment of quiet and then she echoes the two bars on her concertina. One is immediately struck by the fact that she is in fact transposing as she is playing back as the tune she has just heard was played on a concertina in Bb tuning whereas she is playing on a concertina in D tuning. This learning procedure is repeated for successive new phrases which are pieced together for the A section of this

binary tune. She works through the remaining B section of the jig in the same way, following which she then plays the tune through in its entirety. While most phrases seem to have been grasped on just one or two hearings, more particular attention is then given to such details as melodic variations in endings to, and links between, A and B sections. She listens several times to these melodic nuances, and, once mastered, she then plays the tune in its entirety. This process has taken about six minutes. Now she has what she later describes in interview as her ‘basic version’ of the tune. She writes the opening notes on a slip of paper so that she will be able to recall the tune later.

4.5 Conal

(cellist, tin whistle player, singer and uilleann piper)



Conal has always been immersed in Irish traditional music. His grandfather, parents, most aunts, cousins and all his uncles play Irish traditional music, and therefore it was taken for granted that he too would play. Formal lessons and regular practice commenced at the age of three—as was the case with his older sister—initially with the violin, and he progressed to cello when he was seven years old. A few years later, classical music learning also involved several ensemble and orchestral playing contexts. In contrast, Conal did not attend regular Irish traditional instrumental lessons, and while he attended classes over the years at the week-long Willie Clancy or Drumshambo Irish traditional music summer schools, he describes his music learning in this genre as mostly informal, in other words learning through hearing or playing at home with siblings, parents and friends of the family, or learning in other group social contexts, such as the lunchtime Irish traditional music session group at his secondary school and other peer-group contexts. He also plays music in several other contexts, including sessions, concerts, festivals, and at the local *Comhaltas* branch. His Irish traditional music instruments are the tin whistle and the *uilleann* pipes.

Music is very important to Conal. He views it as his main and only interest and explains that, socially, most of his friends and acquaintances are from either Irish traditional or classical music. His response when asked how he sees himself musically

was not to prioritise a particular music, but rather to describe himself as ‘a musician in general, as a cellist and a whistle player and as an *uilleann* piper, as someone who can do all three’. These instruments fulfil different purposes and roles in Cormac’s musical world. He says that he separates the two musics, and sees himself as switching between different modes. He loves playing classical music: solo, in orchestras and in chamber music ensembles, and aspires to a career as a cellist. Playing traditional music, in contrast, is something that he does because he is ‘in the mood’, as he says ‘I just want to enjoy that and be able to play it’.

Conal listens extensively to repertoire in both genres. He believes that ‘it is very important to hear what other people do’ and accesses a wide range of performances through his considerable use of the internet, YouTube in particular, computer/digital tune lists and CDs. He regularly attends the weekly National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) performances at the National Concert Hall, to access and learn from performances of various pieces (which he very comfortably discussed and critiqued in both observed lessons and interview). He says: ‘recordings, concerts, like YouTube as well ... it’s fantastic’ (IntC1). Conal also experiences and hears repertoire through the music making of parents, siblings, other relations and friends, both at home and in more formal performance settings. He and his siblings have amassed a large volume of classical scores at home and he describes how, when his sisters are around, they ‘might find a string trio hidden away somewhere or download it off the internet and play that’.

4.5.1 Conal’s music practices

For Conal, music making in both Irish traditional and classical music embraces a wide range of activities, from solo performance and practice to involvement in a range of ensemble contexts, including chamber music, orchestras, a cello octet, *grupaí ceoil* and *céilí* band, as well as informal music making sessions in both genres. Conal’s music making activities during this particular semester included the following:

Learning, practice, rehearsals:

- Weekly cello lessons with his teacher M (see *Vignette 1* below)
- Regular cello practice sessions at home

- Learning new tunes on the tin whistle / *uilleann* pipes at home (see *Vignette 3* below)
- Chamber music rehearsals with pianist Josephine at weekends in the practice rooms at the Music College, in advance of chamber music lessons and pending Christmas concerts (see *Vignette 2* below)
- *Siansa* group practices (some Saturday afternoons: group of 6 teenagers) (see *Vignette 4* below)
- Music College's orchestra rehearsals
- Irish National Youth Orchestra rehearsals
- Cello octet at the Music College

Performances, music making / playing, teaching:

- Student lunchtime recital
- Christmas Concert
- Informal music making (both genres) in the home with his family, neighbours, and friends
- Teaching tin whistle at local *Comhaltas* branch on Saturday mornings

Conal regards himself as busiest with his classical music given his involvement with lessons, various ensembles and rehearsals, and he takes his regular individual two-hour cello practices very seriously. His weekends can be very busy with orchestral and chamber commitments. He is also working on three other pieces, including Beethoven's *Cello Sonata* in G minor, Op.5 which he will perform in two concerts this term (see *Vignette 3*). He explains how in his home-practice sessions, he is also engaged in his own elementary note-reading and learning of two further works: Tchaikovsky's *Variations on a Rococo Theme*, op.33 and a Prokofiev *Sonata*, which will be brought to cello lessons when they are at a more proficient stage. His engagement in traditional music is managed differently for, he explains that now that he is older 'it's just playing more so than practising on the instrument itself' that is important. Conal describes how 'like ... you see a whistle lying around, you pick it up and play away'. On other occasions he chooses to learn new tunes from CDs, but there is also deliberate, organised practice when a particular performance or competition is pending.

4.5.2 Learning in action

Conal, *Vignette 1: Cello lesson*

The first *vignette* describes an hour-long lesson at the Music College (see below), in which Conal focuses on Schumann's *Adagio & Allegro*, Op.70 under the guidance of Lorraine, his cello teacher. It is a piece he hopes to bring to masterclasses in Germany in the coming months.

Cellos are tuned. Conal makes a request to postpone playing Poppers Etude No2 until the next lesson. Lorraine enquires as to how chamber practices with Josephine for the Beethoven violoncello Sonata in G minor Op.5, No.2 are progressing. She seems particularly interested in the third movement and a conversation ensues about a difficult section in terms of shifts and fingering. There is much humour about a particular motif and Conal suggests that it's not so difficult after all, demonstrates the motif in question, referencing having listened to David Finckel. There are some further comments about fingering and hand positions.

They then continue with Schumann's Adagio & Allegro, Op.70 for the remainder of this hour long lesson. The focus is mostly on the Allegro, as they have concentrated on the Adagio in the two previous lessons. Many elements of Conal's playing receive attention—phrasing, interpretation and technical aspects such as fingering / positioning and use of the bow—which for Conal concerns 'how best to approach the piece from a technical level and from an interpretational level at the same time'. Various cellists and their interpretations are mentioned, in the context of which Lorraine comments on her experience of performing the piece. In this lesson many details are refined, such as: the nuance and interpretation of rhythm; the length and character of a note; tone; gradation; pacing; the importance of breathing. There is much attention paid to the use of the bow, including bow movement, approaching the note, dealing with repeated notes. Fingering issues are considered, maintaining vibrato, understanding the natural physical resonance of the instrument and how to tailor this in the expression of an idea or the mood are discussed. Interpreting dynamic markings, exploring the character of the different sections while searching for his own authentic engagement with the

piece are all part of this particular cello lesson.

Conal, Vignette 2: Learning a tune at home

In the second *vignette*, Conal teaches himself an Irish traditional tune from a digital track of an old Joe Bane recording which his father sourced.

Conal has decided to learn a reel played by the East Clare musician Joe Bane. In the upstairs study he turns on the digital track of this old recording. For whatever reasons, perhaps due to the older analogue recording process or the actual pitch of the tin whistle used by Joe Bane, the pitch of the track does not correspond with Conal's D tin whistle. This does not seem to matter as he presses play and listens intensely for the first two rounds of the tune. He fingers along during the 3rd and 4th repetitions. After a moment, he rewinds to the A section of the tune and listens as the first four bars play and then pauses the track. Conal echoes what he has just heard on the tin whistle. He then lets the track run, listening to the next four bars, pauses the track and again echoes this phrase. He continues to the second part of the tune with which he adopts a similar approach.

There are some variations and stylistic nuances in this old East Clare style of playing that Conal seems to listen to very intently. It takes several further hearings before Conal seems to be satisfied that he has arrived at a reasonable approximation. There is a final performance before putting down the tin whistle and strapping on the uilleann pipes. Further stylistic elements are added as the tune is transferred to the uilleann pipes. This whole process has taken less than ten minutes. Later in an interview he explains how he writes out the notes afterwards to remember unusual tunes such as Joe Bane's version of this single reel.

Conal, Vignette 3: Siansa competition group practice

Vignette 3 describes a two hour Sunday afternoon peer-led group rehearsal

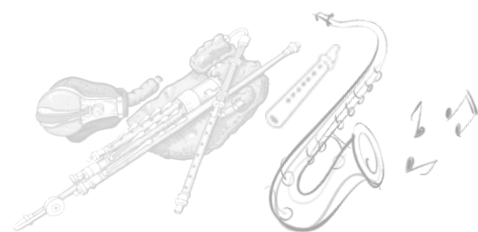
The strains of fiddles, concertina, a harp, guitar and pipes playing an O'Carolans piece emanate from the sitting room in Conal's house as he and

five friends practise their Siansa music arrangement. From time to time Conal's mother comes in, commenting on something that she has heard or to offer a suggestion as to how they might improve on some element such as tempo, togetherness or structure. The friends continue playing music together, developing their arrangement and discussing what needs more practice and attention. It is all transacted by ear, though one of the friends has a page on the floor at the side of his chair that he glances at once in a while. Time is spent playing through particular sections of their twelve-minute arrangement, focusing, for example, on links between the different tunes, particularly the link between the slip jigs and the following song 'Bainne an Ghabhar Bhán', which Conal sings. This link consists of mandolin, guitar, concertina and fiddle and the key change is tricky. Conal's mother, who also plays mandolin, gets involved at certain points to resolve musical issues in what is otherwise peer-led music collaboration. Some twenty minutes later there are more visitors: a next-door neighbour and his three year old daughter have also dropped in to listen. These musicians are seemingly well used to people coming and going and appear to take little notice of any of us while they play and practice.

When all decide that sufficient progress has been made, the 'formal' practice ends but they continue sitting around playing various other tune selections until it's time for refreshments in the kitchen. On retreating to the kitchen, the chat around the dining table reverts to what they had practised and in many respects is an informal critique of how the rehearsal went. A YouTube clip of the previous year's winners is viewed and discussed. Conal's mother talks about how Irish music has evolved and how a very broad approach to Irish music is taken in the competition. They comment on the YouTube clip, noting the previous year's winner's use of 'cello and double bass, and thus the conversation continues...

4.6 Seán

(Uilleann pipes, saxophone, Irish flute, tin whistle)



Seán has grown up in a home immersed in Irish traditional music, with older sibling fiddle players and parents who are very involved in the traditional scene. He attended formal lessons in both musics from a relatively young age, but his first encounter with music lessons was as a toddler, playing with his duplo lego on the floor, during his brothers' tin whistle class. His own formal music learning also started with tin whistle classes, which quickly progressed to the concertina, followed at about the age of eight by both Irish traditional flute and classical recorder lessons. His classical instrumental learning progressed to clarinet before he took up the saxophone in recent years, an instrument to which he had aspired. This multi-instrumentalist currently focuses on saxophone and *uilleann* pipes, while also continuing to play Irish traditional flute and tin whistle. Group music making is largely in the traditional field. While he has opportunities to play in classical / band ensembles, these have tended to clash with sporting involvements and other commitments.

Seán's involvement and musical interests have followed a similar pattern to that of his older brothers, and just as his brothers learned and played both genres, so does he. He describes playing classical and Irish traditional music as 'not bad' but emphasises his preference for, and enjoyment of, Irish traditional music. In interview, his father similarly commented, saying that learning in both musics was just part of what Seán did, in the same way as hurling and football, noting that, 'for all three brothers, their musical interests have veered over time towards Irish traditional music rather than classical'. Indeed, when Seán was asked how he sees himself musically, he, without hesitation, described himself as 'mainly an *uilleann* piper'.

Seán describes very different involvements in classical and Irish traditional musics. In the short term he is focusing on classical music and the saxophone for the national Leaving Certificate music examination but, longer term, he would see 'using the saxophone in trad' as more of a goal. He sees his classical knowledge as a support to his Irish traditional music playing, but he feels that his attitude is a little different to other classical music students in that, while he does his regular practice, it is not something that he takes as seriously as others who would spend 'more time practising'. He acknowledges that he plays 'a lot' of Irish traditional music if he has not anything else on.

With Seán there is a sense of being more comfortable and at ease in the traditional milieu. He talks enthusiastically about his many traditional music projects and comments that, in his experience, ‘trad people are a lot easier to get on with... I don’t know just for some reason I find that’. Seán regards Irish traditional music as having more of a ‘social side to it’; he views it as ‘more fun’ and points out that its focus is on playing with people and getting to know more people. For Seán, there are fundamental differences in each music, which he believes is evident in how the musics are played and taught. He describes the way in which Irish traditional music is taught and played as ‘laid back’. He talks about how each musician, when playing a tune, can add in their own variations as they don’t have to play the tune in the ‘same’ way. He also comments on how there is more ‘chatting’ and ‘talking about the tune’ between the teacher and the students. He contrasts this with the ‘more formal’ approach in classical lessons, which are focused more on just ‘learning’, and the fact that the pupil and teacher would not be ‘chatting as much’.

Seán isn’t planning a career in music, but music, especially Irish traditional music, is something—like his friends—he believes he will do a lot of ‘apart from a career’. As his *uilleann* pipes teacher says, ‘playing traditional music is deeply engrained in him’ (IntS5).

4.6.1 Seán’s music practices

At the time of data collection for this project Seán explains that he is not as busy with his music as he would usually be because he is focusing on his secondary school subjects in preparation for the Leaving Certificate state examination. His music activities at the time were as follows:

Learning, practice, rehearsals:

- Weekly lessons for both *uilleann* pipes and Irish flute (Irish music) (see *Vignette 2 (Seán)* below)
- Weekly saxophone lessons (see *Vignette 1 (Seán)* below)
- Regular saxophone practice
- *Uilleann* pipes and traditional flute instrumental practice
- Saturday morning rehearsals with local *Comhaltas* branch under 18 *grupaí ceoil* and *céilí* band groups.

- *Siansa* group rehearsals

Performances, examinations, music making / playing:

- Grade 4 Saxophone examination
- Involved in various performances as one of the schools senior student's traditional music group (in which he plays tin whistle, flute, pipes and *trad* saxophone), for example:
 - Aonach na Nollag (see *Vignette 3 (Seán)* below)
 - The National Siansa traditional group music competition.
- Performing as a solo *uilleann* piper in:
 - International Piping Day (streamed live)
 - Christmas recital (see *Vignette 4 (Seán)* below)
 - Ceol sa Chlub (organised for younger musicians)
- Involved in fundraisers and sessions as part of a larger, more *ad hoc* group of teenage Irish traditional musicians drawn from his own school, the neighbouring girls' school and various *Comhaltas* groups:
 - Busking (a pre-Christmas busk as a fundraiser) on Grafton St (Main shopping area Dublin city centre),
 - Playing in an Airport Fundraiser for the local Hospice
 - 'Reels on wheels' (pre-arranged/organised teenage sessions).
- Informally playing at home with his brothers (trad)

Keeping pace with the many music lessons he attends means that Seán spends more time practising Irish traditional music than classical music, particularly as he is involved in a range of Irish traditional individual and group music activities in comparison with just his weekly classical saxophone and musicianship lessons in his classical studies. His descriptions of practising in the two genres suggest different approaches to classical and Irish traditional music. In respect of the saxophone, he explains that his practice would last for half an hour and that it is done regularly. He seems to adopt a more varied and flexible approach to Irish traditional music practice. It is something that is done 'fairly often [...] sometimes every day' or 'every few days', and practice sessions are generally between twenty minutes and one hour. Also, he uses any spare time he has to play Irish traditional music.

4.6.2 Learning in action

Seán, Vignette 1: Saxophone lesson

In this *vignette*, Seán's teacher Joseph introduces one of Seán's saxophone examination pieces, a transcription of Purcell's 'Rondeau and Dance for the Haymakers', in preparation for his Grade 4 saxophone examination in 5 weeks' time.

Seán starts work on the pieces for his grade 4 saxophone examination. Their introduction has been carefully planned by Joseph, who has built Seán's technical and musical knowledge through various studies and exercises, and as a result, Seán is already familiar with the time and key signatures, as well as many melodic and rhythmic elements in these new pieces. In this particular lesson he starts, as usual, with tone and breath control exercises and scales, following which Joseph opens Purcell's 'Rondeau and Dance for the Haymakers' on the music stand. Joseph counts Seán in with one preliminary bar, then Seán starts to sight-read the piece for the first time. There is a rhythmic inaccuracy in the opening bar and, as a result, the playing comes to a natural pause. Joseph explains, in respect of the rhythmical error that 'it's faster than you think' and hums it. Seán starts again. Joseph maintains a steady count while Seán sight-reads the opening phrases. Joseph encourages him to go on and Seán sight-reads to Bar 24 quite easily. They then review phrases from this first section of the piece in terms of articulation, breath control and phrasing as well as reviewing the rhythmic inaccuracy in the opening bar of the piece. In each instant Joseph zones in on a motif or a detail in a calm and measured manner. He explains and demonstrates through singing the phrase in question, articulating slurs, detached notes and rhythm, occasionally marking the score (for example, marking in the count on those initial bars and breath marks where appropriate). Seán then replays the phrase or motif in question. The final section of this first piece is similarly introduced and dealt with. The other two new examination pieces are also started in the remaining ten minutes. Joseph reviews what is to be done during the week. Homework practice is written in the notebook (by Joseph). Not a minute is wasted in this thirty minute lesson. The examination is but five or six weeks away.

Seán, Vignette 2: Uilleann pipes group lesson

Vignette 2 describes a forty minute group *uilleann* pipes lesson involving three students and teacher Kieran.

The pipers chat about Saturday's International Uilleann Piping Day—an event which was broadcast as a live video stream from NPU (National Piper's Union)—while strapping up for tonight's lesson. They had all taken part in International Piping Day and chat casually about the tunes they chose to play. As they get ready, Kieran plays 'The Merry Blacksmith' reel they had worked on the previous week. Then each piper in turn is invited to play the tune, following which Kieran offers various suggestions as to how their interpretations of the tune might be improved. Tonight they are going to work with another tune, 'The Return to Fingal'. Kieran uses two different recordings: the first is a Seamus Ennis recording, while the second is a recording dating back to the 1920s of Ennis' father, who was also a piper. The students are encouraged to pay close attention to how Seamus Ennis plays the tune. Kieran at times comments and points out various aspects while at other times he asks 'What are you hearing?' There is much silent fingering on chanters by all as they listen to the recordings. They chat about the similarities and differences in the two recordings and they listen further to brief excerpts to clarify ideas. Ennis' approach to the tune is considered in much detail, particularly his use of the regulators and his approach to playing rolls. When they have all heard the tune several times, Kieran suggests that they should have it in their heads and therefore invites the students, one by one, to play the first part. Again, attention is drawn to the way Ennis would play particular aspects which Kieran models as well as, at times, playing further excerpts of the audio recording to support the various suggestions and points made. The second part of the tune is similarly dealt with. There is one final listening to the whole recording and then they all play the tune together. The lesson has come to an end and Kieran suggests that in the coming week they should keep listening to the recording and explore how close they get to the sound of the Seamus Ennis and his playing of the march, 'The Return to Fingal'.

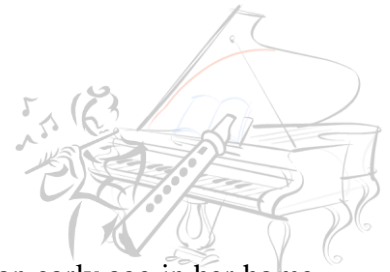
Seán, Vignette 3: Aonach na Nollag (The Christmas fair)

Vignette 3 is one of the many playing and performing opportunities Seán has in his traditional music making. This Irish traditional group performance shows Seán playing saxophone, flute, and whistle in a school concert featuring many different styles. The concert is held as part of the annual Christmas Fundraiser ‘Aonach Na Nollag’.

The venue is thronged with parents, friends, and children of all ages. This is one of the highlights of the afternoon, and is taking place in ‘Margadh an Saothar’ hosted by two of the teachers. This concert is attended by an enthusiastic audience of parents, friends, fellow students, brothers and sisters. Performances in the concert include: a fledgling rock band; a violinist playing Pachelbel’s Canon; a performance of Leonard Cohen’s Alleluia by three students to great applause; a first year Irish traditional music duet; a solo pianist; a clarinetist playing ‘A place for us’ from the musical West Side Story, and further solo and duet vocal items in contemporary ballad style. Without doubt the star attraction and final item of the concert is the sixth year Irish traditional music group of which Seán is a member. It consists of mostly boys and one girl. They arrive on stage oozing presence and confidence. The senior traditional group from this school is well known for successfully taking part in the National Siansa Competition and this group are no exception as they are currently in rehearsal for the first round of the competition. There is a sense of excitement and anticipation among the audience as the group set up. The performance commences and the students confidently introduce the various sets in their 20 minute programme. Seán switches between whistle and traditional flute seamlessly in the various arrangements. The penultimate number, which features Seán playing polkas on saxophone with fellow student Oisín on flute, is, without doubt, the climax of the concert. Announcements and thanks follow from one of the host teachers, following which the senior traditional group are invited to conclude the concert with their final set. Following the finale performance, most people made their way out to the yard to the barbeque. Many students and parents mill around, enjoying the atmosphere and the occasion that is Aonach na Nollag at this prestigious Secondary Gaelscoil.

4.7 Ellen

(flute, piano, keyboard, tin whistle guitar & choral music)



Ellen has learned classical and Irish traditional musics from an early age in her home town in Co. Mayo. Music learning began with tin whistle classes in her local primary school, and she commenced one-to-one piano lessons a year later. By fifth class in primary school, Ellen had graduated from tin whistle to the Irish traditional flute. Ellen sees her secondary school years as a time when she really ‘built on’ and expanded her early music learning. It was during these years that her piano playing extended to include solo instrumental and accompaniment work at her secondary school. During transition year (fourth year, secondary school) she added a new dimension to her music-making with lessons on guitar (popular repertoire). Now, a first year student in college in Dublin, Ellen is pursuing piano and flute as part of her Bachelor of Education degree studies while also continuing her accompaniment work with a local primary school and flute playing with the *Comhaltas* branch in her home town. Of particular significance for Ellen is the band she formed with her friend Aoife, also a multi-instrumentalist in both music traditions, and in which Ellen plays a mix of piano/keyboard and flute and sings backing vocals in sacred and secular music performance styles.

Music plays a huge role in Ellen’s life. She describes it as ‘great’, as something that she is always ‘out doing’ and as a ‘constant’ in her life, to the degree that she wouldn’t know what she would do if she ‘didn’t play’. For Ellen, being involved in music is enjoyable, is a ‘good feeling’; she describes it as ‘amazing’. She emphasises its importance particularly in terms of friendship, commenting, for example, on the way that ‘you always know someone through trad’. In Ellen’s case, she has maintained friends and friendships made in primary school through her Irish traditional group music making for competitions such as Scór. She explains how these primary school activities, along with her friends who have also been involved in classical and traditional music learning, have been the basis for the music band they have now created. Ellen says that having learned classical and Irish traditional musics means that her overall experience with music ‘is a broader thing altogether’.

Ellen reflects on what she regards as some fundamental differences in what is involved in learning classical music and Irish traditional music. She comments on the *aloneness* of learning classical piano repertoire and the fact that it takes a lot more work, in contrast with the ‘group’ nature of Irish traditional music, which she views as being all about ‘playing with people’ and she describes how you can ‘pick it up’ by ear and ‘learn it in no time’. For Ellen, there aren’t any perceptible disadvantages to learning both musics simultaneously, though she highlights having enough time to do both as an issue. For the most part, throughout her teenage years she was busiest with piano, piano examinations and regular piano, and consequently had less time for traditional flute. In interviews she mentions attending some traditional flute lessons with different teachers over the years but not with the regularity with which she attended to her piano studies. For example, halfway through transition year (TY) at school, she took regular traditional flute lessons at a local School of Music, as she was not sitting a piano examination that year and had more time.

Ellen’s view of her involvement in both musics has changed over time. She initially preferred traditional music as it was ‘easier’ to ‘pick up’ a ‘nice’ tune, compared with how much ‘harder’ it was to ‘play a cool piece’ on the piano. This had changed by fourth class, the point when she feels that she became very involved in music and was enjoying it as something more than purely ‘just learning music’. Now, as she embarks on a primary teaching career, she views piano as more important to her career choice, particularly given the literacy element, as she believes that ‘when it comes down to it, you need to be able to read music’. In reflecting on her own music making, she describes herself as ‘a good enough player’ and perhaps as ‘more of a flute player than a pianist’. Ellen explains being able to cross between two different instruments and two different types of music as ‘great’. While she sees the two musics as ‘quite different’, she points out that in other respects ‘it’s all music’. She describes playing ‘so much’ music as something that puts her ‘in good humour’. For Ellen ‘it’s all great’.

4.7.1 Ellen’s music practices

Ellen has had a very busy music schedule this term both in college in Dublin as well as at home in Mayo at weekends in her local community. Ellen’s piano activities at this point involve both learning and teaching. In college, the focus is on learning, while

at weekends it also includes teaching seven beginner students. At the time of data collection, Ellen's music making included:

Learning, practice, rehearsals:

- Weekly 30 minute piano lessons at College
- Regular individual piano practice
- Individual flute repertoire practice (performance focus)
- College traditional group rehearsals (Monday evenings)
- Group rehearsals some weekends with local CCÉ *Pléaraca* group (flute)
- Rehearsing at weekends with her own group (keyboard, vocals and flute)

Performances, examinations, music making / playing, teaching:

- College Lunchtime concert
- *Pléaraca* competition
- Group engagements: providing music regularly for liturgical services; Masses; Weddings; a Christmas Carol Service and concert fundraiser 'Glór on War'
- Attendance at other lunchtime concerts (college lunchtime concert series)
- Teaching piano students at home
- Working as a piano accompanist at one of the local primary schools

Keeping up with both musics has involved different independent practice approaches for Ellen. She explains how she has completed RIAM grade and Senior Certificate examinations, and that she is currently focused on expanding her piano repertoire in her college piano lessons. She really enjoys this new emphasis in her piano studies and appreciates having the time to focus on her own development, as opposed to what she regards as fulfilling examination requirements, as she previously did during secondary school. Maintaining her traditional flute practice is a different thing. Her current individual traditional flute practice involves some self-directed learning (she does not attend individual lessons) and a considerable amount of group rehearsal at weekends as her group prepares for the first round of the CCÉ *Pléaraca* competition. She is also preparing for a lunchtime recital with a different traditional group in college. She emphasises the social nature of her traditional music making and is of the opinion that individual flute practice is something that really only happens when she has 'to

practise for something'. Indeed, she regards group practices and sessions as 'practice in itself' and a way of maintaining many of her Irish traditional tunes.

4.7.2 Learning in action

Ellen, Vignette 1: Classical piano lesson

Vignette 1 describes a thirty minute piano lesson in which Ellen is focusing on two particular pieces of repertoire with her teacher Janet: Prokofiev, *Vision Fugitive*, Op.22: 10 (*Ridicolosamente*) and Michael Nyman, *The Heart asks Pleasure First*.

This is Ellen's second lesson with her new teacher in college. At the previous lesson she chose Prokofiev Vision Fugitive Op22, No 10 'Ridicolosamente' and Michael Nyman's 'The Heart Asks Pleasure First' from a selection of repertoire presented by Janet. Ellen first performs the first section of the Vision Fugitive that she has worked on during the week. They then review the section more slowly, noting a particular rhythmical feature as Ellen replays the section hands together at a slower pace and Janet joins in counting quietly, maintaining a steady tempo. This is followed by some separate hand work on particular motifs of the section to attend to fingering and rhythmical issues. These motifs are replayed in the context of larger phrases before moving on to a new section.

Ellen sight reads the next eight bars hands separately, focusing firstly on two bar motifs with the right hand, reading and resolving issues that arise in each motif, such as fingering, observing tied notes (B21-22), rhythmic patterns and glissandi (B23-24), (B24,25,28) - before adding on the next additional phrase. Throughout the steady progress on this new section, one hears Ellen's concentrated playing, hands separately, punctuated by the occasional teacher probe: 'What are you doing wrong with the Bb?' or 'How long do you hold it for?' At one point they discuss stylistic issues concerning placement of glissandi (Bars 21, 22, 26) and the teacher then demonstrates how to play the glissandi. Throughout this work, notes are added to the score, with the teacher maintaining a supportive role, encouraging Ellen to listen critically and rely on her sight-reading to work out the new music. Following a final 'play

through' of the entire section, practice strategies for the piece are suggested for the coming week.

During the remaining six minutes of the lesson, they review Michael Nyman's 'The Heart Asks Pleasure First'. Following on from the previous week's work, Ellen plays it hands separately at first and then Janet and Ellen deal with some reading issues in the right hand (fingering, notes errors) with Janet counting aloud as they read. Janet proposes strategies for dealing with a section involving cross rhythms. As Janet is aware that Ellen is somewhat aurally familiar with this piece, she requests that Ellen works on it only from the notated score rather than learning it by ear. The intense and detailed work in this lesson has been completed in twenty eight minutes and not a moment has been wasted.

Ellen, Vignette 2: Learning a tune at home

In vignette 2 Ellen is working on a particular version of *Tommy Peoples Reel*. It is a tune she has 'on her ear' and she is learning this independently at home. It was chosen by the organiser and music arranger of the CCÉ *pléaraca* group.

Typically when working on traditional music, Ellen sits at the corner of the table in the sitting room with her music notes in front of her, but today she decides to use her music stand for the ABC notation. She starts working on the tune, watching the ABC notation on the stand as she plays the first part of this binary tune slowly through twice. She appears to be trying to memorise the A part by playing it slowly while looking at it. She pauses momentarily as she thinks through the tune and then proceeds with the second part. Ellen reads the B part through three times, but there is a 'tricky' turn of phrase which occurs in the second part twice. She practises this phrase separately, repeating it a number of times on its own before incorporating it into the B part of the tune. With detailed work complete, Ellen then plays through the whole tune without the music notation at a faster pace. She attends to further details and adds some ornamentation and concludes the session by playing the tune through one final time. This practice has taken approximately fourteen minutes.

4.8 Bríd

(Accordion, piano, keyboard, tin whistle, guitar, percussion & vocals)



There are many musicians in Bríd’s extended family, and she has vivid memories of playing alongside two particular uncles—accordion and banjo players—at family parties (in Cavan?). She also talks about three other uncles who perform various musics in a wedding band. Bríd and her older sister’s musical interests were encouraged from an early age. She remembers learning the tin whistle with the older children in school when she was a four year old in the junior infant class in primary school, as she could ‘pick it up’ very quickly. This led to her parents organising individual lessons for her, initially on tin whistle and later on accordion. At the age of six, piano lessons were organised by her parents in response to her wish to learn the instrument. Bríd had lessons with this first piano teacher throughout her primary and secondary school years, studying ‘classical piano’ and sitting examinations until she moved to Dublin for third level education. In contrast, involvement in Irish traditional music was, over time, marked by several changes in teachers and a shifting emphasis away from traditional music competitions towards a more social- and community-based focus, which she thoroughly enjoys. One of Bríd’s current weekly highlights is the traditional band she recently joined, along with her friends. They rehearse twice weekly in preparation for a seven day music tour in the United States in March. She is a second year student on a Bachelor of Music degree programme, with accordion (Irish traditional music) as her primary instrument. In addition she is continuing her classical piano studies at the college.

In her busy music schedule, Bríd perceives both instruments as being equal in terms of their overall ‘time’ demands, though each instrument fulfils different purposes in her many-layered musical world. The greater balance of time goes towards pursuing her academic traditional music studies during her college weekdays, in contrast with the very substantial role piano plays in her paid teaching and performing activities at weekends. While traditional music is Bríd’s main study in college, she auditioned for both instruments and genres and she actually perceives piano as being her primary instrument.

I study music, like, and they'd say 'Oh, do you play instruments?' Like, I'd say 'yeah'. I always say the piano first, because even ... though... it actually would be more my main instrument. I just need to find my direction in it[...] I say piano and accordion, and accordion is trad ... but I think it's just because, like everyone knows the piano, like, more so than the accordion. You know everyone knows what an accordion is, but it's so random to some people, even though to us it wouldn't be, because it's trad. But people who haven't got a clue, if you're playing an accordion ... what? (IntB2)

Bríd's piano and traditional accordion instrumental practices extend beyond classical and Irish traditional music genres [and particular styles of playing]. She sees herself as a pianist who plays classical, popular, 'Irish and a bit of trad' and finds it difficult to describe her playing style, describing how it gets 'lost in translation'. Bríd feels that she needs to play more in the classical style. When playing accordion, she alternates between different styles of playing: her own 'modern' style in the gig scene and a more 'traditional' approach in her college studies. One strategy that helps at a practical level with this type of switching is to listen to the audio track of her teacher just before lessons so that she will be playing the 'correct' version of the tune in the class.

When Bríd reflects on her experience of learning both musics, she says that it is something that she has never really questioned. She explains 'you do it and that's it', and for her it is simply a case of 'this is what you do here and this is what you do there' (IntB2). She does not believe that there are disadvantages to learning both genres simultaneously, but she considers that how one engages with both musics is a personal thing. She explains as follows:

It depends on how you can look at yourself. It depends on the person. There are some players who are just fantastic at one and they are fantastic at the other. There are some players who are really good at one and good enough at the other. (IntB1)

4.8.1 Bríd's music practices

Bríd's college and weekend music activities change in focus, as does her music making during the academic year and in the Summer holiday months. When she reflects on her weekly term time activities and considers the summer months, she observes that the balance redresses itself in relation to her musical involvements. These include 'classical' hotel commitments and 'immersion in the trad scene', the latter involving summer camps, 'a few gigs with the Wolf Tones', sessions and *fleadhanna* (meaning 'festivals'). Bríd describes a particularly busy and musically active term, saying how it has been 'hard to fit everything in' between academic

studies, teaching, learning and music performance. At the time of data collection, Bríd's music making included the following:

Learning, practice, rehearsals:

- Weekly 50 minute accordion lessons (see *Vignette 1*)
- Weekly 30 minute piano lessons (see *Vignette 2*)
- Solo accordion practice
- Group Rehearsals and Practices:
 - Two hour Irish traditional music ensemble rehearsal (School of Music)
 - Twice weekly group practices (US tour in March 2012)
 - Weekend group practices (own group) rehearsals in her friend's house for their 'covers' band as they also provide entertainment in local public house venues.

Performances, examinations, playing, teaching:

- School of Music Concert (see *Vignette 3*)
- Solo piano: multi-genre hotel entertainment playing a mix of classical / popular / Irish / Irish traditional styles)
- Pub gigs with own band (piano, vocals, percussion)
- Local talent competition (popular music, keyboard, vocals)
- Teaching and monthly sessions with local *Ag Seinnm* music community group
- Teaches eighteen classical piano and two Irish traditional accordion students on Saturdays

Bríd's many musical activities constitute a mixture of participatory and performance style music-making. Her experiences pose many questions regarding the differing conventions and practices within these traditions, both in her home town and as a student at the School of Music. She queries what she regards as the sometimes destructive effect of competition on traditional music transmission. She contrasts the differing aims and focus in performance practices she experiences in the more formal School of Music environment (*Vignette 3* below) with her previous experiences in local community settings, differentiating between the more formal approach to performance in the formal setting and the nurturing and participatory nature of her music making in her early years.

4.8.2 Learning in action

Bríd, Vignette 1: Classical piano lesson

Vignette 1 describes Bríd's weekly thirty minute piano lesson at the School of Music with teacher Marie.

The third movement, (Presto) of Mozart's Sonata in F (K280) is the focus of these thirty minute lessons. It is one of the pieces on the ABRSM grade 7 examination syllabus. Bríd started learning this piece a few weeks previously. At this early stage of learning the piece, the focus is primarily on detailed sectional work, resolving fingering and note inconsistencies and developing essential technique. The approach taken by Marie in class places great emphasis on the importance of effective practice strategy and the importance of reflection on the part of the student. An approach involving both working with the music practically and modelling best practice acts as the framework for the music making in these thirty minute lessons, which focuses on a wide range of issues, including fingering technique, finger action, hand positioning, picking up from particular sections using consistent fingering, chord preparation, articulation, note emphasis, phrasing, sectional work strategies, and encouraging the student to think about, reflect on and understand the issues raised. Clear and detailed advice is given in respect of practice approaches that should be used during the week, which include: spend time working on the development of the piece, be vigilant with tempi and be consistent in fingering. This particular lesson commences and concludes with a review of progress on previous detailed sectional work. Other sections of the Sonata that Bríd is still developing and learning are left for her to finalise before the next lesson.

Bríd: Vignette 2: Irish traditional music lesson

Vignette 2 describes Bríd's fifty minute button accordion lesson with teacher Peter, which takes place at the School of Music. One is struck by the contrast between the cacophonous strains of multiple music lessons in different genres audible in the hallway outside, and the certain quiet informality of this particular lesson.

A calm, informal conversational tone is set by these two accordion players as they chat about how tunes are remembered, about the names of tunes and where a tune was learned or ‘picked up’. Many tunes are played and reviewed during this relaxed fifty minute session: ‘The Swallow’s Tail’, ‘Marino Waltz’, ‘The Road to Kylemore’, ‘Slieve Russel Jig’, ‘Langstern Pony’, ‘Over the Moore to Maggie’, ‘The Leitrim Fancy’ and ‘The Jolly Beggar Man’. Some technical details regarding melodic decoration and left hand bass work are examined in particular tunes as teacher and student settle into the ‘nyah’ of the music. Interestingly, as the reel ‘The Kerryman’s Daughter’ proceeds, there are discrepancies in the versions each is playing, but consensus is reached through a process of checking through the different sections, listening and playing together with the learner or teacher dropping out for a while, listening again and re-joining the tune. ‘The Kerryman’s Daughter’ is played one final time and then another reel, ‘The Bird o the Bush’, is selected. While there is some chatting and some comments, this lesson is essentially a musical dialogue in which the individual tunes or tune sets played are suggested by either teacher or student. Bríd’s little black notebook—in which she writes down the tune names and their opening notes—acts as the reference point for both student and teacher in choosing and tracking what is known and what will be learned. Having the notebook is a strategy that Peter adopted decades ago to remember and maintain his own accordion repertoire, a strategy he now passes on to Bríd. In this lesson, new tunes are given by Peter as they arise and naturally sequence and fit with what has gone before. Today Peter plays a new tune, explaining where the tune has come from and listing several notable players who have recorded it and collections in which it can be found. The lesson concludes with Bríd recording the tune on her iPhone and notating the opening in her notebook.

