

**THE CELTIC TWILIGHT AS REFLECTED IN THE TWO-PIANO WORKS OF
JOAN TRIMBLE (1915-2000)**

A Document

Presented to

The Faculty of the

Moore School of Music

University of Houston

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

By

Lisa McCarroll

May, 2013

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ABSTRACT

The nineteenth-century Celtic Twilight movement was named after a collection of folklore by W.B. Yeats, a work that was inspired by Ireland's native folklore and contained themes of twilight, nature, and the supernatural, mainly that of the "fairy faith" from old Pagan Ireland. The movement, which was created by the Anglo-Irish ruling classes as a method of maintaining their elite status in Ireland, initially began as a literary movement, but eventually branched out into other areas of Irish culture and society, such as sport, art, and music. Present generations are indebted to the Anglo-Irish for what is generally considered as Irish nationalistic culture. This ideology is relatively unknown by young Northern-Irish musicians today. The Celtic Twilight movement formed the backdrop to Northern-Irish composer, Joan Trimble's life, career, and music. Although Trimble's compositional catalogue is diverse, the composer's most characteristic works can be found in her two-piano compositions which succeed in capturing the essence and atmosphere and foot-tapping exuberance of the Celtic Twilight. Therefore, this research has resulted in the first D.M.A document to deal with the connection between Ireland's nineteenth-century cultural history and Trimble's life and two-piano works. In order to contextualize Trimble's life and achievements, chapter one presents an investigation of the Anglo-Irish culture and the Celtic Twilight movement. Several undocumented primary sources, including radio interviews and rare recordings, help to provide insight into Trimble's life in her native town of Enniskillen, and her experiences in London as a student and professional musician. Strong influences of the Celtic Twilight movement in Trimble's life and career is evident from these extremely valuable sources and hence is the topic of chapter two. An overview of her complete two-piano works (published and unpublished) in the third chapter explores the Celtic characteristics found in each work within the subtext of *Goltrai*, *Suantrai*,

and *Geantrai*—the three compositional genres found in Irish traditional music. This study therefore attempts to provide a comprehensive, referential document in relation to Trimble and her two-piano works in the hopes of shedding light on one of Ireland’s greatest musical ambassadors.

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Several institutions in Ireland and England aided me in my doctoral dissertation research. Among those, I would like to thank the staff of the National Library of Ireland in Dublin, Ireland's Contemporary Music Centre, and the Royal Irish Academy of Music library, for making their Joan Trimble Collections readily available to me. To Maira Canzonieri, the Assistant Librarian of the Royal College of Music archival library in London, who supplied me with primary sources related to Joan Trimble, such as the composer's school records.

It has been an honor and a privilege to meet, talk, and correspond with Joan Trimble's daughter, Joanna McVey. My visit with her in the original Trimble family home in Enniskillen, was an unique occasion, where I listened to her account of her mother's life story. A nice way for the Trimble and McCarroll families to reconnect.

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Trimble's compositions included. To my parents, no words can convey how indebted I am to you for your constant love and support, and providing me with the opportunities that have led me to this point.

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Dedicated to my grandmother,

Vera Butler

INTRODUCTION

Born in 1915 in the Northern-Irish town of Enniskillen, composer and piano duettist Joan Trimble is considered one of Ireland's great musical ambassadors of the twentieth century. Her dual career as composer and piano duettist (with her younger sister Valerie) began in 1938 while studying at the Royal College of Music in London under the mentorship of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Herbert Hughes, and Arthur Benjamin. The Trimble sisters' piano-duo debut, although a great success, coincided with the "Munich Crisis" (30 September 1938), when the threat of war was knocking at Europe's door. For this recital the young composer wrote *The Humours of Carrick*, *The Bard of Lisgoole*, and *Buttermilk Point*. The Irish inspired two-piano works were published by Boosey & Hawkes, while Winthrop and Rogers published some of Trimble's early songs. In 1939, when the Second World War broke out, both Joan and Valerie enrolled in the war effort as Red-Cross nurses. Their service meant that the two girls could stay in London and further pursue their musical career, and further pursue it they did. From this point onward the Trimble sisters enjoyed a highly successful career, performing regularly at London Prom concerts (along with all the leading British orchestras), the National Gallery concert series (organized by Dame Myra Hess), as well as becoming the official "mascots" of the BBC radio program "Tuesday Serenade," directed by Stanford Robinson—all this in addition to their eight-hour shifts for the Red Cross.¹ Inspired by her collaboration with her sister Valerie, Joan Trimble continued to write as well as arrange many two-piano compositions throughout this period to facilitate their numerous performing engagements.

The medium of the radio, which they frequented almost every week, meant that they had to find, rehearse, and perform many miniature two-piano pieces that would fulfill the two- or

¹ The Trimbles' first scheduled BBC Promenade concert (Wednesday, 2 October 1940) was cancelled due to the air raids—it was considered too dangerous. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/proms/archive/search/1940s/1940/october-02/13937> for more information.

sometimes three- minute time slots typically programmed for the girls. This proved challenging, and perhaps to an extent a hindrance, to the Trimble sisters as performers, and to Joan as a composer. Valerie, a talented cellist, had now effectively become a professional chamber pianist; and Joan, as a new composer, looked to the day when she would be able to write exactly what she wanted—serious, large scale works. The war also turned out to be another influencing factor on their career; as a diversion from dire wartime conditions, the general English public yearned to listen to something more uplifting and light, rather than serious works. On the one hand this played to the girls advantage, as their Celtic-inspired repertoire seemed to fit with English wartime audiences, therefore, their career soared; on the other, however, the Trimble sisters also were often type cast during this period.

After the war, Joan and Valerie seized every opportunity to play large scale, serious works. As a result, the girls premiered many two-piano works and became known to champion Irish and British music.² Because both sisters were married during the war,³ family duties were now added to their already impossibly busy schedule. Joan acquired additional duties as wife, mother to three children, and secretary for her physician husband. Nevertheless, Joan Trimble was the ultimate multi-tasker! In 1940 Trimble had already won London's Royal College of Music Sullivan Prize for composition as well as the Cobbett Prize for her piano trio, *Phantasy Trio* at the same musical establishment. *How dear to me the hour when daylight dies*, a work for voice and orchestra, won the 1953 Radio Éireann Centenary Prize. The composer wrote a ballad opera, *The Blind Raftery* in 1957⁴ in six months with the surgical office's phone on top of the

² Joan and Valerie Trimble premiered two-piano concertos by British composers Sir Arthur Bliss (1891-1975) and Sir Lennox Berkeley (1903-1989).

³ Joan married General Practitioner John Gant in 1943; Valerie married musician John Williams in 1945.

⁴ Joan Trimble won the BBC commission to write a television opera. Her opera proposal to the BBC executives was chosen over composer Benjamin Britten's submission.

piano.⁵ Due to the stressful conditions under which the latter work was written, Trimble stopped composing for about thirty-three years.⁶ In 1959 she joined the faculty of the Royal College of Music, London teaching general musicianship and piano accompaniment. The Trimble two-piano partnership was still performing during the 1960s and 1970s until Valerie's subsequent ill health and untimely death in 1980 at the age of sixty-seven. Joan Trimble permanently moved back to Enniskillen in 1977, focusing all her energy and attention on the family newspaper, *The Impartial Reporter*. Queen's University of Belfast later awarded the composer an honorary degree of Master of Arts in 1983; Trimble in the same year joined the advisory board of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland until her retirement from the post in 1988. The Royal Irish Academy of Music bestowed a fellowship upon the composer in 1985 for her outstanding contribution to Irish music, before appointing her Vice-President of the prestigious musical institution in 1997. Joan Trimble's music saw a revival of its own in the 1990s with the publishing of many interviews and CDs (on the Marco Polo, Koch International Classics, and Black Box labels).

A strong Celtic vein runs throughout the composer's musical language and is particularly evident in her two-piano compositions. This shows that the history and culture of her native Ireland—especially Northern Ireland's nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish tradition known as the Celtic Twilight movement—had a great influence on the composer's work, which saw Trimble successfully combining Irish folk music with classical art music. It is consequently imperative that a study of the composer and her two-piano pieces examine the connection between Ireland's nineteenth-century cultural history and Trimble's life and works.

It is therefore my intention in the first chapter to contextualize Trimble's achievements

⁵ The opera was to be written and performed on British national television within this time frame.

⁶ *Introduction and Air for Two Harps* (1969) and *Three Diversions* for wind quintet (1990) are the extent of the composer's post-opera compositional output.

by investigating the nineteenth-century Celtic Twilight movement, and by defining the interests of the Anglo-Irish, who were the main driving force behind the movement. Chapter one will provide background for the composer's life (the subject of chapter two) and her two-piano works (the subject of chapter three), to show the strong influences the movement had on her compositional style. The third chapter's overview of her complete two-piano works will point out the Celtic characteristics of each work within the subtext of *Goltrai*, *Suantrai*, and *Geantrai*—the three compositional genres found in Irish traditional music. This study will help to compile a comprehensive, reference document on the composer and her two-piano works for pianists and/or Joan Trimble enthusiasts. This research also aspires to promote the composer's work outside of Britain and Ireland, in the hopes that Trimble's music will once again be revived, grow in popularity, and frequent pianists' recital programs.

CHAPTER I

The Celtic Twilight

Into the Twilight

Out-worn heart, in a time out-worn,
Come clear of the nets of wrong and right;
Laugh, heart, again in the grey twilight;
Sigh, heart, again in the dew of the morn.

Your mother Eire is always young,
Dew ever shining and twilight grey;
Though hope fall from you and love decay,
Burning in fires of a slanderous tongue.

Come, heart, were hill is heaped upon hill;
For there the mystical brotherhood
Of sun and moon and hollow and wood
And river and stream work out their will;

And God stands winding His lonely horn,
And time and the world are ever in flight;
And love is less kind than the grey twilight,
And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.⁷

Into the Twilight, William Butler Yeats's (1865-1939) final entry from his renowned work, *The Celtic Twilight*, is an ode to the Anglo-Irish poet's life in Ireland, and in particular to the time he spent in his beloved native Sligo. There, on his daily travels, he would hear many a storyteller speak of the myths and epic stories of the Ireland gone by. Yeats spent his youth collecting and recording such stories from the native Irish culture, whose advocates he often encountered in Sligo. For example, Mary Battle, his Uncle George Pollexfen's servant, recounted stories of Queen Maeve the Great, the celebrated Irish poet Anthony Raftery, and her own personal experiences or encounters with the supernatural world, or Irish fairies. The latter made a permanent impression as Yeats remarked that in Ireland, "there [was] something of a timid affection between men and spirits."⁸ Yeats recounted all these stories accurately in *The Celtic Twilight*, but the work is not merely an exercise in the precise scientific act of collecting and

⁷ W.B. Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight* (Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1994), 160.

⁸ W.B. Yeats, *Mythologies* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1893), 106.

recording Irish folklore. Yeats took the folk-lore genre even further, making great use of his own imagination to “fuse the modes of folklorist and the fiction writer together.”⁹ In essence, Yeats created a new type of Irish literature, one that built on Ireland’s past. Before the Anglo-Irish poet pioneered this new style of Irish literature during the late nineteenth century, Irish literati had simply translated and adapted Gaelic literature into English.

The title of this pivotal work—*The Celtic Twilight*—alludes to the “witching hour” in Ireland, when the night’s transition into day light awakens fairies and all things magical and supernatural—a form of Irish romanticism. Another work by Yeats, *The Secret Rose*, best describes the significance of the theme of twilight in Irish culture and folklore:

There is a moment at Twilight in which all men look handsome, all women beautiful, and day by day as he wandered slowly and aimlessly he passed deeper and deeper into that Celtic Twilight, in which heaven and earth so mingle that each seems to have when upon itself some shadow of the other’s beauty. It filled his soul with a desire for he knew not what. It possessed his body with a thirst for unimagined experiences.¹⁰

Roger McHugh suggests that “the title of *The Celtic Twilight* may also refer to the folk tradition that dimly reflects earlier heroic beliefs.”¹¹ Therefore Yeats seemed to have perfectly crystallized “the gesture and voice of the peasant tale-teller” in his literary impressions of Irish folklore in *The Celtic Twilight*.¹² That is why the nineteenth-century movement, the Gaelic revival, came to center around W.B. Yeats and his contributions to Irish literature and theater. This is illustrated by the nineteenth-century movement adopting *The Celtic Twilight* as its new name later in the century, which at present still signifies all things Irish in all aspects of Ireland’s culture.

Understanding just how the Celtic Twilight movement came into being is extremely

⁹ Edward Hirsch, “Coming out into the Light: W.B. Yeats’s ‘The Celtic Twilight’ (1893, 1902),” *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 18, no. 1 (1981): 3.

¹⁰ W.B. Yeats, *The Secret Rose* (London: Lawrence and Bullen Ltd, 1897), 142, 43.

¹¹ Roger McHugh, “Yeats’s Kind of Twilight,” *Triquarterly* 4 (1965): 3, quoted in Hirsch, “Coming out into the Light: W.B. Yeats’s ‘The Celtic Twilight’ (1893, 1902),” 13.

¹² Hirsch, “Coming out into the Light,” 5.

important, as it was central to the restoration of much of the Celtic culture. Prior to W.B. Yeats and the Celtic Twilight movement, Irish culture had suffered a steady decline due to several social and political factors of the time. First, the complete English domination of the Irish had been ongoing for more than seven hundred years. However, the nineteenth century is significant in that the degree of intensity of English rule increased considerably due to the passing of the 1800 Act of Union by the British government, which linked England and Ireland economically and politically under the dominion of the United Kingdom. The latter remained in effect until the Irish revolutionary leader Michael Collins (1890-1922) signed the Anglo-Irish Treaty in 1921, recognizing the Irish Free State and essentially splitting Ireland into Northern and Southern territories. Six counties remain part of the United Kingdom to this day. Alongside the Act of Union, Ireland under English rule saw the growth of industrialization and modern transportation, which resulted in the more aggressive dissemination of all that was English. Native Irish culture was essentially stamped out and became entirely subordinate to the ruling English classes.

A second factor contributing to Irish culture's decline was that a tragedy of epic proportions befell the native Irish population during the nineteenth century. The main form of sustenance for the people of Ireland was the potato, which from 1845 to 1849 suffered a fungal disease, *Phytophthora infestans*. This "potato blight" caused the crop to fail so much that it led to the starvation and disease of the Irish nation. Millions of deaths ensued, resulting in a population decline "by one-fifth between 1845 and 1851, [which] never regained its pre-Famine level . . . Many thousands escaped hunger by emigrating to Britain, North America, and Australia, accelerating an outward flow already established."¹³ The resultant deaths and ensuing emigration seriously affected Irish culture, which had mainly relied on the oral transition of old Gaelic

¹³ S.J. Connolly, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 238-40.

literature, music, and art. Passed down from generation to generation, many of Ireland's traditions died with victims of the famine or those who were sent further afield as immigrants—an additional blow to the preservation of the Irish language, literature, music, and art.

A final contributor to Irish culture's decline during the nineteenth century is that many of those who bravely remained in Ireland during these extremely troubling times sought to achieve independence and elevate their social status for an ultimately better life in Ireland. In order to do so they often abandoned many of their Irish traditions, as the Irish native language and culture in an English-dominated Ireland was beginning to be seen as a badge of poverty, illiteracy, and social inferiority. Therefore many deserted their heritage, as statistics from the time confirm: only twenty-three percent of the population were Gaelic speakers with just five percent remaining monolingual in the language.¹⁴

Although Irish culture was almost nonexistent by the mid nineteenth century, its imminent extinction surprisingly was not the catalyst to the creation of the Gaelic revival, later known as the Celtic Twilight movement. Ironically, those responsible for the revival of Gaelic culture were not native Irish peasants fighting for their identity, but the ruling classes—the Protestant Ascendancy class or Anglo-Irish—who instigated much of the movement. The Anglo-Irish were descendants of English settlers who had acquired much of Ireland's lands from Irish natives in the form of plantations in the provinces of Ulster, Munster, Connaught, and Leinster during the colonization of Ireland under British rule. The plantations effectively replaced Catholic Gaelic Lords with a new, highly organized Protestant ruling class. Through the years, the latter came to consider themselves Irish, and although ultimately British, the Anglo-Irish became increasingly distinct from their English counterparts due to their long residency in Ireland and generations of intermarriage with the Irish natives. Therefore the Anglo-Irish found

¹⁴ F.S.L. Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 8.

themselves in a predicament—they were caught between the British crown and the Irish peasant:

On the other hand, conscious that they were a privileged minority, separated by race and religion from those whose land their ancestors had seized, they still looked to England as their ultimate protector and regarded themselves as members of an empire which they were proud to serve. This divided loyalty led them eventually into the characteristic dilemma of a colonial governing class, torn between their country of origin and their country of settlement . . . To the English they came increasingly to seem an anachronism, to the Irish they remained an excrescence. Caught between unsympathetic governments and resentful tenants they provided a convenient scapegoat for most of the ills of nineteenth-century Ireland. The popular stereotype of the Anglo-Irish landlord as a callous, rack-renting, evicting absentee, living in luxury on the pittances squeezed from hungry peasants, became so widely believed that it is only recently that it has begun to be questioned.¹⁵

The Anglo-Irish's unstable existence in Ireland began to be threatened in the nineteenth century with the rise of nationalism, cries of Home Rule, and land reform. Surprisingly, the English government under William Gladstone (1809-1898) passed several bills in favor of the Irish native such as The Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland (1869); the emancipation of Catholics; and, most crucially, the Irish Land Acts. In effect, the Irish natives had more legal rights and could contest in court exorbitant rent fees charged by their Anglo-Irish landlords. Eventual proprietorship of land was now possible for the Irish native due to the land acts of the nineteenth century. The grip of the ruling classes was therefore loosened, and, to add insult to injury, they were put in this precarious position by the English, who were thought to be the Anglo-Irish's protector and ally. Betrayed by their English counterparts, the Anglo-Irish saw it as an imperative to sever all ties with the English, and to attempt to unite with the Irish natives by creating a unified national identity, not by way of politics, but through the promotion of the almost extinct Gaelic culture. The Anglo-Irish concluded that forging an Irish identity of their own would secure their future in Ireland.

The Anglo-Irish decided to shift their focus from politics to the promotion of Irish culture from the mid-nineteenth century onwards by discovering, reintroducing, and emphasizing Gaelic

¹⁵ Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939*, 18, 19, 22.

culture back into Ireland. The Parnell Affair (1890), a scandal involving divorce and adultery, worked in the Anglo-Irish movement's favor, as it marked the downfall of Parnell as leader of the predominantly Catholic Irish Parliamentary Party, and dashed nationalistic hopes of home rule. Disillusioned Irish nationalists consequently abandoned politics and looked to culture instead.

During the first stage of the Celtic Twilight movement, notable Anglo-Irish scholars concentrated primarily on the Gaelic language, the ancient legends and sagas of Ireland's pre-Christian heroic age, and Irish bardic poetry, notably by Anthony Raftery (1784-1835), Egan O'Rahilly (1670-1728), and Tulough O'Carolan (1670-1738). A bard was a type of "praise-poet" who was professionally trained in the art of bardic poetry. Attached to the court of a Gaelic Lord, bards were required to attend banquets and recite verse, praising or celebrating their patron to harp accompaniment. Also part of the bardic repertoire were laments, which were usually recited at the death of a celebrated Gaelic Lord. According to W.J. McCormack, bardic poetry as a whole "was characterized by ornate, very complex metres and an abundance of inherited motifs."¹⁶ The first important scholar of bardic poetry was Eugene O'Curry (1794-1862), who adopted the Gaelic language after stumbling across eighteenth-century editions of the ancient epic literature of Gaelic Ireland. O'Curry influenced one of the real pioneers of the Celtic Twilight Movement, Sir Samuel Ferguson (1810-1886), whose numerous English translations of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Irish bardic poetry became very important among the Anglo-Irish, such as *Cashel of Munster*, *Uileacan Dubh Ó*, and *The Fairy Thorn*.

During the 1840s Thomas Davis (1814-1845), a prominent Irish poet and nationalist, made huge ripples in the Gaelic revival movement by highlighting the importance of the Anglo-

¹⁶ W.J. McCormack, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Irish Culture*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1999), 52.

Irish adoption of the Irish language as a means of uniting Ireland as a nation. Davis's viewpoint is epitomized in his most famous quote: "A people without a language of its own, is only half a nation."¹⁷ Davis's objectives were not only cultural but political, as he founded and used the *Nation* newspaper, and the Young Ireland movement, as a political mouthpiece for the Irish nationalist cause.

Sadly Davis lived a very short life, passing away at the tender age of thirty-one years. However, he laid the path for other Anglo-Irish notables who were important in the Celtic Twilight movement, most prominently the "Fenian Unionist," author, journalist, and historian, Standish O'Grady (1846-1928), and academic Douglas Hyde (1860-1949), who were pivotal figures in the promotion of Gaelic culture.¹⁸ In the 1870s, O'Grady, like many Anglo-Irish before him, delved into the legends and mythology of Ireland's ancient civilization, took up the Gaelic language, and produced English translations, including his two-volume *History of Ireland: The Heroic Period*, which was subsequently published in 1878 and 1880. O'Grady's work for the Anglo-Irish cause influenced later figures such as Lady Augusta Gregory (1852-1932) and the already-mentioned W.B. Yeats. "For [O'Grady], the future lay in the gentlemen of Ireland identifying themselves with the country both in its culture and in its economy. Like Yeats a little later, he could perceive a natural affinity between squire and peasant, since the enemy of both was modern commerce and all its attendant vulgarity."¹⁹

Douglas Hyde, along with W.B. Yeats, can be seen as the most important force behind the Gaelic language and literary revival. Hyde, although an Anglo-Irishman, was born and

¹⁷ Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939*, 32.

¹⁸ Lady Augusta Gregory dubbed Standish O'Grady the "Fenian Unionist" in a letter to the editor of the *All Ireland Review* 15 December 1900, 5.

¹⁹ Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939*, 35.

homeschooled in County Roscommon where he continually interacted with Irish native speakers, “and from them Hyde picked up not only the language, but the poetry and folklore of an Ireland closed to nearly all his contemporaries.”²⁰ This set him apart from all other leading Anglo-Irish scholars of the day, as he had real insight and firsthand knowledge of Irish peasant culture and language. Therefore Hyde’s translations of Gaelic literature are regarded as exceptional, as he is able to capture the charm, rhythm, poeticism, and the Irishman’s typical turn of phrase. All of these qualities contribute to the romantic, sentimental, magical atmosphere that is the Celtic Twilight and which was encapsulated with ease in the Gaelic language. W.B. Yeats writes of Hyde:

To me, the ideal folk-lorist is Mr. Douglas Hyde. A tale told by him is quite as accurate as any “scientific” person’s rendering; but in the most quaint, or poetical, or humorous version he has heard. I am inclined to think also that some concentration and elaboration of dialect is justified, if only it does not touch the fundamentals of the story. It is but a fair equivalent for the gesture and voice of the peasant tale-teller. Mr. Hyde has, I believe, done this in his marvelous *Teig O’Kane*, with the result that we have a story more full of the characteristics of true Irish folk-lore than all the pages given to Ireland from time to time in the *Folk-lore Journal*.²¹

Hyde, who later became the first President of Ireland, became the definitive source for later followers of the movement, including Joan Trimble, who set Hyde’s translations in one of her earliest compositions, *My Grief on the Sea* for voice and piano. F.S.L. Lyons presents Hyde’s literal and verse translations side-by-side to illustrate his great skill in capturing the Irish spirit in his translations (See Figure 1.1):

²⁰ Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939*, 35.

²¹ W.B. Yeats, *Uncollected Prose of W.B. Yeats: First Reviews and Articles, 1886-1896*, ed., John P. Frayne (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 1: 174-75, quoted in Hirsch, “Coming out into the Light: W.B. Yeats’s ‘The Celtic Twilight’ (1893, 1902),” 13.

Figure 1.1, *My Grief on the Sea*, literal and verse translation.

My Grief on the Sea
(Literal translation)

My grief on the sea,
It is that it is big.
It is it that is going between me
And my thousand treasures.

I was left at home making grief,
Without any hope,
Of going over sea with me
For ever or for aye.

My grief that I am not,
And my white múirnín,
In the province of Leinster
Or County of Clare.

My sorrow I am not,
And my thousand loves,
On board of a ship
Voyaging to America.

A bed of rushes
Was under me last night,
And I threw it out
With the heat of the day.

My love came to my side,
Shoulder to shoulder
And mouth on mouth.

My Grief on the Sea
(Verse translation)

My grief on the sea,
How the waves of it roll!
For they heave between me
And the love of my soul!

Abandoned, forsaken,
To grief and to care,
Will the sea ever waken
Relief from despair?

My grief and my trouble!
Would he and I were
In the province of Leinster,
Or County of Clare.

Were I and my darling –
Oh, heart-bitter wound! –
On board of the ship
For America bound.

On a green bed of rushes
All last night I lay,
And I flung it abroad
With the heat of the day.

And my love came behind me –
He came from the South;
His breast to my bosom,²²
His mouth to my mouth.

In 1893 Hyde helped found the Gaelic League, which he avowedly wanted to be a non-political movement that would promote and nurture the restoration of the Irish language in Ireland and abroad.

Hyde brings us back full circle to W.B. Yeats, whose work, *The Celtic Twilight*, as mentioned previously, perfectly evoked the spirit of Irish Gaelic culture. Hence, the Anglo-Irish Gaelic Revival movement adopted the title of the work to refer to all things Irish. Yeats, also Anglo-Irish, developed a new approach to Irish literature that focused on capturing the character

²² Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939*, 40-41.

of Irish-peasant culture. Gesture and an impressionistic interpretation of Irish culture accordingly took precedence over the precise retelling of a piece of folk lore. Hyde collaborated with Yeats during the revival on *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish peasantry* (1888), while helping to establish the Irish Literary Society in London (1891) and the National Literary Society in Dublin (1892). Hyde and Yeats eventually went their separate ways, with the latter joining Lady Augusta Gregory and Edward Martyn (1859-1923) in the establishment of the Abbey Theatre in 1903. Still in existence today the theater promoted the work of Irish playwrights, including plays by the theater's founders as well as Irish literary giants Sean O'Casey (1880-1964), Æ Russell (1867-1935), James Stephens (1882-1950), James Joyce (1882-1941), and Patrick Kavanagh (1904-1967). Many of the plays in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries incorporated the Celtic Twilight theme.

