

2015

## Thomas Davis, The Nation, and Songs of Irish Nationalism

Timothy Mason Love

*Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_dissertations](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations)



Part of the [Music Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Love, Timothy Mason, "Thomas Davis, The Nation, and Songs of Irish Nationalism" (2015). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 3538.

[https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool\\_dissertations/3538](https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/3538)

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [gradetd@lsu.edu](mailto:gradetd@lsu.edu).

THOMAS DAVIS, *THE NATION*, AND SONGS OF IRISH NATIONALISM

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The School of Music

by

Timothy Love

B.M., Furman University, 2004

M.M., University of Missouri-Kansas City, 2006, 2009

May 2015



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my dissertation advisor, Brett Boutwell, for his commitment, patience, and guidance. His thoughtful comments, honest appraisals, and high expectations have made me a better musicologist and scholar. Thank you, Dr. Boutwell.

I wish to thank my committee, Andreas Giger, Alison McFarland, Blake Howe, Meredith Veldman, and Meredith Blackwell for giving their time and support to this project. Their offers of help and encouragement were invaluable, and it has been a pleasure working with such outstanding faculty.

I owe a large debt of gratitude to the entire musicology faculty of the School of Music for their support throughout my time at LSU. Thank you also for believing in me enough to recommend me for the Board of Regents Fellowship and the Dissertation Completion Fellowship. These awards allowed me to pursue my doctoral studies and research with focus and determination. I strive to repay your confidence.

I could not have undertaken the archival research that was central to this dissertation without funding from the Institute for International Education. I also wish to thank Colleen Dube and her staff at the Fulbright Commission in Ireland for their timely assistance and tireless efforts to aid students and scholars working in Ireland.

Maria McHale of the Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatory and Harry White of University College Dublin provided critical assistance in helping this project take shape; their advice and encouragement were truly heartening.

Countless thanks go to the librarians and staff at the Library of the Royal Irish Academy and the National Library of Ireland. Their astute guidance and willingness to help made months of research a pleasure to undertake.

Last, I want to thank my friends and family for their unending support. My classmates and colleagues Warren, Andrew, Megan, and Tina challenged and encouraged me along the way and helped make this journey enjoyable and memorable. I owe an incalculable amount of gratitude to my wife Sarah and our children Russell and Dominic, who kept me grounded, made me laugh, and kept me motivated. This project would have been impossible without them.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	ii
Abstract .....	v
Chapter	
1. Introduction .....	1
2. Thomas Davis's Musical Antiquarianism.....	18
3. Thomas Davis's Musical Nationalism .....	60
4. Thomas Davis and <i>Spirit of the Nation</i> .....	128
5. Competing Visions of Irish Nationalism: Davis's Response to Thomas Moore.....	184
Bibliography .....	226
Appendix 1 .....	238
Appendix 2 .....	239
Appendix 3 .....	240
Vita.....	243

## ABSTRACT

Thomas Davis was a significant figure in the flourishing movement of cultural nationalism in mid-nineteenth-century Ireland. A cofounder of *The Nation*, Davis used the journal's pages as a medium through which to promote a nationalist vision for Ireland distinctive for its nonsectarian appeal. Along with impassioned editorial prose, Davis employed poetry and song to carry his message to the public. "Young Ireland," as Davis and his colleagues became known, focused their efforts especially on the traditional Irish song, elevating it as a symbol for their cultural heritage while harnessing its emotional power to strengthen their political cause.

The songs printed in *The Nation* quickly became one of the journal's most popular features, spawning the publication of an 1843 anthology entitled *Spirit of the Nation*. The songbook itself was popular enough to warrant multiple reissues in the years that followed. Davis, as Young Ireland's chief lyricist, successfully revitalized the tradition of political songwriting. And yet, despite their broad ramifications for Irish culture, several aspects of Davis's legacy remain unexamined. How did Davis select the melodies for his songs, and how did he fashion new texts for them? To what extent did Davis use music in his nationalist movement? Did he engage with the traditional repertory beyond its mere political expediency?

Through a careful analysis of Davis's lyrics in the context of nationalist politics, an examination of his song tunes in the context of Irish folklore, and a close reading of his notes and correspondence, this dissertation explores Davis's approach to creating his influential songs and the way in which he employed music in his nationalist campaign. I also identify Davis's personal engagement with

traditional music and assess his role within the larger antiquarian movement in Ireland. Last, by examining Davis's musical and nationalist influences, I place his Young Ireland movement within a broader European and Irish context. Already well known to scholars of Irish literature and history, Davis emerges from my study a towering figure of Irish music as well.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Thomas Davis was a catalyst behind the wave of cultural nationalism that swept Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century. A cofounder of the influential Irish weekly *The Nation*, Davis used the journal as a platform to lobby for the repeal of the Acts of Union (1800–1801) between Britain and Ireland and to promote a brand of Irish nationalism distinctive for its nonsectarian appeal. Fiery editorial prose carried his message to the public, but so too did poetry and song, modes of cultural expression increasingly linked to nationalist agendas throughout Europe at the time. "Young Ireland," as Davis and his followers became known, focused their attention especially upon the traditional Irish song, celebrating the genre as an exemplar of their cultural heritage while harnessing its emotional power to strengthen their political cause.

The songs printed in *The Nation*—most of them chosen by Davis, and many of them outfitted with newly penned, topical texts of his own making—quickly became one of the journal's most popular features. The best of these songs were compiled in an 1843 anthology titled *Spirit of the Nation*, a volume popular enough to warrant multiple reissues in the years that immediately followed. Despite his lack of a formal education in music, Davis had successfully revitalized the tradition of political songwriting. He did so by carefully selecting the music to serve his ends, dismissing as patently "non-Irish" any songs that failed to meet his stringent standards. Through a process as aesthetically subjective as it was ideologically freighted, Davis established the benchmark by which Irish songs were judged for the remainder of

the nineteenth century.

But what were Davis's criteria for selecting these folk songs, and how did he fashion new texts for them? This aspect of his legacy, despite its broad ramifications for Irish culture, remains unexamined. Through a careful analysis of Davis's lyrics in the context of nationalist politics, a genealogy of his song tunes in the context of Irish folklore, and a theoretically grounded examination of text-music integration in the resulting works, my research explores Davis's approach to generating the songs that defined Irish native musical culture for the better part of the nineteenth century.

In addition to his significance to the field of nationalist song, Davis played a major role in promoting the collection and preservation of Irish traditional music, as well as increasing the cultural appreciation of the native repertory. His manuscript notes, correspondence, and interactions with well-known nineteenth-century Irish antiquarians strongly indicate an extensive engagement with Irish music. The depth of that engagement suggests that his love for this historical repertory in fact transcended politics.

### Primary Sources

A great deal of my research has been undertaken in the archives of the National Library of Ireland (NLI) and in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA), both of which are in Dublin. The RIA houses the Gavan Duffy Bequest collection, which not only contains drafts of four of Davis's song texts ("The Volunteers of '82," "Native Swords," "The March of Cashel," and "Glengariff") but also a wealth of correspondence and a considerable amount of Davis's manuscript

notes regarding Irish history and nationalist projects. The NLI contains the Davis Papers, a collection of his personal and professional correspondence. It also holds a notebook of staff paper that appears to contain a portion of Davis's personal collection of Irish airs.<sup>1</sup> Analysis of these materials has clarified the role traditional music played in his nationalist program while revealing Davis's extensive engagement with song collection and music preservation.

The RIA also holds two volumes of Davis's personal collection of *The Nation* issues, covering the years 1842–44. Importantly, the first volume is replete with his personal notes and markings. His hand-written "T.D." initials that marked his own contributions were especially beneficial to this research, as no author's names were provided in the journal. These annotations allowed me to evaluate Davis's diverse output—including articles on Irish foreign policy, editorials on cultural matters, and nationalist songs—with an unexpected degree of certainty. As a result, I have been able to develop conclusions regarding his working methods, his contemporary influences, and his attempts to control *The Nation's* nationalist message.

## Literature Review

Existing scholarship on Thomas Davis largely focuses on his role as a political or literary figure associated with the mid-nineteenth century nationalist movement in Ireland. I draw from these sources for important contextual information pertaining to Davis's life and work. Works of literary criticism such as Malcolm Brown's *The Politics of Irish Literature: From Thomas Davis to W.B. Yeats* provide significant understanding of the context—historical, political, and economic—of

---

<sup>1</sup> A collection of Irish airs, NLI MS 14,099.



Davis's texts and their effectiveness in educating the Irish people and instilling in them a nationalist zeal.<sup>2</sup> Irish historical studies such as Patrick O'Farrell's *Ireland's English Question: Anglo-Irish Relations 1534–1970* frames Davis and his Young Ireland movement within the larger context of Anglo-Irish relations and the related sectarian conflicts.<sup>3</sup> O'Farrell pays particular attention to Davis's role in the movement to repeal the Act of Union and argues that Davis's emphasis on Gaelic culture and Ireland's past undermined the nonsectarian goals of Repeal and of Young Ireland. John Hutchinson's *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* provides a useful theoretical framework in defining movements of cultural, as opposed to political, nationalism.<sup>4</sup> Hutchinson examines the root causes of the flourishing of cultural nationalism that occurred throughout Ireland beginning in the 1830s, inspiring Davis and setting a precedent for his own actions.

The agendas of Davis and his contemporaries cannot be grasped adequately without an understanding of the nineteenth-century nationalist doctrines that informed them, yet recent academic theories of nationalism likewise have much to offer this dissertation. The romantic ideas espoused by Johann Gottfried Herder and Gotthold Lessing heavily influenced Davis's approach to Irish nationalism. These theories, now called essentialist, are described in R.V. Comerford's book *Ireland* as incorporating the beliefs that nations are individually prescribed by nature or by

---

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Brown, *The Politics of Irish Literature: From Thomas Davis to W.B. Yeats* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972).

<sup>3</sup> Patrick O'Farrell, *Ireland's English Question: Anglo-Irish Relations 1534–1970* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987).

some divine plan, that each has its own character and a naturally defined membership, and that each has about it some kind of informing spirit.<sup>5</sup>

Essentialist views of nationalism also emphasized the individuality of every racial or ethnic group, leading some to tout their group's superiority over others. Despite his opposition to such factionalism in the religious sphere, Davis was drawn to this racializing discourse, which was gaining popularity on the continent. The British, with their Anglo-Saxon heritage, viewed the Celts as racially inferior and incapable of self-government. Davis found a counter-argument to their theories in the writings of French historians Jules Michelet and Augustin Thierry, who glorified the Celt as the basis for French and Irish nationalism. Davis's praise of the Celt seemingly undermined his nonsectarian nationalism and alienated the other ethnic groups of Ireland, such as the Saxons, Normans, and Danes. His ballad "Celts and Saxons," however, clearly shows his engaging with the racial theories of his time in an attempt to redress this ideological discrepancy. The final stanza states, "So start not, Irish born man,/ If you're to Ireland true/ We heed not race, nor creed, nor clan,/ We've hearts and hands for you."

For an analysis of Davis's actions that transcends this essentialist framework, it is useful to consult theories of nationalism that have arisen since Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983).<sup>6</sup> These theories typically argue that the nation is a cultural construct and not a naturally occurring phenomenon. Applying Anderson's ideas, as well as those of Comerford and Hutchinson—whose works

---

<sup>5</sup> R.V. Comerford, *Ireland, Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2003), 1–6.

<sup>6</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

focus specifically on an Irish context—provides the structure necessary for analyzing Davis’s “nation-building” attempts through his writing and songs.

Italian political and social theorist Antonio Gramsci’s ideas on language and hegemony have proved useful guidance in my examination of Davis’s attempts to bolster Irish cultural pride and national identity.<sup>7</sup> While separating aspects of Britain’s political power from its cultural hegemony can be complicated, the British assertion of religious, educational, and linguistic practices in Ireland register as hegemonic influence in Gramscian terms. Davis’s attempts to revive interest in Irish history, culture, and language amounted to an attempt to establish an alternative hegemony, one that would undermine the dominant British apparatus.

Katie Trumpener’s *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* draws critical connections between the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century efforts in Ireland to preserve elements of traditional culture, the historical significance of the bard, and the creation of national identity.<sup>8</sup> Her research emphasizes the cultural nationalism present in literary genres from Gothic fiction to historical novels. Many of the same nationalistic forces that Trumpener identifies in the Irish romantic novel can be identified in the songs of Davis and Young Ireland.

---

<sup>7</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971); Walter L. Adamson, *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci’s Political and Cultural Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

<sup>8</sup> Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Matthew Gelbart's *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music'* has enhanced my understanding of music's importance to cultural nationalism.<sup>9</sup> In tracing the distinctions between the classifications of "folk music" and "art music," Gelbart addresses the need for nationalists to lay claim to music as communal property. He highlights a popular discourse occurring throughout eighteenth-century Europe, particularly in Scotland and Germany, which associated folk music with ideas of nature, simplicity, and cultural purity. Gelbart's claims that ideas of national musical identity originated in Scotland emphasize the cultural significance of the Celtic bard and traditional music. Although unmentioned by Gelbart, Ireland shared a cultural attachment to the historic bards and began to assert the "Irishness" of its music with publications such as Joseph Cooper Walker's *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786). These nascent forms of cultural nationalism directly influenced Thomas Davis's own antiquarian impulses and his nationalist songbook *Spirit of the Nation*.

David Cooper's *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diaspora, Community and Conflict*, his "On the Twelfth of July in the Morning... (Or the Man Who Mistook His Sash for a Hat)," and David Atkinson's "'Edward,' Incest, and Intertextuality," all describe the various connotations—political, religious, and social—carried by a ballad's text and music to a disparate group of listeners.<sup>10</sup> Their work provides a framework for my analysis of Davis's songs. Additionally,

---

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music": Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner*, *New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism*, ed. Jeffrey Kallberg, Anthony Newcomb, and Ruth Solie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> David Cooper, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diaspora: Community and Conflict*, Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010); "On the Twelfth of July in the Morning... (Or the Man Who Mistook His Sash for a Hat)," *Folk Music Journal* 8, no. 1 (2001): 67–89. See also David Atkinson, "'Edward,' Incest, and Intertextuality: Problems of Authority and Indeterminacy in the Traditional Ballad," *Southern Folklore* 55, no. 2 (1998): 102–32.

Atkinson's "Folk Songs in Print: Text and Tradition" examines the origins and evolution of traditional song and the interaction between oral and print cultures in the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup>

Biographies of Davis vary in quality and date from the nineteenth century to the present day. The writings of Davis's closest friend and colleague, Charles Gavan Duffy, provide unique insight as eyewitness testimony to Davis's years in writing for *The Nation*.<sup>12</sup> Duffy's reflections should be read through a critical lens however, as his implicit goal was to praise and validate Davis's work. More recently, Helen Mulvey's well-researched biography of Davis, *Thomas Davis: A Biographical Study*, gives a thorough and objective review of Davis's life and works, although her analysis of Davis's songs foregoes any musical examination.<sup>13</sup> John Molony's biography benefits from his extensive archival research and provides particularly useful information regarding Davis's activity before he joined *The Nation*.<sup>14</sup> At times, however, Molony make suppositions not wholly supported by documentary evidence. For example, several times he suggests that German romantic nationalism had little to offer Davis.<sup>15</sup> Using Davis's own writings and manuscript notes, I argue in chapter 3 of this dissertation that Davis was indeed influenced by German nationalist thought and particularly by that of Herder.

---

<sup>11</sup> David Atkinson, "Folk Songs in Print: Text and Tradition," *Folk Music Journal* 8, no. 4 (2004): 456–83.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *Thomas Davis: The Memoirs of an Irish Patriot, 1840-1846* (London: Kegan Paul, 1890); *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History, 1840-1850* (London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin, and Co., 1880).

<sup>13</sup> Helen Mulvey, *Thomas Davis: A Biographical Study* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> John Molony, *A Soul Came Into Ireland: Thomas Davis 1814–1845* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1995).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 100, 149.

Mary Helen Thuente's monograph *The Harp Re-strung: United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism* contextualizes the literary and musical atmosphere from which Davis emerged.<sup>16</sup> To varying degrees, the late-eighteenth-century nationalist movement United Irishmen and Thomas Moore each served as a model for Davis in combining traditional music with newly written lyrics.

Musicologist Harry White has produced significant scholarship on Irish music and nationalism as well as some relevant material on Thomas Davis. Because of White's output in these areas, his work serves as the principal guide in my investigation of Davis's politicization of Irish music. In his monograph *Keeper's Recital* and his article "Nationalism, Colonialism and the Cultural Stasis of Music in Ireland," White builds a strong case for the close association between music and politics in Ireland.<sup>17</sup>

Beginning with the failed uprising of the United Irishmen in 1798 and hastened by the decline of the native Irish language, the traditional music of Ireland became a powerful symbol of a fading Gaelic culture. With the rise of the popular politician and leader Daniel O'Connell in the 1820s and a growing national consciousness, the traditional repertory quickly took on symbolic connotations of Irish cultural and political independence. According to White, the romantic nationalism and political balladry of Davis and his Young Ireland movement thus played an important role in further binding Irish music to Irish nationalism.

---

<sup>16</sup> Mary Helen Thuente, *The Harp Re-strung: United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

<sup>17</sup> Harry White, *Keeper's Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970*, Critical Conditions: Field Day Essays (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998); "Nationalism, Colonialism and the Cultural Stasis of Music in Ireland," in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800-1945*, ed. Harry White and Michael Murphy, 257-72 (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002).

My dissertation complements and extends the existing literature on Davis. Previous scholars have taken Davis's interest in Irish music for granted. I draw from Davis's personal and professional correspondence, as well as his manuscript notes, in order to establish his participation in an active antiquarian movement. This aspect of Davis's life and work is examined here for the first time and necessitates a re-examination of Davis's legacy. I also reconcile Davis's antiquarian impulses with his nationalist drive and demonstrate how these two forces affected his musical output. In order to do so, I investigate the cultural contexts and connotations of the song texts and the traditional melodies as well as assess his correspondence, notes, and published writings. Interdisciplinary by design, my research goes beyond existing scholarship on Davis's songs to illustrate music's centrality to his cultural nationalism. By examining and identifying Davis's nationalist and musical influences, I show his ability to absorb and employ diverse nationalist elements and position his Young Ireland movement within a broader Irish and European context.

## Chapter Summaries

Following this introductory chapter, my dissertation is divided into four chapters, each of which examines elements of Davis's involvement with Irish music, music's role in his nationalist campaign, and the influences that shaped his approach to crafting his songs.

Chapter 2, "Thomas Davis's Musical Antiquarianism," addresses Davis's high regard for Irish traditional music and thorough knowledge of the repertory. Some scholars, such as Harry White and Joseph Ryan, have intimated that Davis's engagement with traditional music was purely utilitarian and politically motivated.

The evidence provided by Davis's personal correspondence and his early writings for *The Nation*, however, indicates that he had reasons for promoting and preserving Irish traditional music apart from his nationalist politics.

Two sources in particular seem to have influenced Davis's conception of Irish traditional music, as he referenced them multiple times in his manuscript notes: Joseph Cooper Walker's *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786) and Edward Bunting's three-volume collection *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1796, 1809, 1840). The former resource established the deep historical roots of the Irish bards and especially of Irish traditional song. Significantly, in terms of Davis's own output, Walker wrote of the social and political function of the bards in preserving Irish history and music. Edward Bunting's writing in his music collections established the historical preeminence of Irish traditional music and promoted the role of the music collector in saving traditional music from extinction.

Taking his cues from Walker and Bunting, Davis engaged in his own antiquarian activities. His correspondence with other notable musical figures of his day—John Edward Pigot, Henry and William Elliot Hudson, James Hardiman, and William Forde—contains many references to traditional music and the exchange of musical manuscripts. He even took advantage of the widespread circulation of *The Nation* to issue calls for the collection of traditional airs, with references to such a collection appearing in the journal fifteen times between 21 September 1844 and 9 August 1845. Furthermore, these calls for music from the populace seem to have been effective. In one portion of the Forde-Pigot music collection, thirty-seven tunes



are marked as being obtained from *The Nation*.<sup>18</sup> And, as further indication of Davis's antiquarian activities, eight tunes in this collection are marked as being "procured by Davis."

Davis also had his own collection of Irish music.<sup>19</sup> This collection, with Davis's name handwritten on the first page, is divided into two sections. The first contains around seventy airs attributed to the well-known Irish harper Turlough Carolan (1670–1738), and the second is an assortment of melodies inscribed by at least two different hands. It appears that Davis used this collection of airs as a resource when adapting his texts to Irish melodies. The presence of hand-written Xs next to airs such as "Oh the Marriage," "Trip to the Cottage," and "The Peacock," airs that Davis used for his songs "Hope Deferred," "The Banks of the Lee," and "Song for the Irish Militia," respectively, suggests that he drew from this collection when crafting his songs.

Even though Davis amassed a significant music collection, numbering 247 airs, he was most likely unable to read music proficiently. Davis may have chosen melodies for his songs from his manuscript, but he did not work directly with the notated music in adapting his texts. Rather, Davis's process for generating his songs must have been based in the oral traditions of Irish music. In the final section of Chapter 2, therefore, I will explore Davis's unusual navigation of both the written traditions of music preservation and the oral traditions of Irish folk music.

Chapter 3, "Thomas Davis's Musical Nationalism," addresses the various ways in which Davis employed music in his nationalist program. Beginning with his

---

<sup>18</sup> Forde-Pigot Music Collection, RIA MS 24 O 20.

<sup>19</sup> A collection of Irish airs, NLI MS 14,099.

correspondence and early writings for *The Nation*, I will establish Davis's early awareness of the political possibilities of traditional music. His manuscript notes and journal articles describing his musical "projects" and song series clearly demonstrate the crucial role music was to play in his campaign.

I also contextualize Davis's work within the broader European and Irish nationalist movements. He looked to Scottish poet and songwriter Robert Burns as a model, and he was heavily influenced by the ideas of Romantic nationalism espoused by German figures such as Herder and Lessing. This influence is reflected in Davis's idealization of the Irish peasant (Irish "Volk"), his promotion of the Irish language, and his emphasis on Irish history. In Ireland, he looked to his nationalist predecessors, the United Irishmen, as an example of a nonsectarian movement that utilized newspapers and songbooks as a means of communicating their ideology. Davis also fit within the second Gaelic revival, which began in Ireland in the 1830s. This movement promoted the cultural regeneration of Ireland, spurred on by a return to traditional music, language, and literature. Davis's efforts within this framework appear in line with other proponents of Irish culture, such as George Petrie and Samuel Ferguson. Davis's participation in this movement perhaps provided a nexus for his antiquarian and nationalist pursuits. The fact that his emphasis on the importance of Irish culture, especially music, was well received by politically benign figures such as Petrie and Ferguson speaks to the broad appeal of Davis's message.

Chapter 4, "Thomas Davis and *Spirit of the Nation*," addresses the important role the songbook played in Davis's nationalist program. Following other

political/nationalist songbooks that paired newly-written texts with traditional airs—United Irishmen’s *Paddy’s Resource* (4 vols., 1795–1803) and Thomas Moore’s *Irish Melodies* (10 vols., 1808–34)—*Spirit of the Nation* drew upon a tradition of musical agitation. Davis’s correspondence with colleagues Charles Gavan Duffy, John Edward Pigot, and William Elliot Hudson shows him to be the driving force behind editorial decisions and business matters associated with the songbook. Advertised as a collection of the best of the songs submitted by readers to *The Nation*, the songbook served as a distillation of the ideas Davis wished to put forward through song. The rhetoric of violence common to nationalist literature of the time underpinned, and at times undercut, the songbook’s themes of historical memorialization and calls for Irish unity. Additionally, because Davis’s message depended heavily on Irish traditional music, this chapter examines the relationship between the predominantly oral culture of traditional music and the print culture of the nineteenth-century songbook.

As the 1845 edition of *Spirit of the Nation* contains the only examples of Davis’s texts actually set to music, chapter 4 provides the best opportunity to assess the songs in a strictly musical sense. While the practice of pairing Irish traditional tunes with original lyrics had a precedent in the works of Moore and Bunting, the degree to which the arrangements in *Spirit of the Nation* remain faithful to the traditional airs remained understudied prior to this dissertation. Several texts are set to original music written in imitation of traditional airs. I examine this original music in order to determine what methods, if any, were used to approximate the traditional repertory. As a guide I will refer to the characteristics of traditional Irish

melody as identified by Edward Bunting in his 1840 collection and Joseph Ryan in his dissertation, "Nationalism and Music in Ireland." Namely, these are: 1) prominent use of diatonic scales; 2) use of the flattened seventh scale degree; 3) prominent use of the major sixth interval; 4) prominent use of Ionian or Mixolydian modes; and, 5) use of AABB structure. Most, if not all, of the original melodies in *Spirit of the Nation* were provided by J.E. Pigot and W.E. Hudson, both of whom were talented amateur musicians and avid collectors of Irish traditional music. As such, they were highly qualified for imitating the traditional idiom. I will also address questions of text setting in Davis's songs, such as "Does he prefer syllabic or melismatic text setting?" and "Does he emphasize certain words metrically, or through alignment with melodic climaxes?"

Chapter 5, "Competing Visions of Irish Nationalism: Davis's Response to Thomas Moore," explores how Thomas Davis's nationalist campaign and his use of Irish traditional music affected the public reception of Thomas Moore. Active in the early part of the nineteenth century and widely considered the national bard of Ireland, Moore issued ten volumes of his *Irish Melodies* between 1808 and 1834. These works contained Irish traditional tunes with new texts by Moore, some exhibiting nationalistic undertones. Davis, in his essay "Irish Songs," labeled Moore's songs "deficient in vehemence" and claimed they lacked the "sterner passions" needed to qualify as true national songs. Yet, as Davis's immediate predecessor, Moore must be considered a model.

Moore's own sense of nationalism, much like that of Davis, was grounded in his knowledge of Irish history and his agitation to end Ireland's sectarian strife.

Whereas Davis's confident tone promised Ireland's future glory, however, Moore's often despondent tone lamented over Ireland's past defeats. For his part, Davis was eager to acknowledge Moore's genius and lyrical ability, but was also equally desirous to disqualify Moore from the present nationalist campaign. In line with this effort to downplay Moore's influence, Davis appears to have conceived some of his songs in response to those of his predecessor. Thirteen of their songs share the same air, which could indicate an attempt on Davis's part to redeem these airs from Moore's "softer" emotions and to replace them with ones he deemed more appropriate to his own brand of nationalism. In a sense, Davis absorbed the useful bits of Moore's legacy—successfully pairing newly written texts to traditional airs—but chose to eschew the remainder in favor of his own musical path.

In the same vain, *Spirit of the Nation*, and particularly the 1845 version, could also be seen as a response to Moore's songbook. Indeed, with its hard cover, illustrated title page, and music in piano arrangement, this edition was greeted by many as a replacement for Moore's *Melodies*. The 1845 edition of the Young Ireland songbook had the attributes of a drawing-room music book but the spirited, vigorous poetry that befitted the new nationalism. Reviews of *Spirit of the Nation* bear out this contemporary opinion, as young Irish ladies were bidden to make these new songs of Irish nationalism a parlor staple.

As a result of Davis's attempt to replace Moore's lyrical songs with ones that were "racy of the soil," many scholars have commented on the gendered attributes

ascribed to each.<sup>20</sup> Leith Davis's *Music, Post-colonialism, and Gender: The Construction of an Irish National Identity, 1724–1874* provides important insight into the way in which Moore “feminized” the nationalism of his songs with highly romanticized depictions of Ireland and its inhabitants.<sup>21</sup> In doing so, Moore packaged his songs to make them appropriate for the bourgeois market of parlor songs that were largely geared toward a refined, predominantly female, English audience. As I show, Davis conversely emphasized the masculine nature of Irish culture to erase what he saw as the effeminate version of the Irish nation put forward by Moore.

I conclude the chapter, and the dissertation, with an examination of the nationalist legacies left by Moore and Davis. It becomes clear that, in the eyes of their contemporaries and in those of the generations immediately following, Davis superseded Moore as the national “Bard of Ireland.” Whereas Moore’s songs could never shake off the stigma of the English drawing room, Davis’s songs forged a new spirit of Irish nationalism, the influence of which was seen well into the twentieth century. Davis’s accomplishments were born out of the historical and political context in which he worked. His amalgamation of nationalist influences at home and abroad was crucial to the success of his own Young Ireland movement. Davis’s ability to engage with traditional music on an antiquarian level while also weaving music into the very fabric of his nationalist campaign made him one of the most significant Irish musical figures of the nineteenth century.

---

<sup>20</sup> The motto of *The Nation* was to “To create and to foster public opinion in Ireland—to make it racy of the soil.”

<sup>21</sup> Leith Davis, *Music, Post-colonialism, and Gender: The Construction of an Irish National Identity, 1724–1874* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006) 162–65.

## CHAPTER 2

### THOMAS DAVIS'S MUSICAL ANTIQUARIANISM

Scholars of Irish music Harry White and Joseph Ryan have depicted Thomas Davis's attitude toward Irish traditional music as essentially utilitarian. Cognizant of the repertory's emotional power, they argue, Davis harnessed traditional music merely to further his nationalist political ends.<sup>1</sup> This conclusion is understandable given some of Davis's own words. In his preface to the immensely popular songbook *Spirit of the Nation*, Davis wrote:

Music is the first faculty of the Irish, and scarcely any thing has such power for good over them. The use of this faculty and this power, publicly and constantly, to keep up their spirits, refine their tastes, warm their courage, increase their union, and renew their zeal, is the duty of every patriot.<sup>2</sup>

In this passage Davis evinces a cultural mindset that extols Irish music while also inextricably linking it to Irish nationalism. He expands upon this bond in his essays "Irish Music and Poetry," "A Ballad History of Ireland," and "Irish Songs."<sup>3</sup> He goes as far as to suggest "it is not needful for a writer of our songs to be a musician," and

---

<sup>1</sup> See Harry White, *The Keeper's Recital, Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 56-60; "Nationalism, Colonialism and the Cultural Stasis of Music in Ireland" in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800-1945*, Harry White and Michael Murphy, eds. (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 263-64; "The Preservation of Music and Irish Cultural History," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 27:2 (December 1996): 129. See also, Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, Ph.D. diss., National University of Ireland-Maynooth, 1991, 110-15; "The Tone of Defiance," in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800-1945*, Harry White and Michael Murphy, eds. (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 200-04.

<sup>2</sup> Writers of *The Nation*, *Spirit of the Nation: Ballads and Songs with Original and Ancient Music, Arranged for the Voice and Pianoforte* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), vi.

<sup>3</sup> The essays appeared in *The Nation* on 29 June 1844, 16 November 1844, and 21 December 1844, respectively.

encourages his readers to “learn an air for the purpose of writing words to it.”<sup>4</sup> This attitude, which White finds especially troubling, suggests that for Davis music was merely a vehicle that carried his nationalist message efficiently and effectively to the Irish public. This apparent disregard for the intrinsic value of the music lends credence to White’s and Ryan’s portrait of Davis as a usurper of the Irish music tradition driven by a political agenda.

The success achieved by Davis’s songs after his death buttresses his reputation as a political song monger. His songs altered the landscape of Irish nationalism so successfully that they became the model for Irish songwriting until the last decade of the nineteenth century. Even then, those who attempted to break free of the nationalistic paradigm he had helped introduce were condemned as being “irresponsible aesthetes and bad Irishmen.”<sup>5</sup>

In light of this evidence, the conclusions drawn by White and others appear well founded. Yet there is a danger of hindsight lending too much certainty in the matter, and a critical reassessment of Davis is in order.<sup>6</sup> A consideration of primary sources, as well as some early writings for *The Nation*, here examined for the first time, suggest that he may have been acting out of a sense of musical antiquarianism as well as nationalism. With this new evidence brought to light, Davis emerges as a figure engaged in the collection, preservation, and dissemination of Irish music. Furthermore, his activity in this field links Davis to other such music collectors

---

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Davis, “Irish Songs,” in *Essays Literary and Historical*, Centenary Edition, ed., D.J. O’Donoghue (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1914), 274–75.

<sup>5</sup> Georges Denis-Zimmerman, *Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs 1780-1900* (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1967), 82.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Ryan himself has helped rehabilitate the critical reception of another Irish songwriter, Thomas Moore Ryan. See, Ryan, “Tone of Defiance,” 204.



across nineteenth-century Europe who shared his interests and attitudes, and it connects him even more broadly to the romantic movement to document folk culture.<sup>7</sup>

#### Accounts of Davis's Engagement with Irish Traditional Music

There are early clues that suggest Davis's interest in Irish music went beyond politics. Charles Gavan Duffy, Davis's close friend and co-founder of *The Nation*, recounts a scene from Davis's youth as described by a relative: "She saw him more than once in tears, listening to a common country fellow playing old airs on a fiddle."<sup>8</sup> This very brief reminiscence suggests that Davis had a longstanding, emotional connection to Irish traditional music. One should take into account, however, that Duffy tended to present an idealized version of his friend and mentor. In fact, John Molony, one of Davis's more recent biographers, describes Duffy's contributions as hagiography rather than biography.<sup>9</sup> The possibility of bias, as well as the fact that Duffy was writing more than thirty-five years after Davis's death, might give one reason to take his emotive description lightly.

Other evidence exists, however, of Davis's high regard for and involvement with Irish traditional music, and it stems from sources untainted by partiality or revisionism. In a column of *The Nation* describing the meeting of the "Men of the Nation" on St. Patrick's Day, 1843, the anonymous author portrayed several key

---

<sup>7</sup> For the purposes of this dissertation, use of the term "air" refers to a traditional Irish melody; "tune" and "melody" will be used synonymously. "Song" refers to the pairing of text and music, whereas "ballad" refers specifically to a narrative genre of text with music.

<sup>8</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History, 1840–1850* (London: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1880), 52.

<sup>9</sup> John N. Molony, *A Soul Came Into Ireland: Thomas Davis, 1814–1845* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1995), 54, 191.

figures in the group. Davis was described as “the silver-tongued ‘Celt,’ who flew through the forgotten past, and matched our modern ‘saws’ with ancient ‘instances,’ or chaunted a joyous song for some triumph of the Gael over the Saxon.”<sup>10</sup> As Davis was the undisputed leader of this band of journalists and activists, one might expect a reference to his passion for Irish independence or to his cutting prose. Yet, even before the publication of *Spirit of the Nation*, Davis was essentially described as a poet and singer.

In another example from *The Nation*, Davis himself wrote an article entitled “Irish Literature and Publication,” claiming:

As to art, our music needs only to be collected, printed, and diffused; and we are not without hope that the brilliant example of Drogheda will be followed—that schools for Irish music will be founded in the metropolis, and that music for our national instruments—the harp, pipes, and violin—will be found in every farmer’s house before long, in the hands of men and women able to use it.

In other branches of art (sculpture and painting), there are Irish painters and sculptors now residing in foreign countries enough, if collected at home, to enable us to surpass England and compete with France, if not with Germany. But we must not now discuss the absenteeism of Irish genius—it is a sad subject...<sup>11</sup>

Note that Davis supported the establishment of music schools throughout Ireland in order to preserve and extend the playing of traditional music. Note, too, that in the realm of Irish arts he essentially linked Irish traditional music with the “fine arts” of sculpture and painting. In the place usually reserved for art music, Davis inserted

---

<sup>10</sup> *The Nation*, April 1, 1843, 393.

<sup>11</sup> *The Nation*, April 15, 1843, 425. The mention of Drogheda refers to the founding of a Gaelic Society in that town the previous month. The goal of the society was to encourage the study of the Irish language and Irish antiquities. Drogheda was also known for having an active Harp Society. See *The Nation*, March 11, 1843, 345.

his native repertory. This artistic elevation of traditional music is not the action of an interloper bent on furthering his own political agenda.

In a third example from *The Nation*, Davis employed his article “Absenteeism and Irish Genius” to chastise the reading public for their failure to support the *Dublin Monthly Magazine* (formerly titled *The Citizen*). He had personal cause to lament the loss of this journal, as his friend and fellow Irish music enthusiast William Elliot Hudson was intimately involved with the publication.<sup>12</sup> William and his brother Henry were responsible for the “Native Music of Ireland” portion of the journal, in which they published airs from their own collections as well as newly composed tunes modeled on traditional ones.<sup>13</sup> Davis was himself closely acquainted with the *Dublin Monthly Magazine*, cutting his journalistic teeth by contributing to the publication between 1839 and 1842.<sup>14</sup> In considering the magazine’s demise, Davis appeared most concerned about the loss of its music pages:

Besides sustaining its admirable articles on politics and literature, it gave for two shillings three or four airs from private collections, which would elsewhere have been published for 1s. 6d. or 2s. each; and latterly it printed two airs arranged by James Barton for Temperance Bands, which, separately, would have been sold for 5s. each. And yet the magazine has failed. After the expenditure of much time and large sums of money, it has failed. The Temperance Societies, for whose service it went to such expense, neglected it—, and now it is gone. The press did its duty by it well, and the Temperance

---

<sup>12</sup> The journal was founded in 1839 by Davis’s friend Torrens McCullagh and edited for a time by another friend, Thomas Wallis. Though its circulation was never large, the journal’s writers consistently advocated for Irish nationalism. The financial burden of the publication, however, fell largely on Hudson. See Molony, 45.

<sup>13</sup> Jimmy O’Brien Moran, “Irish folk music collectors of the early nineteenth century: pioneer musicologists,” in *Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, Irish Musical Studies 9, ed. Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny (Dublin: Four Court Press, 2007), 104.

<sup>14</sup> Molony, 49.

Societies and the public must bear the blame. The loss will be theirs, as the fault was...<sup>15</sup>

While Davis lamented the loss of the journal's political and literary offerings, his primary concern was the musical vacancy created by the magazine's failure.

The three examples above speak to Davis's personal engagement with Irish traditional music. They show him participating in the social traditions of Irish musical culture as he sang at the gathering of the "Men of the Nation." They also provide a glimpse of Davis's attempts to preserve and promote Irish music and his disappointment when the public failed to appreciate the efforts of his compatriots. Insofar as these examples appear within Davis's nationalist journal, one could certainly argue that his involvement with music was still linked to his engagement with Irish nationalism. That may be true to a point. But while his musical pursuits in these instances may be linked to his nationalism, they were not controlled by it.