Bríd, Vignette 3: Traditional music ensemble concert

Vignette 3 describes one of the performances in which Bríd is involved as part of her performance studies for her undergraduate degree course. This performance of the new academic year showcases student musicians, teachers and a number of guest

musicians in an hour long performance. Programme notes for the event described it as ‘celebrating the Celtic New Year in music, song and storytelling’.

This year, the Ensemble’s autumnal concert commemorates the fortieth anniversary of the passing of Seán Ó Riada, and blends many of the iconic pieces associated with Ó Riada and the group Ceoltoirí Cualainn in an hour long showcase of Irish instrumental music and song. Twenty four musicians are on stage for this performance and comprise a mixture of button accordions, a concertina, fiddles, flutes, banjos, harps, pipers, bodhráns, pianos and guitar. The concert commences with an instrumental performance of the song ‘Aisling Geal’ (violin and piano), long associated with Ó Riada and the Cúl Aoidh Gaeltacht area. This first item then merges into a second piece, ‘Marsiúla Uí Neill’, which in many respects can be viewed as the signature tune of Ceoltoirí Cualainn. The Ensemble’s presentation of this second piece acclaims the style of Ó Riada and Ceoltoirí Cualainn both in content and arrangement and reflects the particular way in which Ó Riada featured the various instruments or combinations of instruments in successive sections, phrases and repetitions of the tunes. A change of style marks the third ‘stand-alone’ concert item, performed by the ensemble’s banjo players, in which more contemporary rhythms and harmonies underscore the reel selection. This is followed by an individual interpretation of the Irish air ‘An Chualainn’ on solo guitar. Successive concert items contrast contemporary and more traditional arrangement approaches in this musical showcase. Of interest is the way in which this performance brings together the instrumental dance and Irish song traditions in a folk orchestral presentation (the invention of which is attributed to Ó Riada by the concert’s presenter), which at one point is joined by several early music players in a hybrid consort of bodhrán, harp and recorder. Also of interest is the way in which this musical presentation incorporates the various members—young and old, students and teachers, constant members and guests—of the entire traditional music community at the School of Music.

4.9 Synthesis and Analysis

What is particularly striking when reflecting on the data in this chapter is the individuality of these students' bimusical practices, suggestive perhaps of a more nuanced image of the natural bimusical musician than perhaps indicated in earlier literature. Collectively, several themes emerge as these learners talk about their experiences of learning and music making in both genres. These issues are now discussed in the context of the students' activities and social dimensions of their individual music worlds.

4.9.1 Music activities: the individual, the ensemble and the social

Previous findings (O'Flynn, 2011; Cawley, 2013) have drawn attention to the multiplicity and diversity of music activities and the range of learning experiences possible for younger traditional musicians. What emerges with these seven students are different balances of participation in both classical and Irish traditional musics, reflecting a particular blend of individual and ensemble group involvements for each musician. These seven accounts suggest that there are many opportunities in both genres, but in this particular group of young musicians, at this point in time, many have opted to a greater extent into Irish traditional music. Fig. 4.2 below presents the participants' individual and group music activities (based on interview data). It gives a sense of this range and diversity within each individual's blend of classical and traditional music activities in individual and ensemble contexts.

	Conal	Nóra	Áine	Seán	Maebh	Ellen	Bríd
<i>Learning</i>							
Instrumental tuition (weekly 1-1)	●	● ●	●	● ●	●	●	● ●
Instrumental tuition (weekly group lesson)			●	●			
Self-taught		●			●	●	
home practice	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●
Occasional tuition* (summer school, workshops, occasional 1-1 tuition)		●	●	●	●		
Masterclasses*	●				●		
Group rehearsals (expert-led: orchestral, grúpaí ceoil, céilí)	●	●	● ●	● ●	● ●	●	●
Group practice (peer-led: Siansa group, own groups, lunchtime session)	● ● ●	●*		●	●	● ●	● ●
Group rehearsals (weekend residential course)	●						
Teaching*		●	●		●	●	● ●

<i>Playing & Performing</i>							
Exams & Assessments (current term or later in academic year)	●*	●	●	●	● ●	●*	● ●
Concerts (end of term, lunchtime, traditional, orchestral, other*)	● ●	Ⓜ*	● ● ●	● ●	● ●	Ⓜ ●	●
Competitions (individual): (current term or later in academic year)	● ●		● ●	●	● ● ●		Ⓜ* ●
Competitions (group / ensemble): (current term or later in academic year)		Ⓜ	● ●	● ●	* ●	●	
Tours*			●*		●* ●*		●
Recordings & Broadcasts (incl competition entries)	● ●	●*		● ●	● Ⓜ* ●	Ⓜ*	
Communal-social performance (fundraiser, liturgical, community)		●*		●		Ⓜ ●	●
Gigs & entertainment (paid)		●			● Ⓜ	●	Ⓜ ●
Traditional sessions (home, public venue, lunchtime, monthly session)	●	●*	●	●	●		●
Busking				●			
Informal playing (at home, with friends)	● ●	●	●	●	●		●
<i>listening</i>	● ●	● Ⓜ ●	● Ⓜ ●	Ⓜ ●	● Ⓜ ●		●

● = Classical, ● = Irish Traditional, Ⓜ = other genre, ■ = not known

* = Participant activity which did not take place during data collection period

Fig. 4.2 .Individual and group musical activities

4.9.1.1 Individual music activities: schedules and settings

At one level, a relatively consistent picture emerges in these learners’ individual classical music learning and making. All engage in individual weekly one-to-one, expert-led (qualified classical musicians) instrumental lessons in formal settings, and in individual practice on their instrument. All are working on particular repertoire, which has been chosen either jointly with or by their teacher, with a view to some form of assessed performance (examination, end-of-year assessment and / or competition). In these respects, they reflect the well-defined pathways of the classical music world—what Finnegan (2007) describes as the ‘classical mode of professional and formalised teaching by recognised specialists’ (p. 133).

Differing structures characterise the participants’ individual traditional music learning activities. Two participants learn in regular expert-led one-to-one lessons; two others learn in small group classes. Lessons take place in a variety of settings, including after-school provision in school buildings, organisation / institutionally based, and in Nóra’s case in a public house. Three participants do not attend lessons. They learn independently, and indeed Conal has always learned in this informal way (IntC2). It

is interesting how all these students are surrounded by either family or music friends. Thus, learning does not depend on individual practice but rather extends into social contexts through the many opportunities they have to learn and participate in sessions and in family music making, as well as through competition and performance preparation. Indeed, for all seven students, repertoire is continually expanded through both their individual learning and other learning / music making activities. Regular individual practice is not seen as essential by many. Neither is standardised assessment a goal in the traditional music making of five of these students. In contrast, the two remaining students sit examinations: standardised Irish harp examinations at the School of Music and assessments as part of an undergraduate degree programme.

A range of other individual activities are part of their practices across both genres, such as competitions, recitals, masterclasses, workshops, and residential courses (see Fig. 4.1). Solo competitive performance features in five individual narratives. For Conal and Maebh it provides a performance avenue in their classical studies, and four of the seven musicians engage in traditional solo competitive performance. For two others, competition has largely negative connotations, while Ellen, who has had little involvement in competition, maintains the view that developing music for herself is 'really more important' (IntE4). Solo performance is a feature of both genres: Conal, Maebh and Áine perform in solo classical recitals; and four students (Maebh, Áine, Seán, Conal) are all solo traditional performers. Masterclasses and workshops reflect different patterns in both genres. Only Conal and Maebh, both of whom are currently following classical learning pathways, attend cello and concert harp masterclasses as part of their formal studies. Attending masterclasses or workshops for Irish traditional music¹, is typically a summer holiday activity for four of these young musicians (Conal, Maebh, Áine and Seán) (see Fig. 4.1) and is largely associated with leisure and opportunities to meet friends and socialise through Irish traditional music.

4.9.1.2 Music making: ensemble and social elements

There are marked differences in the extent of these young musicians' ensemble music making across the two genres. Whereas all the classical string players have at some point played in orchestral and / or chamber music ensembles, only two (cellist, harpist) continue to be involved in playing with multiple ensemble rehearsals, enjoying the many performance opportunities and the social dimension that their ensemble music

making offers, such as national tours, weekend residential workshops, concerts, and recitals. However, the data raise questions regarding why most of the participants in this study are not involved, or have already veered away from classical ensemble in their music practices. The reasons they suggest for dropping out correspond with the many ‘risk points or critical moments for ceasing involvements’ (Lamont, 2011: 379), such as school pressures, lack of time or other competing demands. These reasons confirm and resonate with several other research findings also (Creech, 2010; Lamont, Hargreaves, Marshall, & Tarrant, 2003; Finnegan, 2007).² In these, data on the lack of involvement in classical ensemble has other dimensions. For example, Seán has chosen not to be involved in classical ensemble, having always veered more towards Irish traditional music (IntS4). The reality for Ellen and Bríd was that studying piano in a rural area meant little opportunity for classical ensemble playing or performance. As noted earlier in the profile section, both pianists seem to have naturally diversified into other genres. Nonetheless, in this research, lack of involvement cannot be entirely attributed to competing demands, risk points, access or indeed interest. Nóra articulates a particular deep-rooted concern when she says ‘you’re either a star or you kind of let it go’ (IntN3), expressing perhaps how, at a certain point, perceiving a pathway forward in classical music proves to be overly challenging for many students.

What is particularly striking about their traditional music practices is how all the students have been involved in Irish traditional group / ensemble music making, and how six of the seven musicians are and choose to maintain involvement in a remarkably diverse range of traditional group / ensemble music learning and making, despite some having dropped out of ensemble activities in classical music. They all emphasise the social aspects of traditional music. These many activities take place in a range of contexts, from the home to formal learning contexts and in social settings also. Expert-led group learning and playing in after-school settings, feature prominently for five of the seven students as they prepare for *céilí* bands, and ‘*grupaí ceoil*’ *Fleadh* competitions. This pattern changes for the students over eighteen years of age, whose involvement has become more self-directed. Six of the seven learners emphasise the importance of less formally organised group learning experiences and contexts, such as *Siansa* groups or other gig / performance groups that they themselves organise and rehearse. While several of the participants comment on cutting back on music making activities due to school or college pressures, many discuss their

involvements in a further level of informal participatory music making. These activities take place mostly in familial and social contexts, such as informal playing at home with parents and siblings and playing with friends in various session contexts, including: festivals; secondary school lunchtime sessions (Conal); CCÉ ‘slow’ sessions or the many community based sessions organised for younger members, such as *Reels on Wheels*³ (Conal, Seán), or *Ag Seinm*.⁴ At the informal end of the spectrum, a relatively new trend or development is the new-found respectability of street busking at *Fleadhs* and on other occasions, an activity currently popular amongst Seán and his musician school friends.

For this researcher, two findings emerge in particular. Given how the literature generally emphasises the participatory nature of Irish traditional music, a surprising amount of these learners’ weekly activities are in fact centred on formally organised, expert-led activities. This may in part reflect the period of data collection (autumn school term), as summer music activities are not documented as such. Another significant finding is how group music making is very much part of the music worlds of each of these young musicians. All seven participants seem to have established their own particular niche in group music making, be it classical, Irish traditional, or indeed other styles, such as rock, popular or liturgical, attesting perhaps to music making as a vital aspect of their musical lives.

Fig. 4.3 presents a spectrum of the activities in which the students were involved at time of data collection.

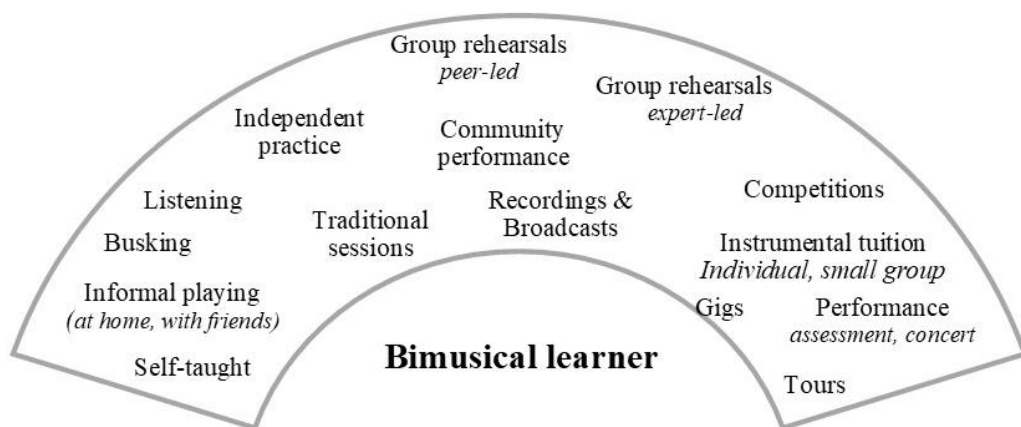


Fig. 4.3 Music activities spectrum

4.9.1.3 Perceptions: individual and social aspects?

In these data, both individual and social dynamics of music making and learning are emphasised and valued, albeit for different reasons. Many of the learners refer to their individual involvement as being sometimes solitary, more ‘formal’ or academically focused, and having a formative or ‘personal development’ dimension (Nóra, Ellen). While there is no causal relationship, several associate this side of their music predominantly with their classical practice, whereas a social focus is generally attributed to Irish traditional music (for most, though not all). Those who comment on the individual and social dimensions of their practice value and emphasise the importance of both aspects of their music making. For example, Ellen comments on the work involved and the aloneness of learning classical repertoire in comparison with traditional music, which is all about ‘playing with people’ (IntE2). Associating Irish traditional music with knowing and playing with people is similarly echoed by Bríd and Seán. In reflecting on her music, Áine very much sees her classical practice as predominantly a solo activity and as something associated with educational attainment and her own personal development. There is an individual dimension to her Irish traditional music also, but she views it differently: as less pressured, more social and more associated with leisure and holidays, as she thoroughly enjoys ‘all the social bits’ of her Irish traditional music making but also loves playing classical (IntA3). Associating Irish traditional music with leisure, holidays, sociability is echoed by Maebh, Ellen and Bríd. What emerges in their descriptions of music learning and making, is a sense of a perception of music as having relevance in their lives beyond the lesson and their practice: a commitment to music and an expectation that music will always be part of their lives in some way.

A recent study (Isbell and Stanley, 2016) commented on the ‘openness to other perspectives’ among musicians who engage in different musics. While one of these students regularly encounters considerable bias and negativity towards her classical practice, it is refreshing to note how, similar to Isbell and Stanley’s (2016) findings, these young musicians value, understand and engage with the differences in both musics openly and positively. Such attitudes contrast with Finnegan’s (2007) findings, where she encountered a jaundiced view of ‘other’ musics, among particular groups of musicians who regarded their music as ‘self-evidently the form of music learning’ (p137). In contrast, these findings show an unmistakeable commitment to all the

activities of music learning at individual and social levels, irrespective of the different and goals and aspirations held for both.

Do these learners socially code-switch? Yes, they engage in the differing social mores of each genre. What is interesting is that unlike the professional musicians described by Cottrell (2007), it seems that at a social level, it is for the most part automatically and unconsciously done.

4.9.2 Interpersonal dynamics

Another aspect of learning that emerges when examining the differing dynamics of these activities is ownership: what Folkestad (2006) describes in terms of the ‘decision making’ within activities (p. 142). Student activities in this research include self-directed independent learning, such as independent instrumental practice, engaged in by all, to varying degrees, in both genres. Students such as Conal, Maebh, and Ellen are self-taught traditional musicians. In other activities, ‘decisions’ (Folkestad, 2006: 142) are teacher / mentor led, often in the style of teacher-learner master-apprentice (Campbell, 1991; McCarthy, 1999) approaches. They also learn in peer-led collaborative contexts in which they have ownership of the process and the decisions made (Lamont *et al.*, 2003; Green, 2002). When issues of ownership and decision making in these students’ range of activities is considered, it brings to the fore the very different interpersonal dynamics they experience in music learning. In this sense, the ownership lens highlights how they and others are involved in their music learning and making, for example, the important of the teacher in the ‘transactional’ nature of classical teaching and learning (Lennon, 1997: 210), the rootedness of traditional music making in family and community (O’Flynn, 2011) or the role of friends and peers in collaborative projects and informal music making activities (Lamont and Hargreaves, 2003; Green, 2002), all of which are underpinned by the family, institutions or community of classical and Irish traditional musics.

The participant portraits and vignettes of learning presented earlier in this chapter illustrate these varied interpersonal dynamics. In a collective sense, these vignettes highlight the transactional and changing nature of ownership and how, irrespective of the particular dynamic, decision making is at times led, but it is also shared, in ways that involve collaboration and promote problem solving and shared decision making.

In these various contexts, the student moves from (vacillate between) a peripheral to a central position in regards to the decisions of their many activities. This bimusical interpersonal dynamic is illustrated in figure 4.4 below.

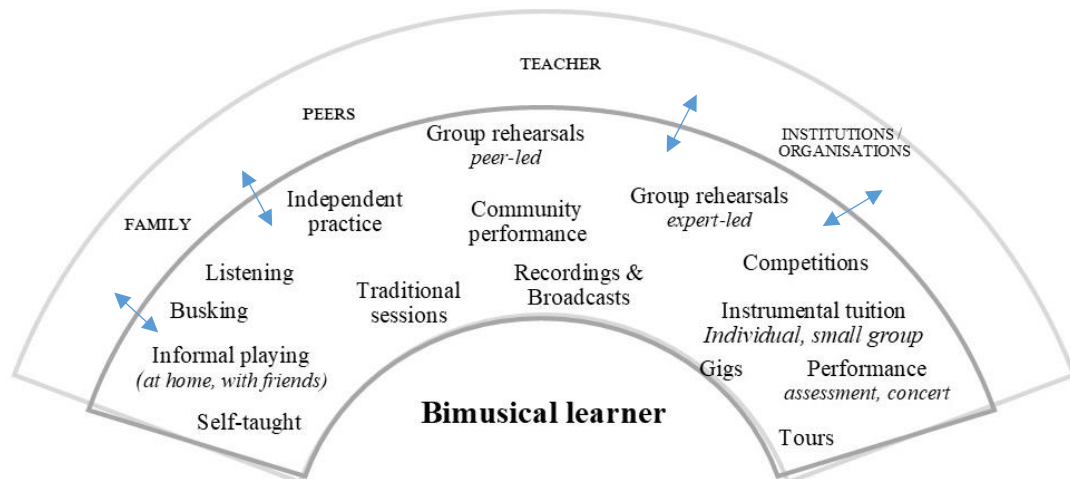


Fig. 4.4 Bimusical learning: Interpersonal dynamics

4.9.2.1 Valuing collaborative learning and music making

Many of the students' multiple activities (particularly in the traditional scene) encourage ownership and a central role in decision making. A particular activity that several of the students talk about is *Gael-linn's Siansa* group competition. Such opportunities to collaborate, play with peers, and to be the central players in activities are emphasised and appear to be highly motivational. Other group music making examples include Seán's informal busking activities, Bríd's twice weekly sessions with friends to arrange and rehearse music for their impending group tour and Conal's description of how he and his sister organised, chose, composed and rehearsed their music arrangement for their entry to the *Siansa* competition. For Áine, it is about playing with friends in various social settings. She comments on the sense of gradually gaining a more central role in, for example, sessions where she now suggests and decides the next set of tunes for others to play (suggesting tunes at sessions was more difficult at an earlier stage). The social dynamic of collaborative, shared, friendship dimension of their traditional music making is further emphasised in the many further summer time activities—festivals, *Fleadhanna*, summer schools—discussed by the students.

4.9.2.2 Independent instrumental practice

The ‘decisions of the activity’ reflect a very different dynamic in independent instrumental practice. Most of the students adopt the lesson format when they practise independently in both traditions. Many classical music teachers are conscious of modelling best practice in lessons and give advice as to what and how to practise. Thus, the student’s independent classical practice is, to some degree, ‘teacher initiated’: whereas some students follow the advice closely, others make their own decisions with varying outcomes. In this research, independent traditional music practice seems to afford a greater element of ownership and decision making for a number of reasons. Requirements for the next class lesson are quickly achieved, for some ‘within a day or two’ (IntA2), which allows for other activities of their own choice. Just as traditional lessons start and often finish with playing tunes, (an activity which is teacher-led in the class context), in their home practice, playing tunes takes many guises. Many depart from the formal practising structure, choosing what to play, when and how, for example, as part of organised practice session, or randomly picking up an instrument and playing tunes at will.

4.9.2.3 Changing Patterns of Ownership

What also emerges in this research is that irrespective of the dynamics of learning activities, there is a natural shift towards ownership among older students as they take on a more central role in the decisions of their learning and become more independent learners in both genres. Decision making devolves to the student to a greater extent in some traditional learning contexts at a much earlier point than in their classical learning. This is due, at least in part, to the collaborative nature of some group projects (*Gael-linn Siansa* competition) but also because many assume ownership at a much earlier stage for their individual traditional music learning. These data show that these changing patterns of ownership occur in tandem with changes in the musical ‘cycle of development’ (Finnegan, 2007: 136) in both genres. At the time of data collection, Maebh, Ellen and Bríd had achieved the end of a classical instrumental grade examination cycle, all three of them had chosen to continue classical studies at third level. For learners who were eighteen years or older, involvement in CCÉ competition and class structures was also changing, as it would seem that such activities in practice cease for this older age group. What emerges in these students practices are continuing activities alongside new activities and pathways. Several participants are now engaged

in touring, gigging, recording, broadcasting and diversifying into music making in other genres (rock, popular, liturgical). Thus it appears to be a time when many weigh up current and future choices beyond the class lesson, in continuing on musical pathways and engaging in music as a lifelong pursuit. The discussion will return to this topic in the final chapter.

4.9.3 Musically involved families

While general research findings suggest that musicians come from all sorts of music and non-music backgrounds (Hallam, 1998; Davidson, Howe, Moore & Sloboda, 1996; Creech, 2010; Lamont, 2011), one of the recurring themes in classical music literature in particular is the role that musically involved families play in fostering and developing a child's music learning and playing. Earlier in this chapter, these young musicians described the many ways in which family members—parents, siblings, cousins, uncles aunts—were musically involved, through performing, playing in sessions, playing in bands (various genres), or through learning or teaching music. Such narratives resonate with Finnegan's (2007) findings concerning hereditary features and musical pathways adopted within families. Finnegan noted a hereditary aspect, particularly evident among those in the classical music world⁵ and less so in folk and jazz musics in her research. In this research, it is the inherited aspects of traditional music making that comes strongly to the fore among the students. The hereditary classical element is less present, as five of the seven musicians are first-generation classical music learners, thereby forging new musical pathways in this genre. However, for six of these seven students (within the family, and at community level for Bríd and Ellen), there is a strong sense of traditional music being 'passed on' (McCarthy, 1999), and of these young musicians following in the pathways of previous generations. Such is the strength of intergenerational musical involvement in, for example, Conal's family background, that within Irish traditional music he would be regarded as coming from a 'traditional music dynasty'⁶, a term coined by MacAoidh (1994: 226). Interestingly, Nóra could be similarly regarded in a *bimusical* sense.

4.9.3.1 Supporting music learning and making

In these musically involved families, active music learning and making emerges as both a supported and 'accepted part' of family life (Finnegan, 2007). Extensive

literature documents the types of supports that parents give in encouraging and fostering music learning (Creech, 2010; Creech and Hallam, 2011; Finnegan, 2007; McPherson and Davidson, 2006; Hallam, 1998; Davidson *et al.*, 1996). Several of these young musicians, particularly those still at second-level schooling, comment on how their parents support music making and home practice in the form of reminders, expectations, encouragement, discussions about music and, in some cases, listening to their practising and playing. Others wistfully comment on the absence of the home routine and structured support for their practice now that they are in college (IntB2). Parents in this research identify the kinds of support needed for each genre. Examples include having extensive access to audio recordings of traditional music, classical musical scores, quiet designated space for practice equipped with a music stand (classical music practice) and, in Aine's case, a holder on the wall for the fiddle so that 'at the drop of a hat, or even without thinking, Áine will just go over, 'pick up' her fiddle and play (IntA4). Further examples of support include facilitating group rehearsals (Conal, Seán, Maebh, Ellen), and in the case of Conal, Nóra and Áine, encouraging and enabling concert attendance in both genres. Funding and resourcing instruments and multiple instrumental tuition is a factor for all of these parents⁷ Such findings reflect Howe and Sloboda's (1991) observations that 'time, transport, money, organisation, and motivation are vital elements which nearly all parents must provide' throughout a child's musical learning (1991: 51). In this researcher's view, this becomes particularly pertinent in the Irish context, given the privately-funded nature of most instrumental learning.

4.9.3.2 Ways of learning

Reflective perhaps of the transmission traditions and practices in these genres is how music making and learning is supported in ways that are conscious and deliberate, but also incidental, and even accidental within these students' families and music making communities. The young musician's narratives reflect these many ways of learning. The students talk about learning incidents, such as being shown how to play something by a parent or older sibling or receiving words of advice regarding some aspect of their music making, as mentioned by Seán, Conal and Maebh. Learning through being immersed in the sounds and ways of traditions is evident in how they informally swap and learn tunes from other family members and in how they pick up tunes by 'osmosis' from hearing others play (IntM2; IntS2, IntC2). For those with parents who are 'active

musicians', familial music making also involves informal playing and performing together (Conal, Áine, Maebh). In several households, music making is part of leisure patterns (sessions, family parties and events), and there is a sense of the younger musicians being socialised in music, in some cases from a very early age, but particularly into the Irish traditional music scene. This emerges in examples such as: Bríd's memory of sitting playing in sessions with her uncles as a small child; Áine and her mother's, descriptions of informal sessions involving extended family and Áine's mother's belief in 'carry[ing] on the tradition, if at all possible' (IntA4). Similarly, Conal, Maebh and their parents all talk about traditional music always being part of the family, and refer to the extended circle of traditional music friends and colleagues dropping by. Maebh's father sums up this immersion in traditional music as a 'way of life' (IntM4).

In contrast, familial involvements in classical music appear to tell a different story. The intergenerational dimension emerges for Conal and Nóra, with classical music listening, learning and to varying degrees music-making part of both homes. For the other five learners, who are first-generation classical musicians, one gets the impression that for the most part, classical music does not permeate the home soundscape beyond the regular practice routine. Differing parental motivations are revealed for familial involvements in classical music, such as: initiated in response to a child's giftedness; to nurture a child's musical interest; to give the child the 'benefits of classical music'; to support their traditional music practice, or simply as part of learning music. While for many of these young musicians, classical music may demand the greater balance of time spent practising, in other respects, it impacts little on the social dimensions of their home life.

4.10 Conclusion

The individual musical worlds of these students reflect diverse music learning and making in a variety of settings: formal, social and familial. The various settings of their music making highlight how the many musicians and others that surround them—friends, peers, mentors, communities, but especially family—involve them in a rich tapestry of practices, traditions, musical sounds, beliefs and understandings. Family plays a prominent role in these young musicians' music making in hereditary,

supportive and participatory capacities and, as noted in previous studies, the home continues to be a major setting for music learning. Each student's narrative reflects different senses of immersion and participation in the classical and Irish traditional music traditions. References to socialising in music emerges in the conversations of all participants: while there is a very strong familial dimension, all emphasise the importance of music-making with friends and like-minded peers, with some particularly emphasising the value of friendships made and kept through music. There is an unmistakable commitment to the activities of music learning at individual and social levels, and both musics fulfil important, yet different purposes in the lives of these young musicians.

¹Summer schools and masterclasses mentioned by the students in this research include: Willie Clancy Summer School, Joe Mooney Summer School; Blas International Summer School of Irish traditional Music and Dance.

²It is also interesting to note the points at which young musicians drop out—what Lamont (2011) refers to as 'risk points'. Based on these data, the Irish Leaving Certificate cycle poses a particular risk point and a time when particular activities are prioritised or dropped. The transition to third-level education can pose similar challenges. Hallam and Creech (2010) also contribute to this topic.

³Dublin based pop-up session for younger players which both Conal and Séan attend.

⁴Local community-organised monthly sessions for young people, attended regularly by Bríd.

⁵Finnegan (1989) found that 'These hereditary patterns were most prominent in classical music, where the established learning system depended on parental support' (p. 309). Familial involvement was 'evidenced in published exam lists, concert programme notes, entrants for arts festival programmes.' (p. 308).

⁶ Cawley (2013) cites MacAoidh, (1994) when discussing prominent families in the uilleann piping tradition, and how 'within the literature and everyday discourse, influential families with a long tradition of participation within Irish traditional music are occasionally referred to as 'dynasties' (p. 144).

⁷Maebh's father explained how she gained a scholarship for her fees based on her exam results (IntM4).

CHAPTER 5

NEGOTIATING BIMUSICALITY

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 presented data through the individual voices of the seven participants in the study. Chapter 5 builds on these individual profiles of each student by identifying a more extensive and detailed picture of learning. What the students identify, in terms of classical music, is a learning sequence that spans different phases and contexts (over a considerable period of time) as the piece progresses from early learning to performance readiness. In interviews, these discussions centred on what happens during a) initial stages of learning, b) later stages of learning, c) lessons and d) practice. These elements are considered in the discussion of learning that follows. Aspects of the learning process considered in the individual cases include developing technique, the aural dimension, practice, interpretation, memorisation, and performance preparation.

When discussing their Irish traditional music learning, a more varied learning landscape emerges as learning takes place in several contexts: as already noted, two of the learners attend individual lessons, two learn in group lessons, and three are self-taught. Also the nature and purpose of what is learned lends itself to very different learning pathways. For example, building repertoire, learning many tunes speedily, developing technique and revisiting previously learned tunes, along with differing approaches to working on the detail of new and older repertoire. Many of these known variants were considered in the interview process and therefore interviews were structured accordingly. Thus these segments of the individual cases are structured around how a tune is a) learned, b) progressed, and c) how repertoire is developed and maintained.

This chapter also demonstrates how the seven bimusical learners negotiate their bimusicality. Being bimusical is generally seen as being positive by the seven students. However, the interface between both traditions is generally perceived as ‘amusingly problematic’ by some classical music teachers, while perspectives from

traditional music teachers are more varied, ranging from teachers who are bimusical themselves to those who are perceived as ‘full trad’. There is no evidence of bimusicality being regarded as problematic.

The students’ negotiation of their bimusicality generally does not result in the emergence of a syncretic genre, a hybrid mix of classical and traditional Irish music. All see the value in keeping both genres separate while acknowledging the positive aspects of the differing approaches within the two traditions.

5.2 Nóra

5.2.1 Classical music learning

Learning a piece of music is a process involving different stages for Nóra. Notes, rhythm, technical aspects, positions and fingering are established, following which attention is given to the more expressive ‘musical’ elements. She explains the overall process as:

Different stages of me learning something. It's like first trying to break it down into the notes, and tempo, timing, everything like... getting the rhythm right and everything, and then trying to put a bit of musicality into it afterwards, I suppose. So it doesn't all come together, you know, for me, anyway. (IntN1).

In Nóra’s opinion, both class lessons and home practice involve a lot of detailed study and systematic sectional ‘phrase by phrase’ work (in comparison with Irish traditional music). Time is spent initially with sight-reading and ‘figuring out notes’. A particular strategy she uses at the early stages is ‘to play as much in the simplest positions that I can first, just to get the actual notes into my head’ (IntN1). She finds that this helps to ‘get a picture of what it actually is supposed to sound like’ (IntN1).

Technique is also emphasised, for example:

Bow arm is a big thing; I remember when we started [lessons] first, I just remember thinking about my bow arm so much, for ages like, [...] And then like today, it was how much the way I was using my fingers; getting my elbow in under the violin [...] so that my fingers can actually reach properly, [...] just so that the fingers fall on the fingerboard properly and these kind of things. (IntN1)

Nóra draws attention to how the learning process involves a ‘combination’ of reading and listening. She views the aural dimension as:



Quite important for me I feel, because if I say I was just learning a piece from sight reading, I don't think I could do it properly. Like, I think eventually I would get it all right. But, it would take a lot longer for me than the kind of combination of having the notes and having someone like Michael play it for me as well, and that helps me a lot (IntN1).

Quite apart from complementing the reading process, Nóra extols the contribution that listening to a more experienced musician makes to one's understanding, because:

It's easy when you're playing yourself to think that you're doing it right. Then when someone else plays it for you properly, you think... how did I think what I was playing was right'. Or even if, say, the rhythm and the notes are actually right—but say even just the tone—you're like 'how did I think my tone was good'... It's great to hear someone who is better than you and just see what more you can do to try to make it better as well. (IntN1).

5.2.1.1 'Getting the music out'

For Nóra, after the initial emphasis on mastering notes and rhythmical elements, the focus shifts to 'the musicality and the emotion, the tension in the actual melody itself' (IntN1). Nóra describes this aspect of learning as 'getting the music out, the *ceol*¹', or 'getting the musicality' of a piece of music (IntN3). Nóra considers that 'musicality' is evident in the way in which players 'express' particular musical elements:

It comes through a lot in dynamics, this is one big thing, how you use the bow as well and the tone you get out of it, I mean, bows speeds, and things like that (IntN1).

Commenting on the challenge of balancing technical and musical issues, Nóra finds that:

It's hard to focus on both at the same time; so, if I'm really trying to get the dynamics, and all the components of the musicality, sometimes I get kind of a bit sloppy with my technique. (IntN1)

Nóra's discussion of 'musicality' in performance intersects with her discourse on interpretation and style. She defines interpretation as 'how a player understands the piece and what it means to whoever is playing it', and makes links to the way people 'express' music differently. She discusses a number of factors that can influence an individual interpretation, including the role of the written score, hearing different interpretations and the importance of stylistic knowledge (IntN1).

In interpreting the written score, Nóra comments on how various editions tend to be pretty similar and observes how 'you don't go around changing it' as 'that's what it is'. (IntN1). She also draws attention to how a piece 'won't really be too different

every time you play it', as 'you're not really ... supposed to take liberty and vary it yourself' (IntN1). Nonetheless, within such parameters there is room for personal interpretation, such as individual performers' interpretations of tempo indications in a score, for 'even though pieces have a given tempo and it's given to you, people play around with that a bit' (IntN1). Nóra also draws attention to individual differences in performers' use of dynamics, in the tone a player achieves, and in the technical aspects of playing. Commenting on her own experience of learning Elgar's *Chanson de Nuit*, Op15 No.1 and different performances of the piece:

[I] listened to a few versions of that Elgar piece on the internet and they were different. They were different again to the version that I got with the book but it's not like the notes were different. It is the way people express them. (IntN1)

Nóra distinguishes between a performer's personal style and the style of compositions, written by particular composers in particular eras. She compares performances of two pieces, Elgar's *Chanson de Nuit*, a Romantic piece, with *Sonatina* No.6 in F by Telemann (a piece which she has previously performed) from the Baroque era, humorously noting that if one were to play these two pieces 'in the same way it would sound very odd' (IntN1). Nóra considers that each work requires 'a different way', and in explaining some of the 'different things you need to do' (IntN1), she contrasts the pieces in terms of her treatment of tempo and dynamics and in relation to the techniques employed, such as the way in which the bow is used:

They were really different from each other, ... the Elgar was kind of slower and a lot more dynamic and you had to use big long notes, you had to put so much into that note, and then ... in the Baroque, there was a lot more notes [...] and then that was a lot to do with the bow and how much bow you were using. (IntN1)

5.2.1.2 Memorisation

Nóra suggests that she doesn't really memorise classical repertoire. She performs with the score, explaining that in performance it provides comfort and security and allows her to check particular details, such as written dynamics. On reflection however, she realises that:

I'm not really reading it from the sheet music—it's more that or just listening. There's that kind of feeling of security when it is in front of you. If you did just blank, it's there in front of you. It's kind of comforting and then, there's the dynamics, not that you'd forget it, but just to be able to play it the best I can, I feel it's nice to have it in front of me; not to be worrying that am I going to forget something' all the time. (IntN1)

When she speculates on how other performers probably memorise, she is reminded that in her own case, music is in fact memorised to some extent:

I suppose, a lot of people would probably learn it by heart for the exam and for performances and things, but I'm not prepared enough when the time comes. It's like I can usually play them from memory but I wouldn't want to push my luck. (IntN1)

In earlier years she memorised classical piano pieces, though her approach then differs in some respects with how she now approaches her violin studies:

I used to play the piano [...] I remember learning it and it was a completely kind of physical memory of where my fingers were supposed to go and I barely would look at the notes at all at a certain point; but I'd only be able to play the piece once I learned like that, because when I was sight-reading it wouldn't sound like anything. But then, with the violin I'm a bit more versatile, I'm more able to do a bit of sight reading and also from memory and it's more balanced. (IntN1)

One particular consequence of this earlier approach was:

When I was doing the piano, there was that physical memory in my fingers. I don't know if that does make sense, but that's what I felt anyway. You know, it's kind of like a pattern. If I made a mistake it would be really hard to get back into it because it would be like a train falling off the tracks, trying to get back on. (IntN1)

Nóra comments on what is involved in remembering or recalling classical repertoire on the violin:

I do (not) know exactly how I remember. From my ear, from knowing the actual tune and then from also having played it so many times, just knowing ... my fingers know where to go. It's a mixture of the two, I suppose. (IntN1)

5.2.2 Nóra's Irish traditional music learning

For Nóra, the typical sequence when learning a tune by ear (whether from her teacher or an audio track) involves repeatedly listening to small sections or motifs, followed by playing each, involving listening and echoing, and then gradually chunking the various parts together. For example she says that:

If I were in a practice where it was the first time I learned a new tune...I'd break it up very kind of similar to the way I'd learn it in the class; just listen to a little bit a few times and just try and play it and piece it all together slowly (IntN2).