Other Irish cultural institutions were formed alongside the Gaelic League and Abbey Theatre. A new focus on Irish entertainment included the widespread reintroduction of Gaelic sports such as Gaelic football and hurling through the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), whereas Irish music—classical and folk—was nurtured through the Feis Ceoil (Music Festival), a music society and competition founded in 1896. The latter joined The Royal Irish Academy of Music (established in 1848) in fostering Irish classical musicianship and educating performers who would compete at a national level in Dublin at Feis Ceoil competitions. In 1898 the Feis Ceoil syllabus highlighted an Irish ballad, *The Donovans*, as an example of Irish culture. The ballad is sung throughout in the rhythm of a slip jig, a dance featuring a rhythmic pattern of a quarter note followed by an eighth-note in 6/8 time within a four-bar phrase structure. With regard to Irish folk music, Feis Ceoil had the best intentions in its early years to do its utmost to contribute to the Gaelic revival cause:

The Feis Ceoil Association has been formed with the following objects: (a) To promote the study and

cultivation of Irish Music; (b) To promote the general cultivation of music in Ireland; (c) To hold an Annual Music Festival, or Feis Ceoil, consisting of prize competition and concerts similar to that held in Dublin in May; 1897; (d) To collect and preserve by publication the old airs of Ireland.²³

The society inaugurated the festival with a total of three concerts in 1897. The first was dedicated solely to traditional Irish music with renditions of “The Gol and Irish Caoine or Lament . . . This first concert comprised an enterprising collection of old Irish musical material suitably arranged, drawing heavily from the Bunting and Joyce collections.”²⁴ The inclusion of Anglo-Irish music on the second concert was especially apt, since the festival was promoted and funded by the Anglo-Irish. Their support is scarcely surprising because they were eager to be involved in any organization that they viewed as an ally in their quest to rally the Irish nation behind the revival of the ancient Irish bardic culture—to which music was inextricably linked:

The records of Feis Ceoil provide documented evidence of the people involved in the movement in its early years, as committee members, subscribers, guarantors or ordinary members. There was massive support from the landed titled gentry, without which it is doubtful that the festival would have survived even the first year. More importantly the names of Douglas Hyde, W.B. Yeats, Maude Gonne, Horace Plunkett, Charles Oldham, T.W. Rolleston, Edward Martyn, the Catholic and Protestant Archbishops of Dublin, Most Reverend Doctor Walsh and Right Reverend Lord Plunkett, Reverent J.P. Sexton and John (Eoin) McNeill show an amazingly varied support structure drawn from the full spectrum of intellectual, religious and political life.²⁵

The last two concerts included works by the following Irish and Anglo-Irish composers: John Field (1782-1837), Carl Hardebeck (1869-1945), Charles Wood (1866-1926), William Vincent Wallace (1812-1865), Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924), Michael William Balfe (1808-1870), Sir Robert Stewart (1825-1894), and Italian-born Michele Esposito (1855-1929), a notable figure in Irish classical music.

The Feis Ceoil in its early stages sought to promote Irish music mainly through

²³ *Irish Daily Independent*, June 30, 1897, quoted in Frank Heneghan, *The Founding of Feis Ceoil and its Influence on Music Education in Ireland* (Dublin: City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee, 1988), 22.

²⁴ Heneghan, *The Founding of Feis Ceoil and its Influence on Music Education in Ireland*, 15. The Gol and Caoine are Irish laments. A Caoine refers to the wailing lamentation of the dead.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

composition and performance. Many young professional composers used the society's programs as a platform to showcase their works. Among them were Carl Hardebeck, who won the composition prize in 1897, 1899-1904, and 1908; Michele Esposito, winner in 1897, 1899, and 1902; and Hamilton Harty, awarded the prize in 1901-1904.²⁶ Most interestingly, and not surprisingly in view of the times, the Feis Ceoil created a separate competition class within the festival for the "Discovery, and Vocal or Instrumental performance of hitherto unpublished airs."²⁷ Competitors could use an instrument or phonograph to record their collections of Irish folk music, while a panel of judges would adjudicate the entries based on the quality and rarity of their finds. The aim of this competition was for the Feis Ceoil to eventually publish the collections and thereby contribute to the Anglo-Irish cause by preserving old Irish airs.²⁸ Assembling and publishing compilations of ancient Irish music was seen as a continuation of the work undertaken by the Anglo-Irish in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century collections such as those compiled by Edward Bunting (1773-1843), Thomas Moore (1779-1852), and George Petrie (1790-1866).

The musical society in Ireland was very much influenced by the Anglo-Irish. As the ruling class in Ireland, they controlled many events throughout Ireland. A stereotypical Anglo-Irishman in Ireland would have been educated at Trinity College (Dublin), would have been Protestant, and would have lived in a fine Georgian home known as a "Big House." Their lavish eighteenth-century libraries were often neglected due to their love of the outdoors—angling, hunting, and shooting were common Anglo-Irish pastimes. Irish playwright and writer Brendan

²⁶ Ibid., 72,74.

²⁷ Feis Ceoil Syllabus of Prize Competitions 1897 (Dublin: Dollard, 1897), 18, quoted in Heneghan, *The Founding of Feis Ceoil and its Influence on Music Education in Ireland*, 31.

²⁸ Ibid., 31-32.

Behan (1923-1964) dubbed them “the horse Protestants” due to their affinity with horse shows and horses in general.²⁹ They therefore were seen to have much more in common with England than they did with the native Irish: “. . . the gentry remained isolated from life around them. It is no accident that the Big House and the Protestant Church, though dominating their little society and closely involved with it, were still not part of an integrated community.”³⁰

Anglo-Irish interests in literature, the arts, and music were more attuned with England; at the same time Irish natives were excluded from this elitist group and its interests due to the lack of social interaction between the two groups. Anglo-Irish musical tastes, particularly during the eighteenth century, never ventured far from those of the English, which were disconnected from the Irish Gaelic tradition. Due to Ireland’s remote geographical position—an island on the extreme west coast of Europe—the infiltration of classical music into Irish society was slow. England suffered the same fate to some extent; however, its prosperity of sea, might, and empire placed it in a better position than Ireland to develop Western Classical music. The latter tradition did exist in Ireland, but solely among the Anglo-Irish. Classical music developed slowly, not only because of Ireland’s geographical isolation and economic condition, but also because the Anglo-Irish (the infiltrators of the art form in Ireland) had specific musical tastes, and therefore were very selective regarding the type of music that would grace the concert halls and be exposed to the general Irish public. As William H. Grattan Flood observed in his *A History of Irish Music*, Anglo-Irish music in the early eighteenth century (1701-1741) consisted mainly of choral music with Anglo-Irish musicians coveting prime organist positions at Dublin’s most prestigious cathedrals (Christ-Church, St. Patrick’s, and the Trinity College, Dublin Chapel).

²⁹ Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland 1890-1939*, 22.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

Also prominent during this time were state bands or “City Music,” such as Dublin Corporation City Band, or the King’s Band. Four theaters were an extremely influential part of musical life in Dublin: Smock Alley, Crow-Street, Capel-Street, and Fishamble-Street (the latter was of great importance due to its ties with Handel, with the composer’s oratorio *Messiah* premiered there). Although Italian operas such as Alessandro Scarlatti’s (1660-1725) *Pyrrhus and Demetrius* were often staged in these venues, ballad operas were a constant favorite of the Anglo-Irish and continued to be so right up into the nineteenth century. *Flora, Hob in the Well, Damon and Phillida, Devil to Pay, The Beggar’s Opera*, and *The Contrivances* were all produced successfully in London theaters before they arrived and were staged in Dublin. Some of these ballad operas contained old Irish tunes, such as Charles Coffey’s (d.1745) *The Beggar’s Wedding*.³¹

Anglo-Irish music from the later part of the eighteenth century was similar, with the ballad opera comprising the most regularly performed genre of music. The previously mentioned cathedrals (Christ-Church, St. Patrick’s, and Trinity College Dublin Chapel) continued to be influential with regard to sacred music. Handel’s music remained a major presence in Dublin; Fishamble Theatre was promoted to National Theatre by Robert Owenson in 1783, and Handel commemorations occurred in 1787 and 1788. It seemed that Irish airs—especially those of Ireland’s last bard, Turlough O’Carolan (1670-1838)—permeated all aspects of musical life in Dublin. For example many plays and ballad operas by John O’Keeffe (1747-1833) drew inspiration from Irish airs in the 1780s; A Methodist Hymn Book contained many O’Carolan airs; and many bands included Irish music in their repertoire, such as *The Shamrock Cockade* set

³¹ The Irish Air, *Eibhlín a Rún* or *Ellen a Roone* featured in Charles Coffey’s *The Beggar’s Wedding*. The Air appears in the Edward Bunting Collection (1840) as no. 123.

to the Irish tune, *Ally Croker*.³²

The pervasive Anglo-Irish interest in English culture set the stage for the awakening of interest in Gaelic poetry, folk music, and sport. These new interests ultimately blossomed into the active promotion of native Irish literature and music, as the foundation of important new cultural organizations illustrate. In tandem with these new cultural developments, members of the outdoorsy, Big House, Protestant ascendancy class shifted their emulation of an English lifestyle to a desperate search for a national Irish identity, all the while maintaining their social status as the rulers of Irish peasant natives. Anglo-Irish scholars, literati, researchers, poets, playwrights, and politicians focused mainly on the Gaelic language in order to translate Gaelic epic literature pertaining to the ancient myths and legends of Ireland. Literary giants such as Douglas Hyde, Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, and of course W.B. Yeats all helped to establish an Irish literary movement, essentially creating Dublin's theater district. Eventually, with the formation of the Gaelic League, the Celtic Twilight movement branched out into other areas of Irish life, such as sport, and more importantly for an understanding of Joan Trimble—music. Hence, Feis Ceoil and the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin were established in the nineteenth century to nurture Irish music and the Irish musician—both classical and folk. Irish culture is therefore indebted to the Celtic Twilight Movement, as the Gaelic language, the Gaelic Athletics Association, the creation of a national theater, Feis Ceoil, and the Royal Irish Academy of Music are all still in existence today and play an extremely important role in Irish twenty-first-century societal life. These nineteenth-century movements therefore contributed to the milieu in which Northern-Irish composer Joan Trimble was born and raised. During her formative years in the early twentieth century, as the ensuing chapter will demonstrate, she was immersed in the Celtic Twilight and became its most natural and instinctive ambassador.

³² William H. Grattan Flood, *A History of Irish Music* (Dublin: Brown and Nolan Ltd., 1906), 307.

CHAPTER II

Joan Trimble and her Anglo-Irish Background

The Trimbles, an Ulster-Scots Presbyterian family, displayed many traits typical of the Anglo-Irish. In 1825 Joan Trimble's great grandfather, William Trimble, first established the Trimble name in the Northern-Irish town of Enniskillen in County Fermanagh, where the Trimble family remains today. Enniskillen is a town steeped in the traditions of the landed gentry or Anglo-Irish, with such notable figures as the Earl of Enniskillen and Earl of Erne settling there in the eighteenth century.³³ William Trimble established a local newspaper in Enniskillen called *The Impartial Reporter*, whose vow to represent the entire community, Catholic and Protestant, displayed a characteristic sense of dualism so common among the Anglo-Irish:

Regardless alike of the frowns of party, and the smiles of power, we shall state our own convictions on all subjects which come under our review. We shall defend the protestant when we consider him in the right, and the roman catholic may expect similar treatment: but should bigotry, superstition, and error raise their audacious fronts, and attempt to trample on truth, like another ENNISKILLENER the IMPARTIAL REPORTER shall point out the way that leads to triumph.³⁴

Joan Trimble continued her great-grandfather's legacy when she took over the role of managing director of the *Impartial Reporter* in 1967. The paper was owned right up until 2006 by the Trimble family, whose members still have managing roles in the paper today.

The Anglo-Irish community took it upon themselves to preserve many of the histories and traditions of Ireland during the nineteenth century. The Trimble family was no exception and made their contributions to the Celtic Twilight cause by taking a keen interest in such histories, and in particular those relating to their native Enniskillen and surrounding area of County Fermanagh. Joan Trimble's grandfather, William Copeland Trimble, took it upon

³³ County Fermanagh's Florence Court and Crom Castle were owned by John Willoughby Cole (1768-1840), the second Earl of Enniskillen, and John Creighton (1731-1828), the first Earl of Erne, respectively, at the time William Trimble settled in the area. Presently the titles are held by Andrew John Galbraith Cole (b.1942), the seventh Earl of Enniskillen, and Henry George Victor John Crichton (b.1937), the sixth Earl of Erne.

³⁴ "150th Anniversary," *Impartial Reporter*, May 22, 1975, 2.

himself to write and publish a history of the twenty-seventh Inniskillings (Enniskillen's Royal regiments) as well as a three-volume history of Enniskillen (now considered a collector's item).³⁵ His service to the Inniskilling regiments—the Dragoons and Fusiliers—extended to salvaging and preserving many historical relics for the Inniskillings Museum at the Enniskillen Castle Museums, which exist to this day.³⁶ Joan's penchant for Irish history, especially that of Enniskillen and County Fermanagh, was palpable, and was often noticed by those who knew her or had the privilege of interviewing her: "As Joan Trimble talks to you about the heritage of the area [Enniskillen and Fermanagh], you become aware of the proximity of the past. Although deeply conscious of history, she is also a practical person and totally immersed in the present."³⁷ The composer's own personal music library, which resides today in Dublin's Royal Irish Academy of Music, reflects Trimble's interest in and broad knowledge of British and Irish history in relation to music (See Appendix A). This collection contains books such as Sam Henry's *Songs of the People* in its original (1878) and revised (1979) editions; Alfred J. Hipkins, *Musical Instruments: Historic, Rare, and Unique* (1945); Joseph Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*; and Colm O'Lochlainn, *Anglo-Irish Song Writers since Moore* (1950). Music compilations are also present in the Trimble collection, such as Edward Bunting's, *The Ancient Music of Ireland* (1796), (1809), and (1840); George Petrie's 1855 first edition and the 1902 Charles Villiers Stanford edition of the *Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland*; and *The Songs of Ulah* compiled by Padraig Mac Aodh ó Neill (Herbert Hughes). These volumes are

³⁵ William Trimble, *The History of Enniskillen with References to Some Manors in Co. Fermanagh and Other Local Subjects* (Enniskillen: William Trimble, 1919).

³⁶ "150th Anniversary", *Impartial Reporter*, May 22, 1975, 7.

³⁷ Philip Hammond, "Woman of Parts," *Sound Post*, December 1984/ January 1985, 24.

only a small cross section of the many invaluable eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ancient Irish musical collections treasured by Joan Trimble (See Appendix B).

Ballad operas were a particular favorite of the Anglo-Irish, and Joan was immersed in this tradition through the influence of her father, William Egbert Trimble. Although primarily a proprietor of the family newspaper, William Egbert had at one point considered a singing career (as did her grandfather William Copeland), and he often arranged for traveling opera companies to perform in Enniskillen's Townhall, including many productions of ballad operas. As an article in memoriam of William Egbert confirmed, "In his [William Egbert's] home town, he organized many entertainments for local charities, wrote and produced variety programmes; took part in opera (standing in at 24 hours' notice in 'The Lily of Killarney' in Enniskillen Townhall with the Elster-Grime Opera Company) and Gilbert and Sullivan."³⁸ Joan reminisced over these performances of ballad operas, which included Michael Balfe's (1808-1870) *The Bohemian Girl* and William Vincent Wallace's (1812-1865) *Maritana*, as some of her first exposure to opera.³⁹ Wallace, who enjoyed huge success as a ballad-opera composer during the nineteenth century, was in fact one of Joan's ancestors—Wallace and her great grandmother were cousins.⁴⁰ As a young girl, Trimble also listened to her grandmother muse over the many opera performances, including the Italian opera seasons, she and her husband attended during the nineteenth century at that great Anglo-Irish institution, the Theatre Royal in Dublin. The composer's great grandfather, likewise an avid fan of Michael Balfe, had attended a dinner in honor of the great

³⁸ "Death of Mr. W.E. Trimble A Great Personality: End of Remarkable Career," *The Impartial Reporter*, February 16, 1967, 7.

³⁹ It is interesting to note that the opera *The Lily of Killarney* by Julius Benedict (1804-1885) has been grouped together with *The Bohemian Girl* and *Maritana* as "The Irish Ring". See Seamus Reilly, "James Joyce and Dublin Opera: 1888-1904," in *Bronze by Gold, the Music of Joyce*, edited by Sebastian D. G. Knowles (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), 6.

⁴⁰ Joan Trimble, *Ring Up the Curtain*, BBC Radio Ulster, 1987.

ballad-opera composer in Dublin in 1837. The catalogue of the Joan Trimble Collection at the Royal Irish Academy of Music shows that the composer retained this Anglo-Irish interest in ballad operas, which she inherited from her family. Among other ballad operas, a score of Michael William Balfe's *The Bohemian Girl* is listed in the Joan Trimble Collection, showing that her father's concerts in Enniskillen made a lasting impression on her. It is therefore no surprise that Joan Trimble resorted to the ballad-opera style for her first and only opera, *The Blind Raftery*, when in 1957 the BBC commissioned her to write an opera for television—a then fairly new and experimental genre. The opera's libretto was based on Donn Byrne's novel on the life of the eighteenth-century Irish bard, Anthony Raftery (1779-1835). Raftery has often been likened to the great Greek epic poet, Homer, and thus frequent references to Raftery as Ireland's Homer have often been cited. Raftery and his Gaelic poetry became extremely significant to the Anglo-Irish led Celtic Twilight movement, whose leading members all professed their admiration for the poet and the significance of his work. Joan Trimble had previously used James Stephens's Anglo-Irish translations of some of Raftery's poetry in her song cycle for voice and two pianos, *The County Mayo* (1949). In *The Blind Raftery*, which included characters such as a Spanish heroine and a Welsh villain, Raftery is portrayed as the Irish hero in Donn Byrne's novel and Trimble's ballad opera.

The influence of classical music can be attributed to Joan Trimble's mother, Marie Dowse, an accomplished violinist who enjoyed a notable career as soloist, chamber musician, and violin professor largely in Dublin. She taught her daughters, Joan and her younger sister Valerie, violin and cello respectively, as well as piano until their mid-teens, before the girls took their first formal musical lessons at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin. Marie Dowse also owed her formative years in music to the latter institution, which helped nurture the

musical talents of eleven out of fifteen of her siblings. Marie's experience and love of family music making with her sisters Bertha, Lilian, and Hilda as part of the Dowse String Quartet were to become an obvious influence in Joan and Valerie Trimble's own musical career. Marie also enjoyed playing in a number of orchestral performances throughout the Irish capital, which often included playing in the Abbey Theatre's orchestra, under the musical direction of her friend and fellow Royal Irish Academy of Music alumnus, Jack Larchet. In 1911 Dowse was concert master in the Irish premiere of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* in Dublin's Christ Church Cathedral.⁴¹ The latter religious institution, according to Barra Boydell in his book, *A History of Music at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin*, "is central to the Anglican tradition in Ireland."⁴²

Marie moved to Enniskillen after her marriage to William Egbert in June 1914 and proved to be integral to the musical society in the old plantation town. In Enniskillen Marie organized and performed in many of the local concerts, of which the proceeds were donated to charities or local organizations such as the hospitals.⁴³ Her programs catered more towards the Irish country audience, and therefore included more popular tunes of the day:

[My Mother] was in demand for local concerts, and gypsy airs like Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* and Hubay's *Hejre Kati* were popular favourites, along with operatic fantasias—always a hit with Irish audiences. Country audiences loved the classical arrangements by August Wilhelmj, father of her own professor, Adolf. Encores would include Irish airs—arranged by Larchet and Esposito—"The Coolin" and the reel "The Wind That Shakes the Barley."⁴⁴

The fact that Trimble has such a vivid memory of the repertoire played at her mother's concerts

⁴¹ The choir involved in the 1911 Irish premiere of Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* was the University of Dublin Choral Society. Founded in 1837, it is considered to be one of Ireland's oldest university choirs. Charles Herbert Kitson (1874-1944) conducted the performance.

⁴² Barra Boydell, preface to *A History of Music at Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin* (Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer Ltd, 2004), xv.

⁴³ Charity or fund raising concerts were a common occurrence among the nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish.

⁴⁴ Joan Trimble, "Addendum," in *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848-1998*, edited by Richard Pine and Charles Acton (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1998), 395.

suggests that it made a lasting impression on her.

Marie and William Egbert Trimble encouraged chamber music and family ensemble playing at home, thereby teaching the composer vital skills that she would utilize throughout her musical career. William and Marie also played the piano and often accompanied each other in their domestic music-making. As Joan's and Valerie's musicianship progressed, both sisters joined the family ensemble; with four pianists, two violinists, a singer, and a cellist, the possibilities were numerous, as Trimble much later recalled:

Well yes after a while, we had all kind of ensembles eventually when I got to be old enough say about seven or eight. I remember taking over accompaniments from both parents. And until that time, you see, we all could play the piano in a kind of a way. My father could play it, mother could play it, [and] so when Daddy sang, mother played for him, and [when] my mother played the violin, Daddy played for her!⁴⁵

Family friends arrived at the Trimble household every Sunday for supper and an evening soiree, where the family ensemble often performed Gilbert and Sullivan productions,⁴⁶ Moskowsky, Offenbach, Kreisler, Weber, and popular nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ballads. Kreisler's *Caprice Viennois* and the American Negro-spiritual song *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* were, among others, particular favorites of Marie and William respectively. Joan Trimble often reminisced about Sunday evenings and her parents' performances:

On Sunday nights Valerie and I used to be packed off to bed—it was always a great social evening in the family—and people always came up for supper and eventually when we were dropping off to sleep we would hear coming up from below, we'd hear pieces like Kreisler's *Caprice Viennois* and *Souvenir* by Drdla, and perhaps *Hejre Kati*. And there was always one bit in that that Daddy used to race away; when I came to play the accompaniments later on, I'd find [myself] marking "don't rush!" Well eventually mother got tired of [Daddy's rushing] that when I was told to do the accompaniments, I took over. Same thing happened to Daddy you see, I took over his songs—he used to sing on Sunday nights too, all the rather better Victorian, Edwardian Ballads, the kinds you never hear nowadays! Like the good Tosti ones, you know?!— And there

⁴⁵ Joan Trimble, interview by Sam Denton, *Music with a Smile*, BBC Radio, 1962, transcribed by the author.

⁴⁶ Hammond, "Woman of Parts," 24.

was one particular one he used to play for himself; nobody ever played that one for him, [and] that was *Tis I love*. Nobody in the family was ever allowed to play that for him.⁴⁷

According to Michael Dervan's interview of the composer, "Sunday nights of family music-making [were] among [Trimble's] most treasured musical memories."⁴⁸

The Trimble household had two pianos, which played an extremely important role in the composer's musical development. Marie and William encouraged family ensemble playing on the two pianos, which at times included piano quartets within the family, as recalled by Joan Trimble: "of course we had family piano duets on Sunday. [I remember] all the Moszkowski *Spanish Dances* were done with the parents, and even a family quartet, four hands at two pianos."⁴⁹ The sisters also performed, extemporized, and arranged at the two pianos from a very young age. Valerie recalled that she "played it straight and Joan embroidered it on the other piano, she was always the embroiderer."⁵⁰ In a 1995 radio interview Trimble discussed the influences on her two-piano career: "[Valerie and I] had always played 'light' music, when we were young we started our two pianos by listening to dance music on the radio. We were allowed to do it, and in those days you had Cole Porter, George Gershwin—*lovely* music!"⁵¹ Trimble reminisces over the fact that this influence came from her mother, who could not help but "break out in a few steps" to the sound of ragtime and early 1920s jazz music heard via radio in Ireland in those days. Although in later years Joan's and Valerie's "signature tune" became the former's original, folk-inspired two-piano composition *Buttermilk Point*, Marie would frequently request

⁴⁷ Hammond, "Woman of Parts," 24.

⁴⁸ Michael Dervan, "The Reluctant Composer," *Irish Times*, June 2, 1995.

⁴⁹ Joan Trimble, interview by Sam Denton, *Music with a Smile*. Valerie Trimble, in the same interview, elaborates on this point: "That was later on, when we had started to play, that was *Invitation to the Waltz* with father and me on one [piano], and you and mummy on the other. Father and I always won because father always rushed!"

⁵⁰ Valerie Trimble, interview by Sam Denton, *Music with a Smile*, transcribed by the author.

⁵¹ Joan Trimble, interview by Una Hunt, RTE Radio, December 11, 1995, transcribed by the author.

the girls play their rendition of Cole Porter's *Stormy Weather*:

I was brought up to like tunes, how to find tunes and write, and my mother I think was a great influence there because she loved the early dance music Alexander's Ragtime Band, she could not help but start to break into a few steps . . . *Stormy Weather* was just one of the dance favourites . . . but my mother was particularly attached to it and she never tired whenever we would get home together if we happened to be at home together in later years, 'Let's hear *Stormy Weather*' she would say.⁵²

Trimble continued to arrange songs by Cole Porter and Gershwin. For example, the Trimble sisters performed Joan's arrangement of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* for a BBC broadcast in Bristol, one of the network's wartime studios.⁵³ Trimble continued to arrange many different pieces, including Irish folk-songs, for the sisters' two-piano recitals right up until their last performance, a television broadcast in Belfast in 1975, which Joan called in an interview their "swan song."⁵⁴ Many of these arrangements were among boxes and folders of scores, various letters, pictures, and Irish memorabilia at Dublin's National Library, which Trimble's surviving family donated upon her death. These arrangements included many Kreisler pieces (again showing the influence of the repertoire heard at the Trimble Sunday-night family evening soirees in Enniskillen) such as *Liebesleid*, *Polichinelle*, *Tambourin-Chinois*, *Rondino* on a theme by Beethoven, Borodin's *Polovtsian Dances*, *Passepied* by Delius, and Gossec's *Tambourin*. Among unfinished arrangements in this collection are the *Scherzo* from Mendelssohn's Octet, a Cossack Dance and Nursery Dance by unknown composers, and *Carolan's Lament* by Turlough

⁵² Joan Trimble, interview, *A Personal Choice*, transcribed by the author.

⁵³ Joan Trimble, interview by Una Hunt.

⁵⁴ Ibid. Joan Trimble says of this particular broadcast, "We did television from Belfast and we had to wear our green velvet concert frocks again; we had not played together for a few years because Valerie's health had not been good, but we went up to Belfast and we played my Irish pieces. [We] shared a program with Raymond Piper and some ballad singer; and that was our swan song up there, in about 1975. Valerie became much more ill after that and she was not able to play. But it is rather nice to think that we went out on that note I think, I had never sort of realized that before."

O' Carolan.⁵⁵ The latter, according to William H. Grattan Flood, was a fond favorite of the Anglo-Irish during the eighteenth century. Therefore, the skills encouraged and instilled in the sisters by their parents proved to be invaluable because they shaped Trimble's career as a composer, arranger, and performer.