Several examples from Davis's correspondence and manuscript notes eliminate all doubt of his genuine regard for and involvement with Irish traditional music. For example, in one letter from William Griffin, brother of the noted Irish novelist and playwright, Davis is depicted as a music lover even by those outside of his usual social orbit. Griffin writes: "I mean to be in Dublin for a day or two.

Perhaps I might then have the pleasure of seeing Gilla Ma Chree which you cannot

---

<sup>15</sup> *The Nation*, June 17, 1843, 571. The importance of the temperance movement in Ireland, particularly during the pre-famine period, cannot be underestimated. What began as a regional movement in 1838 grew into a national phenomenon by 1842, so much so that between three and five million people reportedly took the temperance pledge. Music, particularly choral singing and brass bands, were a crucial component to the movement's growth and continued success. See Maria McHale, "Singing and sobriety: music and the Temperance Movement in Ireland, 1838-43," in *Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, Irish Musical Studies 9, ed. Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny (Dublin: Four Court Press, 2007), 166-186.

wonder to learn, is as great a favourite with me, unharmonious as I am, as it is with one possessed of your love and taste for Irish musick.”<sup>16</sup>

Davis’s tour around Ireland in August and September of 1843 inspired a passage in his diary pages, providing a clue as to what he thought worthy of remembrance. The unpunctuated note, jotted down in pencil, reads:

Mrs Burke a farmers wife of Ceim [sic] an Eigh wrote the Cut and also a great song called mish illo to the old tune of it but this is far finer greater gifts to the child she has no English

Best piper in C town [Cork] is Bat na hoyne  
Poet at Glengarrif [sic]  
Great piper at Skibereen<sup>17</sup>

Davis’s commemoration of these experiences in his personal diary clearly indicates a high regard for Irish music and poetry.

As a final example, in the summer of 1845, Davis wrote down some suggestions for a tour of Wicklow, intended for his friend Charles Gavan Duffy. As was usual with Davis’s notes, the message mixed matters of business and pleasure. In the opening letter he evidently enclosed copies of ballad texts, taken from his personal collection:

---

<sup>16</sup> William Griffin to Davis, 10 September 1844, NLI MS 2644, 427.

<sup>17</sup> Collection of letters and papers of Thomas Davis, RIA MS 12 P 19. A contemporary paraphrase might read: “Mrs. Burke, a famer’s wife of Keim an Eigh, an area of County Cork, wrote the Cut, and also a great song called “Mish illo” to the tune of it. But, this is a far greater gift, her child knows no English.” The “Cut” Davis refers to seems to be an Irish tune. A “cut” in Irish traditional music is a type of melodic ornamentation. Perhaps Davis was using an abbreviation or other type of mnemonic device. Davis’s pleasure at the child having “no English” reveals his respect for the Irish language as well.

Dear Friend,

Read instructions for Wicklow before you start.

Try and dress up one of the enclosed or shall I write a ballad no! dress up the Leinster Prentice or Hugh Reynolds for the 4<sup>th</sup> edition and take great care of my ballads. I am precious about them. Have you the Turloughmore and Drinan Dhun?

Ever yours

TD<sup>18</sup>

The “Leinster Prentice,” “Hugh Reynolds,” “Turloughmore,” and “Drinan Dhun” that Davis referenced in the note are all Irish street ballads. The “4<sup>th</sup> edition” in the text is the fourth edition of Duffy’s *Ballad Poetry of Ireland*, which was published in September 1845. Duffy would include two of the four ballads mentioned, “Hugh Reynolds” and “Drinan Dhun,” in his publication. This letter is revealing in two respects: first, Davis is instructing Duffy regarding the latter’s upcoming edition of ballads, which itself connotes Davis’s authority over the repertoire; and second, we see Davis anxious over the care of the ballads. He refers to them almost as a parent would a child, revealing an emotional attachment that would only be present in one genuinely engaged with the traditional repertoire.<sup>19</sup>

#### Textual Influences on Davis’s Position

How did Davis come to have such a great appreciation for Irish traditional music? If we cannot trust Duffy’s anecdote about Davis’s tearful adolescent enchantment by the music of the fiddle player, what influenced his attachment to the repertoire? Davis, unlike his friends William Elliot Hudson and John Edward Pigot, was not musically trained. Indeed, it is doubtful if Davis could even read

---

<sup>18</sup> Miscellaneous letters and papers of Thomas Davis, RIA MS 12 P 16.

<sup>19</sup> In the introductory remarks to “Hugh Reynolds” in the fifth edition of the *Ballad Poetry of Ireland*, Duffy writes, “I copied this ballad from a broad-sheet in the collection of Mr. Davis...” Davis’s ownership of the ballad emphasizes his interest in traditional music.

music, at least beyond a basic level. Examining his manuscript notes, again, provides vital clues as to what influenced his perception of Irish traditional music.

Davis was an avid reader and educated himself on a wide variety of topics—moral philosophy, Irish history, literature, and politics among others.<sup>20</sup> It is a fair assertion that reading would have also helped form his ideas about Irish music. As one might expect from a keen student of Irish history, his perception of Irish music appears to have been grounded in sources that emphasized the historical nature of the repertoire. He referred to several key texts in his notes: the *Topographia Hibernica* (1188) of Giraldus Cambrensis (“Gerald of Wales”) and Edmund Spenser’s “View of the Present State of Ireland” (1596), both of which provided important historical eyewitness accounts of the high quality of Irish music; Joseph Cooper Walker’s *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786); and Edward Bunting’s *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1796, 1809, 1840). References to all of the above books appear within a collection of Davis’s notes in the National Library of Ireland (NLI); these notes primarily concern Irish history, particularly of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>21</sup>

The accounts of Gerald of Wales and Edmund Spenser were important influences on Davis’s understanding of Irish music because they served as historical testimonies relating the exceptional quality of Irish music. These sources gain more significance when one considers that neither author was Irish—Gerald was Welsh

---

<sup>20</sup> See Charles Gavan Duffy, *Thomas Davis: Memoirs of an Irish Patriot, 1840–1846* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1890), 19–22; T.F. O’Sullivan, *The Young Irelanders* (Tralee: Kerryman, 1944), 26. Additionally, Marsh’s Library in Dublin has 16 volumes of pamphlets from Davis’s personal library.

<sup>21</sup> Drafts of papers read by Thomas Davis, NLI MS 3199.

and Spenser was English—and neither was particularly kind toward the Irish people. Gerald wrote his *Topographia Hibernica* (*The History and Topography of Ireland*) in the late twelfth century. Belonging to an important Welsh-Norman family who took an active role in the Norman invasion of Ireland, Gerald made it clear in his writing that his objective was both to denigrate the Irish and to ingratiate himself to the English royalty.<sup>22</sup> Despite his blistering attacks, which included charges of bestiality, Gerald had to give the Irish credit for their music:

It is only in the case of musical instruments that I find any commendable diligence in the [Irish] people. They seem to me to be incomparably more skilled in these than any other people that I have seen. The movement is not, as in the British instrument to which we are accustomed, slow and easy, but rather quick and lively, while at the same time the melody is sweet and pleasant. It is remarkable how, in spite of the great speed of the fingers, the musical proportion is maintained. The melody is kept perfect and full with unimpaired art through everything—through quivering measures and the involved use of several instruments—with a rapidity that charms, a rhythmic pattern that is varied and a concord achieved through elements discordant.<sup>23</sup>

The Irish, who according to Gerald were an unruly and morally bankrupt people, somehow managed to achieve an accomplished, sophisticated musical culture.

Edmund Spenser viciously disparaged the Irish nearly four centuries later in his “View of the Present State of Ireland.” Urging the military subjugation of the native population, even to the point of suggesting scorched-earth policies to bring about famine, Spenser nevertheless praised the Irish bards. Pausing in his diatribe against the Irish, Spenser singled out the bards as having the ability to inspire in young minds the desire to imitate all things good and virtuous and to despise all

---

<sup>22</sup> Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland*, trans. John J. O'Meara (London: Penguin Books, 1982), 11-12.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.



things disgraceful and vicious.<sup>24</sup> These reports from hostile, foreign sources could only serve to reinforce Davis's belief in the historical pre-eminence of Irish music. Indeed, the severity of Gerald's and Spenser's attacks on other aspects of Irish culture would have made their praises of the music stand out all the more.

As a modern-day scholar, Harry White takes issue with the static, overly romanticized depiction of Irish music put forth by Walker and Bunting, who elevated the repertory as the prepotent cultural symbol of the historical Irish civilization.<sup>25</sup> Viewed with the privilege of hindsight, White's appraisal is accurate. As a nineteenth-century observer, however, what Davis found in Walker's *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786) and Bunting's *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1796, 1809, 1840) was scholarly proof of the historical superiority of Irish music, as well as confirmation of music's important social and cultural functions.

Relatively early in his text, Walker describes the gathering of the four Irish provinces during the reign of Ollam Fodla (r.1317–1277 BCE), an important pre-Christian Irish king. The records of each province were examined by a royal committee and then put into verse by the bards; describing the event, Walker comments, "Thus poetry became the vehicle of truth and the voice of history."<sup>26</sup> A knowledge of the ancient importance of poetry and song would have been very meaningful to Davis, who himself wrote of the importance of preserving and teaching Irish history through song:

---

<sup>24</sup> Edmund Spenser, "A View of the Present State of Ireland," Pt. II, 34, accessed 11 September 2013, <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/825/ireland.pdf>. Online text prepared from Alexander B. Grosart, ed., *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Edmund Spenser* (London, 1882).

<sup>25</sup> White, "Nationalism, Colonialism and the Cultural Stasis of Music in Ireland," 262.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Cooper Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (Dublin, 1786), 24.

To hallow or accurse the scenes of glory and honor, or of shame and sorrow; to give to the imagination the arms, and homes, and senates, and battles of other days; to rouse, and soften, and strengthen, and enlarge us with the passions of great periods; to lead us into love of self-denial, of justice, of beauty, of valour, of generous life and proud death; and to set up in our souls the memory of great men, who shall then be as models and judges of our actions—these are the highest duties of history, and these are best taught by a Ballad History.<sup>27</sup>

Davis never completed the proposed “Ballad History,” but he did write at least eighteen song texts based on historical subjects.<sup>28</sup>

Walker, aside from establishing the cultural importance of the bards, extended the idea of Irish musical excellence by ascribing musical talent to every Irish man, woman, and child. Deeming musical taste to have been innate among the native people, Walker asserted that musical talent was so culturally intrinsic that the lack of musical ability was considered a disgrace.<sup>29</sup> Again, this pride in Irish musical ability prefigured and likely influenced Davis’s own writing, including his remarks that “Music is the first faculty of the Irish,” and “No enemy speaks slightly of Irish Music, and no friend need fear to boast of it.”<sup>30</sup>

Walker, then, widely influenced Thomas Davis’s perception of Irish traditional music, an influence that showed itself throughout Davis’s published writings. From his predecessor, Davis gained a strong appreciation for the deep historical roots of music in Ireland and the important role it played in Irish society from pre-Christian times through the eighteenth century.

---

<sup>27</sup> Davis, 240.

<sup>28</sup> Here I am counting only the texts that Davis paired with airs. If one counted all texts, the number would be much larger.

<sup>29</sup> Walker, 62.

<sup>30</sup> Preface, *The Spirit of the Nation* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), vi, and Davis, 160, respectively.

The greatest influence on Davis's understanding of Irish traditional music seems to have come from Edward Bunting and his three published music collections. Aside from the manuscript notes discussed above (NLI manuscript 3199), Bunting's name appears in three other sources, all housed in the Royal Irish Academy (RIA).<sup>31</sup> In each case, Davis depicted Bunting as the highest authority on Irish music.

Davis was certainly familiar with all three of Bunting's collections, specifically referencing "Bunting parts 1, 2, and 3" in NLI manuscript 3199. While the first two volumes of Bunting's collections (1796, 1809) appeared before Davis was born, the third appeared in 1840, just two years before Davis embarked on his career at *The Nation* and while he was writing for *The Citizen* (later to become the *Dublin Monthly Magazine*). It is worth noting that William Elliot Hudson, the financial backer of *The Citizen* and an Irish music expert in his own right, may well have introduced Davis to Bunting's work.<sup>32</sup>

Bunting, in a sense, continued the project begun by Walker. Like his predecessor, Bunting emphasized the deep historical roots and the cultural significance of Irish music, but he differed by directing his energy toward preservation, publishing a total of 294 airs among his three collections. Fulfilling his commission to transcribe the pieces played at the 1792 Belfast Harp Festival ignited his passion for collecting Irish traditional music. As he walked among the harpers,

---

<sup>31</sup> Notes on Irish history written by Thomas Davis, RIA MS 12 P 15/16, 12 P 15/17, and Miscellaneous letters and papers, RIA MS 12 P 16.

<sup>32</sup> William and his brother Henry, who contributed music to the "Native Music of Ireland" portion of *The Citizen*, occasionally published original compositions modeled on traditional tunes. Apparently the main purpose in publishing the music was to disprove a statement, privately expressed by Bunting, to the effect that no modern composition had the characteristics of traditional melody. See Moran, 104.

Bunting eagerly notated their repertoire. He subsequently visited some of their homes to obtain more music and to learn details of their playing technique.<sup>33</sup> Recognizing the harp music as “relics of a culture all but extinguished,” Bunting spent the rest of his life collecting the repertoire.<sup>34</sup> His published collections, especially the first, were seminal documents in energizing the push to collect and preserve the traditional repertory, becoming the “seedbed of antiquarian and creative endeavour in Irish music for at least half a century afterwards.”<sup>35</sup> Charlotte Milligan Fox, writing in 1911, asserted that Bunting’s first collection qualified as an “epoch-making book.”<sup>36</sup>

Two areas of Bunting’s work in particular seem to have influenced Davis: first, an emphasis on the collection and preservation of traditional music, and second, a reluctant attitude toward altering or arranging traditional airs for creative purposes. Bunting, a highly trained musician and organist from Belfast, was assiduous in accurately transcribing the tunes he heard. Recounting his instructions at the time of the Belfast Harp Festival, he wrote:

The compiler of this Volume was appointed to attend on that occasion, to take down the various airs played by the different Harpers, and was particularly cautioned against adding a single note to the old melodies, which would seem from inferences, that will afterwards be drawn, to have been preserved pure and handed down unalloyed, through a long succession of ages.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Gráinne Yeats, “Irish Harp Music,” in *Four Centuries of Music in Ireland*, ed. Brian Boydell (London: BBC, 1979), 21.

<sup>34</sup> White, *Keeper’s Recital*, 39.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>36</sup> Charlotte Milligan Fox, *Annals of the Irish Harpers* (London, 1911), 23.

<sup>37</sup> Edward Bunting, preface to *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music, Containing a Variety of Admired Airs Never Before Published, and also the Compositions of Conlan and Carolan; Collected from the Harpers etc., in the different Provinces of Ireland and Adapted for the Piano Forte with a Prefatory Introduction* (London: Preston and Son, 1796), i.

His attempts at authentically preserving the Irish harp tradition were laudable. In the preface to his 1840 collection, Bunting detailed his visits to Hempson, a famous Irish harper, not only to transcribe his personal repertoire of music, but also to learn “his peculiar mode of playing and fingering—the identical manner described by Cambrensis [*sic*]—together with a great number of terms of musical science used among the old Irish harpers.”<sup>38</sup> Authentically preserving airs from what was largely an oral tradition had inherent challenges, however, and Bunting seemingly fell short by arranging the airs for piano. Although he attempted to faithfully adapt the harp style to the piano, his arrangements drew some criticism. An anonymous critic from *The Dublin Examiner* took Bunting to task for failing to write idiomatic piano arrangements, lamenting that “We also greatly dislike the thin harp bases [*sic*] which he has given to others...However bearable the lengthened vibrations of our national instrument may have made such accompaniments, they will certainly never be tolerated on a piano-forte.”<sup>39</sup>

Thomas Moore’s success with the *Irish Melodies* temporarily tempted Bunting into commissioning newly written poetry to pair with some of the airs in his 1809 collection. In his 1840 publication, however, Bunting made explicit his frustration with Moore’s willingness to creatively adapt traditional airs:

...but the Editor saw with pain, and still deplores the fact, that in these new Irish melodies, the work of the poet was accounted of so paramount an interest, that the proper order of song writing was in many instances inverted, and, instead of the words being adapted to the tune, the tune was too often adapted to the words, a solecism which could never have happened had the reputation of the writer not been so great as at once to carry the

---

<sup>38</sup> Edward Bunting, preface to *The Ancient Music of Ireland, Arranged for Piano Forte* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840), 6.

<sup>39</sup> Anonymous, *The Dublin Examiner* (August 1816), reprinted in White, *Keeper’s Recital*, 40.

tunes he deigned to make use of altogether out of their old sphere among the simple and tradition-loving people of the country—with whom, in truth, many of the new melodies, to this day, are hardly suspected to be themselves.<sup>40</sup>

Davis apparently agreed with Bunting's judgment. In his "Irish Songs" essay, Davis warned his readers against consulting the airs in Moore's *Irish Melodies*, as they were "very corrupt, and should never be used for the study of Irish music." Besides, he said, "There is no need of using them," as Bunting's collections were "cheaper, and contain pure settings."<sup>41</sup>

Bunting, while holding the music to be a sacred, unchanging object, had no qualms about altering the text of a song, or indeed fitting the air with newly written lyrics, as he did in his 1809 collection. He wrote:

Poems and histories, when orally delivered, will, from time to time, be corrupted and interpolated...So also, but in a higher degree, with regard to songs. The words of the popular songs of every country vary according to the several provinces and districts in which they are sung...But the case is totally different with music. A strain of music, once impressed on the popular ear, never varies. It may be the vehicle of many different sets of words, but they are adapted to *it*, not it to *them*, and it will no more alter its character on their account than a ship will change the number of its masts on account of an alteration in the nature of its lading.<sup>42</sup>

Reviewed in this light, Davis's charge to "learn an air for the purpose of writing words to it" takes on new meaning. No longer does it indicate that he had a lack of respect for the music's intrinsic value, as White inferred. If Davis was acting in the same vein as Bunting, the instruction proves just the opposite. By essentially telling his readers to adapt their words to the air, he emphasized the purported stability of the airs themselves. Instead of disregarding the music, Davis was, in his probable

---

<sup>40</sup> Bunting, (1840), 5.

<sup>41</sup> Davis, 275.

<sup>42</sup> Bunting, (1840), 1.

view, preserving it unaltered. For Davis as for Bunting, the air was a sacrosanct cultural marker, a hallmark of native culture as supposedly authentic as it was immutable. Airs sullied by creative arrangements were somehow less Irish and, as Bunting said, “hardly suspected to be themselves.”<sup>43</sup> Although not acknowledged by Bunting, minor musical changes occurred naturally during the process of an air’s oral transmission. Moore’s creative adaptations, however, were changes of a different sort, and were viewed by Bunting and Davis as conscious attempts to alter the Irish musical tradition.

Bunting’s collections, then, seem to have had a profound effect on the way in which Davis approached traditional music. The publications of Bunting and Moore offered Davis contrasting models for the contemporary use of Irish music. The former was concerned with the preservation of a historical repertoire, while the latter was driven by creative impulses and aimed at the marketplace. In the dialectic between the preservation (Bunting) and the adaptation (Moore) of airs that circumscribed the nineteenth-century interest in Irish music, Davis strongly favored the former.<sup>44</sup> The air was a living representation of a centuries-old culture, with testimonies of its quality dating back to the twelfth century.<sup>45</sup> Davis, in pairing the airs with his lyrics, was displaying that culture to the public. By adapting the words to the music, Davis was simultaneously preserving the tradition and bringing it into the present.

---

<sup>43</sup> Bunting, 5.

<sup>44</sup> For an excellent discussion on the tension between antiquarianism and romanticism, see White’s chapter, “History and Romanticism: Bunting, Moore and the Concept of Irish Music in the Nineteenth Century,” in his *Keeper’s Recital*, 36–51.

<sup>45</sup> Bunting had claimed to rescue them “from oblivion.” See, Bunting, 1796, i.

## Davis's Efforts in the Collection and Preservation of Irish Music

Davis's correspondence confirms that he was not content to just read the antiquarian literature but was actively engaged in the antiquarian movement of his time. Abundant evidence exhibits his knowledge of the traditional music repertoire, his exchanging of musical manuscripts, and his participation in the collection of airs. For example, one letter from William Forde to Davis on 31 January 1845 displays Davis's familiarity with the traditional repertory:

My dear Sir,

Nothing is more welcome to me than a line from a hearty friend of the cause—'tis great encouragement. Thank you for placing the melodies at my command. I only wish to be near you and the other friends who have such stores. I believe you are right as to the "San ban boct"—but the "Bruac na carriage baune" had appeared in Holden's Collection (perhaps 25 or 30 years back.) I felt that Holden's version was illegitimate and I was much gratified to find the *Nation* copy giving support to my view of the pure form of the melody. Mr. Hudson will tell you if I am right in thinking that this fine air is akin to "The Pretty Girl Milking the Cow." I hope to get "The Battle of Clontarf" from Mr. D[enny] Lane. He has given me "The Buacai lin don"—a treasure.

I do not know "The Poor Catholic Brother"—has it any other name—I am anxious to see it.<sup>46</sup>

Forde was a well-known musician and antiquarian from Cork who amassed a sizeable collection of Irish music between 1840 and 1850 consisting of approximately 462 airs. He unsuccessfully attempted to publish his collection, even going so far as to issue a prospectus of the work in a bid to attract subscribers. Forde's holdings are now housed in the RIA as part of the Forde-Pigot music collection.<sup>47</sup> One can surmise from the informal tone of the letter that Davis and

---

<sup>46</sup> William Forde to Thomas Davis, 31 January 1845, NLI MS 2644, 79-82.

<sup>47</sup> Caitlin Bonfield, "Manuscript Irish Music in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy," accessed 12 September 2013, <http://www.ria.ie/getmedia/43d7cca8-7eb7-4079-a492-32f72fe2722d/Music---Bonfield-article.pdf.aspx>.



Forde were on friendly terms, and the text indicates that Davis's knowledge of the traditional literature was sufficient enough to allow him to converse with one of the leading musical figures of his day. Additionally, the opening of the letter—"placing the melodies at my command"—suggests that Davis owned or had access to a music collection and had put it at Forde's disposal.

Further examples exist of Davis exchanging musical materials with others, including friends and members of the larger antiquarian community. In a letter to John Edward Pigot at the end of 1843, Davis wrote, "I shall leave with you to-day the Carolan, etc., or perhaps take them to Miss Prendergast."<sup>48</sup> The "Carolan" most likely refers to his own collection of airs, now preserved in the NLI.<sup>49</sup> This notebook of staff paper is divided into two sections. The first, which Davis aptly titled "Airs by Carolan," contains seventy-two airs attributed to the famous Irish harper. The second section, perhaps the "etc.," in the letter, consists of an assortment of melodies inscribed by at least two different hands. The "Miss Prendergast" mentioned in the above example appears in many of Davis's letters, especially those sent to Pigot and Hudson. The letters indicate that she was a pianist and was often asked to play through the airs collected by this small group of Irish music enthusiasts.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Thomas Davis to John Pigot, 30 December 1843, NLI MS 14,056. The letters in this MS also appear in "The Letters of Thomas Davis, Part I," *The Irish Monthly* 16, no. 179 (May 1888): 265.

<sup>49</sup> A collection of Irish airs, NLI MS 14,099.

<sup>50</sup> Little information seems to exist regarding Miss Prendergast. The only biographical reference I have found is in "Letters of Thomas Davis," *The Irish Monthly: a magazine of general literature* 16, no. 179 (1888): 263. In a review of Pigot's life, it simply says "married Miss Prendergast in 1851."

Davis's personal collection of melodies is confirmed in another letter to John Pigot, in which he offhandedly mentioned that their mutual friends, the Huttons, had "borrowed a lot of my collection of Irish airs."<sup>51</sup>

A letter from James Hardiman underlines Davis's activities within the larger antiquarian community. The body of the letter is devoted to matters of Irish history, but in the postscript Hardiman wrote, "I shall feel very much obliged if you be so kind as to send the MS Book containing the Irish Songs and Music to No. 15 Angelsea Street Directed for me, at your convenience. I am now arranging a considerable number, and there are some in that book to be copied for that purpose."<sup>52</sup> Hardiman, like Davis, had a keen interest in Irish history and music. In 1827 he travelled through Longford and Roscommon collecting Irish poetry and song texts. This activity culminated in his two-volume published anthology, *Irish minstrelsy: or, Bardic remains of Ireland* (1831).<sup>53</sup> With his translations from the original Gaelic poetry, which were largely sectarian in nature, Hardiman put forward an Irish identity that equated Gaelic with Catholic.<sup>54</sup> In a lengthy four-part review of Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy*, Samuel Ferguson found fault with the author's politics, but appreciated the cultural value of the anthology:

These are the songs before us—songs such as the speakers of the English language at large have never heard before, and which they could not see and hear but for the pious labours of a man, who, however politically malignant and religiously fanatical, has yet done such good service to his country in

---

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Davis, "Letters of Thomas Davis, Part II," *The Irish Monthly* 16, no. 180 (June 1888): 337–38.

<sup>52</sup> Letter from James Hardiman to Thomas Davis, 16 June 1845, NLI MS 2644, 115–118.

<sup>53</sup> J.I. McGuire and J. Quinn, eds., *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, Royal Irish Academy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), accessed 13 September 2013, <http://dib.cambridge.org>.

<sup>54</sup> Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, 104.

their collection and preservation, that for her sake we half forgive him our own quarrel, and consent to forego a great part of its vindication.<sup>55</sup>

Davis agreed somewhat with Ferguson's appraisal, writing in his "Irish Songs" essay that if Hardiman's collections were "fair specimens (as we believe they are) of the Irish Jacobite songs, we should not care to have more than a few of them given to the people."<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, despite Davis's opposition to Hardiman's sectarian translations, he supported Hardiman's campaign to bring awareness to the state of the Irish language. In his response to Hardiman's request for the "MS book containing Irish Songs and Music," Davis wrote, "You say you are going to publish more songs. Why not with music? ...one song with music is a better apostle of Irish than 20 without."<sup>57</sup>

In addition to sharing his resources with his antiquarian network, Davis was actively involved with collecting texts and music. While on a tour through Ireland, he stopped to send Pigot a letter containing the freshly transcribed words of the traditional song "Shule Aroon":

My Dear John—I got and burnt your note, you rash friend of mine. You and I will, I trust, meet in October, then will be time enough to talk over the future. As you have not got the Shule Aroon, I send you one which I have this moment written from a carrier, a great fellow who sings and would do more.

If I were on top of yonder hill  
It's there I'd sit and cry my fill,  
And it's every tear would turn a mill,  
Go de tu mavourneen slan,  
Shule, shule, shule agra,  
Shule go succur agus shule a gloom,  
Shule ging un durrus agus ail a gloom,  
Go de tu mavourneen slaun.

---

<sup>55</sup> Samuel Ferguson, "Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy*—No. II," *Dublin University Magazine* 4 (July-December, 1834), 153.

<sup>56</sup> Davis, 271.

<sup>57</sup> Letter from Thomas Davis to James Hardiman, [N.D.], RIA MS 12 N 20.

If I could only cure my woe,  
Since the lad of my heart from me did go.

I'll dye my pettitcoats, I'll die them red,  
And round the world I'll beg my bread,  
Until my parients shall wish me dead.

Chorus

I'll sell my rock, I'll sell my reel,  
And if my flax were spun I'd sell my wheel,  
To buy my love a sword of steel.

Chorus

I have tried to give you the pronunciation, "parients, etc." There are, it seems, more verses, but the one "But now my love is gone to France," was never heard by my informant.

Lane is writing out a ballad on Ceim an Feigh battle. Get Miss Prendergast to sing it "in remembrance of me." I trust she and her family and yours are well...I wish you were here to take down word and music from every second person I meet.<sup>58</sup>

"Shule Aroon" also appears elsewhere in Davis's papers. A small notebook of unlined pages held at Trinity College, Dublin, contains several drafts of the texts of Davis's songs.<sup>59</sup> Among entries such as "The Bishop's Daughter" and "When South Winds Blow," as well as multiple poems to Annie Hutton, Davis inscribed the "Old words of Shule Aroon." Although varying only slightly from the version given to Pigot, Davis's copy does include the verse unknown by his informant.

The concluding phrase of Davis's letter to Pigot is telling. First, it indicates Pigot's role as transcriber for the musically untrained Davis, and thus suggests one possibility of how Davis accrued his musical holdings. Second, it provides a clue as to Davis's activities while he was travelling. If he truly encountered traditional

---

<sup>58</sup> Letter from Thomas Davis to John Edward Pigot, 8 September 1843, NLI MS 14,056.

<sup>59</sup> Manuscript notebook containing drafts of Davis's poems and song texts, Trinity College Dublin MS 10661.

music “from every second person” he met, he must have actively sought out examples of the musical culture associated with his particular location.

On the same circuit around Ireland, Davis stopped to dine at the home of William Sullivan, nephew of the noted antiquarian William Hackett.<sup>60</sup> In a report to his uncle, Sullivan revealed that while Davis acquitted himself well in antiquarian matters of a general sort, he failed to impress his host when it came to Irish music:

A Gentleman named Davis who brought to my Father an introduction from the librarian of the R.I. Academy dined with us a few days. He is the principal conductor of the Nation Newspaper and has a great taste for Antiquities, he was acquainted with your name and seemed quite en fait with some of your theories. He requested me to procure him the words and air of some Irish songs. He is rather ignorant on that score, for he never heard (excuse my spelling) of Shane O Ahire na Glanna. If you can supply me [from] your infinite store you will oblige me very much, and enable me to oblige him...<sup>61</sup>

While the above account may reveal certain perceived gaps in Davis’s knowledge, it also provides further evidence as to the way in which he collected Irish music when he lacked the time or ability to do so himself. By delegating the collection duties to others who were more capable, Davis was able to continue his antiquarian endeavors without being hampered by his lack of musical training.

This cooperative collection effort by Davis and his friends and colleagues is confirmed by two other examples. First, in closing a letter to his longtime friend, Denny Lane, Davis urged him to “Bring piles of Irish airs (new old airs) with you in

---

<sup>60</sup> Hackett’s main areas of interest were Irish archaeology and the Irish language. As a member of the Dublin-based Ossianic Society, he was editor of the group’s abortive attempt to translate and publish the Irish epic poem the *Táin*. See Robert Somerville-Woodward, “The Ossianic Society, 1853–1863,” accessed 16 September 2013, <http://www.ucd.ie/pages/99/articles/somewood.html>.

<sup>61</sup> Letter from William Sullivan to William Hackett, 15 September 1843, RIA MS 12 L 8/88.

November.”<sup>62</sup> Lane, who lived and worked in Cork, was actively involved with the cultural activities of his home city, including music collection.<sup>63</sup> Although not living in Dublin, through correspondence and regular visits to the capital, Lane remained connected to Davis and others involved with *The Nation*, whether by writing songs, collecting music, or giving political advice.<sup>64</sup>

Second, in a letter from September 1844, Pigot notified Davis of a new source of traditional songs:

A Miss Griffin, cousin of Gerald, whom I have just met, sang for me last night the nal Giolla mo croidhe. A graceful flowing tho plaintive old Irish air...I am to call on Miss G. today to copy the air which I will send Miss Prendergast immediately. Probably I may get more in the same quarter: I shall certainly not miss the opportunity, but they are leaving immediately.

In a note scrawled on the top of the letter, separate from the main body of text, Pigot emphasized the collection of this new trove, hurriedly writing “I have copied ‘Nal Giolla mo croide’ and some other airs and sent to Miss Prendergast tonight. Go and hear them. I am promised heaps more as I shall tell you next time.”<sup>65</sup> Despite Pigot’s excitement, signaled by the extra note and the underlined words, Davis was not impressed with these new additions, telling his friend “Your new old ‘Giolla mo Croidhe’ is very poor, as are most of the airs you fell in love with under Miss G’s hands.”<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Letter from Thomas Davis to Denny Lane, 20 July 1844, Cork County and City Archives MS U611/9.

<sup>63</sup> In the letter quoted above between William Forde and Davis, Forde mentioned that Lane had provided him with the airs “Buacai lin don” and “The Battle of Clontarf.”

<sup>64</sup> Helen Mulvey, *Thomas Davis and Ireland: A Biographical Study* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 109–10.

<sup>65</sup> Letter from John Edward Pigot to Thomas Davis, 18 September 1844, NLI MS 2644.

<sup>66</sup> “Letters of Thomas Davis, Part II,” 338.

Davis greatly increased the scope of his antiquarian drive by putting the vast readership of *The Nation* to work in collecting traditional airs. In the “Answers to Correspondents” column on 21 September 1844, the following call was issued:

By the way, we will make the same request of our other friends in every part of Ireland, and ask them to note down and send us as many Irish airs as they can. Of course if the airs are scarce, so much the better, but we shall welcome any Irish airs, scarce or not, as a finer version sometimes turns up than we were used to. Whenever Irish or English words exist to such an air, we should be glad to get them too.<sup>67</sup>

The subsequent week, in the same column, another request was made:

Many thanks to the kind friend who sent us the air, “I went to the Rock.” We should be glad to know the part of the country whence the air was obtained. Any words to it that may exist; and, if not objected to, the name of some player of it. We mean these requests to apply to all airs as well as this. Need we add, that we shall be gratified to obtain any other air, and as many as possible.<sup>68</sup>

These were not isolated incidents. Other calls for airs to be sent in, notes of thanks to correspondents for providing airs, or mentions of a collection by *The Nation* appeared a total of fifteen times between 21 September 1844 and 9 August 1845.<sup>69</sup> Of note in the last quoted example is the appeal for location, text, and player. In requesting such information, Davis was really requesting verification of the music’s authenticity. These are the same items of information usually provided by antiquarians such as Bunting in his collections, and the fact that those same identifiers were requested by *The Nation* suggests a large-scale, systematic attempt at music preservation.

---

<sup>67</sup> *The Nation*, September 21, 1844, 792.

<sup>68</sup> *The Nation*, September 28, 1844, 808.

<sup>69</sup> *The Nation*, September 21, 1844; September 28, 1844; October 5, 1844; October 12, 1844; October 19, 1844; November 2, 1844; November 9, 1844; November 16, 1844; November 23, 1844; December 14, 1844; January 11, 1845; February 15, 1845; April 26, 1845; July 5, 1845; and August 9, 1845. A note of thanks for music received appears in the journal as early as May 6, 1843, although the melodies do not seem to have been solicited.

The calls to the populace seem to have been fruitful, as the following letters from correspondents amply prove:

Sir,

A Peasant hopes you'll have the kindness to Examine the merits of the Five Irish Airs which he sends you, if they be worthy of your attention, he has many more, which he would feel a pleasure in forwarding to you.<sup>70</sup>

Sir

I could perceive, by your able and patriotic paper [*The Nation*], that you are desirous to procure as many Irish musical airs as possible and also to get words to them if any have survived. Tho' I know scarcely anything of music as a science and can't say whether these may not be some tune sufficiently rare to merit copying in the old music books I sometimes meet with, yet, as I have a rather motley collection of Irish songs (Jacobite and others, most of them not given by Hardiman) and some opportunities of adding to my store, I make hold to send you one as a specimen, hoping that it may be worth your inspection or that of some one of your highly-gifted fellow-laborers.<sup>71</sup>

Dear Sir,

An ardent admirer of old Irish airs takes the liberty of sending you two which you called for in a late Publication and two which when played or sung with true Irish feeling fills him with an indescribable sensation. I believe I may call it a melancholy pleasure. They were set for a friend some years ago by an ex Master of a Band [portion of page missing] Tipperary man and if he did not imbibe an un-Irish taste from his position in the army this version of Shawn ODhiar a Glanna must be good as I may say with some confidence that Shawn was a native of Tipperary.<sup>72</sup>

The airs that the latter correspondent sent in—"Shawn ODhiar a Glanna" and "Emun a Knuc"—were two of a number that were specifically requested by *The Nation*; the others were "Tigherna Maigheo," "Buiachal na long," "Cailin Ruadh," "The Peacock,"

---

<sup>70</sup> Letter from J.H. Mann to Charles Gavan Duffy, 8 October 1844, RIA MS 23 H 27. As Duffy was the Editor of *The Nation*, most letters from correspondents were addressed to him.

<sup>71</sup> Letter from Spailpín Fánac to "Editor of 'The Nation,'" 6 November 1844, RIA MS 3 C 6.

<sup>72</sup> Letter from F O'F of Phibsbro [Phibsborough, Dublin] to Editor of *The Nation*, 26 December 1844, RIA MS 23 H 27.



“Buachalin don,” and “Bouchal Cuil duv.”<sup>73</sup> Explicitly identifying airs needed for their collection implies an agenda on the part of those at *The Nation*. Perhaps they were trying to fill gaps in their holdings or were specifically requesting airs they knew to be rare.

This communal effort at music preservation, initiated by Davis and *The Nation*, brought the antiquarian movement to the public in a way that the collections of Bunting or Hardiman never did. By the time Davis issued the calls for correspondent assistance, *The Nation* had become the largest weekly newspaper in the history of Ireland, with a circulation of 25,000 copies and an estimated ten readers per copy, yielding an audience of a quarter of a million people.<sup>74</sup> With access to such a large readership, Davis reached a cross-section of society that was unfamiliar with Bunting’s scholarly volumes.

What happened to this collection of *The Nation*? One author has suggested that the airs sent in by the journal’s readers served as the beginnings of John Pigot’s extensive holdings, now housed in the RIA.<sup>75</sup> This suggestion appears to be at least partly true. In one volume of Pigot’s collection, there are thirty-eight tunes that are marked as being obtained from *The Nation* (see Appendix 1).<sup>76</sup> Pigot noted the provenance of the tunes himself by placing an “N” next to each air.<sup>77</sup> In addition to these airs, there are also eight others marked as being “procured by Davis” (see

---

<sup>73</sup> *The Nation*, December 14, 1844, 152.

<sup>74</sup> Malcolm Brown, *The Politics of Irish Literature: From Thomas Davis to W.B. Yeats* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 67.

<sup>75</sup> Dónal O’Connor, “Ireland’s Music Collectors,” *Treoir* (Spring 2001), accessed 17 September 2013, [http://comhaltas.ie/music/treoir/detail/irelands\\_music\\_collectors/](http://comhaltas.ie/music/treoir/detail/irelands_music_collectors/).