In developing a tune that she already knows, she describes how in one instance:

I just played through it a few times. And then, I sat down and I listened to each part and slowed it down, so I played it slowly; tried to listen for things I hadn't heard before in the recording., tried to play it slower [...] so I did that, and then I did things separately and then everything kind of back together [...] Played

through a few other tunes, but I didn't really learn any new tune in that practice. (IntN2)

Nóra talks about how learning a tune involves listening, looking and feeling. Thus when learning a tune by ear from her teacher, she listens but also:

You are looking at his fingers as well. So that can be a bit of a clue as well. Like I mean it's not blind altogether, but ah, it's kind of a mixture of both. (IntN2)

When reflecting on her way of learning, she talks about listening and trying 'to get the way, the feeling of how the bow should move, I think about the rhythm of it' (IntN2). Sometimes in her fiddle lesson Nóra and her teacher learn a tune off an old recordings (see Nóra, *Vignette 2*). She explains that in this way of learning by ear, she is both listening to the recording, and to her teacher Liam as he gets it, and 'then me getting it from [Liam] and the recording at the same time' (IntN3).

5.2.2.1 Learning by ear or by note?

While notation is very effective in preserving, maintaining and providing access to tunes (IntN2), Nóra does not consider it as good a learning tool as learning by ear for Irish traditional music. In her view and from her experience, notation changes the way in which one works with the detail of the tune. She has noted a tendency to 'simplify' the tune (IntN2) when learning is notation based. She describes the difference as follows:

You could say that in the lessons, you learned all the ornamentation, because you were still hearing it but you didn't, because it was so much easier to be lazy and just read the notes and not really put anything extra in. Whereas when you learn by ear, you do pick up all the little things, because that's all you have; the actual tune that you're listening to. So you're not going to simplify it down... you're going to learn what you are hearing. (IntN2)

Recounting her own earlier learning experience:

When I was in Comhaltas, I sometimes learned the tune... the bare bones of the tune from the notes and then tried to add ornamentation. Whereas, when you're doing it by ear, it's all [there] when you're learning it the first time, so it's part of the tune. Like, it's not a separate thing that you are adding really. It's part of the tune itself. (IntN3)

Nóra notes how ornamentation can be written into the score, but argues that what is learned from the score is but part of the picture, as there are aspects of style in Irish traditional music that can be acquired only through listening:

I think you can't learn any kind of style from the notation really... Ornamentation can be written in, but not to the same extent. There is so much more than just, just the bare ornamentation itself. It's really subtle things that you wouldn't even know you are doing, but you're doing them because you heard someone else doing it. So some things you can't write into music... into notation. That's what you're missing out on. (IntN2.5)

Commenting on the difference that listening to a lot of repertoire makes:

There is another level that, by listening to a lot, you... there is just so much to learn from that; you can learn a very nice tune and you can learn a very nice way of playing that tune, but if you're not listening you're missing something, you're missing something in your playing, [...] you're not going to have the same range. (IntN3)

5.2.2.2 Memorising Tunes

Nóra memorises her tunes, but a tune may not always be entirely memorised in a particular lesson or practice session. Factors such as the levels of difficulty, technical challenge, and a tune's length can affect how much is memorised:

I don't always have it completely when I leave the lesson. You know I'd have to listen to it a good bit, depending on just how much just sank in. It's always, I think good for me, not saying that I do it, if I practice the day of the lesson, or at least the next day, that would be good, because you know it's fresh in my mind. Because if I leave it a few days I basically had to learn it again. (IntN1)

Learning by ear means remembering tunes in ways other than through notation, and it sometimes proves challenging. Nóra finds that she remembers tunes from practising them: 'it depends on if it is a tune I have practised a lot, I'd just know it, kind of in my fingers, I'd just know what it goes like' (IntN2). Remembering older repertoire is 'not so easy', it can be 'kind of frustrating when you know there is a lovely tune and you can't really remember how it goes, and you can't remember the name'. In this respect she explains how:

It's funny, the way you need one little trigger and then you would know it all, but then, before that, if you can't just get the first few notes, you've got nothing. (IntN2)

In fact, at this point in time, perhaps in part due to not having a particular system for storing or remembering tunes (in part due to changing technology), Nóra explains that, unfortunately, there are many, many tunes that she has learned and completely forgotten.

5.2.2.3 ‘Many ways of learning’

Nóra explains that one learns lots of tunes in Irish traditional music, and this repertoire is acquired through many avenues: from a teacher, a friend, another musician at a session, or from recordings (IntN2). She views each source of learning as contributing in different ways to developing her musical repertoire. She identifies learning tunes from recordings and learning tunes in class as the two primary avenues through which her repertoire expands:

The plan is to learn more tunes from recordings. Because I think that's how you learn / you should be learning the bulk of your tunes. You should be coming to your lessons to learn, the more technical, the more kind of style things, you know, getting deep into, say, a tune. (IntN2)

However, Nóra also describes how she also learning tunes through ‘playing with people, and in sessions or anything like that’ (IntN2). It influences what repertoire she has and plays because ‘if you’re playing with a certain group of people, well then you play the same kind of tunes and then you pick them up, you know’ (IntN2).

While people you play with can influence what you play, Nóra suggests that her current way of playing is largely influenced by her teacher’s style: ‘I play in the style that Liam plays because he is teaching me’ (IntN2). As she reflects on style in Irish traditional music she talks about it being ‘a mixture’ of regional and personal elements’ (IntN2). She points out that while she is copying other players, it is a way to developing her technique, and it is from such a ‘platform’ that her own style will develop:

Your personality, your own person would come through, so it's not like you just copy someone. But if you can try and learn from people, you really master your craft just.... the personal thing will come through, eventually, once you get good enough. (IntN2)

5.2.3 Learning musics: ‘just different modes’¹

Nóra describes learning and playing both musics on the same instrument as ‘different ways’ or as being in ‘different modes’ (IntN2). She draws attention to particular elements, such as the differences in (and perhaps interconnected) ways of listening, looking and thinking in both genres.

Nóra believes that ‘connecting with the notes’ in each way of learning involves ‘a different kind of thought process’ (IntN3). In Irish traditional music: ‘it’s very much from my head, I am thinking in my head where do my fingers [go] [...] I’m visualising in my mind as to where my fingers go’ (IntN3). Learning classical music means: ‘I’m not thinking that... where do my fingers go? my fingers are going because of what I see in front of me really’ (IntN3). In describing this latter approach, she explains: ‘well the phrasing and stuff is coming from my head, the notes are coming from the page and I’m very much getting my notes from the page’ (IntN3).

Learning involves ‘trying to listen ... a lot’ (IntN3) when learning, but with these genres, she listens in different ways, as trying ‘to break something down is different from just listening’ (IntN3). In her classical practice, she observes: ‘when Michael plays here (points to traditional video excerpt), I’m standing back, because it’s all about arpeggios and trying to get the phrasing’ (IntN3). Listening in respect of her own classical playing involves:

Trying to listen to myself a lot [...] it’s just like, listen, listen to what I’m playing and try to get the musicality into that, the emotion into that and also try to keep the notes in tune. (IntN3)

Whereas when listening to her Irish traditional music teacher, Nóra is:

Kind of trying to figure something out [...] from listening here, you try to get the way, the feeling of how the bow should move, I don’t know, but I think the rhythm of it... do you know what I mean? (IntN3)

In her home practice, she explains that ‘I would listen to myself but at this stage, the lesson where I’m learning the tune, I’m listening more to what I’m hearing, you know’ (IntN3).

There is a visual component to learning in both musics, which in classical music involves ‘very much looking at the notes because I’m probably still not always one hundred percent sure’ (IntN3). In her traditional learning, she is looking at what her teacher is doing, which for Nóra is ‘a different visual altogether’. (IntN3)

Another observation of hers concerns the different focus and level of detail involved in learning each music:

You learn so many more tunes in trad I suppose, it's not as minute the detail you go into over everything. Whereas with classical, the sound of every single note is kind of gone into. (IntN3)

Nóra explains how, typically, a new tune is learned in each Irish traditional music lesson, the focus of which she describes as being on listening to her teacher (or audio track) to 'get' the tune. In contrast, in any one classical lesson, the focus is on a section of the piece in all its detail, on expressing the music, while also being concerned with the notes. Thus in classical learning:

I'm thinking about what Michael said—about what he was saying, like, getting the music out, the ceol getting the musicality of it; also to try to focus on the notes. (IntN3)

5.2.3.1 'You have to change your style a bit'

For Nóra, differences in content and focus between these 'modes' of learning and playing include:

Technique: She regards technique as being important in both genres. She views it as very much to the fore in classical learning, while a more relaxed, less 'rigid' attitude is generally adopted in Irish traditional music which, in Nóra's own playing can mean an element of 'slipping back' (IntN3). She comments on this while reviewing video excerpts of her learning:

Maybe because I'm so focused on my technique when I'm in the classical class; I'm not doing that (in trad), because I am a bit more relaxed, I'm not so worried about the technique in general here (Irish traditional). (IntN2)

Tone: In her approach to sound, she says 'in both classical and trad, you would be kind of focused on the sound of the quality of every single note' (IntN2). However, differences in technique in each genre result in differences in tone:

My tone wouldn't be exactly the same because my technique is slightly different. It's not intentionally different. I'm not as strict on myself. I'm not thinking of holding the violin up now, keep your arm in there, because I would be when I am doing classical. But, I honestly probably don't achieve the exact same kind of sound. But maybe that's not necessary either, as long as the technique is good enough to be able to play. (IntN2)

However, Nóra is aware that sometimes when playing classical and trad, that she does 'bring some of the classical into the trad in the sense that, you know, the tonal thing' (IntN2).

Intonation: Nóra also perceives differences in attitudes towards accurate intonation. She comments on this in regard to her own playing when reviewing video excerpts: ‘my intonation is a bit off there in that (classical excerpt); but I’m probably a bit off here (referring to traditional) too, but you wouldn’t notice it much’ (IntN3).

Bowing: Nóra believes that while each tradition has different bowing techniques, in general, classical technique gives a player greater ‘flexibility to do more things’ (IntN2). However, doing both presents challenges, as well as crossover benefits. In Nóra’s case, she comments on how her Irish traditional music teacher constantly reminds her to ‘use less of the bow’ (unlike what she does in classical music). Nóra explains how at times the long classical bow stroke when playing a reel, for example means that she ‘just can’t play it fast really basically’ (IntN2). In dealing with the challenge of differing bowing techniques, she believes that ‘some things complement each other in the two styles, but then sometimes you have to say, okay, I am playing this now, I have to play differently’ (IntN3?). However, she also observes that bowing is dictated by the style and character of specific pieces or tunes irrespective of which genre is in question:

Because we’ll say that, the Vivaldi piece, you’re not playing that Baroque bowing in another kind of piece, so you have to change your style a bit, within even, each type of music. So, you’re always having to change things. And even in this tune, you know, doing the up bows on the... that’s... you’re not going to be doing that in every trad piece, you know. So within classical and in trad, you are changing your bowing and your styles anyway. (IntN3)

5.2.3.2 ‘It’s kind of natural to play tunes together’

When reviewing lesson excerpts as part of the third interview, Nóra comments in particular on how she and her Irish traditional music teacher play together, describing it thus:

It’s kind of natural to play tunes together. When you’re going through it a few times, like, you get it into your head and you then play along. It’s the natural thing to do, just him sitting there, obviously, he listens to me a few times, to see am I getting it right, but I think the natural thing for trad musicians is to play along. (IntN3)

She contrasts this approach with what typically happens in a classical lesson. While she and her classical teacher play together on occasion, it seems to have a very different meaning, and would not be in the sense of (informally) ‘joining in’, she reflects as follows:

Well I think sometimes Michael would play with me, but much less like; he wouldn't just join in. Or the odd time we would actually play together and it's very much, playing it together. (IntN3)

Nóra further emphasises the embodied connections made in this way of learning and in how one understands one's instrument:

When I'm playing trad, you know what, just from playing any kind of music at all, you know what the notes sound like; so when you hear it, you can guess where to put your fingers from hearing it. So I suppose that's how you're learning it, in that way. (IntN2)

She compares doing lots of listening in trad to the way in which technique contributes to development in classical playing, saying:

Like with classical, say you'd have, if you are very good with your technique, that's giving you a great range of what you are able to do like, you can do a lot. And then with trad and in some ways, it (listening a lot) is maybe like that. (IntN3)

5.3 Áine



5.3.1 Classical music learning

For Áine, the first sense of a new piece comes through listening to audio tracks of possible repertoire with her teacher. Once chosen, work begins with the teacher marking in up-bows and 'a few other directions' in the score. Then Áine sight-reads the written piece, playing alongside her teacher who is:

Playing it quietly with her and when I get stuck on a bit, she'd stop and say 'okay, let's go over that' and then she would put in fingering and stuff. (IntA1)

Áine describes this initial phase of learning with phrases such as 'I'm just reading it through' (IntA1), 'I'm looking at the notes' (IntA1), but quickly finds that:

Within a couple of days I know what it's supposed to sound like so I can look ahead and see what else is coming up and remember 'oh yeah, it is this way'. (IntA1)

Playing with stylistic accuracy underpins initial learning and practice, in Áine's case achieved by:

Well I'm kind of told what style to do. If it's a Baroque piece, you are supposed to play this certain way, this is the way it's supposed to sound [...] if it's a Romantic piece you are supposed to play legato and stuff but, then at the start I do it like that. (IntA2)

5.3.1.1 As learning progresses

Áine attributes much of the progress to ‘practice’, ‘going through it’ (IntA1) and ‘listening to it’ (IntA3). She describes how learning changes:

When you know the notes a bit more, so you start to notice the [...] like cleaning it up, putting loud here, forte and dynamics, phrasing, vibrato, more performance like, getting more into it. (IntA1)

She is conscious of different ways of listening as she learns, such as listening to her teacher’s playing, and listening to ‘what it sounds like when I play it’(IntA1). Also hearing and listening to other performances is encouraged by her teacher to listen to other performers because:

When you’re playing it, you can only hear what you’re playing so it’s good to get new ideas off other people or something, and then you take out the bits that you’re not doing that well on or like, my Vivaldi is really repetitive so I listened to a couple of pieces from classical players. (IntA3)

Áine doesn’t explicitly use the term interpretation, though she articulates an individual interpretative dimension to her own performances and those of others heard on recorded tracks, YouTube, recitals or in exams. She describes it as something added on, saying ‘when I get like into it more, I put my own bit on it’ (IntA2). Listening to other recordings informs this process, as she says:

I compare them to how I’m playing it and then I see they are putting loads more feeling into it. I see how fast they are playing it, so what speed I’m supposed to get up to and the dynamics and stuff. I see if they are playing something and it doesn’t sound like mine, I go through it, to see if I’m doing something wrong. (IntA1)

There is a point in the learning process when Áine becomes ‘focused’ on how she will perform the piece and she is very conscious of not wanting to ‘sound exactly the same’ as others in concerts, as well as wanting ‘to get into it and make it interesting not just for the melody but the dynamics and style’ (IntA1).

In articulating the stylistic challenges of classical performance, she says:

I think it’s harder when you’re listening to someone to define their style if they’re playing classical because they play a certain way. You are told to play harder, softer and... you’re told what speed and how do these notes so it’s harder to put your own style into it. (IntA3)

However while adhering to the way a piece of music is ‘supposed to sound’ and taking other performances into account, ultimately Áine finds that ‘some bits I don’t really

want to play it like that; so I kind of change it... Eleanor likes when I do it so it's not like everybody else' (IntA1).

Áine will perform Vivaldi's *Allegro Op6 I* in the class Christmas concert. She has the piece 'off by heart... from playing it over and over' (IntA1) and at this stage she does not 'really look at the notes' unless Eleanor has marked something in' (IntA1). Nonetheless she will not perform it without the score, as she says:

You don't really play it off by heart or anything, some people do when they are younger, but from playing it so much I know it in my head—if I'm sitting at home I could play the piece without looking at the sheet, from playing it over and over but [...] not all the up bows and fingering and stuff., it's too hard. (IntA1)

5.3.2 Áine's Irish traditional music learning

Áine says that when learning:

I would listen to it on the tape and I would finger along, like I don't play, I just finger along and then I'd try and play the first half a couple of times. Then if I can't get the second bit, I stop playing and listen to the whole thing full through (IntA2).

Áine's first engagement with a tune is 'listening with her fingers' (IntA2), an ear-learning strategy she finds really helpful to 'hear' if she has the tune correctly or not. While most tune parts are learned in a few repetitions, the more difficult sections get need extra attention. To this end she re-listens to harder parts in the context of the whole piece, and repeatedly goes over the section (IntA2). She quickly has a tune memorised, out of 'habit' but also because, as she says 'I listen to it a lot when I'm learning it' (IntA2). Then when the melody is secure, Áine focuses on other elements of the recording, essentially listening out for 'what things I can do... what particular things I like' (IntA2).

5.3.2.1 How you make the tune your own

How you make 'the tune your own', in Áine's view is what distinguishes one player from another, as is evident to her when listening to competitors at a *fleadh* or a competition:

You could play a tune the same as anybody else... but what would make it different is your ornamentation because it's showing how you make the tune your own, so it's really what do you feel that you like in the tune. I like simple stuff, whereas somebody else might like to put loads of stuff into it. (IntA2)

Áine believes that ornamentation ‘shows your creativity, but she also links ornamentation and what one does with a tune to technique. ‘If you have brilliant technique, I think you can do anything’ (IntA2). In distinguishing between ‘fingering’ and ‘bowing technique’, she regards bowing as having a special role and focus in Irish traditional music, as she says ‘I think bowing, because rhythm is really, really important in traditional: bouncy for hornpipes, fast and lively for reels. So rhythm is important and off beats’ (IntA2).

Good fingering technique, on the other hand, means that:

You can do any ornamentation you want and you can do impressive things, like Frank has really intricate ornamentation and that's because he has such a brilliant technique. (IntA2)

Áine comments on her own preference for adding melodic ornamentation and on the advantages of her classical training which enable her to ‘have good fingering technique: ‘I have a strong fourth finger, so I can do difficult things, difficult ornamentation’. However she does at times find bowing more challenging such as when bowing triplets (IntA2).

But it isn't just what one does but how one approaches a tune that matters. For example, in Áine's opinion, while her current teacher views it as important for her to play well technically, freedom and improvisatory approaches are also emphasised. As Áine says:

I think he likes me to ‘just have fun with it. Don't get too bogged down in the technical bits of it. Technique is important but once you have it, there is no point in obsessing over it and trying to get it perfect. Just play it as you want, play it carefree. That's what I like about him, he puts in random things and they sound really good, not because he planned them, but just because he [*clicks her fingers*] he spurred ... like on the spur of the moment. (IntA2)

Thus in making the tune her own, Áine consciously adopts a somewhat improvisatory approach:

When I'm playing a tune I don't have a set way. Obviously I play the first part first twice and second part twice, but I always play a different thing there and I don't even really think about it. [...] but I don't plan what I am going to do unless it was a Fleadh and I've practiced it that way, just to remember, but when I'm playing a tune I play it differently every time. (IntA2)

Áine emphasises listening as ‘really important to get the feel of the tune’ in her approach to playing. She quotes and agrees with her mum who always says ‘that it’s eighty percent listening and twenty percent doing’ (IntA4):

Because you can look at a tune and you can read it, but if you can’t listen you will never get the feel of what is supposed to sound like [...] Whereas if you hear the tune, you can hear when they’re going loud there and they’re going quiet there, to give feeling in a tune. (IntA2)

She listens extensively to Irish traditional music and has developed preferences for particular ways of playing, and dislikes also:

I don’t like when people play a tune too fast, or when people put in too many variations and it sounds mushed up’ [...] I don’t like extremes like really, really simple... really, really hard’. (IntA2)

She is particularly drawn to the uniqueness of individual playing styles of notable players, such as Tommy Peoples, Michael Harrison and Tara Breen. She particularly mentions the tonal and melodic focus of fiddle player Matt Cranitch as similar to her own approach. ‘He doesn’t do crazy ornamentation’, which she describes as ‘mainstream’ with its focus on tone and melody, and her own simple but varied ornamental style (IntA2).

5.3.2.2 Learning: changing approaches

The ways and opportunities through which Áine learns Irish traditional music have changed over the years. Learning has always been a predominantly aural process, though supported to some degree with notation in early year’s lessons or the occasion workshop. She recollects using ABC² notation initially, but once she understood the stave from her classical learning, she used both. She remembers the frustration of trying to learn through notation, of seeing the notes but not being able to ‘remember the rhythm’ (IntA2). Though she learned aurally in these lessons, notated copies of a tune were given as a memory aid for home practice. For Áine this meant that:

I used to go home and I couldn’t remember the tune so I was just trying to play it with the notes and it didn’t sound right. So I always prefer not having the notes and listening to it and figuring it out myself. (IntA2)

This process changed as the years progressed, as they were encouraged to bring an audio recorder to record the new tune at the end of class. Having both the audio recording and the notation suited Áine, as she could now ‘listen to it as well’ when

practising her new tune, (IntA2). How Áine learns has changed further over time. Now she learns traditional music in many other ways in addition to the lesson, such as, learning tunes from CDs, swapping tunes with her sisters at home, learning tunes heard at concerts or workshops, while also learning additional repertoire for the *grupaí ceoil*, *céilí* bands or to play with friends at sessions. For Áine, her established way of learning is ‘by ear because we’re older now and we’ve played longer’ (Int A3). In Áine’s case this process has become further nuanced. She describes this in the context of how she learns in her group fiddle lesson:

I’m just listening to him. You don’t have to look at his fingers. Whenever I hear a tune on a CD or something I can tell what the fingering is because I’ve played so long. When he’s playing I find it easier to focus on what I’m hearing and put it together myself, than look at his fingers. (IntA3)

When asked whether she watches her teacher’s playing when learning, she explains that she does not, adding that ‘I think that’s kind of cheating’ (IntA3). At this point when learning a tune Áine says that ‘I just listen and my fingers come into play’ (IntA3). What does she imagine as she plays? ‘I just imagine me playing it’ (IntA3).

5.3.3 Learning musics: ‘I think I’m mainly listening’

When reflecting on her learning experiences Áine uses words like *structure* and *relaxed* (or indeed *loose*) to differentiate what for her are two approaches. These words emerge in relation to several musical elements: technique, interpretation, practice and general approaches to learning and playing. They are words she uses to describe aspects of her own approach to learning and playing in both musics.

She describes very different approaches to bowing technique in both genres, for example:

In trad your bow hold is supposed to be loose and carefree ... But [classical bow hold] is very structured and there’s a certain way to have your thumb around it and there is a certain job for each finger in classical’ yeah, for playing down at the heel of the bow, you are supposed to lean on your thumb and index finger and your baby finger should balance it out. There is none of that in trad. (IntA1)

How and where the bow is placed on the strings is also different. When she is playing Irish traditional music, she says that:

I don’t really pay attention to where my bow is or anything, like where it’s on the strings. Eleanor says ‘play nearer the bridge’ and stuff ... and so there is a lot more to think about, I think, when you are playing classical. (IntA3)

Changing between styles with such different technical approaches creates stresses, particularly for her classical practice. It also creates a lot of extra work particularly at the beginning of a new term, when after a summer of festivals, sessions and traditional playing she has to revert to appropriate classical technique. At grade 7 level, this means a lot of studies and technical work, as she says ‘now I have three [books] and I’m doing a lot of studies trying to get the technique back up’ (IntA1). She feels that other classical players of her age may have better technique, such as ‘positions, like where your fingers are at, holding the [bow], your posture’ (IntA1) which she attributes, in her case, perhaps to the way she concentrates ‘on more looking at my fingering because I want it to sound right in my head rather than the bow’ (IntA1).

However changing between genres has benefits also. Referring to one of the comments her classical violin teacher makes about her traditional music making, and how she always says that:

I already have [the] musical bit gotten—because I have played music for so long
I have the trad and that I can listen out and have the ear for music. (IntA1)

Changing between the genres also benefits her Irish traditional playing. She appreciates knowing how, or having the technical structure to do difficult ornamentation or knowing, for example, where to place her fourth finger as opposed to having to ‘guess and stretch up’ as she sees other doing. She also finds that her understanding of theory and musical form, from her classical studies is similarly of benefit:

Yeah I think so because, for the variations that he was doing today, he was (*she humms the variation ‘du.du.du.du’*) ... doing the arpeggio bit—I feel like I know what they are already. (IntA1)

As a result:

When I’m putting in variations and stuff, I am more melodic, because I know scales and I know arpeggios and dominant sevenths, I know all the chords because of classical. (IntA1)

Another benefit of crossing genres is her traditional fiddle tone. She says ‘I think I have good tone, I think that’s from classical’ (IntA2). Curiously, and perhaps there is an element of contradiction when she describes how her Irish traditional playing helped her when she started classical lessons:

In the early grades, obviously in grade one and two, it's just first position, it's very simple and it's mostly developing tone and stuff so that you are not scratchy and that. When I started, I had already played trad first so I was fine. (IntA)

But apart from tone, starting with Irish traditional fiddle and later starting classical lessons presents a number of difficulties for all concerned:

Yeah, I'm fine with tone because I had played before, so that wasn't too bad, but the teacher was fixing everything that I didn't have 'cause they don't teach you in trad properly to hold your fiddle. You kind of look at other people and see what you're doing wrong. (IntA3)

5.3.3.1 Interpretative approaches

Áine contrasts the differing interpretative ways of classical and Irish traditional music saying how in classical:

It's like a certain way you're playing and you're told how long it's for, and you're told all this whereas, trad you can kind of let loose and can do your own thing. You can lean on long notes and put an emphasis on off beats and stuff, whereas in classical you are told what to do and how to play it. (IntA3)

She believes that there is considerable freedom in interpreting an Irish traditional melody on the fiddle. She explains how:

Trad is different because you can play it whatever way you want. I try to play a tune different every time because then it gets boring if I'm playing the same variations all the time. (IntA2)

When she contrasts this with classical interpretative approaches, she believes that:

In classical you were supposed to play it the same—the same bowing and the same ornamentation—but trad you don't have t[o], you don't need the sheet because you don't have to see if you're doing an up bow there, be loud here, you can play it whatever way you want (IntA2).

In matters of interpretation there are differences in Áine's approach in both genres.

In Irish traditional music she feels that her approach might differ in that:

Other people might just be putting in traditional things, they wouldn't be putting in melodic things, they'd be putting in rolls and stuff that they have learned in traditional. Whereas I would be putting in rolls and traditional stuff as well as classical things. (IntA2)

She feels that in classical playing, her slightly different approach 'may show' when compared to others who only play classical, as she may seem 'a bit more relaxed'. This is perhaps also reflected in her approach to the score, which in contrast to others who:

Started with classical learning, then they're probably more structured and stick to the notes, whereas I'd put in my own slurs or something like that. (IntA3)

5.3.3.2 Approaches to learning and playing

When Áine makes a number of observations regarding aural and notation music learning, she comments on the differing initial focus on notation and listening in the two genres, such as how classical learning involves:

Focusing on looking because you have the notes in front of you so you can note in big arrows like 'play this up' or ... So it's all seeing where to go next and reading ahead so that you're ready for it, but for trad it is kind of just more ear'. (IntA3)

Áine emphasises the importance of listening as a key element in her learning approach in both genres. For example, she describes how her aural skills support reading in classical learning, and how:

Within a couple of days I know what it's supposed to sound like so I can look ahead and see what else is coming up and remember 'oh yeah, this is this way'. (IntA3)

Indeed Áine's classical learning emphasis is on 'sound' and 'listening', as she explains:

I'm mainly listening, like when Eleanor, plays something and I'm playing it wrong, I don't really look at her fingers as much. I listen and I play it and I'm 'ok'. I listen more than others I'd say. (IntA1)

On the other hand, she attributes her skill in reading staff notation to her classical learning, but feels that this skill is 'useful', it is 'easy to have' and she says that while 'it's not a really big advantage, I'm still the same average musician as [her peers] ... but I think it's an advantage, it's handy' (IntA2). She describes the skill of being able to 'translate' staff into ABCs as particularly useful at workshops where only staff notation might be available. She has found herself on occasion writing out the ABCs for others who don't read staff notation. As she says 'if they get notes then I have to write it down with them—the ABCs. It's just easy to have' (IntA2). Staff notation would seem to be something that she doesn't particularly associate with Irish traditional music learning. Indeed, she describes one of her peers who 'doesn't know the stave or anything' as 'full trad' (IntA2). She suggests that several of her peers have probably only ever used ABC notation in their Irish traditional music learning.

Reflecting on how one genre impacts on the other in her playing, she returns to the idea of how people who initially learn classical have a more structured approach. This she contrasts with her own playing: ‘I’m not very structured, I don’t go according to the disciplined [way] or anything like that’ (IntA3). She believes that other classical musicians ‘are a lot more technical in it. They are a lot more ‘get it perfect’ whereas I’m ‘play it as best I can or ... free’ (IntA2). She attributes her approach to the effect of also being an Irish traditional musician, but for Áine there is perhaps an element of balancing different factors for:

I think if I didn’t play trad at all, I’d be much more structured and probably better at technique, but I don’t think I’d be as musical. I don’t think I’d be as creative in music, or anything like that. Yeah... I don’t know. (IntA3)

5.3.3.3 Innovations: ‘The best of both worlds’

Áine has recently started to teach younger fiddle players in her local Comhaltas branch. Áine explains that her background in both musics and the particular challenges of playing both musics on the same instrument influences how she teaches. She has developed her own innovative approach to help younger players based on her learning experiences. She notes how:

When they were starting off, it’s trad, so normally a trad teacher would just teach them the notes, or give them a picture with the notes on it but I’m doing scales with them which is classical, so I’m bringing in classical and traditional. So that’s odd, most people wouldn’t really do that so ... but I think that it’s helping them because I know that I got better because I had scales and because I had classical training to do. So that has influenced all, whether I’m playing classical or trad, that I’ve done both of them. So I want them to get the best of both worlds. (IntA3)

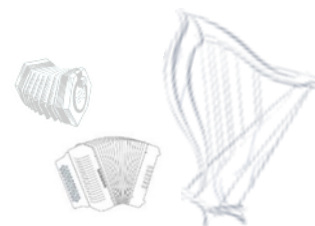
5.4 Maebh

5.4.1 Classical music learning

Reflecting on how she approaches a new piece, Maebh says:

I probably [...] look through it first and play it in my head if I haven’t heard the piece, and try and get some sense of how it’s supposed to be (IntM1).

When describing learning in those initial days and weeks of working on a new piece, Maebh describes how she sight-reads as much of the piece as possible in the lesson while noting her teacher’s critique of such issues as, rhythmical inaccuracies, articulation, difficult passages or whatever requires her focused attention. She subsequently addresses these issues during her daily practice sessions:



I would have the week to work on them myself—probably read ahead a bit more, and then do that until we have got to the end or when the notes were secure. (IntM1)

Typically there is a lot of sectional work at the initial stages of learning a new piece. In this respect Maebh works on the piece in its compositional sections. She gives the example of *Natra's Prayer* for harp, which she describes as being 'very clearly divided, each bit is different, different ideas in each bit, so I would take it section by section' (IntM1). Gradually, as the various elements of notes, rhythm, melody, syncopation, and pedalling are secured, then the linking of the sections begins. Maebh explains this as:

Kind of, putting it together, then making sure that all aspects were okay. If there was any little bit that my technique wasn't very good, I find that I would work on that, take it out and do slow practice making an exercise of it. (IntM1)

Throughout the earlier stages of learning a piece, the focus is on learning accurately from the score, or in Maebh's words 'to know from the score' (IntM1) and attending to technique and such foundation elements as posture, hand and finger position, as well as articulation. Maebh consciously develops the technical aspects of her playing during lessons and practice warm-ups, which at present include Salzedo's 'Conditioning Exercises' and scales. She describes how scales are used as a vehicle for much technical work:

Evenness, putting accents on different fingers each time and then playing it evenly, and practising doing the rolled chords ... practice playing it almost as an arpeggio and building up the speed. And then dynamics—to start playing *pp* and build up gradually maintaining a good tone. (IntM1)

The technicalities of pedalling are also practised:

I would take [that particular pedal section] out separately and work on that a lot... maybe even ... just practise playing in your head... just doing the pedals just to get it totally secure. (IntM1)

5.4.1.1 Progressing learning: phrasing, interpretative elements

For Maebh, learning has a particular sequence:

At first there would be notes and rhythm and after that technique ... like pay just more attention to that. Like you should all along, but you know, that's the way it is, and [then] obviously bringing it towards performance after that. (IntM1)

Gradually as the notes are learned and she feel that she 'understands the score well' (IntM1), other elements assume primary focus, such as 'thinking about giving it more

shape, corrections, and paying ‘attention to the composer’s performance directions’ (IntM1). At this point, Maebh also considers the individual aspects, such as ‘how much you can add in your own, interpretation’ (IntM1). She believes that the performer has a certain amount of freedom and choice regarding how s/he ‘wants’ to play a piece, for example, how a performer reflects:

Dynamics [...] even maybe tone, things that [...] crescendo; where you want the high point of the piece to be; and that will be written in obviously, but how extreme you want the contrasts to be and things like that. (IntM1)

Maebh emphasises the element of choice, pointing out that ‘little changes can make a huge difference to how the piece comes across’. (IntM1)

5.4.1.2 Internalising and memorising music

In classical music learning, Maebh finds that, over time one unintentionally memorises ‘just from practising’ because:

You’re learning a piece and it gets in your head... you will be singing it in your head sometimes, or sometimes playing it in your head when you’re not practising. (IntM1)

She contrasts this with how one deliberately sits down, learns and memorises a tune in Irish traditional music (Int.M1). Nonetheless, she prioritises the deliberate memorisation of particular sections of a classical work, sections she describes as ‘the main bits, or the difficult bits, and then maybe transitions’ (IntM1). Through this process, by the time she reaches performance readiness she will have a very good ‘grasp’ of the piece though ‘may not have it totally memorised’ (IntM1). She believes that ‘it’s easier to focus more on the performance’ when it is memorised, particularly from the point of view of confidence and focus:

I think if you are bringing a piece to performance standard you do almost have it memorised because you have to be totally confident in what’s coming next, so you can give more attention to the actual performance, and not be focusing on notes the whole time. (IntM1)

Thus as learning progresses toward performance, the score takes on a very different role, with the notes serving:

More as a guide as opposed to actually like ... ‘What’s next’—I would always know what’s coming next but ... I usually would have them memorised and just kind of glance at the music. (IntM1)

5.4.1.3 The learning dynamic: visual, aural, kinaesthetic components

Reflecting further on how she learns, Maebh concludes that while she learns through reading and ‘knowing from’ the score in classical music, there are also ever-present aural and kinaesthetic components in the learning dynamic. For example, how she ‘play[s] it in her head’ when initially reading:

Yeah I suppose the sound would be in my head, or the way I think or I'd imagined it should sound, and I see if that corresponds with what I'm actually playing (IntM1).

She also refers to the influence of how her teacher will ‘play through the piece once’ (IntM1) for her in that first lesson. On other occasions she gets a sense of the piece by listening to recordings and following the score, on her iPod or YouTube:

If I start a new piece I would listen to it on my iPod with the score, like on the bus. And then once I've found out the score I would listen to the piece just walking along or whatever. (IntM1)

When learning Natra’s *Prayer* for harp, she describes how she accessed a recording of the piece on YouTube after working on the piece for a day or two, partly to get an overall sense of the piece and to ensure that she was ‘going in the right direction’ (IntM1).

5.4.2 Maebh’s Irish traditional music learning

Maebh learns tunes for the most part aurally, by ear from audio tracks, or from hearing others play tunes in various contexts. She also, particularly in the last two or three years, learns tunes from manuscript collections. She attributes this to the fact that there are Irish traditional music collections at home. Several of her peers—other teenage musicians with whom she regularly plays—also use and discuss collections. Her descriptions of learning suggest that there are different processes at play depending on whether the tune source is aural or written. Further variances in learning emerge on closer examination of her differing uses of notation, for example, whether she is learning a tune from a collection in a home context, or if she is learning a tune from notation for the Irish harp in an examination / assessment type context.

Typically, when learning a tune by ear Maebh initially listens to it a few times to get ‘a general sense of like, where the different bits fall in the tune ... [and to] see how much of it I can do without going through it phrase-by-phrase’ (IntM2). She then tries

it and plays it in a process she describes as from ‘mind to hand’ (IntM2). Very often the tunes that she decides to learn aurally are ones that she has already heard, such as ‘*Quilty Shore*’, (see Maebh, *Vignette 2*), which she had at the top of her ‘to learn’ iPhone playlist (IntM2). Often, learning a tune from an audio track involves concertina playing along with the CD, if the tune is in the same key. As the audio recording of *Quilty Shore* was a semitone higher in pitch than her concertina, she could not use her usual play-along strategy. While ‘an inconvenience’ (as it would sound ‘awful’) (IntM3), she fingered along on her instrument instead, while listening ‘to check certain bits’, and for other sections she simply tracked the notes by hearing them (IntM2, IntM3).

Not all tunes are deliberately learned from audio tracks. Growing up in a house of musicians means that there are times when Maebh learns ‘stuff just by hearing it and then play it without knowing what it is’ (IntM3). Maebh explains that she ‘wouldn’t be consciously memorising’ a tune, rather it is ‘just from hearing Dad play or whoever... like, whenever anyone learns a tune in this house, basically everyone learns it because you hear them practising’ (IntM3).

Irish traditional tunes are intentionally memorised, Maebh explains: ‘when I’m learning it, that’s what I am doing ... memorising it’. Maebh’s way of remembering or recalling the tune at a later stage is either to write down the first few notes to remind her, or simply to ‘have it in [her] head’ (IntM2). In the case of a more challenging tune, she sometimes writes the whole thing down if she thinks that she won’t remember it (IntM2). Typically she uses ABC notation as she does not really write out tunes in staff notation for Irish traditional music, unless it was ‘for the harp ... unless I was doing an arrangement for it for something’ (IntM2).