Marie supplemented both her daughters' informal musical education by entering the young girls in competitive music festivals around the country. Trimble in hindsight realized the importance of these competitions, which was "probably the only way [Valerie and I] were educated you might say because we never had regular lessons from our mother who taught us a bit of everything. But she took us once a year to Dublin to the Feis, to Belfast, and to Derry and Sligo and we heard other people and it was a way of learning standards. We heard all kinds of music, we just didn't stick to our own instruments, and it was great fun!"⁵⁶ The Feis Ceoil, as previously discussed, played an important role in the preservation of music in Ireland, both folk and classical. Joan Trimble attended many of Feis Ceoil's competitions, where she recalled listening to numerous works by Anglo-Irish composer Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924). She claimed to know "every note and word"⁵⁷ of the following songs: *Corrymeela* and *The Fairy Lough* from *An Irish Idyll in Six Miniatures*, op.77 (1901); *The Bold Unbiddable Child*, *The Chapel on the Hill*, and *A Soft Day* from *A Sheaf of Songs from Leinster*; choral works such as *Japanese Lullaby*; Irish folk-song arrangements including *Father O'Flynn* and *My Love's an Arbutus*, Stanford's settings of Anglo-Irish poet, song writer, and H.M.I. school inspector Alfred Perceval Graves (1846-1931). The Joan Trimble Collection at the Royal Irish Academy in

⁵⁵ Published piano-duo arrangements by Joan Trimble include: *Jamaican Rumba* by Arthur Benjamin (Boosey & Hawkes 1951)); *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby* and *The Heather Glen* (Boosey & Hawkes 1949); *La Calinda*, dance from the opera *Koanga* by Frederick Delius (Boosey & Hawkes 1947); *Polka*, from *Schwanda, The Bagpiper* by Jaromir Weinberger (Boosey & Hawkes 1939).

⁵⁶ Joan Trimble, interview, *A Personal Choice*.

⁵⁷ Joan Trimble, *A Student of Music*, BBC Radio Ulster 1987, transcribed by the author.

Dublin includes Trimble's own personal copy of Stanford's edition of the *Petrie Collection of Irish Airs*, whereas the city's National Library holds her well-thumbed score of the nineteenth century composer's *The Irish Melodies: Thomas Moore, op.60*.⁵⁸ Stanford was not only an inspiration to Trimble and other Irish composers, but he also helped shape the careers of many British performers and composers during his professorship at the Royal College of Music in London. As a regular adjudicator at the Feis Ceoil, Stanford awarded prizes to budding young composers. In the 1930s Joan Trimble won various Feis Ceoil competitions for violin, piano (solo and duet), extemporization, and sight-reading, but she also won a prize for composition in 1937 with the song *My Grief on the Sea* from the *Love songs of Connacht*, translated from the Irish by Douglas Hyde.⁵⁹

Both Joan and Valerie Trimble's first formal music lessons began in 1931 at the prestigious Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin—Joan was fifteen, Valerie thirteen. The musical institution, one of Ireland's oldest musical conservatories, was established in 1848 to “provide systematic instruction in instrumental music.”⁶⁰ The Irish Academy has Anglo-Irish roots in the school's founders, who were Dr. John Smith and Robert Prescott (successive music professors at Trinity College, Dublin), R.M. Levey (a revered violinist in Dublin), and, most importantly, John Stanford, Charles Villiers Stanford's father. As mentioned previously, Trimble's mother Marie attended the school with many of her talented siblings and therefore it was only natural that Joan

⁵⁸ Stanford songs with several pencil annotations, possibly by Trimble, are: *No Not More Welcome, Has Sorrow thy Young days shaded, I'd Mourn the Hopes that leave me, You remember Ellen, Farewell, But whenever you welcome The hour, The Young May Moon, At Young May Moon, At the Mid Hour of Night, Avenging and Bright, She is far from the Land*.

⁵⁹ Frank Heneghan—Chairman and Vice President of the Feis Ceoil for twenty years—in *The Founding of Feis Ceoil and its Influence on Music Education in Ireland*, has listed notable Feis Ceoil winners in an appendix on p. 83, which includes Joan Trimble. In 1931 the latter won Junior Violin, Junior Piano Duet; Cello and Piano Duet, Hamilton Harty Cup for Pianoforte Concerto in 1933; A prize for accompaniment sight-reading in the Larchet Memorial Cup 1935.

⁶⁰ Royal Irish Academy of Music, “Royal Irish Academy of Music: History,” <http://www.riam.ie/about-us/history/> (accessed February 25, 2012).

and Valerie should follow in their mother's footsteps. The School also worked (and still works) hand-in-hand with the Feis Ceoil, in whose competitions many students at the Royal Irish Academy of Music have successively participated during the festival's 117-year history. Trimble studied at the Academy with notable musicians such as, Annie Lord, who profoundly affected Joan's musical taste and compositional style. Lord first introduced French contemporary music to Ireland through her many solo and chamber music concerts.⁶¹ Like Trimble's mother, Lord was a founding member of the Royal Irish Academy of Music's Student Music Union, whose programs consisted largely "of contemporary and particularly French music."⁶² Trimble joined the union during her student days in Dublin and later acknowledged that "Lord's great love for French music and her interest in the contemporary scene was a lasting influence on my own development."⁶³ Elements of French music can be heard in Trimble's two-piano music. Her *Pastorale: Hommage to Poulenc* for two pianos is an obvious example of her French influence. It could perhaps be said that the philosophy of French music and that of the Celtic Twilight are similar in concept. Both are created in reaction to a more domineering culture, with the Gaelic revival in essence being anti-English, and the French tradition anti-German. W.B. Yeats's concept of the Celtic Twilight and what makes a good Irish folklorist also ties in with the French tradition that Trimble so admired. According to the poet, "The writer's job was to create a true impression of the storytelling event; it was not to create that event,"⁶⁴ which could just as equally be used as an apt description for late-nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth-century character pieces of Debussy and Ravel.

⁶¹ Joan Trimble, "Intermezzo," in *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music, 1848-1998*, edited by Richard Pine and Charles Acton (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1998), 503.

⁶² Ibid., 325.

⁶³ Ibid., 397.

⁶⁴ Hirsch, "Coming out into the Light," 5.

Dr. John F. Larchet (1884-1967), also a Royal Irish Academy of Music and Trinity College, Dublin graduate, taught Trimble harmony and counterpoint at the Academy. He also subsequently acted as her academic mentor during her Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music studies at Trinity College, and was an important figure in the Gaelic revival. As musical director of the Abbey Theatre (1908-1934), he composed incidental music for plays by important revival authors, such as W.B. Yeats's *Land of Heart's Desire* and J.M. Synge's *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (Synge was also a student at the Royal Irish Academy of Music). Marie Trimble often played in the Abbey Theatre orchestra under the baton of her good friend, Dr. Larchet. It is therefore possible that she played the incidental music to such plays, which were monumental in the scheme of the Irish Literary Revival. It is therefore not surprising to find references to the Abbey Theatre in the Joan Trimble archives held at the National Library. This collection includes a picture or etching the composer kept of the Abbey Theatre, a copy of J.M. Synge's *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, a newspaper or magazine cutting with pictures of Sean O'Casey, John M. Synge, Michael Scott (Abbey theatre's architect), Ria Mooney (actress and artistic director of the Abbey Theatre 1948-1963), and politician Ernest Blythe (managing director of the theatre 1941-1967), and an underlined list of books and plays by Lady A. Gregory (co-founder of the Abbey Theatre), one of which is titled *Our Irish Theatre, A Chapter of Autobiography*.⁶⁵ Outside of the Abbey Theatre, Larchet's compositional style remained extremely nationalistic with *Padraic the Fiddler* (1919), *Lament for Youth* for Orchestra (c.1920), *An Ardglass Boat Song* (1920), *The Cormorant* (1947), *Dirge of Ossian* and *Macananty's Reel* (1940), and *Carlow Tune* and

⁶⁵ The underlined or circled books are: Lady A. Gregory: *Seven Short Plays* (1909), *Our Irish Theatre, A Chapter of Autobiography* (1914); Vere Richard Trench Gregory: *The House of Gregory* (1943); A. Grimble: *The Salmon Rivers of Ireland* (1903); S. Gwynn: *The Charm of Ireland* (1936), *Famous Cities of Ireland* (1915), *The Fair Hills of Ireland* (1906); Mr. & Mrs. S.C. Hall: *A Week in Killarney* (1865); Mrs. S.C. Hall: *Stories of the Irish Peasantry* (bound with *W. Irving Tales of a Traveller* (1894)) (1850), *Tales of Irish Life & Character* (1909); I.H. Hull: *Random Records of a Reporter* (c.1910).

Tinkers Wedding (1952) recognized as among his best work. As mentioned previously Larchet arranged Irish folk tunes, which Marie Trimble often programmed on the many recitals she and her husband organized and performed in Enniskillen. As a teacher, Larchet encouraged his students “to adapt the native musical idiom to modern harmonic developments and thus create a school of composers which would be truly evocative of the Irish spirit.”⁶⁶ Larchet taught the majority of the era’s distinguished composers, such as Frederick May (1911-1985) and Brian Boydell (1917-2000), though we do not know the extent to which he influenced Trimble’s compositional style. We do know from her own comments that Larchet may have been the first to open Trimble’s eyes to the compositional working process:

When I was with Dr. Larchet in Dublin and doing all this kind of academic work, one day he started to talk to me about how composers worked. He put down a single note on the stave, and then he did something from it, and then something from that, and so on. I thought this most extraordinary because for me, composition came from my head and my fingers together at the piano. A process of extemporization if you like.⁶⁷

Larchet presented Trimble with the opportunity of touring with John Count McCormack, the great Irish tenor. She identified these concerts as a major turning point in her life, as it was John McCormack who encouraged her to take the piano more seriously, which led to Trimble joining her sister Valerie as a student of the Royal College of Music in London in 1936.

Trimble realized her potential as a composer while studying in London at the Royal College of Music (RCM). Previously, Trimble had often arranged and improvised at the piano and violin, but not once had she put pen to paper and actually composed. Trimble therefore attributes her starting point and development as a composer to her London composition and piano professors. Herbert Howells (1892-1983), whom she described as “perhaps more of a Celt

⁶⁶ Richard Pine and Charles Acton, eds., “The Composer in the Academy (I) 1850-1940,” in *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848-1998* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1998), 416.

⁶⁷Hammond, “Woman of Parts,” 25.

than a West countryman,”⁶⁸ was known for his pristine, editorial-like finish in his own compositions, and was Trimble’s teacher from 1936 to 1940, helping to refine and polish Trimble’s musical style. As the composer admitted in a 1985 interview, “Herbert Howells . . . brought out the best in me in craftsmanship.”⁶⁹ She also recalled that during her first composition lesson at the Royal College of Music, Howells had reminded her of the Royal College of Music’s strong Anglo-Irish connection by dubbing her as “one of Stanford’s grandchildren.”⁷⁰ When she asked him what he meant, he replied, “Well, I was his pupil, you are mine now, and you’re Irish as well.”⁷¹ Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, a founding professor at the Royal College of Music, taught at the establishment for almost forty years. His pupils include such great British composers as Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), Gustav Holst (1874-1934), Arthur Bliss (1891-1975), John Ireland (1879-1962), Samuel Coleridge Taylor (1875-1912), and Frank Bridge (1879-1941).⁷²

Trimble remembered Stanford’s influence during her studies and frequently drew parallels between herself and Stanford. She recalled scouring through scores in the College’s library and unearthing his piano concerto, *Concert Variations upon an English Theme* ‘Down Among the Deadmen,’ op.71, a work she later performed with the conservatory’s orchestra. Thus, when Joan Trimble began to compose at the Royal College, she immediately drew from the Anglo-Irish tradition she had long known:

⁶⁸ Joan Trimble, *A Student of Music*.

⁶⁹ Hammond, “Woman of Parts,” 25.

⁷⁰ Joan Trimble, *A Student of Music*.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Frank Bridge later taught Benjamin Britten (1913-1976). Britten graduated from the Royal College of Music the semester prior to Joan Trimble’s first year at the conservatory.

I loved Irish words, and I poured over the golden treasury of Irish verse, these lovely words, translations from the Irish, *The Love Songs of Connaught* by Douglas Hyde. And I brought it to my professor Herbert Howells and I said it's different to anything I've ever written before and I'd like to go on with something like this. He said, yes of course! Not the kind of thing I'd write, he said, but then I'm not here to make you write like me."⁷³

The songs subsequently won prizes at the Feis Ceoil in Dublin.

Joan Trimble's love for Irish-sourced prose is quite apparent from the above quote. It is obvious that the Anglo-Irish tradition with which she grew up in Enniskillen fired her imagination when composing. Trimble's earliest compositions, composed while a student at the Royal College of Music, were songs: *My Grief on the Sea* (1937), *Girl's Song* (1937), and *Green Rain* (1938). As already mentioned, *My Grief on the Sea* is based on Douglas Hyde's words, whereas *Girl's Song* is set to a text by British poet Wilfred Wilson Gibson (1878-1962), and the text of *Green Rain* is written by Mary Webb (1881-1927), a poet from Shropshire near Wales. It is interesting to note that Joan Trimble has a certain parallel with the latter poet in that they were both taught to appreciate their heritage and native land's folklore by their respective fathers: "Young Mary acquired from her father a deep love of the Welsh borderlands and knowledge of local history, legends and folklore as he took her on long walks and drives."⁷⁴ Mary Webb's poem *Green Rain* contains vivid imagery romanticizing nature and referencing the magical and supernatural (fairies) that I feel is similar to the Irish concept, in particular W.B. Yeats's perception of the Celtic Twilight:

Green Rain

Into the scented woods we'll go
And see the blackthorn swim in snow.
High above, in the budding leaves,
A brooding dove awakes and grieves;
The glades with mingled music stir,

⁷³ Joan Trimble, *A Student of Music*.

⁷⁴ Mary and Bruce Crawford, "Mary Webb: A Neglected Genius," <http://www.marywebb.org/biography> (accessed February 26, 2012).

And wildly laughs the woodpecker.
When blackthorn petals pearl the breeze,
There are the twisted hawthorn trees
Thick-set with buds, as clear and pale
As golden water or green hail –
As if a storm of rain had stood
Enchanted in the thorny wood,
And, hearing fairy voices call,
Hung poised, forgetting how to fall.⁷⁵

Although the composer confessed she loved the poetry “for its own sake,”⁷⁶ she never set Yeats’s words to music, suggesting that she perhaps viewed his work as untouchable, an already fully formed piece of art not to be tampered with. In spite of this, Yeats was obviously an important presence in her life:

I have to say it would be very hard to think of poetry and not think of Yeats; but Yeats was part of my youth [in Enniskillen] as well. When we went to various competitions we used to go in Easter week to Sligo for the Feis there . . . which is only thirty miles away; and in between Enniskillen and Sligo we have Leitrim, the Yeats country – Glencar. We used to learn his poetry at school and he was alive, he was living and he wrote about places we knew. He wrote about Dromahair, Sligo and Innisfree. Well, they were all part of our scene, our neighboring scene.⁷⁷

Trimble followed this statement with a recording of her favorite recitation of a Yeats poem, *The Song of Wandering Aengus*, by the English-born Irish actor Micheál Mac Liammóir. The latter went on to establish Dublin’s Gate Theatre with fellow actor Hilton Edwards in 1928; the Gate Theatre brought the world’s stage to the capital city and helped expand literary and cultural horizons in Ireland.

Irish themes were naturally important for Joan Trimble’s first compositions, which originated in a string of happy coincidences. Joan Trimble had always extemporized for two

⁷⁵ Mary and Bruce Crawford, “Mary Webb: A Neglected Genius,” <http://www.marywebb.org/poetry/green-rain/> (accessed February 26, 2012).

⁷⁶ Joan Trimble, interview, *A personal Choice*.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

pianos, but she began composing in this medium in 1938 with the encouragement of her Royal College of Music piano teacher, the Australian pianist and composer, Arthur Benjamin (1893-1960). Both Joan and Valerie were Benjamin's students at that time, and he suggested that they form a piano-duo. Valerie was skeptical as she was still primarily a cellist, but the two sisters eventually agreed when Benjamin enticed them with the promise of writing a piece specifically for them. This turned out to be *Jamaican Rumba*. Benjamin then asked for a piece in return from Trimble, as she recalled:

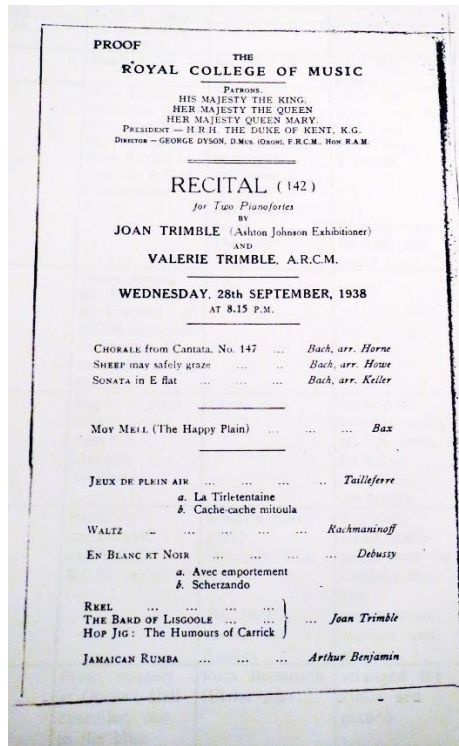
Arthur had gone to the West Indies and had come back with some Jamaican folk tunes. He threw this scrap of paper with a rhythm, a Rumba rhythm, and said "practice that, and if I like the way you play it, I'll write you a piece. And what about you writing something?" So I did. [I thought to myself] well, if he's doing a Rumba, I'll do a jig! So, I did a jig and called it the *Humours of Carrick*, and discovered that this is really what I should be doing.⁷⁸

This was indeed a huge turning point in Trimble's life and career. As she points out, "it was not only the birth of a 'smash-hit' [*Jamaican Rumba*], but also of a two-piano ensemble, which was to oust the cello and develop the composer."⁷⁹ Benjamin then not only encouraged the new composer to write another two-piano piece, resulting in the slow air *The Bard of Lisgoole*, but also organized a piano-duo debut at the Royal College of Music in London, where the Trimble sisters premiered all three works—*Jamaican Rumba*, *Humours of Carrick*, and *The Bard of Lisgoole*. (See Figure 2.1).

⁷⁸ Joan Trimble, interview by Una Hunt.

⁷⁹ Joan Trimble, "Joan Trimble: b.1915," in "Reclaiming the Muse," eds., Sophie Fuller and Nicola LeFanu, special issue, *Contemporary Music Review* 11 (1994): 278.

Figure 2.1. Program of Joan and Valerie Trimble's two-piano debut recital at the Royal College of Music, September 28, 1938.



Before the recital took place, Benjamin set up a meeting with the publisher Leslie Boosey to present him with the three new works. Boosey published them and requested a third two-piano work from Trimble. The result was her reel, *Buttermilk Point*. The titles are homage to the places in Ireland held dear by the composer, especially those relating to her beloved Enniskillen. Buttermilk Point was particularly special to Trimble, as it was a place by County Fermanagh's Lough (Lake) Erne where the Trimble family used to picnic.⁸⁰ (See Figure 2.2.)

⁸⁰ Buttermilk Point in Co. Fermanagh held such a special place in the hearts of the Trimble family that a painting of the picnic spot is displayed in the pride of place in the Trimble kitchen. The composer's daughter, Joanna McVey, proudly showed the painting to the author after her interview at Joan Trimble's house –The Battery, in Enniskillen. McVey, later helped to launch an exhibition in Fermanagh County Museum in July 22, 2012, in honor of her mother. The exhibition was titled, *Buttermilk Point: The Musical Life of Joan Trimble (1915-2000)*. See <http://www.impartialreporter.com/news/roundup/articles/2012/07/22/397437-exhibition-marks-the-musical-life-of-joan-trimble/>

Figure 2.2. Joan (center) and Valerie Trimble (front left) in a family picture taken at Buttermilk Point, Co. Fermanagh, in 1933.



Lisgoole Abbey is the subject matter of *The Bard of Lisgoole*, another Enniskillen landmark situated by Lough Erne. Many traditional Irish pieces have “The Humours of” followed by a place in their title.⁸¹ The Gaelic word used in place of “Humours” is *Pléaráca*, which usually translates as revelry or a romp. Therefore pieces with such titles are fun, lively, and dancelike. The second part of the title most usually refers to a place in Ireland. In Trimble’s instance, Carrick is a place in County Donegal, which leads to famous natural landmarks such as Slieve League and the old settlement or parish of Saint Colmcille and his followers—Glencolmcille.⁸² Joan Trimble, in a 1985 interview with Philip Hammond, talked about Enniskillen and its

⁸¹ *The Humours of Tulla, The Humours of Lissadell, The Humours of Westport, The Humours of Ballyloughlin, and The Humours of Glendart* are a cross section of pieces with “Humours” in the title.

⁸² Glencolmcille is literally translated as the Valley of Colmcille, and is situated in Donegal in the *Gaelacht* area—one of the last surviving Irish speaking areas. It still exists to this day.

surrounding area: “To the north lie the hills of Donegal, to the west the county of Sligo and the Yeats Country. Along the valley Carolan must have trekked on his frequent visits to the Maguires of Tempo or the Coles of Florence Court.”⁸³ Therefore, just as Trimble instantly drew from Anglo-Irish literature when called to compose songs, she was equally drawn to her Celtic Twilight background when she started to compose for the two-piano medium as a student of the Royal College of Music.

Another distinguished student of Stanford and subsequently a member of the Royal College of Music’s composition faculty was Ralph Vaughan Williams. Trimble began studying with him in 1940, and in her opinion, Vaughan Williams would write “music that would overlap and understand” her own style of writing.⁸⁴ As a composition teacher, Trimble found him to be the complete opposite of Herbert Howells. “With Vaughan Williams I sometimes used to play piano duets – he loved arrangements of symphonies and that sort of thing! We talked about poetry, drama, architecture, and people – it’s all part of one’s education. I regard myself as a musician, not some kind of musician, therefore all the Arts matter.”⁸⁵ Vaughan Williams encouraged his students to trust their natural voices and not to let fashion affect their writing.

With the rise of atonal and serial music of Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1957), Paul Hindemith (1895-1963), Pierre Boulez (b.1925), and Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007), among others, Joan Trimble suffered a period of self-doubt. Rebellious against her Irish idiom, she composed the *Sonatina* for two pianos, which she later sarcastically described:

So I tried to write a contemporary work and put in as many “wrong notes” as I could, that was literally the only way I could think of it, and wanted to write something completely different, and

⁸³ Hammond, “Woman of Parts,” 24.

⁸⁴ Joan Trimble, interview by Philip Hammond, *70th Birthday Tribute*, BBC Radio, 1985, transcribed by the author.

⁸⁵ Hammond, “Woman of Parts,” 25.

I wrote a classical Sonatina for two pianos and it didn't turn out the way I had planned. I had to stroke out a lot of wrong notes in the end because I kept slipping back into my own [style] – I had developed a certain idiomatical style.⁸⁶

Critics likewise commented on the “Irishness” of the work, thus confirming that in the end Trimble could not abandon her Irish idiom that was so naturally ingrained in her. With Vaughan Williams's help she quickly regained confidence in her compositional style: “Vaughan Williams helped me and gave me the courage to be myself.”⁸⁷ This is evident in that her body of work from this point onwards continued confidently in this Celtic vein.

Joan and Valerie's enormously successful debut recital in 1938 at the Royal College of Music instantly launched their piano-duo career. A favorable review in *The Daily Telegraph* by critic J.A. Westrup led to a successful audition with the BBC, launching a long broadcasting career during which the Trimble sisters headlined the Stanford Robinson Radio show, *Tuesday Serenade*, for almost ten years, beginning in 1944. During World War II the duo regularly performed on Dame Myra Hess's National Gallery Concerts and on the BBC London Prom concerts. The Trimble sisters were responsible not only for the widespread appeal of *Jamaican Rumba*, but also for the British premier of Stravinsky's *Sonata for Two Pianos*, Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion*, while also premiering English works such as the two-piano concertos of Arthur Bliss and Lennox Berkeley. The two sisters also performed Arnold Bax's (1883-1953) two-piano work, *Moy Mell (The Pleasant Plain: An Irish Tone Poem)*, composed in 1917 for their debut recital at the Royal College of Music. Before the recital they met the composer and played the work for him. Seeming quite pleased with the two girls' interpretation, he asked, “What about my other two-piano pieces, you will play them won't

⁸⁶ Joan Trimble, interview by John Toal, *Music Now: 85th Birthday Tribute*, BBC Radio Ulster, June 16, 2000, transcribed by the author.

⁸⁷ Hammond, “Woman of Parts,” 25-26.

you?” He then proceeded to talk to Valerie and Joan about Ireland and Glencolmcille.⁸⁸ Bax, an English composer who lived for a while in Ireland before retiring in Sussex, felt a great affinity with the Irish, as his works such as *Moy Mell* often attest: “*Moy Mell* had something of the sea in it, the Atlantic Ocean [Bax] knew through Glencolmcille.”⁸⁹ Critics would even sometimes accuse the composer of the tendency to “wallow in a Celtic bog.”⁹⁰ After he died Trimble found herself comparing Stanford and Bax, respectively describing them as “the Irishman in England, the Englishman in Ireland.”⁹¹ Perhaps this struck a chord in her own life, since she likely identified with the Irish and British duality in her own Anglo-Irish upbringing, plus she, too, was an Irishwoman in England during this time.

Trimble soon became an “occasional composer,” owing to the piano-duo’s success, her war-time duties as a Red-Cross nurse, and her new responsibilities as a wife and mother.⁹² Irish pianist and radio broadcaster, Una Hunt, recounted one of Trimble’s wartime stories:

I enjoyed the tales of her hectic lifestyle, particularly the one about the turquoise and gold brocade dresses made by the sisters for their Albert Hall Prom. concert [in the 1940s]. They had no coupons for fabric so the curtains had to do; meanwhile, the taxi awaited while the baby was bathed (with an apron over the precious gown) and final adjustments were made to the hems in the taxi en route to the Albert Hall!⁹³

Consequently, the roles of composer and performer became increasingly entwined; whatever she wrote *had* to be useful for the duo. Therefore, during the 1940s and ‘50s, when the duo was

⁸⁸ Joan Trimble, *A Student of Music*.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Joan Trimble married John Gant in 1942 while he was on leave during the Second World War John Gant later became a G.P. with Joan acting as the surgery secretary. They had three children: Nicholas (b.1944), Joanna (b.1948), and Caroline (b.1950).

