

THE PARAMETERS OF STYLE IN IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC

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Style is an important but elusive concept in the world of traditional Irish music. As a young traditional flute player growing up in St. Albans, England, I heard the words of flute style bandied about at fleadh, concerts and sessions but didn't really understand them despite being exposed to a rare generation of musicians in and around London. In 1990 I took the opportunity to undertake a research degree at University College, Cork with the stated, naive and far too ambitious idea of producing an account of the different regional styles of flute playing within traditional Irish music. My initial period of research was by far the most fun and I travelled the country and received the seemingly limitless generosity and hospitality of many flute players. However, my initial goal of establishing a categorical structure where certain regional styles could be defined in much the way musicologists would define historical styles of classical composition by the use of certain techniques very quickly proved to be unattainable. One man's east Galway style, was another's Clare style was another woman's Sligo style. Very soon I realised that the problem wasn't with the words and conceptual structures of traditional musicians and their inadequacies (as is implied in the findings of musicologists such as George List (1994, 1997) and closer to home, Fionnuala Scullion (1980)). I concluded that the problem was my expectation of discovering a scientific, Aristotelian categorical structure where every category has a limited list of attributes and a well defines border to separate it from others. I wanted to science about music, and music says something different to science and what it does say it says it very differently too! This discussion is for a different article but the essence of my argument is that we may build scientific structure to organise our musical world but all it takes is for one creative musician, a Miko Russell, a Seamus Tansey, a Johnny Carty to, in the words of the song 'come down from the mountain' and not make music according to our 'science' and we must start again (or, as it is dangerously more easy to do, discriminate against and discount them). Too many times have I sat into conversations and presentations and heard people talk about West Clare music and either ignore or skirt the performing styles of Miko Russell, a man certainly idiosyncratic, and inspirationally so, in his performance styles but also quintessentially of Clare – or also say that Johnny Carty isn't really a North Connaught fiddler or Paddy Carty's genius put him

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outside East-Galway. To discuss the categorical structuring of styles we have to develop more sophisticated tools to understand such organisation in its linguistic, aesthetic, socio-geographic and cultural contexts.

Alternatively, one way we can talk about style in traditional music performance practice is to breakdown and examine the technical aspects of any individual performance, examining how the musicians deploys selections of technique to make their own performance style, essentially examining the physical interaction of the musicians with their instruments. This occurs in several of the many instrumental tutors published in the Irish tradition over the past two centuries in a pedagogical fashion. However, what would be more useful and reflective of the performance based conceptual gestalt of the tradition would be an examination of those groups of techniques as they are presented cross instrumentally. This of course removes these concepts from the embodied context of the specific instrument but it is more reflective of a multi-instrumental community with shared aesthetic, political and other conceptual structures.

This has been done in an analytical and academic contexts by musicologists such as Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, (1986, 1990), Sean O Riada (1982), Brendan Breathnach (1971) and Lawrence McCullough (1977) and indeed Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (an international organisation charged principally with the role of promoting traditional Irish music, in particular through a structure of competitions) asks adjudicators to engage this type of analysis every-time they are put to work (I will discuss the structure of an adjudication form later in the article) so what I am presenting here is hardly new in anything but it's extent and comprehension. Brendan Breathnach writes about this sort of analysis that are apparent in a set of performance 'rules' he says

The performer playing a tune or singing a song is not conscious of these rules, just as, when we speak, we are not conscious of the rules of punctuation or of the spelling of the words we are using. (Breathnach 1996, p.90)

This is reinforcing the common cultural convention that musicology can be taught but musicality, as expressed through performance, is somehow intangible, unintellectual and reliant on innate gifts that cannot be taught. This convention has saved generations of politicians having to invest in music education as there is no point spending money on what no amount of resources can develop, which is the case if musicality is ingrained rather than acquired. Most would argue that exceptional musicians engage in a constant process of analysis, even in performance and the more conscious they are of aspects of style and have developed their own structures for evaluating their own style and others, the better performers they will be. I do think that this style of analysis can be very important to the development of the musician rather than just the style analysis of the student at University College, Cork or

the University of Limerick and indeed this is the context where analysis has the most significance.

Of course, this mode of examining a music practice does smack of traditional musicological analysis, a style of musicology that seems to become increasingly unpopular. Ethnomusicologist and 'new musicologists' tend to reject the study of object against process but very often it is they who generate such a dichotomy. Dale Harwood works around these concepts when he writes;

...perhaps we ought to look at how people learn to listen to - and how they learn to play - their community's music, rather than to focus on what it is they listen to or play. The process of understanding and engaging in musical behaviour may be more universal than the content of musical knowledge or action. (Harwood, 1976, p.523)

Certainly, to view music as process rather than use the metaphorical structuring of music as a thing to be analysed is far more productive. But that productivity is severely limited if an examination of the actual auditory event in which music is manifest is ignored. If we decided not to engage in a careful and reflexive examination of the music itself (whatever that is) we lose an important dimension in the study of the process and run the risk of building arguments on the tired paradigms of both traditions of musicology and the tradition under examination. The problem is the mutual exclusion and polarisation of process and product. Product, object, event or whatever way we construct the moment seen as performance or artefact produced in a culture must be seen as part, but not necessarily an ultimate part, of process. Like any examination we must always be aware of the motivations for the structuring and structurings of cultural actors whether they be performers, commentators or musicologists.

My current motivations for the sort of analysis presented below come from my professional life as the course director of an MA in Irish Traditional Music Performance at the University of Limerick. In this I am eager to illustrate to students intellectual tools to structure their own musical experience in the world of traditional music practice, both their own and that of others. I am also eager to illustrate that this process is intrinsically un-musical in itself and in it the gestalt and aesthetic imperatives of an actual performance are invariably lost. Robert Cristgau expands the problems of writing about music in his article 'Writing about music is writing first'.

...all art is magic - and that as we've been told ad infinitum from Saussure on down, nothing can be reduced to words, not even words. Writing about writing is also like dancing about architecture." (Christgau 2005, p.416)

However, there is a very human imperative to write, or more basically, to speak about music to contextualise, structure and inform our practice. The structure presented below is intended to inform the way we perform and listen to our music. It is not entirely new, as we have stated previously, and is part of an academic tradition most manifest in the work of Ó Súilleabhain (1990) and McCullough (1977).

However, as I have indicated, this process of structuring is not one coming from the academy or researcher but comes principally from the sound community of traditional music itself. Much of the terminology presented below is taken from the words used by performers to account for traditional music practice, not from theses. It is important to note that the aspects of performance listed below are not overall aesthetics for performance but are instead the tools that musicians (although rarely would all be consciously manipulating all of the below in performance) use in the service of those aesthetics.

An important theme of any examination of what can be called the technical parameters of style in traditional Irish music is the politicisation of each one. The use, non-use, type of use and perception of the elements outlined below can be political acts, placing the performer in one or many aesthetic camps tied into ideas of region, tradition, contemporaneity and progression. Of course these camps are not fortified positions but rather sites or nomadic travellers who will up-sticks and move their position according to the aesthetic needs of the moment.