5.4.2.1 Learning tunes from notation

Maebh also occasionally learns tunes from staff notation, such as when she recently sourced a number of tunes in *The Definitive Collection of the music of Parry O’Brien 1922-1991* or when learning Irish harp music at the School of Music. Maebh views this way of learning a tune as more akin to her classical music learning, saying that:

It'd probably be the same, because like, I'd play through it... at sight, just reading it, from the collection. But I wouldn't necessarily, have it memorised maybe when I finished playing it. (IntM2)

However, unlike in classical music learning, Maebh makes 'a conscious effort to close the book and just play [the tune] then, without the music'. As Irish traditional music is never performed with the score, Maebh describes how she 'intentionally memorise[s] it, whereas, she always has the music in front of her when performing classical music (IntM2).

5.4.2.2 Versions of tunes: whose 'text'?

As an advanced player, learning concertina tunes does not involve trying to copy the tune source exactly (except in the case of notated harp music discussed in the next section), rather Maebh focuses on the tune or melody, of the audio track, because she is trying:

To learn just the tune itself, instead of learning the way he plays it... not necessarily his variations or his chords... just to get the tune solid in my head first. (IntM3)

As she learns this version of the tune she will naturally incorporate ornamentation that she would 'automatically include [her] self' (IntM2), as she explains: 'I wouldn't really think about it, I just put [ornamentation in] wherever it felt like (*unfinished*) it's just going on an instinctive thing really' (IntM2).

The tune is then revisited in many different ways both formally when practising and informally, as it becomes part of her tune repertoire. She explains:

Well, I'd probably like practise it the next day or whatever. I'd go over it. And then if I have the first few notes written down when I am putting sets (*of tunes*) together and I am practising, I'd probably add it in. (IntM2)

Adding to and developing the tune is something that happens over time in an 'organic way'. Maebh explains that as she gets to know a tune better and gets more comfortable with it, she 'would add in variations; more chords ... stuff like that' (IntM2). Listening again to what the performer does with the tune on her iPod is useful at this stage of developing the tune, but as she explains: 'without trying to copy it exactly' (IntM2).

5.4.2.3 Maintaining and progressing repertoire

Maebh regards tune practice as necessary to ensure ‘that you [...] keep them up, that you still know them [and] that you still have them in your memory’ (IntM2). She describes differently focused practice sessions distinguishing between what she terms ‘practice sessions’ and ‘learning sessions’ (IntM2). The focus in practice sessions is on re-learning or re-visiting tunes already learned. This emphasis on maintaining repertoire can be seen in the variety of activities that are part of Maebh’s learning / practice sessions, which include: 1) *Regular playing of repertoire*: there is a sense of a repertoire cycle, new tunes learned, others maintained through playing and yet others coming back into the current repertoire and being renewed:

Ones that I’d play regularly and ones that I’ve learned recently I would have them off the top of my head. But ones that I haven’t played in a while, I might have to go see... [to] remember how it starts or how the second part goes or something like that... yeah’. (IntM2)

2) *Starting practice sets of tunes to warm-up*: ‘I would always [play sets of tunes] when I’m practising, just play a few tunes at the start’ (IntM2). 3) *Developing and creating sets of tunes incorporating new and old tunes*: ‘usually when I’m practising, if I wasn’t learning a tune ... I’d just play through loads of different ones and maybe put sets together’ (IntM2) and 4) advancing individual tunes.

In a typical practice sessions, Maebh develops her music in several different ways. She usually starts her practice with warming-up with a set of tunes and then switches focus to a particular tune, ‘difficult ones that might improve aspects of your technique or that were hard fingering-wise’ (IntM2). Another aspect of playing that receives attention is style and ornamentation, for example, ‘improving making sure your ornamentation and all is solid’ (IntM2). Playing through repertoire is also part of these sessions. Many of these activities are part of Maebh’s ‘learning sessions’ but in addition, it will focus on learning new music.

5.4.2.4 Irish harp and notated arrangements

Learning Irish harp in the formal School of Music context emerges as a third way of learning with differences characterised by a notation based approach to learning Irish (lever) harp. Maebh regards this way of learning as ‘very similar’ to the concert harp, in that one is ‘playing exam pieces’ from notation and there is ‘a strong focus on

technique'. Maebh points out that 'playing a set piece' means learning a notated arrangement of a tune 'the way it's written' (IntM1). Maebh often knows the tunes, thus learning notated versions of the tunes in this context involves:

Making sure you're playing the same way as it was written [...] like just play the ornamentation that's written [and] resist [the] temptation to play it the way you might play it yourself and then just to learn the arrangement of it. (IntM1)

This contrasts with her previous experience of learning 'trad harp' (IntN2) and its associated playing contexts, such as sessions involving improvised accompaniment and tune playing with more formal approaches to learning Irish harp exam repertoire. It also contrasts with the concert harp, in that, on occasion, Maebh notes how you can 'add your own little touches', a point perhaps illustrating a differing role of improvisation in repertoire / performance in this particular exam system. She gives an example of a reel that she arranged for a previous assessment in the 'own choice' section, explaining how:

I did have an arrangement in my head, I wouldn't be totally fixed on it and play it exactly the same every way, so I said it to Siobhán, 'do I have to write it down?' She just said write at the bottom *ad lib* or at the performer's discretion, so that's what I did. (IntM1)

5.4.3 Learning musics: many ways of learning

Maebh's bimusical learning and making of recent years has brought many changes to her music practice. She describes changed attitudes and practise habits, new ways of working with notation, different approaches to interpretation and expanded musical knowledge and skills. While she points to the different ways of learning in both genres, and while much continues separately, several confluences emerge across what might be described as 'three musical worlds': classical concert harp; formal Irish harp studies; traditional harp and concertina learning and playing.

Maebh found that the different requirements of concert and formal Irish harp studies (which Maebh refers to as lever harp) have changed both her attitudes to the harp and her practising habits in general learning now involves a more 'goals' focused approach in order to play a piece 'really well to the best of your ability [...] for your performance or competition or exam' (IntM1). As a result Maebh now embraces a very focused, structured and consistent approach rather than the previous 'last minute' practice strategies (IntM1). Reaching a good standard of performance and mastery of her

instruments is now a goal in both concert and formal Irish harp studies. In contrast, there is greater flexibility with concertina practice, which takes place in her ‘free-time’ and in which there continues to be a ‘significant element of free choice in what is practised’ (IntM1).

When she commenced formal studies Maebh found that her original traditional learning presented challenges in that ‘I could read music but I wouldn't be a good sight reader’ (IntM1) therefore initially this involved additional work in her classical studies. As a harpist, Maebh also felt challenged technically as her technique from playing just traditional harp wasn't up to scratch and wasn't good ... so it didn't affect me positively at the start’ (IntM1). This perceived lack of technique was the initial reason for pursuing formal harp studies. At this stage, having mastered these initial challenges, Maebh views both musics as complementary processes.

Adapting to the ways of formal Irish harp learning has meant new ways of working with notation in Irish music and different approaches to interpretation, compared with her previous experience of informal community-based learning. One example, is that of learning notated arrangements of tunes. This involves learning exactly what is written (just as in her concert harp studies). In this approach, while the elements of the tune have not changed, she finds that:

You'd still be doing cuts and rolls but you'd obviously have to do them where that particular performer [creator of the arrangement] has written them. You have to be really careful that you're playing as written. (IntM1)

When asked how she finds working in this way, in comparison with learning a tune (either aurally or through notation) that she develops over time in her own style, she replies ‘its okay, you just get used to it’ (IntM3). Unlike the focus on ‘individual style’ in more traditional settings, in this examination orientated context (for both concert and lever harp), Maebh believes that ‘they are not looking for style’ rather, technique is very important and ‘they are evaluating your ability in an exam’ (IntM1). Maebh finds that there are interpretative differences at performance level also. She describes style-switching in the different performance settings, in that arrangements are changed or modified, depending on the context. For example, in a formal assessment setting, while harmonic content would be the same, she would include ‘more features’, and ‘showier’ elements (IntM1). She is of the view that:

The examiner would be classical influenced, so I would play it very differently than how I would play it for a Fleadh. I would use a bit more dynamics and harmonics to keep it interesting, to keep the interest of the examiner. (IntM1)

She contrasts the two styles of playing as:

In an exam you are playing a set piece. [...] You're playing [the tune] the way it's written and you can obviously add your own little touches. Whereas, if you're playing for a Fleadh, it's something you have chosen yourself, something you have arranged yourself, so there is a lot more of your personal style in the piece, in the tune if you're playing just for a purely traditional audience. (IntM1)

While more recent classical music studies have impacted on learning in terms of interpretative approaches and practice habits, one aspect that remains constant is the centrality of listening, analysing and thinking in sound in both musics. Maebh values the role that listening and analysing recordings play in interpretation and performance preparation:

This applies to both genres, especially if I'm doing something for a competition or for a recital, I'd listen to different versions of it. Definitely in trad but especially for say a slow air. I'd listen to a few different recordings of a song. Different interpretations and different ways of doing it. (IntM2)

Listening, inner-hearing and maintaining an overview of a piece also seem to be a constant element in her learning approach in both traditions. Maebh typically starts formally learning a traditional tune by listening to the whole piece. Is it notable how she also adopts a similar approach in her classical studies, through initial sight-reading or inner hearing the score before working in detail on sections, or score reading with recordings, (such as in the *Natra's Prayer* mentioned earlier). Sectional work on a piece is framed by this overview approach.

Maebh also comments on several other advantages, in the broader musical sense, of knowing both musics. For example, her knowledge of traditional tunes is useful when formally arranging tunes for examinations, as Maebh explains:

Now that I'm doing a lot more of arranging it's an advantage to me now, it's just something different, like when you are going into your assessment you are not playing the same pieces that everyone else, you are playing something you have done yourself, so it is a way more impressive. (IntM1)

Thus in a sense, her musical 'worlds' inform each other in different ways:

For classical, you can bring the trad – like there's a depth of tunes you have, that you know so much music already, and it's there for you and you can arrange it and then classical obviously informs the trad in that like technique wise, new ideas

like for pushing the boundaries of the harp more. I suppose, and things like that. (IntM2)

Maebh's teacher captures particular elements of these musical confluences:

[Maebh] comes with everything that that you'd expect a trad musician to have, you know, good ornamentation, you know quick, easy to learn by ear, quick to memorise. [...] I think her quickness to memorise and her eagerness to memorise is very striking. Particularly with the contemporary piece, because I didn't think that she would actually grasp that so quickly. I think it's easier for her to memorise, coming from the trad background. (IntM5)



5.5 Conal

5.5.1 Classical music learning

Cello repertoire is chosen jointly by Conal and his teacher, balancing Conal's preference for repertoire that he has 'heard' and 'loves', with repertoire that his teacher chooses to best advance his current instrumental and musical needs. He explains this when talking about Schumann's *Adagio & Allegro*, Op.70:

I heard it performed a few times. I really liked it, so I chose that one. And then the Beethoven *Sonata* that I played today, the G minor one—Lorraine chose that one, because, it's got certain technical aspects also. (IntC1)

The initial sight-reading and note learning stage is largely self-directed and undertaken by Conal at home before bringing a piece to his cello lesson. He draws on a combination of aural, analytical and reading processes when learning a new piece of music, sequenced as follows:

Well the sheet music is usually there first, and then I listen to recordings while reading that and then the slow practice to make sure all the notes are there and then practice on shifts and everything. (IntC1)

Typically he is aurally familiar with new repertoire due to his immersion in the classical music tradition through regular concert attendance, and his extensive use of Naxos and other on-line libraries, and YouTube. Conal differentiates between 'general' listening and the more focused 'critical' listening he engages in when learning a particular piece (IntC1). For example, when learning Schumann's *Adagio and Allegro* he selected and listened 'critically' to seven different recordings of the piece, by well-known cellists, reading and annotating the 'piano score', so that he could see 'where it all works'. In his own words:

I'll have it (the piano score) out while I'm listening to it [...] you'll see where I've marked in where they [...] I've used seven different colours [...] each colour represents whichever cellist I can find, [I] mark in where they're slower, where they're faster. (IntC1)

When Conal considers the balance of the aural, notational and technical elements in classical music learning, he explains that 'you actually just have to start, going through the music and figuring it out on the cello' and then 'listening to recordings' and 'practising' (IntC1). Accurate careful score reading is essential, but at the same time one is also working on technique. Both involve a lot of detailed work and slow practice 'to make sure all the notes are there' (IntC1) and to facilitate 'practice on shifts and 'fingering', 'string crossings' (IntC1). Conal believes that the score plays a particular role in initial learning by providing a visual structure through which technical, musical and interpretative elements can be developed. He emphasises the importance of this because:

[If] you can't see it on paper you can't actually put a technical structure to your fingering or bowing. To be able to understand the phrasing you have to be able to see what the composer had written. What's written, how it's written. (IntC1)

In chamber music, the score is particularly enlightening and enabling, and as a chamber musician Conal emphasises the importance of studying the piano score to 'understand how everything fits in' (IntC1). However at this stage, the role of the teacher cannot be underestimated either, because even though Conal completes much of this initial work in his own independent practice sessions, he also consults with his teacher on such matters as:

If I have trouble with particular fingering I might ask her at the end of the lesson and she'll sit down and she give me a range of fingerings and also work that she has used, because everyone's hand is different, so what suits them. (IntC1)

Thus Conal's regular two hour home-practice sessions can involve various elements: technical work, initial note-reading and learning of new repertoire, more advanced preparation of cello repertoire or other additional preparation for chamber and orchestral rehearsals.

5.5.1.1 Progressing learning

Once initial note learning is mastered, then technical and interpretative elements are further developed in class between Conal and his teacher. He refers to this somewhat

humorously when he describes the work in progress in a particular lesson, saying how they were:

Trying to figure out how best to approach the piece from a technical level and from an interpretational level at the same time is sometimes not a good combination! (*laughter*) ... because although you have great ideas about how to play it, you can't get there because you don't know [how]. (IntC2)

He talks in particular about fingering, the challenges presented by the many fingering possibilities, and matching fingering with what best suits a particular player. Fingering, issues of style and 'styles of technique' are interrelated, as he explains:

Fingering is a tricky business, because there's always loads of different ways of doing it, and it's all to do with different styles of technique is another thing. And especially in the higher registers of the cello, one style says that you don't use your fourth finger unless you have to, otherwise you're like a violinist. Another style uses it all the time. (IntC1)

Intonation also requires particular attention in this phase of learning, therefore Conal 'counts intonation as part of technique' at this point (IntC1).

Interpretation is an important aspect of progressing a piece of music. For Conal, interpretation concerns the individual performer, the choices they make, and also the 'style' elements of the written piece of music (IntC1). In practical terms, this means that notation is read exactly as 'written on the page and then interpreted but everything on the page has to be there' (IntC1). While 'following the score' is essential, Conal also points out that 'all the important things aren't written on the score' (IntC1). Therefore, in Conal's view, there is also an element of individual choice:

I have to learn it from the notation, but then I can change it, I can interpret it differently depending on how I read what the composer has written. (IntC1)

Conal believes that 'it's very important that each person can interpret music in their own individual way', but connected to this is an individual's understanding of the 'style' of a piece:

Style would be connected with period of composition and therefore interpretation. And I often hear people saying that the stylistic interpretation of th[at] one individual did actually connect well with the style of the piece, the period it was composed in'. (IntC1)

He gives the early Beethoven *Sonata* on which he is currently working as an example, explaining that the particular interpretative challenge of this work rests in the fact that these early Beethoven works are:

Basically the link between Classical and Romantic repertoire. So a lot of times then you're playing Beethoven, like the first movement of that Beethoven Sonata is still his early chamber music, so it would be more Classical. But it's odd the way he has it written, because some elements of it feel like ... I'm trying to think exactly now ... but even the very opening would be odd for a Classical composer just a big 'Bong forte piano and then, you can see, that he is moving into Romanticism. (IntC1)

There are other interpretative issues also. Learning approaches and how a performer's interpretation 'connects to different styles of teaching and of schools' (IntC1) is yet another matter that Conal raises in this discussion. However, of particular importance to Conal is how 'critically' listening to performances improves interpretation. His approach is to listen to multiple recordings of a piece 'to see what people do ... what you like, and what you don't like' (IntC1). The challenge that this approach poses is that while, on one hand, it is 'very important to hear what other people do' with the piece, the inherent difficulty is 'that you might start to imitate it' (IntC1), and as Conal points out:

You don't want to mimic anyone ... if you're playing Dvorák you actually want to be able to demonstrate that 'I can play Dvorák but I can play it my way which is no one else's way' while still remaining loyal to the score'. (IntC1)

5.5.1.2 Memorising repertoire

In general, Conal memorises repertoire, particularly solo repertoire. He explains how he personally finds it easier to perform if he has something memorised:

If the music is in front of you, you glue your eyes to the music regardless of whether you know it or not. If it isn't, you actually start thinking about what you are playing more, so especially if you are nervous, because you don't want to think about the audience. (IntC1)

He makes an exception for chamber music because of the value of using the score in ensemble performance, irrespective of whether he has the music memorised or not.

His approach to memorising varies, depending on whether he is at the earlier or later stages of learning a work. At the earlier stages, memorisation happens in a somewhat unintentional manner. It is a point when a piece is not 'completely memorised but a lot of it is in [his] head', memorised by what he describes as 'osmosis' (IntC1). At a

later stage of learning, however, Conal adopts a very deliberate approach to memorisation and uses a range of strategies involving listening, practicing and sectional work, all part of a larger process where he is reading, checking, correcting, practicing and memorising with and / or without the score. He describes it as:

When I do have to learn something by memory, I am constantly playing and practising it; each passage is memorised separately. Then each passage is glued to the other passages. I'd take a page maybe and read through the page and see if I did anything wrong. If I did, I would practice the bit I did wrong over and over again and put the page back down—blank side facing up. (IntC1)

Once a piece has been learned and memorised, it is then a matter of reviewing it at a later stage as required. He revisits memorised repertoire:

Depending on the amount of time I have and if I needed it for anything soon; because once you've learned a piece, it's easier to relearn it. And seeing as everything I've learned, I make a habit of learning it by memory ... so it's all in there somewhere. (IntC1)

5.5.2 Conal's Irish traditional music learning

The typical sequence involved in learning by ear:

I listen to it. That would be the main thing [...] and I would listen to it at least twice [...] and I might finger along to it on the whistle or something ... I think it's easier to learn tunes on the whistle because it's quieter, and therefore it can't interrupt anyone else. (IntC2)

In the case of *Joe Bane's* reel, he listens initially to the whole tune, as he 'never heard the tune before' (IntC2). Then, drawing on the sequence he outlines above, he divides the tune in four bar phrases, methodically listens, then fingers along while listening, before playing each phrase on the tin whistle. In this way he pieces together, at first, the various phrases and then gradually the A and B sections of the tune. Less typical motifs require a few additional listenings and practises on the tin whistle. Conal explains how one motif 'took me a while to get it, especially that second part because it's kind of weird at the end' (IntC2).

Once complete, he then plays the tune through and that is followed by playing the tune one final time to ensure that it is in accord with the audio recording. This later process is explained as:

Well if there's someone playing the tune I play it with them [...] then, if it's a recording, you'd listen back to the recording and make sure you're playing what they're playing. (IntC2)

Learning a tune can also involve working in different keys, in effect transposing from one key to another, a process that does not seem to pose any difficulty for Conal. For example, *Joe Bane's* reel, which he learned from a recording in C#, was reproduced a semi-tone lower on his D tin whistle. Conal's view of the process is:

Like it's the same fingering on a C sharp whistle as it is on concert pitch whistle so you can still learn the tune the way he would play it. [...] Well you just play a semitone lower I suppose ... it's going to be the same fingering anyway. (IntC2)

Conal explains that when he is learning a new tune or melody he typically includes ornamentation and variation automatically, as 'your fingers just do it' (IntC2). In addition he listens very carefully to the audio recording from which he is learning, sometimes choosing to incorporate further ideas from the performer, if stylistically suitable. Once he has a version of the tune on the tin whistle, he then plays it on the *uilleann* pipes. There is a sense of the tune evolving somewhat on the different instrument, which is in part 'accidental' in the sense that piping features are instinctively added:

On the pipes there'd be closed triplets and things so you can add them, but like, you'd just add them the same way you'd add flicks and cuts and rolls and stuff so it's the same kind of thing. (IntC3)

Conal explains that part of this process of learning involves memorising and internalising the tune. When later recalling the tune, he might listen back to a recording, but generally as he says 'you just hear it in your head if you've memorised [...] you just remember it' (IntC2). He describes a number of other aural and visual strategies that he also uses to remember tunes. For example, he talks about 'tune association' and knowing tunes in sets. He often 'associates different tunes with each other' (IntC2). In practice this means that:

Like I'd remember a set of tunes, and if I'm trying to remember a tune in the middle of a set, I actually have to play through the entire set in my head in order to get to that point. (IntC2)

5.5.2.1 'Just playing more so than practising'

Further development of the tune happens intermittently over time. Conal takes an informal approach to practice (unless there is a performance pending), as he explains, it's 'just playing more so than practising' (IntC2), and he talks about how he plays tunes at will, as there are 'always whistles lying around the house, so you'd pick up

one if you've nothing to do'. Conal does not regard his current version of *Joe Bane's* reel as his final version. In explaining the informal process by which a tune develops and progresses, he says:

Well no, obviously I'm not playing it particularly well ... you know because it's new. It's not that I'll practise it. I'll probably end up playing a few extra times and it'll just get better that way. (IntC2)

However, Conal isn't just concerned with developing a particular tune, rather he talks about learning many 'tunes' and indeed knowing more than one 'version' of particular tunes (IntC2). He believes that listening plays an important role in a musician's development and emphasises the value of listening, developing musical preferences, knowing about different styles and gaining ideas that can be incorporated into one's own playing. He articulates it as follows:

It is important, because the more you listen, the more tunes you gather. Different musicians play different tunes. They also play differently, you can pick up variations and ways of doing things if you listen closely and it's very important because you develop if you listen. You'd play differently depending on what you listen to. (IntC2)

Contributing to Conal's ever expanding repertoire is being immersed in the tradition and hearing a lot of music at home and in a variety of other contexts. Recordings are frequently played at home and new tunes acquired in informal ways. As he says, it's 'not that I'd sit down and learn them, but you might even learn them by osmosis on occasion, you know' (IntC2). On other occasions, he also adopts a proactive approach. He describes listening 'in great detail' and learning many CD tracks. For example, he explains how he can 'literally play Mary Bergin's first album, note by note, track by track' (IntC2).

5.5.2.2 About interpretation and style

To illustrate what interpretation means, Conal gives the following explanation:

[It] would have a lot to do with style as well, whether you play it fast or slow or ... See, when you listen to the old musicians, they always have great sense of rhythm in their music because they actually played music for dancers ... so they interpreted it as a tool for dancing. (IntC2)

Identity and regional style emerge as Conal discusses interpretation and the styles of these older players, particularly how regional style was 'your identity as a musician' (IntC2). Conal feels that much has changed in this respect, which he attributes to what

he perceives as the demise of such connections between musician, region and identity with the use of recordings (IntC2). In discussing issues of style he distinguishes between regional and individual style, considering the latter as ‘something very personal’ and ‘a lot to do with your personality’ (IntC2). He cites Martin Hayes as an example of an individual rather than regional style:

If you listen to Martin Hayes, I don't think anyone else on the planet plays the fiddle quite like him. Some people say it's a Clare style but I don't agree because I've never heard any other musician from Clare playing like that. But I think individual style would be something quite personal. (IntC2)

He expresses definite stylistic preferences, such as a preference for the *Sliabh Lúachra* regional style, as opposed to the Donegal regional style:

The *Sliabh Lúachra* fiddle style in particular would be my favourite one. The Donegal style is kind of choppy, whereas *Sliabh Lúachra* is laid back and relaxed and it's kind of on the offbeat that the emphasis is on. (IntC2)

In his own developing style, he follows in this regional preference

5.5.2.3 Notation and Irish traditional music learning

Conal learns Irish traditional music by ear, which in his opinion is ‘the best way’ (IntC2). Within this aural framework, notation plays a role in several ways. He explains how occasionally he writes the notes down, if it is a difficult tune to learn (IntC2). Sometimes when learning tunes by ear, he writes it in ABC notation afterwards, so that he will remember a particular version of a tune, such as the second alternative version of *Come West Along the Road* that he recently learned (IntC2). Jotting notes down to confirm a particular version, is also useful in group learning such as when preparing for performance or competition and an agreed version of a tune is desirable:

There's a trad group in school. We meet every Tuesday lunchtime and we mainly learn tunes from each other by ear. If we're practising something for a competition and we need everything to be tight, we write down the notes so that we know exactly how we should play it. (IntC2)

On occasion writing out performance arrangements in ABC notation³ can be quite detailed and akin to reading ‘a map’ with the ornamentation and variations for a particular performance indicated (IntC3). While it serves to confirm the arrangement when rehearsing, it has no place in the actual performance, as Conal explains:

Occasionally, especially if you're in concerts or something, and you write out the list of all the tunes, and you write out the first bar or two bars, just so you don't forget, because you're on stage. (IntC2)

Notation is useful to either recall tunes, or to locate versions of tunes in collections:

Loads of tunes are really similar to each other ... so if it wasn't for notation... also it's a way of remembering tunes, ... if it wasn't for the Petri collection or the O'Neill's Collection or the Canon Goodman Collection, there's loads of tunes in these sources that people haven't heard in years... that we wouldn't be able to listen to them anymore. (IntC2)

Learning a tune setting from a collection involves a different way of learning:

The way they have it notated like, this is the way to play it [...] this is the tune so you have to learn it like that, and then you have to play it traditionally. You'd add variation and rhythm if you know what you are doing'. (IntC2)

It is 'slightly more difficult' for Conal to learn in this way (with staff notation) in Irish traditional music because:

It's as if I kind of switch from classical mode to traditional mode. So I'm not used to learning from notes on the whistle, especially when it's written on the stave. (IntC2)

However, Conal, in general, associates the use of notation more with beginners than with older learners. He comments on how, for example, older students at summer schools generally bring a tape recorder to the lessons because 'you don't bring a notebook generally. It's not as if the teacher hands out the notes unless you have a beginner class' (IntC1). He believes that notation is a very useful teaching and memory resource for younger students, particularly, while their ability to learn aurally is developing. He explains it thus:

So it is important because then they have a way of memorising the tune through it and then they can practice, but by doing that their ear does train itself so hopefully it will get to a stage where they can learn a tune by ear. (IntC2)

Recently Conal has started teaching beginner tin whistle class at the local CCÉ branch. While he learned traditional music by ear, he finds that he combines aural learning with notation with this young beginners. He describes it as follows:

I'd give it (*ABC notes*) to them but I'd play the tune for them and they'd kind of follow the notation. I don't know if they actually do, but they learn it from reading it, which is handy because then... it's still at a stage where I'm trying to teach them how to breathe and stuff so I can write that in but like for now you just breathe here (*presume miming showing it on a page*) and what not. (IntC2)

5.5.3 Learning musics: contrasting modes, contrasting processes

With listening as a central and constant element in his way of learning in both genres, Conal listens ‘to everything in great detail’ in both musics and in doing so tends to ‘analyse them as well’ (IntC2). However there are differences. He believes that listening with an analytical / interpretative focus is ‘more’ important in classical learning (IntC2).

In classical everything is in terms of ‘how can I improve my interpretation? ... Listen to loads of different recordings of the same thing to see what people do. What you like, and what you don’t like and could you copy them there?’ (IntC2)

In Irish traditional music the focus is on the detail in a particular recording to ‘pick up’ on ideas that can be incorporated in one’s own version of the tune (IntC2). This contrasts with the ways in which Conal listens to multiple recordings of a piece in classical music with an interpretative focus. Therefore at one level, while the emphasis in both musics is on ‘listening and absorbing’, in another sense it differs in that:

You’re just listening in trad, just listening and absorbing. Classical, you’re listening and absorbing when listening to recordings and going to concerts. They also expect you to have a knowledge of musical theory. And all that’s necessary in fact. (IntC3)

Conal finds that the technical aspects of playing are differently emphasised in both traditions. Technique is very important in classical music, as Conal says:

If you don’t have the proper technique on the cello, it’s impossible. Like vibrato, it has to be perfect, you have to be able to control it, you have to make it wider, faster, slower when necessary. To put it very poetically– you can’t paint pictures with your music if you don’t have the technique to do it. (IntC1)

Certain aspects of technique are attended to in traditional music while others are not, for example:

If you’re playing the whistle, as long as you’re covering the holes properly and you’re blowing properly, that would be the main aspects of technique and then there would be cuts and rolls and stuff but... a lot of that would be to do with style. (IntC2)

And in terms of uilleann piping, technique is important, for example:

To be able to tune the instrument and regulator technique... and chanter work in terms of if you’re going to play open or tight, you know. Triplets and things; they’d be important as an aspect of piping. (IntC2)

In general however, he believes that there is not the same emphasis on technique in Irish traditional music as in classical music. This can present difficulties, particularly for someone who plays both musics on the same instrument, such as ‘if you're a fiddle player and you start playing trad first’ (IntC3).

5.5.3.1 ‘The way it has to be done’

Conal’s discussion of notation-based learning, in both genres, highlights several differences. In classical music terms he believes that the score ‘is much more important’ (IntC2) and that classical music learning is always notation based. One has ‘to learn it from the notation’ (IntC2). In contrast, notation-based learning in Irish traditional music is usually an adjunct to learning by ear, used for mnemonic purposes or in the absence of an aural learning source.

Notation’s roles differs in learning in both genres. He explains how in classical learning ‘you can’t stray from the notation: it’s strict’ (IntC1) and, as already noted, notation is central to accuracy, interpretation and musical and technical understanding (IntC1) (and for these reasons Conal feels that he understands why classical music is learned in this ‘particular way’ and why rote learning is ‘frowned on’). In contrast, regarding Irish traditional music, the score provides ‘the bones of the tune’ (IntC2), that is, the notes of the melody, but ‘what you do with it afterwards is completely up to you’ (IntC2). Indeed the musician can, as Conal explains ‘add variation, you can mess around with rhythm, you can change phrases around. You can’t do that in classical, the notes always have to be the same’ (IntC1). In traditional music there is no mention of the composer or adhering to the score. Indeed he points out that ‘it’s considered boring if you play the way it would be written in a book, because it’s not supposed to be written down’ (IntC2).

An example of how differently the score functions is illustrated by the way in which ornamentation is dealt with both musics. In classical music, ornamentation is written into the music, and is performed following particular conventions:

They write over the note whether they want a turn or a mordent and you know exactly how to play them, and maybe in a trill in Baroque music, you start the trill with the upper note. But in classical music, it’s there. It’s the conventional way of doing it. It’s the way it has to be done. (IntC2)

In contrast, in Irish traditional music, notation does not typically include written ornamentation, therefore ornamentation in a tune depends on, as Conal says ‘the way you hear the music and then you ornament it accordingly’ (IntC2).

5.5.3.2 Interfacing genres

Conal makes an interesting observation regarding his experience of what happens when the traditions merge, such as, when folk music is used in a classical composition. He has found that his understanding of both traditions is highly beneficial. He describes working with Kodaly and Bartok compositions:

If you're playing Bartok or Kodaly, a lot of their music is based on the traditional musics of that region, like Hungary and Romania. Classical players, if they are purely classical, don't really understand that. Emphasis on the rhythm and everything is important and where the beat is, is sometimes not where it would generally be, and also the fact that you can kind of cut corners, in terms of notation when you're playing trad. (IntC1)

Similarly, he describes performing the Irish piece *Mo Mhíle Stór*, arranged for cello and piano at a *Feis Ceoil* competition. As the composition was based on a folk tune well known to him, he ‘knew how to interpret it and what the important parts were’ (IntC1). He remembers the adjudicator’s comments regarding the various performances in the competition, which he recounts as follows:

There was another girl who played trad in the competition as well, who was also a cellist and the thing the adjudicator said was, that our two interpretations seemed more authentic and that we understood what [was] going on more so. (IntC1)

5.5.3.3 Contrasting modes and processes

Finally, Conal draws attention to several aspects of these contrasting modes of learning. When learning in the different traditions, three things are particularly striking about the way of learning in each for Conal:

I’m learning completely from a recording in the trad without a teacher, or written note or anything, whereas I’m learning completely from score with the direction of a teacher in the classical. I think that sums it up the main differences anyway. I’m sure there’s others. (IntC3)

While music learning, irrespective of genre is ‘a never-ending process of improving what you’re playing’ (IntC3) Conal points out that ‘it’s a longer process in classical generally because of the whole consultation with the teacher’ (IntC3). He describes the actual learning in each of these setting as different ‘modes’ (IntC1).

I kind of separate one from the other [...] I honestly can't actually read music on the staff when I'm playing trad, so it's as if I've switched to another mode. I'm currently trying to get used to that and I'm like trying to teach myself to read music again. [...] When I'm playing classical, I can of course play things by ear but, you know [...] everyone has to learn classical the same way, they have to learn the notes from the score. (IntC1)

Conal further explains what is involved when learning in these different modes.

Learning Irish traditional music involves connecting with a tune as follows:

I just hear it. Like the fingers know what to do, there's only six holes they can cover but, you know, I just kind of hear it rather than see it, I think. (IntC3)

The progression is simply from hearing to playing, as he even says 'my eyes are closed' (IntC3). In contrast, his description of classical music learning, involves many elements, to some extent because one is reading 'the score', but also, because of other aspects including:

Well a lot of it is concentrating on fingering and everything because ... I'd see fingering a lot of the time. My eyes are open making sure that things are going right as well. (IntC3)

There is a considerable visual / watching component, particularly at the earlier stages, when one is observing and attending to 'technique', to (one's teachers) 'fingerings' and 'bowing' (IntC3). In talking about visual aspects of learning he regards watching and observing other performers also as important in developing one's own performance practice.

And also the important thing in classical is how you perform on stage – that can get your marks. So you have to watch and see what other people do. (IntC3)

Conal identifies further contrasts between the musics when he thinks about what he imagines as he performs. He explains that when performing Irish traditional music, he connects with the function of the tune, in contrast with the 'story' or knowledge about the composer in classical context, as he explains:

Well to get the rhythm, what I imagine in trad is, I imagine people dancing because essentially that is what the music is for. ... I think that it still should be. In classical, you have to read about the composers and stuff. (IntC3)

He gives a further example of what he means in the classical context, explaining that:

With classical, it's always quite set in stone, the name, the composer and what not. So, for example, Don Quixote by Richard Strauss, for the name you know

exactly what's going on ... every movement is actually labelled and the final movement is the death of Don Quixote. (IntC1)

However, as learning progresses, how one relates to and mentally imagines the music can change. Conal finds this to be the case in his classical music learning, as at a certain point, imagining fingering is no longer necessary and the score is 'ingrained' or internalised. He describes it in terms of 'your fingers know what to do, you know how it's supposed to go, then you can imagine what you want' (IntC3).

5.6 Seán

5.6.1 Classical music learning



Learning a new pieces commences 'always with the music' in class and involves reading 'exactly what's written down' (IntS1). For Seán, when you learn through notation:

Well, you use your sight first like ... as you look over the piece, then you listen to what the teacher is explaining about it ... and then just play it ... yeah and that's kind of harder at the start. (IntS3)

At this initial stage he sometimes thinks that a piece is more difficult than it actually is because when he is sight-reading he 'doesn't know how it sounds' (IntS1) and therefore he 'find[s] it hard, just seeing it and trying it' (IntS1). He explains how his teacher sometimes hums a motif which helps, as it gives him 'something to go by' (IntS1). Seán believes that in this way of learning the focus is on 'reading the notes' more so than in Irish traditional music, but it also involves listening as 'you kind of have to listen to how you're playing it and listen to what the teacher is telling you as well' (IntS1).

5.6.1.1 The score: 'the most important thing'

The pieces develop and progress through daily practice and weekly lessons in a process involving a lot of detailed work. As he says, sectional work is undertaken on 'the hard few lines in the pieces so that I'll have them better' (IntS1). He talks about how his teacher annotates the score in respect of various musical elements: beat and rhythm; articulation and 'the dynamics of the piece'. In this way of learning, the teacher explains particular aspects that Seán finds invaluable for a number of reasons:

They would take marks off in the exam if that's not done right. [...] there's a lot written in the score. 'Cause, do you know the way, as you get [to] higher grades the pieces get more complicated. [...] So it's was just making them a bit easier by explaining it. (IntS1)

For Seán, notation is part of all stages of learning and performing in classical music. It informs not just notes and rhythm but the many aspects of performance such as 'how loud or how quiet, the dynamics, and if the notes are slurred or what kind of speed is best' (IntS1). Indeed in classical learning he describes the score as 'the most important thing' because 'that's what you have to follow because you have to play exactly what's written down like'. (IntS1).

When he reflects on the progress he has made, Seán concludes that 'doing a lot in class helped because John is a good teacher so he'd go through the stuff well' (IntS1). His home practice sessions follow a similar format, as he notes:

Well we get a lot done in the class so that's not too bad. It is easier when I go home because I'm just going over what I've been doing in the class. (IntS1)

Over a period of weeks it is time to perform the pieces at the examination. Seán always performs with the notation, as is allowed in classical music examinations. In fact he says that he 'never' memorises classical pieces, but he also points out that memorising classical pieces is very different to memorising in Irish traditional music: it would 'be much harder, you would have to remember, instead of just the notes, but also the dynamics, the slurs and all that type of stuff' (IntS1).

5.6.1.2 Listening and classical learning

When considering the role of listening generally in classical music learning, the conversation focuses on the role of recordings in his current classical music learning. He is presently working on Grade 4 saxophone, and at this earlier grade stage, listening to recordings doesn't seem to play a significant role in his learning. As he explains when talking about the role of listening in his classical learning: 'I don't really find it that important because usually you wouldn't have a recording of the piece anyway' (IntS1).

He talks about having had the exam CD on occasion, though not always. Seán believes that 'not having enough recordings' is a weakness in his classical learning. For Seán,

reliance on the score amounts to having less of a guide in learning, because ‘if you’re reading a piece, you don’t know how it sounds, you don’t really have much to go by, compared to if you’re listening to it’ (IntS1). Personally Seán advocates the use of recordings in his classical learning, as he says ‘if I had one’ (IntS1). In terms of general listening however, while he professes to listen to ‘most types of music’, listening to classical music doesn’t seem to be part of this.