<sup>76</sup> Forde-Pigot Music Collection, RIA MS 24 O 20.

<sup>77</sup> Pigot titled the final page of MS 24 O 20, “References to Collections, etc.,” where he has identified the sources of his collection and on what pages they can be found. Airs “sent the Nation” appear on pages 269, 270, 423, 463–466, 468, 482–484, and 549.

table 1)<sup>78</sup>. The airs in table 1 marked with an asterisk are those that Pigot identified as coming both from *The Nation* and from Davis.

Table 1. Tunes from *The Nation* That Appear in Pigot's Collection

"Poor Catholic Brother"
[Third part of] "Mo cailín deas cruite na m-bo" ("The pretty girl milking the cow")*
Anonymous*
"The Peacock"
"Tally ho, in the morning"*
Anonymous
Irish version of "Johnny Cope"*
Anonymous

Why would the airs sent in by readers of *The Nation* be used in Pigot's collection and not Davis's? It is likely that Davis's premature death cut short any potential plans he had for the collection. Another possibility, given Davis's close relationship with Pigot and his propensity for sharing his music resources, is that he had always intended on sharing *The Nation* collection with his friend and colleague. As further support for this theory, it appears that Davis made his personal collection available to Pigot for copying.<sup>79</sup> Forty-three of the tunes in Davis's collection also appear in Pigot's, more or less in the same order (see Appendix 2).<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Pigot assigned the term "Anonymous" to several melodies with no titles. As "Anonymous" typically applies to authorship, the term "Untitled" or "Unknown" would have been more accurate.

<sup>79</sup> A collection of Irish airs, NLI MS 14,099.

<sup>80</sup> Forde-Pigot Music Collection, RIA MS 24 O 20.

The sources described above establish Davis's credentials as an active participant in the Irish antiquarian movement. His frequent exchange of musical materials made him an important part of a network that included not only his friends Pigot, Lane, and Hudson but also established antiquarians such as Forde and Hardiman. Furthermore, he used these connections to supplement his own efforts at music collection. Enlisting the readers of *The Nation* into his endeavors, he spread his message of collection and preservation throughout vast elements of the Irish population. The success of these efforts is at least partly manifested in the music collections of Davis and Pigot.

#### Thomas Davis At the Crossroads of Two Traditions

At this stage it should be pointed out that Thomas Davis accumulated a significant music collection, numbering 247 airs. In all likelihood, however, he was unable to read music proficiently. The only evidence that hints otherwise is a humorous quip from one of Davis's letters, in which he wrote to Pigot, "I'm going to try an air or two, and be damned to your objections against my metre!"<sup>81</sup> Of course, even if Davis did test his compositional talents, it does not mean he required knowledge of musical notation to do so. Indeed, it is more likely that he would have simply composed by ear, attempting to approximate the traditional style with which he was familiar.

If he had limited ability to read music, why did Davis collect the music at all? It seems a rather illogical thing to do, much like an illiterate man amassing a

---

<sup>81</sup> See Davis to Pigot, 23 May 1844, reprinted in "Letters of Thomas Davis," *The Irish Monthly: a magazine of general literature* 16 (1888): 261.

collection of books. Given his propensity for sharing his collection with others, especially Pigot, it is possible he intended the music to be a communal resource. The principal motive, however, most likely stemmed from the example and influence of Edward Bunting's published collections. As Davis's guidepost in the realm of traditional music, Bunting assuredly influenced Davis's own collecting efforts. Bunting, though, was a musically educated organist who worked in Belfast. For him, musical notation was the logical means by which to preserve and disseminate Irish traditional music. For Davis, it was not so simple.

As a music collector unable to proficiently read music, Davis makes an odd figure. In a sense, he formed a bridge between the orally based traditions of Irish music and the text/notation based practices of music collection. On one hand, as a proponent of Irish traditional music and as someone who performed songs that he presumably learned by ear, Davis actively experienced the oral traditions of Irish music.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, by adapting new words to traditional airs he participated in the fluid transmission of both tune and text. The majority of his songs were published without notated music, but with only a textual indicator naming the air to which the song was to be sung. In this act, Davis relied on oral transmission for the success of his songs and showed himself to be amenable to the minor musical changes that naturally result from oral transmission. These naturally occurring changes, while apparently disbelieved or ignored by Bunting, were acceptable to Davis. These were different from the types of changes wrought by Moore, whose conscious arrangement of melodies into music fit for parlor songs was, according to

---

<sup>82</sup> Davis often sung Irish traditional songs at the social gatherings of his friends and colleagues. See Duffy, *Thomas Davis*, 130; and, *The Nation*, April 1, 1843.

Bunting and Davis, exceptionable. On the other hand, in his activities as a music collector Davis attempted to freeze those oral-based traditions in time. His well-meaning notions of cultural preservation compelled him to have traditional Irish airs transcribed—some into his own manuscript. In doing so he unintentionally affected the music's natural change as it passed from generation to generation. His actions embody the struggle between oral and textual traditions that took place not only in Ireland but throughout nineteenth-century Europe as folk music began to be collected and preserved.

There is some evidence to suggest that Davis used his collection as a resource for his songs. Of the 247 airs total in his collection, thirty are marked with Davis's hand-written Xs in the margin. Of those thirty, twenty-four fall in the second part of the manuscript, a miscellaneous collection of airs inscribed by two different hands, neither of which appear to be Davis's. Of those twenty-four, seventeen can be identified as sources for Davis's adaptations, those of his colleagues, or airs that were in some way significant to him.

As Davis was unable to read music proficiently, he plainly did not work directly from his manuscript while matching his texts to the X-marked airs. Duffy's description of Davis's working method lends credence to this notion: "A song or ballad was struck off at a heat, when a flash of inspiration came,—scrawled with a pencil, in a large hand, on a sheet of post-paper, with unfinished lines, perhaps, and blanks for epithets which did not come at once of the right measure or colour; but the chain of sentiment or incident was generally complete."<sup>83</sup> If we presume this

---

<sup>83</sup> Duffy, *Memoirs*, 120.

description to be accurate, Davis would have already had an air in mind when composing his text. There are various ways he could have chosen a suitable air: he could have drawn from his own knowledge of the repertory, or a colleague such as Pigot or Prendergast could have played airs on the piano for him. Perhaps such a collaborative method is how Davis internalized the X-marked airs in his collection.

In analyzing how Davis's published lyrics pair with their corresponding X-marked airs, it seems clear that rather than basing his songs on the static, preserved form of the melody in his collection, Davis took advantage of the flexibility offered by non-notated music (such as the freedom to add or subtract a pick-up note, or to subdivide longer note values) in order to smoothly set his texts. This flexibility is consistent with one operating within the oral tradition, and is surely something Davis would have experienced when singing traditional songs.

Matching Davis's published lyrics to the X-marked airs in his manuscript provides a starting point for assessing how he paired his texts with the music, and it allows us to gauge where his adaptations deviated from the notated airs. Analyzing two of his songs, "The Welcome" and "The Banks of the Lee," provides insight as to how Davis balanced the oral and written traditions as he created his songs. As a guide in the assessment process, we should perhaps utilize Davis's advice to aspiring lyrists, proffered in his "Irish Songs" essay:

- 1) "...in all cases the tune must suggest, and will suggest, to the lyrist the sentiment of the words."
- 2) "The tune will, of course, fix the number of lines in a verse."
- 3) "In strong and firm tunes, having a syllable for every note is perfection....With soft tunes, on the other hand, it is commonly better to have in most lines two or more light notes to one syllable..."<sup>84</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup> Davis, 275-276.

Davis paired the air “An buacailin buidhe” with his text for “The Welcome.” The tune is a lively modal jig in 6/8 time, rendered in the manuscript with a simple bass accompaniment. Its modality is confirmed by the absence of a leading tone in the melody and enhanced by the corresponding lack of dominant harmony in the accompaniment at the ends of phrases. Like most jigs and reels, the tune is divided structurally into two eight-measure phrases, yielding a standard, simple AABB form, as each section would be repeated in performance. To this music, Davis wrote a jubilant text on the wonders of true love:

Come in the evening, or come in the morning,  
Come when you're looked for, or come without warning,  
Kisses and welcome you'll find here before you,  
And the oftener you come here the more I'll adore you.  
Light is my heart since the day we were plighted,  
Red is my cheek that they told me was blighted;  
The green of the trees looks far greener than ever,  
And the linnets are singing, “true lovers! don't sever.”<sup>85</sup>

The resulting combination of text and music is very effective, and it demonstrates Davis's tripartite instructions for text-music pairing. The youthful exuberance of Davis's love poem pairs well with the upbeat tone of the jig. The eight lines of text divide evenly between the two musical phrases. And the syllabic setting complements the jig's “strong and firm” tune.

---

<sup>85</sup> *The Poems of Thomas Davis*, 50.

Example 1. First verse of “The Welcome” set to “An buacailin buidhe” from NLI MS 14,099.

Come in the ev - ning or come in the morn - ing Come when you're look'd for or

4  
come with - out war - ning Kiss - es and wel - come you'll find here be - fore y'And the

7  
off ner you come here the more I'll a dore you  
off'ner you come here the more I'll a-dore(you) Light is my heart since the day we were pligh - ted,

11  
told me was bligh ted The  
Red is my cheek that they told me was blighted The green of the trees looks far

14  
green er than e'r and the lin - nets are sing - ing true love - ers don't sev - er

Davis did well in taking advantage of the strong beats of the melody in order to emphasize the important words of the text. If one adheres to the notated melody



in Davis's collection, however, some minor text setting issues arise. The first three lines of Davis's poem contain eleven syllables each. The fourth, conversely, has thirteen. Whereas each of the earlier lines fit smoothly into two measures of music, squeezing the additional syllables into the same amount of music causes problems. See mm. 7, 8, and 12 in Ex. 1.<sup>86</sup> In order to smoothly set the text, small adjustments were needed, adjustments of a sort entirely appropriate within the practices of the oral tradition. In the case of "The Welcome," the longer note values in mm. 7, 8, and 12 would likely have been subdivided in performance in order to allow each syllable of text to receive the appropriate musical accompaniment. These adjustments are illustrated as *ossia* passages in Ex. 1.

"The Banks of the Lee" is another love song by Davis and is set to the traditional air "A Trip to the Cottage." The air is a double jig in 12/8 meter and in C Ionian, again provided with a simple bass accompaniment. There are many more complete triads in this accompaniment than in the previous example, giving the song the strong suggestion of a major-key tonality. The use of the dominant G in the bass at cadences, such as in mm. 6 and 8, also contributes to the tonal sound. It should be noted, though, that the accompaniments in Davis's manuscript were newly created by members of Davis's circle and naturally affect our perceptions of the airs. Despite his best intentions, Davis's attempts to preserve the repertoire as he found it, like most attempts at folk preservation, actually ended up changing it in the music. Structurally, the air from the manuscript is another AABB form, consisting of two four-bar phrases.

---

<sup>86</sup> All of the musical examples presented, excluding the *ossia* passages, are exact transcriptions from NLI MS 14,099. I have underlaid the song text.

Davis's text for "The Banks of the Lee" is much in the same vein as his previous love poem, with the protagonist first proclaiming the wonders of love and then describing the attributes of his lover:

Oh! the banks of the Lee, the banks of the Lee,  
And love in a cottage for Mary and me;  
There's not in the land a lovelier tide,  
And I'm sure that there's no one so fair as my bride.  
She's modest and meek,  
There's down on her cheek,  
And her skin is as sleek  
As a butterfly's wing—  
Then her step would scarce show  
On the fresh-fallen snow,  
And her whisper is low,  
But as clear as the spring.<sup>87</sup>

Again opting for a syllabic setting, Davis assigned the first four lines of text to the first four measures of music, whereas the last four measures received eight lines due to their abbreviated length. The structure of the music determined the structure of the text, with the A section of the tune supporting the protagonist's opening expression of love, and the B section of the tune supporting the description of his bride.

Davis's words match the upbeat, lively tone provided by the double jig. In a savvy text-setting procedure, he took advantage of the repeated rhythmic and intervallic patterns in measure 1 to accompany the repeated phrase "The banks of the Lee." In the second part of the song, Davis's choppy half-lines of text, paired with the running eighth note pattern in mm. 5–8, portrays the protagonist's excited utterances of his love's beauty.

---

<sup>87</sup> Thomas Davis, *The Poems of Thomas Davis. Now First Collected, With Historical Notes and Illustrations*, ed. Thomas Wallis (Dublin: James Duffy, 1846), 41.

Example 2. First verse of "The Banks of the Lee" set to "A Trip to the Cottage" from NLI MS 14,099.

Oh! the banks of the Lee, the banks of the Lee, And

not in the land a love li er tide, And I'm

love in a cot-tage for Mar-y and me; There is not in the land a love-li-er tide, And(I'm)

sure that there's no one so fair as my bride. She's mo dest and meek, There's down on her cheek, And her

sure that there's no one so fair as my bride. (She's)mo-dest and meek, There's down on her cheek, And her

step would scarce show, On the fresh fal len snow, And her

skin is as sleek As a but-ter-fly's wing Then her step would scarce show, On the fresh-fall'n snow, And her

whis-per is low, But as clear as the spring.

The same minor text-setting difficulties that Davis faced in “The Welcome” again arise in “The Banks of the Lee.” Whereas the first three lines of text fit nicely in the first three measures of music, an extra syllable in the fourth line creates problems. The adjustment illustrated by the *ossia* passage above m. 3 in Ex. 2 provides a practical solution, in which the D quarter note on beat 4 is simply subdivided to allow for a smoother text-music fit.

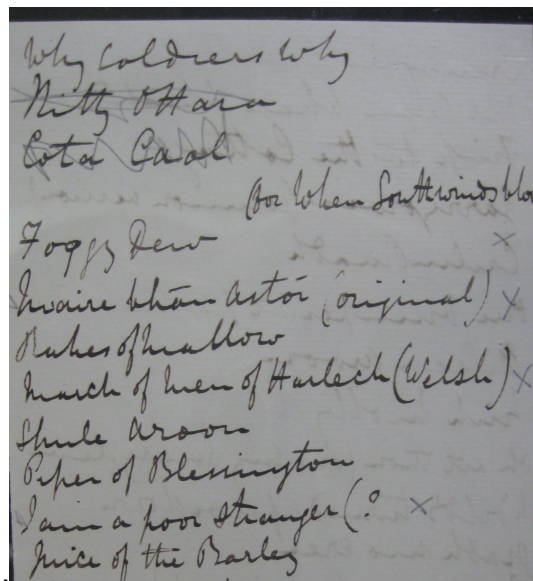
A similar problem occurs in the B section of the tune. Since Davis has established a pattern in which each line begins with an unaccented syllable, one expects a musical pickup note to match. This was done throughout section A, but section B begins on a downbeat with no pickup. If Davis had been relying solely on the transcribed tune for his source melody, he would have been faced with the metrical incongruity of placing an unaccented syllable on a strong beat. The *ossia* passage above mm. 4 and 5 in Ex. 2, however, illustrates the flexibility allowed to someone who approached this repertoire from the standpoint of the oral tradition. One can provide a pickup note into m. 5 by replacing the dotted quarter note on the final beat of m. 4 with a quarter note and an eighth note.

A minor adjustment in m. 7 allows for greater ease in performing the song. By subdividing the quarter note G on the second beat into two eighth notes, the contraction “fresh fall’n” can be expanded into “fresh fal-len,” thus rendering a more natural sounding way to sing the lyric.

If this analysis of Davis’s working method is accurate, then the Xs in the margins of his manuscript essentially served the purpose of check marks, a sort of *aide de memoire*, to remind him that he had already used the indicated air, or

perhaps to mark it for future use. There is no reliable means of identifying when he placed the Xs next to the melodies in his music collection, although a number of the song texts based on the marked airs appeared in *The Nation* between September 1844 and March 1845. Hand-written Xs appear elsewhere in Davis's manuscripts. On a slip of paper now held in the NLI, he listed a number of airs, most of which he employed for his songs. Pertinent to the context of this discussion is the fact that the airs Davis used were marked with an X (see Figure 1).<sup>88</sup>

Figure 1. List of airs from NLI MS 34,980



In adapting his texts to traditional Irish airs such as “An buacailin buidhe” and “A Trip to the Cottage,” Davis was operating at a crossroads of two musical traditions. In keeping with the notation-based practices of music collection, he acquired the airs and had them inscribed into his music collection. He may have

---

<sup>88</sup> The list appears on a loose sheet of paper at the back of NLI MS 34,980 manuscript and has the appearance of a checklist. This image is reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

even learned the exact versions of the airs that were printed in his collection by listening to Pigot or Prendergast play them on the piano. Yet it is clear that Davis, upon matching his published texts to the music in his manuscript, approached the repertory with the flexibility of one operating within the oral traditions of Irish music. Unable to read music in his collection with precision, he was not beholden to the notated version of the airs, but rather he likely used the flexible practices of traditional music performance—subdividing longer note values, adding pickup notes, and the like—in order to provide the smoothest text-music pairing.

The results of this analysis of Davis's music manuscript and of his working method should not be construed as somehow diluting his antiquarian credentials. Rather, as a music collector who had limited ability to read music and as a lyricist who relied on oral traditions, Davis engaged with traditional music on multiple levels. This makes his relationship with Irish music harder to quantify, but it also provides critical insight as to how he approached the repertory as a collector, a performer, and a lyricist.

## Conclusion

Thomas Davis's prowess at crafting nationalistic songs based upon traditional Irish airs cannot be argued. His efforts altered the landscape for Irish lyricists and songwriters and played a significant role in binding together Irish music and nationalism. Based on his legacy, it is convenient to claim that Davis used the music merely as a vehicle to carry his political message to the public. One should not assume, however, that the results of Davis's actions represent his intentions. The mere presence of love songs such as "The Welcome" and "The Banks of the Lee"

in his output suggests that Davis's motives were not completely occupied with politically-charged nationalism. A consideration of his manuscript notes, correspondence, and writings for *The Nation* reveal that Davis had a thorough knowledge of Irish traditional music and was actively involved in the antiquarian network of his day. Furthermore, the sources suggest that his love for this historical repertory in fact transcended politics.

Davis's regard for Irish music compelled him to a level of engagement that far exceeded his capabilities. He had limited knowledge of musical notation, yet he was an active collector of traditional airs, amassing a sizeable trove of music. How? By relying on musically educated friends and colleagues like Hudson, Lane, and Forde, but especially John Pigot. Unable to transcribe the traditional melodies himself, Davis surrounded himself with those who could. Inspired by the examples of Walker and Bunting, Davis's antiquarian impulses were directed toward the preservation of Ireland's musical legacy.

Davis approached his song adaptations—knowingly or not—from the standpoint of one operating within the oral traditions of Irish music. When in his "Irish Songs" essay he wrote, "it is not needful for a writer of our songs to be a musician" and encouraged his readers to "learn an air for the purpose of writing words to it," Davis was speaking from experience.<sup>89</sup> Some scholars read this excerpt as evidence of Davis's disregard for Irish music. The music, they conclude, was nothing more than a vehicle for his political texts. I have argued for an alternate interpretation in which Davis was following Bunting's example in urging lyricists to

---

<sup>89</sup> Davis, 274–75.

adapt their words to the air, thereby emphasizing the music's stability and integrity. While I still hold to that opinion, Davis's advice can also be taken in a much more straightforward manner as evidence of the way in which he approached his own adaptations. When Davis said "it is not needful for a writer of our songs to be a musician," he was speaking as a practitioner of the oral tradition. One need not be musically educated like Bunting, Hudson, or Pigot in order to compose texts for Irish airs. Knowledge of musical notation was not requisite. There were only two requirements: learn an air, and write words to it. In this simple exhortation, Davis was not negating the importance of the music, but was rather providing basic instructions for its use within the oral tradition.

Davis's scholarly reputation, then, deserves to be reassessed. His success at adapting traditional airs to nationalistic lyrics must be considered along with the knowledge of his activity in the collection and preservation of Irish music. Any notions of Davis's utilitarian attitude towards music should give way to ideas of Davis as both a nationalist *and* an antiquarian.



### CHAPTER 3 THOMAS DAVIS'S MUSICAL NATIONALISM

“Land of song!” said the warrior bard,  
“Tho’ all the world betrays thee,  
*One* sword, at least, thy rights shall guard,  
*One* faithful harp shall praise thee!”<sup>1</sup>

The eighteenth- and nineteenth-century nationalist movements in Ireland effectively employed the image of the bard. Thanks to the literary and antiquarian endeavors of Irish historian Charles Vallancey, antiquarians Joseph Cooper Walker and Edward Bunting, and even the apocryphal *Poems of Ossian* by Scottish author James MacPherson, the harp-playing, ballad-singing bard became the prepotent symbol of Irish culture.<sup>2</sup> The rise to prominence of the bard—and Irish traditional music, by association—empowered and was empowered by the Irish nationalist movement. The musical productions of the United Irishmen, Thomas Moore, and Thomas Davis’s Young Ireland movement took advantage of this symbiotic relationship, harnessing music’s cultural purchase to heighten their political message. While Davis certainly can be seen as continuing the legacy of his nationalistic forebears, his engagement with Irish traditional music makes him unique among them. Passionately committed to the study of Irish history and to the collection of Irish music, Davis used many of his songs to preserve popular knowledge of Irish history and to promote cultural nationalism. To appropriate Moore’s lyrics from the epigraph above, we may say that Davis’s musical

---

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Moore, “The Minstrel Boy,” *Irish Melodies, National Airs, Sacred Songs, Ballads, Songs, Etc.* (London: Collins and Payn, Royal Saloon: 1828), 58.

<sup>2</sup> MacPherson’s poems were supposedly translations from the works of the third-century bard, Ossian. His publications became wildly popular, but their authenticity was hotly debated in the nineteenth century. MacPherson never produced the original manuscripts he claimed to have seen.

productions aspired to “guard” and “praise” his native land. In a sense, then, he embodied the bardic figure of Ireland.

My investigation of Davis’s musical nationalism expands upon existing research. Scholars such as R.V. Comerford and John Hutchinson, for example, have commented on German romanticism’s influence on Davis.<sup>3</sup> My research, however, takes his published writings and manuscript notes into account to thoroughly explore how the ideas of Herder and others conditioned Davis’s view of Irish history, the Irish language, and his engagement with “the folk.” Similarly, whereas Davis’s nonsectarian ideas have been remarked upon in discussions of his political idealism, no analysis of the cultural contexts and connotations of his nonsectarian song texts and tunes has heretofore been carried out.

Davis clearly perceived Irish traditional music to be an important component of his nationalist campaign, one that would draw popular support and aid in teaching his nationalist principles. His methods, which included the use of popular verse, songbooks, journals, and an emphasis on native culture, place him within the context of the broader European nationalist movement. This chapter will explore the ways in which Davis employed music in his nationalistic efforts and examine the influences that shaped his pursuit of Ireland’s cultural and political autonomy.

Davis’s correspondence and early submissions for *The Nation* reveal a man who, even in the early, anonymous days of his political career, already maintained an interest in Irish traditional music and was aware of its potential applications in a

---

<sup>3</sup> See R.V. Comerford, *Ireland, Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2003), 138–39; John Hutchinson, *Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 98–103.

political context. In a letter to friend and schoolmate Cadwallader Waddy of early July 1842, three months before *The Nation's* inception, Davis wrote:

What say you to Blackburn? He has produced an angry feeling amongst moderate liberals and even Tories here and as to Pennefather he has damned himself past recovery. Norbury never never uttered so atrocious a charge as he did. To keep the ball up they are this day prosecuting a Drogheda printer for publishing the-----Shan van Vocht!!! Only think of such madness. Is it possible Peel sanctions this? But thank god, for with a persecuting government we need only be true to ourselves and Ireland will be ready whenever an opportunity offers to emancipate herself...<sup>4</sup>

The letter suggests that Davis was well aware of the political impact of Irish music, as he registered the governmental suppression of the “Shan van Vocht” as a possible instigator of political change.

In an 1842 review of the October issue of the *Dublin Monthly Magazine*, Davis praised the publication for including traditional music in its pages, writing:

Give [an Irishman], then, that music—the universal literature of mankind—that which no condition is so rude as not to have achieved—none so corrupt as to have abrogated; that literature which chronicles the hero with triumphant pœans—makes generations mourn with “songs of sorrow” over defeated patriotism and departed piety—that art of arts!—the beautifier! Give the Irish their own music again. You, rich men, took it from them. You outlawed their minstrels as rebels, and suppressed their songs as sedition. Vainly you strove to destroy it: it was an essence—a spiritual thing above your power; it has outlived your hostility; you worship what you went out to persecute. But let the old builders of the altar worship with you; bid *them* to the temple. How much there is in our national music! The history of the country breathes through it: its tunes and songs celebrate or lament our great men and great events. It tells our old manners—from the wedding jig, or the babe’s lullaby, to the keen for the dead. Wondrous magic!—which can bid us walk the Halls of Tara, and strive through the disasters of Aughrim—pant (slaves though we be) with the remembered triumphs of Brian Boroihme, and mourn in frantic strains the baffled hopes of ’98.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Davis to Waddy, 6 July 1842, NLI MS 5758, 74-77. Blackburn, Pennefather, and Norbury were members of the Irish Bar notorious for manipulating the legal system in a manner that heavily favored Protestants over Catholics. In fact, an 1894 issue of Dublin’s *Law Times* still referred to Norbury as “the hanging judge.” The “Shan van Vocht” was a popular revolutionary song from the 1790s.

<sup>5</sup> *The Nation*, October 15, 1842, 11.

As this article appeared in the inaugural issue of *The Nation*, one concludes that Davis held such strong opinions regarding traditional music before the journal was founded.

Music's prominent role in Davis's nationalist projects and plans affirms his understanding of the repertory's political potential and cultural importance. On 15 April 1843, in a recurring column of *The Nation* devoted to "Popular Projects," Davis submitted a letter entitled "Nationality." In it, he emphasized the importance of Popular Reading Rooms (what he called "colleges and lyceums for the working class") for every town as a sort of local gathering space where citizens could collectively engage in self-education. Aside from suggesting appropriate journals to read and historical figures to study, Davis called on his readers to collect accounts of the airs known in the neighborhood and to write "every air and verse, or fragment of them" into the town's music book. To do this would be to accomplish "a patriot's work." In addition, Davis encouraged the revival of the dancing of reels, jigs, and country dances, as well as the singing of traditional funeral keens and the frequent meeting of local pipers and harpers.<sup>6</sup> For Davis to have based such a significant portion of his "plans for national education" on the revival and practice of traditional music clearly shows its significance to his nationalist program.

Even the advertisements and announcements that appeared in *The Nation* display music's high status in Davis's movement. On 4 November 1843, a notice

---

<sup>6</sup> *The Nation*, April 15, 1843, 426.

appeared in the pages of *The Nation* advertising James Duffy's series *Irish Library*.<sup>7</sup> Alongside histories of the Irish nation and speeches of political heroes, the Young Ireland songbook, *Spirit of the Nation*, was featured prominently. If this advertisement had appeared once, the songbook's presence would not elicit much notice. But the ad appeared nineteen times, last appearing on 9 March 1844. For nearly five months the journal's readers saw a visual representation of the importance that Davis and Young Ireland placed on music. Its value to their campaign equaled or exceeded the recounting of past political or military triumphs.

In a similar example, the following year James Duffy and Young Ireland commenced a joint literary venture by issuing Duffy's *Library of Ireland*. The monthly volumes, slated to begin in July 1845, were to be priced at one shilling apiece so as to make them affordable for the general public. The first five proposed volumes were:

1. *The History of the Volunteers of 1782*, by Thomas MacNevin, Esq.,
2. *Ballads of Ireland*, a Collection of Historical and Romantic Ballads, edited by Charles Gavan Duffy, Esq.
3. *Life of Wolfe Tone*, by Thomas Davis, Esq.
4. *Songs of Ireland*, a Collection of Songs, with notices of the writers, edited by M.J. Barry, Esq.<sup>8</sup>
5. *A National Story*, by William Carleton

With the initial announcement of the series prominently featured on the first page of the journal, *The Nation*'s reading public saw that two out of the first five

---

<sup>7</sup> James Duffy (1809–1871) was a prominent Dublin-based Irish publisher. He specialized in publishing nationalist and Catholic religious items, and became the de facto publisher of the Young Ireland movement.

<sup>8</sup> As Michael Barry revealed in his preface to *Songs of Ireland*, Davis was originally intended to serve as the volume's editor. Finding himself too overloaded with work, however, he gave his sources to Barry, who then assumed the editorship. See Michael Barry, ed., *Songs of Ireland* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), vii–viii.

installments were musical, consisting of ballads and songs.<sup>9</sup> In trying to create a nationally minded public, Davis and Young Ireland were clearly counting on their native repertory as an important resource.

Davis's manuscript notes and correspondence confirm his commitment to using music in his campaign. Included among a sheaf of papers containing drafts of several articles and song lyrics, Davis inscribed a list entitled "Projects Fit for Making Ireland a Nation."<sup>10</sup> The seventy listed projects covered a wide-ranging variety of topics, including the re-writing of Irish histories, studies on Irish trade, and information on historical families. Music-based projects appeared frequently throughout the list: "Irish music and instruments;" "Folks lied or popular ballads," a project that suggests a definite Herderian or German nationalist influence; "Irish songs with music in books, letters, sheets, cards" and the same for Anglo-Irish songs; "Irish marches scored for the people"; and, "Manufactory of Instruments and new Irish trumpet and perfect harp/choral singing." Clearly Davis's musical interest was not limited to nationalist songs. While they may have been the most direct method of educating and rousing the people, Davis's list suggests that he intended to promote a variety of vocal and instrumental music to elevate Irish cultural nationalism.

One particular set of sketches in Davis's manuscripts is suggestive of the lengths to which he would go to strengthen Ireland's nationalist cause.<sup>11</sup> Under the heading "Plan for agitating Wales" Davis inscribed the title "Music of 'Men of

---

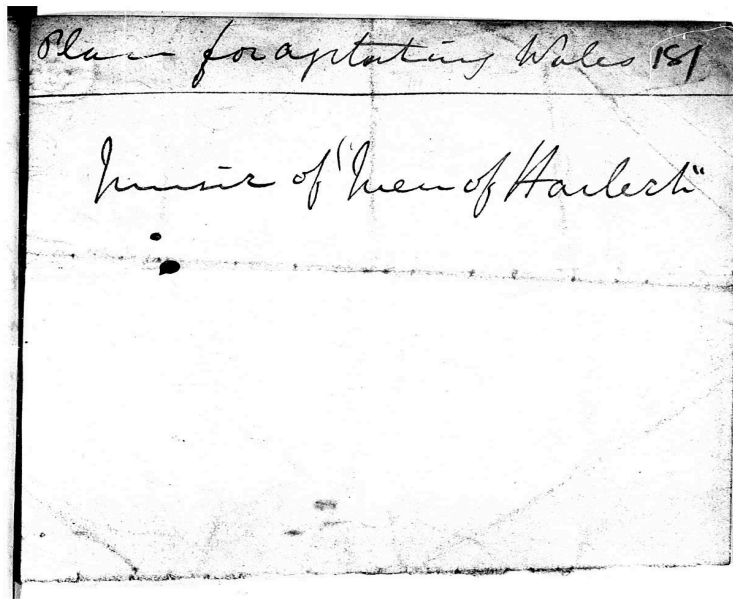
<sup>9</sup> *The Nation*, June, 7, 1845, 561.

<sup>10</sup> Miscellaneous letters and papers of Thomas Davis, RIA MS 12 P 16.

<sup>11</sup> Scrapbook including miscellaneous correspondence, songs, etc., mainly in connection with *The Nation*, RIA MS 23 O 47.

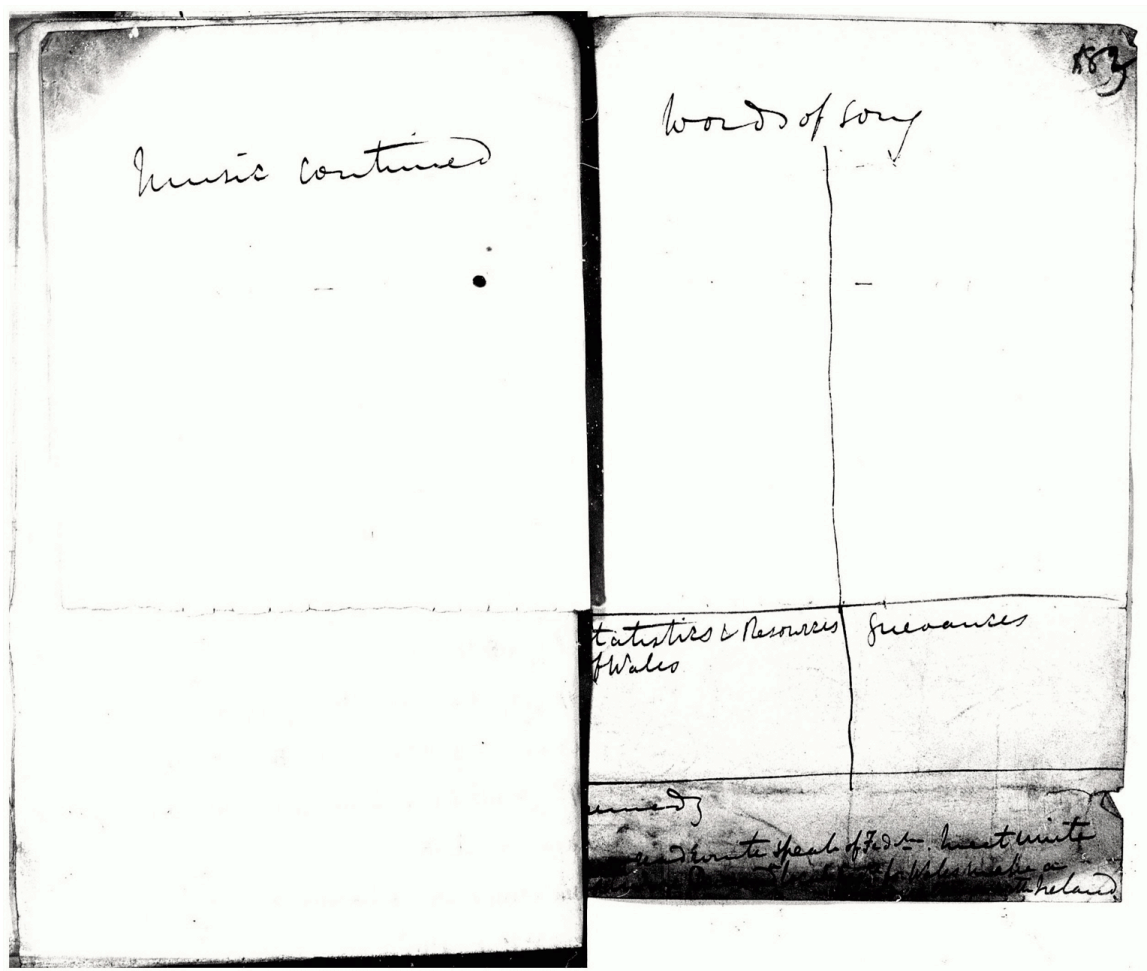
Harlech’,” which was the name of a Welsh air that William Elliot Hudson had collected while touring that country in the fall of 1844 and had sent to Davis.<sup>12</sup> On the following page of his notebook, below a section dedicated to the “words of song,” Davis allotted space for the national statistics and resources of Wales, as well as their grievances. Finally, on the bottom of the page, Davis jotted down the unpunctuated note “read write speak of Federalism. Meet write organise Demand a local lecture for Wales make a federal league with Ireland” (see Figure 1).<sup>13</sup>

Figure 1. Sketches for the Agitation of Wales, RIA MS 23 O 47.



<sup>12</sup> See letter from Hudson to Davis, 30 September 1844, NLI MS 2644. Hudson wrote, I send it ["Men of Harlech"], as I heard it from an old blind Montgomeryshire harper at Lowyn, but he was drunk!!! I will tell you what I think of it." According to the Appendix of Davis's collected works, he was very fond of the air. See Thomas Davis, *The Poems of Thomas Davis*, edited by Thomas Wallis (Dublin: James Duffy, 1846), 215.

<sup>13</sup> RIA MS 23 O 47, Images reproduced by permission of the Royal Irish Academy © RIA.



Davis was possibly attempting to capitalize on the rural unrest in Wales created by the Rebecca Riots (1839–1843), a series of protests undertaken mostly by small farmers as a result of perceived unfair taxation.<sup>14</sup> Rural grievances against government taxation were an issue that both countries had in common. In an effort to bolster Ireland's nationalist argument, Davis was apparently trying to enlist the aid of the Welsh, perhaps in a plea of Celtic solidarity. From Davis's viewpoint, if

<sup>14</sup> Matthew Cragoe, *Culture, Politics, and National Identity in Wales 1832–1886* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 156.



Ours the toil, but his the spoil, and his the laws  
we writhe in;  
Worked like beasts, that Saxon priests my riot in our  
tithing;  
Saxon speech and Saxon teachers  
Crush our Cymric tongue!  
Tolls our traffic binding,  
Rents our vitals grinding—  
Bleating sheep, we cower and weep, when, by one bold  
endeavour,  
We could drive from out our hive the Saxon drones  
for ever.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The lyrics were published as part of the song series “Echoes of Foreign Song.”

68

Davis's correspondence also reveals his commitment to employing music in his nationalist campaign. In an 1844 letter to Pigot, Davis wrote:

My latest project is a ballad poetry history of Ireland—not a continued metrical chronicle, but a rosary of ballads by everyone who could write one. I *calculate* that a fifth of such a work or more has been done. Would it not be the most potent and imperishable of books if well done. Besides it could be continually improved by the insertion of new or the re-writing of old ballads.

Why don't you write? *Make 'force' drive* J[ohn] O'H[agan] to write. It is cruel of him not to do so.

I wish he'd write on Aughrim or Clontarf, or anything down to the rent, if he'd but write. I[ngram], too, is inexcusable. One poem now is worth twenty to be brought out in five years.<sup>17</sup>

The letter is revealing for multiple reasons. Davis's plans for a "rosary of ballads" underline his engagement with the traditional repertoire. Also, the description of his project sounds very nearly like Charles Gavan Duffy's *Ballads of Ireland*, which was brought out in the summer of 1845. Davis's hand in Duffy's project was never publicly acknowledged, but given the close professional and personal relationship between the two men, it is highly possible that Davis played a guiding role in his colleague's publication.

