

## Händel in Ireland

In November 1741, Händel arrived in Ireland where he stayed for 8 months. His sojourn in Ireland has become legendary; during this trip he premiered his oratorio *Messiah* in April 1742 at the New Musick Hall in Fishamble Street. Near the end of his stay Händel travelled to Cork. He stayed in the great houses and would have been entertained by local musicians. He copied at least one traditional tune that he had heard (“Der Arme Irische Junge”) and his musical curiosity would undoubtedly have ensured that he familiarised himself with Irish music in all its forms.

In addition to being one of the high points in the flourishing of European art music, the mid-eighteenth century was also a time of innovation, transition and radical transformation in the practice of traditional music in Ireland. These changes include the ebbing of the bardic tradition and declining popularity of the harp, the introduction of the fiddle, German flute and uilleann pipes as seminal instruments in the performance of traditional music, the influence of continental dance styles on the increasing tempo of dance music, the popularity of Italianate music and styles of instrumental playing, the introduction of printed music, and other cultural factors that have shaped the performance practice and transmission of Irish traditional music to this day.

Dublin at that time was a cosmopolitan centre, the second largest city in the British Empire, and while it was the seat of the Anglo Protestant Ascendancy, it was a rich society that included notable Italian, French and Dutch émigrés. About three quarters of the city’s population was working class and Gaelic-speaking. While there was undoubtedly antipathy between the different political and religious strands at times, there were clearly occasions when cultures peacefully co-existed and perhaps even nourished each other (as evidenced, for example, by The Charitable and Musical Society where “Some Gentlemen, some Lords and Squires,/Some Whigs, and Tories, and Highflyers,/There Papists, Protestants, Dissenters,/Sit Cheek by Jole” who “Each Night ... shook off our domestick Cares,/By Irish, English or Italian Airs,/Scotch, French, or Dutch, sometimes wou’d do as well” – Lawrence Whyte, 1742).

The music performed here tonight is music that was in the air during Händel’s sojourn, from 18th century printed sources – the music as recorded by members of The Charitable and Musical Society, John and William Neale, for example – as well as tunes that have percolated down to us through living, oral tradition. We also fantasize how Händel’s own music would sound in the hands of traditional Irish players.

Caitríona O’Leary

## Texts and Translations

## Hugar Mu Fean

This is a very well known song all over Ireland, learned by almost every schoolchild. Tradition has it that it was sung to welcome the Duke of Ormonde back to Ireland (July, 1662) after the Restoration of the English monarchy. The title, like many of tonight's songs, is a phonetic rendering of the Irish.

Babóg na Bealtaine, maighdean an t-samhraidh,

Suas gach cnoc, is síos gach gleann;

Cailíní maiseacha bán-gheala gléasta,

Is thugamar féin an samhradh linn.

*Samhradh samhradh bainne na ngamhna*

*Thugamar féin an samhradh linn*

*Ó bhaile go baile, is un ar mbaile na dhiaidh sin*

*Is thugamar féin an samhradh linn.*

Thugamar linn é ón gcoill chraoibhaigh

Thugamar féin an samhradh linn

Samhradh buí ó luí na gréine

Is thugamar féin an samhradh linn.

Tá an fhuisseóg ag seinm, is ag luasgadh 'sna spéirthibh,

Áthas do lá is bláth ar chrann,

Tá an chuach 's na h-éanlaith ag seinm le pléisiúr,

Is thugamar féin an samhradh linn.

Samhradh buidhe na neoinín glé-geal

Thugamar féin an samhradh linn.

Thugamar linn é is cé bhainfeadh dinn é?

Is thugamar féin an samhradh linn.

May day doll, summer maiden,

Up each hill and down each glen;  
Beautiful girls brightly dressed,  
We brought the summer along with us.

*Summer, summer, milk for the calves,  
We brought the summer along with us.  
From town to town and then to our own town  
We brought the summer along with us.*

We brought it along from the leafy woods  
We brought the summer along with us  
Golden summer from sunrise to sunset  
We brought the summer along with us.