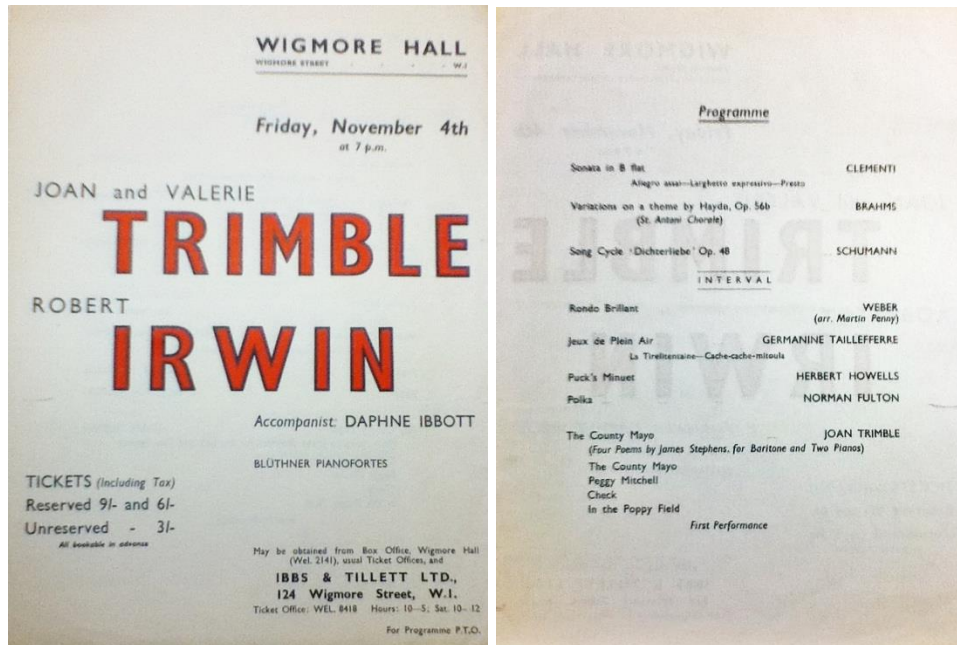
⁹³ Una Hunt, “Obituary: Joan Trimble 18 June 1915 – 6 August 2000,” *The Contemporary Music Centre Ireland: New Music News*, September, 2000, 12.

performing weekly on the *Tuesday Serenade* radio show, Trimble arranged many pieces for two pianos, including Irish tunes such as *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby* and *The Heather Glen*. In contrast, *The Green Bough* was commissioned as an orchestral piece by the Irish composer and conductor, Arthur Duff, for a concert in Belfast. When it was later cancelled Trimble immediately turned the work into a two-piano piece for Valerie and herself to perform. Among Trimble's scores at the National Library in Dublin are orchestrations of not only *The Green Bough*, but also of *The Humours of Carrick*, *The Bard of Lisgoole*, and *Buttermilk Point*. In these pieces—among the flutes, piccolo, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, single trumpet, trombones, timpani, tambourine, and strings—is the harp, which is Ireland's national instrument and emblem.⁹⁴

Among many of the diverse commissions Trimble received during her lifetime was one for the *County Mayo* (1949), which came into fruition when the Trimble sisters scheduled another Wigmore Hall recital in 1949 with the Irish baritone, Robert Irwin (1905-1983). He suggested that Trimble compose something for them all, and the *County Mayo* was born. (See Figure 2.3.)

⁹⁴ The harp dates back to the ancient bards who would often recite their poetry to harp accompaniment. The instrument is such a part of the Irish national identity that it is imprinted on the country's coinage.

Figure 2.3. Poster (front and back) of Joan and Valerie Trimble's two-piano recital at Wigmore Hall with Robert Irwin in 1949.⁹⁵



This piece shows Trimble again drawing inspiration from the Celtic Twilight era as the text itself is taken from *Reincarnations*, a collection of poems by Anglo-Irish poet James Stephens. These poems, like Douglas Hyde's *The Love Songs of Connacht*, are James Stephen's English translations or adaptations of Gaelic poems by Egan O'Rahilly (1670-1728) and Anthony Raftery. O'Rahilly, trained in the bardic arts, is known for developing the *Aisling* or Vision poem, which likens Ireland to a woman, lamenting the loss of Ireland's glory days and hoping for the day that the country will redeem itself. Trimble commented in an interview that to her "poetry . . . has most importantly one or two connotations: either it's rich with imagery and wonderful words, which you get in the English language, or it must have a rhythm, a swing to it, and I must have a feeling that music goes with it."⁹⁶ In *Reincarnations* only the poem entitled "In the Poppy Fields" is an original James Stephens work. Celtic Twilight themes, such as

⁹⁵ From the uncatalogued Joan Trimble Collection at the National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

⁹⁶ Joan Trimble, interview, *A Personal Choice*.

lamenting the loss of the Ireland that once was and the loss of the Irish language and culture, run throughout the text. Stephens's title *Reincarnations* suggests a rebirth or renewal, which is also a theme of the Celtic Twilight movement, in relation to the revival of a lost culture.

Trimble's most significant work after the *County Mayo* was a commission by the BBC in 1957 for a television opera. Again the composer looked to her Irish roots when searching for a libretto. She selected Donn Byrne's book *Blind Raftery and His Wife Hilaria*, a novel loosely based on the life of the famous Irish poet Anthony Raftery. Though received favorably, the opera was composed under what Trimble called "hair-raising" conditions.⁹⁷ As a result she stopped composing, and began teaching accompanying and general musicianship at the Royal College of Music. The duo eventually disbanded in the 1970s when Valerie started to show signs of a serious illness that eventually led to her untimely death at the age of only sixty-seven in 1980. Joan Trimble returned to Enniskillen in 1977, where she assumed full responsibilities as Managing Director of *The Impartial Reporter* and looked after her husband, who had been diagnosed with a debilitating disease. During the 1990s, Una Hunt initiated a revival of Trimble's music, which resulted in a CD of her complete chamber works on the Marco Polo label. Encouraged by this renewed interest in her compositions, Joan Trimble started to write again. One of her last compositions before her death in 2000 was a wind quintet written in the Celtic vein, indeed showing that Trimble really did take the advice Vaughan Williams had given to her in 1940. Pianist, composer, critic and broadcaster Philip Hammond (b.1951) commented on the work, saying that "Joan Trimble's Wind Quintet proves once again her gift for writing is natural and

⁹⁷ Joan Trimble, interview by Una Hunt.

fluid, void of contravenes and sentimentality and reflects the best in the continuing tradition of Irish music.”⁹⁸

Looking back on Joan Trimble’s life, it is clear that the tradition of the Celtic Twilight seemed to permeate every aspect of her life—from an early age up until her later years. The Trimble family’s ties to the Anglo-Irish town of Enniskillen date back to the early nineteenth century. They were actively involved in the community with the establishment of *The Impartial Reporter*, as well as providing music and culture to an otherwise artistically isolated part of Ireland. Like many nineteenth-century Anglo-Irishmen, the Trimbles are also responsible for the preservation and conservation of much of the town’s history and relics. William Egbert’s and Marie’s love for ballad operas, and their charity concerts with lighter, more popular programs all match the Anglo-Irish profile, which later seeped into the programs of Joan’s and Valerie’s two-piano works, as seen in several arrangements made by Trimble for the duo’s many broadcasts. Nineteenth-century institutions such as Feis Ceoil, the Royal Irish Academy of Music, The Royal College of Music, and the Abbey Theatre all in some way had Celtic Twilight connections. The Feisanna in Dublin, Belfast, Derry, and Sligo exposed Trimble to the music of the great Anglo-Irish composer Charles Villiers Stanford, who would come to influence many late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century composers such as Joan’s later teachers, Herbert Howells and Ralph Vaughan Williams. The Royal Irish Academy of Music has Stanford connections, since the father of the composer co-founded the establishment that would help to nurture generations of Irish musicians, including Joan and Valerie Trimble. The latter institution also had connections to the Abbey Theatre through its staff, particularly John Larchet, a friend of the Trimble family and a teacher of Joan who gave her the first professional musical appointment that led her to

⁹⁸ Philip Hammond, sleeve notes to Joan Trimble, *Two Pianos – Songs and Chamber Music*, Patricia Bardon/Joe Corbett/Una Hunt/Roy Holmes/Dublin Piano Trio (Marco Polo 8.225059, 1999), 4.

pursue further her piano studies in London. The Abbey Theatre, the ambitious project of W.B. Yeats, became the center of the Irish literary revival in the early twentieth century. Marie often played incidental music for important Irish plays in the Abbey Theatre orchestra under the direction of Larchet. Joan Trimble later showed an appreciation and interest in the Abbey Theatre, W.B. Yeats, and Irish literature. This is reflected in her early songs composed at yet another Stanford institution, the Royal College of Music in London, where she drew from the texts of Douglas Hyde for *My Grief on the Sea*. She later repeated this tactic with *The County Mayo*, delving into the Anglo-Irish poetry of James Stephens. At the Royal College of Music, she also started to compose for the two-piano medium and instantly was inspired to write Irish reels, jigs, and Irish Airs or Laments. The titles of these subsequent pieces were named after places held dear to the Trimble family in Enniskillen and County Donegal. At the crest of their career, the Trimble sisters championed British and Irish works by composers such as Arnold Bax, whom she dubbed “the Englishman in Ireland.” Her collaboration with Ralph Vaughan Williams, another Stanford descendant, helped to build her confidence in her Irish idiom when he told her not to follow fashions or fads and to be true to oneself. She never forgot the composer’s wise words. On return to Enniskillen Joan commented on how her life seemed to come full circle within the context of her interest in the arts and the local and social history of Enniskillen and County Fermanagh, which seems to sum up her Anglo-Irish profile perfectly:

It’s been fascinating trying to preserve and conserve; my Grandfather wrote the History of Enniskillen and was interested in the whole county as I was. But you see I don’t separate them up, they’re all part, the music if you like, the poetry, the history, the terrain. The County is such a beautiful County; it may be one-third bog and mountain, and one-third water (very important) one-third land. But it is a very fine community to belong to and the more one can preserve the history of that community— and I have a great advantage here with the files of my newspaper in my own house that I can look up at what happened . . . History, it comes full circle and all my life it seems to come full circle, but one wants to preserve for the present generations and the coming

ones [so] that they get the true picture and a love for their own community's background and history.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Joan Trimble, interview, *A Personal Choice*.

CHAPTER III

The Celtic Twilight reflected in Joan Trimble's Two-Piano Works

Now that one is familiar with Joan Trimble's life and career, let us turn to some of her compositions and their connections with the Celtic Twilight movement. In order to do so, it is important to first identify the common characteristics associated with Irish traditional music. Sean O'Riada defines the term "traditional" as meaning music that is "untouched, unwesternized, orally-transmitted music."¹⁰⁰ As previously noted, Ireland's geographical location caused the infiltration of Western art music and culture to be slow and painful. Therefore, clear distinctions were made between national music and Classical music and are still made to this day. England, too, suffered the same fate to some extent. However, its prosperity placed the country in a better position than Ireland in the dissemination of Western Classical Music.

The first thing to note, obviously enough, is that Irish music is not European. . . . Ireland has had a long and violent history during which she remained individual, retaining all her individual characteristics. Such foreign influences as were felt were quickly absorbed and Gaelicised. Such foreigners as settled her rapidly became, in the hackneyed phrase, 'more Irish than the Irish themselves.'¹⁰¹

The national music of the Irish peasants corresponded closely to insular art—a term from the Latin 'insula' meaning island. This particular art movement was distinctive to Ireland and is typified by the numerous Celtic crosses that can be found throughout the country, or the Celtic illuminations that exist in the *Book of Kells*, which now resides in Trinity College, Dublin. These and other indigenous Irish art forms involve the decoration or ornamentation of a basic preexisting form such as a sacred book or stone cross. Long, sinuous, interlocking, curved lines

¹⁰⁰ Sean O'Riada, *Our Musical Heritage*, ed. Thomas Kinsella and Tomás Ó Canainn (Mountrath: Dolmen Press, 1982), 19.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

and patterns that make up many of the ornamentations found in Celtic art were added to important or sacred objects to emphasize their prestige.

This is the idea that has lain at the root of all Irish traditional art since pre-Christian times. It is represented in the carved stones of the great burial-ground at Newgrange, in the curvilinear designs of the Book of Kells, in the old mythological stones, episodic and cyclic in form, in all Gaelic poetry – even in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*; and in the *sean-nós* singing.¹⁰²

The Irish bardic tradition shares similar concepts found in insular art such as ornamentation and prestige. Bards enhanced and reaffirmed the glories, status, and victories of their employers while satirizing the latter’s enemies. Bards would also write laments, almost like musical eulogies to the Gaelic chieftains who had passed away, praising the legacy their employer had left behind. The eulogies would also accord with the religious themes often found in the bard’s poetry when they would refer to God and Christ. The poetry itself, which is very ornate and complex in poetic meter, was preserved in books called *duanairí* by the bard’s patron. However, the bard’s harp accompaniment was unfortunately never notated and therefore lost over time.

The bardic tradition of patronage suffered a major blow during the early seventeenth century. The Battle of Kinsale in 1601 marked the official conquest of Ireland by Elizabethan England and the end of the Gaelic Lord rule in the island. Several years later the Gaelic Lords fled the country to mainland Europe, never to return. The aptly named “Flight of the Earls” transformed the bardic tradition, ending lordly patronage and therefore the role of the bard in Gaelic society. From this point onwards, those trained in the bardic arts became itinerant musicians, playing for the “Big House” Protestant Ascendancy. In her article, “Carolan and His Patrons in Fermanagh and Neighbouring Areas,” Joan Trimble explains that

The relationship of the Harper and his Patron, although altered in structure, continued from medieval times through to the eighteenth century; for by this time, each harper had many patrons and only a few like Lord Antrim and Lord Mayo, could support their own harper. The structure of

¹⁰² O’Riada, *Our Musical Heritage*, 22.

Irish Society, essentially aristocratic, was still maintained through the old tradition of the 'Big House', but in a modified manner. The Big House was a country mansion, inhabited by a number of landed gentry, with its retainers and dependants.¹⁰³

These changes in the bardic tradition are reflected in the career of Turlough O'Carolan. The bard was considered both a musician and poet who travelled all over Ireland, playing for the landed gentry or settled aristocracy, including the Maguires of Tempo and the Coles of Florence Court, both estates in County Fermanagh near Enniskillen. Through the Protestant Ascendancy, Carolan was exposed to the great Italian masters such as Antonio Vivaldi, Arcangelo Corelli, and Francesco Geminiani, whose influence can be heard in his music. *Carolan's Concerto* is one such example. Much of Carolan's music survived and in fact featured prominently in Ireland's monumental Petrie and Bunting Collections. Carolan therefore was of special interest to the Anglo-Irish during the nineteenth-century revival of Gaelic culture, due to the fact that his career grew out of the Anglo-Irish tradition during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This musical basis, to which the Protestant Ascendancy had some claim, helped to bridge the gap between the native Irish and themselves.

Irish music is divided into three genres: *Goltraí* (laments), *Geantraí* (lively, dance music), and *Suantraí* (lullabies), all of which we attribute to the work of the bards. The most characteristic two-piano works of Joan Trimble fall under these three categories. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, *The Green Bough*, and *Inis Fàl from the County Mayo* are *Goltraí*. *Geantraí* pieces are illustrated by *The Humours of Carrick*, *Buttermilk Point*, *In the Poppy Field* from *The County Mayo*, *The Cows are a'milking*, and *Puck Fair*. *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby*, and *Peggy Mitchell* from *The County Mayo* are examples of *Suantraí*. *The County Mayo*, which is the first piece from Trimble's song cycle of the same name, shows elements of both *Goltraí* and

¹⁰³ Joan Trimble, "Carolan and His Patrons in Fermanagh and Neighbouring Areas," *Clogher Record* 10, no. 1 (1979): 30.

Geantraí. In her efforts to escape her Celtic idiom, Trimble composed the *Sonatina* and *Pastoral: Homage à Francis Poulenc*. However, both pieces display Irish gestures, themes, and figuration found in her more characteristic works.

Goltraí pieces, *The Bard of Lisgoole* and *The Green Bough*, illustrate the influence of the Celtic Twilight. Each work shows art sublimating essential human values spawned from love, including loss, unrequited love, deprivation, frustrated patriotism, and persecution, all linked to the loss of Gaelic Ireland. Again, this is associated with the ancient bards of Ireland such as, Eochaidh Ó hEoghusa, a praise-poet who flourished during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and “set a trend in stately lamentation for the passing of the old Gaelic ways, the triumph of English culture, and the neglect of the bards [in relation to the] ‘Flight of the Earls.’”¹⁰⁴ Irish laments are written in the bardic tradition and include four main features: the harp glissando; triplets creating a rhapsodic, free rhythm; the sharp accented rhythm of the Scotch snap; and lastly the melodic decoration of long notes or at cadences.

The Bard of Lisgoole, composed in 1938, represents Joan Trimble’s earliest example of a *Goltraí* and contains all the features typical of the genre apart from the Scotch snap. Most notable among these features are harp idioms that Trimble assigns to both piano parts to reproduce typical elements of the bardic lament. The harp, as mentioned previously, is synonymous with Ireland and the bardic tradition, which shows the importance of both to the Irish national identity. Although Trimble is essentially using a non-traditional instrument—the piano—her imitations of harp-like effects are unmistakable. Sweeping glissandos are found in several instances in *The Bard of Lisgoole*. The most prominent examples of the harp glissando occur in piano I in m. 18 as it assumes the role of accompanist to piano II’s melody, as shown in Figure 3.1.

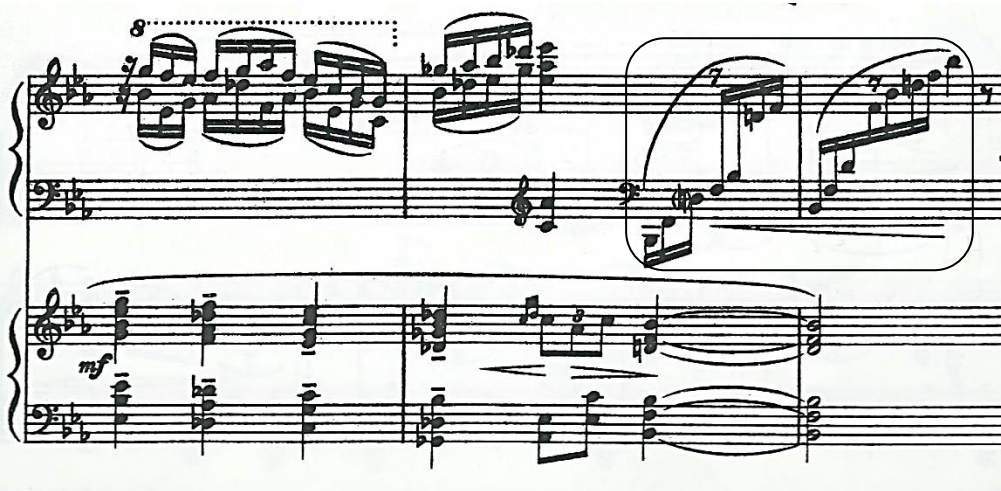
¹⁰⁴ McCormack, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Irish Culture*, 52.

Figure 3.1. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, harp glissando, m. 18.



These descending harp glissandos are echoed a few measures later (mm. 20 and 21) in the piano I part with ascending septuplet glissandos. (See Figure 3.2.)

Figure 3.2. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, ascending septuplet glissandos, mm. 20-21

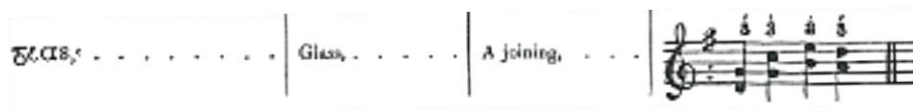


Other such instances occur in m. 9 in piano II; m. 10 in piano I; mm. 15 and 24 in piano II; m. 33 in piano I; mm. 40 and 46 in piano II. In all these examples, Trimble uses the harp glissando to intricately weave both piano parts together as well as painting the picture of a bard reciting his poetry with harp accompaniment. This dual role is achieved by passing accompaniment and melody from piano to piano, thus achieving clarity, a flowing of parts, and a polarity of melody and accompaniment without alienating the two pianos from each other. In fact, in this way both

pianos are actively involved with each other in a constant dialogue. These harp glissandos also produce a genuine rhapsodic atmosphere through the elaborate arpeggios and glissandos, which essentially ornament the simple melody. Again this refers to the complexities of bardic poetry and curvilinear ornamentations of insular art.

Other distinctive harp characteristics occur, for example, in the accompaniment of piano II at the very beginning of the piece, where Trimble writes chords that closely resemble idioms of the harp. The right-hand presents a succession of first-inversion chords that naturally produce an interval of a perfect fourth in the upper most voices of the chord. Fourths are also found in the two upper notes of the left hand of the first two chords. The rise and fall of these chords also evoke the Irish method of playing the harp. In Chapter II of *Ancient Music of Ireland*, Edward Bunting has created a table listing the various chords and double notes for the left hand of the Irish harpist. For example, Bunting describes a succession of quartal chords that ascend and then resolve inward as, *glas* (a joining), as shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3. Edward Bunting, *glas*.¹⁰⁵



These opening chords in *The Bard of Lisgoole*, while imitating traditional Irish harp writing, also create a sense of agency in the music by immediately assigning the harp material with the role of accompanist from the very start of the piece. (See Figure 3.4.) In this way the instrumentation of two pianos works extremely well. Joan Trimble vividly evokes the scene of the praise poet and harp accompaniment by introducing piano I's elaborate melody (the bard) with a two-measure

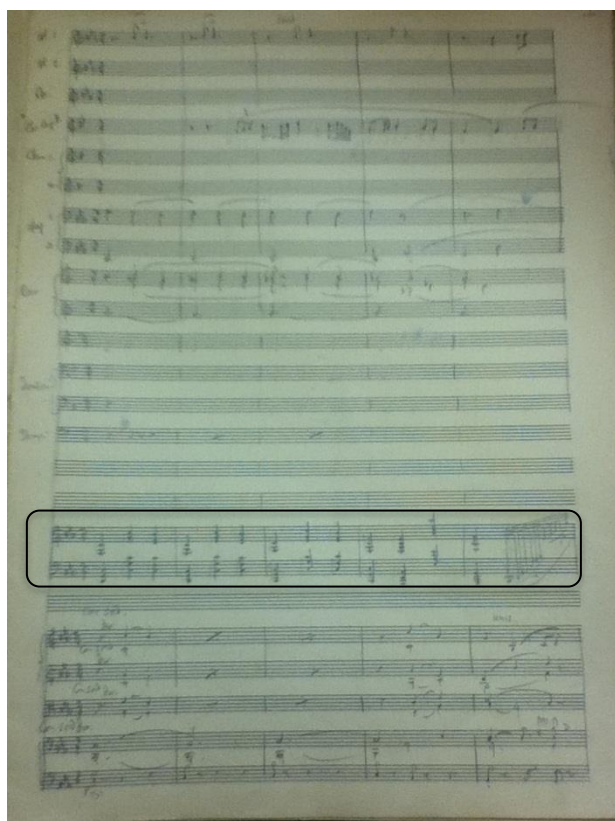
¹⁰⁵ Edward Bunting, *Ancient Music of Ireland: Arranged for Piano* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2000), 26.

harp-like introduction played by piano II. This implied instrumentation is confirmed in Trimble's orchestration of the same piece. (See Figure 3.5.)

Figure 3.4. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, piano II, harp-like introduction, mm. 1-4.



Figure 3.5. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, orchestrated version, mm.1-5.¹⁰⁶



¹⁰⁶ From the uncatalogued Joan Trimble Collection in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

The plucking of alternate single strings is also recreated by Joan Trimble, for example, in the right-hand figuration in mm. 16 and 17 of piano I. This texture is common to a typical piano accompanimental figure, the Alberti bass, however, as the name suggests, it would usually be written on the lower staff accompanying a melody of some sort in the upper staff. In mm.16 and 17, the broken-chord figure is in the middle to high range of the piano, in the top staff and grouped into four-note slurs—all these elements are more idiomatic of the harp, especially the latter (four-note slurs), which perhaps mimics the motion of the hand on the harp when playing such a figure with four notes in one hand group. (See figure 3.6.) Trimble retains the function of the Alberti bass in this passage, which is to accompany the melodic material, a role assigned to the second piano at this point in the music.

Figure 3.6. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, piano I, harp idiom, mm. 16-17.



The rhapsodic quality of *The Bard of Lisgoole*, as mentioned previously, has been in part achieved by the lush harp glissandos sweeping upwards as well as descending cascading figurations. However, the use of triplet figures throughout is the prime component of rhapsody, a characteristic typical of Irish laments. Joan Trimble's remarks about her *Phantasy Trio* confirm

her purposeful use of *Goltrai* elements: “The piano trio was frankly rhapsodic and rhythmic—what came most easily to me.”¹⁰⁷ The latter work was written two years after the *Bard of Lisgoole* in 1940 and was overseen by Ralph Vaughan Williams (Trimble’s composition teacher during this time) and eventually won the Cobbett Prize of the same year at the Royal College of Music in London. Looking at the score of the *Phantasy Trio*, one is drawn to the great number of triplet figures which are predominantly used in the piano part but also permeate the string parts. (See Figure 3.7.)

Figure 3.7. *Phantasy Trio*, rhapsodic elements, mm. 9-17.

The image displays a musical score for the *Phantasy Trio*, measures 9 through 17. The score is written for three staves: two for strings (violin and viola) and one for piano. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The tempo and mood markings are 'Poco rit.' and 'Animato ma sempre tranquillo A tempo'. The score features several triplet figures, which are highlighted with boxes and the number '3'. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte), *f* (forte), *mp* (mezzo-piano), and *dim.* (diminuendo). The piano part is particularly active, with many triplet figures. The string parts also contain triplet figures, especially in the violin part. The score is divided into two systems, with measures 9-12 in the first system and measures 13-17 in the second system.

¹⁰⁷ Joan Trimble, “Joan Trimble: b.1915,” in “Reclaiming the Muse,” ed. Sophie Fuller and Nicola LeFanu, special issue, *Contemporary Music Review* 11 (1994): 280.

The same can be said of the Irish composer's earlier work, *The Bard of Lisgoole*, where the use of the triplet figure is quite prevalent throughout. Trimble appears to use the rhythm in the melody in two ways—one, as an upbeat (See Figure 3.8), and two, as a decorative filler, as exemplified in the second piano part in m. 17. (See Figure 3.9.)

Figure 3.8. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, piano I, triplet upbeat, mm. 1-3



Figure 3.9. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, piano I, triplet decorative filler, m. 17.



The triplet also takes on an accompaniment role, with the most prominent example occurring in piano II in mm. 28-35. (See Figure 3.10.) In this passage, Trimble is referring back to the harp, on which, like the piano, the left hand would play the bass clef chords, and the right hand the top staff triplet chords. Trimble's ability to immediately and subtly evoke both harp accompaniment and melodic material with the same simple rhythmic figure shows the diverse skills Trimble has as a composer.

Figure 3.10. *The Bard of Liscoole*, piano II, triplet accompaniment, mm. 29-31.