The final two paragraphs of the letter show Davis to be a musico-poetic instigator of the Young Ireland movement, urging his compatriots to write poems and even suggesting possible topics. The final sentence—"One poem now is worth twenty to be brought out in five years"—reveals Davis's astute awareness of the need to capitalize on the success of *The Nation*, *Spirit of the Nation*, and the Repeal movement. Songs were the driving force that maintained the nationalist momentum.

---

<sup>17</sup> Davis to Pigot, 8 May 1844, NLI MS 14,056.

In another letter to Pigot, Davis wrote about possible projects:

If J. O'H is writing songs, make him do so to Irish airs, for which no good words are extant.

Smith O'Brien wants, as soon as the "Spirit of the Nation" is out, to re-issue the songs and music of the "Citizen." After that "Spirit of the Citizen" a re-issue of "Bunting," with new words, would be sublime.<sup>18</sup>

The first sentence of the example speaks to Davis's contention that many traditional Irish songs were lacking appropriate lyrics. He argued that the great body of songs received from the Irish language tradition were too despondent in their grief, or too divisive and sectarian in nature, whereas the majority of the street ballads and songs of the lower classes were too bawdy and inappropriate. Newer songs, like those of Thomas Moore, were aimed at the upper classes and so were inaccessible to most of the population. Davis's solution, put forth in his "Essay on Irish Songs," was to call for new lyricists:

We want the verse-writers of Ireland to try and remedy all these wants. If they be poets, they can do so. If they be men of bounding animal spirits, who love the rise because of its toil, or the descent because of its speed—who have grown up amid the common talk and pictures of nature—the bosomed lake amid the rocks—like a woman in a warrior's arms—the endless sea with its roaring or whispering fringes—the mantled, or glittering, or thundering night—the bleak moor, the many-voiced trees, the bounding river—if they be men who have passionately loved, and, ere philosophy raised them above it, ardently hated—if they are men generous in friendship, hearty as the hearth, tranced by sweet or maddened by strong sounds, sobbing with unused strength and fiery for freedom and glory, then they can write lyrics for every class in Ireland.<sup>19</sup>

And, of course, Davis and his Young Ireland colleagues would stand as models for this new body of Irish lyricists.

---

<sup>18</sup> Davis to Pigot, 23 May 1844, NLI MS 14,056.

<sup>19</sup> Davis, "Essay on Irish Songs," *Songs of Ireland*, ed. Michael Barry (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), 31–33.

Davis's thoughts in the letter to Pigot regarding the reissue of the music of the *Citizen*, as well as adding new words to Bunting's collections, are telling.<sup>20</sup> They suggest that Davis viewed existing collections of Irish music as a trove of material for future songs and had no qualms about appropriating the contents of those collections for his own use. As Bunting was widely viewed as the pre-eminent Irish musical antiquarian, using his collected airs would have added a certain amount of "national authenticity" to the re-issued songs.<sup>21</sup>

Davis's remarks also indicate that the musical plans for his campaign extended far beyond *Spirit of the Nation*, much further than scholars have previously considered. William Smith O'Brien's suggestion of a reissue of the music of the *Citizen* is indicative of this far-reaching musical strategy.<sup>22</sup> Additional letters between Davis and O'Brien suggest that the two men planned to establish a band for the Repeal Association and were in fact searching for a bandmaster at the time of Davis's death in September 1845.<sup>23</sup> Given the influence of Davis's songs after just three years of activity with *The Nation* (1842–1845), the impact of his musical plans, if completed, would have further directed the course of mid-nineteenth century Irish nationalism.

---

<sup>20</sup> The *Citizen*, also known as the *Dublin Monthly Magazine*, was a journal funded in large part by Davis's friend, William Elliot Hudson. William and his brother Henry were responsible for the "Native Music of Ireland" portion of the journal, in which they published airs from their own collections, as well as newly composed music modeled on traditional melodies. Edward Bunting's collections were published in 1796, 1809, and 1840.

<sup>21</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, both Bunting and Davis fully condoned the writing of new lyrics to traditional airs. Their main concern was to make sure the melodies themselves remained intact and preserved.

<sup>22</sup> William Smith O'Brien (1803–1864) was a Protestant MP for Limerick County in the British House of Commons. He joined the Repeal Association in 1843 in protest of Daniel O'Connell's imprisonment, and immediately became the de facto leader of the movement during O'Connell's incarceration.

<sup>23</sup> See the Correspondence of William Smith O'Brien, NLI MS 432.

## Influences on Davis's Nationalist Approach

Davis and Young Ireland incorporated music into their nationalist program more so than had any previous Irish national movement, and they played a significant role in establishing the cultural association between Irish music and nationalism.<sup>24</sup> As successful as Davis's efforts were, however, they were not original in conception. He successfully absorbed and incorporated a variety of outside influences that shaped his designs and methods.

The United Irishmen movement of the 1790s was one such influence. Inspired by the French Revolution's egalitarianism, the United Irishmen began as an organization of middle-class Protestants and Catholics who advocated for constitutional reform of the Irish government and for Catholic emancipation. The group gradually became more radical, until the government suppressed it in May 1794. The movement then reconstructed itself as an oath-bound secret society, dominated by middle-class extremists.<sup>25</sup> Native religious animosities soon overwhelmed the group's nonsectarian values, and the movement culminated in a bloody rebellion in 1798. The notorious sectarian atrocities committed by both sides has led historian Roy Foster to comment that the 1798 Rising was probably "the most concentrated episode of violence in Irish history."<sup>26</sup>

For Davis, who thought of violence as a last resort, the United Irishmen did not appear to be an apt guide. As one might expect, when writers of *The Nation*

---

<sup>24</sup> See Harry White, *The Keeper's Recital, Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 56-60; "Nationalism, Colonialism and the Cultural Stasis of Music in Ireland" in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800-1945*, ed. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 263-64.

<sup>25</sup> Roy Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London: Penguin Books, 1988), 274.

<sup>26</sup> Foster, 280.

looked to the preceding generations for political heroes, they often bypassed members of the United Irishmen in favor of less threatening options. Even in the ballads and songs chosen for *Spirit of the Nation*, only two entries out of 146 addressed the United Irishmen or 1798 (Davis's "Tone's Grave" and John Kells Ingram's "Memory of the Dead"). Most of the martial imagery and narratives were drawn from periods safely distant from the present, with seventeen songs recounting events from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.<sup>27</sup>

Yet there are aspects of the United Irish movement that provided a starting point for Davis's own. The United Irishmen began their campaign in the 1790s by advocating for the cause of religious equality. Their leader, Wolfe Tone (1763–1798), stood especially as a model for Davis. Tone was a Protestant intellectual who actively championed the cause of Irish Catholics. His 1791 pamphlet *An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland* vigorously called for the union of the Irish people, the return of the elective franchise to Irish Catholics, and the formation of a national government.<sup>28</sup>

Davis also appears to have harbored a personal devotion to Tone. A sign of this attachment appears in his unfinished biography of his predecessor. One of Davis's manuscripts contains a sketch in his hand of the frontispiece of the prospective work. In a note that reveals exactly how much he identified with Tone,

---

<sup>27</sup> Seán Ryder, "Young Ireland and the 1798 Rebellion," in *Rebellion and Remembrance in Modern Ireland*, ed. Laurence M. Geary (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2001), 139, 141.

<sup>28</sup> Theobald Wolfe Tone, *An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland* (Belfast, 1791), 29–31.

Davis inscribed “Liberty takes down the sword suspended from the ivied wall over Tone’s grave and hands it to *me!*”<sup>29</sup>

Further evidence of this idolization can be seen in the lyrics to Davis’s song “Tone’s Grave,” which appeared in *The Nation* in November 1843.<sup>30</sup> In the text Davis lamented the absence of a marker for his predecessor’s grave and described Tone’s moral character: “For in him the heart of a woman combined/With a heroic life, and a governing mind/A martyr for Ireland—his grave has no stone/His name seldom named, and his virtues unknown.”<sup>31</sup> Davis eschewed any mention of Tone’s radical republicanism and the violence of 1798, instead describing Tone as a kind-hearted hero and martyr. Deflecting the attention away from his radicalism and toward his personal character and courage illustrates a process of selective heroic memorialization in which Davis chose to present a facet of Tone that was politically safe, despite his dangerous legacy.<sup>32</sup>

Davis initially paired these lyrics with an air carrying strong nationalist connotations from the 1790s.<sup>33</sup> “Savourneen Deelish” appeared in the Belfast United Irishmen newspaper, the *Northern Star*, in July 1796 set to the lyrics “The Exiled Irishman’s Lamentation.” The song, also known as “Erin go Bragh,” had been used in Dublin operas such as *The Poor Soldier* (1783) and *The Surrender of Calais* (1791). The song had evidently gained popular notoriety even before it appeared in the

---

<sup>29</sup> See Volume of notes and letters by Thomas Davis relating to the United Irishmen, NLI MS 1791. Emphasis appears in the original text.

<sup>30</sup> *The Nation*, November 25, 1843, 104.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Davis, *The Poems of Thomas Davis*, ed. Thomas Wallis (Dublin: James Duffy, 1846), 162.

<sup>32</sup> Ryder, 143–144.

<sup>33</sup> “Tone’s Grave” was set to the air “Savourneen Deelish” when it first appeared in *The Nation* in November 1843. When the poem was republished in the *Spirit of the Nation* and in Davis’s collected works, however, no air was listed.

*Northern Star*, where it was prefaced with the note: “ERIN GO BRAGH! The following popular song we present to our readers as in some degree expressive of the situation of an Armagh exile.”<sup>34</sup> A 1797 letter from Mary Ann McCracken to her United Irishman husband, Henry Joy McCracken, in Kilmainham jail also attests to the song’s popularity: “There were six prisoners brot to town this evening, for refusing to swear allegiance, and came in undismay’d singing Erin Go Brath”.<sup>35</sup>

“The Exiled Irishman’s Lamentation” was very popular within the United Irishmen movement and became one of the most well known nationalist songs of the nineteenth century. It appeared in three editions of the United Irish songbook, *Paddy’s Resource* (1796, 1798, 1803). Its poignant lyrics, which assume the first-person narrative voice, address practical concerns such as taxes, loss of land, and emigration.<sup>36</sup> Davis, in choosing this air for his “Tone’s Grave”—also in first-person voice—was drawing upon the sentimental and nationalistic associations of the melody in order to bolster the perception of Tone as a politically safe patriot.

Davis was most likely also influenced by the United Irishmen’s use of newspapers and songbooks to spread their message. From the movement’s inception, the United Irishmen sought to educate and influence public opinion through a deluge of the printed word, issuing numerous pamphlets and resolutions, at least five songbooks, several prose satires, and four newspapers. Political songs and poems were featured regularly in their newspapers, which included *The Northern Star* (Belfast), *National Journal* and *The Press* (Dublin), and *The Harp of*

---

<sup>34</sup> Mary Helen Thuente, *The Harp Re-strung: The United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 101.

<sup>35</sup> Edna Fitzhenry, *Henry Joy McCracken* (Dublin: Phoenix, 1936), 89.

<sup>36</sup> Thuente, 101.



*Erin* (Cork). The four United Irishmen songbooks were titled *Paddy's Resource* and included one hundred and sixty different songs in editions printed in 1795, 1796, 1798, and 1803.<sup>37</sup> The group also printed and circulated broadsheets with four to eight ballads each, which were distributed by peddlers, dispatched by merchants as wrappers for their goods, or left at the doors of cottages.<sup>38</sup> The United Irishmen's songs generated what have become stock images of Irish nationalism: bards, harps, shamrocks, green flags, political martyrs, and blood sacrifice.<sup>39</sup> The songs were set to traditional airs and in style and content were aimed at a lower class audience, attacking taxes, tithes, high rents, the aristocracy, and English influence.<sup>40</sup>

The extent to which Davis and Young Ireland knew of these United Irish songbooks is evident by the fact that the first proposed name for *Spirit of the Nation* was the *Nation's Resource*, an apparent reference to *Paddy's Resource*.<sup>41</sup> The United Irishmen also provided a template for the way in which to use music in a nationalistic campaign in a way that would educate the people and fire their national zeal, yet would do so in a way that could transcend sectarian differences. Charles Hamilton Teeling, who was Charles Gavan Duffy's political and literary mentor, wrote in his *History of the Irish Rebellion of 1798: A Personal Narrative* (1828) of how the United Irishmen involved music and song:

As the vigilance of the government increased and the system of union became more pregnant with danger, for the insurrection act had now attached to it the penalty of death, the exertions of the people were

---

<sup>37</sup> Thuente, 2-3.

<sup>38</sup> Georges-Denis Zimmerman, *Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs 1780-1900* (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1967), 37.

<sup>39</sup> Thuente, 3.

<sup>40</sup> Jim Smyth, *The Men of No Property: Irish Radicals and Popular Politics in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Studies in Modern History, ed. J.C.D. Clark (London: MacMillan Press, 1992), 162.

<sup>41</sup> *The Nation*, February 4, 1843, 264.

redoubled. Music, to which the Irish are so peculiarly attached, and which, if I may use the expression, speaks the native language of their soul, was most successfully resorted to on this occasion; and the popular songs of the day, suited to the temper of the times, were admirably calculated to rouse the national spirit, and elevate the mind to contempt of danger and the most enthusiastic feeling which love of liberty and of country could inspire.<sup>42</sup>

Teeling's words foreshadow Davis's own thoughts on music, especially those from his preface to *Spirit of the Nation*, in which he wrote of music's power keep up the spirits, renew the zeal, and refine the tastes of all Irishmen.<sup>43</sup>

Another influence on Davis's nationalist methods was the output of Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759–1796). He was mentioned in *The Nation* on no fewer than eleven occasions, often held up as a model for aspiring Irish poets.<sup>44</sup> Burns's style, which was described in *The Nation* as having “no melodious flow, no pedantic allusions, just common sense poetry,” as well as uniting “homely language to immortal thoughts,” can easily be seen as influencing Davis's own simple, direct poetic style.<sup>45</sup>

Burns also provided a model for setting nationalist lyrics to traditional airs. He contributed many songs to the *Scots Musical Museum* (1787–1803), a series of anthologies of traditional Scots tunes and songs. Burns generally reprinted or imitated the colloquial dialect of Scottish folksongs rather than Anglicizing them for publication. The enormous popularity of Burns's songs demonstrates the eighteenth-century interest in folk song, as well as the adaptability of old tunes to

---

<sup>42</sup> Charles Hamilton Teeling, *History of the Irish Rebellion of 1798: A Personal Narrative* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828), 12.

<sup>43</sup> Thomas Davis, preface to *Spirit of the Nation* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), vi.

<sup>44</sup> *The Nation*, October 22, 1842; October 29, 1842; December 3, 1842; April 8, 1843; July 1, 1843; November 18, 1843; January 27, 1844; July 27, 1844; November 16, 1844; December 21, 1844; and, June 28, 1845.

<sup>45</sup> *The Nation*, April 8, 1843, 408; and, July 1, 1843, 600.

new lyrics.<sup>46</sup> Musicologist Hamish Mathison has written that Burns's particular achievement with the *Scots Musical Museum*, of which he was the editor in all but name, was to give the disenfranchised a political voice, allowing them to better evaluate the political stances and historical moments relevant to Scotland. In essence, Burns fashioned a "National Song."<sup>47</sup>

Burns, although experienced in adapting new texts to traditional tunes, did face some difficulties in negotiating the melodic and rhythmic characteristics particular to traditional Scots tunes. He acknowledged this in a November 1792 letter to George Thomson, editor of the five-volume work entitled *A Select Collection of Original Scottish Airs for the Voice* (1793–1818):

If you mean, my dear sir, that all the songs in your collection shall be poetry of the first merit, I am afraid you will find more difficulty in the undertaking than you are aware of. There is a peculiar rhythmus in many of our airs, and a necessity of adapting syllables to the emphasis, or what I would call the feature-notes of the tune, that cramp the poet, and lay him under almost insuperable difficulties. For instance, in the air *My Wife's a Wanton Wee Thing*, if a few lines smooth and pretty can be adapted to it, it is all you can expect.<sup>48</sup>

Burns then provided Thomson with his extemporaneously composed lyrics to the supposedly troublesome air, the first two stanzas of which are:

She is a winsome wee thing,  
She is a handsome wee thing,  
She is a bonnie wee thing,  
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

---

<sup>46</sup> Thuermer, 62.

<sup>47</sup> Hamish Mathison, "Robert Burns and National Song," in *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic*, ed. David Duff and Catherine Jones (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 83.

<sup>48</sup> Robert Chambers, ed., *The Life and Works of Robert Burns* (New York: Harper and Brother, 1852), 3:253.

I never saw a fairer,  
I never loed a dearer;  
And neist my heart I'll wear her,  
For fear my jewel tine.<sup>49</sup>

Whether Davis was aware of Burns's letter to Thomson, or of the poet's difficulty in adapting lyrics to this particular air, is unknown. Davis must have found the adaptation effective, however, as he published his own lyrics to the same air in December 1842 with the introductory note, "Lines in imitation of Burns." The first two stanzas of Davis's text, entitled "My Land," are clearly modeled on Burns's but with an Irish-centric subject matter:

She is a rich and rare land;  
Oh! she's a fresh and fair land;  
She is a dear and rare land—  
This native land of mine.

No men than her's are braver—  
Her women's hearts ne'er waver;  
I'd freely die to save her,  
And think my lot divine.<sup>50</sup>

Davis's choice of a Scottish air for an Irish national song may seem incongruous. Irish literature scholar Mary Helen Thuente has shown, however, that Burns's songs were very popular in Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly in Ulster. In fact, many of the tunes popularized by Burns were used by the United Irishmen for their own nationalist songs.<sup>51</sup> With "My Land" Davis took advantage of this common practice of musical borrowing to praise the attributes of

---

<sup>49</sup> Chambers, 3:254.

<sup>50</sup> *The Nation*, December 3, 1842, 120. A draft of "My Land" can be found in RIA MS 12 P 19, a collection of letters and papers of Thomas Davis.

<sup>51</sup> Thuente, 62.

his own country. Using a Scottish air and imitating Burns's style, Davis crafted a light-hearted love song to his nation.

Davis was also heavily influenced by the German Romantic nationalist ideas that were so prevalent throughout nineteenth-century Europe. Although no evidence exists of Davis ever travelling to Germany, he could read and translate the German language proficiently, and he kept abreast of contemporary movements on the continent.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, Davis would have had easy access to information on German trends, as there was much interest in all things German in 1830s' Dublin. The early issues of the *Dublin Monthly Magazine* (1833–1882), in particular, contained translations of German literary works, articles on German schools and universities, and biographical notes on German authors. As an omnivorous reader, Davis was most likely aware of these publications, especially when one considers that his friend, Samuel Ferguson, was a regular contributor to the journal.<sup>53</sup> Davis's own interest in German literature is confirmed by the fact that he translated and published German poems by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Leopold Graf zu Stolberg, and Friedrich von Matthisson in the pages of *The Nation* on multiple occasions.<sup>54</sup>

The German theories of nationalism, particularly those of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803) and Gotthold Lessing (1729–1781), influenced Davis in several ways. Two of the areas in which Davis's German influence manifested itself were in

---

<sup>52</sup> John N. Molony, *A Soul came into Ireland: Thomas Davis 1814-1845*, (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1995), 149.

<sup>53</sup> Helen F. Mulvey, *Thomas Davis and Ireland: A Biographical Study* (Catholic University of America Press: Washington, D.C., 2003), 39–40.

<sup>54</sup> *The Nation*, November 12, 1842, 74; December 31, 1842, 186; April 1, 1843, 394; and, April 22, 1843, 443.

his idealization of the Irish peasant (the Irish “Volk”) and in his support of the Irish language. In a July 1842 letter to his friend Daniel Owen Maddyn, Davis fulminated against the materialism and industrialization of what he called “Modern Anglicanism” and “Yankeeism” for the way it threatened the Irish rural way of life:

Modern Anglicanism—i.e. Utilitarianism, the creed of Russell and Peel, as well as of the Radicals—this thing, call it Yankeeism or Englishism, which measures prosperity by exchangeable value, measures duty by gain, and limits desire to clothes, food, and respectability,—this damned thing has come into Ireland under the Whigs, and is equally the favourite of the ‘Peel’ Tories. It is believed in the political assemblies of our cities, preached from our pulpits (always Utilitarian or persecuting); it is the very Apostles’ Creed of the professions, and threatens to corrupt the lower classes, who are still faithful and romantic. To use every literary and political engine against this seems to me the first duty of an Irish patriot who can foresee consequences.<sup>55</sup>

The “faithful and romantic” lower classes represented the essence of what it was to be Irish. They maintained the older ways of life and resisted the encroaching changes wrought by British industrialization. In watching the effects of imperialism and industrialization on traditional Irish society, Davis became convinced of the need to preserve indigenous cultural artifacts and traditional customs, and even to decelerate the course of modernization by establishing a cultural bulwark that would separate rural, traditional Ireland from modern, industrial England.<sup>56</sup>

For Herder, and later for Davis, the concentration on the common man not only consisted of praising the wholesomeness and simplicity of his lifestyle but also in establishing a continuity of tradition for that lifestyle. This involved research into the past in order to awaken historical awareness. Herder was actively involved in

---

<sup>55</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *Thomas Davis: Memoirs of an Irish Patriot, 1840–1846* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and Co., 1890), 83.

<sup>56</sup> Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 31.

historical research and as a folksong collector he published two volumes of *Volkslieder* (1778–1779).<sup>57</sup> Davis’s own interest in Irish history and his activities in collecting traditional music can be seen as reflections of Herder’s influence. Confirmation of this influence can be found in Davis’s manuscript notes: in listing his “Projects Fit for Making Ireland a Nation” he included space for “Folks lied or popular ballads” (see Figure 2).<sup>58</sup> Davis’s use of the pidgin term “Folks lied”—a clear Anglicization of “*Volkslied*,” yet not the idiomatically English “folk song”—suggests his awareness of Herder’s project.<sup>59</sup> Indeed, he subscribed to Herder’s belief that the study, collection, and appreciation of folksong could serve a deeper end than mere antiquarianism, offering valuable understanding of the character of a people.<sup>60</sup> For Davis, the shared body of traditional songs and ballads in Ireland represented a communal history and culture, a unifying bond that helped define the Irish national identity.

---

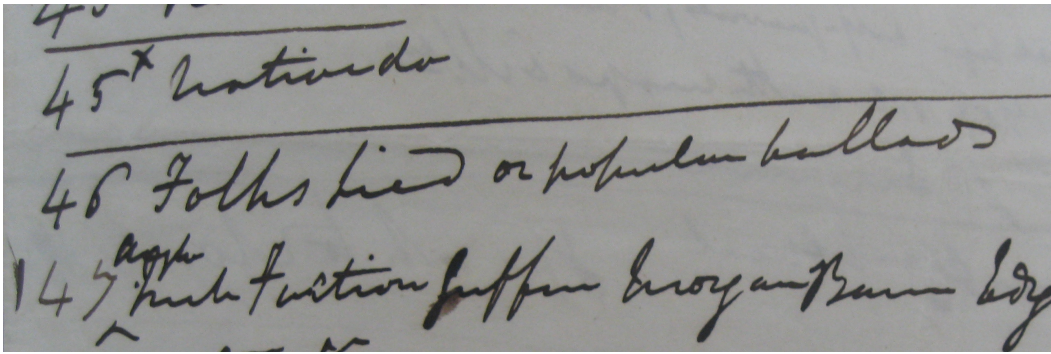
<sup>57</sup> Hans Adler and Wulf Köpke, eds., *A Companion to the Works of Johann Gottfried Herder* (Rochester: Camden House, 2004), 30. See also, Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, Ph.D. diss., National University of Ireland Maynooth, 1991, 34.

<sup>58</sup> Miscellaneous letters and papers of Thomas Davis, RIA MS 12 P 16. Image reproduced by permission of the Royal Irish Academy © RIA. Davis’s title recalls parallel verbiage used by historian Benedict Anderson in his *Imagined Communities* (1983), in which he posited that nations were “imagined” or socially constructed communities brought into existence by constituent members of a national group.

<sup>59</sup> Herder’s *Volkslieder* project was clearly an influence on Davis, but in practice it worked quite differently. First, Herder’s definition of “*Volkslied*” was broad enough to include works by Shakespeare and Goethe. Second, he wasn’t just interested in German folksong; instead he practiced a kind of cultural relativism, compiling song texts from around the world. Notably, he did not include any Irish texts.

<sup>60</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder, “Critical Forests, or Reflections on the Art and Science of the Beautiful: First Grove,” in *Selected Writings on Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. Gregory Moore (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 65, 67. See also, Ryan, 34.

Figure 2. "Folks Lied" in Davis's Manuscript Notes, RIA MS 12 P 16.



Davis emphasized a connection to the common man in other ways as well. For one, the motto of *The Nation*, printed on every issue of the journal, was "To create and foster public opinion in Ireland—to make it racy of the soil." Ascribed to Chief Baron Stephen Woulfe (1787–1840), who was known for his defense of the rights of Irish Catholics, the motto aligned Davis and the journal on the side of the Irish working classes.<sup>61</sup> The verbiage itself—"racy of the soil"—ties the interests of Young Ireland to the rural, traditional culture, as if to say that *true* popular opinion must come from the Irish *Volk*.

The very first issue of *The Nation* employed songs to make an undeniable statement as to where Young Ireland stood regarding the rights of the rural poor. An example from James Clarence Mangan's lyrics to "Our First Number," written to the tune of "Rory O'More," issued a warning to the Irish landlords:

We announce a New Era—be this our first news—  
When the serf-grinding Landlords shall shake in their shoes;  
While the ark of a bloodless yet mighty Reform  
Shall emerge from the flood of a Popular Storm!  
Well we know how the lickspittle panders to Power,

---

<sup>61</sup> For a period account of Woulfe, see "The Character of the Right Honourable Stephen Woulfe," in *Dublin Monthly Magazine* (November, 1842): 278–295. Davis had a personal copy of this journal in his library. See RIA RR/36/B.



Feel and fear the approach of that death-dealing hour;  
But we toss these aside—such vile vagabond lumber  
Are but just worth a groan from The Nation's First Number<sup>62</sup>

Irish historian and writer John Cornelius O'Callaghan, who wrote under the pen name of "Gracchus," was even more explicit in his lyrics to "The Exterminator's Song," sung to the tune of "'Tis I am the Gipsy King":

'Tis I am the poor man's scourge,  
And where is the scourge like me?  
My land from all Papists I purge,  
Who think that their votes should be free—  
Who think that their votes should be free!  
From huts only fitted for brutes,  
My agent the last penny wrings:  
And my serfs live on water and roots,  
While I feast on the best of good things!  
For I am the poor man's scourge!  
For I am the poor man's scourge!  
(*Chorus of the Editors of THE NATION*)  
Yes, *you* are the poor man's scourge!  
But of *such* the whole island we'll purge!<sup>63</sup>

Davis's own "Scene in the South," which appeared later, described finding the site of a ruined peasant's cabin, and ended with a vow to purge Ireland of its unjust landlords.<sup>64</sup>

As a middle class, Anglo-Irish Protestant, Davis's efforts to connect with and promote the traditions of his rural, Catholic countrymen created a paradox of sorts. He undoubtedly admired the rural Irish traditions and even participated in antiquarian activities to preserve and promote Irish music and other elements of indigenous culture. In a strict sense, however, Davis was not a part of that tradition.

---

<sup>62</sup> *The Nation*, October 15, 1842, 9.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas Davis, *The Poems of Thomas Davis. Now First Collected*, ed. Thomas Wallis (Dublin: James Duffy, 1846), 191–193.

His was the world of the colonizer, not the colonized. Kate Trumpener has astutely observed that the middle-class cultural nationalism that took place throughout nineteenth-century Europe, and of which Davis was a part, was based on a new degree of imaginative sympathy and community with countrymen who were more directly oppressed and affected. This resulted in a “rhetorical appropriation of their situation and customs as if they in fact constituted a shared tradition.”<sup>65</sup>

The idea of a “shared tradition” continued in Davis’s support for the Irish language, which was also influenced by the writings and theories of German nationalists. For Herder, language was the external signifier that distinguished one nation from another. It was the means through which man became conscious of his national personality—the outer expression of his inner experiences, the result of a particular history, and the legacy of a distinctive tradition. For a man to speak a foreign language was to live an artificial life.<sup>66</sup> These ideas echo strongly in Davis’s writing on the Irish language. In an essay entitled “Our National Language,” he wrote:

The language, which grows up with a people, is conformed to their organs, descriptive of their climate, constitution, and manners, mingled inseparably with their history and their soil, fitted beyond any other language to express their prevalent thoughts in the most natural and efficient way.

To impose another language on such a people is to send their history adrift among the accidents of translation—‘tis to tear their identity from all places—‘tis to substitute arbitrary signs for picturesque and suggestive names—‘tis to cut off the entail of feeling, and separate the people from their forefathers by a deep gulf—‘tis to corrupt their very organs, and abridge their power of expression.

---

<sup>65</sup> Trumpener, 32.

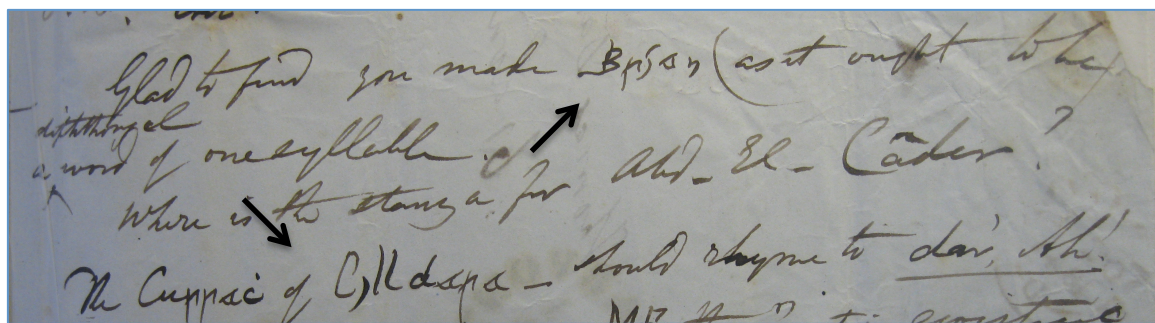
<sup>66</sup> Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (Hutchinson and Co: London, 1960), 62–64.

The language of a nation's youth is the only easy and full speech for its manhood and for its age. And when the language of its cradle goes, itself craves a tomb.<sup>67</sup>

Davis's strong support of the Irish language is consistent with the middle class appropriation of traditions as pointed out by Trumpener, especially considering the fact that Davis could not even speak Irish.

This lack of knowledge did not prevent Davis from using the Irish language whenever possible in his songs. He inserted Irish words or phrases in fifteen of his song texts.<sup>68</sup> William Elliot Hudson, Davis's friend and fellow Irish music enthusiast, was a fluent Irish speaker and appears to have advised him on aspects of pronunciation and versification. In an 1844 letter, Hudson wrote to Davis concerning the lines to his song text "Oh! for a Steed": "Glad to find you made Brian (as it ought to be) a diphthongal word of one syllable...The Currac of Cylllara, should rhyme to dar' Ah!" (see Figure 3).<sup>69</sup> Hudson even went to the length of writing "Brian" and "Currac of Cylllara" in the Gaelic script.

Figure 3. Hudson's Advice for Davis's "Oh! for a Steed," NLI MS 2644. Arrows Indicating Gaelic Script.



<sup>67</sup> *The Nation*, April 1 1843, 394.

<sup>68</sup> Here I am counting only the lyrics that have been paired with airs. The number climbs to twenty-four if one adds the poems and ballad texts that do not have accompanying airs.

<sup>69</sup> William Elliot Hudson to Thomas Davis, 30 September 1844, NLI MS 2644. Image reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.

Davis also saw to the inclusion of Irish phrases, names, and places, as well as an Irish language index to the 1845 edition of *Spirit of the Nation* songbook. Again counting on the aid of his knowledgeable colleagues, Davis received assistance from Hudson, and antiquarians John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry.<sup>70</sup> Not all of Davis's Young Ireland compatriots agreed with his Irish language emphasis. While he insisted that to truly understand Ireland's history, topography, and romance, one must study the native nomenclature, some of his colleagues preferred the practicality of English. A letter of the period from Charles Gavan Duffy to Thomas MacNevin humorously reveals the language controversy:

It was impossible to keep my appointment with you yesterday; I had a *sederunt* with Davis over the quarto edition of the *Spirit* and it lasted long, b/c the moot points were various and troublesome...I have yielded however about the native names, and I fear a new 'insurrection of the Bards' in consequence. The text of the ballads is to be larded with a Celtic nomenclature furnished by John O'Donovan, which sometimes consist of an aggregate meeting of consonants with scarce a vowel to take the chair. They dislocate the metre, evaporate the melody, and often efface the rhyme itself. Since McCarthy got back his revises he declares it is useless to rhyme any more; if he wrote

Let us go down

To pretty Kingstown

Davis, he says, would turn it in the next edition into—

Let us go down

To pretty Dunleary [Dunleary being the native name of Kingstown]

...You will stare with all your eyes when you see what has become of some of your old acquaintances. What do you say to the Lee becoming the Laoi, the Shannon the Sionainn, Limerick Luimneach, and Sleive Donard Sliab Domangort. It seems to be this is going too fast: it would need the authority of an Irish parliament, methinks, to get the present generation to call Glengariff Glen Garbh...Pigot in a fine frenzy, says, let them learn. But suppose (which is highly probable) that they won't learn?<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>70</sup> See correspondence from Hudson to Davis, [n.d.], RIA MS 23 O 47, and NLI MS 4571, a collection of notes made for Thomas Davis by Eugene O'Curry concerning the Gaelic items in the index to *Spirit of the Nation*, 21 March 1845.

<sup>71</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History, 1840-1850* (Cassell, Petter, and Galpin: London, 1880), 561–563.

The practical concerns voiced by Duffy were seen as negligible by Davis. Although he could not speak the language himself, his belief that Irish culture would be set adrift without the anchor of its indigenous language compelled him to push for its inclusion in his songs and in those of his colleagues.

#### German Elements in an Irish Context: Gaelic Revival

John Hutchinson writes that, for cultural nationalists along the lines of Herder, national glory came not from political power of the state but from the culture of its people. Aiming for the moral regeneration of their communities, they engaged in naming rituals, celebrated national cultural distinctiveness, and rejected foreign practices. In order for these movements to succeed, activists had to “evoke and appropriate genuine communal memories linked to specific homelands, cultural practices, and forms of socio-political organization.”<sup>72</sup>

In Davis’s time, cultural nationalists found their communities under attack by the spread of British cultural hegemony and political influence. The Act of Union (1801) effectively accelerated this threat. Ireland’s political, social, and intellectual leaders abandoned Dublin for London, taking with them their much needed talent and financial resources; meanwhile Ireland’s traditional, agrarian economy was suddenly thrust into competition with Britain’s modern, industrializing economic machine. Gaelic culture was steadily on the retreat, so much so that by 1845 the Irish (half of whom still spoke their native tongue) viewed the Irish language as a

---

<sup>72</sup> Hutchinson, 16, 20.

mark of poverty, illiteracy, and backwardness. Ireland seemed destined to be remade in the image of Britain.<sup>73</sup>

By the 1830s, however, a wave of cultural revivalists emerged, led by figures such as George Petrie (1790–1866), James Hardiman (1782–1855), and Samuel Ferguson (1810–1886), two of whom were Protestant. Reacting against the hegemony of English values, these men exhaustively investigated the history of Gaelic Ireland to vindicate Ireland's claims as a separate civilization.<sup>74</sup> Petrie was an accomplished archaeologist, painter, journalist, and music collector. A member of the Royal Irish Academy by age thirty, he undertook a scientific reordering of its collections and added to its treasures with his own expeditions and collecting trips.<sup>75</sup> He also directed the historical section of the Irish Ordnance Survey (1828–1840), was an active member of the Irish Archaeological Society (1840) and the Ossianic Society (1853), and edited the *Dublin Penny Journal* (1832–33) and the *Irish Penny Journal* (1840–41).<sup>76</sup>

Petrie's travels around Ireland as part of the Ordnance Survey facilitated his interest in Irish music and provided ample opportunity to enhance his own music collection, part of which (147 airs) was eventually published as the *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1851).<sup>77</sup> This first of several proposed volumes represented only a tenth of Petrie's entire collection.<sup>78</sup> Petrie's musical interests often overlapped with Davis's

---

<sup>73</sup> Hutchinson, 75.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Mulvey, 230.

<sup>76</sup> Hutchinson, 80.

<sup>77</sup> Ryan, 108. Petrie's *Ancient Music of Ireland* was the sole publication of the Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland, a group he helped co-found.

<sup>78</sup> Charles Villiers Stanford's *The Complete Collection of Irish Music as Noted by George Petrie* (1902) contained 1,582 tunes.

own, as both men hoped to illustrate the cultural value of their native repertory and to use that music to bridge Ireland's sectarian divide. A deeper understanding of a shared, historical, musical heritage, they thought, would spur reconciliation. Petrie wrote of his Protestant countrymen: "Could music penetrate their stony hearts, the melodies of Ireland would make them weep for the ill they were the means of perpetuating on this unhappy island, and they would embrace that ill-treated people with a generous affection, anxious to make reparation for past injuries."<sup>79</sup>

It also appears that Davis and Petrie were friends. While no correspondence between the two men has been found, both of them were members of the Royal Irish Academy and both shared the mutual friend of John Pigot.<sup>80</sup> Additionally, Irish poet and songwriter Albert Perceval Graves (1847–1931) noted in his *Celtic Song Book* that Davis and Petrie were "personal friends" and that Davis had even sent Petrie some airs from his own collection.<sup>81</sup>

Because of their nonsectarian goals and conciliatory efforts, Davis and Petrie can be seen as representing a middle ground in Irish cultural nationalism. James Hardiman and Samuel Ferguson, however, each stood at opposite ends of the spectrum. On one hand, with his *Irish Minstrelsy, or bardic remains of Ireland* (1831), a collection of Gaelic poems and songs with translation, Hardiman used the fruits of his research not to bring all Irishmen together, but to present a circumscribed vision

---

<sup>79</sup> William Stokes, *The Life and Labours in Art and Archeology of George Petrie* (London: Longman's, Green, and Co., 1868), 317.