The lark is singing and soaring in the sky,  
The day is happy and the trees are in bloom,  
The cuckoo and the birds are singing for joy,  
We brought the summer along with us.

Golden summer full of bright daisies  
We brought the summer along with us  
We brought it and who'd take it from us?  
We brought the summer along with us.

**Ta me ma Chulla's na doushe me**

Atá mé 'mo chodhladh gan bogadh le ráithe,  
Atá mé 'mo chodhladh 'ná dúisge mé

A mháthair chaoin dílis, éirighe is las solus domh,  
Tá mise millte is d'éirigh an donas domh;

Déalogh an radaire dubh a d'fhág torrach mé,  
Is tá mé 'mo chodladh 's ná dúisge mé.

I am asleep and haven't stirred for a season,  
I am asleep and don't waken me

O gentle dear mother, get up and light a lamp for me,  
I am destroyed and wretched;  
The dark rogue has fled and left me with child,  
And I am asleep and don't waken me.

### **Eileanóir, a Rún**

Mo ghrá thú den chéad fhéachaint, 's tú Eleanóir, a rún,  
Is ortsa a bhím a' smaoineamh, tráth a mbím 'mo shuain,  
Mo ghrá den tsaol thú, 'smo chéad searc, is tú is deise ná ban Éireann,  
*'S a bhruinnillín deas óg, is tú is deise, is milse póg,*  
*Chúns a mhairfeadsa beo, beidh gean a'm ort,*  
*Mar is deas mar a sheolfainn na gamhna leat, 'Eleanóir, a rún.*

'S bhí bua aici go meallfadh sí na héanlaith ón gcrann,  
'S bhí bua eile aici go dtóigfeadh sí an corp fuar ón mbás,  
'S bhí bua eile aici nach ndéarfad 'sí grá mo chroí 'smo chéad searc,

'S an dtiocfaidh tú nó 'bhfanfaidh tú, 'Eleanóir, a rún?  
Nó an aithneofá an té nach gcáinfeadh thú, mo chuid don tsaol is a stór?  
Ó tiocfaidh mé ach ní fhanfaidh mé, is maith a d'aithneoinn an té nach gcáinfeadh mé,

You're my love from first-sight, Eleanor, my dear

It's of you I do think while I lie in repose

Love of my life, my own darling, you, you're the nicest woman in Ireland

And, lovely young maid, yours is the best, the sweetest kiss

For as long as I live I will love you

And I would love to drive the calves with you, Eleanor, my dear.

She had the gift that she could entice the birds from the trees  
And that she could bring a cold corpse back from death  
And she had another gift that I will not tell, she's the love of my heart, my own darling

Will you come or will you stay, Eleanor my dear?  
Or would you know the one who'd not chide you, my life's love, my treasure?  
Oh, I will come but I will not stay: well would I know the one who'd not chide me

### **Caoineadh na Marbh**

This is a traditional lament, or "keen", learned from an old recording of the singing of Bridget Mullins from the Aran Islands.

Och, ochón ó! Dial linn go deo!

O, alas! God help us!

### **Hush, ye Pretty Warbling Quire**

Hush, hush, ye pretty warbling quire!

Your thrilling strains awake my pains,

And kindle fierce desire.

Cease your song, and take your flight,

Bring back my Acis to my sight!

### **Shea Sude Shear an Rode a Dima Shee**

Siúd é siar an ród a d'imig sí

Cúl na bhfáinniugh, slán o dtillid sí;

Méara míne, sgríobhaidh sí is sinnidh sí,

Is gheobhaidh mé bás dá grádh mur dtigidh sí.

Ga dtagaidh an Nodhlaic ní bhfeicear 's mo sgáile 'rís,

A ghiolla nár choraidh a dtosach nó a lár na haoidhe;

Go dtainic a' solus go folusach 'lár a' tigh,

Is tú rinne an codladh is measa ar dearnadh riamh.

Mo mhilliugh 's mo dhíth, cá bhfuighe mé comrádaigh  
Mur racha mé síos go tír na n-ógánaigh,  
Mar 'bfuil a' fer croidhe 'dhéanadh caint is cómhra dh liom?  
Fáigidh mé a' tír so, tá sí ró-thóigeálach.