Style can be broken down into the following components that we will discuss shortly.

1. Ornamentation
2. Phrasing
3. Articulation
4. Variation
5. Intonation
6. Tone
7. Dynamics
8. Repertoire
9. Duration
10. Emphasis
11. Speed
12. Instrumentation
13. Instrument specific techniques

The list above in itself is a categorical abstraction of groups of techniques used by instrumentalists playing Irish traditional dance music. The members of these categories which tend to relate more to the musician's physical

interaction or perceived metaphorically hypostatized nature of the sounds made differentiate according to the instrument played and background of the musician. It is interesting to see 'musicological' traditions developing within the traditions according to the interaction of contextual elements such as aesthetic, exposure to other traditions and embodiment. Indeed we must be acutely aware that this article in itself is an extreme facet of this influenced by the environment of the University, my own background as a listener and embodied performance practice.

Before we discuss them it is important to note that their importance in any individual performance is dependant on a number of factors including the individual aesthetic of the musician (e.g. most traditional musicians, to various degrees, would be conscious of not over-cluttering their performance with ornamentation and some, for various reasons, would omit certain types of ornaments) and the context for the performance (e.g. most musicians would play differently in a concert than for dancers). Also we should also know that an ever-present theme of the performance of traditional dance music is, of course rhythm, and the deployment of technique is very often for rhythmical effect. This last point I will try to illustrate as we go on.

Ornamentation

Ornamentation is a term used by all traditional musicians but as a concept is again not easy to define. Some of the ornaments we will discuss are easily defined as such, like cuts, rolls and crans, but 'ornaments' such as single note triplets as used by fiddle players or accordionists could strictly be regarded as articulation but generally would not be so defined. A working definition could be the addition of extra tones to (or the division of) a main tone which is regarded as being embellished. Central to the idea of ornament is that a note is being ornamented and as such no ornament has any life beyond the context of the 'main – tone'.

Travelling in Europe and North America it becomes apparent that the traditional musicians of those countries see ornamentation as central to what it is traditional music in this geographical context and, although not always central, it certainly is perceived to be more prevalent in the performance of traditional Irish music as opposed too say English, Welsh or much Scottish music. It is essential to remember that there are conventions of ornamentation that are held across the Irish tradition but the terminology is often not. Sure enough the pipers, perhaps because of the literacy and urbanity of their tradition, seem to have a reasonably well defined vocabulary for their ornaments and indeed this vocabulary is borrowed throughout the tradition. Some vocabulary is now very common. All know what a roll is however the distinction between a long roll and a short roll is not so easily made and the terminology begins to loose its regularity (the long-roll, short roll distinction was first published by Breathnach, a piper (1971)).

A long roll is usually represented as below in fig.1 although the rhythmical structuring of it can vary between it and what you can see in fig.2. Generally the rhythmical structure tends to concentrate on the end of the tone being ornamented. The structure is of five tones in the following sequence; the main-tone; a tone above; the main-tone; a tone below.

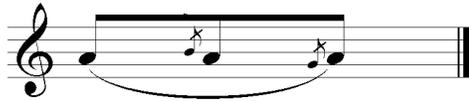


Fig.1



Fig.2

The intervallic relationship (i.e. the distance up and down) between the main tone and the two others (one above and one below) can be changed because of the nature of the instrument or the aesthetic judgement of the musician. For example many B/C accordion players who like using rolls are forced to play upper and lower notes which may be only a semitone away from the main tone to avoid a change in the direction of bellows while some south-Sligo flute players (notable Seamus Tansey and Peter Horan) will choose to have wider intervals to make a more audible and rhythmical effect.

The short roll (sometimes called a half-roll) is generally described as being the same as the above but with the first note missing so can be represented as follows;



Fig.3

Unlike the long roll this ornament occurs at the beginning of the note being ornamented so the note of the ornament with longest duration is the last. This ornament works particularly well in smaller spaces but there are problems if the tune is coming from a tone above.

Rolls tend to occur over notes of longer duration that are usually represented as having a duration of a crotchet or dotted crotchet but in recent years, and particularly on the pipes, whistle and flute, some virtuoso players have been getting them into much smaller spaces. Of course this can also lead to a further complication of the terminology used to describe these ornaments with musicians talking about 'short long rolls' and 'small short rolls' etc.

The overall effect of a roll is invariably rhythmical where the tones above and below can often not be distinctly heard – what can be heard is the punctuation of the main tone. There are also other words used for roll, notably in west Clare the word beril would be used (as in the title of the tune recorded famously by Mrs. Crotty, ‘The Reel with the Beril’) which would also have been used to describe a turn or curl in someone’s hair. Interestingly enough the term is used in Scotland to account for a piping ornament that is not dissimilar to a roll. These terms have an obvious metaphorical root when we conceptualise the sound of these ornaments as spatial entities.

Single or double notes ornaments from above and below are given a variety of names. The word cut is used most often to describe a single note ornament from above which can be represented as in fig. 4. A pat is often used by traditional musicians to describe a downwards double note grace note as is illustrated in fig. 5. These ornaments tend to occur at the beginning of the tone being ornamented although the Sligo flute player June McCormack illustrated to me how she would sometimes use them towards the end of a main tone. Again, usually the emphasis is on their rhythmical effect, accentuated to start of the main tone which often occurs at the beat (see figs. 6 and 7 where I show how they could be used in the first bar of Willie Coleman’s Jig) but again occasionally they can be used to take up to over half of the duration of the main tone to suspend or hide cadence points. Fig. 8 shows how this can be combined with a short roll in the first bar of the second part of Willie Coleman’s (the first four bars are illustrated together in Fig. 9).



Fig.4



Fig, 5



Fig.6



Fig.7



Fig.8



Fig. 9

Another popular ornament (again from the pipers) is the cran which is popular on pipes, flute and whistle but now can be heard used by fiddlers and accordion players although some would argue that for the sake of traditionality they should be left to the pipers. A cran is multiple note ornament which includes at least two notes, usually above the main tone and none below². It is often represented as follows;



Fig.10

They are most popularly used by pipe, whistle and flute players on a D where most often there is not the facility to play a roll on the D but it is more and more common to hear musicians using crans on other notes (I often hear flute players referring to crans on other tones as flutters). Indeed Sean Donnellan mentions a disagreement in the letters page of the Evening Herald in 1930 between pipers Séamus Mac Aonghusa (the father of Seamus Ennis) and Leo Rowsome about the appropriate notes on the pipes to cran (Donnellan 1988, p.133).

The above is just a few examples of the ornaments used by traditional musicians and the names they use to classify them. In recent years it is fair to say that the technical complexity of ornamentation and the sheer quantity of its use has increased and there is much argument as to whether is trend is to welcomed or not. It would not be uncommon for a young flute player to play a complex ornament as illustrated below that incorporates aspects of the cran, long roll and double note ornament going down!