<sup>80</sup> Mulvey, 230. The RIA catalogue lists MS 24 O 9, 24 O 10, and 24 O 11 as Petrie's correspondence, some of which concerns Davis. The collection has been miscataloged, however, and is actually the correspondence of R. R. Madden. I was assured the library is correcting the error.

<sup>81</sup> Albert Perceval Graves, *The Celtic Song Book: Being Representative Folk Songs of the Six Celtic Nations* (London: E. Benn, 1928), 32.

of Ireland that essentially equated Gaelic with Catholic.<sup>82</sup> He thus undercut any hopes of the nineteenth-century Protestant Irish—descendants of the colonizer, in his view—to espouse an Irish identity.<sup>83</sup> Samuel Ferguson, on the other hand, was a Belfast-born Protestant who was strongly unionist and ardently opposed to the Catholic Church.<sup>84</sup> Ferguson’s early writing, which appeared in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* and in the *Dublin University Magazine* throughout the 1830s, strongly suggests that he was both poet and Protestant propagandist. The Ireland he envisioned included the Catholic Irish, but only after they abandoned their religious beliefs in order to join the Anglo-Irish as “free, loyal, and united Protestants.”<sup>85</sup> In Ferguson’s mind, his “Popish countrymen” had to be weaned from their idolatry and superstition in order to take part in the nationhood which they were temperamentally incapable of creating on their own.<sup>86</sup> As he wrote in an 1833 article, the primitive and savage Native Irish (i.e. Catholics) could only be liberated by the Protestant Ascendancy, who were seen as the only class capable of conceiving and creating a nation.<sup>87</sup>

These antithetical views of Irish cultural nationalism collided in Ferguson’s four-part review of Hardiman’s *Irish Minstrelsy*, which appeared in the *Dublin University Magazine* throughout 1834 (April, August, October, November). An example of this ideological skirmish can be seen surrounding the Gaelic song “Róisín

---

<sup>82</sup> Ryan, 104.

<sup>83</sup> May McCann, “Music and Politics in Ireland: The Specificity of the Folk Revival in Belfast,” *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 4 (1995): 61.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>85</sup> David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: colonialism, nationalism and culture*, Cultural Politics (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 26, 28.

<sup>86</sup> Cairns and Richards, 28.

<sup>87</sup> Samuel Ferguson, “A Dialogue Between the Head and the Heart of an Irish Protestant,” *Dublin University Magazine* 2, no. 11 (November 1833): 592–3.



Dubh,” a seventeenth-century love song that metaphorically identified Ireland with a woman. Hardiman translated the song text and added his own contextual notes, interpreting the poem as a political allegory in which Ireland—“Dark Rosaleen”—awaited military aid to overthrow her English oppressors. Alternatively, Ferguson chose to interpret the poem as the love song of a priest who had broken his vows: “We sympathise with the priest’s passion, we pity his predicament; but we despise his dispensatory expedients, and give him one parting advice, to pitch his vows to the Pope, the Pope to purgatory, marry his black rose-bud, and take a curacy from the next Protestant rector.”<sup>88</sup>

Surprisingly, given the profound differences in their views, Davis worked with and developed friendships with both Hardiman and Ferguson. Their love of Irish history and culture created what Ferguson called a “green point of neutral ground, where all parties may meet in kindness and part in peace.”<sup>89</sup> Davis took advantage of Hardiman’s expertise, particularly on Irish events of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to consult on historical matters. Additionally, their correspondence from the summer of 1845 reveals that they exchanged musical manuscripts, and that Davis encouraged Hardiman to include music with his next publication of Irish songs, saying that “one song with music is a better apostle of Irish than 20 without.”<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> McCann, 61.

<sup>89</sup> Samuel Ferguson, “Hardiman’s *Irish Minstrelsy*—No. III,” *Dublin University Magazine* 4, no. 22 (October, 1834): 467.

<sup>90</sup> James Hardiman to Thomas Davis, 16 June 1845, NLI MS 2644. Davis’s response to Hardiman can be found in the Letters to James Hardiman, RIA MS 12 N 20, letter #51.

Davis and Ferguson found common ground on multiple fronts. Both men were avid researchers of Irish history and were poets. And even though Ferguson's writing for the *Dublin University Magazine* was politically conservative and pro-union, in a cultural sense it was strongly national. In the pages of the journal he urged Irish writers to find themes in the past of their own country, especially from the history of the Gaelic kingdoms. He hoped that the heroes of Gaelic literature would provide the same kind of inspiration that the heroes of Homer had inspired in the Greeks.<sup>91</sup> The cultural nationalism shared by Davis and Ferguson created a bond between the two men. Davis thought highly enough of Ferguson to send him a copy of the 1845 edition of *Spirit of the Nation* songbook as a gift, including the simple inscription, "Samuel Ferguson, Esq., with the regards of Thomas Davis, March 1845."<sup>92</sup> In response, Ferguson wrote to Davis that he would "preserve [*Spirit of the Nation*] as a memorial of your friendship and an incitement to my own love of song and country."<sup>93</sup> In the following month, when Ferguson was unable to complete a writing project due to an illness in his family, he asked Davis to finish it, explaining: "There is something in our feeling about this country that makes us brothers."<sup>94</sup>

The Gaelic revivalists of the 1830s and 1840s—Petrie, Hardiman, Ferguson, and Davis—all mined the annals of Irish history both to preserve what was in danger of being lost and also to legitimate Ireland's distinct cultural identity.

---

<sup>91</sup> J.C. Beckett, "The Irish Writer and His Public in the Nineteenth Century," *Yearbook of English Studies* 11 (1981): 104, 111.

<sup>92</sup> Presentation copy of *Spirit of the Nation*, NLI LO 1643. On the second page, Ferguson wrote an early draft of his poem, "To the Gentlemen of the Nation Newspaper, on their being censured for their want of Sectarian Zeal."

<sup>93</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *Thomas Davis: Memoirs of an Irish Patriot, 1840-1846* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1890)

<sup>94</sup> Samuel Ferguson to Thomas Davis, 8 April 1845, NLI MS 2644.

Because of Ireland's political circumstances—being governed from London and having a ruling elite made up of a minority of the population—the revivalists' efforts to unearth and revitalize Irish culture were inevitably laden with political connotations. Whether like Davis and Petrie (à la Herder) they hoped to use the knowledge of Irish culture as a unifying force, or like Hardiman and Ferguson to justify a circumscribed vision of Irish identity, the revivalists broached the question of "Whose culture is it?" with differing plans and agendas.

### Irish History as a Resource

Influenced by nationalist movements abroad and the Gaelic revivalists at home, Davis used his native country's history as a resource to assert national legitimacy and to promote a shared heritage. As Patrick O'Farrell pointed out, however, Davis's idealistic nationalism ignored Ireland's sectarian facts.<sup>95</sup> The long history of bitter antagonism between the Catholics and Protestants meant that Davis's campaign for unity was over before it even began. As of the Act of Union in 1801, the majority of the Irish Protestants considered themselves to be British nationalists and were no longer open to conversion to Irish nationalism. Moreover, Davis's mission held a radical contradiction: while he looked forward to an Irish nationalism in which Catholics and Protestants would unite in brotherhood, he also looked back to, and sought to resurrect, an Irish history overflowing with memories of revolution and sectarianism. The assumption was that a revival of the past would encourage the development of a living national consciousness and a unified

---

<sup>95</sup> Patrick O'Farrell, *Ireland's English Question: Anglo-Irish Relations 1534-1970* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 133.

people.<sup>96</sup> For a time, it looked as if Davis's vision would succeed. In the end, however, memories of Ireland's past proved too strong for his nonsectarian nationalism.

Davis was also attempting to reconcile ideas of racial purity with the reality of Ireland's pluralist origins. In doing so, he wanted to build linguistic and cultural barriers between Ireland and England while using those same processes to break down barriers between the descendants of Englishmen and Irishmen living in Ireland. His aim was to convince all parties that "Irishness" was a product not of race or religion, but of environment.<sup>97</sup> Living in Ireland and embracing its uniqueness was qualification enough to be considered Irish.

A formidable obstacle stood in Davis's path: many Irishmen had no knowledge of their country's history. The English government, acting on the belief that education would dispel political disaffection, created the National Education Board in 1831 to promote, control, and finance primary education. By 1845, there were over four thousand government run schools across Ireland with hundreds of thousands of students. The schools made great gains in improving literacy rates across the island but at the same time were hostile toward the education of Irish history and Irish literature. Irish children were taught to think of themselves as English.<sup>98</sup> It was Davis's task to re-educate his readers with a version of Irish history untainted by the biases of the colonizer. In an essay published in *The Nation*, he wrote:

---

<sup>96</sup> O'Farrell, 133.

<sup>97</sup> D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London: Routledge, 2003), 157–58.

<sup>98</sup> Boyce, 159–60.

I repeat, then, sir, that 'tis but a just demand that every Irishman who comes to discuss our power of independence should feel that his education, and studies, and conversation all prejudice him to lean unjustly against the belief of Ireland's strength; and therefore it is his bounden duty, as an honest judge, to discard all Anglicism—all the peculiarly English notions of England, of Ireland, and of other lands, as they are, and as they were.<sup>99</sup>

In Davis's opinion, the educational handicaps created by the state educational system prevented the Irish people from realizing their national potential.

Music figured prominently in Davis's plans to promote a knowledge of Irish history. Davis himself wrote eighteen songs with historical subject matter.<sup>100</sup> One such example is his song, "Clare's Dragoons" set to the air "Viva la" (Ex. 1). The text recounts the bravery and military exploits of Lord Clare's Dragoons, a regiment of Irish soldiers who, forced to leave Ireland, served in the armies of France from the late-seventeenth through the mid-eighteenth centuries. The opening stanza paints a picture of the regiment's military prowess:

When, on Ramillies' bloody field,  
The baffled French were forced to yield,  
The victor Saxon backward reeled  
Before the charge of Clare's Dragoons.  
The flags, we conquered in that fray,  
Look lone in Ypres' choir they say,  
We'll win them company to-day,  
Or bravely die like Clare's Dragoons.

Viva la for Ireland's wrong!  
Viva la for Ireland's right!  
Viva la in battled throng  
For a Spanish steed, and sabre bright!<sup>101</sup>

---

<sup>99</sup> Davis, "Letters by a Protestant on Repeal" no. IV, *The Nation*, February 25, 1843, 316.

<sup>100</sup> Here I am counting only his texts that were paired with airs.

<sup>101</sup> Writers of "The Nation," *Spirit of the Nation*, Ballads and Songs with Original and Ancient Music, Arranged for Voice and Piano (Dublin: James Dufy, 1845), 288–90.

“Viva la” was a popular melody with the United Irishmen of the 1790s. According to Davis’s personal copy of the “Native Music of Ireland,” the United Irishmen poet James Orr used the same tune for his song “The Irishman,” the text of which praised the natural beauty of Ireland and the moral character of its inhabitants.<sup>102</sup> The tune also appeared in the 1795 *Paddy’s Resource* songbook.<sup>103</sup> Davis chose a melody with clear nationalistic and even revolutionary connotations to underscore his text of Irish military triumph.

Example 1. Davis’s “Clare’s Dragoon” in *Spirit of the Nation* (1845)

**CLARE’S DRAGOONS.**  
AIR.—“*Viva La.*”

When on Ra-millies' blood-y field, The baf-fled French were forc'd to yield, The  
vic - tor Sax - on back - ward reel'd Be - fore the charge of Clare's Dra - goons.  
The flags we conquer'd in that fray Look lone in Ypres' choir, they say, We'll

<sup>102</sup> See *Dublin Monthly Magazine*, RIA RR/36/B, I:21.

<sup>103</sup> Thunette, 59.



Davis and his Young Ireland colleagues also taught history through the use of song series in the pages of *The Nation*. Claiming that “[h]istorical songs and ballads are the best nutriment for the nationality and public spirit of a country,” they published series such as National Ballads, Historical Ballads, Ballads of the Pale, and Legendary Ballads; these appeared regularly and would run for a period of several weeks or months at a time.<sup>104</sup> Typically, each ballad would be accompanied by a

<sup>104</sup> *The Nation*, November 18, 1843, 89.

prose summary of the historical event being poetically recounted, presumably to emphasize the educational aspects of the song series. For example, Davis's well-known "Lament for the Death of Owen Roe O'Neill" was the first entry in the Historical Ballads series. He preceded the ballad with a brief scene-setting prose description: "Time—10<sup>th</sup> Nov., 1649. Scene—Ormond's Camp, County Waterford. Speakers—A Veteran of Owen O'Neill's clan, and one of the horsemen, just arrived with an account of his death."<sup>105</sup> Paired with the Irish tune "The Last Rose of Summer," the ballad began with the two speakers exclaiming their astonishment and grief:

"Did they dare, did they dare, to slay Owen Roe O'Neill?"  
'Yes! They slew with poison *him* they feared to meet with steel.'  
"May God wither up their hearts! May their blood cease to flow!  
My they walk in living death, who poisoned Owen Roe!"<sup>106</sup>

Following the ballad, Davis included a detailed account of O'Neill's life and death, recounting his military exploits in the Irish Confederate Wars of the mid-seventeenth century. Davis's eulogizing of a Catholic revolutionary figure, while popular with the majority of his readers, would not have been as welcome within the Irish Protestant community.

Davis also had large-scale plans for historical ballads that went beyond the short-lived song series. In a May 1844 letter to John Pigot, Davis informed his friend that his latest project was a "ballad poetry history of Ireland—not a continued metrical chronicle, but a rosary of ballads by everyone who could write one...Would

---

<sup>105</sup> *The Nation*, November 19, 1842, 89.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.* When the ballad first appeared in *The Nation*, no tune was listed. "The Last Rose of Summer" was first paired with "The Lament for the Death of Owen Roe O'Neill" in the first edition of *Spirit of the Nation* songbook (1843).



it not be the most potent and imperishable of books if well done.”<sup>107</sup> Using strikingly similar language, he announced the project in the pages of *The Nation* in November of that year, saying “we do not mean a metrical chronicle” but a “string of ballads” arranged chronologically.<sup>108</sup> The goal of the project was clear:

To hallow or accurse the scenes of glory and honor, or of shame and sorrow; to give to the imagination the arms, and homes, and senates, and battles of other days; to rouse, and soften, and strengthen, and enlarge us with the passions of great periods; to lead us into love of self-denial, justice, of beauty, of valour, of generous life and proud death; and to set up in our souls the memory of great men, who shall then be as models and judges of our actions—these are the duties of history, and these are best taught by a Ballad History.<sup>109</sup>

The proposed “Ballad History of Ireland” was intended as part of an effort to replace *Spirit of the Nation* songbook, which was nearing completion of its 1845 edition and which Davis and his colleagues did not intend to continue.<sup>110</sup> The “Ballad History of Ireland” as Davis described it in the journal was never published. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, however, his close friend and colleague Charles Gavan Duffy published an anthology entitled *Ballad Poetry of Ireland* in the summer of 1845. Given the close personal and professional relationship between the two men, Davis’s propensity for sharing his resources, the similarity between the two projects, and the close chronology between the proposed “Ballad History” and the published *Ballad Poetry*, it is likely that the plans for Davis’s publication were simply adapted for Duffy’s.

---

<sup>107</sup> Thomas Davis to John Pigot, 8 May 1844, NLI MS 14,056. Notes on Irish history, written by Thomas Davis, RIA MS 12 P 15/16 contains Davis’s notes on what appears to be plans for a “Metrical History of Ireland.”

<sup>108</sup> Thomas Davis, “A Ballad History of Ireland” Part I, *The Nation*, November 16, 1844, 91.

<sup>109</sup> Thomas Davis, “A Ballad History of Ireland” Part II, *The Nation*, November 30, 1844, 122.

<sup>110</sup> *The Nation*, November 16, 1844, 91. Two other projects, “Songs for the Times” and “Songs for the Street and the Field” were also intended to replace *Spirit of the Nation*.

Davis's articles also reveal his efforts to create an Irish public aware of their own history. In a short article praising the Irish Archaeological Society, he tied the successful endeavors of the Society to a thriving arts culture and to an independent nation:

This noble and national Society labours with increased success. Independent of every party, embracing all creeds, and unvisited by parliamentary patronage, it continues to prepare and publish the materials of our national history, so long neglected—so essential to a nation. The lyricist, the romancer, the painter, the musician, the apostles of all social sciences and of every fine art, find, in minute national history, facts, characters, forms, and an inspiration less vivid but much more solemn than personal observation can supply.

Long may they labour! They cannot exhaust the mine. A few years of exertion, and the orators, poets, statesmen, and artists of Ireland, will never need the memories of the foreigner from whence to mould every thought and form of heroism, grace, virtue, and sublimity.<sup>111</sup>

Drawing upon the trove of historical materials unearthed by the society, Irish artists would make their native history accessible to the public and would also bolster nationalist claims of cultural distinction. Importantly to Davis, such a native-based artistic culture would provide a bulwark against the encroachment of British cultural hegemony, the “memories of the foreigner.”

In another article entitled “No Redress—No Inquiry” Davis issued a strongly worded denouncement of the British government's unwillingness to address Ireland's political, economical, and social problems. But, he said, Ireland's hope lay not in governmental redress from London but in its own growing sense of self-reliance and nationhood. Davis cited the impact of the burgeoning “schools” of national art and literature as well as the influence of the Irish press in teaching the people their own history and awakening in them a sense of national duty and pride.

---

<sup>111</sup> *The Nation*, July 1, 1843.

By “changing the loose tradition of her wrongs into history and ballad,” Davis and Young Ireland sought to educate the public and also to use the memories of oppression to fuel their own national cause.<sup>112</sup>

### No Need for Art Music

In an essay entitled “Irish Literature and Publication,” Davis wrote of his hopes for Ireland’s musical future. Once the repertory of traditional music was “collected, printed, and diffused,” he was confident that schools of Irish music would soon be established, and that music for the national instruments—harp, pipes, and violin—would soon be readily available for the growing body of practitioners able to use it. He then continued to lament the number of Irish sculptors and painters who were living and working in foreign countries.<sup>113</sup> Notably absent from his review of the Irish arts was any mention of Irish composers or art music in general. For Davis, who put great stock in the ability of such “high” arts as painting, sculpture, and especially literature to elevate Ireland’s cultural profile, art music never factored into consideration. This omission is not surprising when one considers that Davis bemoaned the presence of foreign music in Irish concert halls as “paltry scented things from Italy” that were leading the Irish away from their own music.<sup>114</sup>

Two further examples from the pages of *The Nation* help to spell out Young Ireland’s antipathy toward art music. In a review of the series of concerts given by

---

<sup>112</sup> *The Nation*, July 15, 1843, 632.

<sup>113</sup> *The Nation*, April 15, 1843, 425.

<sup>114</sup> Thomas Davis, “Irish Music and Poetry,” in *Essays Literary and Historical*, Centenary Edition, ed. D.J. O’Donoghue (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1914), 160–61. Christopher Morash has written that for most of the 1840s, Italian opera “almost completely overwhelmed the sound of the spoken word on Irish stages.” Most touring companies took a Belfast-Dublin-Cork route that had been established since the 1730s. See Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre, 1601–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 105–07.

collector and performer Frederick Horncastle in February 1843, the anonymous author praised the absence of “fine singing” by the performers:

The music was not merely music, but *Irish* music too, and that means that it was not merely the best and most beautiful upon earth, but entwined by association with all that is loveable and lovely in Ireland—all that in our minds is the brightest and dearest under heaven. There was in these concerts no “fine singing”—none of those tortuous and incomprehensible vocal exercises which young ladies call “embellishing a song.” Had there been anything of this kind we should have inevitably stuffed our ears, while making way out of the room as fast as we could; for Irish music is like a fair girl, fairest when unadorned: and all the ornament and finery, with which foreign “musicians” seem determined to conceal every lovely sound, always seemed to us like the dressing and painting of a decayed ballet-dancer—unmeaning, unnatural, and altogether disgusting.<sup>115</sup>

The author drew a very clear stylistic contrast between the simple, unadorned method of singing traditional music and what he perceived as the decadent, unnatural practice of vocal art music.

In an article commenting on the inception of the Metropolitan Choral Society, the anonymous author approved of certain benefits such a society would bring. Knowledge of “musical science” (i.e., harmony) was welcome and would enhance Ireland’s musical culture. It was welcome because “[s]cience is hardly ever national” and was the “common property of all nations,” in the author’s words. The harmony of Handel was not perceived to be a threat to Irish music, because as a “science,” harmony belonged in the same category as metaphysics, algebra, and chemistry, and therefore posed no stylistic or cultural danger. Additionally, an Irish middle class educated in the practice of singing would only benefit the growth of national song, as the author envisioned numbers of shopkeepers, mechanics, and students singing while undertaking their tasks, as well as joining in extracurricular musical activities.

---

<sup>115</sup> *The Nation*, February 18, 1843, 300.

The author, however, protested the Irish practice of Italian, French, German, and Scottish music due to the fact that a nation's cultural elements—history, poetry, ballad-music—“lose their finest virtues when transferred from the land of their origin, and, by occupying the faculties which should have native possessions of the same sort, rather spoil than serve their foreign hosts.”<sup>116</sup> In other words, music from one country (Italy, for example) when transplanted to another (Ireland) not only lost some of its intrinsic value but also acted as a musical interloper, artificially occupying a place in the Irish cultural matrix normally reserved for native music.

The attitudes of Davis and Young Ireland toward art music fit comfortably within an artistic discourse that began in the eighteenth century. Scottish author James Macpherson's *Poems of Ossian*, first published in 1761, popularized ideas of a golden age of bardic song. Purportedly a translation of the orally transmitted work of the third century Celtic bard Ossian, Macpherson's work helped make Scotland a conceptual link between the “primitive” realm and “civilized” Europe.<sup>117</sup> The Highlanders of Scotland became a primitive “other” at Europe's own periphery. Wildly popular throughout Europe, the *Poems of Ossian* sparked debate concerning the relationship between art and nature. With the example of Ossian held up as the ideal, many began to think of true art as coming from earlier, simpler times. John Gregory, a Scottish professor of medicine published his thoughts on the subject in his *A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with those of the Animal World*. Building on Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ideas of art and nature, Gregory posited

---

<sup>116</sup> *The Nation*, December 21, 1844, 170.

<sup>117</sup> Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of “Folk Music” and “Art Music”: Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner*, *New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism*, ed. Jeffrey Kallberg, Anthony Newcomb, and Ruth Solie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 11.

that art, while still an extension of nature, could also be a potentially dangerous byproduct of civilization and progress, tending toward decadence unless carefully reined in.<sup>118</sup> Writings such as Gregory's spurred many artists and philosophers to look to the history of their own countries to find examples of "natural" artistic achievement. Ideas of "national" and "natural" became almost interchangeable:

They who apply much of their time to Music, acquire new Tastes, besides their national one, and in the infinite variety which melody and harmony are capable of, discover new sources of pleasure formerly unknown to them. But the finest natural Taste never adopts a new one, till the ear has been long accustomed to it, and after all seldom enters into it with that warmth and feeling, which those do, to whom it is national.<sup>119</sup>

Gregory warned against the artificiality of Italian opera as one of the "new sources of pleasure" that could distract one from their own "national" music.<sup>120</sup>

In his essay, "Ossian and the songs of Ancient Peoples" (1773), Herder echoed many of the thoughts that were present in the writing of his British contemporaries. He allied "nature" to his "folk song" just as they had used "natural" and "national" interchangeably. He also used the term "art" (*Kunst*) in a way that denoted artifice and science and conceived of his *Volkslieder* as a form closer to nature than art.<sup>121</sup> From Scotland to Germany, folk music became separate and distinct from art music. Seen as a living remnant of past traditions—from the golden age of Ossian—the simple, unadorned style of folk music (and folk song in particular) was seen as something to be protected from the degrading influence of

---

<sup>118</sup> Gelbart, 42.

<sup>119</sup> John Gregory, *Comparative View*, 7th ed. (London, 1777), 156–57.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>121</sup> Gelbart, 197.

progress. Art music, typified by the ornate style of Italian opera, became a symbol of the artifice and caprice of “modern” man.

These arguments were also made by Irish authors of the eighteenth century. Joseph Cooper Walker, with whose *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (1786) Davis was familiar, lamented the growing influence of foreign art music on Ireland’s musical culture. As musical tastes became refined, he wrote, the traditional “sweet” melodies and native musicians fell into disrepute. The refinement removed the ear from the heart to such a degree that “the essence of music cannot reach it.”<sup>122</sup> Davis also had in his personal library a copy of Joseph Wynn Baker’s *Practical Agriculture Epitomized, and Adapted to the Tenantry of Ireland* (1771), a seemingly innocuous pamphlet at first glance. Davis marked a specific passage in which Baker warned that the fine arts were the parents of oppression, superstition, and poverty. As he wrote, “fine arts beget pride, and pride begets imaginary superiority—that begets a neglect of agriculture, and contempt of enemies, and eventually brings destruction upon a nation.”<sup>123</sup> While Davis did not disparage all fine arts, the idea of art music leading to decadence and decay was undoubtedly one with which he was familiar.

Davis and Young Ireland’s practice of shunning the “paltry scented things from Italy” in favor of promoting Irish traditional music had its theoretical basis in the works of Gregory, Herder, and Walker. Additionally, as the nineteenth century progressed and movements of nationalism developed across Europe, nations on the European periphery that historically had imported art music from France, Italy, and

---

<sup>122</sup> Joseph Cooper Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* (Dublin, 1786), 158.

<sup>123</sup> Joseph Wynn Baker, *Practical Agriculture Epitomized, and Adapted to the Tenantry of Ireland* (Dublin, 1771), 14. See Pamphlets belonging to Thomas Davis, Marsh Library MS P2.6.33.

Germany (Scotland and Ireland, for example) were given even more impetus to close their musical borders and to promote their native musical traditions. Davis and Young Ireland's antipathy toward art music fit perfectly within this international movement of musical retrenchment and move away from the artificiality of art music, particularly the art music of a foreign country.

Davis did single out two Irish composers by name, as examples of what Ireland's musical culture did not need. In singling out Michael Balfe (1808–1870) and William Rooke (1794–1847), Davis was perhaps taking his lead from his friend William Elliot Hudson. In January 1841 an article appeared in *The Citizen* entitled “National Music and Musicians” that summarized the careers of both Balfe and Rooke. The essay ended with the following plea:

Why then, should not these men resort to our native mines, the riches of which are yet unexplored? Their powers stand unquestioned. And why not take a scene from Irish story, and analyse and adopt the sources and strength of our national music? In such hands, new life would be infused into the dramatic art from those pure fountains, and the authors would rally round themselves both the enthusiasm of their countrymen and the increasing admiration of the world.<sup>124</sup>

While no author was named, Hudson was responsible for the musical material published for the journal and so it is likely he penned the article. It should also be noted that the article was published during the time in which Davis was contributing to *The Citizen*, which increases the likelihood that he was familiar with its contents.<sup>125</sup> The implication from the essay is that Balfe and Rooke were talented composers who were lured away by the refinement and decadence of art music;

---

<sup>124</sup> Anonymous, “National Music and Musicians,” *The Citizen* (January 1841): 196. See also Royal Irish Academy RR/36/B for bound volumes of the journal from Davis's personal library.

<sup>125</sup> Molony, 49.



they composed their music not for the Irish, but for foreign audiences. In his own writing, Davis claimed that the composers had become so alienated that “not one passion or association in Ireland’s heart would answer to their songs.”<sup>126</sup> Davis’s frustration with Balfe and Rooke’s unwillingness to engage with Irish subject matter had theoretical backing from Herder. In the second volume of his *Volkslied* (1779), Herder modified his opinions on the relationship between the folk (nature) and art. The *Volkslied* still represented nature, but art (*Kunst*) was no longer its artificial opposite. In his updated theories, folk material could be mined as a resource for art music. In this framework, folk and art became mutually reliant. Art music could thus grow organically from its folk roots.<sup>127</sup> The failing of Balfe and Rooke is that they ignored those roots completely.

Fortunately for Ireland, Davis wrote, there was one composer who could “smite our harp like a master, and make it sigh with Irish memories, and speak sternly with Ireland’s resolve.”<sup>128</sup> He did not provide a name but said that the composer had written music for the songs “The Memory of the Dead” (also known as “Who Fears to Speak of ‘98”) and “The Hymn of Freedom.” In this remark Davis was certainly referring to William Elliot Hudson or John Edward Pigot, or perhaps even both. Both men provided newly written music for the 1845 edition of *Spirit of the Nation*, in which both songs were published. In the 1911 edition of the songbook, Irish musicologist W. H. Grattan Flood wrote that Pigot provided the melodies for

---

<sup>126</sup> Davis, “Irish Music and Poetry,” 162.

<sup>127</sup> Gelbart, 198–200.

<sup>128</sup> Davis, “Irish Music and Poetry,” 162.

both “The Memory of the Dead” and “The Hymn of Freedom.”<sup>129</sup> More recent scholarship by Fintan Valley, however, claims that Hudson wrote the music for “The Memory of the Dead.”<sup>130</sup> Davis’s correspondence seems to confirm Valley’s finding. In a letter to Pigot, Davis told his friend that Hudson had “written music for [“Who Fears to Speak of”] ’98, Fag a Bealac, etc.”<sup>131</sup> Ultimately, the exact identity of the composers matters less than the fact that both men embodied the qualities Davis envisioned in an Irish composer. Both Pigot and Hudson wrote new music that was anchored in the idiom of Irish traditional music. They were not attempting to write music aimed at pleasing foreign tastes but were focusing their talents on Irish audiences.

### Influencing the Public Mind

Davis and the other writers of *The Nation* took advantage of the journal’s wide circulation to spread their message. Using an arsenal of essays, editorials, foreign policy articles, book reviews, ballads, and songs, they attempted to educate their readers in the ways of Irish nationalism. The Answers to Correspondents section of the journal, however, was the only portion conveying a sense of dialogue between the writers and the readers of the journal. Readers would send in comments or questions on current events and usually a steady stream of their own attempts at poetry or ballad writing. The journal’s writers in turn would provide answers or comments, as well as critiques of the poetic contributions. Charles Gavan

---

<sup>129</sup> W.H. Grattan Flood, introduction to *The Spirit of the Nation, or Ballads and Songs with Original and Ancient Music, Arranged for Voice and Pianoforte* (Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1911), ix–x.

<sup>130</sup> Fintan Valley, ed., *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 192.

<sup>131</sup> Thomas Davis to John Edward Pigot, 24 March 1844, NLI MS 14,056.

Duffy described this portion of the journal as a “system of ‘Answers to Correspondents,’ real and imaginary...in which new projects were broached, books and men briefly criticized, and seeds of fresh thought sown widely in the popular mind.”<sup>132</sup> The crucial word in that description is “imaginary.” In their attempt to sow “fresh thought” in the mind of their readers, they were apparently willing to engage in a certain amount of misdirection.

Indeed, there is ample proof of such misdirection in Davis’s own output. Beginning in just the fifth issue of the journal, Davis published his “Vow of Tipperary” as well as additions to his “Men of Tipperary” in the Answers to Correspondents under the guise of outside contributions. Supposedly signed by “Anonymous” and submitted from the town of Clonmel, the lyrics for the “Vow of Tipperary” were introduced with the caption: “However we may differ from its opinions, as it would be a pity to lose such verses, we print them under protest against being supposed to agree with them.”<sup>133</sup> The penultimate and final stanzas declaim the injustices meted out to those Irish who enlisted in the British army:

“Too long we fought for Britain’s cause,  
And of our blood were never chary;  
She paid us back with tyrant laws,  
And thinned The Homes of Tipperary.

“But never more we’ll win such thanks:  
We swear by God, and Virgin Mary  
Never to list in British ranks;”  
And *that’s* The Vow of Tipperary.<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *Thomas Davis: Memoirs of an Irish Patriot, 1840-1846* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1890), 95.

<sup>133</sup> *The Nation*, November 12, 1842, 72.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*

By protesting the contents of the text, which presented themes of British betrayal and tyranny, Davis was able to simultaneously offer such material to the reading public and protect *The Nation* from any possible repercussions from the Crown.<sup>135</sup> In the early days of his movement, perhaps this type of hedging was necessary. Davis published six other poems and songs as submissions from outside contributors, last using that device on 31 May 1845 with his lyrics for “The Invocation.”<sup>136</sup> Aside from giving a skewed impression of what readers were actually submitting, this practice by Davis and other of the journal’s writers helped to control and shape the movement’s message by giving readers cues as to appropriate subject matter and tone.

In addition to surreptitiously publishing their own ballads and songs, the writers of *The Nation* also used the Answers to Correspondents to critique genuine outside contributions and to explicitly focus the direction of Ireland’s national literature and song. On one such occasion, the author lamented the influx of sub-par war songs, complaining that the “Sunburst has floated in six thousand ballads” and “the Harp has been taken off the Willow ten thousand times” since they began publishing the journal. He then directed the contributors to the subjects on which they should be focusing their energies:

Let our poetical contributors sing the condition of the people, the natural beauties of the country, her heroic endurance, her gallant struggles, her heroes past and present, the glorious fate that awaits her, or any of the

---

<sup>135</sup> In October 1844, Charles Gavan Duffy, as the editor of *The Nation*, along with Daniel O’Connell and other members of the Repeal movement were arrested for conspiring to undermine the constitution. One of the pieces of evidence brought against Duffy was the nationalist song “The Memory of the Dead,” which he had published the previous year.

<sup>136</sup> See “My Land,” December 3, 1842, 120; “My Home,” January 14, 1843, 218; “March of Cashel,” May 20, 1843, 504; “A Plea for the Bog-Trotters,” October 28, 1843, 40; “A Christmas Scene,” December 30, 1843, 184; and “The Invocation,” May 31, 1845, 552.

thousand other subjects which love of country will suggest; but let us not get the character of ferocity or blood-thirstiness. We are a calm, brave, determined people, ready to act—but ashamed of threatening a minute longer than our meaning is understood.<sup>137</sup>

Such prescriptive comments helped dissuade readers from using the overly militaristic rhetoric common to many nationalist movements and helped ensure a more comprehensive nationalist outlook.

The Answers to Correspondents column was also used to comment on the contemporary state of Irish music. Responding to a comment made by “S.” regarding the poor quality of Irish street ballads, the author issued a strongly worded response as to the detrimental effects of that song literature:

We entirely agree with “S.,” that it is time the hideous nonsense sung as street ballads should be abandoned. It is a disgrace to the people that when a ballad-singer is plundered of his store, according to the present practice of the police, it is found to consist of a heap of “clotted nonsense,” with scarcely a glimmer of meaning. Nothing can have a worse effect upon the minds of the people than the custom of hearing such rubbish.<sup>138</sup>

The author suggested songs from *Spirit of the Nation* as suitable replacements and even offered to write original material if need be, instead of allowing the popular mind to be “drugged and diseased with perilous nonsense.”<sup>139</sup> In their attempt to sow fresh thoughts in the minds of their readers, as Duffy wrote, Davis and Young Ireland at times had to purge the unhealthy thoughts as well.

---

<sup>137</sup> *The Nation*, September 16, 1843, 776.

<sup>138</sup> *The Nation*, August 12, 1843, 696.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

## Songs for a Unified Nation

Davis's idealism led him to believe that Irishmen of all creeds would join together under the common banner of nationalism, given the right impetus. His herculean task was to convince groups who harbored ancestral animosities to lay aside their grievances and realize that their best interests lay in working together for a unified Ireland. An important tool in creating his nonsectarian nationalism was his attempt to redeem divisive party songs, especially "Boyne Water" and "The Protestant Boys." Both songs were representative of the highly symbolic and inflammatory power of music within the Irish political sphere. For example, in 1788 a group of largely Protestant Irish Volunteers were attacked by a group of Catholic Defenders for playing "The Protestant Boys" and "The Boyne Water," both of which were intensely offensive to Catholics.<sup>140</sup> As musicologist Samuel Bayard noted, even in the Irish immigrant community in America "the mere playing or singing" of "The Boyne Water" could bring on a mass attack of Irish Catholics who happened to be within hearing distance.<sup>141</sup> Davis's appropriation of these tunes would have made a powerfully symbolic statement. If existing songs are used in the construction and definition of boundaries within a community, then their adoption by the opposing faction is not merely a pragmatic use of existing musical sources, but is instead more akin to the annexation of territory in warfare "which results in the redefinition both of ownership and of the power relationship of the protagonists."<sup>142</sup> By claiming two

---

<sup>140</sup> David Cooper, "On the Twelfth of July in the Morning... (Or the Man Who Mistook His Sash for a Hat)," *Folk Music Journal* 8, no. 1 (2001): 71.

<sup>141</sup> Samuel Bayard, *Dance to the Fiddle, March to the Fife: Instrumental Folk Tunes in Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1982), 273.

<sup>142</sup> Cooper, 79–80.

of the most divisive tunes for his own purposes, Davis made a strong statement in favor of Irish unity.

Davis used the tune of “The Boyne Water” for two of his songs, “Native Swords” and “Song of the Volunteers of 1782.” Notably, in the 1845 edition of the *Spirit of the Nation*, Davis printed both of his songs as well as J.D. Frazer’s “Song for July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1843” which was also set to the same air. Frazer’s song and Davis’s “Native Swords” both carried lyrics that called for an end to Ireland’s religious divide, and his Volunteer song praised the political and legislative independence won in 1782. To draw attention to his re-branding effort, Davis printed a notice in *The Nation* two weeks after the songs were brought out: “The number just published of the new edition of the *Spirit of the Nation* contains, among other music, the *Boyne Water*, with three sets of words, more appropriate for Irishmen of all creeds than the braggart and bitter song in common use.”<sup>143</sup> The following review of the songbook from the *Limerick Reporter* proves that the effort was not made in vain:

As an instance of the unsectarian and truly national tone of the work, we may mention the fact of the air “The Boyne Water” being selected for no fewer than three pieces of the first number. This is rescuing from the service of party and of the devil (as John Wesley would say of popular tunes he borrowed for his hymns), for the service of God and our country, some of the finest airs in the world.<sup>144</sup>

At least as far as the reviewer was concerned, Davis’s re-branding campaign rescued “The Boyne Water” from its sectarian associations.

---

<sup>143</sup> *Nation*, July 13, 1844, 632.

<sup>144</sup> *Nation*, August 24, 1844, 730.