5.6.2 Seán’s Irish traditional music learning

Learning an Irish traditional tune involves listening and playing what he hears, which he explains as ‘[I] hear and then play what’s been heard. Usually I’d listen the whole part and then if there was a hard bit, I’d concentrate, just do that bit’ (IntS1). In Seán’s group piping lesson, the march *The Return to Fingal* was learned in this way. Led by piper Kieran, they listened and contrasted two old Ennis recordings of the tune, in terms of phrasing, regulator works and ornamentation, following which each tune part was played. This contrasted with the approach taken in another lesson with the more difficult reel *The Morning Thrush* (IntS2). On this occasion, learning involved listening and repeating shorter sections or motifs (one and two bar phrases), but again, particular attention was paid to the version of the tune in the original Ennis recording. For Seán, learning *The Morning Thrush* in the lesson meant that he had the tune ‘almost’ from memory. He explained how he would ‘have to listen over it again though’ (IntS3) when he got home to be sure that he had it memorised. Seán describes independent home practice as a blend of listening, playing and reviewing older tunes. He would typically ‘listen to tunes that I learned in class and play them, and go over maybe some old tunes’ (IntS2).

Given that his uilleann pipes learning is by ear, recalling tunes in order to practice or play them usually involves either being able to remember part of a tune, or listening back to the recording. In the case of *The Morning Thrush*, Seán explains how he could ‘remember the last part more, because we went through it a lot, and I’d just kind of go from there’ (IntS2). A former strategy he used when he was younger was to write down a few notes on a page relating to a track but, as he says, while ‘I have done that before, to remember tunes, I don’t really do it that much [now]’ (IntS2). Occasionally, if he cannot locate a recording of a tune, he would ‘just find notes, if there’s notes or whatever’ (IntS2). Another effective way to recall and practice tunes is:

If you are playing in sessions and stuff, you're kind of just going back over tunes you've heard, like you've learned a while ago, so that's; kind of a good way. (IntS2)

5.6.2.1 A question of style

Seán prefers learning by ear because 'you are hearing it instead of just reading it' and therefore 'you'd be putting in things in your music that you'd hear from the person' playing (IntS2). In his view this is something that 'improves how you play' (IntS2). At this point his own approach to tunes combines learning many elements from the particular audio recording (or performance), with his own style ideas. He explains 'I kind of go by what's on the recording, and then put [my] own variations and ornamentation in with it' (IntS2). In Seán's view, what one listens to is very important in terms of how one goes about (or interprets) a tune, and is therefore a major factor in one's style of playing. He listens 'closely' to and learns from the old recordings and pipers in developing his playing style (IntS2). In his group piping class, this stylistic approach is also evident in the way in which one is taught in detail with reference to old recordings, and the guidance given as students added their own details. Seán is a firm advocate of going back to the source of the music because he believes that from a learning point of view:

It's really important, cause the old recordings are like (unfinished)... the basis of the tune, so that's where you'd learn the tune from if you're going to learn it properly. (IntS1)

He comments on how 'there are a lot of different styles' in traditional music. He believes that style of playing is important, and in respect of his own playing style, says that:

I have a traditional enough style ... some people have kind of modern Irish music style. But, I have kind of more traditional style; going by what Seamus Ennis would play and stuff like that. (IntS2)

5.6.2.2 'A bit of both'

Irish traditional music learning has, for Seán, incorporated many contexts and approaches combining group / individual / oral–aural and notation in a variety of ways. Now as an older and more skilled musician he learns in many ways: in solo and small-group instrumental lessons, informally at home, in sessions and in several ensemble contexts. All of his solo instrumental work involves learning by ear. From his own experience, he believes that notation has a useful role to play in Irish music, such as,

initially when ‘starting off [as] it's a bit harder learning by ear’ (IntS2) but he does not ‘really think it is as effective’ (IntS2) at a more advanced level (IntS2).

Drawing on his own experiences, he talks about the ways in which ABC notation is used in learning Irish traditional music: ‘if you’re younger and you’re playing trad, I think using the ABCs is the best ‘cause it’s just gets you more into it’ (IntS3). Seán is keen to point out that the particular way in which notation is used in Irish traditional early music learning is in conjunction with listening or ‘hearing’ the music. He remembers this way of learning as ‘a bit of both, you'd have the notes and someone would play it and then you'd play it using the notes’ (IntS2). In his view this facilitates an ‘easy enough’ way to learn. Séan’ also comments on how this approach is replicated in ensemble group teaching at various age group levels. He explains it thus:

There'd be like fifteen of us maybe so it would be kind of more difficult to go one by one, so they just give us notes. [...] They hand us the notes, but before we start doing it, they play it a lot and they make an effort of us hearing it beforehand.
(IntS2)

In his view, the large numbers of students in such group activities as *grupaí ceoil* and *céilí* bands necessitate such an approach (IntS3).

5.6.3 Learning musics: different ways

Particular elements emerge when Seán contrasts his experience of the learning processes of classical and Irish traditional music. He regards learning in both musics as ‘completely different’, explaining that ‘in classical well you’re just mainly learning tunes from the books and stuff. For trad you're learning tunes a lot of different ways’ (IntS3). When reviewing lesson excerpts he alludes to this again, saying in respect of the saxophone lesson ‘I’m reading the notes more [...] and I’m listening in the pipes’ (IntS3). The discussion that followed these observations seemed to centre on two key essentials 1) the differing ways in which notation is used in both traditions and 2) the role that listening and particularly audio recordings play in the learning process.

Seán finds that notation is used very differently in both genres. At one level he comments on how when you are reading music, in whatever genre ‘you kind of do the same, in a way’ but he also comments on how the focus is different when reading classical or Irish traditional music. This different focus concerns the way in which one

is ‘reading notes off’ in classical music, whereas, one is reading but also listening to someone playing the tune in Irish traditional music. Seán surmises this as a basic focus on ‘reading’ in classical compared with ‘listening’ in Irish traditional music, and he ‘prefers’ the latter (IntS2).

For Seán, the differences concern more than just the way one reads. It is also about the different ways in which one works with the music notation. Comparing the use of notation in both genres he explains how when reading ‘in trad, you can play the tune with bits of ornamentation, it doesn't really matter’ (Int S1) whereas when working with notation in classical music ‘you have to read exactly what’s written down so’ (IntS1). For Seán, another matter concerns how ‘in classical there’s all dynamics of a tune, that’s not in trad, so it different that way’ (IntS1).

5.6.3.1 ‘They don’t record!’

The idea of using recordings for learning seems natural to Seán. He comments on the absence of recordings in his classical learning, saying how ‘they don’t record ... it's kind of different the way they do it’ (IntS1). In considering the issue of recordings he make reference to a number of related issues such as: types of classical pieces learned in earlier grades, the availability of recordings, and how one ‘goes about’ (interprets) pieces of music. Seán believes that there are greater possibilities for ‘listening to recordings’ in Irish traditional music and this enables an easier way of learning and interpreting music, whereas:

Most of the stuff in the books (*for classical music*) are just tunes for exams. For *trad*, people record tunes and I think it is easier to *go about* tunes in trad (IntS1).

He comments on the exam CD and how it ‘helps more, because you know exactly how it should sound like’ (IntS1). Given the option, Seán would utilise recordings in classical learning also.

5.6.3.2 Learning musics: Beneficial confluences

For Seán there are many differences in the ways that he learns both musics, but that generally he feels that the ways in both ‘don’t really cross-over’ (IntS3), nonetheless a number of benefits emerge from learning both classical and Irish traditional music.

For example, he would say that knowing ‘music theory’, while part of his classical studies, benefits his traditional music learning:

Cause from, the saxophone, you would know music theory. You know a lot about chords so that helps when you're playing the regs (*meaning regulators*). You have an understanding of what chords to play. (IntS3)

Seán plays several wind instruments: flute; tin whistle and uilleann pipes in Irish traditional music; saxophone in his classical studies; at an earlier stage he also played recorder. Interestingly he doesn't find the differing fingering systems at all confusing. Perhaps it is having learned the different fingering systems simultaneously, but Seán describes the differing fingerings as ‘similar enough in some ways, so like, that kind of helps’ (IntS3). He has recently started to adapt saxophone playing to Irish traditional music:

Well I'm trying to do trad because it's not that much different. ... But I wouldn't kind of like go to lessons or anything for that. ‘Well for the saxophone you can play some trad tunes on it. That's really the only thing, which is good like because it's something different. (IntS3)

5.7 Ellen



5.7.1 Classical music learning

Ellen chooses *Vision Fugitive*, Op22 by Prokofiev, based on hearing her teacher play excerpts from a number of pieces. Under her teacher's guidance, work commences on the new piece with sight-reading the first page, right and left hands separately ‘maybe twice’, and then trying to play it ‘really slowly both hands together’ (IntE1). The brief excerpt heard when choosing the piece impacts little on the learning process, in the sense that she had ‘nearly forgot[ten] what it sounded like after it was played’ (IntE3). Rather, she emphasises the sight-reading aspect of learning and talks about initially ‘not knowing what it was supposed to sound like’, but gaining a sense of the piece through reading: ‘once I looked at the notes, I suppose I was quick enough to read them, and then I knew how it should sound when I played them’ (IntE3).

Classical music learning involves a lot of practice, repetition and sectional work for Ellen. She describes, for example, the type of repetition involved in perfecting the ‘timing’ and articulation of the *glissandi* in *Vision Fugitive*, first page:

I really had to take out, and keep going over to make it a bit neater, because it was very messy the first time I played it, and then the sound was more confident, once I took out those few bars. (IntE3)

Advancing and refining of each section, is part of both daily practice sessions and lessons. Ellen talks about how progress is gradually made as one becomes ‘familiar with the piece’ [...] that’s how I came to that level. It’s just being familiar by playing it over and over (IntE3). Gradually the learning focus changes, and with *Vision Fugitive* she describes emphasis advances from issues such as ‘ornamentation’ and ‘articulation’ to ‘the expression in the piece’ (IntE1). For Ellen, working on the ‘expression in the piece’ is about focusing on ‘the way it’s supposed to be played’ (IntE1), or developing ‘the style’ of the piece (IntE3).

5.7.1.1 ‘My own style, my own interpretation’

When talking about style and interpretation, Ellen draws attention to both the role of the performer and the role of the score. She remarks on how ‘there always seems to be different interpretations of the same piece. I always found that, amazing like [...] seeing that they are the exact same notes’ (IntE1). For Ellen, the score sets out what is to be learned and played, yet in performance there are differences between players. From her own experience, she explains how:

Most pieces tell you how they want to be played and so on, but there's still a certain kind of freedom with that. I just remember pieces in school, we'd play for practicals (the same pieces), the difference between me and another person playing it... it sounded like a different piece (IntE1).

She remembers, one particular piano examination in which several students performed the same Scarlatti piece, noticing differences of ‘tempo’, ‘dynamics’ and the manner in which the ‘ornaments’ were played in the respective performances. Reflecting on these differences and how they arise, she says that:

It's so much more interesting, when you hear two people playing the piece and the differences. It's not the same, you know. They'd play something different because of the way they learn, and I suppose their teacher as well (IntE1).

Ellen regards the current new piece, *Vision Fugitive*, as one that allows greater interpretative and stylistic freedom than is always the case: ‘there is no indication on the thing, on really how to play it, so you have a lot of free rein in that’ (IntE1). In terms of individual interpretative elements she believes that by developing the piece

solely through the notation and by not hearing other performances of the work, her own musical interpretation emerges:

I suppose I read the music the first time, that then I would kind of have my own way of playing it then [...] so that would be my own style [...] my own interpretation of it, from reading it. (IntE.3)

5.7.1.2 'You are not to listen to it'

In considering the role of listening, Ellen tends to focus on the role of recordings in learning. She believes that 'you need to listen to a piece' (intE1), but in her case, with previous repertoire, she did not listen to recordings as she 'got the piece' or 'had it in her head' from listening to her teacher play the piece and therefore 'I just never even thought of listening to recordings' (IntE1). With *Vision Fugitive*, the focus at this juncture is on her own sound and her own interpretation rather than others' interpretations. This approach is advocated by her teacher so that she will develop her own ideas and understanding. As Ellen explains:

Janet was saying that 'you're not to listen to it', so go with my own style for it, so I suppose now I need to really get into it now as I know the notes and stuff... to really perfect it. (IntE1)

Nonetheless she regards listening to recordings and other performances as having an important role to play 'for style or the particular way you want to play' a piece. Listening to other performances contributes in particular to knowledge and depth of understanding:

I suppose there are so many different players. They all have [a] different sound. [...] It makes a difference when you have heard so much, you can really bring it into a piece then when you start to play, from all the listening. (IntE3)

While up to now, she hasn't used recordings, it is something that she feels will become more part of her learning, particularly as 'now, I would feel more keyed into this piece for myself to play, not for the exam, so it's different' (IntE1). Thus she feels that she 'should listen to more on, say, YouTube or whatever' (IntE1).

5.7.1.3 Performing

Ellen 'normally' uses the score in performing classical music, though she did perform from memory when she was younger. There are perhaps several reasons for this, as she suggests:

When I was younger, I tended to learn it off by heart a bit more. It was easier to do that, then. But now, when you have such big pieces, it's impossible [...] I suppose you've just got out of that habit. You just have to look at the music as you're playing and that improves sight-reading and stuff. But yeah, definitely when I was younger I used to try and memorise it more. (IntE1)

Generally Ellen 'would find it hard now not to have the music', when performing, but within the performance of a piece she will consciously have memorised sections, particularly difficult or 'fast' parts or sections that are more easily played from memory than from the score, as she explains:

If there is so much going on you'd have to take out a particular bit, and know it off by heart, but then for the next bit, you would go back to the book. (IntE1)

Ellen says that she has previously had little opportunity to review and maintain repertoire because 'before now, it was for the exams. I didn't have time to learn pieces for myself' (IntE1). In the exam phase, there was also a sense of moving on and being very busy with the next successive grade and as a result previous repertoire was not maintained because:

You move on to, like, another grade, you've a lot to do. Then you don't keep it up as much, with the ones you have done. It's amazing like, how you forget though if you're not. (IntE1)

Now that she has completed her grade exams, she feels that she is learning piano more for herself. Also some of these pieces are not too difficult, therefore, as she explains below, she may memorise them:

Like the piano piece 'The heart asks for pleasure', since more people would know it already, it would be handy, to have it without music. (IntE1)

5.7.2 Ellen's Irish traditional music learning

Ellen uses ABC notation when learning Irish traditional music. Generally she is already 'familiar with' the tune that she is going to learn. For example, with the *Tommy Peoples* reel, she explains how 'I had heard it a few times, and then I kind of had the tune of it so then I wasn't just reading notes' (IntE2). Often Ellen is preparing for group performances with others, as she explains:

I'd know the gist of some notes but to get them accurate you know, reading the notes, making sure that you know. [...] There could have been a different version I'd heard, then, just to make sure that every note was right I suppose. (IntS2)

When Ellen learns a tune, it involves going ‘through the notes’, and ‘taking out’ and practising any bars or sections in the music that present difficulties. With a particular motif in the A section of the *Tommy Peoples* reel, she explains how:

I did it really slow, a good few times, till the notes were in my head [...] so just to remember them, cause even if I was looking at the page it was still too slow cause I wanted to play the rest of the second part of the piece, so then once I knew it by heart it as easier as well and then picking up speed. (IntE2)

While Ellen will essentially learn and largely memorise a tune in the first session, she explains how she would need to practice it again later with the notation. For example with the *Tommy Peoples* tune she says how:

I would know it nearly there (*referring to video clip*). But it’s just when there are still bars... kind of sticking... I’d be still afraid (*not to use the notes*), because I didn’t know it well enough. So if I went over it the next day I should know it really by then. (IntE2)

She deliberately memorises as she is learning a tune by consciously watching the notation and repeating phrases, which she explains as ‘I’d have to look at it bar by bar and I just keep playing it and then continue on till I have it by heart’ (IntE2). She is also aware that when working on her tunes, there is an element of remembering through playing, what she describes as:

Yeah that’s true I would have kind of remembered it. I wouldn’t have thought about it. It’s a kind of (a) pattern or whatever. It kind of sticks into your head. (IntE2)

Ellen refers back to the ABC notation to practice and recall a tune, but this approach has another function also. She finds that sometimes there are differences between the version she will have heard and the written version that she is required to play in the group, therefore she uses the notation:

Just to make sure I’ve it right, because if I start, you know I might start playing a different version, if I change between notes unknown to myself then... so to get the right version I’ll just go back to the notes (IntE2).

5.7.2.1 Developing the tune

Gradually as the melody becomes more secure or ‘solid’, she also attends to the ornamentation and detail of the tune (IntE2). Her version of a tune emerges from what she has heard, combined with her own ideas. She explains it thus:

I suppose from whoever I heard playing it I'd pick it up that way as well, unless I saw by looking at [the notes] if there was kind of room to put in something in the piece, I would. (IntE2)

Ellen believes that in Irish traditional music a musician is free to 'play around' with the ornamentation but it is not prescribed. Personally she adds ornamentation, as she 'just kind of feels it' (IntE2), though she is also guided by the written notation in deciding what to add:

I suppose when I had heard it a few times... you get a sound for it or whatever, so then it just comes out ... because well I suppose she had G and I think there was probably a dash after it, so then I just put in a roll, or it was a quick roll, a cut one. (IntE2)

Ellen elaborated further on how she adds ornamentation to the notated version of the tune, explaining thus:

Like the G there at the beginning, it looked like it was a long G. [...] If I played it without ornamentation, it would just be a long G, so then there was room for, like, a cut or a roll ... and then it was the same... the second part was the high G roll an. (IntE3)

For Ellen, style is about 'how you play it'. For example, how a player could have 'a loose relaxed kind of playing' style or a 'good strong tone' (IntE3). In Ellen's view, style and interpretation in playing are influenced by such factors as what one chooses to do with the tune or what a player hears, for example: 'Whatever your teacher is doing, you kind of imitate that as well [...] then the ornamentation would come into it as well' (IntE2). Ellen feels that what she hears impacts on her traditional style of flute playing and unlike when she develops her own interpretation of a classical piece from the score, the version of a traditional tune she develops:

Could have been someone else's way of playing it and I'd kind of go along with that [...] that (*pointing to flute video excerpt*) wasn't my own interpretation of reading it and playing it. (IntE3)

5.7.2.2 'I'd normally go back to the notes'

Ellen has learned Irish traditional music repertoire in different ways over the years. These include 1) learning with notation in school contexts, 2) ways which combined aural and notational and 3) learning by ear. Each way, in her view, has inherent advantages and challenges. Her usual approach involves having the tune in her head, or hearing it (from the teacher or a recording) before learning it with the notes. This

approach (as opposed to learning solely from notation) speeds up the process, as was the case with the Tommy Peoples reel:

I'd heard that tune so then it didn't take me as long as it might for a tune that I really didn't know the air of it. So I knew how it was supposed to sound or I heard someone else playing it and that was (why) it didn't take as long then that way. (IntE2)

She has also learned tunes 'by ear', but finds that learning by ear is 'an extra kind of effort to do it because you really had to listen' (IntE2). She also found that it took a lot longer as well (IntE2). Nonetheless, she acknowledges that learning by ear is particularly useful for session playing, because 'you get into it and then, I suppose, at sessions you'd pick them up better (IntE2). Ellen regards her way of learning as different to many of her traditional music peers 'because a lot of them wouldn't read music' (IntE2). She attributes her notation preference to her classical piano studies because:

On the piano you're reading the music all the time and you're used to actually having notes. [...] So that's why I do like to have notes then for the flute. [...] 'Cause that's what I started with on the piano. [...] That's not always the case, but that's what I usually do. (IntE2)

She typically uses notation when recalling tunes also: 'I'd normally go back to the notes to make sure I have the proper notes [that] I'm playing the proper tune' (IntE2).

5.7.3 Learning musics: confluences and contrasts

Ellen's music learning highlights several confluences and contrasts across the two genres. Her ways of learning merge in that she uses notation in both musics, in ways that are both contrasting and similar.

One difference centres on 'familiarity' or lack thereof when learning a classical piece or a traditional tune. Ellen explains how in classical learning, the score, typically, represents a 'new' and unknown piece of music, while in Irish traditional music the notation presents a tune that is already familiar. This affects how she learns a piece, as she would 'not hear' the classical score and 'I wouldn't know what it was supposed to sound like' (IntE3), in contrast with flute notation, where 'I heard it rather than I played it', as she says 'I just had it more in my head' (IntE3). For Ellen, therefore, reading and playing a classical piece takes 'a lot more concentration' (IntE3), in part

because it is new, whereas with Irish traditional notation in the flute: ‘I would be familiar with the tune then it made more sense reading it then because it was familiar’ (IntE3).

Confidence: Linked to the underlying theme of familiarity were Ellen’s contrasting comments on confidence levels in her own performance in both genres. She perceived herself as having ‘a lot more confidence’ when playing the flute, as the music seemed ‘way more familiar’, in contrast with being at a stage where she is ‘just really reading the notes’ in the classical piece (IntE3). In this respect she also commented on the time involved in learning in both genres and how with the flute:

Well it’s not really finished as a tune, it just sounds a lot more together than the piano piece is. It just sounds like I know it a lot more’ [...] there’s not as much going on, I think, in a tune that you can pick it up so much quicker. (IntE3)

She contrasts this with learning classical piano:

It looks like an awful lot more work goes into the piano when I look at it now that. It doesn’t sound as impressive [...] I suppose it will be better after a another while, but it [in respect of the flute] just sounds a lot nicer or something, more finished even in that shorter space of time. (IntE3)

Time aspects: Ellen also contrasts the time aspect of learning in both musics, noting how she learned and largely memorised Tommy Peoples’ reel in fifteen minutes. Ellen notes that ‘you can do so much more (with a trad tune)’ (IntE3) and how 15 minutes is ‘nothing really’ in the context of learning a classical piece of music (IntE3). A further factor is the greater amount of time spent concentrating on ‘the notes’ in classical music, in contrast with Irish traditional music learning. She explains as: ‘there is just a lot of concentration on the notes [rather] than on the actual playing ... as in the articulation because we’re at the beginning now’ (IntE3).

Interpretation: Ellen identifies further differences in how one works with and interprets notation in each genre. She believes that classical notation has to ‘be played a certain way’ (IntE3). On the other hand, ABC notation in Irish traditional music is ‘looser’ and ‘give[s] you a bit more freedom [...] there’s nothing there to say it has to be a certain way’ (IntE3). Thus, when it comes to style elements, she finds that for example: ‘with ornamentation you can put in whatever you want’ in contrast with classical music, where ‘it’s a bit more ... whatever is there you just go with’ (IntE3).

'Pattern': A similarity that Ellen identifies in both genres is the kinaesthetic / embodied aspects of learning. In terms of traditional flute she points out that practice and repetition enables her 'to feel my way with it' ... 'because I remembered' and 'it's a kind of pattern' (IntE3). This sense of feeling her way, of remembering and of 'pattern' is also reflected in her classical learning, though the process 'would be slower' (IntE3).

Memorisation: Ellen adopts a similar approach to memorisation in both genres, which she describes as memorising by looking at the notation and repeatedly practicing sections of the music. The differences that arise concern when memorisation takes place. A traditional tune is memorised in that first session as part of learning while she describes deliberate memorisation in classical music as part of a later stage of learning. Ellen memorises to enable performance of difficult fast tempo sections rather than memorising an entire piece. In terms of the learning sequence, again in both genres, there seems to be an initial focus on accurate note learning, followed by memorisation (IntE1, IntE2).

5.7.3.1 A blend of literate and aural

It is interesting how Ellen's music practice extends beyond classical piano and Irish traditional flute learning. In her own multigenre music group, in which she performs flute, keyboard and piano, one gets a sense of a blend of aural and literate approaches reflective of her skills in both traditions. For example, she describes how she accompanies pieces in different styles in the band:

I try and get music and then if I do not have it, 'you make it up, you would be all right, once you have the chords' [...] Some pieces that are not too hard, it doesn't take much, just sit down and make it out, [...] it would take me a few minutes. It depends on the piece, some things, you are really familiar with it, even if you haven't played it; you would make it out in no time. (IntE3)

5.8 Bríd

5.8.1 Classical music learning

New repertoire is chosen based on the teacher's recommendation and on listening to extracts of a number of pieces. Learning then proceeds with sight-reading and Bríd explains how her teacher does not play 'anything for me before making me try it myself' (IntB3), an approach she appreciates, as she believes her sight-reading is 'a bit



weaker' than others. She talks about how she approaches sight-reading, by initially getting the count and the rhythm (IntB1). She also explains that initially there is a lot of emphasis on accuracy, reading and fingering the various passages consistently, as well as focusing on little sections that prove challenging. She describes how her teacher:

Takes it in very small parts, even divides up the bar into smaller parts and talks about my fingers and then when I'm going on to the next part, warns me that I better have the right fingers or it won't work, and then she gets me to go back and add successive other little bits until I eventually have the line off by heart, or off right. (IntB3)

Sight-reading presents particular challenges, as she says:

I know I can read it but I'm not quick enough to get it to my hands on time if that makes sense? [...] So then I have to find out what it is so then I know what it is... and do it slowly. (IntB3)

As a result Bríd has developed several reading strategies, such as her way of looking at the music and 'transferring it from the music to [her] hands on the piano', figuring out notes, trying to 'get my hand into a pattern' or looking 'for intervals and scale passages' (IntB1). Bríd is also conscious, at this initial learning stage, of the need to rehearse at suitable tempi, explaining that 'the fast thing has always been an issue for me in both trad and classical like' (IntB1). Maintaining consistent fingering also requires particular attention at this stage, something her teacher addresses by:

Telling me exactly what I need to do with my fingers, saying I need to get my hand used to doing this or just different... like my scale passages in this piece, the fingers are so crucial like. (IntB3)

Bríd regards consistent practice, careful sectional work, correcting 'the little mistakes' and personal application or 'being strict' on oneself as the key to progressing any piece. Structural awareness and analysis also contributes to effective ways of learning. She explains how she commenced Mozart's *Sonata in F* (K280/189e) by working on the recapitulation section first, and now that she is working on the exposition, she recognises the similarities and realises that 'I've done a lot of it' already. For Bríd, this emphasises the importance of examining or analysing the piece while learning it (IntB3).

5.8.1.1 Issues of interpretation and style

Interpretation, or ‘how you pick up a piece’, ‘your understanding of it’ and what ‘you decide’ as a result, is part of the on-going process of learning for Bríd (IntB1). She gives an example of the types of interpretative decisions needed when dealing with a particular passage in the third movement of Mozart’s *Sonata* in F:

Sometimes you have to make your own interpretation like in bar 21, there is the repeated F, it actually starts bar 20. But I mean it is a repeated note, you’re not going to hold it, you’re going to keep it very crisp to give this repeated *dum, dum, dum* effect. (IntB1)

For Bríd, the challenges of interpreting the score become evident when balancing one’s own interpretation with that of others:

You hear a recording or a few recordings and you understand this is how this is played. This is how this person plays it. And you think ‘oh for me reading that, I wouldn’t have played that like that’, so you are after interpreting it in another way. (IntB1)

There is also the challenge of one’s interpretation having to stand up to outside scrutiny. She says:

I’ll learn a piece myself and the next thing I’ll go and hear it by someone else and ‘I’m doing it wrong’ I always think I’m doing it wrong, because I’m not as classically trained because they’d know more than me. (Int.Bt2)

In Bríd’s opinion the teacher is important in interpretative matters and so also is listening to many recordings of classical composers and performers ‘because that’s what you’re going to learn from and interpret from’ (IntB1). Of her own practice, she says that: ‘it is very important and something I have tried to get into the habit of listening to stuff of that era, to get into the style’ (IntB1). She regards listening to a range of ‘classical composers and performers’ rather than listening just to the piece of music that one is learning as important, (as one does in Irish traditional music for style and interpretation). She avails of YouTube to listen to her exam pieces and required college course repertoire. However, in terms of general listening, she ‘wouldn’t sit and listen’ to classical music (IntB1).

Matters of style concern ‘what pieces you’re playing, what century it’s from’ (IntB1) but Bríd also considers style in terms of individual elements, such as a player’s ‘own touch’. As she explains:

I think you always know the playing of someone, like I could walk down the hall and I hear one of the fellows in my year playing piano; no matter what kind of stuff he is playing, I will know it is him. [...] I suppose he has his own touch no matter what piece he plays (IntB1).

In her own playing, she describes being ‘lost in translation in a style’ (IntB1), in part due to playing many music styles at the piano but also due to the fact that ‘it is so long since I’ve done exams’ (IntB1). In terms of classical style, she feels that she is only ‘getting back to it again’ (IntB1).

5.8.1.2 Memorising music

Bríd memorises irrespective of genre, as she says: ‘I always was a memory person, when it came to music, it was all memory’ (IntB1). She attributes memorising to a resistance to reading the notation and to this day feels that her ‘sight-reading isn’t great’ (IntB1). She finds that while learning she memorises ‘the piece but not on purpose, it just happens’ and in a relatively short time there are sections that she will ‘know off by heart’ (IntB1).

Bríd explains how she memorises:

If there is an odd hard chord or something, you just [...] get your hands; you just look at your hands and you take a picture of your hands and that’s it. And, you know what way you are supposed to go, actually know nearly what notes you are playing, but you know they are the right ones anyway. (IntB1)

However even when the music is memorised, she also consciously follows the score because ‘at the same time, I like to be able to read them just in case you get stuck’ (IntB1).

5.8.2 Bríd’s Irish traditional music learning

Bríd learns tunes by ear or with notation as required by her college and other traditional musical activities. As an older experienced student, her preference is to learn a tune independently and a ‘whole tune by:

Listen[ing] to the whole thing; but then I’ll start with the first part, and I like to play along with it until I get it and usually I get it ‘cause my ear is pretty trained now. (intB2)

It there are notes or phrases that need further attention:

I go back and try and get that little part and then just play the first part and then go on to the second part and just try and play it over and over again. (IntB2)

Technique is something that Bríd feels is important when learning, and she emphasises foundational aspects of button accordion technique, such as fingering, posture, instrument hold, examples of which, in respect on the button accordion, are fingering and phrasing (tunes ‘need to flow’), ‘thumb position’ and accordion ‘hold’, bellows ‘control’, and ‘posture’ issues (IntB2). Of primary importance, however, is ornamentation and variation, as she says ‘your ornamentation is a big deal’ explaining that it is an aspect of playing that ‘needs to be worked on, and is something that takes time’ (IntB2). Bríd says that she generally incorporates her own ornamentation when learning a tune.

Bríd highlights the importance of interpretation and style in Irish traditional music. She defines style in terms of the individual player and their way of playing. It is determined by many factors including: ‘ornamentation’, ‘tempo’, repertory and ‘who’ and ‘what influences you’ (IntB2). She differentiates styles in terms of style ‘eras’ (IntB2), ranging from traditional to modern. She equates certain musicians with ‘an early stage of trad music’ and suggests that other musicians, such as ‘Damian Mullane, and Beoga, are like the 20th century [of Irish music] (IntB2)’. She views her own style of playing as ‘modern’, in that it incorporates flattened notes, and particularly her ‘left hand’ use of chromaticism, syncopation and off beat rhythms.⁴ She unequivocally expresses a preference for what she describes as a ‘more modern’ style of playing. Listening to other musicians and recordings plays an important part in developing one’s style, as she explains:

I think, if you want to be like, an older style, then you have to listen to people who do that, you're going to be influenced by them and pick up their tricks and tips, and if you're interested in the other [style], that's what you listen to. (IntB2)

Therefore Bríd believes that interpretation is to do with:

The way you pick up the tune, basically, your interpretation. You’ll hear a tune, because so much of this is picked up by ear, it's whatever way you pick it up, whatever recordings you have heard. (IntB2)

Interpretation also concerns the particular version that one learns, for example:

There is one tune which none of us knew that it was actually a variation. We thought like it was a whole run of rolls going down, from a high A to a D and everyone thought that was the original tune, because it was a pretty big modern tune anyway. Actually it turns out that it was only a variation. We all know it, because that's just the way we learned it, so that is our interpretation. And if we heard the original tune we would probably think it was a variation. (IntB2)

5.8.2.1 Recalling tunes

Bríd feels that she remembers most tunes from learning them, but emphasises that practice ensures recall. She explains how some but not all new tunes become part of her stable, established repertoire:

Usually once I learn them, I remember them, and I just practice them. If it was a tune that I like, I would be practising it anyway and it starts to move into the group of tunes I like to play. But a lot of the other tunes we just learn them because you've been given it to learn, like the waltzes and all that. (IntB2)

However in college, she encounters a lot of music, and at a certain point, she realised that she was no longer remembering all her tunes, thus on the advice of her instrumental tutor, she now has a notebook in which she documents tune names and opening phrases in ABC notation. This notebook is now the reference point in her accordion lessons. As she explains:

If I'm going to practice for the lesson I would have the book so I would know which tunes are which. Because you do so many tunes, you do loads of different things in ensemble as well. (IntB2)

5.8.2.2 Many ways of learning

For Bríd, learning Irish traditional music in the various contexts (classroom, community music groups, and instrumental lessons) has involved many ways of learning. She talks about the different notational approaches she has experienced, such as handwritten ABC notation given out in a group learning context, learning tunes from staff and ABC notation combined. She comments on learning Irish traditional music with staff notation, in one particular context, which in her view was 'a very regimental way for trad' (IntB2). Describing her experience of learning tunes through notation, she says:

[The] tune [...] was written down and you got a comment and all that kind of stuff, the same was in piano [...] They'd write down 'this is this' and 'that was that' and you'd be told watch this part on such a line... and it would be there to be seen the next day. (IntB2)

She also remembers how one teacher gave tunes 'on tape', the purpose of which was 'to play it exactly' as on the recording (IntB2). Bríd understood that 'this was how it was being done', and that 'it was usually for a competition ... to learn it exactly like that' (IntB2). An approach that she particularly values was learning through a local community organisation. Learning in this setting was characterised by a mixture of oral and notational ways. Learning in this setting was more than learning tunes:

You would practice purely for enjoyment when you were going to her. Because you might go to a session and you have all these friends and you would hear them playing a tune you like. She'd give it to you and it's up to you whether you were able to learn it or not, like 'there it is, you can learn it, if you want. (IntB1)

5.8.3 Learning musics: confluences and contrasts

Several interesting confluences emerge in Bríd's learning in these two genres:

Learning through notation: Bríd's experience of learning classical and Irish traditional music through notation were often quite similar. Some of her traditional music teachers taught predominantly with notation and there were only 'a couple of tunes' given by ear. Perhaps it is due to this continuous use of notation over time in traditional music, but Bríd describes a curious twist, namely how she inner hears 'traditional Irish music keys' more easily. She describes what she hears when looking at the classical music notation, as follows:

This is going to sound very silly but honestly, it depends on what key it's in ... it's because of trad. If it's in D, G, A, C, F any of those... even E... like my major ones. I'm alright with them. Anything with A flat, or D flat, absolutely not! (*Laughter*) No. I can't hear it in my head and I know it's the same but I get so mixed up over it. Is this supposed to be this, that and the other, and then flat minors or sharp to sharp minors or whatever. I haven't a clue, even though they're all the same, only a different tone. (IntB3)

On the other hand, using staff notation in both genres meant that on occasion she wrote in the ABCs under the staff notation, a practice she now describes as 'cheating'. However, when she was younger:

I used to write them in piano music! If there was the odd note like in a three-note chord, we'll say, I'd write in which one it was because I'd keep forgetting. (IntB2).

Pattern: Bríd talks about pattern in the kinaesthetic / physical and also the aural sense. Bríd finds, that among her fellow students, 'not many' others memorise classical repertoire (IntB1), and in that sense she views her classical learning as different. She feels she memorises more easily than others. She sees it as:

You get into a pattern, it's a routine, you know where your hands are going, you know what it's supposed to sound like, you just get it. Always from when I was small I got into this habit. (IntB2)

It is not only the pattern of 'where your hands are going' that she emphasises, but also the 'familiar' aural patterns within tunes and pieces in both genres:

Like a lot of the tunes, you probably will have heard before subconsciously, like in a session, while you don't know that tune or maybe you heard it only once but something clicks in your brain then cause a lot of them are very patternised, like you can nearly guess what's coming next, (27.06) you can hear what's coming next, like the same like in cadences you can hear this is going to be like 'a cadence there' it should go from 5 to 1. (IntB2)

Memorisation and recall: Memorising, for Bríd, is not genre specific, rather it is more of a general learning approach (IntB1). While she commonly memorises all music, recalling pieces in the different genres presents different challenges. Once an Irish traditional tune has been learned, 'it's in there somewhere, I know it is' (IntB3) and remembering something about how or where it was learned is often a sufficient 'trigger' to recall the tune, as she explains:

Any tune that you'd know well, you'd remember, 'oh yeah I remember learning that' ... the first tune I ever learned from Peter, I'll never forget it because it was the first tune I learned. So any time I hear someone saying 'Jackson's Bottle of Brandy', I'm going to think of him. (IntB3).

Associating a tune with places or images similarly helps recall for example, when thinking about a tune repeatedly played at a session at a previous Fleadh, or a song that 'reminds me of summer. (IntB3). The same is not the case for classical repertoire which she has learned in detail over a long time, as she explains:

In the classical music if I don't keep up this practice I'll be back to square one. Like I've learned for years all the pieces for exams and I don't even remember them now, I just forget them all. Practice needs to be consistent. (IntB3)

Bríd does not use images of the score to recall, as she says she 'barely looks at the music' (IntB3). In classical music, how she remembers 'depends on what types of music' or 'era' is in question. Unlike in her traditional practice, there are few associations for many classical pieces, as she says in reference to Mozart: 'now that piece, is very ordinary, there's no picture to it to me' (IntB3).