² The notable exception is when whistle and flute players cran a high D with their top finger off which produces at least two Cs below the main note ornamented.



Fig.11

For this sort of newer and more innovative ornament there is no standard terminology but such terminology does flourish, even if is not standardised. For example in my teaching I would call the above a 'tapped-cran-roll' whereas Grey Larson in his encyclopaedic *The Essential Guide to Irish Flute and Tin Whistle* (2003) would refer to it as a 'double cut roll'.

Of course some instruments lend themselves to more ornamentation than others (notably the flute, pipes and whistle) and some do not lend themselves to crans and rolls at all (e.g. the banjo and mandolin). Also the way that ornaments are executed is very instrument specific. For example what concertina players call a roll could be any one of a number of ornamental sequences but often not the five note ornament shown above and usually either something that more resembles what above is a cran or a single note triplet with a single grace note added to one of the notes of the triplet. Individual tones on specific instruments lend themselves to certain types of ornaments and give different levels of ornamental possibility depending on the way we physically interact with the instrument. For example, rolls are virtually impossible on an open string on a fiddle where getting the tone below means swapping strings, something that cannot really happen at the speed required. On a C sharp on a flute, where none of the tone holes are covered ornamentation, which is largely dependant on the fingers of the player interacting with the holes on the instrument, is extremely difficult. However there are no absolutes in these situations and a performer will always show you how that get over the apparent and assumed embodied limitations of their instrument.

Single note triplets would usually be regarded as ornamental techniques rather than articulation, which is perhaps a less prominent stylistic parameter in the mind of the average traditional Irish musician (if such a thing exists). These are associated with fiddle playing - more recently the banjo, accordion and most latterly whistle and flute. This ornament is perhaps motivated by a desire to ornament a note where it is otherwise difficult to use other ornamental tones at speed. Of course on different instruments the effect is produced through different ways of interacting with the specific instrument. On the fiddle it is achieved through rapid changes in the direction of the bow; on the banjo by a quick succession of single strokes with the plectrum; on the accordion (both the button and piano) by the rapid successive tapping of a single button or key, usually by different fingers; on the flute by using something akin to classical triple tonguing techniques or rapid successive glottal stops. This is usually used

on notes characterised as being of crotchet or dotted crotchet length seen below in bars one and three of Willie Coleman's Jig.



Fig.12

These ornaments are usually called triplets and, less frequently, perhaps to distinguish from multiple note triplets, trebles.

Some traditional musicians would consider the use of multiple note triplets as ornaments. These often happen in contexts where the melody involves a jump of tones of a third or more.

For example, again in the second part of the jig, 'Willie Coleman's';



Fig.13

The triplets that fill up intervals of a third or over can be seen in bar 3 and 4. A common ornament especially used by older flute and whistle players can be seen in bar 2 above. It is a type of ornament that would have been used by Micho Russell but in a modern context would be very often replace with a cran, roll or single note triplet depending on the instrument and aesthetic preference.

It is important also to remember that ornamentation is used in the vast majority of cases to accentuate rhythm. When the ornamentation becomes so overcrowded or complex to interfere with rhythm then many would say that the playing is cluttered and unmusical.

An important issue for these ornaments and their performance is the proportion of duration given to the individual tones. This tends to change according to the particular instrument, the place in the melody and the aesthetic of the performer. For example, some flute players like to play rolls as represented in Fig. 9 above but perhaps it would be more popular for them to give the first tone of the ornament a longer duration, aspiring for something that would perhaps be represented as;



Fig.14

The flutes, pipes and whistle lend themselves to this sort of uneven roll that gives a type of rhythmical push to the tune (it is often combined with a dynamic push to the end of the ornament). However, this sort of uneven structuring of the ornament is not as easy on the accordion and fiddle and is less common or extreme. The single note triplets above also rarely have equal triplet and quite often are played in way more accurately represented as;



Fig. 15

Or;



Fig.16

Also the place in the tune and the type of tune plays a part in the rhythmical structuring of an ornament. For example in a reel, a roll that starts on the beat will usually be structured differently than a roll that starts after the beat.

As is intimated above, the use and nature of ornamentation is essentially politicised within the tradition. It is common to hear musicians to complain about the sheer amount of ornamentation used by some musicians and others to disregard the performances of others who eschew the use of much ornamentation as being too plain. The Sligo flute player June McCormack would encourage the even spread of the notes of a roll of the tune been ornamented (justifying it as being more traditional) whereas I personally would prefer pushing the ornament to the end of the tone. Also some musicians would disregard some ornaments as being part of another instrumental or regional tradition despite them being able to use them. I mention above that some flute players refuse to use crans as they are piping technique. A notable example of this is the virtuosic Cork flute player of a North Connaught style, Conal O Grada who said to the author in an interview "if you want to cran I reckon play the pipes altogether" (Keegan, 1992, p.40). Indeed, Conal does play the pipes and does use crans on that instrument but prefers not to on the flute even though the motor movement for the technique on both instruments is very similar. Some ornamental techniques also associated with particular stylistic categories. For instance, one of the

paradigms of Donegal fiddle music is that they use a lot of single note triplets. Also some techniques are seen to be more traditional or authentic in certain instrumental contexts. Again it is traditional for a Donegal fiddle player to use single note triplets but not for a flute player.

Phrasing

Phrasing is a concept important to every flute and whistle players in one way or the other but many other musicians can sometimes disregard it and often do not consider its effect (whether good or demeritorious) on their performances. It is essentially when spaces are made in the tune to shape phrases, often seen as musical sentences. Thus for flute and whistle players phrasing is always important as we have to breath. The way we shape our phrases is often considered an essential part of our performance practice, whether the phrase are natural or irregular / long or short.

All of our tunes can be divided into 2, 4, or sometimes 8 bar phrases that tend to follow a basic call and response pattern. These Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin calls 'natural' phrases (1990, p.120). Look at version 1 (first staff of the system) of the Boyne Hunt below which is structured in 2 bar phrases and version 2 (second staff of the system) which is structured in 4 bar phrases. Both are consider by Ó Súilleabháin and the wider traditional music community as natural (ie. fit the melodic and rhythmical shape of the melody).

The Boyne Hunt

The image displays a musical score for the tune 'The Boyne Hunt'. It is written in D major (one sharp) and common time (C). The score is divided into two systems, each containing four staves labeled V.1, V.2, V.3, and V.4. The first system covers measures 1 through 4, and the second system covers measures 5 through 8. Each staff shows a different phrasing structure for the melody. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and various phrasing slurs. The key signature is D major, and the time signature is common time.