Davis's setting of his text for "Native Swords" is a prime example of how he intended to appropriate the divisive melody for his own purposes (see Ex. 2). The opening stanza of his lyrics makes an unequivocal statement for Irish unity:

We've bent too long to braggart wrong  
While force our prayers derided;  
We've fought too long, ourselves among,  
By knaves and priests divided;  
*United* now, no more we'll bow,  
Foul faction, we discard it;  
And now, thank God! our native sod  
Has Native Swords to guard it.<sup>145</sup>

Davis presented a similar message in all of his nonsectarian lyrics: the internecine animosities between Irish Catholics and Protestants made them weak and susceptible to foreign influence. To function as a nation, they would have to overcome their own religious divisions. Note that Davis enhanced the nonsectarian aspects of his setting visually by inscribing the word "United" in italics (m. 9), but also by reserving the text "*United* now, no more we'll bow," for the melodic climax of the melody in measures 9 and 10.

---

<sup>145</sup> Thomas Davis, "Native Swords," in *Spirit of the Nation* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), 34.



Example 2. Davis's "Native Swords" from *Spirit of the Nation* (1845)

We've bent too long to brag - gart wrong, While force our prayers de-

ri - ded; We've fought too long our - selves a - mong, By knaves and priests di-

vi - ded. U - ni - ted now, no more we'll bow, Foul fac - tion, we dis -

card - it; And now, thank God, our na - tive sod Has Na - tive Swords to guard it.

Davis also aimed his redemptive efforts at “The Protestant Boys,” a song he described as “vigorous, and musical, and Irish, no doubt, but surely not fit for this generation.”<sup>146</sup> The air for this song, “Lilliburlero,” had a strong anti-Catholic pedigree, dating from a 1687 broadside ballad by Thomas Wharton, an English politician who used the song to attack the Catholic Lord Deputy of Ireland, Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnell.<sup>147</sup> As David Cooper writes, “Lilliburlero” had a potent influence on Irish politics of the time and served as the setting for numerous other seventeenth-century ballads.<sup>148</sup> In Davis’s time the tune was most commonly heard in “The Protestant Boys,” especially within the context of the annual sectarian Orange processions, celebrating the anniversary of William of Orange’s victories at the Boyne (1690) and Aughrim (1691).

It was to the tune of this song that Davis set his “Orange and Green Will Carry the Day” (see Ex. 3). It was originally published in *The Nation* as one of the first numbers in the series entitled “Songs for the Times.” Songs of this series were to be “simple in expression, vigorous in thought, propagandist of some popular principle, and written to a popular air,” in order to gain quick access to mass consciousness.<sup>149</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> *The Nation*, January 4, 1845, 202

<sup>147</sup> David Cooper, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diaspora, Community and Conflict*, Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 15.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–17.

<sup>149</sup> *The Nation*, December 14, 1844, 152.

Example 3. Davis's "Orange and Green Will Carry the Day" from *Spirit of the Nation* (1845)

**Vivace *f***

Ire - land! re - joice, and Eng - land! de - plore, Fac - tion and feud are

pass - ing a - way. 'Twas a low voice, but 'tis a loud roar, "O - range and Green will

car - ry the day." *p* O - range! O - range! Green and O - range! Pitt - ed to - ge - ther in ma - ny a fray!

13  
Li-ons in fight! And, link'd in their might, — O - range and Green will car-ry the day.

17 *mf*  
O - range! O - range! Green and O - range! Wave them to - ge - ther o'er moun-tain and bay; — *cresc.*

21 *ff*  
O - range and Green! Our King and our Queen! "O - range and Green will car-ry the day!" *ff*

In keeping with his own mandate, Davis opened his song with this “vigorous”  
verse proclaiming an end to sectarian strife:

Ireland! rejoice, and England! deplore—  
Faction and feud are passing away.  
‘Twas a low voice, but ‘tis a loud roar,  
“Orange and Green will carry the day.”  
Orange! Orange!  
Green and Orange!

Pitted together in many a fray—  
Lions in fight!  
And link'd in their might,  
Orange and Green will carry the day  
Orange! Orange!  
Green and Orange!  
Wave them together o'er mountain and bay.  
Orange and Green!  
Our King and our Queen!  
"Orange and Green will carry the day!"<sup>150</sup>

That he paired lyrics exulting in Irish unity with an air laden with sectarian associations speaks to Davis's faith in his own effort to redeem this divisive song.

The lively tempo and dance-like feel of the song provide a sense of optimism to the lyrics. Davis also took advantage of the tune's melodic contrasts to further bind "Orange and Green" together in the ear of the listener. In a predominantly stepwise melody, the descending fourths in measures 9, 17, and 18 and the arpeggiated triads in measures 7, 15, and 23 highlight the textual phrases calling for Irish unity.

Leaving no doubt as to his intention to appropriate this melody for his own nationalistic purposes, Davis even textually responded to the lyrics of "The Protestant Boys," which contain the repeating phrase "For Orange and Blue/Will be Faithful and True," proclaiming Protestant loyalty to the English throne.<sup>151</sup> Davis replaced this Orange and Blue refrain with his own "Orange and Green will carry the day!" With each repetition of this nonsectarian refrain he textually excised the "Blue" of the British and replaced it with the "Green" of the Irish. In this not-so-

---

<sup>150</sup> *The Nation*, December 14, 1844, 153.

<sup>151</sup> M.J. Barry, ed., "The Protestant Boys," in *The Songs of Ireland* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), 74-74.

subtle syntactical maneuver Davis emphasized his larger point: a unified Orange and Green renders the Blue unnecessary.

#### Conclusion: Idealism Meets Reality

The potential success of Davis's movement depended on his ability to loosen the ideological intransigence created by centuries of mistrust. For a brief period, it appeared as though he and Young Ireland were making significant, sustainable progress. *The Nation* was the most widely read journal in Ireland and the songs of the *Spirit of the Nation* were immensely popular.<sup>152</sup> In November 1844, a letter from Philip Fitzgerald, a subscriber of the journal, was printed in the pages of *The Nation* and indicated that public opinion was changing:

Their [*The Nation's*] tone, too, is well calculated to "create and foster" a spirit of nationality—to teach Irishmen that by burying in oblivion the causes of past dissensions, and uniting together for the good of their common country, they would be too strong for their enemies to be any longer made the victims of oppression. To conciliate all for this great end you have laboured consistently, strenuously, and with considerable success; for at the present moment there are manifest indications of mutual good will amongst the members of different communions more than at any former period. There is less distrust, less bigotry, and a growing disposition to acknowledge that the prosperity of the kingdom can result only from the union of all classes, and that the long train of calamities from which we are emerging had their source more in the weakness consequent on our quarrels with one another than in the strength of our opposition.<sup>153</sup>

Davis's idealistic vision for a united Ireland was gaining momentum.

Then reality set in. Since the beginning of Davis's movement and his involvement with the Repeal Association in 1842, there had been a struggle

---

<sup>152</sup> For popularity of *The Nation*, see Malcolm Brown, *The Politics of Irish Literature: From Thomas Davis to W.B. Yeats* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 67. For popularity of the *Spirit of the Nation*, see Georges Denis-Zimmerman, *Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs 1780-1900* (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1967), 79.

<sup>153</sup> *The Nation*, November 9, 1844, 72.

between Davis and Daniel O'Connell, the Association's leader, as to the identity of Irish nationalism. Residence and volition were the main criteria for Davis's nationalism, with calls for nonsectarian cooperation based on a shared historical and cultural experience. For O'Connell, however, who was known as "The Liberator" for his role in engineering the campaign to win Catholic Emancipation (1829), religion was the dominant criterion.<sup>154</sup> Whereas both men sought Ireland's release from the Act of Union, O'Connell's close relationship with the Catholic clergy and widespread support of the Catholic Irish meant that O'Connell and Davis advocated different approaches to their common goal.

The decisive confrontation came in May 1845, when the British Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, introduced the Irish Colleges Bill, which provided for establishing three "Queen's Colleges" in Cork, Belfast, and Galway. The colleges were to be non-denominational and the government would have the right to appoint professors and other college authorities. O'Connell labeled the proposed institutions "godless colleges" and argued that only Catholic colleges could meet the needs of Catholic students. Davis and Young Ireland, however, welcomed the measure and saw it as an opportunity to promote understanding and fellowship among the students of differing religious beliefs.<sup>155</sup> An article entitled "Academical Education" appeared in *The Nation* arguing for the virtues of nonsectarian education, claiming that ignorance fed the bigotry and mistrust on both sides of the religious divide. Such ignorance created a barrier that kept the Irish from uniting. The only antidote

---

<sup>154</sup> Cairns and Richards, 39.

<sup>155</sup> John Coolahan, *Irish Education: Its History and Structure* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981), 114.

for this ignorance was education, which could “strengthen the soul of Ireland with knowledge, and knit the sects of Ireland in liberal and trusting friendship.”<sup>156</sup>

O’Connell and his followers, however, refused to compromise on the issue and in their furor over the legislation even attacked Davis’s Young Ireland party as the “young infidel party.” The Repeal Association, a political body supposedly dedicated to the repeal of the Act of Union and independence for all Irishmen, had devolved into an organization intent on guarding the Catholic faith and morals. Davis saw all too well that his dreams for a nonsectarian nationalism were not yet possible. Although he continued his work, he never fully recovered from this disappointment.<sup>157</sup>

French author Albert Memmi’s concept of the “colonizer who refuses” is applicable to Davis in this situation. Memmi wrote that, “Despite his attempts to take part in the politics of the colony, he will be constantly out of step in his language and his actions.”<sup>158</sup> Davis’s nationalist idealism prevented him from taking full account of the deep-seated anxieties that many of his Catholic followers felt at taking part in a nationalist movement that downplayed the importance of religious identity. Those anxieties came rushing to the surface in the debates over the Colleges Bill. Davis’s stance that education, even government sponsored education,

---

<sup>156</sup> *The Nation*, May 17, 1845, 520.

<sup>157</sup> John Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)* (Glasgow: R&T Washbourne, 1861), 77, 87.

<sup>158</sup> Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (New York: Orion Press, 1965), 42. Memmi’s concept, as he described it, applied to colonizers who were born in the mother country but who were living in the colony. Given the ideological, political, religious, and financial separation between nineteenth-century Irish Catholics and Protestants, and the fact that most Protestants professed loyalty to the Crown, I believe that Memmi’s concept can also be applied to Irish Protestant nationalists like Davis.



was more important than religious affiliation put him firmly out of step with the broader nationalist movement that was populated almost entirely by Catholics.

Two of Davis's posthumously published songs indicate that he faced his own struggle with bridging the religious divide. "Fanny Power" and "Marie Nangle" never appeared in the pages of *The Nation* or *Spirit of the Nation* and were even left out of the first edition of his collected poems.<sup>159</sup> Easily interpreted as attacks on Catholic belief, the songs were withheld until the second edition of Davis's poems (1866).

Soon after Davis's death, his friends Charles Gavan Duffy, John O'Hagan, and John Pigot began to collect his songs and poems and to prepare them for publication. In the correspondence between the three men, "Fanny Power" and "Marie Nangle" were quickly singled out as being too imprudent to publish. Writing to Duffy in November 1845, Pigot stated: "And there remain only 'Fanny Power' v. Priests and 'Marie Nangle' v. Nuns, both which [we] agreed were dangerous for the paper, and specially so just now."<sup>160</sup> After Davis's death, *The Nation* and Young Ireland were in danger of collapse. As John Mitchel wrote, without Davis *The Nation* was a "fortress ungarrisoned" and his movement had lost its center.<sup>161</sup> The goal of a nonsectarian nationalism, which Davis's comrades continued to work toward, would not have been able to survive if the very heart of the movement—even after his death—had appeared disingenuous.

Both songs seem to take a jab at the practices of celibacy and austerity practiced by Catholic priests and nuns. "Fanny Power" which was sung to an air of

---

<sup>159</sup> See Thomas Davis, *The Poems of Thomas Davis, Now First Collected*, ed. Thomas Wallis (Dublin: James Duffy, 1846)

<sup>160</sup> John Pigot to Charles Gavan Duffy, 17 November 1845, NLI MS 5756.

<sup>161</sup> Mitchel, 91.

the same name, tells of a young priest who became enraptured by the beauty of Fanny Power. Unable to fulfill his duties or to forget her, the priest decides to break his vows in the name of love:

'Tis vain to strive with Passion's might—  
He left the convent walls one night,  
And she was won to join his flight  
Before he wooed an hour;  
So, flying to a freer land,  
He broke his vow at Love's command,  
And placed a ring upon the hand  
Of happy Fanny Power.<sup>162</sup>

Such disregard for Catholic tenets coming from a Protestant author who was also a powerful advocate for the principle of religious tolerance would have undermined one of the primary goals of Davis's brand of nationalism.

The ballad "Marie Nangle," only a portion of which was printed in Davis's collected poems, conveys a similar message. Marie, the most beautiful of seven daughters, spurns the advances of her suitors and instead takes her vows as a nun. While attending the wedding festivities of her sisters, Marie falls in love and must decide whether to leave the convent or stay within its "dark" cells:

The marriage rites are bravely done;  
But what ails her, the novice Nun?  
Oh! never had she seen an eye  
Look into hers so tenderly.  
"Methinks that deep and mellow voice  
Would make the Abbess' self rejoice;  
He's sure the Saint I dreamt upon—  
Not Barnwell of Trimleston.  
In the Holy Land his spurs he won—  
What aileth me, a novice Nun?"<sup>163</sup>

---

<sup>162</sup> Thomas Davis, *The Poems of Thomas Davis, With Notes, Historical Illustrations, Etc.*, ed. Thomas Wallis (New York: D&J Sadler and Co., 1866), 215–16. A draft of this text can be found in Trinity College Dublin MS 10661 and varies slightly from the published version.

<sup>163</sup> Davis (1866), 218–19.

While the fragment of published text is not as explicit as “Fanny Power,” the implication was still strong enough to merit the text’s omission from publication in 1846. Comparing the two texts, John O’Hagan wrote to Duffy in January 1846: “As to Marie Nangle, I do not think it so objectionable as Fanny... Marie’s being a novice merely not under vows makes the difference but there are certainly phrases about the nuns inveighing her and about living “as nature meant she should” which would not be sweet chewing to your friends the priests.”<sup>164</sup> Here again, the religious issue determined the text’s fate.

There is no clear indication as to when Davis wrote these texts. Given the thematic similarities between “Fanny Power” and “Marie Nangle” it is likely that both texts were written within the same general time frame. A draft for “Fanny Power” does survive in one of Davis’s notebooks.<sup>165</sup> While most of the journal’s contents are undated, two entries (love poems to his fiancée, Annie Hutton) are dated the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> of August 1845. If “Fanny Power” was written around the same time, it is conceivable that the debates and frustration surrounding the Irish Colleges Bill sparked this poetic outburst from Davis. Perhaps, then, these two texts, which are thematic outliers within his songs, represent nothing more than a lyrical catharsis for Davis. His nonsectarian idealism was torpedoed by Daniel O’Connell, Ireland’s pre-eminent nationalist leader, and he expressed his momentary frustrations in the same manner he expressed his hopes: through song.

---

<sup>164</sup> John O’Hagan to Charles Gavan Duffy, 5 January 1846, NLI MS 5756.

<sup>165</sup> Manuscript notebooks containing drafts of Davis’s song texts and poems, Trinity College Dublin MSS 10660 and 10661.

The ultimate failure of Davis's campaign should not detract from its significance. He founded and led a movement that successfully absorbed influences from other nationalist movements both abroad and at home. While pushing for the Repeal of the Act of Union, he focused his efforts on creating national pride and cultural awareness in an attempt to bring Irishmen of all creeds together. Music and song assumed a significant role in his nationalist ideology, as he harnessed his nationalist lyrics to traditional melodies to inspire in his countrymen feelings of pride and unity. In doing so, Davis assumed the role of a bard of Ireland, engaging music to praise and protect his native land.

## CHAPTER 4

### THOMAS DAVIS AND *SPIRIT OF THE NATION*

The songs and ballads of Thomas Davis and Young Ireland quickly became one of the most popular features of *The Nation*. The public response was so positive, in fact, that Davis and his colleagues decided to publish the best entries in a songbook entitled *Spirit of the Nation*. First appearing in 1843, it was successful enough to warrant multiple reissues in the years that immediately followed. The songbook, being an anthology of the best of the movement's verses, served as a distillation of the ideas Davis wished to put forward. The rhetoric of violence common to nationalist literature underpinned (and at times undercut) themes of historical memorialization and calls for Irish unity. Additionally, the traditional melodies paired with the texts, whether simply indicated by name or transcribed in print, played a vital role in furthering Davis's message.

Davis employed songs as an effective vehicle for transmitting his nationalist ideology. But, as in other aspects of his movement, Davis's use of a songbook can be traced to influences from his nationalist predecessors, namely the United Irishmen songbook *Paddy's Resource* (4 vols., 1795–1803) and Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies* (10 vols., 1808–34). This chapter will explore the models of *Spirit of the Nation*, as well as Davis's particular role in its publication. Moreover, because Davis depended heavily on his native music, this chapter will also investigate the relationship between the predominantly oral culture of Irish traditional music and the print culture of the nineteenth-century songbook.

The blossoming of print culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland set the stage for the success of *Spirit of the Nation*, as the public had grown accustomed to a wide variety of ballads and songs in print. Albert Friedman noted that a period understanding of the term “ballad” referred to “a doggerel poem written to a familiar tune, printed on a folio sheet or long slip, and sold at bookstalls or hawked about the streets by ballad-singers.”<sup>1</sup> The wide availability of broadside ballads supported and enlarged the popular deposit of a folksong repertoire, aiding future song anthologies.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, in Ireland at this time the experience of print for many ordinary people would have been communal and public, an experience in which the ordinary lines between oral and literate culture would have been blurred. As Jonathan Barry has pointed out, the public consumption of the popular ballad epitomized this experience.<sup>3</sup> The boundaries between print and oral communication became less clear with the practice of the performance or reading aloud of a text. Communal gatherings for storytelling, known as *áirneáil* or *scoraíocht*, were a common feature of rural life from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Furthermore, in many areas of Ireland around 1820, with the loss of disposable income due to the economic downturn and rising literacy rates due to state funded primary education, communal reading became common practice even among groups of literates. These

---

<sup>1</sup> Albert Friedman, *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), 6.

<sup>2</sup> Philip Connell and Nigel Leask, “What is the people,” in *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Philip Connell and Nigel Leask (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 19.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Barry, “Literacy and Literature in Popular Culture: Reading and Writing in Historical Perspective,” in *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500-1850*, ed. Tim Harris (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 82.

forms of reading aloud were interactive and most likely had many interruptions, explanations, comments, and criticisms in order to determine the meaning of the text. These practices facilitated the entry of printed texts into a communal, predominantly oral culture.<sup>4</sup> Thus printed songs and ballads, whether on loose broadsides, collected in songbooks, or even in newspapers, regularly crossed the blurred divisions between the oral and literate cultures.

The United Irishmen took advantage of the blossoming print culture to employ songs for their own purposes. From the beginning of their movement in the 1790s, the United Irishmen sought to educate and influence public opinion, largely with the aid of newspapers and songbooks. Political poems and songs were regular features in their newspapers, which included *Northern Star* (Belfast), the *National Journal* and *The Press* (Dublin), and the *Harp of Erin* (Cork); the four editions of their *Paddy's Resource* songbooks contained 160 different nationalist songs.<sup>5</sup> Due to the United Irishmen's largely Anglo-Irish makeup and their inspiration from the French Revolution, the group's songbooks showed a level of internationalism not present in later songbooks such as *Spirit of the Nation*.<sup>6</sup> In fact, of the 98 melodies cited in *Paddy's Resource* (1795), around half are of English origin, a fourth are Irish, and sixteen are Scottish, with three songs from the French Revolution and two from America. Despite the significant use of Irish tunes, the predominance of English

---

<sup>4</sup> Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland, 1750-1850*, Early Modern History: Society and Culture (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 187, 190.

<sup>5</sup> Mary Helen Thuente, *The Harp Re-strung: United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Georges-Denis Zimmerman, *Songs of Irish Rebellion, Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs 1780-1900* (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1967), 39.

melodies suggests that English melodies would have been just as, if not more, familiar than the Irish ones to the United Irishmen.<sup>7</sup>

Of the Irish tunes that were used for *Paddy's Resource*, a number gained enduring popularity. For example, "Cruiskeen Lan" became one of the most popular Irish drinking songs, and "The Girl I Left Behind Me" was very popular among Irish soldiers, Dubliners, and country people in the eighteenth century. In meeting their avowed goals to give their movement and their songbooks a popular appeal, the United Irishmen used old tunes familiar to people of all classes and religions to craft their new songs.<sup>8</sup> While Davis's cultural nationalism led him away from the internationalism present in *Paddy's Resource*, he clearly adopted the practice of using well known tunes for his songs. "Cruiskeen Lan" was used by Davis for two of his own songs, "O'Sullivan's Return" and "The Men of '82," and he paired "The Girl I Left Behind Me" with original lyrics of the same name.

Set to traditional airs, in style and content the United Irish songs were aimed at a lower-class audience, attacking taxes, tithes, high rents, the aristocracy, and English influence.<sup>9</sup> One such example is the popular song "The Exiled Irishmen's Lamentation," also known as "Erin go Bragh," as mentioned in chapter 3. Set to the traditional melody "Savourna Deilish" [*sic*], the song appeared as the last song in the 1796 edition of *Paddy's Resource* and as the third song in both the 1798 and 1803 editions. It was very popular within the United Irish movement and became one of

---

<sup>7</sup> Barra Boydell, "The United Irishmen, Music, Harps, and National Identity," *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 13 (1998): 50.

<sup>8</sup> Thunte, 143.

<sup>9</sup> Jim Smyth, *The Men of No Property: Irish Radicals and Popular Politics in the Late Eighteenth Century*, Studies in Modern History, ed. J.C.D. Clark (London: MacMillan Press, 1992), 162.



the best-known nationalist songs of the nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> The second stanza contains language typical of the attacks on taxes, rent, and the untenable land situation faced by many Irish farmers:

Though all taxes I paid, yet no vote could I pass, O;  
    *Erin ma vorneen! slan leat go brah!\**  
Aggrandiz'd no great man—and I feel it, alas! O;  
    *Erin ma vorneen! slan leat go brah!*  
Forced from my home, yea, from where I was born,  
To range the wide world—poor, helpless, forlorn;  
I look back with regret—and my heart strings are torn.  
    *Erin ma vorneen! slan leat go brah!*<sup>11</sup>

\*Ireland my darling! Forever adieu!

Similar themes concerning Ireland's agrarian policies and treatment of the poor appeared in *Spirit of the Nation* over forty years later in songs such as "The Penal Days" and "The Exterminator's Song."

The United Irishmen also used songs to further their own nonsectarian ideology in ways that served as clear models for Davis's own program. Through their newspapers, songbooks, and broadsides, they issued songs intended to quell contemporary sectarian animosities. An account from the time described their attempt to ease tensions between the Catholic "Defenders" and the Protestant "Peep O' Day Boys," who in 1795 became known as the Orange Order: "In this state of things, a new party appeared styling themselves 'Liberty Men,' but better known by the name United Irishmen. They emerged from their committee in Belfast early in 1796, and disseminated their doctrines with industry and ability...They dispersed

---

<sup>10</sup> Thuermer, 101.

<sup>11</sup> *Paddy's Resource, Being a Select Collection of Original and Modern Patriotic Songs* (New York: Wilson, 1798), 1.

liberty songs composed for an Irish climate.”<sup>12</sup> A fitting example of one of these “liberty songs” is a song entitled “Advice to Paddy,” set to the tune of “Larry Grogan.” The first stanza assured Catholics that they would never attain their rights and freedom unless they join in unity with their Protestant brethren:

Arrah, paddy my joy  
What makes you so shy,  
To join with your protestant brother, your brother?  
Sure you never can thrive,  
If you both do not strive  
To live in good friends with each other, each other.  
Your foes long have prided  
To see you divided,  
That they with more ease might oppress you, oppress you;  
But when they once find,  
You together have join’d,  
I’ll be bound they’ll be glad to caress you, caress you.<sup>13</sup>

The idea of uniting Catholic and Protestant Irishmen for mutual advantage in opposition to a common foe can be frequently found in the songs of Young Ireland, such as “Orange and Green Will Carry the Day” and “Celts and Saxons.”

The United Irishmen did at times show an element of selective nonsectarianism that would have been a foreign idea to Davis and his movement. Knowing that the Anglo-Irish (Anglicans) were likely unwilling to give up the benefits belonging to the ruling class and an alliance with England, many of the United Irish “liberty songs” were aimed at restoring peace between the “Scotch” (popular name for Presbyterians) and “Irish” (Catholics). One such song, “The Social Thistle and Shamrock,” was composed by the United Irishman Henry Joy McCracken

---

<sup>12</sup> David Miller, *Peep O’ Day Boys and Defenders: Selected Documents on the County Armagh Disturbances 1784–96* (Belfast: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 1990), 136–37.

<sup>13</sup> *Paddy’s Resource, Being a Collection of Original and Modern Patriotic Songs* (Philadelphia: Stephens, 1796), 39–40.

and set to the old Jacobite tune “Charley is My Darling.”<sup>14</sup> With verses like “The Scotch and Irish friendly are, their wishes are the same,/The English nation envy us, and over us would reign,” as well as “Our historians and our poets, they always did maintain,/That the origin of Scottishmen and Irish were the same,” the message of friendship and unity was abundantly clear.<sup>15</sup> In addition to professions of unity and friendship, some United Irish songs made their case by attacking the Established Church. The song “Church and State or, The Rector’s Creed,” set to the tune “Black Joke,” targeted the materialism and disingenuous faith of an Anglican rector:

Ye men of my parish I pray you take heed,  
Till I give you a sketch of my time-serving creed—  
My creed it is cash, and my stipend salvation,  
For which I’d destroy all the swine in the nation,  
With my black coat,  
And cravat so white.  
I believe in my church, I believe in my mense,  
I believe that religion is all a romance,  
With my black coat,  
And cravat so white.  
I believe that the only two comforts of life  
Are counting my stipend, and kissing my wife;  
I believe that the people were born to be slaves,  
To be pilder’d and plunder’d by us artful knaves,  
With our black coats,  
And cravats so white.<sup>16</sup>

While both the United Irishmen and Young Ireland preached nonsectarianism, an attack of this sort would have been out of place in Davis’s movement. The cause for the difference lies in the historical context. The United Irishmen (and Wolfe Tone, their leader) based their nationalism on the principles of individual liberty that were espoused following the French Revolution. They were willing to jettison the

---

<sup>14</sup> Thuente, 128.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>16</sup> “Church and State or, The Rector’s Creed,” in *Paddy’s Resource* (1796), 16–17.

support of the Anglo-Irish as a lost cause in order to gain a political majority large enough to win more rights for Catholics and Presbyterians. Young Ireland and Davis, however, based their nationalism on the ideas of group rights and the principles of cultural separation that were ushered in with Romantic nationalism.<sup>17</sup> Davis sought the support and unity of all Irishmen, as inhabitants of the same nation and partakers of a shared history and culture.

The United Irishmen were deliberately vague as to who wrote, collected, and published the songs in *Paddy's Resource*. No author's names were given in the first edition of the songbook and the practice continued for all later editions as well. Numerous government prosecutions against the editors of the United Irishmen newspaper *Northern Star* had undoubtedly made those involved with the songbook wary. Separating the authorship of materials from their publication in fact became the cornerstone for several United Irishmen defenses against charges of libel.<sup>18</sup> Fear of government prosecution could also be the reason no author's names were provided for the early editions of *Spirit of the Nation*.

Another distinction should be made between the United Irishmen's use of literature and that of Young Ireland. The former's interest in nationalist uses of literature was real but limited. The main thrust of their program was the use of song for propaganda purposes, as epitomized in *Paddy's Resource*. Their desire to use elements of popular culture for nationalist purposes, however, was not the same as Young Ireland's wish to nationalize popular culture. Just as their predecessors had

---

<sup>17</sup> Oliver MacDonagh, *Ireland: The Union and its Aftermath* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1977), 153.

<sup>18</sup> Thuente, 131.

done, Young Ireland promoted national balladry, hoping to provide an alternative to frequently uncouth or sectarian verses available to the populace. Their literary endeavors, however, were much more ambitious than those of the United Irishmen. Young Ireland's publications went beyond mere propaganda and were intended to focus the popular mind on the cultural nationalism the group espoused. Davis led the way in producing his rousing verses for *The Nation*, many of which were then published in *Spirit of the Nation*. Other Young Irelanders also joined in the effort by publishing their own edited anthologies, engaging the public with a multi-front campaign. Michael Barry published his *Songs of Ireland* (1845), Charles Gavan Duffy produced his *Ballad History of Ireland* in the same year, and D. F. McCarthy followed with his *The Book of Irish Ballads* (1846). Two productions, *Spirit of the Nation* and *Ballad History of Ireland*, were reprinted often throughout the subsequent generations.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, as ballads and songs, they were the appropriate forms to operate in both the literate and oral communities. In the prose arena, an example of Young Ireland's nation-building literary endeavors is the Library of Ireland, a collection of books published by James Duffy between 1845 and 1848.

Representative works include Thomas MacNevin's *The History of the Volunteers of 1782* (1845) and John Mitchel's *The Life and Times of Aodh [Hugh] O'Neill* (1845).

#### Genesis of the *Spirit of the Nation*

Before coming to *The Nation*, Davis had no experience as a lyricist. The credit for introducing ballads and songs into the journal's pages belonged to Duffy. As editor of the Belfast journal the *Vindicator* (1839–42), Duffy began to write and

---

<sup>19</sup> R.V. Comerford, *Ireland, Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2003), 161.

publish national songs because he “was persuaded that among a race whose public festivities were always enlivened by ballad poetry, chanted by minstrels and chiefs, song was an immense though greatly underrated force.”<sup>20</sup> Duffy received some assistance from T.M. Hughes, who would also later contribute to *The Nation*, as well as other local poets; a revival of national spirit in the North quickly followed. Upon founding *The Nation* with Davis and John Blake Dillon, Duffy pushed to continue the practice of publishing national songs.<sup>21</sup> Inexperienced in the genre, his new colleagues reluctantly agreed.

Dillon bowed out after several attempts at verse, but Davis seemed to have unlocked a hidden talent. Almost surprisingly, he was able to express “his passionate convictions on the past, and his rapturous reveries on the future, in the only shape in which they would not appear extravagant or fantastic.”<sup>22</sup> The journal’s ballads and songs became an unequivocal success, with Davis’s verses leading the way. National spirit began to awaken, and the journal was soon inundated with songs and poems sent in by readers. After only four months in print, this notice appeared in *The Nation* praising the popular response to their musical program:

The quantity of patriotic poetry—rude, strong breathings of the national spirit—which we have evoked since we commenced our labours, is little less than miraculous. We receive at least twenty songs every week, full of bitter complaints of the fallen condition of our country, or hopes of her speedy resurrection. Every one of these we reckon of more value, as an evidence of the condition of the popular mind, than a dozen speeches or a score of petitions. They echo the true, inner, heartfelt feelings of the people. Song is the language of enthusiasm, and cannot lie—above all, when addressed to or

---

<sup>20</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *My Life in Two Hemispheres* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1898), 1:55–57.

<sup>21</sup> Duffy, *Two Hemispheres*, 64.

<sup>22</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *Thomas Davis: Memoirs of an Irish Patriot, 1840-1846* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1890), 93.

springing from the millions. We have no doubt, a philosophical speculator on the present prospects of Ireland would take this apparently trifling circumstance as one, and not the least material, of his *criteria* in coming to a conclusion. The relish with which the national poetry of a different order furnished to the people through our pages (let us whisper—and by some of the most distinguished men in Ireland), has been received, is a fact bearing upon the same point; and we have before us abundant assurances that the temperate blood of the north, and the hot current of Tipperary and Waterford, have alike beat high to our national harpings.<sup>23</sup>

Davis and his colleagues clearly placed great importance on the power of song to arouse national fervor and they perceived the success of their musical campaign as evidence of widespread national feeling among the people.

Once Davis and his colleagues had produced a sufficient body of verse, the idea of collecting them into a songbook inevitably arose. The suggestion first appeared in *The Nation*, supposedly from the pen of a reader: “A letter from Drogheda contains a suggestion which we have long been cogitating about. We are glad to see that the same thought occurred to others, and possibly we were not overweening when we believed the people would care to see our songs reprinted.”<sup>24</sup> The claim that they had “long been cogitating” the idea of a songbook barely more than four months after the journal’s inception suggests that publishing a songbook may have been in the plans from the beginning. Charles Hamilton Teeling, Duffy’s nationalist mentor, was a member of the United Irishmen and may have influenced him regarding the effective uses of a songbook along the lines of *Paddy’s Resource*.<sup>25</sup> Regardless, several weeks later this announcement appeared in *The Nation*:

---

<sup>23</sup> *The Nation*, January 14, 1843, 216.

<sup>24</sup> *The Nation*, February 4, 1843, 246.

<sup>25</sup> Teeling wrote a memoir of his experiences with the United Irishmen, entitled *History of the Irish Rebellion of 1798: A Personal Narrative* (1828), in which he wrote about how the United Irishmen used music and song.

At the suggestion of many correspondents, we are about to provide “singing for the millions,” worth all that Mainzer and Hullah have taught. We are reprinting the best political songs, national ballads, epigrams, and squibs, that have appeared in our journal, in a little book, with the title of the *Spirit of the Nation*, which we will sell, or rather give away, for sixpence. We hope to circulate it by tens of thousands among the people...<sup>26</sup>

The low price of the songbook indicated that Davis and Young Ireland’s objective was mass accessibility. If *The Nation* proved to be too costly, then readers could still afford *Spirit of the Nation* and thus imbibe their nationalist doctrine the easiest way possible: through song.

### *Spirit of the Nation* Comes Into Its Own

Davis and Young Ireland’s first experiment in national literature—what Duffy referred to as the “little sixpenny brochure”—was a marvelous success.<sup>27</sup> The first edition of *Spirit of the Nation* appeared in May 1843 and was printed out of *The Nation* office on Trinity Street in Dublin. If affordability and accessibility were Young Ireland’s aims, they achieved both. It was an unassuming work with the image of a harp interwoven with shamrocks on the paper cover (see Fig. 1). The songbook’s small size, just 4 x 6 ½ inches, meant the volume was portable and affordable.<sup>28</sup> There were fifty-five poems, twenty-nine of which were paired with traditional airs; and, like its predecessor *Paddy’s Resource*, *Spirit of the Nation* contained no music. The melodies to which the lyrics were to be sung were indicated in the songbook’s Table of Contents and/or by a textual indicator beneath the poem’s title.

---

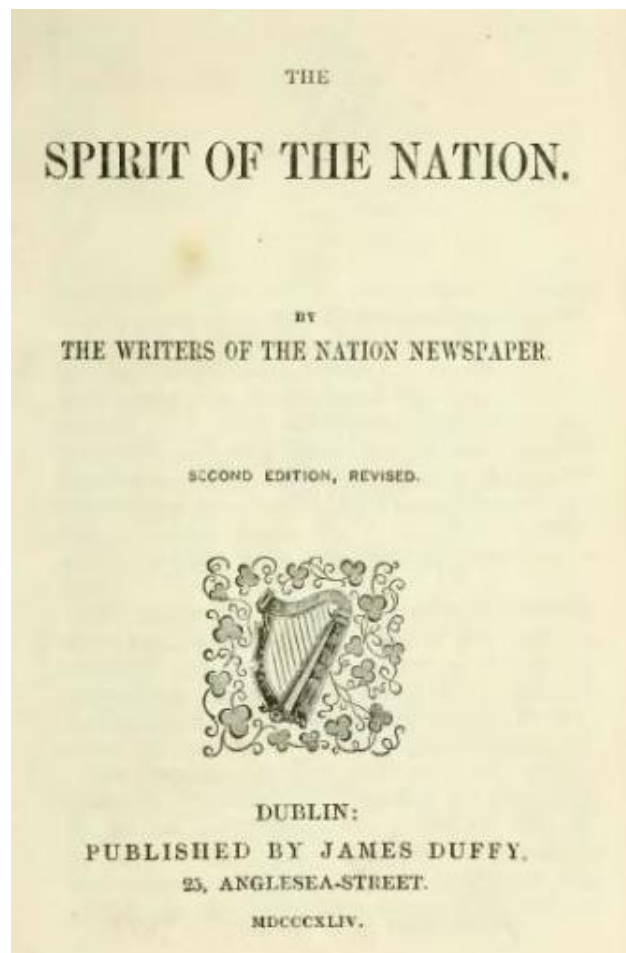
<sup>26</sup> *The Nation*, March 25, 1843, 376.

<sup>27</sup> Duffy, *Thomas Davis*, 141.

<sup>28</sup> T.F. O’Sullivan, *The Young Irelanders* (Tralee: Kerryman, 1944), 58.



Figure 1. Title Page, *Spirit of the Nation* (1844)



The absence of notated music should not indicate, however, that the lyrics were divorced from their melodic partners.<sup>29</sup> Nick Groom has noted that even a printed ballad or song lyric, missing its musical component, still created a sound world all of its own—by its known historical relation to a melody, by its word choice, or by the rhythms and sounds of its refrain. The reading or performing of the

---

<sup>29</sup> Kirsten McCue, "‘An individual flowering on a common stem’: melody, performance, and national song," in *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Philip Connell and Nigel Leask (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 89.

text brought the music to mind. As Groom wrote, “the noise cannot be silenced so easily.”<sup>30</sup>

Choosing tunes that were well known to their readers also eliminated the necessity of having printed music. The familiarity of the tune provided a constant minimum level of knowledge to those who were reading or singing from *Spirit of the Nation*. That bare minimum of knowledge had real significance, especially when new ideas were introduced through the song’s text. It meant the ability to know in the reading process how the words would go and how they would come out in the cadence of one’s own voice. This was also an enormous aid to memorization, contributing to the songs’ ability to inhabit both the literate and oral cultures.<sup>31</sup>

Immediately after its publication, Davis and his colleagues began to promote *Spirit of the Nation* as a model for aspiring lyricists. Only a week after the songbook appeared, a notice printed in *The Nation* suggested that “young gentlemen” who wished to say something new with their verse, or at least to say something old in a new way, should study *Spirit of the Nation* for suitable examples.<sup>32</sup> The following week an announcement appeared begging for a reprieve from the subpar verses submitted by many of the journal’s readers. Again, the songbook proved to be the yardstick for acceptable submissions:

We have been compelled to burn a cart load of verses, in all moods and measures, during the present week. In fact, if we printed half of what we receive, there would not be room for a line of prose in the paper. We are consequently forced to beg a truce with our poetic friends for the space of

---

<sup>30</sup> Nick Groom, ““The purest English”: Ballads and the English Literary Dialect,” *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 47, no. 2-3 (Summer-Fall, 2006):187-90.