Analysis: Irrespective of genre, Bríd says that 'you have to examine and break it down' (IntB2). She finds with drawing her own student's attention to the structure of a tune, and teaching it in 'lines' is very helpful. Also in her own learning, she finds that classical analytic approaches have influenced how she hears and thinks about traditional Irish music, for example:

You know the way you analyse, take out bits? I found myself with the trad recordings of bands, picking out underlying bits. I'd treat them all as set works, in a weird way! (IntB2)

5.8.3.1 Perceptions: aural and notational ‘abilities’

She is of the view that there are differences in aural and notational abilities depending on which methodology has been most prevalent in one’s learning. For those working predominantly with notation, she feels that they do not have the same facility to ‘pick up’ aurally as, for example, Irish traditional players. As she says:

I find a lot of people in my class, we’ll say, with singers and that, they read. They don’t get the same chance to listen, they don’t pick up as well, listening like I would, or another trad player. (IntB2)

Therefore she concludes, that learning in both ways, can still have a negative impact skills wise:

The clash I could see would be because ... if you become really familiar with classical, your ear is going to suffer a little bit more, like, not suffer but it’s not going to be as strong as a trad persons ear. [...] And your sight reading is going to be better in classical. You’re going to be trained to read that way and everything is so structured as well. (IntB2)

The fact of being in contact with so much music, as a result of playing in both genres, also positively impacts on ones sight-reading, as she explains ‘when you’re just looking at music every day, I think it actually does improve, whether you are practising sight reading or actually just reading music.’ (IntB2).

5.9 Synthesis and Analysis

5.9.1 Perceptions of learning: through notation or by ear?

Classical and Irish traditional musics are frequently perceived and described in the literature as genres that are learned either through notation or aurally. For these students, the ‘taken-for-granted framework’ of musical literacy (Finnegan, 2007) is understood as the ‘way’ in which ‘everyone’ learns classical music (see Fig.5.1). Given their understandings of both genres, some reflect on the possibilities of learning classical music in other ways, for example aurally. Ellen points out that it is not possible to aurally ‘pick up’ the detail of a classical piece (IntE1). Bríd draws attention to problems of ‘accuracy’ in such an approach (IntB1). Conal considers another dimension of classical learning when he emphasises the importance of notation for technical and interpretative reasons:

You can’t see it on paper, so you can’t actually put a technical structure to your fingering or anything, or bowing. To be able to understand the phrasing, you have

to be able to see what the composer had written, what's written, how it's written out. (Int1)

It is interesting to observe the learners' use of language in describing classical learning (see Fig. 5 Perceptions of Learning: through notation or by ear?). The language frequently focuses on visual aspects, with comments such as 'looking' or 'reading' or 'learning the notes from the score' (Fig. 5.1). Indeed, their remarks suggest that, in terms of process, they perceive notation-based classical learning as more focused on 'the notes' than on listening (Fig. 5.1) or on what is 'in your head' (Fig. 5.1). These latter aspects they associate more with Irish traditional learning.

However, perceptions of Irish traditional music are not so clear cut as might be expected (see Fig. 5.1). All the learners have experienced some degree of notational use in aspects of their traditional learning. While traditional music learning is predominantly perceived as aural learning or listening to learn, findings suggest a lack of consensus on the matter. Five of the seven students believe that more experienced traditional musicians learn by ear. Yet Bríd, who has frequently experienced learning with notation, easily adapts to whatever approach the particular learning setting requires. Ellen, on the other hand, prefers to learn with the notes and believes that notation should be used more in traditional learning. Curiously, the varied perceptions might suggest a rural–urban divide in that these latter two students have grown up immersed in traditional music in rural communities where various teachers had different approaches. Or perhaps such approaches reflect differing views of what is considered 'critical, desirable or incidental' (Trimillos, 1989) in the practices of music traditions⁵. What these data suggest is that learner perceptions of the use of notation are highly nuanced. Students in favour of aural learning focus on the perceived advantages of hearing and learning the detail of a tune from other players. Others simply state that aural learning is better or easier. Ellen, on the other hand, attributes her preference for notation-based learning to the influence of her classical studies.

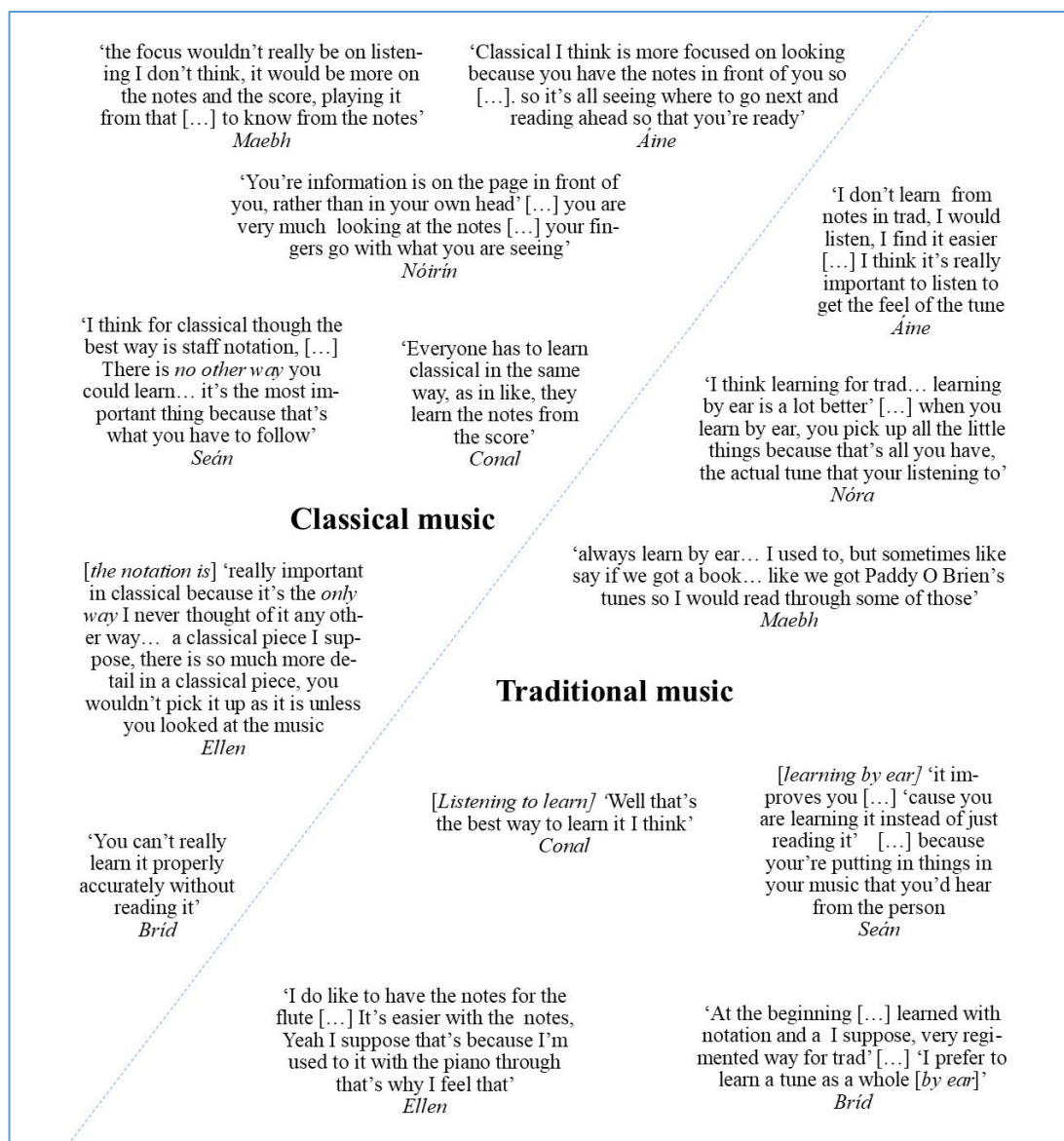


Fig. 5.1 Perceptions of learning: Through notation or by ear?

5.9.2 Learning in action

One of the most striking aspects of the students’ learning is how they switch between notation-based learning in their classical studies and aural approaches in their traditional learning. At the point when they formally or consciously commence learning a classical piece, they adopt the characteristic way of learning: what Ginsborg (2004: 130) describes as ‘learning and practising new pieces from a notated source’. Indeed, much of what they say regarding initial classical learning concerns how they work with notation (See Fig. 5.2). Many of the comments draw attention to various elements of learning through notation, such as: the need for careful and

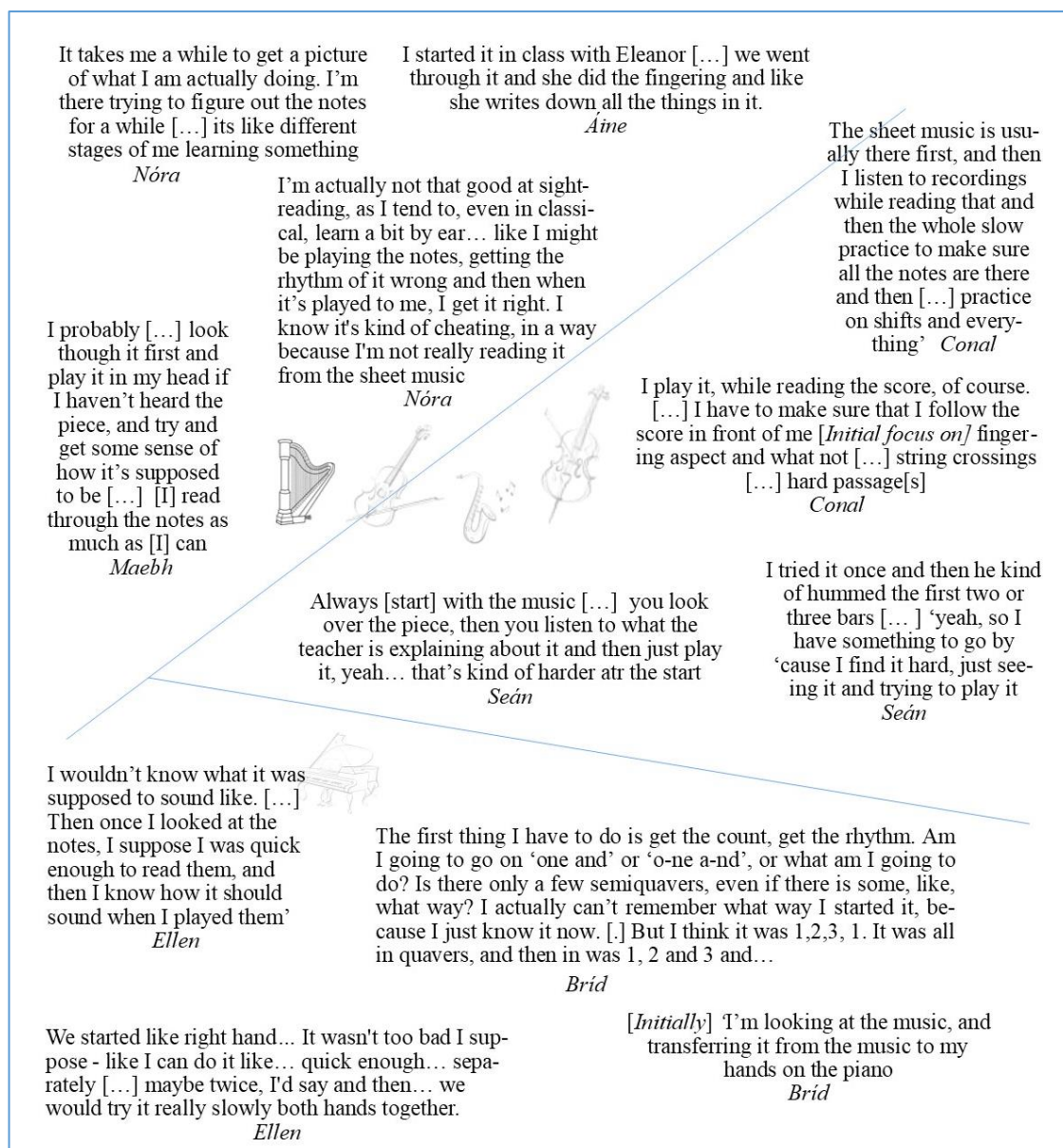


Fig. 5.2 Approaches to learning: Classical music

accurate reading of the score; how teachers scaffold the students learning to greater or lesser extents through demonstration, explanation, annotating the score; attention to technical and performance elements including fingering, shifting, vibrato, articulation, use of the bow. Initial comments also draw attention to the processes of sight-reading.

Descriptions of learning a traditional tune highlight a different approach. For six of the seven students, comments focus on aurally picking up the tune, which, in essence, is described as listening and playing, and some of the learners talk about how this involves fingering or playing along quietly while listening (see Fig 5.3). Ellen, the

seventh student, describes how she learns through notation. She draws attention to how it is different to her classical learning, differentiating between ‘reading’ something that is new in classical music,

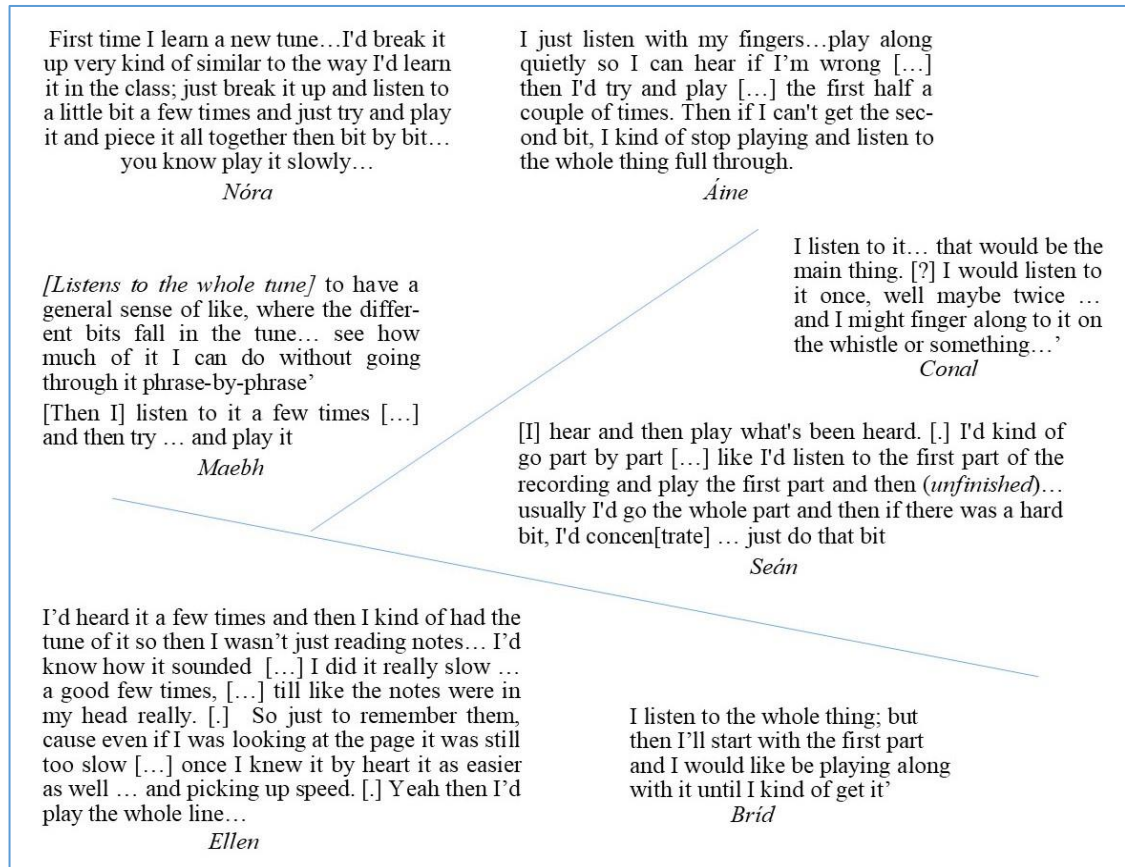


Fig. 5.3 Approaches to learning: Irish traditional music

in contrast with ‘hearing /remembering’ a tune already ‘in [her] head’ (IntE2), when reading an Irish traditional tune. Green (2002) has documented a similar approach to notation among popular musicians. Although Ellen may appear to be the only student currently learning with notation, what emerges in the data is, that while aural learning is the primary mode for the other learners, there is some degree of notational use (mostly ABC notation) at various stages of learning, particularly at workshops or in group learning contexts.

5.9.3 Processing learning: aural-literate dynamics

A very interesting aural-literate dynamic emerges when the processes which underpin classical and traditional music learning are considered. All of the students learn

classical music through notation. As indicated above, six of the seven participants learn solo traditional instrumental music by ear, but in various contexts they all experience (or have experienced) learning with notation in Irish traditional music. Thus, what emerges among these students, across both genres, are five distinct ways of learning with notation. In the first way, students cognitively inner-hear the musical text which they then read when they are sight-reading. In the second, students de-code as they sight-read and then hear what they are playing. These ways of learning through notation are documented in classical and music educational literature (Green and Varvarigou, 2014; McPherson and Gabrielsson, 2002; Mainwaring, 1951). In traditional music learning, two of the students, Maebh and Bríd, occasionally learn tunes from staff notation in a similar way to their classical learning. As Maebh explains, the process is the same except that at the end of learning a traditional tune from staff notation, she typically closes the book and consciously plays the tune from memory (IntM2).

The three remaining ways of processing music through notation concern the students' Irish traditional music learning. (In most cases they are describing the use of ABC notation, but occasionally they refer to combined staff / ABC notation). The first of these latter three ways of learning with notation is one which many of these students associate with beginner-learners or large group contexts. It involves following or reading the music while listening to a performance. As Nóra explains: 'you'd be looking at the notes as well as listening to the teacher' (IntN2), and so, in this approach, the tune is learned by looking, listening and copying. Combining aural and visual in this way is previously documented and associated with learning in many vernacular musics (Waldron and Veblen, 2008; Green, 2002; Breathnach, 1996c, Cranitch, 1996; Veblen, 1991). The next, or fourth, way documented in this study, is when a piece of music is learned from notation, but it is already aurally known to the student. Ellen describes it in terms of being aurally familiar with the tune but using notation to learn and 'remember' it (IntE2). In the fifth way, notation serves as a mnemonic device. This approach is a well-documented Irish traditional music practice, in which a tune is learned aurally, following which the notation is distributed for mnemonic or recall purposes in later playing or practice (Nugent, 2013; Keegan, 2012; Ward, 2008, 2016; Veblen, 1991, 1994; Breathnach, 1996a, 1996c).

5.9.3.1 Music notation in learning: five approaches

These five approaches can be illustrated by drawing on Mainwaring’s (1951) model of cognitive processing in reading notation. In this model he illustrates the first two approaches outlined above (see Fig. 5.4).

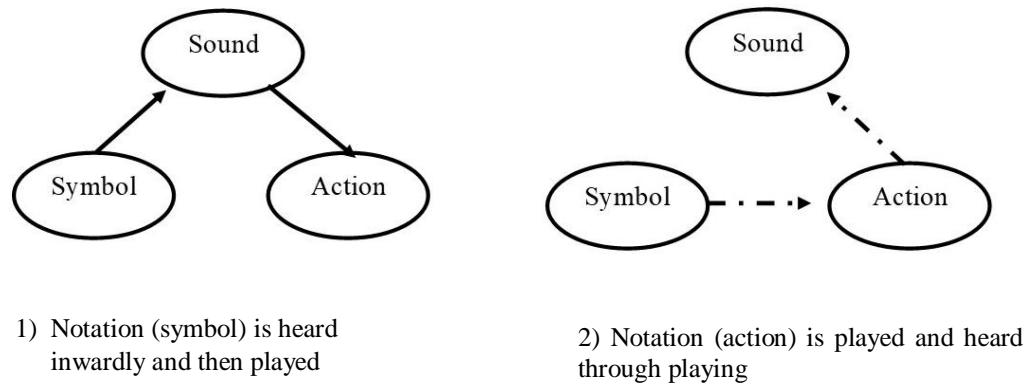
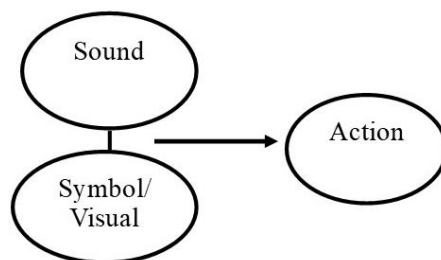


Fig. 5.4 Cognitive processes in reading notation (adapted from Mainwaring, 1951)

By extending Mainwaring’s model, it is possible to illustrate the latter three ways of cognitive processing in Irish traditional ways of learning. The third approach, in which the student follows or reads notation while listening to the tune, involves matching sound with the visual (notation, and teacher demonstration) which is then translated into their own playing (action). This process can be illustrated as follows:

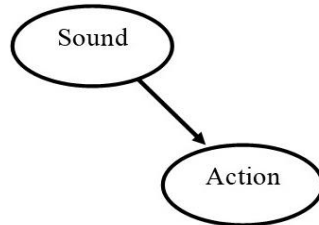


3) & 4) Notation is read or followed while listening, and then played

Fig. 5.5 Cognitive processes: Traditional Irish music (1)

It is likely that in the fourth way, Ellen describes a similar process of matching sound with symbol, except that she matches the tune ‘in her head’ with the notation. The fifth way describes learning by ear. The students in this research describe the process as ‘listening to’ or ‘thinking’ in sound and then playing directly on their instrument. This

explanation—like previous literature—emphasises the process of sound to action, what Priest (1989: 181) described as ‘sound ... translated into kinaesthetic knowledge’. This can be illustrated as follows:



5) Sound is heard and played directly

Fig. 5.6 Cognitive processes: Traditional Irish music (2)

These latter three ways of processing music scaffold learning very differently, with the emphasis remaining on aural learning rather than on notation and the focus not on developing reading skills to any great extent. Thus in these approaches, as Valley (2011) states in relation to Irish traditional music, ‘listening remains the way to understand how to play the music’ (p. 493).

5.9.3.2 Notation in Irish traditional group learning

In relation to Irish traditional music learning, previous literature findings have noted the tendency to incorporate a notational dimension in the larger class contexts (Cawley, 2013; Cotter, 2013; Keegan, 2012; Veblen, 1991, 1994; Breathnach, 1996a, 1996c). In this research, the data show that the learning approach in smaller group learning settings observed were entirely aural, such as Seán’s group uilleann pipes lesson (Chapter 4, Seán *Vignette* 2) and Áine’s group fiddle lesson (Chapter 4, Áine *Vignette* 2). What also emerges in this research are the differing ways in which large group rehearsals function (as opposed to large group instrumental lessons), highlighting changes in the ways of playing and use of notation in these competitive / performance focused rehearsals. Many similarities can be observed between classical and traditional ensemble rehearsals in this respect, with the emphasis on unison of sound and having an exact version of the piece or the tune. Thus, *urtext* and ensemble playing become the focus. Keegan (1996) described notation’s function as ‘operational’ and ‘representational’ in classical music, that is, it serves as both a model for and of performance (Caws, 1974, cited in Keegan 1996: 338-9). Keegan suggests

that in Irish traditional music, the score is ‘directional’, in that it has no role in performance and it acts as a signpost for learning by providing essential information for learning, such as ‘the basic outline of the tune’ (Keegan, 1996: 339). As evidenced in these data, notation’s function changes in some ensemble rehearsal contexts, where much more than the outline of the tune is notated, with the details of the performance visually mapped out in the process, acting as a guide for both rehearsal and performance.

5.9.4 Knowing musics: listening and immersion

Knowing and being ‘familiar’ with a music genre from being immersed in the sounds of the tradition is not a new theme when examining how people learn. As Green (2002) notes, while it is viewed as an important aspect of learning in vernacular musics, it is often overlooked in classical music. In this research, student comments about knowing a tune, having heard it or having it in one’s ear emerge repeatedly, more frequently in respect of traditional learning, though not exclusively so. For example, Conal typically knows the classical repertoire he is studying, as he is an avid music listener and a regular concert attender. For others, it is more a feature of their traditional learning, with many of the students knowing traditional tunes from hearing older siblings, parents or friends play in familial and various social settings, such as sessions, or from listening to audio tracks. For some, it is not necessarily knowing the tune *per se* but, as Bríd explains, understanding the patterns in the music which can often allow one to predict the next part of the tune. She similarly talks about the predictability of chord sequences and cadences in some standard classical repertoire. Conversely, many comment on not ‘knowing’ music when they have not previously heard a piece or a tune, particularly in relation to their classical learning. Seán believes that this makes learning harder and he views the lack of classical recordings as a particular disadvantage. However, some of the students, particularly the string players, report that as classical learning progresses, they seek and consciously listen to the details of other performances, on CD and YouTube to enhance their understanding and interpretation of the pieces. What emerges in this research is that knowing music through prior listening and having a familiarity with the patterns of the genre affects how these students learn. Campbell (2006) found that this type of knowing enabled young Irish traditional musicians to ‘advance more rapidly’, because they had absorbed the music in their environments. In this research, Ellen’s comments draw

attention to how the sight-reading process in Irish traditional music learning is altered by this kind of previous knowledge. She explains that it speeds up the process, as one is not ‘just reading the notes’; one already knows how its ‘supposed to sound’ (IntE2).

5.9.5 Content: tunes, technique, theory

When the content and objectives of the classical and traditional music learning explored here are examined, several differences emerge. In line with previous research findings, the data suggest that the focus in classical music is on learning and practising pieces from notated sources and is ‘associated with a drive to excel musically and technically’ (Creech *et al.*, 2008: 228). The approaches to Irish traditional music learning represented here also reflect the literature, supporting the view that ‘most repertory is learned by ear’ (Hast and Scott, 2004: 43), with the tune representing the ‘vehicle of learning’ (Veblen, 1994: 27). The data also reflect Smith’s (2005) view that taking part in the tradition means being able to play a substantial repertoire, by ear, socially with other musicians.

Fig 5.7 (below) summarises the lesson content of representative examples of classical and traditional learning sessions observed during data collection. (The corresponding *vignettes* from Chapter 4 are indicated in Fig. 5.7). These examples highlight differing learning emphasis and content in both traditions, corresponding to previous findings (Creech *et al.*, 2008; Finnegan, 2007; Hallam, 1998; Veblen, 1994); how technical work, preparatory activities and repertoire are essential in classical music learning, in contrast with an emphasis on learning though the tune in Irish traditional lessons. Reflecting on Fig 5.7 in conjunction with the *vignettes* of Chapter 4,

	<i>Classical Lesson</i>	<i>Traditional Lesson</i>
Maebh	<p><i>One-to-one instrumental lesson (Maebh, Vignette 1)</i></p> <p><i>Warm-ups:</i> conditioning exercises (technical focus): <i>Salzedo</i>, pentatonic arpeggio exercises Scales (HT; C.M; 6th; 10th; Dom7th; inversions), studies,</p> <p><i>Pieces:</i> Sectional & separate –hand practice, attention to technique (posture, hand & finger position, articulation), accurate note- learning, pedalling technique, interpretative</p>	<p><i>Independent learning (Maebh, Vignette 2)</i></p> <p><i>Reviews known repertoire</i> Sets of jigs and reels played to warm up</p> <p><i>Tunes:</i> Listen to new tune Listen and imitate phrases to learn new tune Play from memory Adds further details (chording, rhythmical detail, double stops, ornamentation) to melody</p> <p><i>Final review</i> of new tune from memory</p>

	choices considered through performance and discussion Sight-reading next section (class & home practice) Review: performance of known sections of the piece	
Seán	One-to-one instrumental lesson (Seán, Vignette 1) Warm-ups: Exercises: tone / sound production focus, posture, breath control exercises and advice studies & pieces: sequence of study based activities (practising particular key, metre & rhythmical patterns) culminating in sightreading section of new exam piece - sectional practice, accurate note-reading, tone, phrasing, articulation Review: performance of known sections of piece, advice for weeks practice	Group instrumental tuition (Seán, Vignette 2) teacher plays tune as students get ready to play Review of known previous tune (individually) Student views of his version... suggestions re introducing introduce variations: version of tune, phrasing, stylistic accuracy Tunes: Listen to new tune: examine distinctive features of performance: regulator rhythm, rolls, vibrato, trills Teacher demonstrates features as they listen Discussion of stylistic elements of performance heard, performers ornamentation choices, use of regulators Tune played part by part... Conclusion: set of tunes played Listening and playing suggestions for the week

Fig. 5.7 Examples of lessons sessions: Classical and Irish traditional musics

draws attention to how technical concepts in both traditions are addressed very differently. The emphasis on instrumental and stylistic technique typically associated with classical lessons is evident. Technical development is also evident in the traditional lessons, but the emphasis here is on technical elements of style rather than instrumental technique. Noteworthy are the ways in which stylistic technique is developed, for example, in Seán’s group traditional lesson (Seán: *Vignette 2*). In this lesson, listening, analysis, demonstration and group discussion were all utilised in developing the individual student’s interpretation of the tune. The musicians were encouraged to listen and attend to elements of piper Seamus Ennis’s playing and to bring some of these elements into their own interpretations. This way of examining performer interpretations of pieces ‘as expressed through ornamentation and tune variation’ (Veblen, 1994: 24) has many parallels with what Rink (2002) describes as performer or ‘descriptive analysis’ (p. 36) in the classical learning context.

The data suggest that one of the greatest challenges in switching between these two musics, particularly when playing the two genres on the same instrument, lies in the

different technical approaches involved. The students in this research often found that, in contrast with their classical learning experience, instrumental technique was not directly addressed in their traditional learning. As Áine said, there was an element of ‘look[ing] at other people and see what you’re doing wrong’ (IntA2). Nóra, who started with classical violin and later learned traditional music, perceives learning both musics as a tremendous advantage. For her, it meant that she already had the instrumental technique from violin studies, and therefore learning traditional fiddle was simply a matter of learning the style (IntN2). In general, findings from the participants in this research suggest that if instrumental technique is first developed in classical playing, it serves as a foundation for learning in both traditions. The reverse does not seem to be the case, and classical teachers and students alike emphasise how this can involve a lot of frustration and relearning.

Áine, Nóra and Maebh highlight a number of technical challenges and advantages in switching between playing both musics on the same instruments. For the violinists, many of the technical differences centre on bowing and rhythmical elements; for Maebh, the harpist, technical differences centres around fingering and articulation. These elements reflect what Breathnach (1996a) and Ó Canainn (1993) note as the differing aesthetics underpinning the ways in which sound is produced in both traditions. One challenge for the violinists lies in switching between the different ways of bowing in each music. Áine explains it in terms of how classical bowing is highly structured, and how ‘there is a certain job for every finger’ (IntA1), in comparison with how traditional bowing is supposed to be ‘loose and carefree’ (IntA1) or more ‘relaxed’ (IntN2). Tonal differences arise, as Nóra explains, from different use of the bow in terms of weight, intensity, length of bow stroke and bow speed (for example, using shorter bow strokes to play a traditional reel) (IntN1).

While there has been debate around the use of classical technique in Irish traditional music (Larsen, 2003; Carson, 1986; Ó Canainn, 1978; Breathnach, 1996a), the students in this research comment on the many advantages which classical technique presents when playing Irish traditional music, such as knowing where to place your fourth finger, as opposed to having to ‘guess and stretch up’ (IntA1). Both violinists / fiddle players feel that they have tremendous facility when playing traditional music, due to their classical studies. They view this as an advantage and regard it as being

particularly helpful when working with ornamentation. It would seem that switching back to playing both musics, after playing either music for extended periods, can prove challenging, as exemplified in Aine's description of having to adapt back to classical technique after a summer of playing traditional music with friends at sessions, workshops and festivals. For all three students, there is a sense of being consciously aware of the differences as they play in either genre.

Among the group generally, there is a view that their understanding of theory and musical form enables them in different ways. Seán and Bríd talk about how their harmonic knowledge is helpful when working on the accompaniment side of their traditional playing. Seán discusses how harmonic knowledge helps with the regulators⁶, while for Bríd, it makes the accordion's left hand accompaniment easier. Áine finds that having an elemental understanding of scales and arpeggios is useful in understanding the structure of motifs and phrases in traditional music and helps learning.

5.9.6 Developing style and interpretation

A core element of music learning is learning to play a particular work or tune in the style appropriate to the genre. When these learners talk about style and interpretative matters, they focus on very different elements in both traditions. In classical learning, these young musicians' initial responses to the question of style is to talk about its compositional elements: the composer's style, and the style of the era (in keeping with Cooper's (1997) definition of style). Conal, Áine and Nóra, in particular, explain how some of these style determinants impact on one's playing. For example, differences in bowing style, dynamic range and use of vibrato across different styles. Reflecting on matters of style in Irish traditional music raises such issues as: Irish traditional music as a style, with such sub-styles such as modern-classical and simple-virtuosic; style in relation to specific instruments; style in the context of regional / musical dialects and style in relation to the personal styles of individual noted performers. It is interesting that knowledge of style in traditional music is not formally studied *per se*, yet the data from all the students suggests that it seems to be acquired informally, tacitly, through immersion in a range of musical involvements.

Learning to play a piece or a tune involves interpretation within the stylistic parameters of each tradition. As previous literature notes, many musical elements in both musics are acquired aurally or through the ‘folk knowledge’ (Lennon, 2000a; Keegan, 1996) that is passed on within the traditions, nonetheless, these students switch between different musical interpretative approaches. In their classical learning, the learners refer to the importance of interpreting the composers work with detailed stylistic accuracy, and interpretation in the early stages is largely or mostly achieved through teacher guidance. Some students talk about the challenges of interpretation and the fear of not interpreting ‘correctly’ (IntN1), perhaps reflective of the emphasis on accurately reading the score (Hill, 2002), while others bring up the importance of listening to recordings in developing their interpretation (IntC1, IntM1). They refer to how individual interpretative aspects come to the fore more as the piece develops and one starts to focus on performance. It is interesting to note that they also emphasise the value of listening to recordings and live performances in deepening their understanding of style. Indeed, analysing the performances of others is a constant part of Conal’s music practice. However, he is extremely aware of and cautions about the inherent dangers of ‘imitating’ other performers and their performances. Coincidentally, all four string players in the group listen to (or *hear*) classical repertoire, either in respect of their studies (and encouraged by their teachers), socially or as part of their home and / or college soundscapes. Indeed, the role of the performer and their personal style or ‘individual way’ of expressing a piece of music are at the core of Maebh’s, Áine’s, Nóra’s and Conal’s discussion of style and interpretation in classical learning. The importance of teachers’ contributions, through modelling, demonstrating, guiding and discussion, to their developing understanding of knowing ‘how it is supposed to sound’ (IntE1) is emphasised by all.

In comparison, traditional music learning does not involve a composer’s *urtext* of a tune, and many of the students talk about how they learn versions of tunes. Perhaps reflective of an emphasis on performer interpretation (Larsen, 2003; Ó Canainn, 1993) they describe an individualised approach to learning diverse regional styles, local versions, virtuoso interpretations, modern or traditional tune settings. For example, Seán describes learning a Seamus Ennis uilleann pipes version of a march, Conal discusses learning virtuoso whistle player Mary Bergin’s versions of tunes and Ellen and Bríd refer to learning local versions of tunes. For many of these young musicians

there is a sense of progression in the way they work with versions of traditional tunes. Just as Breathnach (1996a) said, ‘imitating the style of some outstanding player is an excellent way of making progress’ (p. 123), the students comments suggest that there comes a point when, as Maebh says, you develop your own version of the tune’ (IntM2). Ornamentation is an important element in expressing their own creative and interpretative versions of tune. For many ornamentation seems to evolve holistically as part of learning the tune, and is something that develops and changes over time. Agay (1982) notes the improvisatory roots of ornamentation, something that is reflected in Áine and Maebh’s narratives in particular. Collectively, the students’ explanations of interpretation in Irish traditional music emphasise the individual nature of interpretation, the variety of tune versions that are transmitted and, to a greater or lesser extent, an element of choice reflective of local, regional or individual style. This resonates with Molloy’s (2003) explanations of interpretation and how each individual musician ‘puts their own stamp’ on the music reflective of their personality (cited in Larsen, 2003: 36).

Some curious stylistic /interpretative confluences and cross-overs emerge as they negotiate learning in the two genres and within genres (switching between the style differences of Baroque, Classical or Romantic musics in the classical genre, or between older and more modern interpretations in traditional music). One striking difference concerns how listening to recording is utilised in both genres. This researcher suspects that there is sometimes a very fine line between interpretation and imitation, and this is highlighted by Conal and Nóra. Conal believes that in classical music, imitation has a detrimental effect on one’s individual interpretation. What is fascinating is how this is the opposite to what Conal does in traditional music learning, imitating players when learning and trusting that his own style will emerge in time! While one might suspect an element of cross-over from their traditional learning in how learners utilise listening to other performers and performances to inform their classical performance, there is certainly a mental or cognitive switch of approaches for such students as Conal.

5.9.7 Memorising musics

Ginsborg (2004) argues that memorisation builds in the first instance on the ways in which music is learned and created, and these data show that in the cases of learning presented in this research, memorisation evolves differently in tandem with the diverse ways of learning in these two genres. Examples include Conal's memorisation of a classical work consciously and in its entirety in the later stages of the learning process, in contrast with Maebh's example of how learning or indeed hearing a tune in Irish traditional music *is* memorising the tune⁷. However, while these examples identify key characteristics of memorisation, the data reveals that the process is varied and integral to the individual practices of these young musicians.

In their classical music learning, most of these students do not consciously memorise an entire piece, but some explain how, through the learning process, a piece is gradually 'in their hands' and 'in their heads' due to repetition and practice⁸. Conal calls this kind of memorisation in classical music, memorisation by 'osmosis'. Maebh describes the gradual ways of memorisation in classical music as the unintended consequence of a great deal of practice, a process she contrasts with the 'intentional' way in which Irish traditional tunes are memorised from the outset (IntM2). Indeed, for each of these students, memorising in Irish traditional music is part of learning the tune. There is a sense though, for some, that when they talk about learning and memorising a tune, in a curious way it is but the formal point in the life of that tune, in that most talk about having heard the tune, or knowing it 'in their head' before formally learning it. This formal conscious learning is supported by the processes of immersion, similar to patterns observed with other traditional musicians by Campbell (2006) and Hast and Scot (2004). Thus, while the formal conscious learning and memorisation of a tune can take as little as ten minutes in a learning session⁹ (See chapter 4, Conal: *Vignette 2*, Maebh: *Vignette 2*), musical immersion ensures that the tune is returned to again and again in formal and informal ways. Several of the learners comment on the value of consolidating the tune through review, at a later point (IntN2, IntA2, IntS2), through playing, practice, sessions, or adding it to 'sets of tunes' that they are currently playing (IntM2).