Fig.17

Version 3 gives examples of how the phrasing can be made irregular. The natural phrase breaks that can be seen in versions 1 and 2 are avoided and the breaks that are made in bars 1, 4, 5, 6 and 8 are away from the natural phrase breaks and produce a punctuating effect (again, rhythm is an underlying aesthetic). Version 4 gives another possible phrasing structure for the tune. For flute and whistle players phrasing is always very obvious as there is a breath which does make the phrasing structure obvious to the listener, although it can happen, if rarely, that these players would make a break in the melody without taking a breath. Flute players such as Conal O Grada would use their breath as a technique to break up the phrasing even when strictly speaking they don't have to breath, whereas players such as East Galway's Paddy Carty would stick to the natural phrasing of the tune so as to maintain the uninterrupted flow of the melody. When there isn't the imperative to breath sometimes the phrasing structure is harder to identify. Sometimes a fiddle player like Martin Hayes will not actually stop the melody but imply a phrase break by playing a long note with a definite dynamic structure (a phenomenon we will revisit). This sort of technique produces a complex phenomena of ghost phrasing that is difficult to account for and produces a

multi-layered approach to phrasing which, though effective, is doubly difficult to account for in such a blunt tool as a transcription.

Next time you listen to John Carty on banjo or fiddle, listen to where he occasionally hides the natural phrase break with a variation or, when listening to June McCormack on flute, listen to where she plays through the natural phrase break, stealing a breath to great effect somewhere else. However, when listening to Johnny Doherty on fiddle notice the way he maintains the uninterrupted flow of the tune with his motoric rhythm, hardly breaking up the phrases at all, let alone irregularly. For Johnny, not breaking or stopping the phrase was an important part of his style.

The melodic shape of the tune plays a roll in the shape of phrases in performances. The tune encourages the musician to take breaks in certain places - many melodies extend over places that would be usually natural phrases ends. The creative interplay of artist and melody (which are often characterised within the tradition as things in themselves) is very apparent in the structuring of phrases in performance which combines with processes of variation to create new and individual versions or settings of tunes. Extreme examples of this can be found in Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin's study of Dublin fiddler Tommie Potts (1987). One notable example is the way he conjoins the two first parts of the reel, 'My Love is in America' (Potts 1972 and see Súilleabháin 1987, p.206-248).

Another example of a flute player with a very creative approach to phrasing to a tune is seen in the transcription below of Jack Coen's recording of the first round of The Blackthorn.

The Blackthorn (reel)

Fig.18 (transcribed from Coen & Coen, 2002, track one, 0.00-0.24)

The breaking of the phrase (which can see where there are rests) is used here for very obvious dramatic effect, building an impetus through the first round of the tune where the phrase lengths become more likely to be regular.

Perhaps an important aspect of phrasing structure (as with anything) is to avoid repetition. If the break is made always at the same point of the tune, as in version one of the Boyne Hunt above, the performance would often be seen as being affected detrimentally. However, in the performance of dance tunes by far the most popular place for making the break in the tune is the quaver value immediately after the quaver value on the beat.

Articulation

Articulation is a very important parameter of style when we examine the categorisation of different styles by traditional musicians. Articulation is the way we make breaks between notes and the frequency with which we do it. For pipers it is central as their world is very often and most basically split into open and closed piping where the open or legato style is associated with the travelling community (particularly performers such as Johnny Doran, Paddy Keenan and Finbar Furey) and the tight pipers who tend to use much more staccato passages are associated with an urban, Dublin community (particularly associated with Seamus Ennis, Andy Conroy and Mikie Smyth). This is a criminal oversimplification of the way pipers see themselves but it does illustrate the centrality of articulation as a defining stylistic parameter.

For flute and whistle players the frequency of articulation is also important. For the flute, legato playing is more associated with the flute playing of Galway and Clare, staccato with the playing of Leitrim and northern players such as Desi Wilkinson. Articulation is central to the whistle playing of players such as Miko Russell and Sean Ryan but in very different ways. However also important for both instruments is the way articulation is made. Articulation by tonguing is not uncommon among an older generation of flute players (such as Vincent Broderick or, again, Miko Russell) but today throat articulation (the glottal stop) is the norm and young flute players (such as Brian Finnegan) that do use their tongue to articulate, and go as far as imitating the staccato triplets of box and fiddle players, are seen as stretching the boundaries of what is traditional.

For fiddle players articulation is achieved by changing the direction of the bow and obviously this is central to the style of many Donegal fiddle players who play in a very articulated fashion. Fiddle players from Sliabh Luachra, Clare and Sligo will be much more likely to bow across the beat, hiding the rhythmical impact of the note on the beat by slurring onto it but this would be a rhythmical technique found to some extent everywhere and on may

instruments. However, as with all the technical parameters listed here, their importance is specific to certain instruments. For example, articulation is not central to banjo performance as the instrument itself has little capacity to produce a legato effect.

Again the effect of changing the use of articulation is rhythmical. The use of lots of articulation tends even out the duration of quaver progressions. Tight piping does tend to slow the music down and make the overall sound seem much more controlled whereas open piping tends to be louder and faster, incorporating more multi-tonal ornamentation. Generally the use of much articulation tends to preclude the use of ornamentation with the exception of pipers who have invented their own 'tight' ornaments (such as Patsy Touhey's 'back-stitching' (Mitchell & Small, 1987)). Conversely, the highly articulated style of Donegal fiddle players such as Johnny Doherty, is associated with speed and an urgency in performance but does, as in piping, preclude certain types of multi-tonal ornamentation. The extensive use of articulation also can often effect the sense of 'swing' in a performance where articulation of consecutive quavers can give them a more equal duration.

Variation

Variation is another difficult concept to articulate. It lies anywhere between composition and improvisation and of course is an aspect of all the other technical parameters of style we speak of (ie. the way a player will 'vary' the use of ornamentation, phrasing, articulation etc.). However what we will talk about here is the deliberate changing of main melody of the tune for aesthetic effect. How much this process is compositional or improvisatory (two intrinsically interconnected ideas) is very much down to the musician and in an Irish context the word variation seems to cover both. It is important again to emphasise that the use of variation is a stylistic choice. Many musicians choose to use very little variation, often concentrating on the delivery of a single setting (for a good example of this see Brendan Taaffe's work on Patrick Kelly from Cree, Co. Clare, (2004, 33)).

Categorising variation into various 'types' is always dangerous but I do find it useful in a teaching context to list variation as having 4 aesthetic and embodied orientations in its motivation. These I list as rhythmic variation, melodic variation, harmonic variation and phrase variation. Below is the first part of the reel, 'The Boys of Ballisodare', presented in a system with four different versions, the first being a basic model of the tune. The second system is an illustration of variation where the motivation for varying the tune is phrasing, the third rhythmical and the fourth melodic and the last harmonic. For the purpose of brevity I have condensed many examples of variations into this first part of this reel; however, for the majority of

performances, even by musicians noted for their use of variation, there would rarely be this sort of intensity variation.

On the second stave you can see how the phrasing is altered as in the examples above and how, in order to facilitate this, the melody is changed also. In bars 4 to 5 especially, the phrase end is hidden by a radical change in the melodic line. This is discussed above but this is an obvious example of how interactive all of these stylistic parameters are and the problems of presenting them as a categorical structure and its implications of the bounded nature of members which is not applicable here.