<sup>31</sup> Mark W. Booth, *The Experience of Songs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 111-12.

<sup>32</sup> *The Nation*, May 20, 1843, 504.

twelve months, or till the Union is repealed. Let none of them within that time venture to send us a contribution, unless a jury of twelve competent persons pronounces it superior to anything published in “The Spirit of the Nation.” This arrangement will, as the advertisements say, “be mutually advantageous.” Meantime there will be no lack of poetry in our pages, as the gallant and gifted band who produced “The Spirit of the Nation” will still pour out their soul-thrilling music, like the giant harmony of a great waterfall— awful, irresistible, eternal! Not a doubt of it.<sup>33</sup>

Aside from giving the editors of *The Nation* a break from poor verse, these self-praising lines established Young Ireland’s control over the nationalist message of the journal’s songs. With the “gallant band” and their songs set as the standard, *Spirit of the Nation* was established as the musical voice of Irish nationalism.

Davis and his colleagues were undoubtedly very proud of their songbook, but they decided nonetheless to issue a revised edition later that same year to correct some minor issues. For one, they realized they had fallen into a trap common among non-Irish speakers in that they spelled some of the Irish words and phrases phonetically, instead of according to Irish orthography. Considering the cultural platform Davis’s nationalism stood on, this was a slightly embarrassing blunder. For another, they were unhappy with some of the airs suggested for the texts because “some of these are Scotch, and some are not characteristic.”<sup>34</sup> This second, revised edition was published in September 1843.

Following quickly on the heels of the revised edition, Young Ireland published a second collection of their songs and poems, which they aptly titled *Spirit of the Nation*, Part II; thereafter, they referred to their original effort, in its revised version, as Part I. Published in November 1843, Part II was identical to Part I in size

---

<sup>33</sup> *The Nation*, May 27, 1843, 520.

<sup>34</sup> *The Nation*, May 20, 1843, 504.

and shape. It contained fifty poems, thirty-three of which were set to traditional melodies. Again, no authors' names were given and no written music was provided. In order to handle the popular demand for the songbook, the publishing duties were taken over by a professional printer and publisher, James Duffy, at his office in Angelsea Street in Dublin.<sup>35</sup> In the preface to Part II, Davis explained that the success of the first songbook was what prompted them to issue another installment. Claiming that "the Tory has praised [the songs] more than the Liberal, and the anti-Repealer as much as the Nationalist," as well as referencing the songbook's popularity in the United States and Canada, Davis predicted *Spirit of the Nation's* continued success.<sup>36</sup>

### Political and Popular Impact

Aesthetic products can hold enormous power in creating or reviving a national identity. In Ireland, as in other European nationalist movements, music became a potent means of transmitting ideas about national culture. Given that music performance, whether in the concert hall or in the local market, was one of the main forms of public entertainment in the nineteenth century, it came as close to anything as a mass medium.<sup>37</sup> Davis's songs and those of Young Ireland were no different. The popularity of *Spirit of the Nation* meant that their songs were sung throughout Ireland wherever people assembled—in the cottage, in the village forge, in the harvest field, in the workshop, in the lawyers' chambers, in the universities, in

---

<sup>35</sup> O'Sullivan, 62.

<sup>36</sup> Preface, *Spirit of the Nation*, Part II (Dublin: James Duffy, 1843), iii–iv.

<sup>37</sup> Benjamin Curtis, *Music Makes the Nation: Nationalist Composers and Nation Building in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambria Press: Amherst, 2008), 24, 26.

the public houses, and in concert halls. They were even discussed and sung in the aristocratic drawing rooms.<sup>38</sup> The breadth of the songs' appeal is important. One must recognize that music does more than symbolize or articulate nationalism, it actually participates in its formation. As ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlman declared, modern nation-states most powerfully came into being when their citizens sang together.<sup>39</sup>

The reviews of *Spirit of the Nation* provide an indication of the popular fervor for the songbook. The praise from the *Waterford Chronicle* reached religious proportions:

We have pored with delight over this beautiful wreath of genuine Irish song, which may aptly be termed a Rosary of National Feeling—its every verse, and line, and word, breathing scorn for the foe—love of native land—defiance to the oppressor—freedom for the slave—death to tyranny, and invoking the light of liberty, pure, bright, and unshackled as the breeze or beam of Heaven, for all who deem the glorious gift worth struggling for. The *Spirit of the Nation* is a manual of martial and patriotic sentiment worthy of the sacred cause—the noble people—and the glorious land from which its animating strains derive their inspiration...As a popular song-book, this work may be regarded in the light of a morning hymn to a new era, just suited to the age, in soul, sentiment, and music.<sup>40</sup>

A review from the English Radical journal the *Leeds Times* took a more earnest, militaristic approach and imagined the songs of *Spirit of the Nation* leading the Irish to freedom by whatever means necessary:

And, to speak the truth, the book is a very serious matter both to friends and foes. It is impossible to make light of it—or to laugh over its pages. Earnestness, like the grip of death, breathes throughout every line; and in every word there is a soul, armed with swords.

---

<sup>38</sup> O'Sullivan, 58.

<sup>39</sup> Philip V. Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History*, ABC-CLIO World Music Series (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 35.

<sup>40</sup> Review reprinted in *The Nation*, June 17, 1843, 562.

Neither can we mistake the spirit of these songs. They mean simply this, and no more—"FREEDOM"—by peaceable means if we can get it—but if not—"FREEDOM."

The boldest utterances are they which ever come from a strong and fiery heart conscious of the misery and degradation of its father-land. And Ireland has at last—after these weary and dumb ages of suffering, of oppression, and of wrong—found a voice which speaks to some purpose. In this book five centuries of pain and injustice plead sternly and eloquently unto God and man for judgment and redress. The iniquity could last no longer—could be endured no longer—and the soul of the Irish people has burst out in flames here—in these very songs—and it will burn the injustice to ashes.<sup>41</sup>

Songs that could arouse such passion from those who supported Irish nationalism were sure to elicit similarly strong feelings from those who opposed it. In June 1843, *The Nation* reported on a large anti-Repeal meeting that was held at the Rotunda in Dublin, at which the prominent Unionist barrister Isaac Butt spoke.<sup>42</sup> After attacking the Repeal movement as a treasonous activity, he held aloft a copy of *Spirit of the Nation* as proof of the movement's dangerous intent. Butt read aloud from several ballads, including Davis's "Men of Tipperary" and "Vow of Tipperary," as well as Edward Walsh's "War Song of Ireland, A.D. 1843," labeling the last as "murderous invective."<sup>43</sup> And, in a final example, the *Times* in London took offense at the ability of the poets of *Spirit of the Nation* to use historical allusion as a device in which to house their message of Irish liberty and "vengeance":

Poetry is one of the most convenient instruments in the world for saying what you please. Nobody has a right to know exactly how much you may or

---

<sup>41</sup> Review reprinted in *The Nation*, October 21, 1843, 26. The Radicals were on the liberal end of the British political spectrum. They favored reform of the parliamentary system, reform of the Church of England, and they often sided with O'Connell and his Irish MPs in supporting issues such as Catholic emancipation and reform of the tithing system for the Church of Ireland. See, Howard Martin, *Britain in the Nineteenth Century*, Challenging History (Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes, 1996), 109–111.

<sup>42</sup> A staunch advocate of a union with Great Britain in his early life, Butt's experiences with the Great Famine led him to turn to Irish nationalism and to support the establishment of a domestic legislature. In 1873 he formed the Home Rule League.

<sup>43</sup> *The Nation*, June 17, 1843, 576.

may not mean. Let a man but make his thoughts rhyme, and there is hardly any amount of treason and iniquity that he may not utter, without giving anybody a right to say positively that he intends it. But when to the license of poetry are joined the facilities of history—when writers do but pay criminal justice the compliment of casting their exciting appeals to modern national feeling into the very transparent form of historical allusion, and of winging them with the privileged and ambitious vehemence of verse, no sedition appears too daring to be spoken, no atrocity too great to be recommended with impunity...

...*These burning words are not inserted in the popular newspaper of the day as a mere specimen of poetical diction*—the mere literary endeavour of a fanciful and studious to realise the past. They are written with far other objects; *they are written to command and direct the public mind*, and **THEY ARE VERY WELL CALCULATED, INDEED, FOR THEIR PURPOSE**. The man who wrote them is a man of talent, and knew perfectly well what he was about. It was his object to encourage the Irish people in identifying themselves with the feelings, the actions, the wrongs, and the victories of their forefathers. He meant that every line should find a response in every Irish heart; he meant—it is nonsense to deny it—to inspire, if not an abstract admiration for, at least a fervid sympathy with, those in whose person he was speaking.

...If any one wishes to doubt that the Irish movement has a character, and that character is one of revenge, and that that revenge is too likely to be a bloody one, we advise him to keep clear of the *Spirit of the Nation*.<sup>44</sup>

Such strong reactions from both sides of the nationalist divide meant that the songs of Davis and his movement were having their desired effect. They inflamed the dormant feelings of pride and nationalism in people throughout Ireland, and did so to such a degree that the opposing forces had no choice but to take notice.

### A Bigger, Better Songbook

After the success of *Spirit of the Nation* Parts I and II, Davis and his colleagues decided to issue another edition of the songbook in a guise altogether different than its previous iterations. The public was given a hint as to the plans for the new work in January 1844 when an announcement appeared in *The Nation* declaring that the

---

<sup>44</sup> Review reprinted in *The Nation*, December 16, 1843, 154. Emphasis appears in the original text.

publisher had in mind two new formats of the songbook, “one for the drawing-room, in the most beautiful style of typographic art; the other for the millions, in a little pocket volume that the farmer can take to the fair, and the labourer to the field with him, and which either can purchase for a trifle.”<sup>45</sup> Nothing else was said of the new edition until April of the same year when the finalized form was disclosed. The “Library Edition” as it was called, was to be printed in small quarto size with large type on thick vellum paper. It was to be issued in six parts, with each part containing two musical accompaniments—one newly composed air and one traditional air—along with the poets’ names.<sup>46</sup> By June 1844 the proposed number of parts had already grown from six to eight, where it would remain.<sup>47</sup> The parts were intended to be issued on a monthly basis, a pattern that generally held true with only slight deviation (see Table 1).

Table 1. Dates of Publication for *Spirit of the Nation*, “Library Edition,” Nos. 1–8

No. 1	29 June 1844
No. 2	28 July 1844
No. 3	31 August 1844
No. 4	19 October 1844
No. 5	2 November 1844
No. 6	7 December 1844
No. 7	21 December 1844
No. 8	20 January 1845

After all eight parts were published individually, the entire work was combined and made available for purchase by the end of January 1845. In its final form, the

---

<sup>45</sup> *The Nation*, January 27, 1844, 248.

<sup>46</sup> *The Nation*, April 20, 1844, 440.

<sup>47</sup> *The Nation*, June 29, 1844, 593.



songbook totaled 350 pages and included music for seventeen original melodies and arrangements of twenty traditional tunes, as well as an Irish language index.<sup>48</sup>

In offering the new edition of the songbook in two formats—individual numbers and the combined work (The “Library Edition,” hereafter known as the 1845 edition)—Davis and Young Ireland were appealing to multiple markets. The individual numbers were affordable and portable and thus were targeted at the farmers and laborers who formed the bulk of Davis’s audience. Capitalizing on the success of Parts I and II, he sought to further impress his nationalist vision upon the popular mind. In doing so, he also attempted to replace the vulgar street songs commonly known to the Irish poor and working classes, songs Davis once referred to as “faded finery of the West End, the foul parodies of St. Giles’s, the drunken rigamarole of the black Helots—or, as they are touchingly classed in the streets, ‘sentimental, comic, and nigger songs.’”<sup>49</sup> Davis was well versed in this body of songs, as he had his own collection of street ballads.<sup>50</sup> The literary imitations of street balladry, which Davis and his colleagues cultivated in *Spirit of the Nation*, strengthened the popular understanding of music as a functional resource, one

---

<sup>48</sup> The preface for the 1845 edition states that there are twenty-two old Irish airs arranged for voice and piano. A careful count of the songbook’s index as well as the actual printed music, however, yields a count of twenty. Perhaps Davis intended to have twenty-two arrangements but then had to cut them out immediately before the songbook went to press.

<sup>49</sup> *The Nation*, June 28, 1845, 616. In referring to Irish peasants as “black Helots” and their songs as “nigger” songs, Davis was drawing on a rhetorical trope of the period that linked Spartan helots, Irish peasants, and African slaves of the West Indies. Irish authors even frequently used “Helots” as a pseudonym for Irish peasants. See, Stephen Hodkinson and Edith Hall, “Appropriations of Spartan Helotage in British Anti-Slavery Debates of the 1790s,” in *Ancient Slavery and Abolition From Hobbes to Hollywood*, ed. Edith Hall, Richard Alston, and Justine McConnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 90. For example, one Irish author of the period wrote: “Oppression is the inevitable result of a state of things in which a marked class has the ascendancy over another; no matter whether the inferior caste be black or white, Irishmen or Helots, Catholics or Plebians, injury and insult must of necessity be its lot.” See, William Sampson, *Memoirs of William Sampson, an Irish Exile; Written by Himself* (London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Arnot, 1832), xiv.

<sup>50</sup> See Forty-five Irish song-sheets, some from the collection of Thomas Davis, NLI LO 2210.

which continually advanced the cause of Irish self-determination. While Davis repudiated the commonplace vulgarity of street ballads, he took advantage of the central influence they exerted on forming popular opinion.<sup>51</sup> Their reach was extensive. In the mid-nineteenth century, printed song texts circulated very widely, socially as well as geographically, and were disseminated along with all sorts of everyday commodities, passed from hand to hand, pasted onto walls, sung out loud, copied, and learned aurally.<sup>52</sup>

The 1845 edition of the songbook, with its substantial size, music in piano arrangement, and green silk binding was appropriate for the drawing room. Utilizing this format, Davis and Young Ireland were targeting the Irish middle-class, particularly the Anglo-Irish Protestants who may have been open to the cultural nationalism espoused by Davis but who were uncomfortable with the Catholic populism of Daniel O'Connell. Davis knew public speeches and meetings would be utterly useless in winning middle-class Protestants to a cause associated with the name of O'Connell, for their prejudice could not be softened by verbal assault. In employing national songs, Davis took advantage of the social and intellectual forces that could break down that prejudicial divide. As a Protestant, he knew that among every generation of Protestants since the Battle of the Boyne (1690) there were some who were ashamed of an Ascendancy that had so little to say to justify its dominant social, political, and economic position; and among the young there were many who felt the want of a country and listened eagerly to stories of Irish soldiers

---

<sup>51</sup> Harry White, *The Keeper's Recital, Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 69.

<sup>52</sup> David Atkinson, "Folk Songs in Print: Text and Tradition," *Folk Music Journal* 8, no. 4 (2004): 463.

and statesmen.<sup>53</sup> He hoped to capitalize on those feelings to produce Anglo-Irish support.

A contemporary reviewer from the *Kilkenny Journal* noted the songbook's drawing room appeal:

This new issue was called for—it will be the harbinger of nationality into the drawing-rooms of our aristocracy—it will be found upon the study table, and in the libraries of the intellectual men of the country, and it will have its place in boudoirs, and on the music-stands of the women of Ireland. The book is got up with great taste and elegance—the illustrated cover, and the printing, as a specimen of Irish typography, is most creditable to the country, and shows the progress we are making as a literary people... We would teach them [songs and ballads] to our children, and we would rather hear our daughters sing them than any other music we know of; and the advent of Ireland's liberty will be at hand, when the puny ballads which have been too long Irish drawing-room companions are laid aside—when such songs as those of THE NATION are heard beside the harp and piano, and the reply of our youth, to woman's soft voice, asking "What shall I play?" shall be "The Men of Tipperary"—or if pathos be the ruling influence of the hour, "The Lost Path." Such songs will ever be acceptable to our fair countrywomen, and such songs poured from their lips will carry love of country with them, and plant it in the hearts of our youth.<sup>54</sup>

This format of the songbook proved to be very popular and would reach its fiftieth edition by 1877.<sup>55</sup> The wide appeal of the songs of *Spirit of the Nation*—from the marketplace ballad monger to the drawing room pianist—indicated the popular attraction of Irish traditional music and underlined the efficacy of that music as a vehicle for carrying Davis's message.

It was also in the format of the 1845 edition that *Spirit of the Nation* most clearly showed its influence from Thomas Moore and his *Irish Melodies* songbooks.

---

<sup>53</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, Charles Gavan Duffy, *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History, 1840-1850* (Cassell, Petter, and Galpin: London, 1880), 278–79.

<sup>54</sup> Review reprinted in *The Nation*, December 21, 1844, 171.

<sup>55</sup> Helen F. Mulvey, *Thomas Davis and Ireland: A Biographical Study* (Catholic University of America Press: Washington, D.C., 2003), 105.

Both refit traditional melodies to new texts, although Moore's were not as overtly nationalistic; and both contained music in piano arrangement. Patriotic inspiration was present in approximately one-third of Moore's songs, the texts of which generally expressed frustration, death, or despair. The impression one derives from Moore's works is that the job of an Irish bard was to weep for his country. Despite Moore's overly sentimental patriotism, he still opened the door for nationalist writers of the mid-nineteenth century, and Davis certainly took him as a model.<sup>56</sup>

With the 1845 edition of *Spirit of the Nation*, Davis and Young Ireland created a hybrid songbook, adopting aspects of Moore's works without abandoning their own style. Its hard cover, illustrated title page, and music in piano arrangement endowed the songbook with the attributes necessary for the drawing room. Its content, however, was still the vigorous, spirited poetry that was characteristic of the literature of Young Ireland. Conversely, Moore's lyrical poetry was stylistically far removed from the straightforward approach of the Irish street ballad. The *Irish Melodies* were intended primarily for the parlors and drawing rooms of the upper classes, and as such were much slower in reaching the lower classes outside the cities. The link between popular literature and nationalist activism, which the *Irish Melodies* eschewed, was taken up and developed by *Spirit of the Nation*.<sup>57</sup>

#### The Force Behind *Spirit of the Nation*

With Charles Gavan Duffy spending the majority of 1844 either in prison or convalescing outside of Dublin and away from *The Nation*, the majority of the work

---

<sup>56</sup> Zimmerman, 77.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 78.

involved with assembling and publishing the new edition of *Spirit of the Nation* fell on Davis's shoulders.<sup>58</sup> He did not act alone. His correspondence, for example, clearly indicates he received assistance from his colleagues, most notably John Pigot and William Elliot Hudson, who provided the musical arrangements and newly composed music. The correspondence also shows, however, that Davis was the driving force behind the songbook, pushing the project through to its conclusion.

Even though the first of the eight individual numbers of the new edition was not published until June 1844, Davis wrote to Pigot in March of that year indicating that musical plans were already underway: "Hudson has written music for [Who Fears to Speak of]'98, Fag a Bealac, etc. The Spirit is to be re-issued in six parts, the size of Macaulay's Ballads, with a new and an old air in each number. Of course 'twill be kept for you... I wish you would try music to the 'Men of Tipperary.' You understand it, and Hudson does not."<sup>59</sup> The music for the three songs mentioned in the text—"Who Fears to Speak of '98," "Fag a Bealac," and "Men of Tipperary"—were used as the original compositions in nos. 1 through 3 of the new songbook. Davis's assurance to Pigot ("Of course 'twill be kept for you") not only guaranteed the latter a role in the songbook's production but indicates his importance to the project. That importance was highlighted by Davis's request that Pigot assume the duties of writing music for "Men of Tipperary."

---

<sup>58</sup> See Mulvey, 139, 158. Duffy, along with Daniel and John O'Connell, as well as other members of the Repeal Association, were convicted of conspiracy in February 1844. He was imprisoned from 30 May 1844 until 6 September 1844. Afterwards, he recuperated by travelling through Leinster, Munster, and Kerry.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Davis, "Letters of Thomas Davis," *Irish Monthly* 16, no. 179 (May, 1888): 266.

In May of the same year Davis again wrote to Pigot, this time with some suggestions for editing several texts going into the songbook:

I suppose you see J[ohn] O'H[agan] often. Tell him that three several persons who worship his "Dear Land" are displeased with "Crimson Red," and that he ought to alter it. Also say that the concluding line of I[ngram]'s first verse is bad English—it should run, "his glass" not "your glass." But then "your" is a far better singing word, so let him write forthwith to I— to shift the line, so as to secure the English and smoothness. I think the two last lines in verse one would sing better and read better thus than as at present—

"But you man, a true man,  
Will fill your glass with us."

I have the first proof sheet of 1<sup>st</sup> part of the new edition on my desk. The music is very well done, and the paper and letter-press are superb. Nothing like them have been attempted here before. Have you musicked Tipperary? yea or nay.<sup>60</sup>

O'Hagan's "Dear Land" was included in the first number of the new songbook and Ingram's text was in the second. With O'Hagan's poem, especially, Davis must have been inspecting the proof sheets for the first number and was attempting to make last-minute adjustments. The second paragraph of the example also indicates Davis's pride in the project and his awareness of how ambitious an undertaking it was.

In the summer of 1844, Davis wrote Pigot a letter that provides vital clues as to how the music was prepared for *Spirit of the Nation*:

Hudson will leave town in September, and may not be able to read the music proofs of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> numbers of the Spirit. He and I, therefore, want you to copy the "Sean Bhean Vochd," "Dalcais," "Contented I Am," and the other airs needed for them in your clearest MS. He will read them over so that there can be no possible error in the MS. Holden will thus be able to set up quicker, and have a greater number finished by September, and the rest you could read the proofs of. Is not that rational?

---

<sup>60</sup> "Letters of Thomas Davis," 267.

Further, ask Miss P[rendergast] to cross out the Boopeepish part of “a Nation once Again,” as H[udson] is fond of the air and wants to revise it, subject to her final judgment!<sup>61</sup>

This letter is revealing on multiple levels. First, Hudson, not Pigot, appears to have been the primary “musical editor” in charge of inspecting the proofs and providing music to the engraver. Second, Holden must have been responsible for engraving the music for publication. This appears to be the case, as a near-contemporary source lists a “W. Holden” as “an exhibitor of printed music letter-press printing, and stereotype casts.”<sup>62</sup> Last, Miss Prendergast seems to have played a significant role in preparing the music and making musical decisions. Her name appeared often in the correspondence between Davis and Pigot, largely in reference to her capacity as the unofficial Young Ireland pianist, playing traditional tunes that were collected or composed for Davis and his colleagues to hear. In this instance, however, her participation was more substantial, as it seems she played a role in crafting the music for Davis’s well-known song, “A Nation Once Again.”

Also in the summer of 1844 Davis wrote to Hudson concerning the proposed publishing schedule for *Spirit of the Nation*, the possibility of expanding to eight numbers instead of the proposed six, and the need for more music:

I have been discussing the numbers and find that we have now materials for 7 numbers and your appendix on Irish with the Index would take at least 20 pages or ½ a number more. We must have either 6 or 8 numbers as the book must be sold either for 7<sup>s</sup> and 6<sup>d</sup> or 10<sup>s</sup> and 6<sup>d</sup>...

The only difficulties in front of this (otherwise) best arrangement are 1<sup>st</sup> the time of bringing out and 2<sup>nd</sup>, the music. I think both faceable with your

---

<sup>61</sup> Thomas Davis, “Letters of Thomas Davis,” Part II, *Irish Monthly* 16, no. 180 (June, 1888): 337.

<sup>62</sup> Dublin Music Trade, “W. Holden,” <http://www.dublinmusictrade.com/node/212> (accessed 25 September 2014). The website cites *The Exhibition Expositor and Advertiser* VII (Dublin: Gunn & Cameron, 1853): 1, as the source of its information.

help. I would either publish the 6<sup>th</sup> number on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of December so as to have the volume on 1<sup>st</sup> January with corrected Index or let them run on and bring out the volume on 1<sup>st</sup> March. Either would do but I prefer the former for business reasons. The list on the back shows a want of 5 old airs to be readily made up between Barry[,] O'Hagan etc. and 4 new airs in aid of which we have your 2 airs to which Barry is promised to write words, Clements' promise of music to the Wilde Geese and the hope of your writing music to O'Hagan's words which I gave you yesterday or to The Vow. Verses of A Martyr's Burial.

Yrs TD

New	Old
1) Fag an bealach Dear Land	Carabhat Jig Boyne Water
2) Memory of the Dead Ourselves Alone	Feadaim mas ail liom Brink of the White Rocks
3) Tipperary Bide Your Time	Chraobhin Aoibhin Paddies Evermore
4) Rally for Ireland Hymn of Freedom	An t-Sean bhean Bhoichd Contented I am
5) The Sword New Years Song	Wheelwright Annie Dear Dalcais War Song
6) Step Together A Nation Once Again	Up for the Green _____
7)_____	_____
_____	_____
8)_____	_____
_____	_____
The Repeal March <sup>63</sup>	

As in the previous examples, this letter shows Davis in charge of the production of *Spirit of the Nation* and delegating responsibilities to his trusted associate. The text

---

<sup>63</sup> Thomas Davis to William Elliot Hudson, [N.D.], RIA 23 O 47.



also indicates that the traditional airs arranged for the songbook were obtained by a variety of contributors, not just Pigot and Hudson. The original compositions, however, do seem to have been largely or completely provided by the two men. The “Clements” named in the letter must not have delivered on the music promised for “Wild Geese,” as the text is set to the traditional melody “Kitty O’Hara” in the songbook.

Another aspect to Davis’s control over the production of *Spirit of the Nation* was his ability to determine which authors or lyricists were published. His correspondence with Duffy often shows him making last-minute adjustments to the songbook, ensuring that his professional standards were met and that the desired message was presented. The following letter to Duffy shows Davis rearranging the contents of *Spirit of the Nation* no. 1 and yielding to pressure from his friends concerning an ill-advised change to his popular poem “Lament of Owen Roe O’Neil”:

I find every one, including John O’Hagan, etc., are against me on the ‘Owen Roe,’ so I must surrender. Will you take the blame of restoration with James Duffy? If so, put back verse one as in the present ‘Spirit of the Nation,’ but I plead to have verse two run thus—

‘From Derry we were marching, false Cromwell to o’erthrow,  
And who can doubt the tyrant’s fate had he met Owen Roe?  
But the weapons of the Saxon met him on his way,  
And he died, etc.’

You, I think, agree with this. Will you put my ‘Aileen Aroon’ into the first number, where ‘Corravath’ comes now, and push that farther on? This will oblige me. Inclosed is the correct copy. I shall leave the music of the ‘Corravath’ tomorrow.<sup>64</sup>

In this instance, two of the texts mentioned—“Owen Roe” and “Aileen Aroon”—were Davis’s own, and “Corravath” refers to Pigot’s lyrics “Our Own Little Isle,” which

---

<sup>64</sup> Duffy, *Thomas Davis*, 234. Davis was concerned about the “blame of restoration” because the cost of alterations fell on the publisher, James Duffy.

were set to the “Corravath Jig.” Despite Davis’s editorial suggestions, all three songs ended up being included in the first number.

At times, contributors did not appreciate being on the receiving end of Davis’s editorial decisions. One such man, Edward Walsh, was a teacher in the National schools and frequently contributed verse to *The Nation*. In fact, his association with the journal cost him his teaching post. Despite Duffy’s and Davis’s successful efforts to find him other means of employment, Walsh carried a personal dislike for Davis, one of the few men to do so.<sup>65</sup> In July 1844, upon discovering that one of his songs had been cut from the second number of *Spirit of the Nation*, Walsh wrote to Duffy to complain:

Sir

I had a message from you yesterday through Mr. Hamill, expressing a wish that I should procure from the printer of the new Spirit of the Nation, any songs of mine that may appear in the Second Part of that work, which is in course of publication, in order that they may be sent to you.

In obedience to your command, I saw at the printer’s a list of the songs now about to be published and among them was none of mine. The “Song of the Penal Days” was originally there but was again struck out by Mr. Davis to make way for another.

I have no objection that my untaught strains should give way to any of the numerous songs of Mr. Davis that adorn the collection, or to that of any other person who may be honoured in a niche of your national temple.

On the contrary, I am very glad the “Craoisin Erin” has been omitted, for I have seen from the Proof sheet that it was intended it should appear without my name, while that humble name has been affixed to a less clever song [“Irish War Song”] in the first Part—a proceeding which puzzles me to account for, and against which I must protest.

With many thanks for the interest you continue to evince in my welfare, I beg to have the Honor of being your very obliged servant.

Edward Walsh<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *A Short Life of Thomas Davis*, The New Irish Library (Dublin: Sealy, Bryers, & Walker, 1895), 190–92.

<sup>66</sup> Edward Walsh to Charles Gavan Duffy, 19 July 1844, RIA MS 12 P 19.

Walsh's antipathy toward Davis comes out in the sarcasm-laced third paragraph. His references to Davis's numerous pieces in the songbook and to contributors being allowed a "niche" in Young Ireland's national temple certainly carry the sting of someone on the outside looking in.

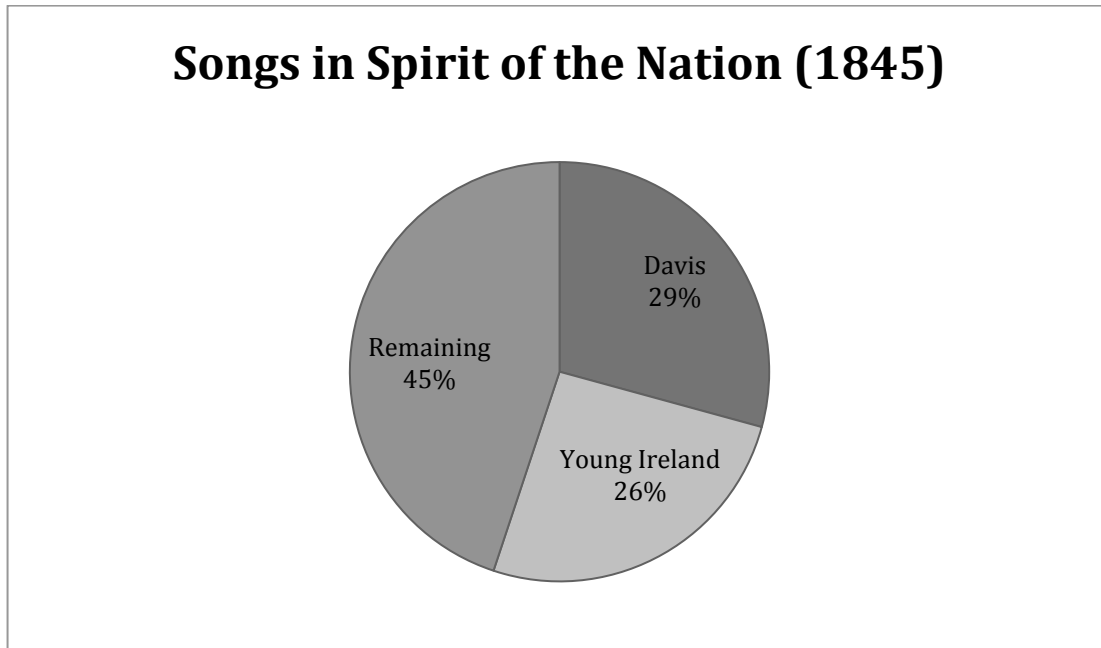
Regardless of Walsh's personal feelings toward Davis, his point was warranted. Of the 147 songs total in *Spirit of the Nation*, Davis wrote 43 of them. If one counts the contributions of the Young Ireland inner circle—Charles Gavan Duffy, John O'Hagan, John Pigot, M.J. Barry—then Davis and his colleagues account for 81 songs, or 55% of the total. That only leaves 66 songs split among 28 other authors (see Table 2). Despite Walsh's complaints, his four poems rank among the highest number of songs from an outside contributor in the songbook.

In May of 1844, before any numbers of the new edition were published, Davis indicated that the door for outside contributions was already closed. An advertisement for the new edition of *Spirit of the Nation* contained a note alerting readers that the numbers would contain "Poems by the same authors hitherto uncollected."<sup>67</sup> This suggests that he had a list of favored authors whom he trusted to provide songs for the new edition of the songbook. According to Table 2, Davis put the primary responsibility on himself, with support provided by his close colleagues. His ability to control which songs were printed in *Spirit of the Nation* allowed him to more easily control the nationalist message of his movement. And with the most songs in the songbook, his voice led the way.

---

<sup>67</sup> *The Nation*, May 25, 1844, 520.

Table 2. Division of Authorship in *Spirit of the Nation* (1845)



### The Music

Adding printed music to *Spirit of the Nation* was a significant step in the development of this songbook and further tied *Spirit of the Nation* to the world of print culture.<sup>68</sup> In the process, this addition changed this body of music in fundamental ways. For example, the folk tunes represented as “Irish” in the collection actually came from a variety of socially distinct repertoires, including shepherds’ songs, church songs, farmers’ songs, and other types. By labeling them all as simply “Irish,” the creators of the *Spirit of the Nation* positioned these diverse songs to represent the entire nation, not just its component parts.<sup>69</sup>

Although the printing of traditional music may have put forward an image of national unity, the reliance on print culture also had negative ramifications for the

---

<sup>68</sup> To be clear, not every song received musical notation. 17 original airs and 20 traditional airs were notated.

<sup>69</sup> Curtis, 107.

cause of Irish nationalism. As Irish author Seamus Deane noted, “The movement from an oral to a print culture is not simply a matter of translating folk tales or customs from the mouths of the people to the page. It involves an attempt to control a strange bodily economy in which food, drink, speech and song are intimately related.”<sup>70</sup> The printing of native music undeniably altered both its musical form and its cultural significance; it also changed the terms by which traditional music confronted the print-based marketplace of Anglo-Irish culture. Whereas most native tunes experienced a degree of change or variation across time in the process of oral dissemination, the act of printing enforced uniformity on Irish tunes. Additionally, when Irish music was printed, it was often designated for instruments foreign to the native tradition: the flute and violin in the eighteenth century and then the piano in the nineteenth century.<sup>71</sup>

The transferal of music from the oral tradition to print represented a dramatic shift in the practice and dissemination of traditional music. It was only through the medium of print, however, that a wider audience could be found and established for this music. If broad sympathy for Ireland’s woes was to be won across social classes and other divides, the music had to be publicized and commercialized in a recognizable and attractive form.<sup>72</sup>

Even with this shift, the attitude of Davis and Young Ireland toward Irish music and Irish composers were still tied directly to the folk. In an “Answers to

---

<sup>70</sup> Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 55.

<sup>71</sup> Leith Davis, *Music, Postcolonialism, and Gender: The Construction of an Irish National Identity, 1724-1874* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 29–30.

<sup>72</sup> Deane, 67.

Correspondents" column in *The Nation*, the anonymous author castigated a reader who dared to doubt the existence of Irish composers:

Some one who cannot spell, and who writes insolence in bad English, has attacked us for praising Irish music. He asks—"Was there ever an Irish composer?" Aye! [Turlough] Carolan was one, and [Cornelius] Lyons another, and [Ruadh  r   Dall] O'  athain another, and there were a hundred nameless men beside, who composed the most haughty and sustained marches, and the tenderest love-tunes, and the deepest dirges, ever heard by mortal ears. The names of these great geniuses, like those of the authors of the *Border Ballads*, of the *Songs of the Cid*, and, indeed, of the fountain works in most countries, are gone; but, thank Heaven! their creations are here. If we could recall the direction of the chap who sent the letter (we tore his letter in disgust), we would recommend him for a settlement in a Connaught bog.<sup>73</sup>

The Irish composers referred to in the text were all harpers from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. No mention was made of contemporary composers such as Michael Balfe, William Rooke, or John Stevenson. Additionally, the "nameless men" who composed the "fountain works" of their native countries refers directly to the anonymous compositions that formed the cornerstone of native musical culture, passed down orally from generation to generation. In securing William Elliot Hudson and John Pigot to arrange traditional melodies as well as write original compositions for *Spirit of the Nation*, Davis chose men whose style was anchored in their native traditional music. In his mind, the works of Pigot and Hudson followed in the same line as Carolan, Lyons, and O'  athain.

Pigot's and Hudson's arrangements and newly composed music for the songbook, scored for piano and voice, are simple, direct, and devoid of ornamentation; some present-day scholars have characterized the settings as

---

<sup>73</sup> *The Nation*, May 24, 1845, 536.

“bland.”<sup>74</sup> What these musical settings were lacking were the *carte blanche* arrangements of the *Irish Melodies*. In those volumes, John Stevenson added “symphonies” (preludes) and postludes to each song, and Moore felt free to alter the tune’s melodic contour in order to fit his texts.<sup>75</sup> Those tunes had been modified to such an extent that contemporaries such as Edward Bunting lamented that the melodies were “hardly suspected to be themselves.”<sup>76</sup> He would not have encountered that difficulty with the arrangements of Hudson and Pigot.

The simplicity of the arrangements likely resulted from an attempt to remain as true to the original melodies as possible. In such a model of folk song notation, skilled performers would be expected to enhance the skeletal framework of the notation by drawing upon an orally transmitted body of performance practice conventions. Whereas some consumers of *Spirit of the Nation* may not have been familiar enough with the traditional style to do so, there were many who would have been. As Irish musicologist Niall Keegan has noted about the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century transmission of tunes via notation, many elements of traditional music performance—variation, ornamentation, phrasing, and articulation—were not accounted for in the notation, and often the melody was represented in a very basic manner.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps this practice helps explain the blandness of Pigot’s and

---

<sup>74</sup> Harry White in his *The Keeper’s Recital, Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 60; and Joseph Ryan in his dissertation *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, Ph.D. diss., (National University of Ireland Maynooth, 1991), 115 both use “bland” to describe the music in the *Spirit of the Nation*.

<sup>75</sup> Harry White, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 47–48.

<sup>76</sup> Edward Bunting, preface to *The Ancient Music of Ireland, Arranged for Piano Forte* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840), 5.