5.9.7.1 Memorisation Strategies

The students describe how they use many strategies when learning. Previous findings suggest (Ginsborg, 2004; Hallam, 1998) that classical musicians draw on physical / kinaesthetic memory and use such strategies as repetition and sectional work in learning pieces from memory, and these approaches are reflected in the data.¹⁰ (see Fig. 5.8 below). These young musicians comment on how unreliable such strategies can be. While, for example, repetitive practice contributes to their knowing the tune, or knowing ‘what it sounds like’, they would not ‘risk’ relying on this type of automatic memorisation¹¹ in an exam or classical performance situation (IntN1, IntB1).

<i>Learning processes which contribute to memorisation (Classical)</i>	Nóra	Áine	Maebh	Conal	Ellen	Bríd
Repetitive play/ practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Sectional memorisation		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Physical memory of where fingers go	✓		✓	✓		✓
Inner hearing: In my head / Knowing the tune /from ear / what it sounds like	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Visualising (patterns, fingering, picturing hands)	✓			✓		✓
Sectional work (memorising difficult sections)		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Playing away from the instrument		✓	✓			
Listening to pieces (CD/YouTube)			✓	✓		✓
Osmosis				✓		
Passage by passage / chunking				✓		
Reading (consciously memorising / remembering)			✓	✓	✓	
Score analysis		✓	✓	✓		

Based on strategies identified during interviews

One student is omitted as, in his view, he does not memorise classical music

Fig. 5.8: Memorisation in Classical Music

The literature points to how classical repertoire becomes longer and more complex in the more advanced grades and automatic memorisation strategies are insufficient for a successfully memorised performance (Ginsborg, 2004; Aiello and Williamon, 2002; Williamon, 2002; Hallam, 1997, 1998), and this is also noted by Nóra and Bríd. The data from this group of students reveals that at this stage of their learning, most perform with the score and rely on memorisation only for particularly difficult or intricate sections, or for passages that are more easily memorised than read (IntE2,

IntM2). Literature findings suggest that ‘for memory to become reliable and long-lasting, a deeper understanding is essential’ (Aiello and Williamon, 2002: 176) and analytical approaches are perceived as being useful in scaffolding memorisation in more complex and longer classical works.¹² This type of deep and deliberate memorisation is reflected in comments, particularly by Conal, who consciously and deliberately memorises pieces in advance of performance. He describes this process as involving many additional strategies of aural and score analysis, listening and extensive sectional practice (IntC1).

As already indicated above, in their traditional learning the students describe having a tune memorised or ‘mostly’ memorised by learning it. Áine gives a sense of the processes involved when she talks about memorising through listening a lot to a piece or listening a lot while learning it (IntA2). For Conal, the proof of whether it is memorised or not is if ‘you can just hear it in your head’ (IntC2). While Ellen adopts a different approach in traditional music learning by ‘looking’ at and memorising written notation (IntE2), it is Maebh who insightfully states that ‘when I’m learning it, that’s what I’m doing ... like memorising it (IntM2). Thus, for those who learning aurally, how a tune is learned is essentially how it memorised.

In the absence of notation, a range of other strategies are drawn upon to recall or remember a tune for further practice or music making. Fig. 5.9: Irish traditional Music Memorisation (below) summarises the range of recall strategies that these musicians use. While they are largely reflective of the types of strategies identified in the literature, (Lillestam, 1996; Priest: 1989)¹³, several additional written and visual strategies are also suggested by the data, including personalised notebooks of repertoire (tune titles and opening motifs of tunes noted down), written tune lists and notation (ABC or staff notation) as a mnemonic resource.

<i>Specific recall strategies</i>	Nóra	Áine	Maebh	Conal	Seán	Ellen	Brid
Remembered from learning			✓	✓		✓	✓
Aural recall (inner hearing / recalling its sound)		✓	✓	✓			✓
Playing it through in his/her head			✓	✓			
Tune association							

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by sets • Tune names • Track number 		✓		✓			
	✗	✗		✓	✓		✗
		✓					
Physical memory (fingers knowing what to do)	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Remembering particular phrases/ sections		✓			✓		
Situational recall							✓
Listening to audio recordings	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
When someone else starts the tune	✓			✓			✓
Written notation (in memorisation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The notebook (tune name + few note) • Tune list (tune names and/or few notes) • Notation as mnemonic resource 							
			✓				✓
		✓		✓			
						✓	

Fig. 5.9: Memorisation in Irish traditional music: Specific recall strategies

5.9.7.2 The habit of memorising

One finding in these data draw attention to the role that learning habits play in music practices. This idea of the habit of memorising emerges in participants and teachers' data alike. One classical instrumental teacher observed how music students often do not have the 'habit' of memorising entire works, thus rendering it a very difficult task for them (IntC4). This teacher's views resonate with comments by Ellen and Áine, who suggest that while they memorised classical pieces in their earlier years, they are now either 'out of the habit' of memorising or it has become 'too hard' in the higher grades (IntA1, IntE1). However, this absence of memorisation is linked to several other factors in these data. A number of the participants comment on how memorisation is not expected, particularly in the more advanced classical grades. Most describe having the piece memorised in that it is 'in their hands' and 'in their head', but the technical structure of the piece is not securely memorised in terms of such elements as bowing and performance directions of a piece (IntA1). Another factor mentioned is the importance of having the score in certain performance contexts, such as in ensemble performance (IntC1). It is also interesting to note how this concept of the habit of memorising, as noted by Larsen (2003), also emerges in the students' traditional learning discourse. For example, Áine suggests that at one level,

memorising traditional tunes also happens out of ‘habit’. While many factors contribute to their changing approaches to memorisation in classical learning, it is those who have maintained the *habit* that continue to memorise their entire (longer and more complex) pieces in their classical practice.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the individual learning practices of these bimusical learners. The individual nature of the learning process is highlighted, while common themes in relation to practices within and across the two traditions have also been discussed. Chapter 6 will consider the outcomes presented here and in chapter 5 within the framework of analysis, presented in chapter 3.

¹ Two students, Nóra and Conal, use the term mode when they describe the different modes of learning in which they are engaged. This meaning of ‘mode’ applies to ways of learning, such as classical and Irish traditional learning, rather than Campbell’s (1991) of the word in the sense of modalities and learning theory modalities (Campbell, 1998, 2002).

² ABC notation or ABCs refers to ‘the most common simple tune notation system which is alphabetic, using the letter A-G to represent the note pitches’ (Vallelly, 2011).

³ Conal and the researcher discuss a ABC notation example they are viewing, commenting on how Conal in describing the notation says ‘there’s arrows everywhere as to where we leave in, like ornamentation variations and everything so it does get kind of confusing’ (IntC3) ‘You can see that notes are changed and there’s all sorts of marks on the side and things circled and comments beside them: ‘second time round’ here. ‘Hop’ and then variations for the end of the tune. The ‘hop’ would be so that you would all hop off the note for dramatic effect in the group and stuff’. (IntC3).

⁴ In explaining her understanding of the different styles, she talks about and contrasts ‘older’ styles of traditional music, (placing her current teacher in this category) with how she plays. She contrasts this ‘older’ ‘very steady’ style with her ‘modern’ style which has ‘a little more ... not flowing’ aspect to it, what she describes as music with ‘a flight to it’ (IntB2).

⁵ Nugent (2015) SMEI conference paper: Reading the Score... Critical, desirable, incidental?

⁶ The *uilleann* pipes have three regulators, and along with the drones provide rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment to the melody.

⁷ Commenting on when she is learning a tune, she says ‘that’s what you are doing ... memorising it’, which she describes as an intentional deliberate process, whereas there is also the non-deliberate way in which one memorises from hearing: ‘a lot of the time I wouldn’t be consciously memorising stuff like I would learn stuff just by hearing it like and then play it without knowing what it is’ (IntM2).

⁸ Nóra talks about memorising as ‘the physical memory in my fingers’ as a young piano student, but now memorising in terms of it being in her ‘fingers’ and ‘from her ear, knowing the actual tune’.

⁹ In the earlier profile section Maebh distinguishes between ‘learning sessions’ and ‘practice sessions’ (see Maebh, *Vignette 2*).

¹⁰ As Hallam (1998) notes, the combined strategies of ‘playing by ear (aural), memory for movement (kinaesthetic) and visual (remembering where the music is on the page)’ function very effectively for young classical learners but are insufficient, as pieces ‘become longer and more complex’ (p. 148).

¹¹ Hallam (1998) in examining memorisation strategies discusses automatically acquired aural, visual and kinaesthetic codes (p.148).

¹² Aiello and Williamon (2002) note that Hallam (1997) found that strategies adopted by professional musicians to memorise a composition were related in part to the difficulty of the piece: a more analytical approach for longer and complex works, automated processes used to memorise.

¹³ Lillestam (1996) found that ear learning musicians use ‘other means’ of remembering music, such as relying on hearing (auditive), visual imaging of instruments or other visual patterns, remembering ‘how it feels’ (tactile-motoric), verbal memory and /or mental imagery (pg 201-202). Priest (1989) noted the importance of the kinaesthetic senses to support aural learning.

CHAPTER 6

THE BIMUSICAL LEARNER – *IDIREATARTHU*: THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

6.1 Introduction

This research set out to explore the perceptions, beliefs and music practices of the bimusical learner involved in playing and learning both Irish traditional music and western classical music. Drawing on a wide and diverse range of literature, chapter 1 attempted to define the phenomenon and to consider its evolution and continuing existence in the Irish musical context, where Irish traditional music and classical music are both discussed in terms of ‘streams of tradition’. Chapter 2 explored further literature focusing on the processes involved in instrumental music learning, examining and discussing the traditions and conventions associated with the two genres under consideration and culminating in the following research questions:

- What learning processes are involved when a student is engaged in learning music in different genres?
- What are the bimusical practices, contexts, and confluences involved in music learning for these participants?
- What beliefs, meanings and identities do participants construct as a result of their experience of multi-music making?

Chapter 3 outlined the research methodology, highlighting the phenomenological focus of the study and presenting an analytical framework within which to consider the various data sets. Chapters 4 and 5 addressed the research questions and explored and discussed the perceptions, beliefs and music practices of the seven bimusical learners at the heart of this study—students who simultaneously engage in learning classical and Irish traditional musics. While the reality of bimusicality among these students is portrayed, what quickly emerges is how these young musicians do not seem to conform to the image of the fluent or native bimusical musician, as suggested in earlier literature. No two student narratives tell the same story. Each of these individual accounts are nuanced, highlighting differing degrees of immersion, participation,

commitment and to some extent fluency in their involvements in the two music traditions. Thus, what emerges in this research is more accurately described as a spectrum of bimusical practices, which is differently configured by social, musical, individual and contextual factors. In exploring the main outcomes and implications of this research, it is these wider overarching themes that are the main focus of this final chapter. Using the analytical framework presented in chapter 3 (and included below in Fig. 6.1), and keeping the bimusical learner at the centre of the discussion, the first part of this chapter will attempt to bring together and discuss issues relating to context, content, process, ownership and intentionality. This will be followed by a reflection on the research methodology, some ideas for further research and, finally, some concluding thoughts.

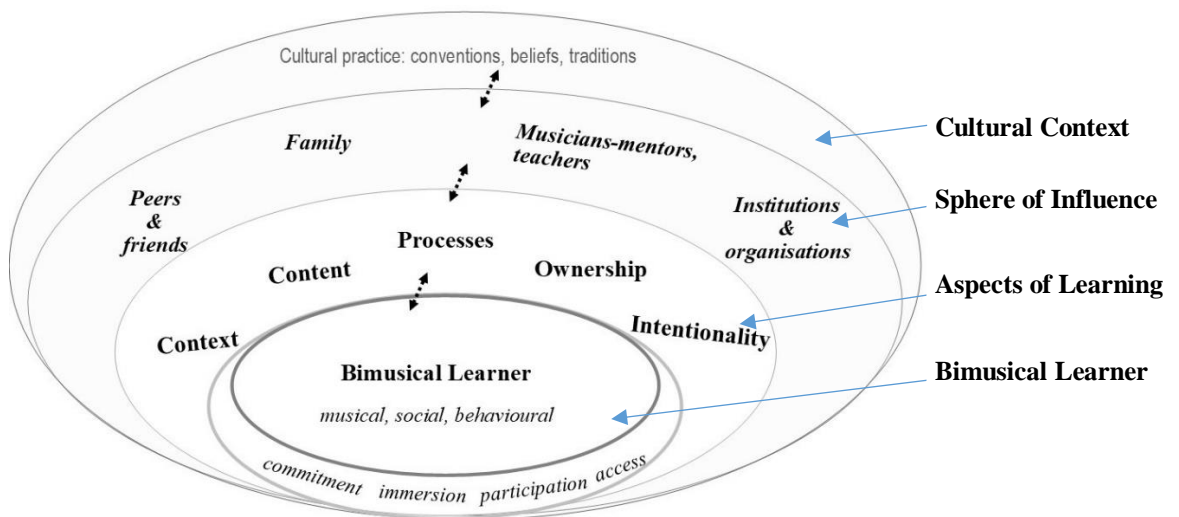


Fig. 6.1 Bimusical learning: Analysis framework

6.2 Learning Processes

6.2.1 Aural and literate processes

One of the most striking aspects of the data presented above is how these students use both aural approaches and notation-based learning. While much of the literature links aural approaches to Irish traditional music learning and notation-based learning to classical study, these narratives suggest that at times the participants rely solely on aural or on notation, while at other times their learning involves some cross-over

elements. The individualised nature of each participant's approach comes across strongly.

As already discussed, the use of notation has been the subject of considerable debate in both music traditions. McPherson and Gabrielsson (2002) focus on core challenges in notation-based instrumental learning. In the Irish traditional world, the debate often centres on the role of notation in an aurally based tradition (Cotter, 2013; Vallely, 2011; Ward, 2008; Keegan, 1996, 2012; Smith, 1999; Veblen, 1991, 1994; Breathnach, 1996a, 1996b). These different debates are reflected in the students' highly nuanced use of notation across the two genres. Five distinct ways of learning through or with notation emerge, largely reflective of the aural or literate approaches associated with these genres. All agree that learning classical music through notation is the expected approach. In accordance with the literature, instrumental differences emerge: the development of sight-reading skills is emphasised in the pianists' learning, while a more blended aural / notation approach seems evident among the string players. In their traditional music learning, as in previous research, there is a lack of consensus regarding how notation should be used. It is interesting how several of the learners believe that for the more advanced player, the use of notation in traditional music changes learning, as it may negatively affect both how one listens and the detail of what one learns. The opposite argument is made for the use of notation in classical music, where the score ensures accuracy, enables detailed technical structuring and empowers the development of musical and interpretative elements. The truth of these contrasting views perhaps rests in the differing underlying learning processes these learners negotiate in both traditions.

6.2.2 'Different kinds of thought processes'

Individual student narratives reveal how the two learning approaches necessitate cognitively switching from one learning 'mode' to another. The six students who generally learn by ear in traditional music explain how it involves a process of 'listening to' or 'thinking' in sound, which is then 'fingered' or 'played' (in pitch) on their instrument. This explanation, like some previous literature, emphasises the process of sound to action—what Priest (1989: 181) described as 'sound ... translated into kinaesthetic knowledge'. This way of learning leads directly to memorised performance. In classical music learning, the students describe the process as either

(1) reading and hearing / thinking or (2) reading and decoding musical text, which they then play on an instrument, somewhat similar to Mainwaring's model of literacy development involving sound, symbol and action, referred to in chapter 5. This would appear to be a much longer process and involves further strategies to bring a piece to memorised performance level. Thus, bimusical learning involves 'different kinds of thought processes' or different cognitive routes for these students. In discussing Irish traditional music, Smith (2005) argues that the learning processes have proved to be 'surprising resilient' (p. 70). This study would suggest that this conclusion can be applied to both genres as the students choose to adhere to the distinct ways of learning in each tradition, despite having the skills to do otherwise. Similar findings have been observed among popular musicians (Lilliestam, 1996).

6.2.3 Cognitive processes: continuities and discontinuities

The processes described above support the musical activities of each genre very differently. What the data show is that, when learning by ear, the same cognitive processes underpin the various activities of learning, playing, practising and performing in Irish traditional music. Thus, when Maebh says that 'learning *is* memorising' (IntM3), she draws attention to this continuity of process and the way in which hearing and thinking is translated directly into playing in this vernacular music. As a result, there is a natural flow between learning, practising, playing or performing which, in this researcher's view, underpins the ease with which these students participate in their many formal and informal traditional music activities. It suggests that playing and performing skills are an integrated, in-built and continuous part of the traditional learning process. One suspects that it is this spontaneity and flow of participation that is similarly evoked in Irish phrases, such as 'abair amhráin', which translates as 'speak a song' or 'play us a tune'¹, or in the comments of musicians of other vernacular genres on the integration of learning across 'listening, practising and performing' (Lilliestam, 1996).

Classical learning processes involve a very different transition from learning to performing. It is a more complex progression involving what Hallam (1997: 96) describes as a 'mismatch' of codes. The complex learning process underpinning the memorisation of classical music was discussed in chapter 2. The data, as presented in chapter 5, highlight the differing and discontinuous cognitive processes and the

particular challenges experienced by the students in memorising classical music. In this research, one wonders if these underlying cognitive processes have, in some way, contributed to the very different patterns of student participation in the two music genres, identified earlier in chapter 4. One could speculate also as to whether it is a factor in the lack of student involvement in classical performance. Interestingly, several of the teachers in this research attributed the greater sense of ease in these students' classical performance to their traditional learning and playing,

6.3 Ownership and Participation

While observing the students' many music learning and making activities, this researcher (I) was struck by their sense of musical place, of ownership and of embeddedness, particularly in their traditional music making. For Conal and Maebh, this was evident across both genres. Similar observations were made by a number of the classical and traditional teachers in this study², which prompts the question: from where does this sense of ownership and embeddedness emanate? It appears to be linked to the diversity of their music making, their many ways of participating in music and its many contexts.

The roles or the ways in which they participate connects with Folkestad's (2006) description of 'ownership' in learning discussed in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 4 reveals how these students were involved in a diverse range of activities, which can be expert-led, self-regulated, partially guided, peer-led or community-driven, depending on the activity and the context. Also evident was how 'decisions of the activity' (Folkestad, 2006: 142) are shared or influenced by those in their social sphere: teachers, peers, friends and indeed families. A further factor was how ownership patterns change, due in part to the different cycles of learning in each tradition, but also linked to particular stages or 'risk points' (Lamont, 2011) irrespective of genre.

The data show how this rich diversity of music making enables the students to take part in different roles within their musical communities. Similar to Green's (2002) findings, there is an undeniable motivational factor linked to peer-collaborative activities where the students themselves are the decision makers. However, what is equally evident is how they value the many activities in which they participate in

different roles—as learners, as leaders and as collaborators. Jorgensen (1997) noted these different ways of participating and positioning within different musical spheres. In this research the students are differently positioned in their classical and traditional music making. Conal and Maebh can be viewed as centrally positioned in both classical and traditional music practices, though there are annual seasonal variations. For other students, connections are ‘more peripheral’ in their classical music practice. Many are centrally positioned in their traditional music practice. For students such as Seán, this extends to a ‘life-style [that] is symbolised and integrated’ by this involvement (Jorgensen, 1997: 40).

6.4 Learning Context

The students’ backgrounds and social-cultural context were considered in chapter 4. The data revealed the differing ways in which classical and traditional music activities permeate their daily music making at home, in the wider social scene and in formal learning contexts. Findings confirm the typical expert-led formal patterns in classical learning activities, but what is striking and somewhat surprising is the substantial element of these students’ weekly learning sessions, in both musics, which centre on ‘formal’ learning activities and contexts. This pattern is particularly evident in the under-eighteen age category, where Irish traditional competitive events and / or classical music assessments are a primary focus in learning for many. Thus, in reality, while there is a very considerable and highly visible social dimension to these students’ traditional music involvement, for most it is founded on the less visible, but regular, deliberate, expert-led tuition by master musicians (as in classical learning) in their formative years. Incorporating multiple ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ activities and contexts in folk learning is not new, as is already evidenced in Feintuch’s (1995) description of formal / informal contexts and activities in relation to learning the Northumbrian pipes.

A very significant aspect of their many settings is how they facilitate socialising in music. What emerges from these data is how all emphasise the social-communal aspects of their music making in motivating them to practise and play music. The social dimension of Irish traditional music and the value of music-making with friends, like-minded peers and family members receives particular attention in these data.

McCarthy (1999: 15) commented on the rich music network and opportunities to participate in music-making enabled by the local communal base associated with Irish traditional music. Flynn and Johnston (2016) similarly draws attention to traditional music learning's social context. These data suggest that settings have changed, but the influence of familial, social and formal learning contexts on the students traditional music learning persists. Indeed, it could be said that for most of the participants, the multiple ways and multiple contexts of their traditional music practice permeate the home and community becoming the music of their everyday lives. The lack of socialising in classical music (beyond the lesson), as is currently the case for four of the seven participants suggests that, in this genre the primary focus is on learning to learn (Nettl, 2005; Saar, 1999), or music learning in the formal academic sense.

Adopting a 'dynamic view' (Folkestad, 2006: 142) of learning contexts proved essential in this research, given the sometimes overlapping and changing nature of the students' learning settings. For example, Bríd learns both musics at the same institution, while Maebh learns both musics with the same teacher on successive weeks in the same lesson. Both students have changed to more formal learning settings for traditional music for various reasons. These data reflect what has already been documented in the literature: that learning changes in the transition from communal to more formal learning settings. However it is no longer the case that formal settings essentially mean formal ways of learning (Green, 2002). The experience of students in this research suggests that while certain formal elements in learning, such as assessment, or perhaps a more literate approach are adapted, other aspects remain unchanged. Therefore, is context a 'crucial factor' in music learning? Schippers (2005: 30) believes that it is crucial in expressing 'the full reality of each distinct musical practice'. In 1999 McCarthy drew attention to the effect of changing contexts to the interpersonal and affective dynamics of classical and Irish traditional musics. Bríd's comments also reflect this, alluding to the changing parameters of her current traditional music making in the more formalised, performance-based institutional context, alerting us perhaps to how values and practices in a more formal context can differ from community based participatory contexts.

6.5 Framing traditions: Issues of Intentionality

Folkestad (2006: 138) suggested that music learning could be differentially understood on the basis of intentionality, or how music is framed. That is, whether the mind is focused towards learning how to play, or towards playing. Saars (cited in Folkestad, 2006) described it as the differences between pedagogical and artistic framing in learning. When the many aspects of these students' bimusical learning are considered, what becomes apparent is how the students' engagement in the two musics is fundamentally very differently framed, as are the two traditions themselves.

The students switch between notation-based and aural learning; approaches which frame their learning very differently. Conal and Maebh's descriptions stress how working with classical notation involves attending to the composer's *urtext* in developing accurate stylistic interpretation and the necessary technical structure, so that one can accomplish the best possible performance of a master's work. Detailed structured practice and technically excellent playing is emphasised. It is an approach that focuses on working on a small number of pieces in detail over a considerable length of time. In contrast, many of the students point out that when learning aurally in the traditional context, the emphasis (at their stage of learning) is on developing their individual style through listening and emulating the great players of the tradition by drawing on ideas, the nuance and techniques heard as they continually expand their repertoire of tunes. Tunes are revisited over time in many ways, through sessions, playing with others or adding new tunes to existing sets. Sometimes there is detailed individual practice, but as Conal says 'it's just playing more so than practising' (IntC2). The data highlight how each approach is orientated differently. Their classical learning is framed or predominantly focused on learning to play, whereas learning by ear in traditional music orients towards playing. This emphasis is reinforced in the differing contents of the lessons. In classical lessons, exercises, scales and studies are used to enhance and improve individual technical skill in learning. In traditional lessons, while there were no scales, or exercises³, technical elements of style were emphasised in conjunction with aural immersion and an orientation towards expanding and playing repertoire.

The different ways in which these traditions are framed is also apparent in the students' broader participation in each genre. The importance of socialising in music, the range of musical contexts and the role played by the wider community are key factors. The framing of their classical learning as 'learning how to play' (Folkestad, 2006: 142) is further magnified by the fact that many of them have dropped out of ensemble playing. What is surprising is how underlying cognitive processes as discussed earlier appear almost to conspire to maintain these differences in framing.

Curiously, these differently framed traditions prove quite complementary in the students learning and music making. Such students as Áine, Seán and Maebh comment on enjoying the differing challenges and emphasis of both musics. For many there seems to be a perceived inherent individual balance between self-development or academic-career orientated classical studies, while a social-leisure focus pervades their many traditional activities.

6.6 Negotiating Bimusicality: Codeswitching

Cottrell (2007) found that professional musicians musically, socially and behaviourally code-switched between the different genres that they perform. Interesting differences emerge when we look at the experiences of bimusical learners rather than bimusical professional performers. Cottrell (2007) emphasised the importance of cognitively conscious code-switching in order to move successfully between the various genres (p. 99). In this study, what emerges is that these students are not necessarily conscious of such differences, particularly in respect of social and behavioural code-switching. They follow (and switch between) the social and behavioural mores of the traditions, observing different codes of practice (habits of practising-approaches, attitudinal, physical), participating to varying extents in differing lesson, ensemble and social structures of each music. However, perhaps due to the immersive ways in which they are involved, what is interesting is how social / behavioural switching seems natural, intuitive, and for the most part unconsciously done, unlike the professional musicians cited in Cottrell (2007, 2004).

Musical code-switching presents a different set of challenges for all. As noted earlier in this section, these learners code-switch between the differing aural-literate learning

processes and practising approaches of each genre. They also negotiate the different style-codes of classical and Irish traditional musics: tone and intonation, rhythmical emphasis, approaches to ornamentation, style and interpretative emphasis. A number of students talk about ‘local’ *style-switching* within each genre: string players describe switching between Baroque and Romantic styles, while the accordion player switches between her individual ‘modern’ accordion style and an ‘older’ traditional style in her accordion lessons. However, the greatest challenge is for those who play both musics on the same instrument. These data show that style-switching between genres on the same instrument involves cognitively and consciously code-switching between the different technical requirements of both musics, (for example, bowing, fingering, harmonic aspects, articulation, tone) and, as noted in individual narratives in chapter 5, often contradictory understandings of foundation elements.

Individual differences in the ways that they code-switch suggest that students such as Maebh are conscious of musically and physically switching, while others in the study seem less conscious of the differences. One can speculate as to whether this concerns (a) playing both musics on the same instrument, (b) starting the second genre as an older learner or (c) being a reflective practitioner? In this study, overall consciousness of differences and consciousness of switching between them seems greater for those who play both musics on the same instrument rather than playing each music on different instruments.⁴ On the other hand, Bríd’s piano repertoire incorporates a number of music styles, and what she discusses suggests many cross-overs and a sense of adopting a somewhat hybrid approach in her particular performance style. Whether this hybrid style is a deliberate choice or reflective of minimal code switching is not certain.

Tokita (2014) found that music making that involved different genres was rarely equally balanced or fluent in both genres, but more often ‘unbalanced in favour of’ one or other genre (p.168, 171). A lack of balance between the genres is reflected at a number of levels in these data. As data in chapter 4 showed, there are considerable differences in how these learners balance *time* spent in each genre. For students such as Seán, traditional music endeavours occupy the greater amount of time. Others maintain a seasonal balance between term time and holiday. Another particular

imbalance has been the differing degrees of participation and engagement in performance and ensemble activities across both traditions.

6.7 Reflecting on the Research Methodology

As discussed in chapter 3, the research draws on a qualitative hermeneutic research framework with a view to gaining in-depth insight and understanding of bimusical learning. A range of research methods were employed, providing multiple sources of evidence. While the core focus was on the bimusical learner and their perceptions and practices, the involvement of parents and teachers in the research process also provided valuable material that allowed for triangulation of data. The study was undoubtedly enriched by the wide range of methods and data sources engaged with, including: observations of instrumental lessons and a wide range of student music activities and performances; multiple interviews with each learner and supporting interviews with parents and teachers; video-recordings of student self-directed learning and a collection of a range of documents and artefacts, including concert programmes, television footage and website information. The participants were eager, articulate and very well able to share their considerable knowledge and wisdom. The resulting rich data was both enlightening and challenging. One of the challenges of the research process was managing the huge volume of different types of data that emerged, both from the perspective of finding ways of organising and presenting the data and also from the standpoint of establishing an appropriate framework for analysis. How these issues were successfully resolved is outlined in chapter 3. However, with hindsight, given the volume and range of data sources, it would perhaps have been helpful to have employed a data management package.

The data was collected in one term and it could be argued that research over a longer period of time may have revealed further insights. For example, depending on the learner, it is possible that there might be seasonal changes in the learners' music making that it was not possible to observe within the time constraints of the project. However, it is hoped that the in-depth individual interviews that encouraged the respondents to discuss the totality of their music activities will have captured the main issues. It was also considered prudent to limit the data collection period to ensure the

feasibility of data collection and the manageability of the various data sets, an issue already referred to above.

Questions might be raised in relation to the need for researcher objectivity in the role of observer. In this context it is important to consider that the researcher's interpretation of the learning processes observed in lessons and other music activities were used in conjunction with the learners' perspectives as revealed in interviews and were informed by interviews with parents and teachers, ensuring triangulation of data. In addition, as indicated above, the recording of the lessons allowed for repeated viewings and explorations rather than on-the-spot inferences. In this context, it is also worth noting that the researcher's own wide-ranging experience as a bimusical learner, performer and teacher informed the analysis and interpretation of the observations in both genres. The *vignettes* of learning were included in an effort to portray the individualised and contextualised nature of the bimusical learners' music making and learning. The researcher's experience in both genres was also an asset in gaining the trust and co-operation of the participants. Having 'insider' status in both musics undoubtedly eased the way in terms of ensuring participation and enhanced the interviews in terms of the breadth and depth of the issues covered.

While the sample involved is relatively small and the research located within the greater Dublin area, the participants selected cover a range of instruments and instrument combinations, present a range of geographical and social-cultural backgrounds and provide examples of various levels of formal and informal involvement in the two musics. In keeping with the qualitative hermeneutic approach adopted, the decision was taken at the initial stages of the research process to explore the phenomenon through an in-depth study of a limited number of cases. I believe that this has succeeded in providing real insight into bimusical learners and their musical worlds. However, this is not to suggest that generalisations should be made from the findings presented here. The emphasis throughout has been on ensuring the credibility, trustworthiness, dependability and reliability of the research as it attempts to provide a window into bimusicality in action (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

The use of technology within the data collection process deserves mention. The use of video in recording the lesson observations allowed for repeated viewings from a range

of perspectives and was a significant factor in facilitating the stimulated recall sessions that formed part of the second interviews with each learner. The stimulated recall approach was crucial in helping students reflect on and make sense of the reality of their engagement with the two musics. The data emerging was particularly important in revealing and helping to explain the various cognitive processes at work in playing and learning to play both musics. The use of technology in capturing the students' self-directed learning was also important. While the literature shows how video has been used to explore musicians' and students' approaches to practising, the focus in this research was slightly different in that it was trying to capture not only the learning processes involved, but also the students' perceptions and analysis of those learning processes that were entirely self-directed.

This research focused on bimusical learning. In many respects it would have been easier to focus exclusively on learning processes and such an approach would most probably have resulted in more manageable data sets. However, viewing bimusical learning in the broader context of social-cultural practice draws attention to the deeper enculturative elements experienced by these young musicians, which might have been omitted if viewed purely as code-switching or the ability to engage two sets of codes. This exploration of social-cultural issues obviously also necessitated the preliminary historical examination of the 'streams of tradition', and I consider that this material has informed and enhanced the overall impact of the research. In a similar way, adopting a bimusical learner rather than a teacher or music performer perspective, reveals and emphasises particular aspects of music transmission and learning conventions in differing traditions, indicating how learning processes underpin and facilitate music making and participation. In this research, adjusting this learner-lens to the bifocal view of the classical / traditional learner draws attention to the many contrasts and confluences across these music learning traditions.

Establishing an appropriate analytical framework presented significant challenges, as it involved synthesising diverse learning processes and transmission practices through the holistic lens of the bimusical individual. In the end, Folkestad's model allowed for the bringing together of formal and informal learning literature and provided a basis from which to proceed. The literature tended to differentiate formal and informal learning as separate and distinct processes or as specific points on a continuum. In this

research, the continuum view, as posited by Folkestad, was not particularly helpful, as these bimusical learners revealed themselves as engaging in a spectrum of learning activities, which do not fit neatly into any particular ‘formal-informal’ sequence. To move from the perceived ‘stable’ inflections in the literature to a more ‘dynamic’ perspective required a conceptual shift on the part of the researcher. This proved essential to formulating the analytical framework, which I consider to have been effective in helping to articulate the individual voice of the bimusical learner in its broader social-cultural context.

6.8 Potential for Future Research

While this research focuses on a small number of cases of bimusical learners, there is evidence to suggest that this learning phenomenon is more widespread than hitherto acknowledged—for example, 40 percent of the Irish National Youth Orchestra learn bimusically⁵—and it should prove fruitful to further explore aspects of the findings among a larger cohort of learners, possibly even, resources allowing, through a nationwide survey. It would be interesting also to explore some of the issues raised in this study in the context of multimusic learning, where learners engage across three or more musics, and to explore the impact of shared contexts involving a range of musical genres.

While this research project has focused on the student’s individual and social experience of bimusical learning, the data gathered are more wide-ranging, incorporating interviews with teachers, and parents, and suggest further avenues of research focusing on such issues as teachers’ perceptions and practices and the role of parents in bimusical learning contexts. In the current research, student self-perceptions and identity support the main learning focus. However, data collected suggest that a cross-generational reflection on experiences of bimusicality among these students and the bimusical teachers of the study would prove insightful. A number of specific emergent findings of the study are worthy of further research, including the issue of bimusical learning in formal contexts. It would be interesting to explore how the experiences of Bríd and Maebh in learning both musics in formal contexts resonate with other formal contexts, such as *Maoin Cheoil an Chláir* (see McCarthy, 1996, 2004b). Learning processes, content, and affective culture could be examined in these

changing contexts. The related topic of the effects of shared learning contexts on different musics—for example, classical, jazz and folk music—might also be considered.

This research incorporated a range of instruments played by these bimusical learners. In some cases, issues relating to bimusical learning arose specifically in relation to particular instruments or families of instruments and were often linked to factors such as the differing conventions and traditions associated with the two genres. It would appear that further research focusing on specific instruments could prove useful for bimusical learners and their teachers. The subject of technique came to the fore in a number of instances, suggesting that there is scope for a more focused study on the issue of instrument-specific technical approaches in bimusical learning. Further investigation of this area in the overall context of code-switching, already addressed in the context of the professional bimusical musician, could also be beneficial.

The research has highlighted the debates around aural-based and notation-based learning in the two genres, drawing attention to the nuanced explanations provided by these seven bimusical learners. While recent research (Green, 2010, 2012) has explored the implications of incorporating substantial aural-based approaches into classical learning contexts, there is scope for further research into the function and uses of notation in learning in differing contexts. The role of technology in instrumental learning has also figured in this study, and this is another area that is becoming increasingly important for young musicians in both genres. Data was collected for this study in 2011. It identified new patterns of listening particularly among classical learners due to the effects of YouTube and online access. In the intervening period, one suspects that internet usage has dramatically increased, and this could prove an interesting area for further research. While online learning in traditional music has been well researched (Ward, 2016; Kenny, 2016; Waldron and Veblen, 2008), further exploration of online access and new patterns of listening among younger learners in both genres would contribute to this growing body of literature and would undoubtedly be of value to learners and teachers alike.

This study has drawn attention to the differing approaches to performance and participation in music making between the two genres, pointing to the emphasis on

participation and active music making in Irish traditional music and the emphasis on learning in the classical music context. Given the current interest in lifelong learning and in the role of music and the arts in people's lives, it would be worthwhile investigating the musical pathways pursued by bimusical learners beyond the teenage years. A related study could explore modes and levels of musical engagement in the two genres in the context of lifelong learning.

Two additional topics that could be further explored are the significance of differences in ownership and learner agency in different learning traditions and the related issue of drop-out rates among traditional and bimusical learners. This latter topic has received considerable attention in classical learning, but examining drop-out rates in other genres is equally relevant. When setting up this research project, the differences in the numbers of young students (under 15) that learned traditional music or learned bimusically seemed dramatically different when compared with the cohort of students learning in the over 15 age group. This suggests that there is a substantial undocumented drop-out factor in Irish traditional music and in bimusical approaches to learning that has yet to be investigated.

6.9 *Idireatarthu*: The Best of Both Worlds⁶

Like others before (Cottrell, 2007; Rosenberg, 1995; Hood, 1960), I too have reservations about the term bimusicality, particularly, as already noted by Rosenberg, its implicit boundedness. Titon (1995) and Cottrell (2007) both adopted the term in its metaphorical sense, yet does this suffice? Other have proposed alternative terms (O'Flynn, 2005, Baily, 2007), and more recently these musicians have been described as 'code-switching musicians' (Isbell and Stanley, 2016). For this researcher, this latter term fails to capture the cultural-social dimension involved in switching between differing musical traditions.

Throughout this research, the music students have been referred to as bimusical learners. In titling this chapter, it seemed fitting to combine Irish and English languages with the words '*Idireatarthu*: The best of both worlds'. This synthesis of languages combines the ideas of 'in between' (*idireatarthu*⁷) and 'both'. In doing so it perhaps captures the parallels and confluences that underpin the phenomenon and

the musical experiences of these participants. *‘Idireatarthu / between worlds’* is also the title of Michael Ó Súilleabháin’s orchestral work which alludes to bimusicality though a musical dialogue of two music genres (classical and Irish traditional music), which represent two cultures (O’Connor, 2001).