In the third system you can see examples of how a musician would attempt to enforce or alter the rhythm of a tune through variation. In bars 5 and 6 the tune varies by refereeing back to the 'D', a strong tone for most flute players or pipers who would be able to force the note to great rhythmical effect, reinforcing a beat. Flute players therefore, in the production of an effect in line with their own aesthetic sense are utilising the physical nature of the instrument and the way they can kinaesthetically interact with it. In bars 7 and 8 the melody is structured in steps of 2 notes going downwards, forcing tension with what usually is the base rhythmical structure which is split-common time. Essentially most people play reels where the emphasis is 1234 1234 but by changing the melody to produce a stepping, sequenced effect we naturally make more of a 12 12 12 12 feel. It is important thought not to see a one way process of the aesthetic exploiting the physical, when the aesthetic is arguably derived from the possibilities offered by our physical interaction with the world as would be argued by modern cognitive linguists and philosophers such as Mark Johnson, Mark Turner, and George Lakoff.

In version 4 I have presented ways musicians may be motivated to change the melodic shape of the tune. So in bars 1 and 2 the stepped progression of the tune is replaced by a wide arc into the second octave and this occurs again in bars 7 and 8. This does also have obvious rhythmical effect by destroying the original 4/4 of the tune again, highlighting the problems of categorical structure. This is the reason I have characterised these types of variation as having aesthetic and embodied motivations as it would be wrong to try and account them as being things that are melodic, rhythmic etc. To attempt to account for motivations for process is a far more flexible tool.

Perhaps less traditionally in bar 4 we have the introduction of a chromatic variation which again would illustrate how these technical parameters would place the performer politically within the tradition. However it is important to point out that this political location has to do with not just the way aspects of performance such as chromatic variation are used by the musicians but also the context they are in. For example, the travelling piper Johnny Doran, the North Tipperary accordion player Paddy O'Brien and contemporary

concertina player Niall Vallely all use chromaticisms in different contexts and it is these contexts play the larger part of their positioning politically and aesthetically within the tradition – there are very few members of the traditional music community who would group them together stylistically.

In version 5 the motivation is harmonic so is either to reinforce or transform the underlying harmonic implications of the tune. Straight away in bars 1 and 2 arpeggiated sequences representing different inversions of the root chord are introduced but implicitly reinforcing the dominant role of the root in those two bars. Again we move into what would generally be considered a less traditional mode in bars 3 and 4 where, in bar 3, a G major seventh is implied in the second group of quavers progressing immediately and unconventionally into a F major triad which would be considered quite untraditional. In the final four bars of the last system I have a bit of fun and show how these different types of variation can combine. Here I hide the natural phrase break and create a break in bar 7. I go on to introduce a movement of groups of three quavers that undermines the rhythmical structure and changes the melodic shape of the tune.

The Boys of Ballisodare (reel)

The image displays a musical score for the reel 'The Boys of Ballisodare'. It consists of two systems of five staves each, labeled V.1 through V.5. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns such as eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together in groups of three. Phrasing is indicated by slurs and breath marks. The score shows different harmonic and melodic treatments of the same tune across the five variations.

Fig.19

Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (1990) has approached variation and improvisational practices from a different perspective and proposed mechanisms traditional musicians use to generate variations. He mentions phrasing and the need to present and vary motor rhythm but does mention two dimensions for variation and improvisation that should be included here. These include what he calls “the pitch dimension – set accented tones” (Ó Súilleabháin, 1990, 123) where the musician plays off a hierarchy of tones, produced by rhythmical placement, to produce variations, versions and settings. Also he presents “the structural dimension – interchangeable segments” (Ó Súilleabháin, 1990, 127) where he illustrates how traditional musicians will quote internally within tunes to create variations at appropriate points, perhaps most often unconsciously. By not attempting to present an overarching structure for understanding variation and improvisation in traditional dance music practice, he has greater capacity for looking at individual process for the creation and understanding of the creation of variation. However, in focusing almost exclusively on this singular process the tension between what is perceived in the process of creation and the analysis of the process by the musicologist is most apparent.

Another important issue that I have avoided here is the relationship between improvisation and variation, the implication being that the later is a much more composition, premeditated process. This is further complicated by the fact that the later term is one current in the tradition for both processes while the former is one that is seen as coming from outside the tradition and belongs to other musics and musicians. One personal anecdote that illustrates this comes from an improvisation class I have ran with post-graduate students. When introducing the students to the idea of improvising and some of the processes that can be involved I asked students to indicate to me if they thought they were now improvising. One student, who was perhaps the most successful in my eyes, failed to put his hand up and when I asked him why not he declared he was not improvising ‘but making up variations on the spot’! So part of our problem in the examination of improvisation and variation as perhaps separate but highly interrelated processes lies into the fact that in the Irish tradition improvisation is a part of variation and indeed is perhaps not considered traditionally as an entity in itself to juxtapose against variation. This returns us to the problems of categorical structuring of musical experience but it is evident that much research has yet to be conducted regarding the various processes of variation in traditional Irish music practice and how they are conceptualised and expressed by the community that engage them.

Intonation

The four stylistic parameters listed above are normally the major important considerations in any individual’s style. Another element which also is often

an important factor for a performance is intonation and this concept plays a parting the traditionality of a performance. The online music dictionary Dolmetsch defines intonation as:

In tuning, the degree to which a pitch of a note heard is what is correct but not to the degree that the note heard is the wrong note (www.dolmetsch.com)

In western art music there a number of structured tuning systems (just intonation, pythagorian tuning, meantone, well, and equal temperament) but in traditional music there seems to be at least two orientations for intonation that stray from general western practice and they are based perhaps on perception and embodied factors (as in fact all systems of tuning must). The first is embodied in the experience of the musician who seems not to either notice or value normal, contemporary western consistency in tuning (this is most often true of some our most esteemed, older performers). The second is perhaps based in the physical and kinaesthetic properties of the instruments and the bodies that interact with them. Many instruments are, purposely or otherwise designed to generate different structures of intonation which can prove to be the focal point of performance for duets. The most obvious recent example of that being the playing of Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh and Mick O'Brien where Caoimhín deliberately focuses on the intonational properties of Mick's flat pipes (2003). Other musicians produce certain types of intonation because of the way they physically interact with their instruments. Jos Konig writes about the way that East Clare fiddlers manipulate the tonal structure of the music through left hand (fingerboard) technique rooted in the physical restrictions caused by the way the left hand of the fiddler interacts with the neck of the fiddle. He writes;

It seems to me that the individual freedom in performances, allowed to the player, enables him to manipulate according to his personal taste the musical results of physiological restrictions (Konig 79, p. 84)

A prime example of this manipulation of the tonal nature of the performance is apparent in virtuoso East Clare fiddler player Paddy Canny's most recent album where his own tonality contrasts sharply with that of accompanying piano and guitar (Canny 1998).