Paidir nó creid le m'bhél ní minic a dubhairt,  
Nó 'Aifrionn na gCréacht ní théighim a' feacadh mo ghlún;  
Le fear ar a' tsaoghul nír leig mé faice mo rún,  
Is mealladh mé féin tar éis mo ghliocais mur súd.

West down that road she went  
Head of curls, may she be safe till she returns  
With slender fingers does she write and play  
And I'll be dead of love if she does not come back.

You'll not see my shadow again until Christmas  
O lad who never stirred at the start or middle of the night  
Till daylight reached the centre of the house;  
Yours was the worst night's sleep ever!

Alas and alack! Where will I find a comrade?  
Unless I go down to the land of young men,  
Where there is that dear man who will talk and converse with me.  
I will leave this country, it is too hypocritical.

I've rarely said a Pater or Credo  
Nor do I bend my knee at the Mass of Five Wounds.  
To no man have I confided a whit

Even still was I fooled in spite of my wit!

### **Patrick Sarsfield**

The subject of this song is Patrick Sarsfield, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Lucan (ca. 1660 – 21 August 1693), an Irish hero in the Jacobite-Williamite war. After William's victory he left for France, along with much of the Irish nobility, to join the army of Louis XIV in what is known as the Flight of the Wild Geese.

A Phádraic Sáirséal, slán go dtí tú!

Ó chuadhais don Fhrainc's do champaidhe sgaoilte,

Ag déanamh do ghearáin leis na ríghthe,

'S d'fhág tú Éire 'gus Gaoidheil bhoicht claoidhte.

*Och, ochón!*

A Phádraic Sáirséal, is duine le Dia tú,

Is beannaighthe an talamh ar shiubhail tú riamh air;

Go mbeannaighe an ghealach gheal 's an ghrian duit,

Ó thug tú an lá ó lámha Rígh Liam leat.

Mo chúig céad slán chughaibh, a hallaoi Luimnidh,

'S chum na buidhni áluinn do bhí 'nár gcuideachtadh;

Bhidheach teite cnámha 'guinn is cárdaighe imeartha,

'S briathra Dé dhá léaghamh go minic dhúinn.

Is iomdha saighdiúir meaghrach meanamnach

Do ghaibh an tslighesi le seacht seachtmhuine

Fae ghnadh, fae phíceadh, fae chloidheamh cinn airgid,,

Acht tá siad sínte shíos an Eachdhrum.

Cia súd thall air chnoc Bheinn Éidir?'

'Saighdiúir bocht mé le Rígh Séamus;

Do bhí mé anurraig a arm 's an éadach,

Acht táim a mbliaghannadh ag iarraidh déirce.'

Do cuireadh an chéad bhrise oruinn ag droichead na Bóinne,

An dara brise ag droichead na Sláinge,

An trímhúghadh brise an Eachdhuim Uí Cheallaigh,

'S 'Éire chúbhartha, mo chúig céad slán leat!

Annsúd atá siad, barr uaisle Éirionn,

Diúcidhe, Búrcaig, 's mac Rígh Séamus;

Captaoin Talbóid, croidhe na féile,

'S Pádraic Sáirséal, gradh ban Éirionn.

Patrick Sarsfield, fare thee well!

Since you've gone to France and your camps are scattered,

Making your supplication to the kings

And you've left Ireland and the Irish bereft and oppressed

*O alas!*

Patrick Sarsfield, you're a Godly person,

Blessed is the ground wherever you've walked;

May you be blessed by the bright moon and sun,

Since you stood against King William.

Five hundred farewells to you, halls of Limerick,

And to the fine followers in our company;

We had bonfires and card games

And the word of God often read to us.

Many the cheerful, vigorous soldier

Has gone this way these past seven weeks



With a gun, a pike, a silver-headed sword,  
But now they're lifeless in Aughrim.

"Who is that there on Howth Hill?"

"I'm a poor soldier of King James;  
Last year I was armed and in uniform,  
But this year I'm begging for alms."