How do these young musicians perceive themselves? In most of these cases, musical identity transcends musical boundaries. They see themselves primarily as musicians or music students that happen to learn and play different types of music. They describe themselves, for the most part, as either learners, learning both musics, or as musicians who happen to play different instruments or musics. There are differences in positionality, with some being less involved in the classical tradition; others are very involved in both, and differences are also evident in the degrees to which they are immersed in these musics in their home, social and formal learning settings. When they consider themselves in relation to other learners in each of these genres, there is perhaps a sense of being ‘in-between’ or ‘otherness’. While they describe their learning generally as the same as others, they also sometimes describe ‘others’ differently. The data suggest that students choose the balance between the musics, engaging wholeheartedly across the two genres, both of which are important within their musical lives. One does not sense any ‘clash’ or tension between the two traditions, rather that they serve different purposes within the learners’ musical lives.

While bimusical learning is not without challenges, it was perceived by all as an advantage and in Ellen’s words as ‘a broader thing altogether’ ... it would appear that the students perceive their bimusicality as ‘the best of both worlds’.

¹McCarthy (1999: 4) highlights how these phrases draw attention to the contexts and uniqueness of music transmission.

² Both Seán’s classical and Irish instrumental teachers (also teacher Michael) draw attention to how traditional music students, and Seán in particular, are ‘much more embedded in their musical life’.

³ While no scales or exercises were observed in this research (as previously found by Veblen (1991, 1994) this researcher is anecdotally aware of several that incorporate technical exercises, classical instrumental techniques, and scales into the lesson. O’Flynn (2011) found similarly.

⁴ It is likely that Cottrell is talking about professional musicians playing the same ‘instrument’ (He comments, for example, on how they use different bows or violins in different genres, in a manner similar to the way that Caitlin talks about having just acquired a different violin for traditional music).

⁵ According to a survey conducted by author with participants of the Irish National Youth Orchestra, 2012, Kilkenny.

⁶ *Idireatarthu*’ is translated by Niall Ó Dónail (1977: 696) as ‘betwixt and between’. It also has the sense of ‘between’ and ‘amongst’.

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Appendix 2: Ethics: Consent Forms:

The following forms are included below:

- Statement of consent
- Information sheet / consent form: for student participants
- Information sheet / consent form: parents/guardians
- Information sheet/ consent form: teacher
- Consent form: for parents/ guardians of accompanying teenagers in
‘subjects’ group lessons
- Director. site clearance

Statement of consent

Information sheet / consent form: parents/guardians

Statement of Consent:

Please read the questions below and indicate whether or not you would be willing to participate in the study as described.

Have you been fully informed/read the information provided about this study?	Yes	No
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	Yes	No
Have you received satisfactory answers to any questions you have raised?	Yes	No
Have you received enough information about this study and any associated health and safety implications if applicable?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at any time • without giving a reason for withdrawing • without affecting your future relationship with the Institute 	Yes	No
Do you agree to take part in this study the results of which are likely to be published?	Yes	No
Do you consent to have three lessons videotaped in classical or traditional music for the purposes of studying learning processes in music?	Yes	No
Do you agree to the use of audio/visual excerpts to present the results of this research at conferences or other educational contexts such as teacher in-service programmes?	Yes	No

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(teacher)

Signature of Investigator: _____ Date: _____

Information sheet / consent form: for student participants

Information sheet / consent form: for student participants

To be completed by the participant

..... (Date)

Dear (participant's name),

I am writing to ask for your help with a post-graduate research project that I am undertaking at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama. The project investigates musical learning of teenagers engaged in both classical and traditional Irish music. I hope that the findings of the study will inform teacher educators and policy makers about teaching and learning processes in music education.

There are four parts to the study:

Initial interviews with parents/guardians

observing and videotaping of music lessons, ensemble rehearsals and performances

videotaping of music practice

Interviews with you based on recorded lessons and music practice. Your teachers will also be interviewed after the recorded lessons.

It is envisioned that the study would be conducted during a two month period.

The study involves observation and videotaping of three classical music lessons and three traditional music lessons during a two month period. Lessons observed will be chosen for both practical and pedagogical purposes. If no formal lessons are attended in traditional music learning you will be asked to videotape yourself when learning new music (i.e. at home, at a session). Regarding music practice, you will be asked to video a practice session after each observed lesson, and this would be followed up with separate interviews with you and your teacher about the learning process engaged in. The initial interview with your parents will focus on musical backgrounds, experience and their views regarding approaches to learning in classical and traditional music practices. Interviews would last for approximately 60 minutes or less and would be recorded on audiotape.

This data collected in this study will NOT be used to evaluate knowledge or musical standard. The purpose of the video data would be twofold: to act as a prompt in interviews and also to help study the learning process in several ways: to observe and note the learning strategies; to investigate the similarities and differences between what is known about learning processes in classical and traditional music and current practice.

You will be asked to sign a form (below) indicating that you agree to participate in the different parts of the study. Participation will remain strictly confidential. Your name will not be attached to any of the data you provide and the video will be kept in a secure location without your name on it. You are welcome to discontinue participation in the study at any time, should you wish to do so. If you have any questions or require further clarification on any of the issues outlined above please don't hesitate to contact me at: 01 8057792 (office), 01 2983606 (home), 086 8065028 (mobile); e-mail: maire.nuinseann@mie.ie; or by post c/o Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9. You may also contact my advisor for the project, Dr. Mary Lennon at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama (mary.lennon@dit.ie).

I look forward to hearing from you,
Yours sincerely,

Information sheet / consent form: parents/guardians

Information sheet / consent form: parents/guardians

..... (Date)

Dear,

I am writing to ask for your help with a post-graduate research project that I am undertaking at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama. The project investigates musical learning of teenagers engaged in both classical and traditional Irish music. I hope that the findings of the study will inform teacher educators and policy makers about teaching and learning processes in music education.

There are four parts to the study:

- Initial interviews with parents/guardians
- observing and videotaping of music lessons, ensemble rehearsals and performances
- videotaping of (or writing about) music practice
- Interviews with teenage participants and music teachers based on recorded lessons and music practice.

It is envisioned that the study would be conducted during a two month period.

The study involves observation and videotaping of three classical music lessons and three traditional music lessons during a two month period. Lessons observed will be chosen for both practical and pedagogical purposes. If no formal lessons are attended in traditional music learning (*participant's name*) will be asked to videotape himself/herself when learning new music (i.e. at home, at a session). Regarding music practice, the participant would video a practice session after each observed lesson, and this would be followed up with an interview with both participant and teacher about the learning process engaged in. The initial interview with parents will focus on 's background, music experience and your own views regarding your teenager's learning approach to learning in classical and traditional music practices. This would also be an opportunity to agree on how the study would proceed e.g. suitable times for observations, videotaping and interviews. The interviews would last for approximately 60 minutes or less and would be recorded on audiotape.

This data collected in this study will NOT be used to evaluate knowledge or musical standard. The purpose of the video data would be twofold: to act as a prompt in interviews and also to help study the learning process in several ways: to observe and note the learning strategies; to investigate the similarities and differences between what is known about learning processes in classical and traditional music and current practice.

You will be asked to sign a form (below) indicating that you agree to participating in the the study. Participation will remain strictly confidential. You or your daughter's names will not be attached to any of the data you provide and the video will be kept in a secure location without any of your names on it. You and your daughter/son are welcome to discontinue participation in the study at any time, should you wish to do so. If you have any questions or require further clarification on any of the issues outlined above please don't hesitate to contact me at: 01 8057792 (office), 01 2983606 (home), 086 8065028 (mobile); e-mail: maire.nuinseann@mie.ie; or by post c/o Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9. You may also contact my advisor for the project, Dr. Mary Lennon at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama (mary.lennon@dit.ie).

I look forward to hearing from you,
Yours sincerely,

Mary Nugent

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Information sheet/ consent form: teacher

Information sheet/ consent form: teacher

To be completed by the music teacher

.....

Dear ,

I am writing to ask for your help with a post-graduate research project that I am undertaking at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama. The project investigates musical learning of teenagers engaged in both classical and traditional Irish music. I hope that the findings of the study will inform teacher educators and policy makers about teaching and learning processes in music education.

There are four parts to the study:

Initial interviews with parents/guardians

observing and videotaping of music lessons, Separate interviews with you and your music student (i.e. participant) based on recorded lessons and music practice.

It is envisioned that the study would be conducted during this semester.

The study involves observation and videotaping of classical music lessons and three traditional music lessons during a two month period. Lessons observed will be chosen in agreement with you for both practical and pedagogical purposes. The initial interview with’s parents will focus on musical backgrounds, experience and views regarding approaches to learning in classical and traditional music practices. Interviews in general would last for approximately 60 minutes or less and would be recorded on audiotape.

This data collected in this study will NOT be used to evaluate knowledge or musical standard. The purpose of the video data would be twofold: to act as a prompt in interviews and also to help study the learning process in several ways: to observe and note the learning strategies; to investigate the similarities and differences between what is known about learning processes in classical and traditional music and current practice.

You will be asked to sign a form (below) indicating that you agree to participate in the study. Participation will remain strictly confidential. Your name will not be attached to any of the data you provide and the video will be kept in a secure location without your name on it. You are welcome to discontinue participation in the study at any time, should you wish to do so. If you have any questions or require further clarification on any of the issues outlined above please don’t hesitate to contact me at: 01 8057792 (office), 01 2983606 (home), 086 8065028 (mobile); e-mail: mair.nuinseann@mie.ie; or by post c/o Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9. You may also contact my advisor for the project, Dr. Mary Lennon at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama (mary.lennon@dit.ie).

I look forward to hearing from you,
Yours sincerely,

Mary Nugent

Consent form: parents/ guardians of accompanying teenagers in ‘subjects’ group lessons

Consent form: for parents/ guardians of accompanying teenagers in ‘subjects’ group lessons

..... (Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

One of your child’s fellow musicians in the orchestra (grúpa ceoil) have agreed to participate in a research study about learning classical and Irish traditional music. The study looks particularly at learning in music. As part of their participation in the study, one of your child’s orchestral (grúpa ceoil) practice sessions will be videotaped. I am requesting your consent to allow your child to be videotaped as part of this project.

If you decide not to allow your child to be videotaped, he or she will still participate as usual in the orchestral rehearsal /grúpa ceoil but will simply remain outside the range of the video camera.

If you agree to allow your child to be videotaped, your child’s identity will remain completely confidential. His or her name will not be attached to any information I collect nor will these videotapes be used by anyone other than the qualified researcher working on this study.

For more information about the study please contact Mary Nugent by e-mail at maire.nuinseam@mie.ie or by phone at either 01 805 7792 or 086 8065028. Should you have questions regarding your child’s participation in the research you may also contact my advisor for the project, Dr. Mary Lennon of the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama (mary.lennon@dit.ie).

Yours sincerely,
Mary Nugent

Please complete **one** of the two options below:

1. ___ I **do** consent to allow my child _____ to be videotaped.
(Print child’s name)
2. ___ I do **not** wish my child _____ to be videotaped.
(Print child’s name)

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Consent Form: Director. Site clearance

director. site clearance

2/09/2011

Dear.....,

I am writing to ask for your help with a post-graduate research project that I am undertaking at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama. The project investigates musical learning of teenagers engaged in both classical and traditional Irish music.

Central to this project is data collected in the form of interviews and lesson observations with teachers and teenage students. Parents of participating students will also be interviewed. With this in mind I am requesting your permission to interview and observe and video three music lessons of one of your students (Ailish O Grady) and teachers (Eileen Prenderville). I have spoken with Eileen, Ailish and Ailish's mother Chris and they are happy to take part in the project. I have also spoken with Ger Flanagan, Director of your Music Centre. Ger said that he was happy for the observations to go ahead subject to your permission. In compliance with normal ethical procedures I will get written informed consent from the parents of the participants, the participants and the teachers in question. I have attached an information sheet further detailing this project.

I would be very grateful if you would indicate by signing the form (below) whether or not this research may take place. Participation will remain strictly confidential. Your name/ College's name will not be attached to any of the data provided. You are welcome to discontinue participation in the study at any time, should you wish to do so. If you have any questions or require further clarification on any of the issues outlined above please don't hesitate to contact me at: 01 8057792 (office), 01 2983606 (home), 086 8065028 (mobile); e-mail: maire.nuinseann@mie.ie; or by post c/o Marino Institute of Education, Griffith Avenue, Dublin 9. You may also contact my advisor for the project, Dr. Mary Lennon at the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama (mary.lennon@dit.ie).

This project has been approved by The Ethics Committee, Dublin Institute of Technology on April 2010.

I look forward to hearing from you,
Yours sincerely,

Mary Nugent

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Re: **Bi-musicality: Children's practices in music learning in Ireland**

TO WHOM IT CONCERNS

(Insert name and address of Institution/school/Comhaltas Branch)

is a music Institute / school/ Comhaltas Branch in Ireland. This is to confirm that Mary Nugent, as researcher on the above-named project, has permission to conduct part of her study on this site.

Yours faithfully,

Signature

Name in block letters: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

Information sheet

RE: Bi-musicality: Children's practices in music learning in Ireland

This post-graduate research project is being undertaken by Mary Nugent at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama. The project investigates musical learning of teenagers engaged in both classical and traditional Irish music. It is hoped that the findings of the study will inform teacher educators and policy makers about teaching and learning processes in music education.

There are four parts to the study:

- (i) Initial interviews with parents/guardians: *focusing on musical backgrounds, experience and views regarding approaches to learning in classical and traditional music practices*
- (ii) Observing and videotaping of music lessons, ensemble rehearsals and performances
- (iii) Videotaping of music practice
- (iv) Follow up interviews with the student participating in the study and with the student's music teacher.

NB: If no formal lessons are attended in traditional music learning the participant will be asked to videotape himself/ herself when learning new music (i.e. at home, at a session). It is envisioned that the study would be conducted during a two month period.

The data collected in this study will NOT be used to evaluate knowledge or musical standard. The purpose of the video data would be twofold: to act as a prompt in interviews and also to help study the learning process in several ways: to observe and note the learning strategies; to investigate the similarities and differences between what is known about learning processes in classical and traditional music and current practice.

Appendix 3: Interview Questions: Student Participants and Teachers

Questions asked; *[not in the order in which they were asked]*

Question in italics = (those not attending classes in Irish traditional music (ITM))

[i1] interview 1:

[e] emerged in a particular interview

{C/T} q which considers both;

S= student; T= teacher

Classical / Student	ITM / Student	Teachers (classical)	Teacher (trad)
<p>Lesson Content & Structure</p> <p>Well how do you think that lesson went?</p> <p>Would that have been a typical (1-to1) lesson? <i>[Yes/no/ why/expand, why might this be?</i></p> <p>Scales & Arpeggios</p>	<p>Well how do you think that lesson went?</p> <p><i>What did you think of the video you sent?</i></p> <p>Would that have been a typical (1-to1) lesson?</p> <p><i>Would it be typical of what you do when you.....</i></p>	<p>Would that have been a typical (1-to1) lesson? <i>[Yes/no/why/ same for all your students / lesson content/ expand (normally would focus on scales, exercises, studies, aural work.../ time of year..)]</i></p>	<p>Would that have been a typical (1-to1/group) lesson? <i>[Yes/no/why/ same for all your students / lesson content/ expand (normally would focus on scales, exercises, studies, aural work.../ time of year..)]</i></p>
<p>Repertoire</p> <p>What <i>repertoire</i> are you working on at present? <i>[Establish purpose/focus /if exam: anywhere else]</i></p>	<p>What kinds of trad tunes do you play?</p>	<p>Is A working on any other repertoire?</p> <p>Who much repertoire would A be working on at any one time?</p>	<p>What sort of tunes do ye work on?</p>

<p>Do you do many pieces at the one time?</p> <p>What kind of repertoire would you cover?</p>	<p>{e}How much repertoire would you be working on at any one time?</p> <p>Would you have loads of tunes?</p> <p>{E}Review?</p>	<p>Has she covered much <i>piano</i> repertoire?</p> <p>Is she working on these particular pieces with a view to performing them? (probe exam, other performance opportunities)</p> <p>Has S done many exams?</p> <p>When she is not working towards an exam, what is the focus?</p> <p>How do you build repertoire in classical music learning?</p> <p>Would you review pieces you have taught?</p> <p>As a teacher would you encourage students to bring other materials/ pieces they have learned?</p> <p>Would you expect that students are learning tunes from other sources?</p>	<p>The tunes you are working on: are they for any particular reason/performance? (playing /performance opportunities)</p> <p>How do you build up a repertoire of tunes in trad music learning?</p> <p>Would S play in competitions/ exams?</p> <p>I noticed that ye went back over tunes you have taught: is this important?</p> <p>As a teacher would you encourage students to bring other materials/ pieces they have learned?</p> <p>Would you expect that students are learning tunes from other sources?</p>
<p>Learning</p> <p>When did you start the.....?</p> <p>What stage are you at with it: what are you focusing on with it right now?</p>	<p>Do you always learn by ear when learning a traditional tune?</p> <p>Have you always learned trad tunes in this way or have you done things differently with different teachers?</p>	<p>How do you go about introducing a new piece / tune?</p> <p>Do you remember how you introduced that piece / tune to....</p> <p><i>(Probe preparation/ actual learning process, listening, use of notation , recording the tune)</i></p>	

<p>I noticed that last day that..... seemed to pay a lot of attention to.....</p> <p>Probe: Next step/ as you develop you playing of the piece / how long?</p> <p>Can you describe how you have gone about learning the piece so far?</p> <p>Is the way you learn a classical piece typical?</p>	<p>{e}length of time with particular teacher</p> <p>{e} learning a tune at an advanced level / learning a tune when you are older</p> <p>You recorder the tune on a ? (phone / digital recorder...)</p> <p>Do you think that the way you learn differs from others who do only classical or only traditional music?</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>About teachers own learning</p> <p>Is the your first instrument?</p> <p>Do you play other music genres (types of music) on the/ other instruments?</p> <p>Do you teach as you were taught?</p> <p>[trad] Do you read music/experienced learning with notation yourself?</p> </div>	
<p>[i3] Students / teachers give reactions and describe what is going on in video clips from lessons (focus on aural/ notation processes) teachers focus on a range of issues: technique, posture,...</p>			
<p>Learning & Listening</p> <p>How important is listening when you are learning a classical piece?</p> <p>Do you listen to recordings of your pieces?</p> <p>At what stage would</p> <p>At what stage would you listen to the recording of a piece?</p> <p>[probe: sources / YouTube, differences in different recordings {interpretation}]</p>	<p>How important is listening when you are learning traditional music? (listening for different purposes)</p> <p>What other kinds of music do you listen to?</p> <p>{e} earliest memories of learning</p>	<p>What role does listening play in learning music?</p>	<p>In your opinion, in general what role does listening play in traditional music?</p> <p>Would you encourage S to listen to recordings of other players?</p>

<p>Learning & Notation</p> <p>How do you learn a piece when you're working with notation? How important is the score in classical music? What does it tell: What can't it tell you?</p>	<p>Would you ever use notation to learn a tune? What kind? Is notation useful in trad, in your opinion? Would your friends who play trad use notation the same way? How is it different from the way you use notation in classical music? {C/T}</p>	<p><i>Commented on in answer to learning</i></p>	<p><i>Commented on in answer to learning</i></p>
<p>Formal / Informal learning contexts</p> <p>Apart from your music lesson where else do you learn classical music? [formal or informal] / <i>Would you learn classical music other than what you learn in class?</i></p>	<p>Do you learn tunes apart from what [T] teaches you?</p>		
<p>Memorisation</p> <p>Do you always memorise your pieces? How have/are you memorised it? Do you /did you always learn [work with] pieces in this way for classical music /lessons?]</p>	<p>Have you the tune memorised now? If you were going to play that later on tonight, how would you remember it, how would you recall the first few notes? Do you have a system for remembering your tunes?</p>	<p>Would A play her pieces from memory/ (concert/exam/competition) {e} is this typical in t/exam/competition) {e} is this typical in your opinion?</p>	<p>In your opinion what role does memory play in learning trad music?</p>

<p>[i2] I know the last day you said that you don't really memorise your classical pieces: could you explain that a little?</p> <p><i>[e] So is memorising the same or different in the two traditions?</i></p> <p><i>[e] so what does memorising in classical music mean to you then?</i></p>	<p>How do you go about memorising a tune?</p>		
<p>Technique</p> <p>Is technique important in classical music?</p> <p>How does your teacher go about developing your technique? [Probe: <i>Preparatory technique ...</i>]</p> <p>What aspects of technique does she see as important?</p>	<p>What aspects of technique are focused on in traditional music?</p> <p>I noticed..... Can you remember when you started putting in ornamentation in Irish music?</p> <p>How did it happen?</p> <p>Is it very different to how</p> <p>How did it happen?</p> <p>Is it very different to how you work with ornamentation in classical music?</p>	<p><i>Probe in relation to video clip viewing</i></p>	<p><i>[trad} At S's playing stage, what aspects of her playing need particular attention.... need to be developed?</i></p> <p>Ornamentation/ variation: You were working on..... [e.g. rolls/cuts/ bowing triplets] ornamentation with A....?</p> <p>How do you teach ornamentation/ variation?</p> <p>Who decides what put in?</p> <p>Is ornamentation/ variation important in Irish music? (ornamentation/ style/ interpretation)</p>
<p>Interpretation</p> <p>What does interpretation mean to you in classical music?</p>		<p>In your opinion what does interpretation mean in classical music</p>	<p>In your opinion what does interpretation mean in traditional</p>

		learning? (Expectations of S in this regard)	music learning? (Expectations of S in this regard)
Improvisation	Improvisation Do you improvise in trad music?		
Style In these two lessons you have been How would you describe the style of these pieces? Do you follow any particular style of playing? <i>Are there particular cellists that you admire?</i> What does the word <i>style</i> mean, to you, when you are playing classical music?	Do you think that you follow any particular style of playing? What does the word style mean to you in trad music?	How does style develop?	How does style develop in traditional playing? What would you expect of S in this regard?
Practice Is practice important? How do you decide what to practice? [<i>notebook, teacher notes, other factors</i>] If I were a fly in the wall what would I have seen you doing?	Is practice important in traditional music? How do you decide what to practice? <i>How do you decide what to learn?</i> If I were a fly in the wall what would I have seen you doing? [probe:	Do you make suggestions as to how A should practice? What would you expect? Can you explain?	Is practice important in trad music? Do you make suggestions as to how a should practice during the week? What would you expect? Can you explain?

<p>[probe: sequence of activities: <i>what started with, then etc; look at score, how?</i>]</p> <p>Set up/context [where, sitting / standing/ music stand/ other gadgets, internet, digital recorder,</p> <p>Does anyone listen to you?</p> <p>Length of practice?</p> <p>Review of familiar repertoire, playing for fun/ relaxation/ enjoyment</p> <p>Does practice change as the piece progresses?</p> <p>Has your practice changed since you started learning harp?</p> <p>Is it different to how you practiced when you were younger?</p>	<p>sequence of activities: <i>what started with, then etc; look at score, how?</i>]</p> <p>Set up/context [where, sitting / standing/ music stand/ other gadgets, internet, digital recorder,</p> <p>Does anyone listen to you?</p> <p>Length of practice?</p> <p>Review of familiar repertoire, playing for fun/ relaxation/ enjoyment</p> <p>Has your practice changed since you started learning harp/fiddle ...? {C/T}</p> <p>Is it different to how you practiced when you were younger?</p>		
<p>Analysis</p> <p>Role of analysis in learning</p> <p>[i3] When I was looking though the lesson I noticed that a lot of time was spent..... examining / analysing: Do you find that this helps?</p>	<p>How do you see the role of analysis in learning & performing?</p>	<p>How do you see the role of analysis in learning & performing?</p>	
<p>What are the strongest and weakest aspects of your playing? {C/T}</p>			

What would T emphasise as being important in your playing?	What would T emphasise as being important in your playing?		
{e} what strikes you as being really important?	{e} what strikes you as being really important?		

General Questions	Teachers	Parent
<p>Socio-cultural context</p> <p>Can you explain a bit about your musical background?</p> <p>Can you tell me how you became involved in classical and traditional music? [Probe: Which started first, when, why, who's idea]</p> <p>Influences</p> <p>What (or who) do you think are the major factors / influences in your music to date?</p>	<p>How long student is attending lessons with you?</p> <p>Are you aware of which s/he started first?</p>	<p>Can you tell a bit about S's musical background (<i>musical environment, family, insts played</i>)?</p> <p>In your opinion what have been the major factors/influences in S's musical development to date?</p>
<p>Music making contexts:</p> <p>Tell me a bit more about your other music activities (apart from this classical music lesson)? [e.g. ensemble, theory lessons, junior/ leaving cert music, concerts, exams, competitions]</p> <p>Did you do music in school, and how did your instrumental fit in?)</p> <p><i>What types of performing experience do you have?</i></p> <p><i>Have you played in competitions / feiseanna?</i></p> <p>Do you play music at home or with family members? [Formal/ informal]</p>	<p><i>Students musical activities may have been covered in other answers (i.e. focus of learning a particular piece)</i></p>	<p>How would you describe your role in his/her music education? [how encouraged, nurtured, supported]</p> <p>It sounds like a big commitment? [Practice, range of musical activities]</p> <p>I imagine that your involvement has changed as S has go older?</p>

<p>[i3] How have you been getting on since I saw you last?: how's the playing going? [<i>range of activities during term</i>]</p> <p>[i3] Would it always have been like that as you were growing up?</p>		<p><i>Students musical activities will have been covered in various answers (i.e. family background, parental role...)</i></p> <p><i>Where relevant probe lack of formal lessons</i></p>
<p>Multi-music worlds</p> <p>Are there advantages or disadvantages to playing both styles (one instruments)?(clashes)</p> <p>Are you busier with your classical or traditional music or are you equally involved in both?</p> <p>What's it like doing both?</p> <p>In your opinion, does playing trad..... affect how you play classical in any way? Did it at any point? (vica versa)</p> <p>Do you play other kinds of music on your?</p> <p>Other [trad] instruments that you play?</p> <p>Role of the two different musics in your life? (culture, context etc)</p> <p>What role do you see music having in your life in 5/10yrs time?</p>	<p>{C/T}</p> <p>Are there aspects of the way S approaches learning a tune/piece that strike you as same/different /similar to other students of yours that don't play classical / trad?</p> <p>I know we've touched on this already but does it change how s/he approaches classical/ trad music in any way? (<i>probe: compared to others who only play, would you see differences? Advantages/ disadvantages, strengths./ weaknesses/ compliment her playing in any way?</i>)</p> <p>Has this changed since s/he started learning with you?</p>	<p>Would you like to explain how S came to be involved in traditional and classical music?</p> <p>How does s/he find playing the two musics (on the same/ different instrument(s))</p> <p>Does s/he play other kinds og music on?</p>
<p>Identity +</p> <p>Do you see yourself as a violinist , a fiddle player or how would you describe yourself (musically)?</p> <p>What do you get from playing and learning music?</p>	<p>What are your goals for S as a? (<i>probe: What would you expect somebody like S to be able to do at the end of the lesson? You know, what</i></p>	

<p>Would you like to talk a little about your goals as a classical and traditional musician?</p>	<p><i>expectations would you have of where s/he's at?)</i></p>	
<p>Other</p> <p>What is the key to becoming a fine classical / traditional player???</p> <p>How has the recording /my presence affected the lessons?</p> <p>How did you find the process?</p>	<p>Other</p> <p>What is the key to becoming a fine classical player?</p> <p>Is there anything else you would like to tell me?</p> <p>How has the recording /my presence affected the lessons?</p>	<p>Other</p> <p>What is the key to becoming a fine traditional player?</p> <p>Is there anything else you'e like to tell me?</p> <p>How has the recording /my presence affected the lessons?</p>

Appendix 3b: Interview Questions: Parents

Questions for Parents:

1. Could you tell a bit about N's musical background? [*probes*: musical environment, family, instruments played]
2. Would you like to explain about how N... came to be involved in traditional and classical music?
3. How would you describe your role in his music education? [how encouraged, nurtured, supported]It sounds like a big commitment? [practice, range of musical activities...]
4. I imagine that your involvement has changed as N has got older? [e.g. sitting in on lessons? Who organises the practice?, motivation]
5. How does he find playing (find doing) the two musics the same instrument? [pros/ cons]
6. How do you think he benefits from playing music?
7. In your opinion what have been the major factors/influences in P's musical development to date?

Where no formal lessons are attended for Irish traditional music: probe lack of formal lessons at this stage.....

Appendix 4: Additional Vignettes

Nóra, *Vignette 3*: Rock band rehearsal

The rock band rehearsal described in *Vignette 3* takes place later one evening after one of Nóra's Irish traditional music lessons. Nóra is particularly busy with this rock band as they typically practise, for about four hours, three nights of the week, and are preparing for their performance in *The Battle of the Bands*. Both Nóra and the researcher travel together to her rehearsal which takes place in the old converted warehouse studio that the band have rented for the last number of months. It is about 7.30pm when we arrive outside. Nóra makes a quick call on her mobile and another band member comes out to unlock the big steel door to let us in. To the uninitiated, it is surprisingly quiet inside this warehouse which has fourteen rehearsal studios, each of which is obviously heavily soundproofed. On the corridor, on the way down to their room, least two bands can be heard from other rooms. Members of Nóra's band later tell that their own band can't be heard in the corridor, in which case I am inclined to think that the other bands must be extremely loud indeed!

I (the researcher) am immediately very conscious that I have entered a space to which I have no membership as I find myself in the middle of youth culture and frankly in many respects couldn't be more out of place. However I'm known to everyone in Nóra's band (they are all cousins) and am accepted as a friend of the family. I later discover that I am the first visitor to their practice space

As is typical for a young band, the studio is rented and shared by more than one band, so they first spend time setting up at the beginning of the rehearsal as the other band has been in the previous day. They expand their equipment as they can afford it - microphones, leads, amps, guitars, drums, electric bass, keyboards, 10 track mixing desk, - all of which will again be tidied away after the rehearsal to accommodate the other band with whom they share the space. A few problems are encountered during set up - the mixing desk kept tripping the power supply and everyone ending up in darkness - eventually after trying various possibilities they decide not to 'mike' the vocals tonight and proceed in semi-acoustic fashion.

They run through several of their compositions while I am there. As one of the lead vocalists hasn't arrived there is a considerable amount of juggling of parts, which they do with remarkable ease. Juggling, swapping instruments or vocal lines all

seems to be part of the fun among these extremely versatile young musicians. They ooze talent... for example they all play violin and so Nóra's electric fiddle part is taken on by different people depending on the instrumental arrangement, similarly the drums rotate between three of the band members. The lead guitar is played by two different members depending on the line up needed for particular songs. The keyboard is played consistently by U and the electric bass by Nóra though both play other instruments in particular song arrangements. They all sing and it is evident from the performances and arrangements that there is tremendous creativity and talent in this group. All songs have original lyrics, melodies, harmonies and arrangements. They regard their singing and harmonies as their strongest point. They talk about their up-coming gig 'The Battle of the Bands' the following Monday night. It's their first gig but quite honestly they don't seem remotely under pressure about it!*

This is youth culture: 'democracy... our space... our decisions... our rules... we own it'. I was privileged to be allowed in. My presence did change things somewhat in that I was told that the fact of my being there meant that 5 out of 6 arrived on time for once! I also got the impression, that the structure of the rehearsal altered, in that the usual hanging out in the kitchen, chatting to other bands etc. didn't happen, at least, during the hour that I was there.

Maebh, Vignette 3: Rehearsing for traditional music radio broadcast

The following *vignette* describes the rehearsal which takes place some days in advance of a national radio (RTE radio 1) broadcast in which Maebh is taking part in as one of a group of musicians. In it she plays as one of a 'céilí band' ensemble, as well as being one of the featured musicians in the programme.

A group of fifteen traditional musicians meet downstairs in the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) Club hall for a rehearsal for a live show which will be broadcast in two days' time on the eve of the All-Ireland hurling final. It is a much more formal occasion than the regular ad hoc session which usually takes place upstairs in the bar. The hall has been set up for the night of the broadcast. An air of anticipation pervades. There are on-lookers: a few friends and family members as well as several of the lady members of the Club who are working on preparing the hall decorations for the Radio show which is a ticket only event and will attract a large discerning audience.

The musicians, ranging in age from eighteen to about sixty, automatically assume places in this two row arrangement as if they were settling into a céilí band practice. There is a little tweaking of seating positions by T, the co-ordinator, and the rehearsal commences. As co-ordinator, T has organised a tunes list which he has on the floor in front of him. Everyone else is playing entirely by ear, remembering and memorising as they go along. There is some audio recording of tune sets by musicians as the rehearsal progresses. Sets of reels and jigs are practised, then a hornpipe set. Sets are repeated as it is felt that the overall balance and timing could be improved on. Everyone is paying attention to tuning, listening very keenly, watching feet and using whatever visual or aural cues are available to maintain a tight ensemble sound. Detailed versions of particular tune repeats and endings are agreed. Once the reel, jig and hornpipe sets are secured, the group begins to practise a set of polkas. There are some differences in the versions which various players have, so all listen to one of the accordion player's version and then the various musicians, without comment or direction, audibly 'correct' their playing to this particular version as the tune is once again rehearsed. Individual and small group items are given special attention. Maebh and two of her friends perform their pre-arranged set for the group as they will by performing a 'trio item' for the live broadcast. The concluding set of tunes for the broadcast is practised and the rehearsal draws to a close. It has been an expedient and efficiently run one hour rehearsal. The sound check time for Saturday night is agreed and without much delay most head upstairs for a session in the bar.

Conal, Vignette 4: Chamber music lesson

Teacher /Coach: Lorraine

Pianist: Josephine

Having rehearsed the Sonata in G minor Op.5 together over a number of weekends, Conal and Josephine are ready to play for Lorraine. The first two movements of the Beethoven Sonata are the focus of this coaching session. They commence by performing the opening seven minute section, at which point Lorraine who has been sitting, listening, suggests reviewing some elements of what they have played. She draws attention to pacing and the need to set the right atmosphere for their audience and themselves. She also emphasises the need to 'always listen to exactly how it fits together'. With these points in mind they return to the opening phrase. Several elements are examined in detail including the weighting and pacing of the opening

motif, with attention first given to the piano motifs and then to how the cello responds and matches the piano dynamic. Lorraine explains, sings and gestures in respect of what she would like to hear: 'I think you are rushing the second one a little bit...more on that single note...it doesn't have to be louder or longer, just more delayed...be really brave...really hold the tempo...'. Josephine plays and Lorraine says 'yes that's it'. Conal is now asked to do the same and then they perform together. Lorraine makes further suggestions in terms of character, the nuance, the weight /gravitas of sound. All the coaching is done by Lorraine from memory with an occasional glance at either piano or cello score to clarify which motif they are working on or to confirm a dynamic marking or locate a point from which to play on. Throughout, as Lorraine advises, suggests, comments with simplicity and clarity, gestures to support a point or conducts, sings, and /or demonstrates on 'cello, it is obvious that this is a sonata that she has performed many times.

Seán, Vignette 4: Christmas concert

Following a well-established tradition, the last night of classes before Christmas becomes a gathering downstairs in the 'halla' of young and old, friends, teenagers, siblings, adults and grandparents where students of the various classes play in a semi-formal uilleann pipes recital. This recital is open to all attending classes. The students are really encouraged to take part by Eoin and Padraig (the directors of the organisation). About twenty pipers take part in this recital which lasts over two hours. Each in turn is introduced to the audience by Eoin following which they then take their place on stage for their performance. Nollaig, the designated photographer on this occasion, photographs each performer while they play. Many of the performers explain a little about the tune they have chosen to play before performing to what can only be described as a very attentive listening audience. Looking about the room, one can list many of the renowned Dublin pipers, as well as other musicians, among this discerning audience. Many are present in their capacity as a father, grandfather, teacher or friend, or simply as an interested fellow musician. This gathering exudes a real sense of a community of musicians and friends.

While the crowd is quiet during the performances, there is a lot of background activity as well in this relaxed atmosphere. There is a sense of people chatting, catching up, and retreating to the kitchen for a cup of tea, chocolates, other refreshments. Yet there is a constant core audience in the hall, giving their undivided attention as each person gets up and plays their piece. Throughout proceedings the teenagers come and go, in the midst of whom is Seán. This loyal group of friends descend on the concert every

time one of their gang is playing, and otherwise they escape to the kitchen again to their own particular scene. About fifth item from the end of the concert, it's Seán's turn to play. Again, the teenagers come in en masse. Seán is introduced, he takes the stage and introduces his item, telling us that he is going to play the reel the Friezs Britches (one of the tunes he has previously played for the live streamed International Piping day event). Seán plays to what for some would be quite a daunting gathering in a manner which exudes calm. He seems to take the performance in his stride, suggesting that it is something that comes easily and is just a natural part of piping.

Ellen, Vignette 3: Lunchtime concert

Vignette 3 focuses on Ellen's performance on flute in a traditional music group as part of a lunchtime concert in her college

Over 40 students perform in a variety of ensembles and musical styles in this student lunchtime concert. Classical, contemporary, modern and Irish traditional musics are all represented in the forty minute programme. It is one of a series of lunchtime concerts held in Autumn each year organised by the Lunchtime Concerts Committee directed by Dr Daly. The various concerts in the series comprise of a mix of musicians (both student and professional), musical styles and genres. This particular concert takes place in the Music department's recital space to an enthusiastic, appreciative and packed audience of parents, grandparents, friends, current as well as former students of the department, lecturers, the College president and many others. The concert comprises six items - representing a blend of genres and styles - skilfully interspersed with introductions and commentaries by classical composer / faculty member Dr Daly as each of the groups set up for their particular item. Conventional performance practice of the various styles is adhered to, and in the case of the traditional music group the performance is from memory.

Ellen takes part, playing flute in the final item which involves 15 instrumentalists. Dr Daly chats amiably with the audience while the group arranges itself on stage in two rows, consisting of a back row of nine fiddles, in front of which are seated the remaining six players: low whistler, two flute players, another tin whistler, a concertina player and guitar player. In introducing this item Dr Daly jovially talks about how this group has been 'practising like mad' and tells the audience that they 'will finish today's concert in vibrant fashion with a set of Jigs'. The group commences with a slow Irish piece and concludes with two lively paced jigs. Their

musical arrangement features different instrumental colours, for example in the first G major jig, the flutes and tin whistle perform the A section and are joined by the concertina and guitar players for the B section of the tune. The fiddlers are featured in the first part of the final jig, performed in A major, which builds to a lively finale in which all players feature.