The melodic decoration of long notes or at cadences is another particular feature of the *Goltrai* style and is found throughout *The Bard of Liscoole*. Unlike Western music, Irish folk music rests uneasily at long pauses or cadential moments, and instead of taking a little time, folk artists would rather fill in the time with elaborate ornamentations. *The Bard of Liscoole* perfectly illustrates this element particularly associated with Irish folk music. Piano I's melody in mm. 1-8, as shown in Figure 3.11, shows Joan Trimble filling in each long note with a run of consecutive notes ascending to the next melody note. In Irish music this type of ornament is known as a "slide," in which the performer slides from one pitch, up to the next.

Figure 3.11. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, piano I, “slide” ornament, mm. 1-8.



Another type of ornamentation present in the same passage is that of the decorative modal turn.

This ornament is specifically used at cadences, with the turn starting on the supertonic and often descending to the flattened seventh. In *The Bard of Lisgoole*, Joan Trimble uses the turn to highlight the notes C (tonic), B-flat (flattened-seventh), and G (dominant). All three notes can be found in the first few phrases (mm. 2-9) of piano I’s melody, as shown in Figure 3.12.

In m.33 of the piano primo part, as the music intensifies so does the modal turn, showing Trimble creating interest by variation. (See Figure 3.13.)

Figure 3.12. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, piano I, modal turns, mm. 1-9.

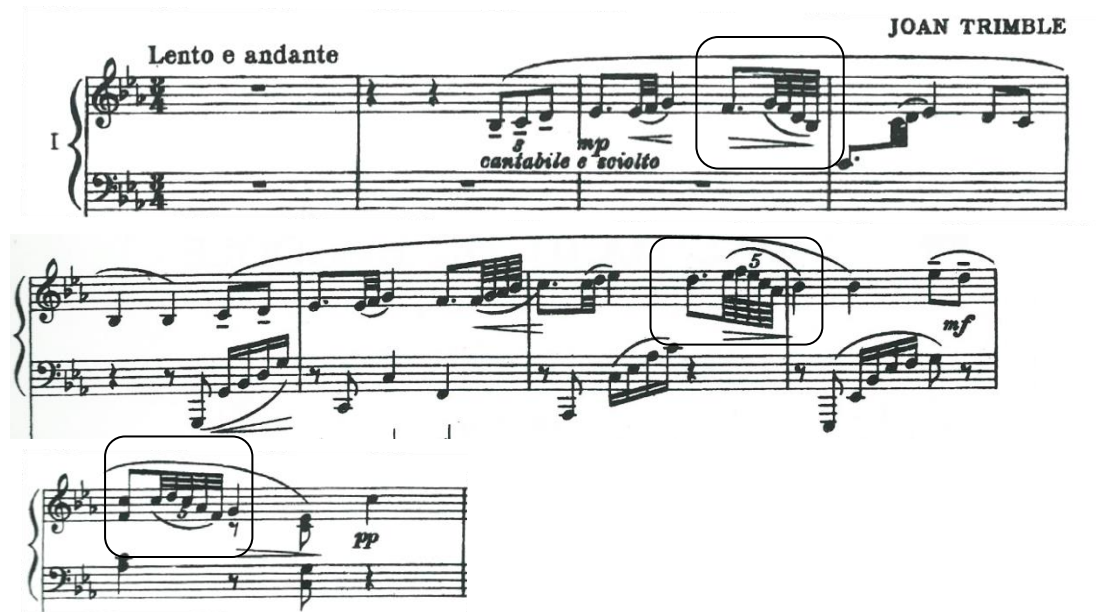


Figure 3.13. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, piano I, intensified modal turn, mm. 32-34.



The melodic ornamentations present in *The Bard of Lisgoole* refer to traditional Irish folk singing known as *sean-nós*—old style. One must nonetheless remember that Trimble is using the instrumentation of two pianos to depict a typical ancient Irish scene of a bard singing his praise-poetry with harp accompaniment. Therefore the elaborate melodic material is in essence mimicking the singing of the bard in *sean-nós* style. *Sean-nós* is a form of Irish traditional vocal

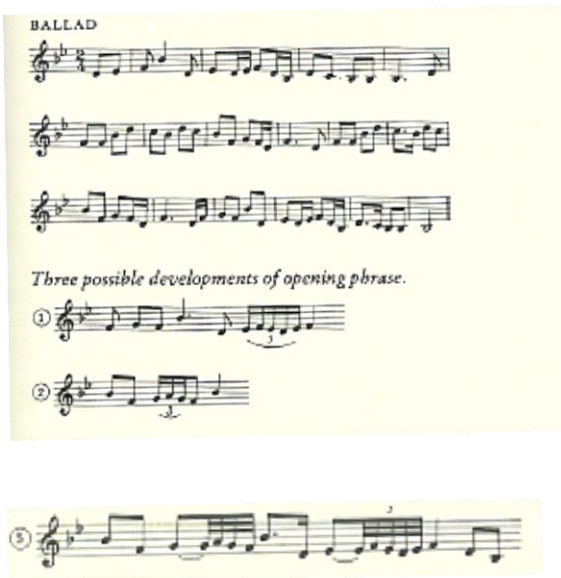
music, nasal in tone and quite complex. Unlike Western European music, Irish traditional music achieves intensity not through dynamics or rubato, but through ornamentation and the timbre of the voice to convey the more dramatic moments stated in the text. Variation is vital in *sean-nós* and Irish music, which can be quite repetitive; Irish folk artists consequently also use ornamentation to dispel the monotony of repeated phrases. Folk artists will therefore be expected to use their imagination and creativity at such points in the music that call for ornamentation, in order to display their artistry. The Irish musician's skill is accordingly measured by his or her artistic inventiveness within the proper constraints of *sean-nós*. Seán Ó Riada, in his book *Our Musical Heritage*, explains the principles of *sean-nós* singing and its origins in the bardic tradition:

Perhaps the most important aspect of *sean-nós* singing is what I call the "Variation Principle." It is not permissible for a *sean-nós* singer to sing any two verses of a song in the same way. There must be a variation of the actual notes in each verse, as well as a variation of rhythm . . . The variations must not interfere with the basic structure of the song. They must occur where they would give most point and effect. Since the ability to make artistic variations is creative, we actually demand the talents of a composer in the *sean-nós* singer. The variations are, of course, on a miniature scale . . . they may consist of something like two notes left out, three notes changed, and an extra ornament at a salient point. I believe that a possible explanation of this dates from the period when poet-singers existed on patronage. Their patrons, well-versed in the niceties of tradition, would have been thoroughly bored by the monotonous repetition of fifteen or twenty stanzas all sung in exactly the same way; consequently the song had to be varied.¹⁰⁸

The author provides examples, which seem similar to the melodic ornamentations in *The Bard of Lisgoole* (See Figure 3.14.)

¹⁰⁸ Ó Riada, *Our Musical Heritage*, ed. Thomas Kinsella and Tomás Ó Canainn, 24-25.

Figure 3.14. Seán Ó Riada, *Our Musical Heritage*, sean-nós ornamentations.¹⁰⁹



One final feature to point out is the “filling in of space” at strong cadences. In the *Bard of Lisgoole*, this is usually executed by piano II with harp-like figuration, as shown in Figure 3.15. Piano I finishes the melodic line while Piano II continues with a cadential commentary before starting the next section.

Figure 3.15. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, cadential fill, mm. 12-15.



¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 27-28.

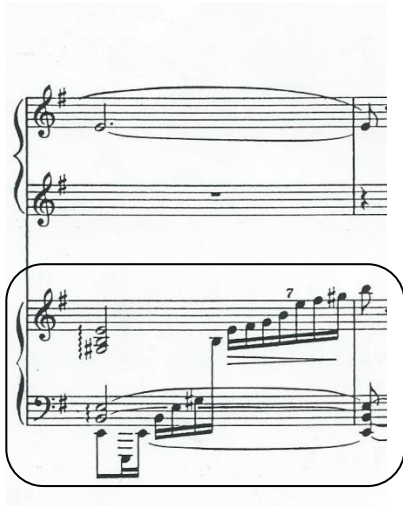
The Green Bough (1941), although written only three years after *The Bard of Lisgoole*, shows Joan Trimble's development of the *Goltraí* style. From the very beginning of this lament, we see that *The Green Bough* is even more elaborate and rhapsodic than *The Bard of Lisgoole*. In the opening passage, the triplet upbeat that was present in *The Bard of Lisgoole* have in *The Green Bough* turned into sextuplets, with a much wider melodic range that spans an octave from e^1 to E^2 and heightens the drama from the very beginning of the piece (See Figure 3.16.)

Figure 3.16. *The Green Bough*, mm. 1-5.

The image shows the first five measures of the musical score for 'The Green Bough' by Joan Trimble. The score is written for two pianos, Piano I and Piano II. The tempo and mood are indicated as 'Slow-with feeling and freedom'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. Piano I has a melodic line with a sextuplet in measure 1. Piano II has a harmonic accompaniment. The score is labeled 'JOAN TRIMBLE'.

As in *The Bard of Lisgoole*, modal turns are also present at cadences in *The Green Bough*. In m. 4 the turn starts on the supertonic and descends to the flattened seventh (D-natural)–F-sharp–G–F-sharp–E–D–E. It is also at this point that piano II fills in the rest of the cadence with a harp-like flourish, which adheres to the Irish traditional style of ornamenting cadences and long notes. (See Figure 3.17.) Of course the rhapsodic nature of these flourishes of triplets, quintuplets, sextuplets, and septuplets (which occur regularly throughout the piece) not only creates a seamless, luscious, flowing quality to the music and between the two pianists, but is also a common characteristic of Celtic music.

Figure 3.17. *The Green Bough*, piano II, cadential harp-like flourish, m. 5.



Another *Goltraí* element, that of sharp-accented rhythms, is introduced in this opening statement of *The Green Bough* and is a distinctive feature of the melody throughout. These downbeat short-long rhythms, known to musicians as the Scotch snap, were derived from the inflection of the Gaelic language or words and remained in instrumental music when the words were taken away. The Gaelic names for the Irish provinces of Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connaught are prime examples of the rhythm of the Scotch snap in the Irish language. Ulster is *Uladh* (Ullah); Munster is *Mumhan* (Moo-ah); Leinster is *Laighean* (Leiy-in); and, finally, Connaught is *Connaught* (Cunnacht). All display the sharp accented rhythm of the Scotch snap, which can be found in Joan Trimble's *The Green Bough*, as shown in Figure 3.18.

Figure 3.18. *The Green Bough*, piano II, Scotch snap, mm. 21-29.



Joseph C. Walker, in his *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786), mentions that each province had its own *Gol* or lamentation cries or *Ceanan*, which firmly links the style of the *Goltraí* to the provinces of Ireland.¹¹⁰ Thomas MacDonagh further explains the cross-pollination of language and music in Irish culture: “One influence of Irish remains to be noted, perhaps the most important of all with regard to poetry, the effect of Irish rhythm, itself influenced by Irish music on the rhythms of Anglo-Irish poetry.”¹¹¹ Figure 3.19 shows the Irish air *Scott’s Lamentation for the Baron of Loughmore* as it is recorded in the Edward Bunting collection, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, which is a good example of the Scotch snap within the *Goltraí* style.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Joseph C. Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1971), 67.

¹¹¹ Thomas MacDonagh, *Literature in Ireland: Studies Irish and Anglo-Irish* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1917), 52.

¹¹² Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, 6.

Figure 3.19. Edward Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland, Scott's Lamentation for the Baron of Loughmore*, mm. 11-27.

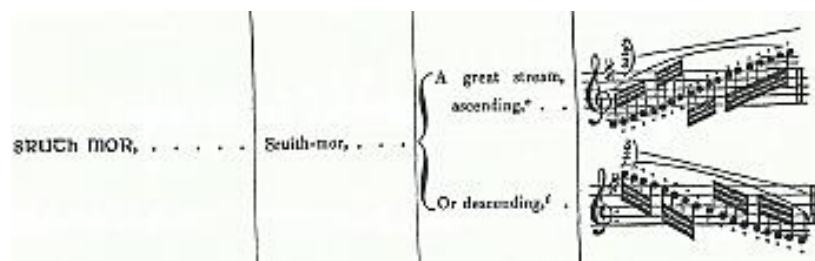


Particularly interesting in *The Green Bough* is Joan Trimble's use and development of the harp idiom. In *The Bard of Lisgoole* both pianos are assigned flourishes here and there, passing them from one part to the other, making sure never to obscure the melody. Three harp elements are applied throughout: the glissando, alternate single-string plucking, and arpeggiated chords. The middle section of *The Green Bough* stands out in that it shows Joan Trimble developing the alternate single-string plucking and harp glissando. Joan Trimble writes a whole section where both pianos share harp textures. In mm. 56-65 both piano parts (I and II), rhythmically shift in the right hand from two, to three, and to four notes per beat, thus imitating single-string plucking. (See Figure 3.20.) Ascending harp glissandos or *sruith-mor* (a great stream) are played by both pianos simultaneously in thirds in m. 66 (See Figure 3.21a and b) and are answered in synchronicity with a descending *sruith-beg* or little stream of notes harmonized in thirds and fourths in m. 67. (See Figure 3.21c and d.) The same pattern is repeated in mm. 68-70.

Figure 3.20. *The Green Bough*, harp idiom, mm. 56-65.



Figure 3.21a. Edward Bunting, *Sruith-mor*.¹¹³



¹¹³ Bunting, *Ancient Music of Ireland*, 24.

Figure 3.21b. *The Green Bough*, harp glissando, mm. 66-67.

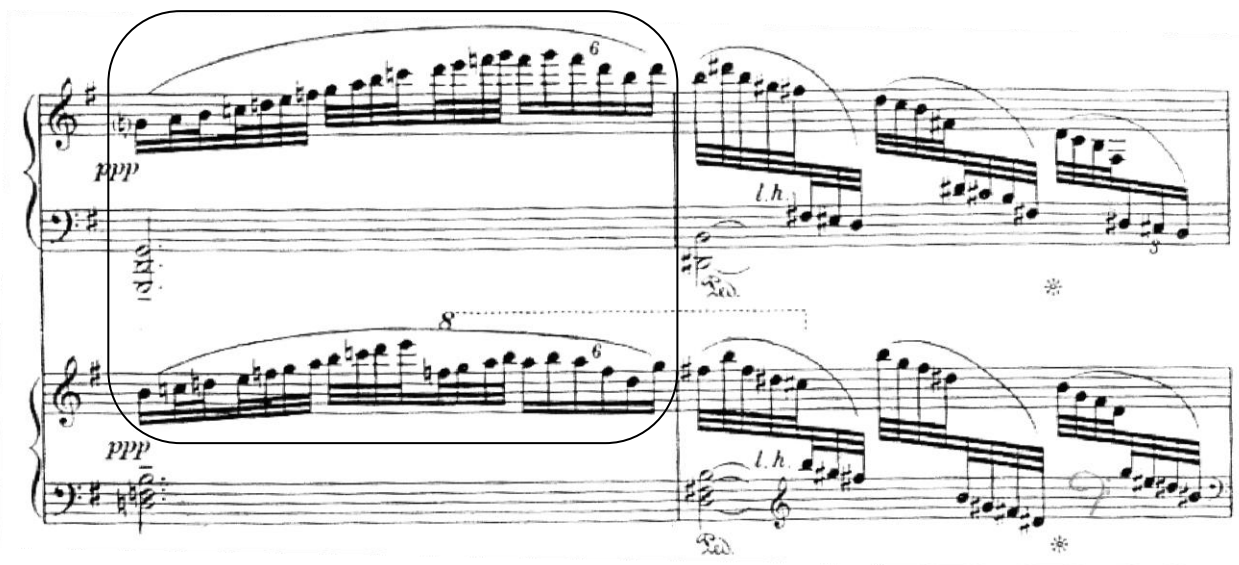
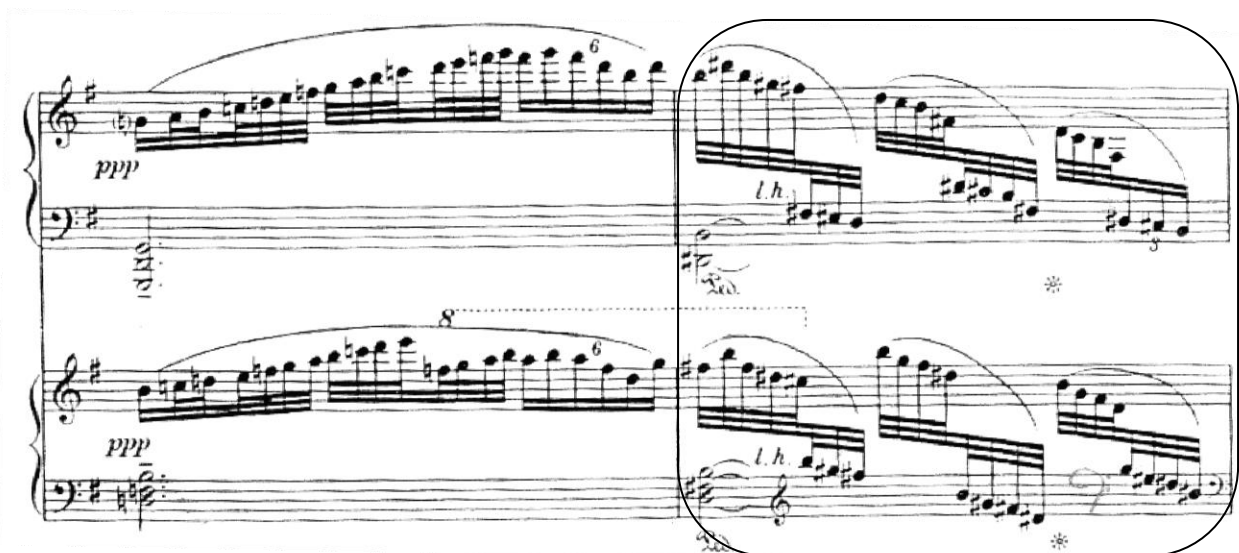


Figure 3.21c. Edward Bunting, *Sruith-beg*.¹¹⁴



Figure 3.21d. *The Green Bough*, harp idiom, mm. 66-67.



¹¹⁴ Bunting, *Ancient Music of Ireland*, 24.

In marked contrast to the heart-wrenching Irish *Goltraí*, the *Geantraí* style is a bit of fun-loving relief. This style group usually adheres to Irish dances and therefore is more likely to consist of instrumental works than vocal pieces. Irish dance music was and still is at present functional rather than stylized, and the steps of each dance therefore determine the structure, phrase-length, rhythm, and tempo of the music. Popular Irish dances are the reel (*ril*), jig (*port*), and hornpipe (*chornphiopa*), with the reel being the most ancient of the three. *Buttermilk Point* and *The Humours of Carrick* are examples of Joan Trimble's most characteristic pieces written in the lively style of the *Geantraí*. Her *Buttermilk Point* is written in the style of a reel, and *The Humours of Carrick* is a hop jig.¹¹⁵ Like all Irish dances, the reel and hop jig are usually defined through the music's "motor rhythm." In Irish dance music a reel has a 4/4 time signature with a "motor rhythm" of two groups of four eighth-notes (See Figure 3.22a), whereas a hop jig is in 9/8 with a motor rhythm of three groups of three eighth-notes. (See Figure 3.22b.) Joan Trimble's themes in her two-piano dances mirror these rhythms, making them instantly identifiable as a hop jig and reel respectively. (See Figure 3.23a and b.)

¹¹⁵ An Irish jig has many variants identified by its time signature and "motor rhythm." The single jig is usually in 6/8 and is defined by its long-short-long-short rhythm of two groups of quarter followed by eighth-note figures per measure. A variant of the single jig is known as the slide jig and is in 12/8. The double jig has a 6/8 time signature consisting of six eighth notes in two groups of three in each measure. Jigs in 9/8 are known as the slip jig or hop jig with a "motor rhythm" of nine eighth-notes in each measure divided into three groups.

Figure 3.22a. Edward Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, *Emon Dodwell*, Reel.



Figure 3.22b. Edward Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, *The Miners of Wicklow*, Jig.

This musical score is for a jig titled 'THE MINERS OF WICKLOW' (number 102). It is from Edward Bunting's 'The Ancient Music of Ireland', with the author and date unknown. The tempo is marked 'Molto' with a metronome setting of 152 and a note 'Per. 6 Inches'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is written for piano with two staves. It begins with the instruction 'Very Quick and Animated.' and includes dynamic markings such as *p* and *pp*. The piece consists of several measures of music, including a repeat sign and a first ending marked '(1)'.

Figure 3.23a. *The Humours of Carrick* (Hop-jig), piano I, mm.1-4.

This musical score is for 'The Humours of Carrick' (Hop-jig), piano I, measures 1-4. The tempo is marked 'Molto allegro e vivo'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is written for piano with two staves. It begins with the instruction 'Molto allegro e vivo' and includes dynamic markings such as *pp* and *ppp*. The piece consists of several measures of music, including a repeat sign and a first ending marked '(1)'.

Figure 3.23b. *Buttermilk Point* (Reel), piano I, mm.1-4.

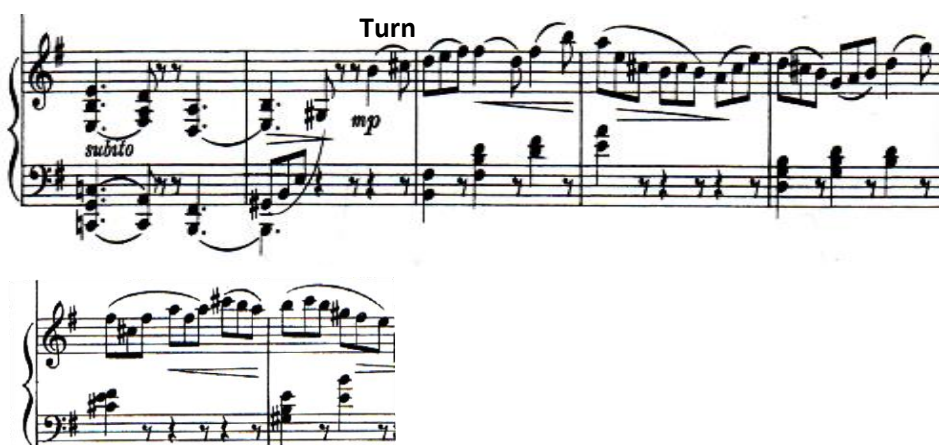
This musical score is for 'Buttermilk Point' (Reel), piano I, measures 1-4. The tempo is marked 'Allegro, assai ritmico (♩ = 120)'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is written for piano with two staves. It begins with the instruction 'Allegro, assai ritmico (♩ = 120)' and includes dynamic markings such as *mp* and *senza Pedale*. The piece consists of several measures of music, including a repeat sign and a first ending marked '(1)'.

Structurally *Geantrai* pieces are very symmetrical, with two contrasting sections called “parts” and each “part” consisting of eight measures. Irish musicians call the first “part” a “tune”, and the second “part” the “turn.” Lower registers are usually assigned to the initial “tune” and are then answered by the “turn,” which is higher in pitch. Both “parts” are often repeated employing variation. Therefore the structure of an Irish dance is usually that of A A' B B'. The first two themes of *Buttermilk Point* and *The Humours of Carrick* observe the characteristics of a “tune” (in the lower register) (See Figure 3.23a and b) and a “turn” (in the higher register) (See figure 3.24a and b.)

Figure 3.24a. *Buttermilk Point*, “turn”, piano I, mm. 17-20.



Figure 3.24b. *The Humours of Carrick*, “Turn”, piano II, mm. 25-31.



Joan Trimble retains eight-measure parts in her dances, but she expands the simple A A' B B' structure, as can be seen in the tables in Figures 3.25 and 3.26.

Figure 3.25: The Form of *Buttermilk Point*.

Themes	A ('tune')	A'	A'' ('turn')	A'''	B	B'	A''''	A'''''	C	C'	C & C'	A'''''	A'	A''
mm.	1-8	9-16	17-24	25-32	33-40	41-48	49-56	57-64	65-72	73-80	81-88	89-96	97-104	105-112
Mm / phrase	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8

Figure 3.26: The Form of *The Humours of Carrick*.

Themes	Intr o	A	A'	A''	B	B'	A'''	A''''	C	C'	C''	A'''''	A''''''	A'''''''
mm.	1-2	3-10	11-18	19-26	27-34	35-42	43-50	51-58	59-66	67-74	75-82	83-90	91-98	99-106
mm. per phrase	2	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8

The Humours of Carrick and *Buttermilk Point* both unfold in an expanded rondo form of ABACA. This enables Trimble to introduce new themes, instead of just sticking to two and simply repeating them by variation, which is a deviation from the true Irish *Geantraí* model. The latter's heavy dependency on variation rather than introducing new themes to avoid monotony is due to the fact that authentic Irish dance music is functional and therefore it would be impractical to make huge thematic changes. The composer is aware that this is in fact a piece of stylized music not to be danced but listened to, inducing her to keep her audiences interested by utilizing the more classical device of thematic contrast.

It is interesting to refer to the orchestration of *The Humours of Carrick* by Trimble herself. The piano (and especially two pianos) is not a traditional Irish instrument and therefore Celtic music played on such an instrument is seen by many traditionalists as a violation against the performance practice of the genre. In Western Classical music circles, the piano is seen as an orchestra in itself, and therefore a good pianistic practice in general is to try and recreate different tonal colors. In this way, an orchestration of a piano piece by the composer can be very informative to the pianist. Although the elements of the *The Humours of Carrick* place the composition firmly in the Celtic vein, Trimble reinforces this fact by including the harp in her orchestration of the same piece. Throughout the score, the harp is predominantly assigned chords that rhythmically punctuate the harmony, but Trimble also includes some harp glissandos, which are apparent in the two-piano score and are translated literally into the orchestrated score, as shown in Figure 3.27a and b. The harp's subtle involvement in *The Humours of Carrick* observes the general performance practice of the *Geantraí* style, as “mostly song airs and moderately paced instrumental harp pieces are played.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ “Ireland: Instruments,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press (accessed March 24, 2012) <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/13901>.

Figure 3.27a. *The Humours of Carrick*, orchestrated version, mm. 96-101.¹¹⁷

The image shows a page from a musical score for the orchestrated version of 'The Humours of Carrick'. The staves are labeled on the left: Harp, Vln I, Vln II, Vla, Cello, and Bass. The Harp staff is circled in red. A black rectangular box highlights a specific musical phrase in the Harp staff, which consists of a sequence of notes and rests. The other staves show the corresponding parts for the Violins, Viola, Cello, and Bass.

Figure 3.27b. *The Humours of Carrick*, original two-piano version, mm. 97-101.