What resonates with me in a discussion of intonation is Charles Keil's concept of 'participatory discrepancies' where he writes

The power of music is in its participatory discrepancies, and these are basically of two kinds: processual and textural. Music, to be personally involving and socially valuable, must be "out of time" and "out of tune" (Keil 1987, p.276)

Although Keil understood this is having a far more abstract life than literally one of intonation, appropriate (for a traditional context) variations in intonation set real tensions in the appreciation of our music that are enjoyed as well as placing the performance in time, out of time. However, as musicologist we must be conscious that this perception of tension and 'out of tune' -ness is one created in a modern listening experience and the aesthetic that created such tonal practice is unlikely to be the one that sustains it in a modern western environment.

Within the community of traditional music practice there is a belief that variations of intonation is a very 'traditional' practice that is on the wane because of the influence of fixed pitch instruments (such as the much maligned accordion), ensemble playing and the pervasive environment of western music and its fixed tonality. However, as a practice it is rarely taught and in instruments where it is possible to manipulate much emphasis in early development is usually given to playing 'in-tune'.

Instrumentation

A stylistic parameter that has perhaps had greater significance in modernity is the type of instrument a musician wants to play. There are all different models of flute, whistle, fiddle accordion etc. many of which have distinct tonal qualities. In past days the selection of instruments may not have been so good. A fiddle player would have started on a house fiddle, left up on the wall and then may have progressed to buying their own fiddle when the opportunity and financial ability arose. The woman who in the late eighteenth century went into a market town shop to exchange some of her income from selling eggs and dairy products to buy a free reed instrument would have not have had the choice of instrumentation that musicians today have. Today there is a network of instrument makers throughout Ireland, and internationally, that will supply and sometimes custom make instruments for musicians who have much greater financial ability to invest in instruments than their predecessors. Instruments may now be expensive but musicians have greater capacity to buy them, of course depending on their own income and desire to own instruments but it would not be uncommon for musicians today to own multiple instruments.

Sound quality may not be the only criteria for choosing an instrument. The sheer size of an instrument and the physical effort that may be needed to put into playing an instrument may be a factor. Accordions may be too heavy and have too many reeds for some to play effectively, some flute players may prefer flutes that are harder to 'fill'. Certain types of instruments are often engendered - I often hear students talking about 'girl's flutes', 'a man's box', 'a lady's fiddle'. There may also be certain other properties of an instrument

that are not directly linked to sound quality. For instance, I prefer a flute that has keys that are 'pin-mounted' because I think the action of those keys is faster and more consistent than the normal 'block-mounted' keys whereas another flute player may prefer a flute with no keys at all. This physical nature of my preference for a flute with keys may not effect the tonal qualities of the instrument but does allow me to play certain types of repertoire and use more chromatic variations.

This parameter also includes, for some instruments, materials that are used in performance as part of the instrument or used to prepare the instrument for performance. Therefore, for banjo players and fiddle players the make, type and quality of strings used will be part of what informs performance style, for pipers the same goes for reeds, for banjo players the type of plectrum.

I would argue therefore that very often the choice of a type of instrument is as much a part of a musicians playing style as the choice of a roll or particular phrase in performance. Although it is not a stylistic parameter that can be manipulated in performance (although many musicians would use several instruments in performance depending on the repertoire they are playing and the mood of performance they want to create) it still plays an active roll in the life of the musician who may choose a certain instrument for aesthetic reasons at various stages of their performing lives. It must be emphasised that this is not always the case and people inherit instruments that they stick with and don't actively think about choosing instruments to suit their own playing style or may quite simply be unable to afford to do so. These people do not engage instrumentation in the way others do which is analogous to the way some musicians would not think of other stylistic parameters.

Tone

Tone as a stylistic parameter is closely associated (but not identical too) instrumentation. It is the quality of the sound produced (and the variety of qualities) by a particular instrument. Though the term timbre in this context may be better to use to avoid confusion with intonation, tone is the term that would used most often in the tradition.

Among flute players some will create a very narrow wide embouchure to produce a hard, raspy sound while others might make a slightly more open and round embouchure for a softer, less aggressive sound (notice me grasping for metaphors!). Fiddle players will use different parts of their bows on different places on the strings to produce different or certain sound qualities as banjo players will strum the strings at different places to make brighter or more muted tones.

On some instruments, such as accordions, piano and others that tend to be more mechanical in nature (ie. the human body is in some way more removed from the actual sound production) there is less scope (but rarely none) for manipulating the quality of sound. It is interesting that this 'mechanical' nature of certain instruments and the inability of manipulating the tonal quality of the sound are often presented as reasons for the non-traditional nature of some instruments. A good example of this is Sean Ó Riada's attack on the accordion in *Our Musical Heritage*. Writing on the importance of 'making' the note he writes;

"This the accordion player cannot do. He does not make the notes, they are already there, ready to sound at the pressing of a button, produced in an almost entirely mechanical fashion. He has only to press a button and pull or push the bellows. The tone and even the intonation of the ensuing note has already been decided for him by the maker. Because of this individual musical expression becomes extremely difficult if not impossible for him" (Ó Riada 1981, p.69)

Although Ó Riada is certainly incorrect in assuming that an accordion cannot influence to tonal quality of their instrument, the sentiments expressed above are common, but paradoxically not often applied to the concertina, just as mechanical an instrument as the two-row button or piano accordion.

Dynamics

Breandán Breathnach writes;

Intensity, the varying of loudness and softness of sound, is not a feature of traditional music. It is not possible, in fact, to vary the sound in such manner on the pipes. Crescendo and diminuendo are terms for which one finds no use in the notation of the music, and this rule applies equally to singing and to playing. The use of dynamics betrays the non-native (Breathnach 1971, p.90)

He is undoubtedly right that the use of terminologies such as the Italianate ones he mentions would have little use in the notation for traditional Irish music. Indeed their use in classical music has an operational role in that it is a performance instruction and I would argue that the notation of Irish music for Irish musicians does not have this role at all and certainly dynamics, like many other stylistic techniques, do not make it onto the page. Also the implication of the broad sweeping and above all gradual dynamics implied by the use of the long 'hairpins' used to indicate these terms in a classical score rarely occurs in the performance of traditional music. However, the varying of intensity is an important part of many musicians performance style and can

manifest in a number of different ways. The fiddle players of East Clare use small dynamics on long tones which will include a slight movement of pitch and a dynamic movement instead of an ornament such as a roll. Many older generation musicians would play the repeats of entire parts at different intensities of volume and use crescendos over one or two bars to 'lift' the music into a phrase or part change. Indeed, Breathnach's own instrument's lack of capacity for making different dynamics that he claims as a justification of his account of their absence in traditional music is not strictly true as pipers create a dynamic by occasionally using their drones and regulators.

Repertoire

The dance tunes we choose to play are also part of our performance style. This is manifest in a number of ways.

