

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

This is the inaugural volume of *Ethnomusicology Ireland*, the journal of the Irish National Committee of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM Ireland). It is our intention that the contents of our journal, like the activities of the society itself, reflect the range of music played, studied, and researched on the island of Ireland, providing a regional forum for scholars of diverse musical traditions. The Committee maintains a website at [www.ictm.ie](http://www.ictm.ie) at which the journal can be accessed in two formats: a general readership may access a printable PDF version; members benefit from their access to sound and video illustrations in the online version.

We invite submissions reporting on original research that has not been published elsewhere. All submissions are subject to review by two readers and subsequent revision at the request of the editor. In general essays should be around 7,000 words in length, although exceptions may be made depending upon the character of particular contributions. Without precluding any particular mode of writing, all should conform to a high academic standard and include appropriate scholarly apparatus. We follow the so-called British style as found in the *Oxford Style Manual* in editing text, and the Harvard style Author-Date system for referencing. Authors are asked to submit their copy in electronic form in Word with minimal formatting to the editor at [Colin.Quigley@ul.ie](mailto:Colin.Quigley@ul.ie).

As editor, I am mindful of the mandate to feature current ethnomusicological investigation of Irish music topics. This would include studies of traditional Irish music, of course, but the scope of journal is meant to be much larger than this. The musical life of Ireland today is a diverse and cosmopolitan one, including that of immigrant communities, urban cultural-scenes, affinity and diaspora groups. Its many idioms encompass the 'pure drop' and the wildly mixed, the conservative and avant-garde. It spans high-art and down-home settings. Contemporary ethnomusicology accepts and engages with all of these and more.

The Society's activities are intended to reflect the interests of all its members, including ethnomusicologists, folklorists, performers, music enthusiasts, and the traditional music community at large. It is composed of scholars, students, performers, publishers, museum specialists, and librarians from numerous disciplines. Some of these disciplines include anthropology,

musicology, cultural studies, acoustics, popular music studies, music education, folklore, composition, archiving, and the performing arts; anybody with an interest in the scholarly study of music is welcome and encouraged to join. This journal, then, while centred in ethnomusicology, will reach out to wider readership. It shall include essays from such related fields as they may relate to the broad humanistic orientation of ethnomusicology.

The essays gathered together in this volume reflect the theme of the 2010 Conference, 'Ensemble: Playing Together' and all began as presentations to that gathering. Nevertheless, in the spirit of the journal as expressed above, readers will find that they address a variety of subject matter and research problems. Its contents incorporate study of little known idioms in Irish music, innovative approaches to the study of Irish traditional music, represent a broad conception of Irish traditional music and move beyond this subject matter to address research questions of interest to ethnomusicologists in Ireland through studies of non-traditional, not-specifically Irish musics.

**Timothy Cooley's** essay grew from his keynote address to the conference. In it he reports on his developing investigation of musicking among surfers. The nature of this affinity group poses challenges to traditional ways of understanding the relationships between music and the expression of collective identities. How 'musicking together' works to express the ethos of 'surfing alone' presents a central paradox to be tackled. The extensive illustrations accessible in the online version do much to enrich the study.

Likewise, **Gordon Ramsay's** essay incorporates compelling ethnographic video in the online version. Ulster marching bands constitute an extraordinarily vibrant, but academically little known musical tradition. Hundreds of bands participate in parades every weekend throughout the summer, and concerts and contests in the wintertime. The tradition includes internationally competitive Pipe Bands, brass and 'part-music' flute bands whose efforts are largely devoted to classical music, accordion and military styled 'melody' flute bands, and the distinctive 'blood and thunder' flute bands whose exuberant performances constitute an unique fusion of the militaristic with the carnivalesque. His paper describes the social, musical and political history that brought these diverse styles of music-making into existence, before using ethnographic studies of flute bands from three different genres to examine the different ways that class, ethnicity and aesthetics interact to produce the tastes, practices and embodied identities which define and sustain these bands.

**Niall Keegan** investigates talk among Irish traditional musicians in ensemble settings. He argues that the 'language-ing' of ensemble plays a pivotal

role in the making of this aspect of traditional Irish music practice. The linguistic turn that he advocates reveals how language brings a shifting world of meaning into play at all levels of discourse; even the use of the term 'ensemble' in itself is one that brings a plethora of dialogic ideas such as cultural hegemony, value and class into play around this ostensibly neutral term. Keegan draws upon material from three different sources: an extended ensemble rehearsal, interviews with professional ensemble members and from responses by traditional musicians to excerpts played from recordings of bands. He compares what he finds to the language of Irish traditional music more generally, offering insight into the construction of a distinctive ethos in the newly emergent and increasingly important 'ensemble' domain of traditional Irish music making.

Two essays present reflexive personal accounts of their subjects. **Desi Wilkinson** reports on his experience as a participant in an 'intercultural' musical exchange project in order to raise important questions about this not uncommon context for traditional music practice of many kinds. The creative dynamic of any ensemble may be led by one individual or arrived at by a more apparently democratic negotiation of a performed end result, which must be both imagined and communicated by the musicians involved. Where the participants in an ensemble come from very different cultural backgrounds, with divergent musical and even career aspirations this web of creative negotiation can become both complex and revealing. In this paper he illustrates some aspects of this process by offering a brief description of the socio-cultural and musical dynamics of a musical collaboration involving Irish traditional and Senegalese musicians. The process of negotiation involved in 'making a group work' exposed the musicians' micro-political strategies for positioning themselves comfortably within an ensemble and shed some light on the difficult work of 'imagining collectively'.

**Karen Power** addresses a non-traditional music in her essay about changing relationships among composers, listeners, and performers in contemporary music. She examines how current creative technological trends are affecting both the concept of 'performers' and, indeed, the performance space, within contemporary music practices. The paper focuses on how technology has helped composers to widen both the concept of the performer and the performance space. Specifically, how, through the creative use of technology, composers today are becoming more involved in the performance aspects of their work, through both an increase in their physical stage presence and through the widening of the concept of a performance stage. A musical

idiom that traditionally created clear lines between these functions is becoming more intuitively realised through the use of technology. Through reflection on her practice and the example of a particular piece, *some things just are*, Power points to a fruitful area of research for ethnomusicologists.

This publication would not have been possible without the help of the Editorial Board and members of the general ICTM Ireland Board. My thanks to them; as Editor I welcome both these contributors and you, readers, to this first volume of *Ethnomusicology Ireland*.

Colin Quigley