The image shows two systems of musical notation for the original two-piano version of 'The Humours of Carrick'. Each system consists of two staves. The first system has a black box highlighting a specific musical phrase. The second system also shows a similar phrase. The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

¹¹⁷ From the uncatalogued Joan Trimble Collection in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Joan Trimble's example of the Irish lullaby or *Suantraí*, can be seen in her two-piano arrangement of *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby* (1949). Gartan is a small village in County Donegal, where the tune was collected by Herbert Hughes and James Campbell and published in their *Songs of Uladh* collection (1904). In Joan Trimble's own personal copy, which resides in the library of The Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin, she apparently marked the page with a make-shift bookmark—a cutting of a newspaper article about Toirdhelach Mac Soibhne, “The great piper of Gweedore,” by Seamus O’ Neill. Underneath the lullaby’s title the authors have written, “I got this air from Cait ni Dubhthaigh, who sang it to me. She heard it at a fair in Leitir-Canadhnain when she was a child. It was sung to a ballad now forgotten.”¹¹⁸

The text of the song, attributed to Seosamh Mac Cathmhaoil, reveals hues of the Celtic Twilight, which is obvious from the tune’s first line:

Sleep, O babe, for the red-bee hums
The silent twilight’s fall:¹¹⁹

The rest of the text includes familiar themes such as the poetic painting of nature and references to the supernatural, notably the fairy *Aoibheall*, who in Irish folklore is a beautiful “queen of the northern Fairies.”¹²⁰ Herbert Hughes notates the song in C major in the *Songs of Uladh*, but in the first volume of his later collection of Irish Country Songs, he transposes it into D major. Joan Trimble chooses the key of E-flat major for her arrangement of the tune. In Irish folk music, certain lament features overlap with *Suantraí*, such as the slow tempo, the Scotch snap rhythm, and a feeling of lusciousness. But they are superimposed onto a time signature of 6/8, creating a lilting rhythm. Joan Trimble therefore writes such an accompaniment for piano II while piano I

¹¹⁸ Herbert Hughes, *Songs of Uladh: Collected and Arranged by Padraigh mac Aodh o Neill (Herbert Hughes), with Words by Seosamh mac Cathmhaoil (Joseph Campbell), and Designs by Seaghan mac Cathmhaoil* (Belfast: William Mullan, 1904), 94.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

mainly sings the famous Irish folk tune throughout. The texture of Trimble’s arrangement and Herbert Hughes’s setting of the tune are not entirely different. Indeed both have similarities, such as an introduction with drone fifths in the bass. However, Trimble’s version is much more effective as it flows into the first statement of the melody, whereas Hughes’s introduction stops before the voice’s entry. Trimble achieves this by using a root position E-flat chord followed by a first inversion F minor chord in piano II (Hughes keeps both harmonies in root position). A perpetual circle of fifths is then created by unblocked chords and added tied tonic pedals, which enables the harmonies, along with the *Suantrai* rhythm, to neatly and expertly dovetail into each other. (See Figure 3.28a and b).

Figure 3.28a. Herbert Hughes, *Irish Country Songs Vol. I*, “The Gartan Mother’s Lullaby,” mm. 1-5.



Figure 3.28b. Joan Trimble, *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby*, mm. 1-4.

This musical score for Figure 3.28b shows the first four measures of Joan Trimble's arrangement of 'The Gartan Mother's Lullaby'. It is written for two pianos, PIANO I and PIANO II. The tempo is 'Andante cantabile' and the mood is 'Dolce con tenerezza'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is arranged by Joan Trimble. PIANO I plays a melody in the right hand, while PIANO II provides harmonic support with chords and a moving bass line.

Trimble’s arrangement surpasses Herbert Hughes’s version of *The Gartan Mother’s Lullaby* in

that the former composer seems to use word painting through her use of different textures to highlight the text and Celtic Twilight atmosphere of the poem. This becomes very apparent from m. 20 onwards when the music expertly modulates from E-flat major to B major at “Dusk is drawn . . .” with both pianos playing *pianissimo* at extreme registers from each other. The soft dynamic and the piano’s polarity of register contribute to the depiction of dusk. The text’s continuation, “Dusk is drawn, and the Green Man’s thorn is wreathed in rings of fog,” depicts a murky scene that is matched in piano II’s fog-like texture of slurred and tied *pianissimo* octaves on the pitch B, as illustrated in Figure 3.29.

Figure 3.29. *The Gartan Mother’s Lullaby*, text painting, mm. 20-23.



Piano I continues to play in the “twinkling” register of the piano in m. 25 for the words “Starry bog.” (See Figure 3.30a.) The second piano emerges from its lower murky range to join piano I in mm. 29 and 30 (with a harp flourish), to depict the “Paly moon.” (See Figure 3.30b.) Sadness bears over the lullaby at the words, “And weeps to hear the sad sleep tune I sing, O love to you,” where Joan Trimble uses a G-sharp minor harp arpeggio that leads to an echo of the tune on the same harmony in mm.35-39. (See Figure 3.30c.) M. 40 is a particularly special moment when the music directly modulates back to E-flat major—a spine tingling, haunting point in the arrangement, which epitomizes through music the magical world of the Celtic Twilight. (See Figure 3.30d.) This particular moment reminds me of Trimble’s own mantra, so to speak, when

arranging music: “Let the tune speak for itself. If you’re going to put something to it, it must enhance it – the right chord in the right place for example.”¹²¹

Figure 3.30a. *The Gartan Mother’s Lullaby*, text painting, mm. 25-28.

“a starry bog”



Figure 3.30b. *The Gartan Mother’s Lullaby*, text painting, mm. 29-31.

“Paly moon”



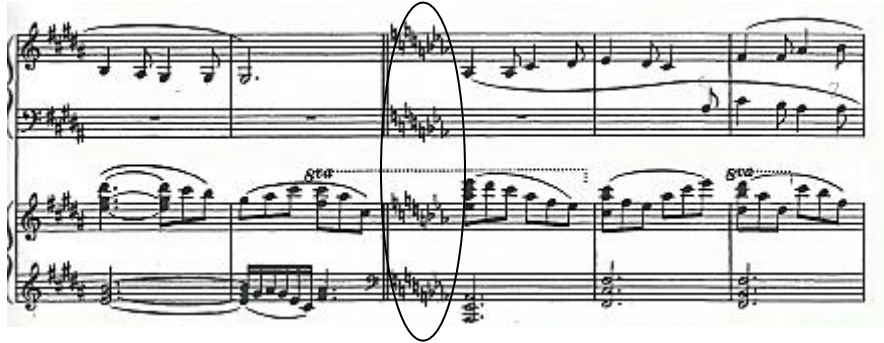
Figure 3.30c. *The Gartan Mother’s Lullaby*, text painting, mm. 33-39.

“And weeps to hear the sad sleep tune I sing, O love to you”



¹²¹ Hammond, “Woman of Parts,” 25.

Figure 3.30d. *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby*, haunting key change, mm. 38-42.



The poem ends with the beginning stanza, a formal repetition that we can clearly hear in Trimble's version at m. 44, where the opening music confidently returns back in E-flat major with piano II accompanying the melody with harp-like arpeggios. (See Figure 3.31.)

Figure 3.31. *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby*, harp idiom, mm. 43-45.



At the return of the phrase “Aoibheall from the Grey rock comes, to wrap the world in thrall” in mm. 48-51, piano II plays little streams of thirty-second notes cascading downwards in m. 51 on the word “thrall.” (See Figure 3.32.) The change from sixteenth notes to thirty-second notes helps create the image of *Aoibheall* captivating the world with her beauty. This passage transitions into a moment of joyousness with both pianos coming together for the first time in the piece in unison chords and thematic material. (See Figure 3.33.) The lullaby ends as simply as it began with the same lilting “hush-a-bye” accompaniment ending on a hopeful, shimmering E-flat major chord. (See Figure 3.34.)

Figure 3.32. *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby*, text painting, mm. 49-51.



Figure 3.33. *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby*, joyous unison, mm. 52-54.



Figure 3.34. *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby*, mm. 59-63.



The shimmering chords, the sweeping harp-like arpeggios, the vivid imagery of twilight and the moon, and the hopeful, upward-looking ending in this arrangement of *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby* reminds me of Claude Debussy's *Clair de Lune* from his *Suite Bergamasque* (1905).

Although Trimble acknowledged the strong Irish idiom in her music, the composer also admitted that she “felt very much akin to Debussy and Ravel.”¹²²

The Gartan Mother’s Lullaby was published alongside Trimble’s arrangement of the Irish Air, *The Heather Glen* (1949), which complements the former very well due to its upbeat, jaunty tune. Trimble’s source for *The Heather Glen* is not entirely clear, but one could hazard a guess. The original tune was collected by George Petrie and is listed as number 1582 in the Charles Villiers Stanford edition (1904) of the collection, both of which reside as part of The Joan Trimble Collection in Dublin’s Royal Irish Academy of Music. (See Figure 3.35.) The title of the air in the Petrie collection is *An Smactaoin Crón*, which can be translated as *The brown little Mallet*. An informative note in relation to the title is included at the bottom of the page by Stanford: “Note. A pencil note to this title says ‘or Roll of Tobacco.’ Ed.”¹²³

Figure 3.35. George Petrie, *Complete Irish Music*, *The brown little Mallet*, no. 1582.¹²⁴



Another possible source could be from *Three Irish Melodies*, op.40 for voice and piano by Michele Esposito (1855-1929). The Italian composer was also an accomplished pianist and teacher, and he “was the single most influential musical figure working in Ireland at the turn of

¹²² Joan Trimble, interview by Una Hunt.

¹²³ George Petrie, *Petrie’s Complete Irish Music: 1,582 Traditional Melodies*, edited by Charles Villiers Stanford (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2003), 397.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

the century.”¹²⁵ Esposito became part of the piano faculty at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in 1882 and remained in the post until his retirement. “He established there a surpassing piano school, and his influence was such that he was in reality the uncrowned director.”¹²⁶ During the latter part of the nineteenth century, Esposito became increasingly interested in Irish folk music, which resulted in several arrangements by the composer, including, for example, *The Two Irish Melodies for piano*, op. 39 (1897).¹²⁷ His arrangement of *The brown little Mallet* can be found in his second set of arrangements for voice and piano, *Three Irish Melodies*, op. 40. Here the second song is titled *The Heather Glen* but uses the air of *The brown little Mallet*. Interestingly, a lullaby also precedes Esposito’s arrangement, *Hush! O Hush!*, so it seems that Joan Trimble followed a similar plan. As mentioned previously, two generations of the Trimble family were long associated with the Royal Irish Academy of Music. Joan Trimble never met Esposito, but she commented that his “spirit and reputation, as head piano professor for forty-six years, still seemed to be felt everywhere.”¹²⁸ Therefore, it is quite possible that she was aware of Esposito’s arrangement of the air.

Trimble’s *The Heather Glen* displays her ingenuity in relation to variation, which is an essential tool in arranging Irish folk tunes, due to their repetitive nature and AB form. In G major, Trimble introduces the folk tune with four measures of sixteenth-notes in an almost canonic dialogue between the two pianos (See Figure 3.36.) The main theme (A) is a jolly,

¹²⁵ McCormack, *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Irish Culture*, 201.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ The second melody of this set was assigned for Royal Irish Academy of Music grade examinations for piano. See McCormack, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Modern Irish Culture*, 201.

¹²⁸ Joan Trimble, “Intermezzo,” in *To Talent Alone: The Royal Irish Academy of Music 1848-1998*, edited by Richard Pine and Charles Acton (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1998), 397.

carefree melody illustrated by the non-legato touch, dotted rhythms, and lively staccato accompaniment in piano II. (See Figure 3.37.)

Figure 3.36. *The Heather Glen*, canon, mm. 1-4.

Figure 3.37. *The Heather Glen*, mm. 5-12.

The composer varies this theme throughout in different ways. In mm. 13-20 piano II plays the melody, which is doubled with both hands two octaves apart. The accompaniment played in piano I keeps its basic original shape, but adds a few filigree notes for decoration and variety. The articulation changes from non-legato to legato at the third repeat of A in mm. 36-43; piano I, also legato, plays a more active right hand similar to that of the introduction. A return to the original staccato articulation of the theme occurs in mm. 44-51, where piano I plays the same

doubled theme at the two octave range seen previously in piano II (mm. 13-20). The contours of the accompaniment presented in the beginning are retained by piano II, but the filigree and initial bass note are now stripped from the model. The texture is a little sparser at this point due to the unison melody and high tessitura of the piano II accompaniment. The fourth repeat of the A theme is particularly interesting as it moves into E-flat major (a mediant relationship to G major). Here Trimble opts for a legato touch, and with added triplets and a flattened seventh, adopts a rather jazzy character, as shown in Figure 3.38. The jauntiness of the tune is recalled in the recapitulation of the A theme in its original key of G major (m. 94), with the right hand of piano I using slurs to vary its sixteenth-note countersubject.

Figure 3.38. *The Heather Glen*, jazz variation, mm. 68-79.



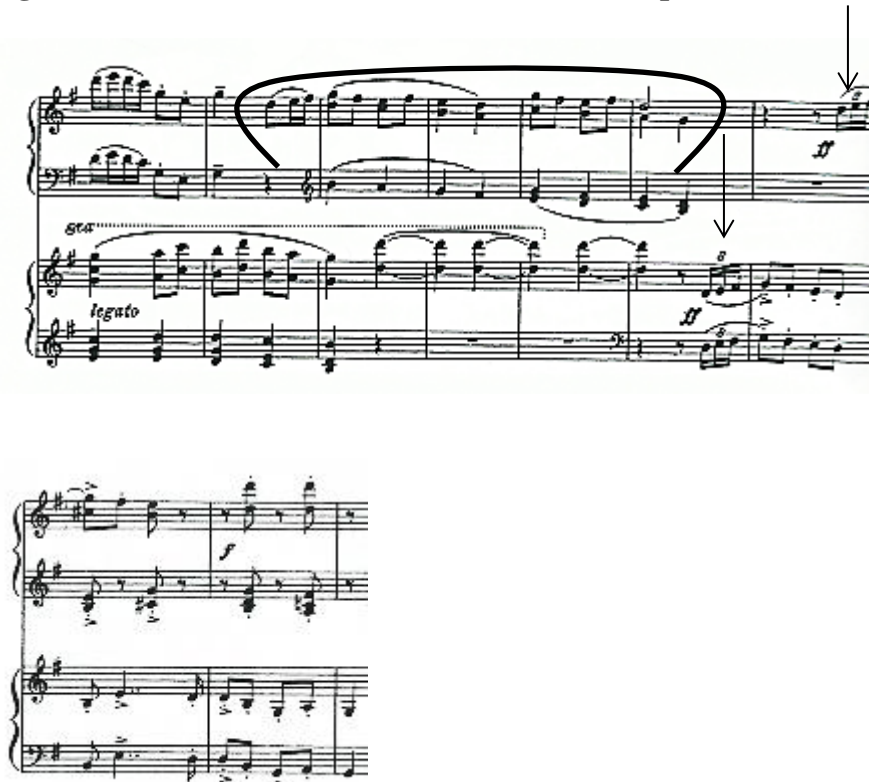
Many of the same devices are used to vary the B theme, which first enters in m. 20. (See Figure 3.39.) The upbeats and dotted rhythms of this “turn-like” theme make it similar in character to A, except that it is more stepwise in nature, often uses triplets, and uses a mixture of slurred and staccato notes.

Figure 3.39. *The Heather Glen*, B theme, mm. 16-27.



Piano II first accompanies this theme with off-beat right-hand chords that contribute to the cheery character of the piece. In mm. 28-35 the texture and register of the first variation of B is similar to the corresponding variation of the A theme. In both instances piano II plays the melody in the high range of the keyboard with the hands two octaves apart. However, the B theme's accompaniment, played by piano I, thickens in texture at this point by filling out the left-hand chords. Trimble varies the character of the B theme in its third repetition in mm. 52-59, where for a few measures, Trimble thins the texture first by shifting the register up into the high treble range, and also by writing nothing but octave D's in the right hand of piano II's accompaniment. In m. 55 piano II interrupts, *subito fortissimo*, and authoritatively leads the ensemble, taking over the tail material of the B theme. (See Figure 3.40.)

Figure 3.40. *The Heather Glen*, humorous interruption, mm. 50-59.



Legato touch is reintroduced in the melody in mm. 60-65, accompanied with harp-like arpeggios that end on a fermata in m. 65. The latter helps to propel the following measures forward into a four-bar modulatory passage (mm. 68-71); surging stepwise scales that are simply shifted down a half step give the music ample room to modulate straight into the previously mentioned jazz passage in E-flat major. (See Figure 3.41.)

Figure 3.41. *The Heather Glen*, modulation by half step, mm. 68-71.



Just like the A theme, B is transposed into the new key, although this time it is played as a left-hand melody. The succession of chords in this passage—E-flat, B-flat minor-seventh chord, C minor, and a dissonant G-flat major-seventh chord in m.86—perhaps denotes a hint of sarcasm or tongue-in-cheek due to the latter chord’s remote relationship to E-flat major, and to its tritone shift from C to G-flat. The eighth measure announces a dominant E-flat pedal with a written-out two-measure pause (mm. 88-89), stretching out and leading to the return of introductory material, now in A-flat minor in mm.90-93 and acting as a retransition to the final reiteration of theme A in G major in m.94. This modulation, achieved through enharmonic equivalency of the pitches C-flat and B-natural, acts as a ii chord to V of V in G major. (See Figure 3.42.)

Figure 3.42. *The Heather Glen*, retransition, mm. 90-94.



The final entry of B is a boisterous one (mm. 102-17). This passage consists of a succession of stark contrasts, from thick staccato punctuated chords in piano I in m. 102, to unison accented and unaccented staccato notes (mm. 106-109) and unaccented staccato notes. A climactic passage in mm. 110-13 contains the arrangement’s widest range and thickest texture; it is quickly succeeded by a sudden change in all preceding elements. Forward motion is halted by a *poco rit* and *fermata*, which sets up the arrangement’s humorous ending marked *a tempo* and *piano*, adding naivety with simple chords and staccato octaves. (See Figure 3.43.)

Figure 3.43. *The Heather Glen*, final variation, mm. 106-117.

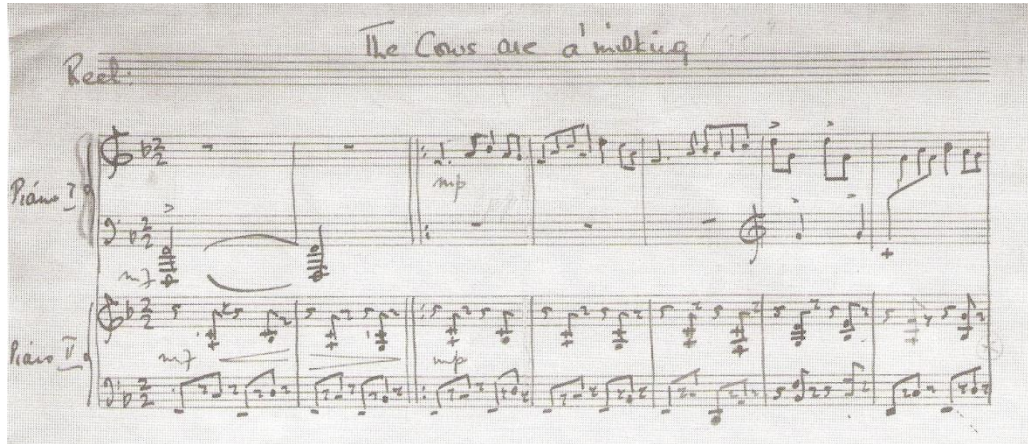


The Cows are a'milking (1945), is an unpublished arrangement by Trimble taken from a reel by Turlough O'Carolan.¹²⁹ This is not the first time the composer arranged folk tunes by O'Carolan; an unfinished arrangement of *Carolan's Lament* for two pianos also exists. Trimble not only arranged pieces by Turlough O'Carolan, but later in life, she also wrote an article on the seventeenth-century composer, which is a testament to Trimble's interest in one of Ireland's greatest bards. *The Cows are a'milking* is instantly recognizable as a reel due to the piece's time signature of 4/4 and eighth-note "motor rhythm." The arranger sets the scene with a clearly demarcated two-bar introduction, after which Trimble keeps the symmetrical eight-measure rule typical of Irish dances. Since this is an arrangement, the folk tune is original and kept intact, and thereby the whole piece is based on an eight-measure "tune" and "turn," which is repeated several times throughout. Thereby the Carolan tune becomes an exercise in extemporization and

¹²⁹ The original score of *The Cows are a'milking* can be found in the uncatalogued Joan Trimble Collection held at the National Library of Ireland in Dublin.

variation for Trimble, a skill which came naturally to the composer. The “tune” is initially presented by piano I in the middle range of the piano, while the second pianist’s left-hand bass notes and off-beat right-hand chords successfully portray the left right milking action of the maids. (See Figure 3.44.)

Figure 3.44: *The Cows are a’milking*, “tune”, mm. 1-6.¹³⁰



The first variation of the A theme or “tune” occurs in mm. 11-18, where Trimble not only switches the roles of soloist and accompanist with piano II, but also thickens and expands the theme’s texture and register by adding octaves doublings. When piano I takes up the milking action theme, however, Trimble slightly alters the accompaniment by making it a mirror image of piano II’s figuration. Perhaps this is to illustrate the milk maids changing hands, now milking the cows right to left. (See Figure 3.45.)

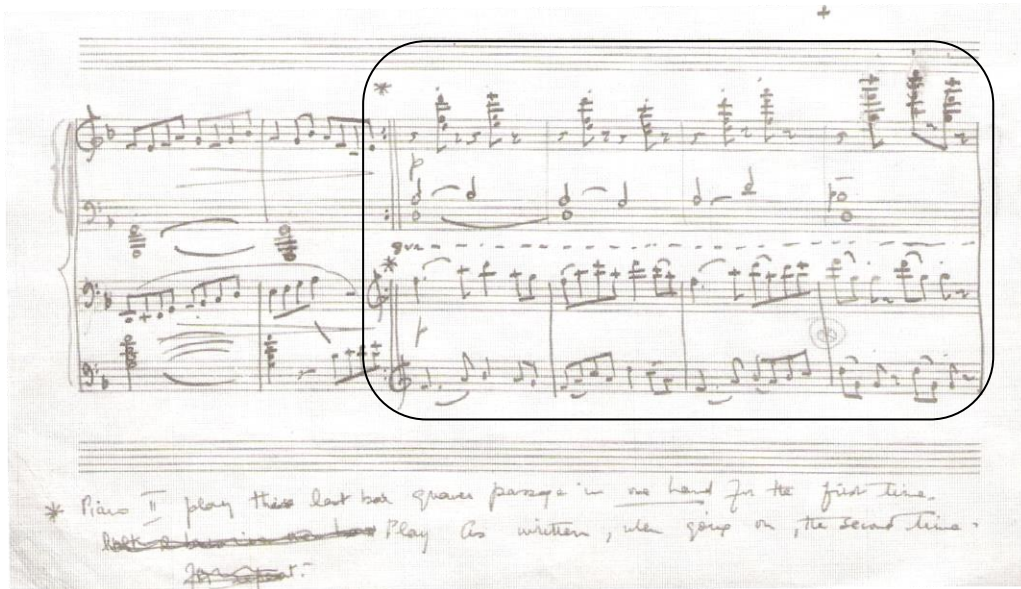
¹³⁰ From the uncatalogued Joan Trimble collection, in the National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Figure 3.45. *The Cows are a'milking*, mm. 8-14.



The latter style of accompaniment ceases at the entry of the “turn” in m. 19, where both hands of piano II become accented block chords, the texture expands, and the melody is given once again to piano I. Trimble increases her rate of variation here by passing the role of soloist back to piano II just four measures later (m. 23) rather than the previous change at eight measures. In m. 27 Trimble varies the “turn” by sharing the theme between the right hands of both pianists, an octave apart. The accompaniment of piano II is shaped into a *leggiero*, witty commentary partly due to the playful octave leap in m. 32 and the passage’s high register. A repeat of the entire “part” begins at m. 35 with the return of the “tune.” Trimble extends the range of piano II, whose hands are now two octaves apart. (See Figure 3.46.)

Figure 3.46. *The Cows are a'milking*, mm. 33-38.



This particularly high range is reminiscent of the Irish tin whistle, which produces high notes by employing a technique called over blowing.¹³¹ Eight measures later, the “turn” returns in piano II for one measure before it is snatched by piano I in m. 44. At this point piano II uses the “motor-rhythm” to create a countersubject in its right hand, while hints of punctuated chords in the left hand still remain. A distinct narrowing of texture occurs in mm. 47-50, where piano II provides some relief with a slower rhythm and higher register, as shown in Figure 3.47.

Figure 3.47. *The Cows are a'milking*, mm. 45-50.



¹³¹ Over blowing allows Irish Tin Whistlers to attain the second octave of the instrument.

Grace notes add a touch of humor to this passage, which is continued by piano II in mm. 51-54 with legato quarter notes and surging dynamics. The last sixteen measures of the piece present the final reiteration of the “tune.” In mm. 59-66, the two pianos are intertwined, playing in unison in the right hand and sharing the accompaniment in both pianists’ left hands. The rhythm of the accompaniment speeds up measure-by-measure, cumulating in a harp flourish played in sixteenths by piano II in m. 66. This buildup of rhythm helps to create the most effective shift of dynamics, texture, and articulation in m. 67, where piano I recalls its introductory octave pedal tone on F, perhaps signaling that things have come full circle. (See Figure 3.48.)

Figure 3.48. *The Cows are a’milking*, mm. 64-69.



From mm. 70-72 piano I seems to be enjoying itself, improvising off of the melody that is played by piano II. Both pianos finally join forces in interlocking octave melody notes before piano I takes over and has the final word.

Puck Fair (1951) is another example of Joan Trimble writing in the *Geantraí* style. The title of this piece refers to Ireland’s oldest fair of the same name. The exact origins of the fair are unclear, but it has been suggested that it pre-dates Christianity, therefore rooting itself in paganism. Each year Puck Fair is held over a period of three days in the middle of August in Killorglin in County Kerry. The first day of the fair, the people of Killorglin crown a wild

mountain goat King Puck, who is then placed on a tall pedestal or platform for the entirety of the fair. Celebrations continue over the next few days with music, livestock markets, and food. King Puck is dethroned on the final evening, taken down from his pedestal, and escorted out of town, accompanied by traditional Irish music. The origins of King Puck are uncertain, however, a story involving Puck and Oliver Cromwell is most often recounted:

The most widely mentioned story relating to the origin of King Puck, associates him with the English Ironside Leader Oliver Cromwell. It is related that while the “Roundheads” were pillaging the countryside around Shanara and Kilgobnet at the foot of the McGillicuddy Reeks, they routed a herd of goats grazing on the upland. The animals took flight before the raiders, and the he-goat or “Puck” broke away on his own and lost contact with the herd. While the others headed for the mountains he went towards Cill Orglain (Killorglin) on the banks of the Laune. His arrival there in a state of semi exhaustion alerted the inhabitants of the approaching danger and they immediately set about protecting themselves and their stock. It is said that in recognition of the service rendered by the goat, the people decided to institute a special festival in his honour and this festival has been held ever since.¹³²

No matter its origins, the fair, over the years, has been a fun-filled celebration. This aspect of the fair is reflected in Trimble’s musical setting of *Puck Fair*, which is written in the *Geantraí* style. The two-piano work juxtaposes elements of the *Geantraí* with a classical ternary form, which perhaps symbolizes the three-day duration of the fair. The *Geantraí* style in this work is mainly denoted by the 6/8 time signature and “motor rhythm” of the main themes. The main theme (mm. 25-32) has the characteristic long–short rhythm of a 6/8 single jig. Trimble inverts the rhythm at the beginning to short–long (an eighth note followed by a quarter tied to a dotted quarter). This rhythm, which is reminiscent of the Scotch snap, is a typical Celtic idiom. This slightly distorted jig helps to paint the quirky and humorous image of a crowned goat perched on top of a platform. (See Figure 3.49.)