Certain tunes are associated with certain instruments and this is usually based on the ergonomic capacity of the instrument, or perhaps, more importantly, what is perceived to be the ergonomic opportunities and disadvantages offered by the instrument. For example, tunes that go consistently below the D above middle C would not be regarded as flute, pipes or whistle tunes (as these instruments don't have these notes) but will more likely be associated with the fiddle, accordion and banjo. Certain tunes just sit well on certain instruments, playing to the capacities of certain instruments and the limitations of others.

Certain regions have their own repertoires which can sometimes be betrayed by the tune titles (although tune titles can change quicker than the tunes themselves) so it's easy to work out that 'the Ballydesmond Polka' is a Sliabh Luachra tune, 'The Glen Road to Carrick' is a Donegal tune etc. Very often these repertoires are tied to an instrument or the aesthetic of a particular regional style. The Donegal repertoire is undoubtedly a fiddle repertoire with a preponderance of tunes with 'A' as tonal centre, the repertoire associated with iconic players of the east Galway tradition (musicians such as flute player Paddy Carty and fiddle players Paddy Kelly and Paddy Fahy will tend to work around a G with a minor modality (paradoxically musicians such as Carty acquired a lot of newly composed material from Cavan born, Philadelphia based fiddler Ed Reavey).

Some tune types are associated certain regional styles. For example Scottishes and highlands are associated with Donegal music; polkas and slides with Sliabh Luachra music. Certain different types of the same tune type also will have predominance in different regions. The dominant Kerry polka and the Sligo polka (which seems to be the historically more dominant) have different structures. The Kerry polka will be in 2 4 and will move in a quaver motion

while the Sligo version will be similar but will occasionally move in semi-quaver motion.

Duration & Emphasis

Perhaps one of the most fundamental parameters of style in traditional dance music this is perhaps a combination of techniques most closely tied to the central rhythm aesthetic of style in this form.

Performers can produce emphasis by increasing the volume of certain notes in the patterns intrinsic to the various tune types. Here are some examples based on the first two bars of the reel 'The Green Mountain'.



Fig.20

These are three fairly stereotypical accounts emphasis and often musicians will vary their approach to emphasis according to varied contexts, including the repertoire being performed. Also this is a parameter which is based in the relative volume given to notes rather than absolute values, for example, the first version presented above could involve equal but heavy staccato bowing or fairly light legato bowing but both with an little differentiation of emphasis between notes. So here I am describing an approach that could be manifest in a variety of very different sounds. Above I account for a couple of different approaches that could equally be manifest in very different sounds. The second staff in the system has an emphasis on the main beat of the reel. The third is an emphasis on the sub-ordinate beat producing what a lot of traditional musicians would call back-beat and would be regarded by many as a stylistic marker for North Connacht style.

Duration also effects rhythm by elongating the rhythmical values of certain notes at the expense of others in the stereotypical quaver based movement of the danced tunes, what Ó Súilleabháin calls the 'motor rhythm' (1990, p.121). We can illustrate this using the first two bars of the jig 'Willie Coleman's';



Fig.21

The second version on the system here puts a greater emphasis on the first quaver of each group at the expense of the second quaver. Again, this example of what would be regarded as a swung rhythm (and again seen as an important part of North Connacht fiddling) is oversimplified and stereotypical but it does show how the shifting of duration in the typical quaver movements of the dance tunes can be an important aspect of an individual's and a group of individual's style. The development of duration and emphasis, building and changing patterns, versions of 'motor rhythm, is one of the more subtle part of a musician's stylistic palette.

Speed

Another important aspect of style is the speed at which the dance tunes are played. There are several common regional paradigms around this which, though specifically often inaccurate, do illustrate the importance of speed. These include the oft-quoted 'Donegal music is fast' and 'East Galway and East Clare musics are slow' paradigms.

Speed is also a highly politicised parameter of style. The age old paradigm of many musics, that young people play too fast, occurs here. Breandán Breathnach writes in his preface to the second reprint of the influential collection, *Ceol Rince na hÉireann*;

It was pointed out to the editor that readers not familiar with Irish dance music had been left in the dark about the tempo at which this music was usually played. The following shows the tempo for each class of this music:

Double Jigs		=	127	Slip Jigs		=	144
Single Jigs		=	137	Reels		=	224
	Hornpipes		=	180			

To play the music at a quicker tempo detracts from the melody; to play it somewhat slower can do it no harm. It was customary for many of the older musicians when playing for themselves to adopt a slower pace than that demanded by the dancers. (Breathnach 1974, p.ix)

Anyone familiar with traditional Irish music would know that the time values are not observed strictly as above. However we can see here the common paradigms of the older musicians playing slower and dancers needing the music too fast emerging

Instrument Specific Techniques

Many, if not all, instruments, possess capacities for techniques and effects on their own instruments that are not quantifiable by the above and are individual to that specific instrument or perceived family of instruments. Many of the categories above group techniques individual to certain instruments but quantified by their audible effect. For example, articulation is achieved on the fiddle by changing the direction of the bow, the pipes by stopping all the holes on the chanter, the whistle and flute by stopping the flow of air into the instrument using the tongue or throat. However, here we are talking about techniques also individual to certain instruments that don't fall into the categorical structures above and have distinct audible effects. When examined it is true to say that many of these instrument techniques are associated with the capacity of the instrument in question playing more than one tone at any one time, and doing so very often to primarily produce rhythmical emphasis or provide a harmonic accompaniment. They include:

Instrument	Technique	Description
Fiddle	Double-stopping	Playing more than one string at one time to produce a chord or drone.
Banjo	Chording	Playing chords at strategic points in the tune
Pipes	Regulator playing	The employment of the regulator pipes, laying across the lap of the piper, to provide a basic harmonic and rhythmical accompaniment.
Accordion	Use of Bass	Providing basic rhythmical and harmonic accompaniment with the left hand
Concertina	Octaving	Playing the melody in two octaves simultaneously

Fig. 21. Instrument specific techniques

Rhythm

When presenting this as a way of analysing performance to performance and ethnomusicology students at the University of Limerick, one of the first criticisms is why isn't rhythm presented as a separate parameter? I would

argue that appropriate rhythms and their variation are developed out of the careful combination of the parameters listed above. Ó Súilleabháin writes:

“Here is yet again another aspect of the creative process at work whereby the musician interacts with a given rhythmic flow in such a way as to allow for his own musical thought free reign within the traditional norms of rhythmical possibility” (Ó Súilleabháin 1990, p.122)

I am in complete agreement with his view but not his organisation where he lists his four dimensions of creative practice; “phrasing, rhythm, pitch and structure” (Ó Súilleabháin 1990, 120). Rhythm is I would argue more accurately accounted for as the underlying aesthetic to this music, naturally so as it is a dance music. It can be argued that all the parameters above are utilized to the service of various rhythm based effects and aesthetics. Although the music has been separated from the dance practice over the past century or so it is still distinctly a dance music and we still very much listen with our feet. This aesthetic is there in even the most undancable of traditional music performances.