We were first defeated at the bridge of the Boyne,  
Our second defeat at the bridge of Slane,  
Our third at Aughrim of the O'Kellys,  
And, sweet Ireland, five hundred farewells to you!

And yonder are they, the nobility of Ireland,  
Dukes, Burkes and the son of King James,  
Captain Talbot, the soul of generosity,  
And Patrick Sarsfield, the darling of Irish women.

### **Bumpers Esquire Jones**

Ye good fellows all  
Who love to be told where good claret's in store,  
Attend to the call  
Of one who's ne'er frightened,  
But greatly delighted,  
With six bottles more.  
Be sure you don't pass  
The good house Moneyglass,  
Which the jolly red god so peculiarly owns;  
'Twill well suit your humour,  
For pray what would you more,

Than mirth, with good claret, and bumers, Squire Jones?

Ye poets, who write,

And brag of your drinking fam'd Helicon's brook –

Though all you get by 't,

Is a dinner, oft-times,

In reward of your rhymes –

With Humphry the duke:

Learn Bacchus to follow,

And quit your Apollo,

Forsake all the Muses, those senseless old crones.

Our jingling of glasses

Your rhyming surpasses,

When crowned with good claret and bumpers, Squire Jones.

Ye lawyers so just,

Be the cause what it will, who so learnedly plead,

How worthy of trust!

You know black from white

Yet prefer wrong to right as you chance to be fee'd;

Leave musty reports

And forsake the king's courts,

Where dullness and discord have set up their thrones;

Burn Salkeld and Ventris,

With all your damn'd entries,

And away with the claret – a bumper, Squire Jones.

Ye clergy so wise,

Who mysteries profound can demonstrate most clear,

How worthy to rise!

You preach once a week,  
But your tithes never seek  
Above once in a year;  
Come here without failing,  
And leave off your railing  
‘Gainst bishops providing for dull stupid drones;  
Says the text so divine,  
“What is life without wine?”  
Then away with the claret – a bumper, Squire Jones.

### **An Seothó**

Seóthó, a thoil, ná goil go fóil,  
Do gheobhair gan dearmad i dtaisge gach seód,  
Do bhí ‘gad’ shinnsear ríoghdha reómhat,  
In-Éirinn iathghlais Chuinn is Eoghain!

*Seóthó, a thoil, ná goil go fóil,  
Seóthó, a leinbh a chumainn ‘s a stóir,  
Mo chúig chéad cumha go dubhach faoi bhrón,  
Tú ag sileadh na súl is do chum gan lón!*

Do gheobhair an dtúis an t-ubhall id’ dhóid,  
Do bhí ag an dtriúr i gclúid faoid’ chomhair;  
An staf bhí ag Pan – ba ghreanta an tseóid,  
‘S an tslat bhí ag Maois ghníodh díon dó ‘s treóir.

Do gheobhair, a leinbh, mar thuilleadh leó an tseóid  
Thug Aoife d’éis gach céim do’n leoghan,  
Le’r mharbh Feardiadh ba dhian i dtóir,  
Is Conlaoch uasal uaibhreach óg!

Do gheobhair saill uaim, fíon is beóir,  
Is éadach ‘na n-aice ba mhaise do threón;  
Acht ó chím do mhuime chugam ‘san ród,  
Ní gheallfad uaim dhuit duais ná seóid!

Hush, love, don’t cry any more,  
And for sure you’ll get all the wealth  
Your noble ancestors had before you

In green-meadowed Ireland of Conn and Eoin!  
*Hush, love, don't cry any more,*  
*Hush, child, dearest darling,*  
*It's my five-hundred fold grief and dark sorrow*  
*Your weeping eyes and pallid face.*

First you will get that apple in your hand  
That the three (graces) were holding just for you;  
The reed of Pan – a beautiful treasure,  
And the staff of Moses when he led his people.

Child, you will get even more treasure  
Than Aoife pledged after each step of the hero,  
With the death of Ferdia, swiftest in the chase,  
And young, proud, noble Connla.