¹³² Puck Fair, “History/Origins,” <http://www.puckfair.ie/history.php> (accessed 3/11/2013).

Figure 3.49. *Puck Fair*, distorted jig, mm. 25-32.¹³³



A standardized version of a single jig is presented by a “turn-like” theme in mm. 85-93, as shown in Figure 3.50.

Figure 3.50. *Puck Fair*, “turn”, mm. 85-93.



The “motor rhythm” of a double jig (two groups of three eighth-notes) is reserved for connective scalar passages in mm.55-56, 81-84,161-64, 169-72, and 237-40.

As in her other *Geantraí* works, Trimble uses harp idioms, which in *Puck Fair* serve the dual function of filling in space as well as adding flighty, humorous gestures towards the end of phrases. These gestures in themselves come in two forms: ascending and descending sixteenth-notes played between the pianist’s hands, and ascending glissandos. The latter occurs twice, in mm. 40-41 and in mm. 255-56, creating a virtuosic flourish at the end of the work. The former

¹³³ Joan Trimble, “Puck Fair,” score, 1951, The Contemporary Music Centre Ireland Library, The Contemporary Music Centre Ireland.

harp idiom appears more frequently throughout the piece: mm. 30, 43, 214, 224, 241, and 246. (See Figure 3.51.) These figures usually consist of the following intervals: seconds, thirds, perfect fourths, and fifths.

Figure: 3.51. *Puck Fair*, humorous harp gesture, m. 30.



Edward Bunting's collection of *Ancient Music of Ireland* includes a table of double notes and chords for the harp, which largely corresponds to Trimble's figures. (See Figure 3.52.)

Figure 3.52. Edward Bunting, Double Notes, Chords, etc.¹³⁴

NAMES IN IRISH CHARACTERS.	NAMES IN ENGLISH CHARACTERS.	TRANSLATION.	MUSICAL EXAMPLES.
GLASLUITH, ^a	Glasluith, . . .	Quick locking, . .	
CENN AN CHROÍBH, ^b	Cennanchrúich, .	Extremity of hand,	
TAOBHCHROÍBH, ^c	Taobhchrobbh, . .	Side hand,	
LANCHROÍBH, ^d	Lanchrobbh, . . .	Full hand,	
MALART PHONCH, ^e . .	Malart Phonch, .	To reverse the hand,	

Puck Fair, in addition to *Geantraí* features, displays rustic elements, perhaps to suggest the pagan origins of the Fair. Open perfect fourths and fifths feature heavily throughout the piece, and are usually superimposed on top of each other or combined with seconds and

¹³⁴ Bunting, *Ancient Music of Ireland*, 27.

sevenths. The introduction is one such example. The opening measures of this passage (mm. 1-4), played over a “drumroll” tremolo, function as an energy-building cell, leading to an almost majestic statement in mm. 5-8. Mm. 9-12 almost sound grotesque due to the juxtaposed open fifths and fourths of F-sharp, C-sharp and E, B played by piano I. Fragmented jig material that is assigned to piano II consists of clashing Gs and accented F-naturals. The same rustic intervals appear in the latter part of the introduction (mm. 13-16) as open fourth and fifth chords in piano I. These chords are played against a stepwise bass in piano II, E-F-G, whose middle note, F, provides the interval of a second between the two pianos. (See Figure 3.53.)

Figure 3.53. *Puck Fair*, mm. 1-18.

Allegro brillante. Joan Trimble

The image shows a handwritten musical score for two pianos, PI and PII. The tempo is marked 'Allegro brillante.' and the composer is 'Joan Trimble'. The score covers measures 1 through 18. The notation is dense, with many beamed notes and rests. There are dynamic markings such as 'f cresc.', 'mp cresc.', and 'pesante seg.'. The score is written on a system of staves, with PI and PII parts clearly delineated. The handwriting is in ink on a light-colored background.

The accompaniment of the A section, which begins in m. 17, takes the form of open-fifth drones presented simply at first, then capriciously due to added grace notes, open fourths, and clashing seconds and sevenths. (See Figure 3.54.)

Figure 3.54. *Puck Fair*, mm. 19-24.



The opening two notes of the distorted jig (m.25) are, in themselves, made up of unison melodic fourths. Trimble varies the jig in mm. 57-64 in four ways: roles of soloist and accompanist are switched (piano II and piano I respectively), the melody is an octave lower, harmonized with chromatic melodic sixths, and piano I playfully accompanies the jig with melodic perfect fourths and fifths. (See Figure 3.55.)

Figure 3.55. *Puck Fair*, mm. 57-64.



A transitional passage in mm. 73-84, recalls the introduction's four-measure energy-building cell, which contains intervals of perfect fourths and fifths, seconds, and sevenths. Mm. 77-80 largely mirror mm. 5-8 of the introduction; however, the interval of a second is produced by the addition of capricious grace notes in the right hand of piano I. Connective scalar material makes a humorous injection in the form of an ascending chromatic scale in mm. 81-84. The latter

is an obvious reference to the interval of a second, which has played so prominently throughout the piece. This passage leads to the previously mentioned “turn-like” theme in m. 85. Piano II accompanies this B-Aeolian “turn” by retaining open fourths and fifths in its right-hand chords. The left-hand off-beat thirds waver chromatically between G-sharp and G-natural, which suggests B-Dorian. A shift in harmonic color occurs in m. 93 with a return to the piece’s home key—A-Aeolian. Octave F-sharps in piano II culminate in a closing passage played over a pedal D. The end of this closing material is demarcated by double bar lines in m. 118.

The B section, which begins in m. 119, is distinctly different from the rest of the piece. High pitched, fragmentary jig material played by piano I is marked *pianissimo* and *misterioso*. Quartal harmonies in the left hand of piano I and in the right hand of piano II are played over a pedal D and suggest F-sharp minor. (See Figure 3.56.)

Figure 3.56. *Puck Fair*, mm. 119-126.



The slow harmonic and thematic rhythm, the pedal tone, the inactivity of the accompaniment and melody, and the polarity of registers between the two pianos in this passage (mm.119-39) help to create a feeling of disembodiment or moment of stasis. All these elements could perhaps denote the perched, crowned goat’s birds-eye view of the Fair. This I feel is reinforced by the

descending tones of E-sharp–C-sharp–B–G-sharp–F-sharp, which are played by piano I in mm. 137-41. (See Figure 3.57.)

Figure 3.57. *Puck Fair*, change of perspective, mm.137-41.



Piano II mirrors this descending line with an ascending bass line, which resolves the pedal tone D in a step wise motion to F-sharp. This contrary motion between the two pianos almost suggests a shift in view, as the range contracts and the F-sharp harmony is confirmed. From this point onwards (mm. 141-92) much more activity ensues, emphasizing a return to the hustle and bustle of the Fair at ground level.

A return of the opening tremolos in m. 193 (this time a whole step higher on F-sharp) initiates a retransition by way of F-sharp–B–E–A to recap section A in m. 201. The majority of the material in the restated section remains intact; however, to add interest Trimble adds subtle variants. For example in mm. 237-38 the composer harmonizes an ascending chromatic scale (heard earlier in mm. 55-56) in minor sixths and augmented fifths between the two pianos. The resultant dissonance adds to the rustic quality of the piece. (See Figure 3.58.)

Figure 3.58. *Puck Fair*, harmonized chromatic scale, mm. 237-38.



A codetta (mm. 249-56) marked *Brillante* echoes the main intervals presented throughout the piece—second, fourth, and fifth—by its chord progression. The subdominant, supertonic, and an imperfect authentic cadence decorated with a harp glissando in piano I concludes the festivities of the Fair.

Elements of the three Irish styles—*Geantraí*, *Goltraí*, and *Suantraí*—are also present in *The County Mayo* written in 1949 for baritone and two pianos. As previously mentioned, the texts of the song cycle are taken from *Reincarnations* (1918), a collection of Gaelic poetry adapted by the Anglo-Irish poet, James Stephens (1882-1950). Stephens admits that his initial intention with *Reincarnations* “was to make an anthology of people whom long ago our poets had praised, so that, in another language [English] and another time [early twentieth century], these honoured names might be heard again, even though in my own terms and not in the historic context.”¹³⁵ The poet did not follow the latter path which many Anglo-Irish literati had taken before, including Douglas Hyde; but he found himself so inspired that the poems took on the new role of a muse, giving rise to his own adaptations of the famous texts. Therefore, the title *Reincarnations* could mean, among a number of things, the rebirth of forgotten Gaelic literature (an Anglo-Irish nineteenth-century notion), or something more avant-garde, the creation of

¹³⁵ James Stephens, note to *Reincarnations* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd, 1918), 62.

something new from the past. Out of the collected poems, Joan Trimble chose to set the texts of *The County Mayo*, *Peggy Mitchell*, and *Inis Fál*. *In the Poppy Field* is an original James Stephen poem taken from the larger work, *The Hill of Vision* (1912).¹³⁶ The text of the first piece of Trimble's song cycle, *The County Mayo*, is adapted from Anthony Raftery's Gaelic poem. Raftery's poetry was never written down until the nineteenth century, during the era of the Celtic Twilight, when Douglas Hyde, W.B. Yeats, and Lady Gregory, among others, took it upon themselves to record and preserve the bard's work. It had been aurally transmitted to them by Irish natives who had known and met Raftery:

It was in Gort workhouse that Yeats heard an old man describe the poet: 'He was a big man, and his songs have gone through the world. I remember him well. He had a voice like the wind.' An old woman of Ballylee remotely recalled the role of the bard when she said of Raftery. 'If you treated him well he'd praise you, but if you did not he'd fault you in Irish. He was the greatest poet in Ireland, and he'd make a song about that bush if he chanced to stand under it. There was a bush he stood under in the rain, and he made verses praising it, and then when the water came through he made verses dispraising it.'¹³⁷

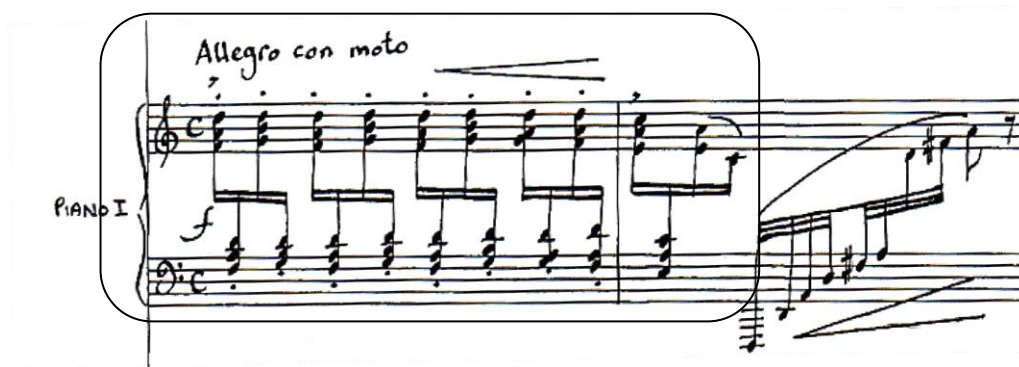
Raftery, who is considered alongside Carolan one of Ireland's last great bards, was a native of Killedan near Kiltimagh in County Mayo. It is believed that the poet was exiled from his beloved home town by his patron Frank Taffe and then moved to Galway, where he lived and worked for the rest of his life, never to return to Mayo. *The County Mayo*, therefore, is an homage to his native home that he yearned for and missed terribly.

The text in the opening stanza of *The County Mayo* portrays the coming of spring, the rebirth of nature, a renewal, and the poet's nervous restlessness in his desire to return home to Mayo. This restlessness is depicted by Trimble through piano I's staccato sixteenth-note accompaniment, which reoccurs throughout. (See Figure 3.59.)

¹³⁶ James Stephens, *Hill of Vision: In the Poppy Field* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1912), 28.

¹³⁷ Kathleen Raine, introduction to *The Celtic Twilight*, by W.B. Yeats (Buckinghamshire: Colin Smythe Ltd, 1994), 20.

Figure 3.59. *The County Mayo*, piano I, Raftery's nervous restlessness, mm. 1-2.



The rest of the piece alternates between a dance-like figure (at places in the text when the poet is almost making a checklist of things he would do on his visit to Mayo) and reverie-type passages, more in tune with laments, when the poet is lost in thought. Joan Trimble thereby taps into the poet's psyche with these contrasting motives, as shown in Figures 3.60 and 3.61.

Figure 3.60. *The County Mayo*, piano I, dance theme, mm. 19-20.

19 Ben ritmico

-mor-ris I would stop a night and sleep with de-cent

Ben ritmico

pp

Figure 3.61. *The County Mayo*, reverie, mm. 37-39.



The entire work of *The County Mayo* shows many instances of word painting. In a notable section of the first piece of the same name, we see piano I depict rising ocean waves, wind, and mist or fog when the text says, “that my heart lifts up like the lifting of a tide, rising up like the rising wind till fog or mist must go.” (See Figure 3.62.) A reference is made in the text to two bushes, which corresponds with the previously-mentioned comment by Yeats, who also related that Raftery often stood and wrote poetry under some kind of shrubbery. No doubt Joan Trimble knew the importance and connection of this particular reference, as she takes it upon herself to set the text accordingly. In a passage that depicts the line, “At the gap of the Two Bushes,” Trimble assigns both pianos two chords played simultaneously on beats one and three, which are distinctly separated by triplet sixteenth notes in piano I, and in piano II by syncopated bass octave Es. (See Figure 3.63.)

Figure 3.62. *The County Mayo*, piano I, text painting, mm. 44-47.

44

lift-ing of a tide, ris-ing up like the

46

cresc. *mf*

ris-ing wind till fog or mist must

Figure 3.63. *The County Mayo*, text painting, mm. 51-52.

Co. Mayo 13

51

cresc.

gap of the Two Bushes, and the wide plains of May-

cresc.

cresc.

The composer therefore creates vertical moments on beats one and three, and linear motion on beat two, producing contrast that equates the two chords with two bushes. A gap might be best represented by rests of some kind, but as the text is actively talking about the gap between the two bushes, the gap may be considered foreground and thereby the talking point of the text. Hence, Trimble chooses to make the gap more present in her musical representation of this passage.

A hilarious piece of text painting occurs a little earlier, where the poet says that he will “go drink galore”—not an uncommon topic in Ireland. On the word “drink” Joan Trimble changes the meter from common time to 5/8, and phrases the right hand of piano I in such a way that it sounds like the notes are stumbling over themselves. The poet’s drunkenness is emphasized on the second syllable of the word “galore” with a chromatic and very dizzy piano I figure! (See Figure 3.64.)

Figure 3.64. *The County Mayo*, piano I, text painting, mm. 23-26.

The image shows a musical score for 'The County Mayo', piano I, measures 23-26. The score is in 5/8 time and features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics 'drink gal -', '- ore,', and 'and next'. The piano accompaniment features a complex, chromatic figure in the right hand, marked 'mp'.

Peggy Mitchell, another setting of Raftery, describes the cycle of life by comparing aspects of Peggy's character to that of a lily and a rose. Both these flowers have connotations in literature. The rose implies love, beauty, heaven and harmony, and has overtones of growth and renewal, whereas the thorns imply pain hidden within its beauty. Themes of purity and chastity are denoted by the lily through the flower's association with the Virgin Mary. Trimble's setting of *Peggy Mitchell* has the quality of a *Suantrai* or lullaby with its slow lilting 6/8 rhythm similar to that of *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby*. (See Figure 3.65.) Raftery was known to write poems about exceptionally beautiful women of his personal acquaintance (Mary Hynes is an example). Such a topic was common in bardic poetry, whose "task was to . . . commit to the memory of the people the memories of great deeds, the magnificence of men and the beauty of women."¹³⁸

Figure 3.65. *Peggy Mitchell*, piano I, *Suantrai*, mm. 1-2.



The two pianos pass many harp-like figurations from one to the other, which Trimble utilizes in different ways to depict the text. For example, in m. 39 the poet writes, "she is our torment, without end." The passage is marked *con passione*, with the two pianos playing *sforzando* rolled

¹³⁸ Raine, introduction to *The Celtic Twilight*, by W.B. Yeats, 19.

D-minor chords (See 3.66a), whereas in m. 49 an ascending harp glissando on five notes (A–C–D–E–F) is used to depict the word “glee.” (See Figure 3.66b.)

Figure 3.66a. *Peggy Mitchell*, text painting, m. 39.

Handwritten musical score for m. 39. The score is for three staves. The top staff is a vocal line with the lyrics "She is our tor-ment." and "Con passione" written above it. The middle and bottom staves are piano accompaniment. The tempo/mood is marked "largamente". The piano part features a "cresc. e largamente" marking. The score is enclosed in a large bracket on the right side.

Figure 3.66b. *Peggy Mitchell*, piano I, text painting, m. 49.

Handwritten musical score for m. 49. The score is for two staves. The top staff is a vocal line with the word "glee" written above it. The bottom staff is piano I accompaniment, featuring an ascending harp glissando on five notes (A–C–D–E–F). The score is marked "Ped" at the bottom.

Another interesting piece of text painting in *Peggy Mitchell* can be heard earlier at the words “Just so did she,” where the voice sings a melody and is mimicked first by piano I and then immediately followed by piano II in canon to expertly depict the text. (See Figure 3.67.)

Figure 3.67. Peggy Mitchell, text painting, mm. 29-30.

The emotional weight of the song cycle is carried by *Inis Fàl*, James Stephens's adaptation of Egan O' Rahilly's original Gaelic poem, whose title means Island of Destiny. Its laments for the loss of old Ireland and the Gaelic culture epitomize the idea of Celtic Twilight. As mentioned previously, *Aisling* or vision poetry is attributed to O'Rahilly and often personified Ireland as a young or old woman who appears to the poet in a dream or vision, lamenting the lost glory days of Ireland, but prophesying better days to come. Trimble therefore sets *Inis Fàl* in the *Goltraí* style, adopting many of the elements found in *The Green Bough* and *The Bard of Lisgoole*, including triple meter and lush rhapsodic moments. Piano II plays a lot of harp glissandos, plus arpeggiations in triplets, sextuplets, and even nonuplets, while piano I occasionally sings with triplets and strong accented Lombard rhythms (the Scotch snap), typical of a lament. (See Figure 3.68.)

Figure 3.68. *Inis Fál*, piano I, Scotch snap, mm. 22-25.

22. Un poco più mosso ($\text{♩} = 66$)

mp

Un poco più mosso ($\text{♩} = 66$) All come - - ly qual-i - ty,

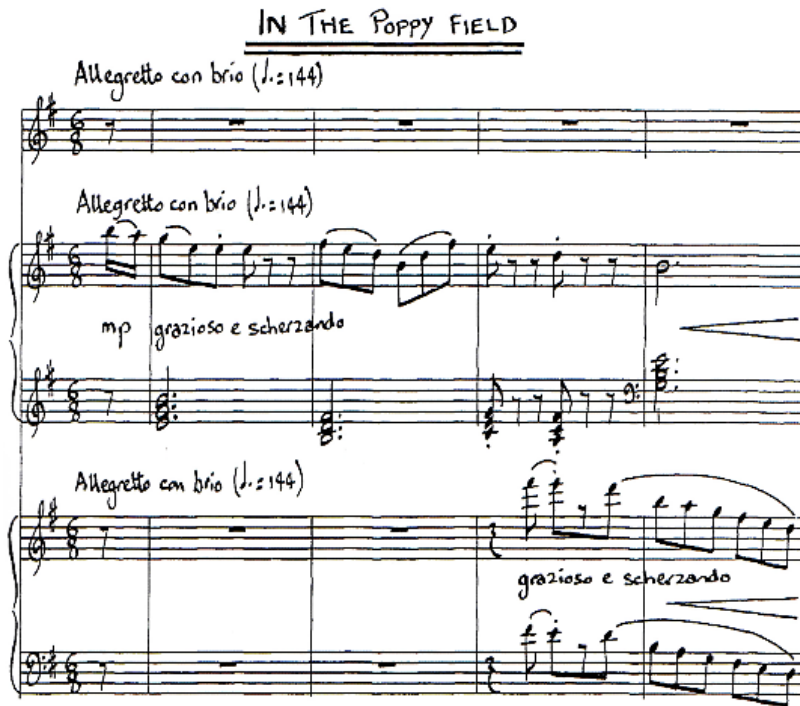
lontano

One can really imagine the death or loss of something from the very beginning, when piano II's dotted rhythm is answered by a forte, B-flat minor, low-register chord in piano I, sounding almost like a death knell. The dotted rhythm and low register chord return in mm. 43-45, this time *pianissimo*, to reinforce this sense of doom. Another striking moment of word painting that portrays loss can be heard in m. 41 at "our music vanished and our skill to sing." The baritone sings on a single pitch of C-sharp, and on the words "skill to sing" Trimble has very cleverly written in the singer's inability to sing, with the notes C-sharp-F-sharp-G-F-sharp-E-D-C-sharp. The texture in both piano parts is extremely stark at this point to emphasize the fact of music vanishing. (See Figure 3.69.)

Figure 3.69. *Inis Fál*, texting painting, mm. 41-43.

An Irish work could not be complete without a bit of witty banter, and therefore the song cycle ends with *In the Poppy Field*, the only original poem by James Stephens in this set. As mentioned previously, this poem is from a different work, but is the perfect relief to *Inis Fál*, which may be the reason Trimble decided to include it. Although *In the Poppy Field* is not from the same set of poems, the symbolism contained within the title remains coherent with this idea of reincarnation. In literature the poppy flower refers to rebirth or reincarnation, which observes the Celtic Twilight theme. The narrator in this poem depicts a conversation he or she had with the town character, “Mad Patsy,” who is sowing poppy seeds in a corn field. A humorous story therefore shows Trimble once again writing in the lively *Geantraí* style. *In the Poppy Field* has a “motor rhythm” of two groups of three eighth-notes, which define the song as a single jig. (See Figure 3.70.)

Figure 3.70. *In the Poppy Field*, jig, mm. 1-4.



Due to the colorful character of “Mad Patsy” there are plenty of opportunities for word painting for Trimble to exploit. The most notable can be heard on the words “run” and “ran”, “devil weed” and “devil”, “laughed” and “ecstasy.” Harp figurations are used for run, ran, and ecstasy, as shown in Figure 3.71. Dissonant chords are used on each utterance of the word “devil,” as illustrated in Figure 3.72. And one can really hear “Mad Patsy’s” belly laugh with Trimble’s use of descending staccato notes before the poem ends in a state of ecstasy that leaves the audience feeling uplifted. (See Figure 3.73.)

Figure 3.71. *In the Poppy Field*, text painting, mm. 34, 107, 118.

The image displays three systems of handwritten musical notation for the piece "In the Poppy Field". Each system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#).

- System 1 (Measure 34):** The vocal line begins with the lyrics "And then, — he said, — the an - gels run". A circled section of the piano accompaniment in the right hand features a rapid ascending scale, marked with a fortissimo (*pp*) dynamic and a "Ped" (pedal) instruction.
- System 2 (Measure 107):** The vocal line continues with "clown! — He ran — and laughed — be - hind a". A circled section of the piano accompaniment in the right hand shows a rapid ascending scale, marked with a crescendo (*cresc.*) and a "Ped" instruction.
- System 3 (Measure 118):** The vocal line concludes with "for ve - ry ecs - ta - sy.". A circled section of the piano accompaniment in the right hand features a rapid ascending scale, marked with a "Ped" instruction.

Figure 3.72. *In the Poppy Field*, text painting, mm. 45,70.

Handwritten musical score for 'In the Poppy Field'. The score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo/mood is marked 'con passione'. The lyrics are: 'pop-py is a de-vil weed, -' and 'The dev-il has r'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 45-49) shows the voice part with a melodic line and the piano accompaniment with a rhythmic pattern. The second system (measures 70-74) shows the voice part with a melodic line and the piano accompaniment with a rhythmic pattern. The lyrics are: 'pop-py is a de-vil weed, -' and 'The dev-il has r'. The score is written in a handwritten style with some corrections and markings.

Figure 3.73. *In the Poppy Field*, text painting, mm. 108-109.

Handwritten musical score for 'In the Poppy Field'. The score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#). The tempo/mood is marked 'cresc.'. The lyrics are: 'clown! He ran and laughed be-hind a'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 108-112) shows the voice part with a melodic line and the piano accompaniment with a rhythmic pattern. The second system (measures 109-113) shows the voice part with a melodic line and the piano accompaniment with a rhythmic pattern. The lyrics are: 'clown! He ran and laughed be-hind a'. The score is written in a handwritten style with some corrections and markings.

The Sonatina for two pianos was written in 1940 under the mentorship of Ralph Vaughan Williams and was premiered at the Royal College of Music in London in the same year. Joan Trimble recalled the circumstances in one of her many interviews:

That year of 1940, for example, I wrote the two-piano Sonatina, because I wanted to get away from my so-called “Irish idiom”. I deliberately tried to have clashing dissonances, and I remember gritting my teeth and saying “I am not going to write a work that is pleasant to listen to and called charming.” Then at a performance in the National Gallery in London, Frank Howes, the critic of *The Times*, gave it a nice notice and said that you could tell it was a bit Irish! In the end, I found the work had written itself in spite of me!¹³⁹

The preceding traits are evident in the score, which exhibits several instances of her Irish idiom shining through. The first movement of the work is in sonata form and is in the key of E minor. The legato, forward-moving primary theme (mm. 1-22) is presented in eight-measure phrases, including a two-bar introduction, and is heptatonic in nature, avoiding the sixth scale degree of C, a common trait of Irish melodies. (See Figure 3.74.)

Figure 3.74. Sonatina: Moderato, con moto, mm. 1-8.

JOAN TRIMBLE

I

Moderato, con moto $\text{♩} = 66$

PIANO I

PIANO II

The musical score for measures 1-8 of the first movement of Sonatina by Joan Trimble. The score is for two pianos. Piano I has a melody starting with a two-bar introduction, followed by a series of eighth notes. Piano II has a harp-like accompaniment with triplets and chords. The tempo is Moderato, con moto, 66 beats per minute. The key signature is E minor (three flats).