To illustrate this I will critique Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin’s famous analysis of Tommie Potts’ performance of the reel, ‘My Love is in America’ on his commercial recording, *The Liffey Banks*. The A part of this tune shows some radical ‘deviations’ (Ó Súilleabháin 1987, p.209) from a more traditional tune model. Ó Súilleabháin does illustrate some techniques particularly associated with rhythm such as Pott’s exclusion of the set accented tone at the beginning of bar three of the performance. Ó Súilleabháin gives a complete account of the tonal and phrasing structure of the performance but I think he is missing an important rhythmical subtext. Below is Ó Súilleabháin’s transcription of bars 9-24, with his model of the tune in the second stave of the system.

Fig. 23. “Ill.44 Potts’ ‘My Love is in America ‘ I (bars 9-24) compared with the model” (Ó Súilleabháin 1987, p.214)

Ó Súilleabháin concentrates on the variations in bars 1-4 and 7-10. I would argue that underlying the many processes described by Ó Súilleabháin is an aesthetic of rhythmic variation. In bars 1, 2, 7, 8, and 9 we can see what Ó Súilleabháin calls sequential variation (*ibid.*, p. 213). These sequences have a different rhythmical structure, which is leaning into a strong 4/4 feel (where the shape of the melody is accentuation first, third, fifth and seventh quaver value of the bar) to the model which is more firmly centred around split-common time (where the major emphasis are more emphatically on the first and fifth quaver value of the bar).

It is interesting that when Potts in interview with Ó Súilleabháin about the programmatic nature of the music that Potts more often than not explicitly contextualises this in a rhythmical than a tonal realm, the movement of the shuttle in ‘The Weaver’, the movement of the caravan in ‘The Yellow Tinker’ (*ibid.*, p. 271). I would not like to undermine the analysis of Ó Súilleabháin which is quite obviously the single most significant and extensive piece of academic analysis of a performance of traditional Irish music but he perhaps understates the motivating role of an underlying traditional aesthetic based on rhythm in the music of Potts.

Conclusion

I am certain that the account above of technical parameters of performance practice in Irish traditional music is not exhaustive. However it does provide a useful tool for performers in examining their own performance practice and also for the musicologist for examining others. In the Irish tradition we are in the interesting position of these two personalities manifesting in the single performing musicologist although we must be aware of the problems, many manifest here, that this Janus figure generates for both academic and performance communities.

It is important that the use of such systematic tools for musicological analysis should remain reflexive and open-ended. If music is encultured and imaginative and is essentially indefinable (through language at least) then the way that individuals constitute and categories aspects of what they do and hear will never be precisely the same. Even within the often romanticised community of Irish traditional music (although for a more acerbic view see O'Shea 2007) there are diverse ways and seemingly endless variations of accounting for what we hear and play. Much as the presentation here is as complete as the author can aspire to, it is a categorical structure that will exclude some sounds out of ignorance or a sense of traditionality as I am sure some aspects included will seem to others to be untraditional.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the list presented above is that it comes out of the community that sustains its performance. Below (fig.24) is an adjudication sheet from a Comhaltas county fleadh from 1993. Competition is a contentious issue in traditional Irish music circles as it is in many practices although it would be fair to say that most developing traditional musicians would have taken part at some level.

comhaltas ceoltoirí éireann
 Official Adjudication Sheet Concert Flute, ~~In Whistle Piece~~

Fleadh Cheoil: Monaghan Name of Competitor: Majella Bartley No. _____
 Competition: Concert Flute Address: Carraghan Grade: 15-18

Classification of Piece	Style and Ornamentation	Variation and Control of Tone	Rhythm and Phrasing	Time	Command of Instrument	Total	Remarks
	50 Marks	15 Marks	10 Marks	10 Marks	15 Marks	100 Marks	
<u>Going to the Well for Water</u>							<u>lovely strong tone obtained here.</u>
<u>A Pipe</u>							<u>Nice use of variations.</u>
<u>Josie Mc Donnell's Reel</u>							<u>Played @ a nice pace!</u> <u>Again lovely tone.</u> <u>Nice use of Dorans.</u>
							<u>Excellent choice of Reel.</u> <u>Beautiful playing</u> <u>Excellent tone.</u> <u>lovely performance</u>

Date: _____ Adjudicator: _____

Fig.24

Monaghan born flute and fiddle player Majella Bartley supplied the form which comes from a county flute competition for ages 15 to 18 that she won in Monaghan. If you look first at the template of the sheet it asks the adjudicator (whose anonymity is preserved here) to provide marks for style and ornamentation, variation and control of tone, rhythm and phrasing, time and command of instrument according to various weightings. Anyone familiar with these adjudication sheets will also be familiar with the way adjudicators maintain the independence of their aesthetic judgement by completely ignoring this marking scheme on the form and provide their own justification for the place and mark of the performance in the remarks section (which has perhaps motivated a more recent restructuring of these forms to replace the prescriptive structure here with a list of suggested parameters). However, many of the same criteria can be seen in the comments, which would naturally reflect the performance and what was appreciated (or not) by the adjudicator. Here she likes the strength of tone, the variations, speed, a particular ornament that would be regarded as advanced in a child performance (the D cran) and the choice of repertoire. Thus, in one adjudication sheet we can see evidence of nearly all our stylistic parameters. These are a particular organisation and presentation of the tools we use to evaluate performance or perhaps more accurately to justify our evaluation of a performance. They are also used in the construction of performance which can perhaps be best seen in the contemporary teaching practice of traditional

Irish music. The way these tools are used and the combinations of them are always different but they are always there.

We must always remember in this sort of analysis that the effect can be artificial and we can easily lose a sense of the whole performance. An effective but gruesome metaphor is to imagine the performance being analysed as being a favourite pet dog that is dissected, chopped up into small pieces and turned inside out, to try and find out why it is so lovely! In the analysis we can lose the thing we love and interact with, this music is obviously more than a sum of its parts and this sort of process can lose its true musical, social and cultural impact. However, as a tool to develop our individual performance practice it can be invaluable. It is also invaluable for musicologists attempting to engage with native structures for assessing and accounting for performance. Many contemporary performers need to become musicologists in order to develop their performance practice and examine how these technical parameters of style are manifest in their own music and make decisions about the effect of such technique on their style and how their use can add, or subtract, from what they want to achieve in performance. True enough, we all meet musicians who seem to never practice, never examine themselves in such a cold and clinical manner, seem to be handed their talent from either God or the devil. The role of 'deliberate practice' outside of classical music scenes needs much more examination and also the importance of deliberate 'listening' is something that is being examined by the academic community of music psychologists (see Hargreaves and Coleman's account of 'listening styles' (1981). I suspect that there are fewer of these unreflective, non-practicing people than we think and the vast majority of us have to engage in this sort of reflective, analytical practice to become the musicians we have the potential to be. These processes are the root and means of creative practice in traditional Irish music and as such processes, I would argue, we are duty-bound to follow. A duty not particularly to God or Ireland but the people who have to listen to us!

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