You will get fat meat from me, wine and beer,  
And plenty of elegant clothes;  
But, since I see your mammy coming up the road,  
No more will I pledge you prizes or jewels!

### **Ceann Dubh Dílis**

A song by the Irish harper, Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738). He wrote this for a friend who was secretly, but madly, in love with Nelly O'Conor. When she heard her admirer sing it, Nelly eloped with him immediately, or so the story goes...

Ar an gcéad amharc do chonaic mé riamh ort  
Chrónaigh mo chroí féin istigh in mo lár,  
Do bhéal tana meala bhfuil boladh na taoim' air,  
Ag baint na sú-chraobh amuigh insan lá.  
*Ceann dubh dílis, dílis, dílis,*

*Cuir do lámh mín geal tharm anal.*

*A chum is gile ná an eala is an fhaoileán*

*Is duine gan chroí nach dtiubhradh dhuit grá.*

Ar drúcht na maidin le héirí na gréine,

Casadh orm mo chéad-searc agam san ród,

Do dhruid mé féin léithi go mblasfainn dá béal binn,

Agus d'imigh sí i bhfeirg uaim, is ní fheicfead í níos mó.

'Sí banríon Chonnacht Miss Neilí an déid ghil,

'Sí ba deise is dá bhfacas de mhnáibh,

A taobh mar an eala is a rosc mar an bhféar glas,

'S a grua mar na caorthaibh ar éirí den lá.

The very first time I ever saw you

My heart shriveled up inside me;

Your slender, honeyed mouth that smells of thyme,

You were plucking strawberries out in the day.

*Dear, dear, dark-haired deary,*

*Put your fair, slender arm around me,*

*Your face is fairer than the swan or the seagull,*

*It's a heartless person wouldn't give you love!*

In the dewy morning at sunrise

I met my true love on the road,

I leaned over to taste her sweet mouth

But she angrily left me and now I'm alone.

She's the queen of Connacht, Miss Nelly of the bright smile,

She's nicer than any that I've ever seen-

Her skin like a swan and her eyes like green grass,  
Her cheeks like the rowan-berry at the break of day.

### **Shein Sheis Shuuse Lum**

This beautiful song has the distinction of being the first Irish song to have ever been published.

Sín síos suas liom,  
Druid anall is fáisc mé;  
Cóirigh leaba fúinn araon,  
A chumann, croí na páirte:  
Tá mo ghrá-sa súgach,  
Tá sé luathfar láidir;  
Hey ho, rirko,  
Saor anois ón mbás mé!

Lie down alongside me,  
Come close and hold me tight;  
Make a bed under us both,  
My darling, my beloved:  
My own love is joyous,  
He is vigorous and strong;  
Hey ho, rirko,  
Now I'm safe from death!

### **Slán le Máigh**

This poem is by the poet Andrias MacCraith (fl. 1740) Croom, Co. Limerick.

Ó! Slán is céad ón dtaobh so uaim  
Cois Máighe na gcaor, na gcraobh, na gcruach,  
Na staid, na séad, na saor, na slua,  
Na ndán, na ndrúacht, na dtréan gan ghruaim!  
*Is och, ochón! Is breóite mise,*

*Gan chuid, gan choir, gan chóip, gan chisde,  
Gan sult, gan seód, gan sport, gan spionnadh,  
Ó seóladh mé chun uaignis!*

Ó slán tar aon do'n bé d'ár dual,  
An bháinchnis bhéasach, bhéaltais bhuadhach,  
'Chuir tráth chum sléibh mé 'gcéin am ruaig;  
'Sí grádh mo chléibh bí n-Éirinn cuach.

Is fanach faon mé, is fraochmhar fuar,  
Is támh-lag tréith, 's is taomach trua,  
I mbarr an tsléi 'gan aon, mo nuar!  
Am páirt ach fraoch is gaoth aduaidh.

A hundred farewells to this place I must leave  
The Maigne-side of the sheep, the woods, the cornstacks,  
The ladies, the jewels, the free men and hosts,  
The poems, the songs, the joyous heroes.  
*And, O alas, I am ailing  
Without goods or rights, without friend or store,  
Without joy or holding, sport or vigour,  
Since I was sent to solitude.*

Farewell to her to whom it's due,  
Milk-skinned, gentle, soft-lipped and good,  
For whom I fly through the hills far away,  
She is the love of my heart, my dear.