The right hand of the accompaniment in piano II has harp writing similar to that found in *The Bard of Lisgoole*. Trimble provides variation by way of harmony in m. 9 that adds interest by moving from E minor to G-sharp minor, a mediant relationship. The transition begins in m. 14 with a succession of triplets in the right hand of the first piano; as mentioned previously, triplets

¹³⁹ Hammond, “Woman of Parts,” 26.

are found in rhapsodic *Goltrai* pieces as well as the lively dances of the *Geantrai*. (See Figure 3.75.)

Figure 3.75. Sonatina: Moderato, con moto, mm. 11-15.



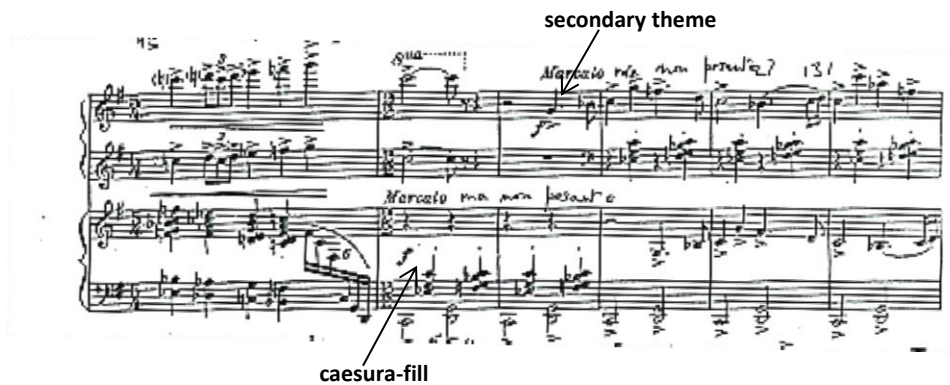
The secondary theme is preceded in mm. 22 and 23 by what James A. Hepokoski would identify as a two-measure caesura-fill:

The literal presence of the general-pause gap (the brief rest in all voices before the onset of S) is the most normative option at the medial caesura point . . . Almost as common, however is the technique of implying that gap but filling it in with a brief sonic link in one voice (or, sometimes, in more than one). One function of this link is to articulate with sound the most important expressive obligation of this moment: the representation of the *energy-loss* that bridges the vigorous end of [the transition] to what is frequently the low-intensity beginning of [the secondary theme].¹⁴⁰

Therefore, Trimble uses mm. 22 and 23 to de-energize preceding material and transition into a more relaxed second theme. The caesura-fill also establishes the key of C minor, another mediant relationship to E minor. Because the melodic contours of this theme are derived from m. 3 in the primary key area, Trimble provides thematic contrast between the two themes by varying the accompaniment and adding a more robust, accented, marcato articulation. (See Figure 3.76.)

¹⁴⁰ James A. Hepokoski and Warren Darcy, *Elements of Sonata Theory: Norms, Types, and Deformations in the Late-Eighteenth-Century Sonata* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2006), 40.

Figure 3.76. Sonatina: Moderato, con moto, mm. 21-26.



At this point the composer passes the theme in canon between the two pianos, mixing a learned topic with the Irish “hobnail boots” accompaniment to create an interesting effect. The passage is a prime example of Trimble mixing art music with folk elements.

The development section in m.45 uses the opening material but transposes it into A-flat minor, which mirrors G-sharp minor (the enharmonic equivalent of A-flat minor) presented in m. 9. A written-out shift in time signature to 12/8 occurs at m. 58. Marked *scherzando*, the theme is played by piano II and mimics a slide jig (a variant of the 6/8 single jig.). The jig theme, played originally in A minor in m. 58, moves to B minor in m. 60 and then to C minor (played by piano I) in m. 65. Each of the above phrases ends with a variation of the—“Celtic cadence”—the thrice repeated tonic note, as shown in Figure 3.77.

Figure 3.77. Sonatina, mm. 55-62.

Parallel chords in m. 75 lead to a subito drop in dynamics and a subito recapitulation, in which the exposition is largely kept intact; a slight adjustment of the harmony occurs in m. 95 in order for Trimble to be able to repeat the secondary theme in E minor instead of C minor. The coda in m. 117, keeping true to sonata form, uses primary theme material to close the movement.

The second movement is in minuet and trio form (A B A') in G-sharp minor, and opens with a four-bar introduction. Piano II is particularly interesting in this preparatory passage as it uses harp-glissando effects to decorate the dominant note of D-sharp, as shown in Figure 3.78.

Figure 3.78. Sonatina: Minuet, harp glissando, mm. 1-4.

The minuet theme is especially florid, mirroring piano II with streams of arpeggios embellished with added grace notes, trills, and mordents. All give the impression of a refined minuet, however, the ornamentation of the theme almost suggests a flute idiom. (See Figure 3.79.)

Figure 3.79. Sonatina: *Minuet*, flute idiom, mm. 5-10.



Trimble combines flute and harp together beginning in m. 15 in order to vary the theme. (See Figure 3.80.)

Figure 3.80. Sonatina: *Minuet*, mm. 14-17.



The contrasting trio section of the minuet in B minor has longer lines in comparison to the extremely punctuated gestures of the A section. The right-hand sixteenth notes of both pianos are harmonized in thirds in the treble range, evocative of flute writing. (See Figure 3.81.)

Figure 3.81. Sonatina: *Minuet*, flute idiom, mm. 32-34.



A little Irish humor is interjected between a restatement of the trio theme, with F-sharps skipping down the octaves in the right hand of piano II and a tongue-in-cheek gesture in m. 47 using Irish “slide” ornamentation on a sforzando F-sharp. (See Figure 3.82.)

Figure 3.82. Sonatina: *Minuet*, “slide” ornamentation, mm. 47-50.



In a retransitional passage in mm. 52-54, Trimble uses whole-tone scales in both parts in contrary motion, producing idiomatic flute sounds. The whole-tone scales temporarily eliminate all sense of tonality, thereby de-energizing the passage as the end of the trio returns to the opening of the overly-punctuated minuet. (See Figure 3.83.)

Figure 3.83. Sonatina: *Minuet*, de-energizing passage, mm. 51-58.



Trimble concludes the movement by way of flurid harp figurations, particularly in the second piano part, as shown in Figure 3.84.

Figure 3.84. Sonatina: *Minuet*, harp idiom, mm. 76-81.



The final movement is in rondo form (A B A' C A B A" coda) in E major, and is more playful in character in comparison to the first two movements. In Ireland, an evening of music

and celebration would more likely end on a high note, and therefore this movement is an apt finale to the Sonatina. The character of the movement is set straight away in m. 2 by piano I with accented melodic octave Bs. Piano II in mm. 9-16 (B theme) reinforces the Irishness of this movement with its cheeky octave G-sharps, staccato notes, Scotch snap, and triplet rhythms. (See Figure 3.85.)

Figure 3.85. Sonatina: *Rondo*, mm. 1-2.



The theme continues to be capricious in mm. 17-24 with the addition of grace notes to the second piano. A' (m.25) shows Trimble varying the theme by way of adding thirds, while piano I makes more use of the octave motif. A new theme (C) enters boisterously in m. 37, with piano II punctuating the pentatonic melody of piano I with accented chords. The latter part also makes use of harp glissandos and the Scotch snap rhythm, as illustrated in Figure 3.86.

Figure 3.86. Sonatina: *Rondo*, Scotch snap & harp idiom, mm. 37-41.



A and B return intact in mm. 76 and 84 respectively. A is again varied, this time harmonically as well as texturally; the melody suggests that the passage is written in C-sharp Aeolian while piano II thickens its texture through low-register chords and right-hand arpeggios. (See Figure 3.87.) The coda propels the movement to a close on a Celtic note with virtuosic harp glissandos, as shown in Figure 3.88.

Figure 3.87. Sonatina: *Rondo*, C-sharp Aeolian, mm. 91-95.



Figure 3.88. Sonatina: *Rondo*, harp idiom, mm. 114-20.



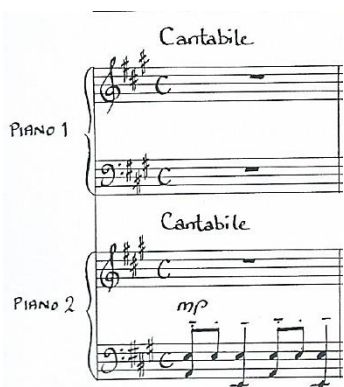
Joan Trimble's *Pastoral: Hommage á Francis Poulenc*, for two pianos is an unpublished work written in 1943, perhaps composed for her piano duo with her sister Valerie. Due to the dedication in the title of the piece, *Pastoral* is similar to the Sonatina in that it is not one of her most characteristic Irish works. However, Irish elements still reside in the composition. As mentioned previously, Trimble felt a special affinity with French music, an interest that began in her days as a student at the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin under the mentorship of Annie Lord. Lord championed French piano music on her many recitals in Ireland. Trimble no doubt performed Poulenc's piano duet works with Valerie, as her scores of the French composer's Sonate: piano à quatre mains, his two-piano Concerto in D minor, and his *Mouvements perpétuels: for piano* can be found in the Joan Trimble special collection at the library of the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

The title *Pastoral* may refer to some of Poulenc's compositions of the same name: *Pastorale* from *Trois Pièces* for piano; *Concert Champêtre* for harpsichord and orchestra (sometimes referred to as a "Pastoral" concerto); or *Pastourelle* from *L'éventail de Jeanne*. The latter work seems to bear the most resemblance to Trimble's own *Pastoral*, with its simple folk like melodies, clarity of texture, and similar character. However, one cannot be certain whether or not Poulenc's ballet movement was the influence here. The connotations of the term Pastoral in the French and British culture itself in a way links the two composers in that vaudeville and ballad opera came from the pastoral genre. As discussed above, the Anglo-Irish, including Joan Trimble, had a long association with ballad opera, and she produced her own ballad opera in 1957; similarly Poulenc was known to be influenced by the popular tunes of the Parisian cafes or vaudeville, as his compositions often attest. The rustic aspect attached to the pastoral theme,

along with Poulenc's love of folk melodies, enabled Trimble to easily combine her Irish idiom with the French school of music.

Typical features of pastoral music include running water, hunting scenes (usually portrayed by "hunting- horn" open fifths), a major mode, slow harmonic rhythm, pedal points, parallel thirds, compound meter, predominance of the subdominant, and a feeling of an easy lyricism. Many of these features Trimble includes in her two-piano portrayal. *Pastoral*, written in A major, retains the genre's major mode; the piece opens with a one-measure introduction played by the second piano whose rhythm of short-short-long and drone-fifths perhaps conjure up images of a rustic drum. (See Figure 3.89.)

Figure 3.89. *Pastoral*, rustic drum, m. 1.



The main theme, played by piano I in m. 2, uses modal inflection (also a melodic trait of Poulenc) by lowering G-sharp to G-natural and is instantly answered in canon by piano II, as illustrated by Figure 3.90. The latter compositional device is linked to a more learned style not usually associated with the pastoral. However, Robert S. Hatten, in his book about topic theory, has cited instances of what he calls "rustic canon" in several trio movements of Beethoven's works.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Robert S. Hatten, *Interpreting Musical Gestures and Tropes: Mozart Beethoven, Schubert* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 58.

Figure 3.90. *Pastoral*, “rustic canon”, mm. 1-4.

Trimble achieves a capricious nature, which is not uncommon in pastoral movements, by using Irish gestures such as short *leggiero* melodic octaves in sixteenth notes (mm. 9-12) and grace notes. These gestures and ornamentations are present in most of Trimble's work, including her most characteristic pieces, and contribute to the rustic or primitive theme typical of the pastoral. Poulenc also uses similar quirky ornamentations towards the end of his *Pastourelle*.

A second theme emerges in m. 14 and contrasts in character with the first theme, which is more lyrical; here the fast sixteenth-notes in groups of four are reminiscent of an Irish reel. The opening introductory rhythm provides a contrapuntal figure to the sixteenth-notes as well as continuity, acting as a type of Poulenc ostinato. Both these figures are shared and passed forward and back between the two pianos; the sixteenth-notes are written in thirds, contributing to the pastoral theme of the piece while providing a most satisfying and challenging passage to the two-piano ensemble. (See Figure 3.91.)

Figure 3.91. *Pastoral*, thirds, mm. 13-15.



A cycle of fourths from F-sharp minor to C-sharp minor, cadencing in G-sharp minor (mm. 24, 25, 26 respectively), leads to what seems like a developmental passage of both the lyrical eighth-note and sixteenth-note themes. The predominance of fourths, thirds, and ease of modulation in this section are representative of the pastoral and of Poulenc, whose music had a “characteristically impertinent blend of the preceding and succeeding harmonic areas.”¹⁴²

Trimble’s other previously discussed works show a similar ease of modulation.

A more linear theme enters in m. 36, acting as a retransition. In this passage, piano I is assigned slow-moving, smooth, compact chords in the right hand, while a “running water” type of theme in piano II flows in between the melody chords with major and minor-sevenths, as well as some major-ninth chords. Poulenc’s harmonic language often included seventh, ninth, and thirteenth chords acting as consonance or assigned a dominant function. The figuration in both pianos in Trimble’s *Pastoral* has more of a dominant function. The flowing water motif, as

¹⁴² Roger Nichols, “Poulenc, Francis: Piano Music,” Grove Online, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed January 24, 2013, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/22202>.

mentioned previously, is a pastoral theme, a common trait of French music, and is also idiomatic of the harp, providing Trimble with a subtle way of combining all three. (See Figure 3.92.)

Figure 3.92. *Pastoral*, idioms combined, mm. 34-39.



A recapitulation of the primary theme, a linear simple folk-like melody with modal inflections, begins in m. 43. The material stays intact for the most part, although the coda takes the place of the second theme recapitulation. The coda, beginning in m. 53, features snippets of the stylized folk melody, as shown in Figure 3.93.

Figure 3.93. *Pastoral*, mm. 51-55.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for measures 51-55 of a piece titled 'Pastoral'. The score is written on four systems of staves, each system containing a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The word 'coda' is written above the first system. Measure numbers 51, 52, 53, 54, and 55 are indicated at the beginning of their respective systems. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte). The handwriting is in ink on aged paper.

Piano II brings back its sixteenth-note retransitional material, perhaps suggesting that this motive is a joining tool used for structural purposes. M. 56 to the end of the piece creates a sense of symmetry by reiterating the rhythmic ostinato from the introduction, while piano I adds a French and modal flavor with staccato C-major chords alternating with a diminished-seventh chord with a root on B-sharp, adding character and color to the end of Trimble's *Pastoral*. (See Figure 3.94.)

Figure 3.94. *Pastoral*, mm. 56-59.

Handwritten musical score for two systems, measures 56-59. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The notation is in treble and bass staves.

System 1 (Measures 56-59):

- Measure 56:** Treble staff has a whole rest. Bass staff has a half note G2, a half note F#2, and a half note E2. A *pp* dynamic marking is above the first two notes.
- Measure 57:** Treble staff has a whole note chord (G#4, A4, B4). Bass staff has a half note G2, a half note F#2, and a half note E2.
- Measure 58:** Treble staff has a whole note chord (G#4, A4, B4). Bass staff has a half note G2, a half note F#2, and a half note E2.
- Measure 59:** Treble staff has a whole note chord (G#4, A4, B4). Bass staff has a half note G2, a half note F#2, and a half note E2.

System 2 (Measures 56-59):

- Measure 56:** Treble staff has a whole note chord (G#4, A4, B4). Bass staff has a whole note chord (G#4, A4, B4). A *pp* dynamic marking is above the first note.
- Measure 57:** Treble staff has a half note G#4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. Bass staff has a whole note chord (G#4, A4, B4).
- Measure 58:** Treble staff has a half note G#4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. Bass staff has a whole note chord (G#4, A4, B4).
- Measure 59:** Treble staff has a half note G#4, a half note A4, and a half note B4. Bass staff has a whole note chord (G#4, A4, B4).

CONCLUSION

The nineteenth-century Celtic Twilight movement, a manifestation of Anglo-Irish culture, began as a way of self-preservation among the settlers of Ireland. Abandoned by British politics, they set about retaining their status in Ireland by attempting to unite the Irish nation through the preservation and nurturing of the old native Gaelic culture, which was deteriorating at an alarming rate due to English domination in the country for hundreds of years. Initially Anglo-Irish scholars and literati focused on the Irish language and began to translate the old ancient histories, myths, and legends of Ireland. Special attention was devoted to the old Irish bards such as O'Carolan, O'Rahilly, and Raftery. An Anglo-Irish literary movement grew out of this interest, with literati such as Douglas Hyde, Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, and W.B. Yeats becoming extremely important figureheads of the movement. They helped establish the world renowned school of Irish literature still in existence today. The Celtic Twilight was named for a collection of folk lore by W.B. Yeats, a work that was inspired by Ireland's native folk-lore and contained themes of twilight, nature, and the supernatural, mainly that of the "fairy faith" from old Pagan Ireland. The Celtic Twilight movement eventually branched out into other areas of Irish culture and society, such as sport, art, and music. The Feis Ceoil and the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin were established with the view of preserving Irish music, both traditional and classical. These institutions are still in existence today and are an integral part of Irish societal life.

The Celtic Twilight movement formed the backdrop to Joan Trimble's life, career, and music, as it has become apparent just how greatly influenced she was by these nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish traditions. Members of the Trimble family lived (and still do to this day) in the town of Enniskillen, which is steeped in Anglo-Irish traditions. An appreciation of the

histories of Enniskillen and its surrounding County Fermanagh was instilled in Joan from a very young age by her parents and grandparents. Through the family-owned newspaper *The Impartial Reporter* the Trimble's have always been active members of the Enniskillen community. Joan's grandfather preserved many important historical relics in and published several books preserving the histories of the area for generations to come. An appreciation of Irish history was instilled in both Joan and Valerie at a very young age, as was a love of music. Trimble's parents, William Egbert and Marie, both accomplished musicians themselves, exposed the girls to classical as well as traditional Irish music. They encouraged domestic music making, particularly chamber and light music, and were integral to the musical and cultural life in the otherwise isolated town of Enniskillen. Their activities included providing orchestras for dramatic societies, music for recitals, schools, the church, and fundraising events, as well as organizing travelling opera companies to come and perform popular ballad operas, a particular favorite of the Anglo-Irish.

Marie Trimble, a native of Dublin, had connections to musical institutions and pivotal people involved in the Celtic Twilight movement. Eventually Joan and Valerie became a part of the Dublin musical society as students at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and as competitors in the music festival, Feis Ceoil. Trimble during this time was exposed to Anglo-Irish composers such as Charles Villiers Stanford as well as music of the French masters, both of which would influence her greatly. Stanford's presence and legacy, which could be felt in the various aspects of her musical life, became even more apparent when she joined Valerie in London to become a student of the Royal College of London. Trimble's composition teachers, Howells and Vaughan Williams, were both a testament to the Stanford Anglo-Irish school of music, which they continued to nurture in Trimble when she started composing in 1937 under their mentorship. Arthur Benjamin, the Trimble sisters' piano teacher at the College, encouraged Joan to combine

her piano and compositional skills by way of composing two-piano works for herself and Valerie to perform. Thus was born a composer who drew from her Anglo-Irish background for inspiration—awakening her natural Celtic idiom. Trimble was instantly successful as a composer and piano duettist, and began a lifelong working relationship with the BBC, who commissioned an array of Celtic-inspired works from the composer and broadcasted the Trimble duo throughout wartime London and beyond, making them household names. Through her compositions and two-piano performances, the Trimbles championed British works and premiered many other works apart from her own.

Although Trimble's compositional catalogue is diverse, the composer's most characteristic works can be found in her two-piano compositions which succeed in capturing the essence and atmosphere and foot-tapping exuberance of the Celtic Twilight. Trimble's two-piano works draw from the bardic tradition of *Goltrai*, *Geantrai*, and *Suantrai*, in which Irish literature and music are inextricably linked. *The Bard of Lisgoole*, *The Green Bough*, and *The County Mayo: Inis Fál* are all laments and closely correspond to the *Goltrai* style, using harp effects, Scotch snap, rhapsodic rhythms, and folk-like melodies inspired by the heavily ornamented *sean nós* vocal style involving the decoration of long notes and cadences.

The lively dance music of the *Geantrai* style is portrayed in *Buttermilk Point*, *The Humours of Carrick*, *The Heather Glen*, *The Cows are a'milking*, *Puck Fair*, *The County Mayo*, and *In the Poppy Field* from the *County Mayo*. In these pieces Trimble, preserves the structural symmetry typical of Irish dances as well as the "motor rhythms" by which dances such as reels and jigs are identifiable. Her extemporization skills are displayed in these pieces, which rely heavily on variation due to the symmetrical structure of dance. Not only does this show off her

improvisatory talent, but also her innate pianistic ability. In Trimble's music an entire *ceili* session band comes to life, while still remaining pianistic.

The *Suantrai* style is portrayed in her arrangement of *The Gartan Mother's Lullaby* and in *Peggy Mitchell* from *The County Mayo*, where the lilting rhythms or the lullaby are mixed with *Goltrai* elements, such as the Scotch snap and light harp effects. Both pieces have the added dimension of extramusical Anglo-Irish literary references that Trimble reflects with word painting in her interpretation of these lullabies. This she achieves through the subtle variation of textural, harmonic, registral, and rhythmical elements.

The *Sonatina* and *Pastoral: Homage à Francis Poulenc* are examples of pieces in which Trimble intentionally tried to escape her Celtic idiom—in the former Trimble tried to conform to the growing popularity of atonal music during the 1940s. Trimble's experiments caused her some doubt in relation to her compositional style; the latter piece shows the composer paying homage to the French school of music that she greatly loved and identified with. However, by her own admission, the Celt within her found its way to the fore through rhythm, texture, melody, ornamentation, variation, and instrumental effects—despite her initial intentions.

Thus, her compositional style was conclusively and completely natural, instinctive, uninhibited, and totally void of any political agenda. The Northern Irish composer was in ways the true “impartial reporter,” able to embrace North and South traditions, considering herself Irish first and foremost, but also able to identify with her British heritage. *Irish Times* journalist Kevin Myers sums up Joan Trimble's persona perfectly by the following quote: “Joan Trimble . . . personified a world that was sacrificed to tribal pride on both sides of the border. She was, I believe, the last of her type, though her middle kingdom species once greatly enriched the culture of the world and of Ireland . . . she was a wonderful woman – modest, brave, upright, honest and

true: the quintessence of the qualities so highly regarded by the now all but vanished middle kingdom. She was its last queen.”¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Kevin Myers, “An Irishman’s Diary,” *The Irish Times*, October 12, 2000.

APPENDIX A

List of Irish and British Music History Books: Joan Trimble Collection held at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, Dublin.

- Acton, Charles. *Irish Music and Musicians*. Dublin: Eason and Son, c.1978.
- Boydell, Brian, ed. *Four Centuries of Music in Ireland: Essays based on a series of programmes broadcast to mark the 50th Anniversary of the BBC in Northern Ireland*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1979.
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- O Lochlainn, Colm. *Anglo-Irish Song-Writers since Moore*. Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1950.
- O'Neill, Francis. *Irish Folk Music: A Fascinating Hobby with Some Account of Allied Subjects Including O'Farrell's Treatise on the Irish or Union Pipes and Touhey's Hints to Amateur Pipers*. Wakefield: EP Publishing Ltd., c.1973.

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- Shields Hugh. *Shamrock, Rose and Thistle: Folk Singing in North Derry*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1981.
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- Tunney, Paddy. *The Stone Fiddle: My Way to Traditional Song*. Skerries: Gilbert Dalton, c.1979.
- Ulster Folk and Transport. *The Flute and Ireland: Our Musical Heritage*. The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, 1984.
- Van Thal, Herbert, ed. *Solo Recital: The Reminiscences of Michael Kelly*. London: The Folio Society, 1972.
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- White, Terence De Vere. *Tom Moore: The Irish Poet*. London: Hamish Hamilton, c1977.
- Yeats, Gráinne. *Féile na g Cruitirí, Béal Feirste 1792: Gráinne Yeats assesses the Music of Carolan and Other Harper Composers Which was Collected by Edward Bunting at the Belfast Harpers' Festival 1792*. Dublin: Gael Linn, 1980.

APPENDIX B

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- Britten, Benjamin. *Folksong Arrangements. Volume 3, British Isles*. London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1947.
- Bunting, Edward, *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music: Containing a Variety of Admired Airs, Never Before Published, and Also the Compositions of Conolan and Carolan; Collected from the Harpers and in the Different Provinces of Ireland, and Adapted for the Piano-Forte: with a Prefatory Introduction by Edward Bunting*. London: Preston and Son, 1796.
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LIST OF PIANO-DUO WORKS

Original Two-Piano Works Published by Boosey & Hawkes:

The Bard of Lisgoole (1938)

The Humours of Carrick (1938)

Buttermilk Point (1938)

Sonatina for two pianos (1940)

The Green Bough (1941)

Arrangements for Two Pianos Published by Boosey & Hawkes:

La Calinda, dance from the opera *Koanga* by Frederick Delius (1947)

The Gartan Mother's Lullaby (1949)

The Heather Glen (1949)

Arrangements for Piano Duet Published by Boosey & Hawkes:

Polka, from *Schwanda, The Bagpiper* by Jaromir Weinberger (1939)

Jamaican Rumba by Arthur Benjamin (1951)

Original Unpublished Two-Piano Works residing at the Library of the Contemporary Music Centre Ireland:

Pastoral: Hommage à Francis Poulenc (1943)

The County Mayo for baritone and two pianos (1949)¹⁴⁴

Puck Fair (1951)

¹⁴⁴ An arrangement of *The County Mayo* for baritone and piano also exists at the Contemporary Music Centre and the National Library of Ireland in Dublin.

Original Unpublished Two-Pianos Works residing at the National Library of Ireland:

Pastoral: Hommage à Francis Poulenc (1943)

The County Mayo for baritone and two pianos (1949)

Puck Fair (1951)

Unpublished Arrangements for Two Pianos residing at the National Library of Ireland:

Liebeslied by Fritz Kreisler (undated)

Polovtsian Dances by Alexander Borodin (undated)

Passpied by Frederick Delius (undated)

Polichelle by Fritz Kreisler (undated)

Rondo from String Quartet in E major op.33, no.3 by Franz Joseph Haydn (undated)

Rondino on a theme by Ludwig Van Beethoven (undated)

The Cows are a'milking by Turlough O'Carolan (1945)

Tambourin-Chinois by Fritz Kreisler (undated)

Tambourin by François-Joseph Gossec (undated)

Unfinished Arrangements residing at the National Library of Ireland:

Carolan's Lament by Turlough O'Carolan (undated)

Cossack Dance (composer and date unknown)

Nursery Dance (composer and date unknown)

Scherzo from Octet by Felix Mendelssohn (undated)

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