I'm wandering, weak, frantic and cold,  
I'm fainting lonely, gloomy and sad,

On the hillside with none, to share my grief,  
But the purple heather and howling north wind.

Ein hundertfaches Lebewohl dem Ort, den ich verlassen muss,  
Den Ufern der Maigue mit seinen Schafen, Wäldern, Getreidegarben,  
Den Damen, Schmuckstücken, freien Männern und Gastgebern,  
Den Gedichten, Liedern und munteren Helden.

*Und, o Jammer, ich bin kränklich*

*Ohne Habe oder Rechte, ohne Freund und Herd,*

*Ohne Freude oder Güter, ohne Spass und Leiden schaft,*

*Seit in die Einsamkeit ich musste.*

Leb wohl, du, eigentliche Ursach',  
Deren Haut wie Milch und die so sanft und gut ist,  
Um derentwillen ich über die Hügel davonfliege.  
Sie ist die Liebe meines Herzens, meine Teuerste.

Ich wandere dahin, bin schwach, verzweifelt und verfroren,  
Die Sinne schwinden mir und einsam bin ich, gramvoll und betrübt;  
Keiner ist da unterwegs, der mir meinen Kummer tragen hüllfe,  
Nur die violette Heide und der Wind, der scharf von Norden weht.

(übersetzung: Michael Windgassen)

### **Úna Bhán**

To understand this song requires a little background information. Tradition has it that Úna was a young woman from the wealthy McDermott family who lived on an island in Lough Measc, Co. Mayo. She fell in love with Tomás "Láidir" Costelloe, but her father forbade the romance. She fell deathly ill due to her lovesickness and Úna's nursemaid persuaded McDermott to allow Tomás to visit. In his company Úna regained her health, but as soon as she was better McDermott told Tomás to leave. In Úna's earshot he agreed to leave but said that if she called him back before he reached the Danóg river he would return. He left and waited three hours for a signal at the river. But, hearing nothing, he continued on his way. As soon as he had crossed the nursemaid came running out to say that Úna wanted him back but he wouldn't break his word and refused to return. Úna was again stricken and died



three weeks later. When Tomás heard the news he swam across the lake each night to sing his lament on her grave. On the third night Úna's ghost came to him, slapped his face and sent him away. He only lived another six months after that and was buried beside her.

A Úna Bháin, nach gránna an luí sin ort

I do leaba chaol chláir i measc na dtáinte corp

Mur dtige tú le fóir orm, a ghrá a bhí 'riamh gan locht,

Ní thiocfaidh mé chun t-áras go brách ach an oíche anocht.

A Úna Bhán, ba rós i ngairdín thú,

Ba chláirseach a' cheoil 'gabháil romham sa mbóthar thú

Ba cheiliúr is ba cheolmhar ag dul an bhealaigh seo thú

Mo léan dóite níor pósadh le do ghrá geal thú.

Tá an sneachta seo ar an lár, 'sé dearg le fuil

Ach samhail mo ghrá ní fhaca mé in áit ar bith

Féachaidh-se a mhná, cé b'fhearr ná an t-ochón sin

Aon ghlaoch amháin 'ghabháil Áth na Donóige.

Fair Una, how awful, you laid out thus,

In your narrow wooden bed among all those corpses.

If you were to come save me, my faultless love,

I would never come to your house, but this one night.

Fair Una, you were a rose in the garden,

You were a musical harp going before me in the road,

You were song and music going along the way,

My bitter grief that you were not married to your true love.

The snow lies all about and is red with blood

And one like my love I've nowhere ever seen

Look here, women, would not better than your lamentation

Have been one shout crossing the Danóg ford?

**Rejoyce Greatly, O Daughter of Zion**

Rejoyce greatly, O daughter of Zion,

Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem,

Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.

He is the righteous Saviour,  
And He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

***All translations from the Irish: Caitríona O'Leary***