<sup>77</sup> Niall Keegan, “Literacy as a Transmission Tool in Irish Traditional Music,”

Hudson's arrangements, despite the fact that the music in *Spirit of the Nation* occasionally specifies dynamics or articulation. The music was clear and direct enough for those outside of the traditional music culture to perform while also providing ample opportunity for the embellishments characteristic of traditional music performance.

Example 1 presents the first eight measures from Pigot's song "Our Own Little Isle," sung to the melody of the "Carabhat Jig." The syllabic text setting is accompanied by a basic, triadic chordal accompaniment that deviates only slightly in mm. 5 and 6 when the beat is subdivided into three eighth notes, presumably to mark the new line of text. The opening tempo of *Vivace* and dynamic of *mezzo-forte* are given, but other than those indications, the score is quite bare. Clear, "bland" arrangements such as this met the needs of both the parlor performer and the traditional musician.

The pioneering Irish musicologist W. H. Grattan Flood provided a preface and an introduction to the 1911 edition of *Spirit of the Nation* in which he commented on the music, praising the longevity of several songs. Of the songs that were set to traditional melodies, "Annie Dear," "The Battle Eve of the Brigade," "Clare's Dragoons," "Paddies Evermore," "Lament for the Milesians," "The West's Asleep," and "Our Own Little Isle" were still popular, he wrote, and were included in most books of Irish minstrelsy.<sup>78</sup>

---

in *The Maynooth International Musicological Conference 1995: Selected Proceedings*, Irish Musical Studies 4, ed. Patrick Devine and Harry White (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996), 337–38.

<sup>78</sup> Note that five of the seven songs Flood mentioned were Davis's.



Example 1. "Our Own Little Isle," mm. 1-8. *Spirit of the Nation* (1845)

## OUR OWN LITTLE ISLE.

AIR.—"The Larkspur Jig."

The musical score is for the song "Our Own Little Isle," which is an arrangement of "The Larkspur Jig." It is written in 6/8 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo and dynamics are marked "Vivace. m. f." The score consists of three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Oh I - rish-men ne - ver for - get 'Tis a fo - reigner's farm your own lit - tle isle; Oh I - rish - men when will you get some life in your hearts for your poor lit - tle isle:". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand.

Of the original melodies, according to Flood, "Dear Land" and "Who Fears to Speak of '98" had "lost none of their pristine freshness." He continued to write, however, that of the seventeen newly composed melodies, no more than twelve could claim to

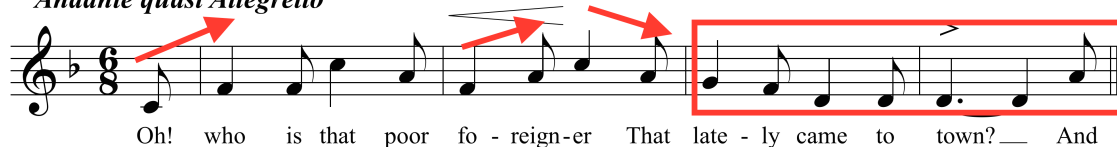
be strictly original. The melody for “A New Year’s Song,” for example, was merely a variant of “Irish Molly O,” a ballad popular in the first half of the nineteenth century (see Ex. 2). Other numbers, according to Flood, were “purely ephemeral,” a possible nod to the “bland” quality noted by later writers.<sup>79</sup>

The melodies “A New Year’s Song” and “Irish Molly O” are both sixteen measures in length, consisting of eight-measure phrases and an overall ABBA structure. Both are also in 6/8 meter and center on the key of F major. A comparison of the first four measures of each tune reveals the melodic similarities that presumably led Flood to label the new composition merely a variant. Both start on C and leap up a fourth to F. Both also ascend to C as the melodic high point, although “A New Year’s Song” extends the rise for an additional measure. Measure 2 of each melody features a leap of a minor third from A to C followed by a corresponding descending leap from C to A. And both melodies share the exact same rhythmic profiles in mm. 3 and 4.<sup>80</sup>

Example 2. Illustration of Melodic Similarities Between “Irish Molly O!” and “A New Year’s Song”

“Irish Molly O!”

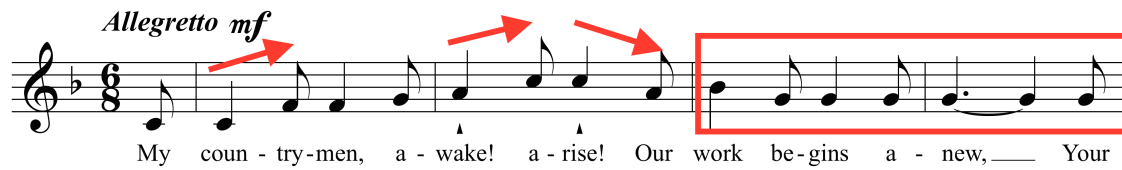
*Andante quasi Allegretto*



<sup>79</sup> W.H. Grattan Flood, preface and introduction to *Spirit of the Nation* (Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1911), vii, ix.

<sup>80</sup> This melody for “Irish Molly O!” was taken from Davis’s personal copy of the *Dublin Monthly Magazine*’s series, “Native Music of Ireland.” See RIA RR/36/B.

"A New Year's Song"



Some contemporary writers were also unconvinced by the original compositions. A review from the *Belfast News-Letter* made it clear that traditional airs were preferred:

The publication before us consists of chiefly the same pieces, but brought out in a really magnificent style, and accompanied with the airs in a harmonized form. Some of these airs, we are told in the title-page, are "original"; but whether original or not, we have a very indifferent opinion of a number of them—they want the intensity of genuine Irish compositions of a musical character, which speak at once to the heart; and, as Sir Walter Scott, in another case, express it, "go down with a *pegh*." From this censure we except the genuine old Irish airs that have been adopted, because the striking of a single chord renders their origin unmistakable. Let THE NATION, then, keep its musical "originals" in its pocket...<sup>81</sup>

This comment did not go unnoticed by Davis and his colleagues, perhaps indicating anxiety on their part about the way in which the original compositions would be received. A letter to Davis at the time specifically mentioned this review: "The only 'musical' critique, yet, has been McNight's in Belfast N.L.—very ill natured...His cautious query—are these original?—ought to induce the omission of the word. It will do as well to call the things 'Airs composed for this work.'"<sup>82</sup> Given Davis's emphasis on the cultural importance of native music, new compositions that were based on the traditional idiom were bound to be scrutinized. And although Pigot's

<sup>81</sup> Review reprinted in *The Nation*, December 21, 1844, 171.

<sup>82</sup> Letter to Thomas Davis, NLI MS 2644. No name or date were provided in the letter, but the handwriting and tone of the text indicate that William Elliot Hudson was the author.

and Hudson's works generally met with approval, in the eyes of some they were clearly found lacking.

### Contents of the Songbook

Of the 147 songs and ballads in *Spirit of the Nation* (1845), a great number fall into two genres: texts with historical subject matter, which feature the rhetoric of violence and often include elements of racializing nationalism, and texts of Irish unity, which attempt to persuade Irishmen of all sects to overcome their differences for the good of their common nation. Thirty-four texts contain historical subject matter, treating events ranging from the twelfth through the nineteenth centuries. Some are war cries urging the Irish to victory, and some are laments over fallen heroes. Davis was counting on these history lessons to mobilize and unify the Irish people: he enjoined his readers to "saturate themselves in Irish feeling" by absorbing the lessons from their history.<sup>83</sup> In emphasizing Ireland's history, Davis offered up a set of collective memories that were vital in the construction of the nation and its self-definition. With his songs and others in *Spirit of the Nation*, he attached those memories to specific characters and places, so that the former became national heroes and the latter became part of a historic homeland. In other words, he engaged in the territorialization of memory. Memories of Irish heroes such as Brian Boru, Owen Roe O'Neill, Patrick Sarsfield, and Henry Grattan became the groundwork for nationalist claims of Irish identity because their exploits were

---

<sup>83</sup> Brian Jenkins, *Irish Nationalism and the British State, From Repeal to Revolutionary Nationalism* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 64.

crucial for the development of the community.<sup>84</sup> In the landscape of Irish history, Davis staked an enormous claim for Irish nationalism.

Yet even as Davis sought to mold the perception of Irish history, he was finding it an unwieldy mass to manage. In an 1845 letter to Daniel Owen Maddyn, he wrote that “The weight of that past is upon us now, and sanguine as I am that this country could be rescued, I often doubt if it will, for history casts shadows on my hopes.”<sup>85</sup> One might argue that Davis was admitting that history had created such bitter animosities between the sects of Irishmen that those differences could not be transcended, that all his efforts to bring Irishmen together with appeals to a shared history and culture were in the end insufficient. One might also argue, however, that Davis himself contributed to the “weight of that past” of which he wrote. The historical ballads he penned and those he published in *Spirit of the Nation* were intended to educate the people and contribute to the store of national memories. The language of many of the poems, however, was full of hostility toward England, thus alienating much of the Anglo-Irish population who still held loyalties to the Crown. While that earned him a large amount of support from segments of the Irish population, it also prevented his version of Irish history from being a unifying force.<sup>86</sup>

Two examples illustrate the inconsistencies in Davis’s message from one song to another. His “The Penal Days,” sung to the tune of “The Wheelright,” harkens back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when a set of statutes known as

---

<sup>84</sup> Anthony D. Smith, “Culture, community, and territory: the politics of ethnicity and nationalism” *International Affairs* 72, no. 3 (July, 1996): 453–54.

<sup>85</sup> Duffy, *Thomas Davis*, 329–30.

<sup>86</sup> Mulvey, 225–26.

the “Penal Laws” were passed. Intended to regulate the status of the Irish Catholics, they disenfranchised the majority of the Irish population from all avenues of political or economic power.<sup>87</sup> Davis’s opening stanza lamented the cruelty of the unjust legislation:

Oh! weep those days, the penal days,  
When Ireland hopelessly complained.  
Oh! weep those days, the penal days,  
When godless persecution reigned;  
    When year by year,  
    For serf and peer,  
Fresh cruelties were made by law,  
    And, fill’d with hate,  
    Our senate sate  
    To weld anew each fetter’s flaw.  
Oh! weep those days, the penal days—  
Their mem’ry still on Ireland weighs.

But after three stanzas spent describing the oppression of the Penal Laws, in the final stanza Davis rejoiced at the end of those days and entreated heavenly aid for Irish unity:

They’re gone, they’re gone, those penal days,  
All creeds are equal in our isle;  
Then grant, O Lord, thy plenteous grace,  
Our ancient feuds to reconcile.  
    Let all atone  
    For blood and groan,  
For dark revenge and open wrong;  
    Let all unite  
    For Ireland’s right,  
And drown our griefs in Freedom’s song;  
Till time shall veil in twilight haze,  
The memory of those penal days.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Introduction, “Laws in Ireland for the Suppression of Popery,” (accessed 1 October 2014), <http://library.law.umn.edu/irishlaw/intro.html>.

<sup>88</sup> Thomas Davis, “The Penal Days,” in *Spirit of the Nation* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), 198–99.

Davis blunted the attack of the first three stanzas by refraining from naming either the Protestants or the English as responsible for the Penal Laws, only using words like “They” or “stranger.” In doing so, the penal days were framed as an episode that harmed Ireland as a whole, and not just one of its constituent parts. This text is a prime example of Davis’s efforts to educate the public about important episodes in Irish history while also emphasizing the lesson that the dark moments can be transcended. With a history as contentious as Ireland’s, the task of both remembering and forgetting was crucial in promoting unity, and in this text Davis succeeded.

Davis’s words married well with the traditional air—“a most successful adaptation of words and music,” in the words of W. H. Grattan Flood (see Ex. 2).<sup>89</sup> In a departure from the bare melodic presentation of other airs, the arranger of “The Wheelwright” supplied an approximation of traditional ornaments. The accents, grace notes, and turns provide additional metric emphasis, which in turn highlights important textual features. In mm. 1, 2, 5, and 6 the ornamentation brings forward “weep” and “penal.” Conversely, in the final triumphant stanza, the same tools punctuate the absence of the penal laws (“gone”) and the “plenteous” quality of the Lord’s grace. The *allegretto* tempo also aids the celebratory mood of the final stanza.

---

<sup>89</sup> Flood, xiv.

Example 3. "The Penal Days," mm. 1–8, from *Spirit of the Nation* (1845). The boxes show moments of emphasis underscored by written-in ornaments.

**Allegretto**

1. Oh! weep those days, those pe - nal days, When Ire - land hope - less -  
 4. They're gone, they're gone, those pe - nal days, All — creeds are e - qual

ly com-plain'd, Oh! weep those days, the pe - nal days, When god - less per - se -  
 in our isle; Then grant, O Lord, thy plen - teous grace, Our — anc - ient feuds to —

cu - tion reign'd.  
 re - con-cile.

Davis's "A Rally for Ireland. May, 1689," set to original music by Pigot, provides a countervailing example of a song that would likely have alienated his Anglo-Irish or Protestant audience. The poem describes one of the most divisive periods in Irish history, when the Protestant William III and the Catholic James II



fought for the British crown. Whereas the “Glorious Revolution” came off peacefully in England, in Ireland significant battles were fought, largely along sectarian lines. Arguably the most important was James’s defeat in the Battle of the Boyne (1690), which many Protestants still celebrate to this day.

Davis’s exuberant text, written from the Irish Catholic viewpoint, could easily be interpreted as a claim that Catholics were the only true Irish. In the first stanza he referred to them as “uprising slaves” and called them forth, as the green banner “Bids you to battle for triumph or graves—/Bids you to burst on the Sasanach [English] knaves.” In the third stanza, Davis made a reference to the founding of the Irish Parliament under James II, which would later be called the “Patriot Parliament.” Predominantly Catholic in composition, it was seen as more representative of the majority of the nation than any other parliament before.<sup>90</sup> Many hoped that the parliament would restore Catholic lands and property that were taken during the Cromwellian settlements of the mid-seventeenth century. Davis wrote: “We can laugh at each threat,/For our Parliament’s met” and then later, “They’ll break the last link of the Sasanach chain—/They’ll give us the lands of our father’s again!”<sup>91</sup> Davis, as a Protestant, could not have been unaware of the long history of strong anti-Catholic feelings among the Anglo-Irish, feelings reinforced by Catholic Emancipation in 1829. If he accompanied his family to weekly Church of Ireland services, he would have heard, among other commemorative prayers, one of thankfulness for deliverance from the Irish Catholic Uprising of 1641, a prayer

---

<sup>90</sup> J.G. Simms, *War and Politics in Ireland, 1649–1730*, ed. David Hayton and Gerard O’Brien (London: Hambledon Press, 1986), 65.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Davis, “A Rally for Ireland. May 1689,” in *Spirit of the Nation* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), 125–27.

removed from the liturgy only in 1859. Nothing in his surroundings would have led him to underestimate Protestant fears of a Catholic ascendancy, however misguided he may have found those feelings.<sup>92</sup> So for Davis to pen a text in which Catholics regain their power and land by physical force or die in the attempt would have been uneasy reading for members of Ireland's Protestant ascendancy.

Why would he write such lyrics? Perhaps by placing the date "May, 1689" in the title of the song he hoped to deflect the text's partisan sentiments safely into the past. Davis's poem was a historically accurate interpretation of the optimistic feelings held by many Catholics in 1689, and his intent to use the ballad to educate the public is clear in the litany of Irish military figures and their allies included in the second stanza:

Gallant Sheldon is here,  
And Hamilton, too,  
And Tirconaill so dear,  
And Mac Cartha so true.  
And there are Frenchmen;  
Skilful and stanch men—  
De Rosen, Pontée, Pusignan, and Boisselau,  
And gallant Lauzun is coming, you know,  
With Bealdearg, the kinsman of great Owen Roe.<sup>93</sup>

Davis framed the conflict as Irish vs. English, never using the terms "Catholic" or "Protestant," perhaps in an attempt to diminish the religious component of the event being described. Regardless of such precautions, however, in combining his own educational directive with his nationalist antipathy toward England, Davis's text presented a message that undermined his goal of a nonsectarian nationalism.

---

<sup>92</sup> Mulvey, 114–15.

<sup>93</sup> Davis, "A Rally for Ireland," 126.

Davis's lyrics, like Pigot's music, is structured around the recurrence of refrains, as seen in Ex. 4 below, where the refrains appear in bold text.<sup>94</sup> A part of that refrain, the repeated phrase "Now or Never! Now and forever!" was the motto displayed on the flag flying above Dublin Castle during the residence of the "Patriot Parliament" in 1689–90.<sup>95</sup> The phrase was also used in a version of the popular eighteenth-century nationalist song "The Shan Van Vocht," which was sung in support of the United Irishmen and their rebellion of 1798.<sup>96</sup> The intertextual connotations of that refrain undeniably supported the idea of Catholic nationalist rebellion. Pigot denoted these refrains musically with the use of fermatas, tempo changes, and dynamic changes in mm. 5–6, 17–18, and 23–26 (see Ex. 5). The end result, with Davis's upbeat, militant text and Pigot's sectionalized musical treatment, approximates an Irish drinking song.

Example 4. Verse 1, "A Rally for Ireland. May, 1689." *Spirit of the Nation* (1845).

Shout it out, till it ring,  
From Beinn-Mor to Cape Cleir,  
For our country and king,  
And religion so dear.  
**Rally, men! rally—**  
**Irishmen! rally!**  
Gather round the dear flag, that, wet with our tears,  
And torn, and bloody, lay hid for long years,  
And now, once again, in its pride re-appears.  
See! from The Castle our green banner waves,  
Bearing fit motto for uprising slaves—  
**For "Now or Never!"**

---

<sup>94</sup> This can be identified as Pigot's composition because the end of the music is signed, "Gaillte." Upon Davis's request that Pigot add some sort of signature at the end of his music to distinguish it from Hudon's, Pigot chose "'Galtee' (spelled Irishly)." See the letter from Pigot to Davis, 18 September 1844, NLI MS 2644.

<sup>95</sup> Charles Ffrench Blake-Forster, *The Irish Chieftains; or, A Struggle for the Crown* (Dublin: McGlashan and Gill, 1872), 147.

<sup>96</sup> *The Nation*, October 29, 1842, 40.

**"Now and for Ever!"**  
 Bids you to battle for triumph or graves—  
 Bids you to burst on the Sasanach knaves—  
**Rally, then, rally!**  
**Irishmen, rally!**  
**Shout "Now or Never!"**  
**"Now and for ever!"**  
 Heed not their fury, however it raves,  
 Welcome their horsemen with pikes and with staves,  
 Close on their cannon, their bay' nets, and glaives,  
 Down with their standard wherever it waves;  
**Fight to the last, and ye cannot be slaves!**  
**Fight to the last, and ye cannot be slaves!**

Example 5a-c. Refrains in Davis's "A Rally for Ireland," *Spirit of the Nation* (1845).  
Boxes indicate Pigot's use of musical means to denote textual refrains.

5a.

Shout it out, 'till it ring, From Ben-more to Cape Cleir, For our Coun-try and King, and Re-

li - gion so dear. Ral-ly, men! ral-ly, I - rish-men! ral - ly!

5b.

13 *Spirited*

See from The Cas-tle our Green Ban-ner waves, Bear-ing fit mot-to for up-ris-ing slaves, For

The image shows a musical score for a song. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a vocal line on a single staff and a piano accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The piano accompaniment begins with a grand staff. The lyrics are written below the vocal line. The second system continues the music with similar notation. The lyrics continue below the vocal line. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'Spirited'.

17 *Slower*

"Now, or Ne-ver, Now-and for E-ver!" Bids you to bat-tle for tri-umph or graves,

17

5c.

21 *>*

Bids you to burst on the Sa - sa-nach knaves

21

*Loudly*

Ral-ly, then, ral-ly I - rish-men! ral-ly.

25

Shout, "Now or Ne - ver, Now, and for E ver!"

25

The original music is based in C and leans toward tonality rather than modality due to the presence of the leading tone in the melody and dominant harmony at the ends of phrases, such as in mm. 18 and 26. In his choice of key, as well as the 6/8 meter and the syncopated dotted rhythms, Pigot was imitating the characteristics of the traditional repertoire. Yet those characteristics are not unique to Irish folk music, but are indeed shared by English, Scottish, and Welsh musical traditions.<sup>97</sup> As Benjamin Curtis warns, “Irishness” (or “Polishness” or “Norwegianness”) is not to be found in immanent stylistic features. Those designations are in fact social constructs.<sup>98</sup> Pigot, whose compositions were firmly grounded in the traditional idiom and were written expressly for a nationalist songbook, clearly intended for his works to express the quality of “Irishness” and be perceived in this manner.

A prominent component in the *Spirit of the Nation*’s historical songs was the use of a rhetoric of violence. The purpose of this sort of speech was to send a message to audiences at home and at Westminster about the utility of physical force, whether in the past or future. These words usually exhorted readers and listeners to take up arms against the foe and glorified those who had done so in the past. Often included were allusions to breaking the chain of slavery or taking up the sword against the Saxon (“Sassenach”) foe.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> Ryan, 157.

<sup>98</sup> Curtis, 30–31.

<sup>99</sup> L. Perry Curtis Jr. “Moral and Physical Force: The Language of Violence in Irish Nationalism,” *The Journal of British Studies* 27, no. 2 (April 1988): 161. On the use of the word “Sassenach,” see *Memoire, or, Detailed Statement of the Origin and Progress of the Irish Union: Delivered to the Irish Government, by Messrs. Emmett, O’Connor, and M’Nevin* (London, 1802), 71. William James McNevin testified that “...it has been the misfortune of this country, scarcely ever to have known the English natives or settlers, otherwise than enemies, and in his language the Irish

Part of Davis's rhetoric of violence was his frequent use of racializing nationalism. Influenced by the work of French historians Jules Michelet and Augustin Thierry, who glorified the Celts as the racial basis for French and Irish nationality, the term "Celt" became a leitmotif in Davis's writings.<sup>100</sup> This, of course, created a paradox as he tried to promote a nonsectarian nationalism. He was constantly caught between celebrating the Celt, and thus emphasizing a racial component of Irish national identity, and offering reassurances to descendants of the Danes (his term for Vikings), Normans, and Saxons that their place in the Irish nation was secure and that race did not matter.<sup>101</sup>

This glaring inconsistency in Davis's ideology did not go unnoticed by his contemporaries. In an anonymous article entitled "Who are the Irish," published in *The Nation*, the author took Davis and his movement to task:

But it will be said that the Celtic-speaking people of Ireland have retained the traditional national character, while the English-speaking race have with its language adopted the conventional morals and faith of England. So be it. Doubtless the people from whom a nation inherits its literature and religion are more truly its ancestors than its physical progenitors. But who are the leaders of the "Irish" of the present day? In this view of the question, they are "Saxons" to a man. Their faith is not that of the old Irish Church, but of the Romish Church; which, if not originally introduced, was first firmly established by the Anglo-Norman rulers. Their language, when they discuss religious, philosophical, or political topics, is English. O'Connell may now and then treat his auditors to a few scraps of Irish Gaelic...but could O'Connell frame a reform bill, or a constitution, or argue their *pros* and *cons* in Irish? Could the acute and energetic writers in the *Nation* find words and phrases in the "Irish Gaelic" to express their ideas? A parliament assembled in College-green must talk "Saxon," legislate in a "Saxon" spirit, reason according to "Saxon" habits of thought. "Ireland for the Irish," if "Saxon" is to

---

peasant has but one name for Protestant and Englishman, and confounds them; he calls them both by the name of *Sasanagh*; his conversation, therefore is *less against a religionist* than against a *foe*; his prejudice is the effect of the ignorance he is kept in, and the treatment he receives. How can we be surprised at it, when so much pains are taken to brutalize them?"

<sup>100</sup> "The Celt" was also the pen name under which most of his poems appeared in *The Nation*.

<sup>101</sup> Comerford, 70.

be held the antithesis of “Irish,” pronounces sentence of proscription and banishment against all educated Repealers.<sup>102</sup>

In the same vein, Davis received this letter from the author William Cooke Taylor, who was working with the English Anti-Corn Law League, warning him that further assaults on Saxons would cost him support:

If you could be anti-Orange without being anti-English, you would soon make for yourselves a party at this side of the water. What the devil do you mean by indiscriminate abuse of the Saxons? Many of your warmest supporters in Ireland...are Saxons, and if I should speak of an individual so humble as myself, I might say that I have done nothing to merit being included in a proscription list by the conductors of the Nation.<sup>103</sup>

Cooke’s mention of a “proscription list” suggests that he was familiar with the attacks leveled at Davis enumerated in the article above. Both authors merely pointed out historical reality. Despite Davis’s romanticized notions of reviving Ireland’s Celtic identity, nineteenth-century Ireland was a racially diverse nation and his myopic obsession with the Celts was doing his movement a disservice.

Despite the inconsistencies in Davis’s ideology, many of his songs carried the message of conciliation, harmony, and cooperation amongst Irishmen. His arguments were often addressed toward Protestants, but equally he tried to mediate between Protestants and Catholics to show the latter that the success of their movement required Protestant participation. His sermons were grounded in the belief that England was the only beneficiary of Irish sectarianism.<sup>104</sup> One of the most successful songs to emphasize this theme was his “Orange and Green Will Carry the Day,” which was discussed in depth in the previous chapter.

---

<sup>102</sup> *The Nation*, November 4, 1843, 51.

<sup>103</sup> William Cooke Taylor to Thomas Davis, [January, 1844], NLI MS 2644.

<sup>104</sup> David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: colonialism, nationalism and culture*, Cultural Politics (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 36.



Another of Davis's songs that calls for Irishmen to unite in brotherhood is his "Our Own Again," set to original music. The second stanza summoned all to the cause of nationhood:

Send the cry throughout the land,  
"Who's for our own again?"  
Summon all men to our band,  
Why not our own again?  
Rich, and poor, and old, and young,  
Sharp sword, and fiery tongue—  
Soul and sinew firmly strung,  
All to get our own again.  
Brothers thrive by brotherhood—  
Trees in a stormy wood—  
Riches come from Nationhood—  
Sha'n't we have our own again?  
Munster's woe is Ulster's bane!  
Join for our own again—  
Tyrants rob as well as reign,  
We'll have our own again.<sup>105</sup>

In referencing Ireland's southern Munster province, and the northern Ulster province, Davis was telling his readers that his national brotherhood included all Irishmen from coast to coast. Munster, a heavily Catholic province, and Ulster, a heavily Protestant province, also symbolize the nonsectarian cooperation Davis sought. Intriguingly, his use of "sharp sword, and fiery tongue" left the door open to both violent and non-violent agitation. This ambiguity is extended in the final stanza when he wrote "Bravely hope, and wisely wait,/Toil, join and educate" followed closely by "Powder's calm ere it burst—/Making ready for the worst."<sup>106</sup> Regardless of the means by which nationhood was won, Davis was clearly attempting to convince his readers that all Irishmen were included in the word "our."

---

<sup>105</sup> Thomas Davis, "Our Own Again," in *Spirit of the Nation* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845), 310.

<sup>106</sup> *Spirit of the Nation*, 311.

The original music is written in a 2/4 march style and comprises four eight-measure phrases, constituting an ABBA form. The A sections are centered on F major, whereas the B sections gravitate toward D minor. The unimaginative accompaniment consists of chordal pulses on the beat. The presence of complete triads throughout the song, as well as dominant-tonic motion at the ends of phrases gives the song a strong tonal, rather than modal, sound. The emphasis on the sixth scale degree (D) in the B section is, according to Edward Bunting, idiomatic to Irish traditional music: “The feature which in truth distinguishes all Irish melody, whether proper to the defective bagpipe, or suited to the perfect harp, is not the negative *omission*, but the positive and emphatic *presence* of a particular tone; and this tone is that of the Submediant, or Major Sixth...”<sup>107</sup> The pull toward D is heightened in mm. 15–16 and 23–24 when the piano accompaniment features V<sup>7</sup>-I progressions establishing D as the temporary key area (see Ex. 6).

The contents of *Spirit of the Nation*, overall, present a rather mixed message. Intended as a national voice that would educate Irishmen in their history and unite them in a shared cultural bond, the songbook at times both encouraged and undermined nonsectarian cooperation. As “hymns of romantic nationalism” Davis’s songs were immensely successful in inspiring Irishmen and women to believe in national and cultural self-determination.<sup>108</sup> But Davis’s inability to reconcile the “weight of that past” with his nonsectarian goals prevented his movement from achieving its nationalist potential.

---

<sup>107</sup> Edward Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840), 14.

<sup>108</sup> White, 60, 69.

Example 6. Davis's "Our Own Again," ms. 1-16. Illustrating emphasis on *D. Spirit of the Nation* (1845)

**Allegro** *f*

Send the cry through - out the land, Who's for our own a - gain? Sum-mon all men

*f*

6 *piu p*

to our band, Why not our own a - gain? Rich and poor and old and young, Sharp sword, and

12 *cresc.*

12

fie - ry tongue, Soul and sin - ew firm - ly strung, All to get out own a - gain. —

Conclusion: The Growth of a Songbook, the Growth of a Movement

One can see in the development of *Spirit of the Nation* the maturation of Davis's Young Ireland movement as a whole. From the modest "little sixpenny brochure" of 1843 to the parlor-room music book of 1845, Davis and his colleagues

grew from an offshoot of O'Connell's Repeal movement, reliant on his association for popular viability, into a dynamic force for cultural nationalism.

Davis's goal—"To bring a soul to Ireland"—was not mere hollow talk, but the self-assigned task of Young Ireland, a group of ambitious, practical-minded intellectuals from the Irish middle class. Taking his early cues from the United Irishmen, and to a certain degree from Thomas Moore, Davis used his ballads and songs to ignite a nationalist fervor throughout Ireland. Beginning as an unknown journalist and poetic novice, he became the Irish brother of his contemporary European patriots, Adam Mickiewicz, Pierre Béranger, and Giuseppe Mazzini (with whom he is most often coupled).<sup>109</sup>

And just as *Spirit of the Nation* survived well beyond Davis's lifetime and into the twentieth century, the ideas and symbols popularized by its songs continued to influence Irish cultural life. William Butler Yeats, writing of Young Ireland's long-lived influence, lamented:

...many at that time found it hard to refuse if anybody offered for sale a pepper-pot shaped to suggest a round tower with a wolf-dog at its foot, who would have felt it inappropriate to publish an Irish book that had not harp and shamrock and green cover, so completely did their minds move amid Young Ireland images and metaphor.<sup>110</sup>

Even if Davis's nonsectarian dreams were unfulfilled, his work ignited a cultural awareness that was the precursor to the Gaelic Revival of the 1890s. *Spirit of the Nation* sparked that national enthusiasm into flame, and its contents shaped ideas of Irish national identity into the twentieth century.

---

<sup>109</sup> Malcolm Brown, *The Politics of Irish Literature from Thomas Davis to W.B. Yeats* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 56.

<sup>110</sup> William Butler Yeats, *Autobiographies: The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats*, ed. William O'Donnell and Douglas Archibald (London: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 3:172.

CHAPTER 5  
COMPETING VISIONS OF IRISH NATIONALISM:  
DAVIS'S RESPONSE TO THOMAS MOORE

When Thomas Davis's nationalist campaign began in 1842, there was a reigning "Bard of Ireland" in the figure of Thomas Moore. Moore had ceased publishing new volumes of his popular *Irish Melodies* songbooks nearly a decade prior, but his legacy remained firmly established in the Irish cultural milieu.<sup>1</sup> The foremost Irish poet and lyricist of his time, Moore was the first to draw international attention to the beauty of Irish music and to the travesties of her political woes, crafting popular parlor songs from existing melodies and his original lyrics. As a fixture within English aristocratic circles, Moore developed a paradoxical reputation as both a nationalist poet and a drawing-room dandy.

Moore's and Davis's contrasting models of Irish nationalism can easily be seen in the content of their songs. In pairing his lyrical poetry with Irish traditional melodies, Moore put forth an overly romanticized image of Ireland as a proud but defeated nation, forever weeping; to many observers, it was an image coded with feminine gender traits. Davis, with his supposedly vigorous and unpolished lyrics, sought to reclaim the narrative of Irish nationalism and to supplant Moore's lyrical effusions. I will investigate the gendering of Irish nationalism as perceived in the songs, writings, and criticisms of Moore and Davis. This chapter will also explore Moore's vision of Irish nationalism and how he put that vision into practice, as well as his reception by both contemporaries and scholars. Last, this chapter will

---

<sup>1</sup> The *Poetical Works of Thomas Moore, collected by himself*, 10 vols. (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1840–41) also helped keep his work in the public mind.

examine how each poet handled the text/music relationship in his songs, and specifically how he treated the traditional melodies chosen for his works.

I explore Moore's sense of nationalism at length to show how it both resembles and differs from Davis's. Because of their chronological proximity and their use of traditional music in fashioning new songs, Moore and Davis are often compared in the literature on Irish musical nationalism. This chapter adds to that ongoing discourse. Whereas many scholars in the past have either praised Moore as a groundbreaking nationalist or denounced him as a drawing-room stooge, I aim to provide a more nuanced interpretation, drawing upon Moore's correspondence to reveal the complexities underpinning his vision of Irish nationalism.

In my discussion of the gendering of Irish nationalism, I extend the research undertaken by Leith Davis. Whereas her scholarship considers Davis's published writings, mine takes into account the imagery associated with the *Irish Melodies* versus *Spirit of the Nation*, the public reception of both songbooks, and Davis's attempt to rescue certain melodies from Moore's feminized connotations.

Thomas Moore began his nationalist life as a radical. As a student at Trinity College, he was associated with the United Irishmen Society within the university and even contributed to the group's Dublin newspaper, the *Press*. On 2 December 1797, Moore's "Letter to the Students of Trinity College" appeared anonymously in the journal's pages. His strongly worded epistle attacked the professors who outlawed the United Irishmen from Trinity and attempted to rouse his fellow students with fiery language:

Can you see poor Ireland, degraded, tortured, without burning to be  
revenged on her damned tormentors? ...Can you behold without indignation,

that horde of foreign depredators, who murder the happiness of our country, and gorge on the life-blood of Ireland?

Moore concluded his letter: “Let us show these ministerial minions...that Ireland has sons untutored in the school of corruption, who love her Liberties, and, in the crisis, will die for them.”<sup>2</sup> He became close friends with Edward Hudson and Robert Emmett, who were both active in the United Irish cause. In later life, Moore would attribute his love for Irish music to the times he spent with Hudson at the piano, playing through Irish airs.<sup>3</sup>

By the spring of 1810, with the publication of the third volume of his *Irish Melodies*, Moore had considerably softened his tone. In the “Letter on Music to the Marchioness Dowager of Donegal” that was prefixed to the volume, Moore described the target audience for his songs:

...there is no one who deprecates more sincerely than I do any appeal to the passions of an ignorant and angry multitude; but that it is not through that gross and inflammable region of society, a work of this nature could ever have been intended to circulate. It looks much higher for its audience and readers — it is found upon the piano-fortes of the rich and the educated — of those who can afford to have their national zeal a little stimulated, without exciting much dread of the excesses into which it may hurry them...<sup>4</sup>

What had happened between 1797 and 1810 to make Moore shift his rhetoric from showing the “ministerial minions” that Ireland’s sons will die for their “Liberties” to explicitly avoiding the arousal of the “ignorant and angry multitude”? He lived through the 1798 rebellion by the United Irishmen and its aftermath. Moore did not

---

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Moore, “Letter to the Students of Trinity College,” *Press*, December 2, 1797; quoted in Mary Helen Thuente, *The Harp Re-strung: The United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 117.

<sup>3</sup> Lord John Russell, ed., *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853), 1:48–49.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Moore, *The Works of Thomas Moore, Comprehending All His Melodies, Ballads, etc.* (Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1823), 4:66.

participate in the uprising, but he saw his friends Edward Hudson and Robert Emmett imprisoned and executed, respectively.<sup>5</sup> Moore himself was questioned as part of a governmental “inquisition” to determine the presence of a United Irish presence in Trinity. He gave no evidence but was moved by the “degrading spectacle” exhibited by those who, out of fear for their own safety, implicated friends and associates in the plot.<sup>6</sup> These harrowing episodes made a clear and lasting impression on Moore, who later described them as the “time of terror and torture.”<sup>7</sup>

Moore’s experiences concerning 1798 and its aftermath directly affected his perception of the relationship between Irish music and nationalism. His borrowing of traditional melodies was driven by his reading of Irish history, which provoked a sense of outrage at the degradation experienced by the Irish people; this outrage is reflected in his writings on Ireland.<sup>8</sup> And yet, as he decried the injustices of Ireland’s political situation, particularly of Catholic Ireland, he depicted the nation as having been soundly defeated, not bracing itself for battle against its foe. Cowed by the violence of insurrection, Moore sensed that Ireland would gain more by creating a sense of pity for her sufferings than by threats of force or shows of strength. In applying this insight to his poetry and his conception of Irish music, he wrote: “The language of sorrow, however, is, in general, best suited to our music, and with themes of this nature the poet may be amply supplied. There is not a page of our

---

<sup>5</sup> Harry White, *The Keeper’s Recital, Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998), 45.

<sup>6</sup> Russell, 1:63.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Moore, *The Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald* (New York: M. P. Haverty, 1855), 150. Moore penned the phrase while describing his own reminiscences of the time.

<sup>8</sup> Harry White, “The Preservation of Music and Irish Cultural History,” *International Review of Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 27, no. 2 (December 1996): 128.



annals which cannot afford him a subject.” The National Muse of Ireland, he wrote, would be “known only by the tears that are shed upon it.”<sup>9</sup> Katie Trumpener’s comments on the nationalist state of mind in the early nineteenth century are applicable to Moore. In a time of localized and national uprisings, executions, and deportations, in a time that produced national martyrs, the nationalist’s new attitude toward the past “must be understood as historical mourning and as national self-defense.”<sup>10</sup>

Davis saw the same sorrow in Irish history as Moore, but instead of using it to elicit feelings of pity, he employed the negative events of Irish history to promote feelings of national pride and resilience and to call for mutual conciliation between all the parties of Ireland. In his first “Letters of a Protestant on Repeal,” Davis wrote:

And again, we have a history...It tells us that foes have always come from England, from Strongbow to Ebrington—and friends have come from France, from St. Patrick to St. Ruth...It tells us that valour was never wanting, since the time when Dathy died victorious at the foot of the Alps, to the time when Sarsfield signed the treaty of Limerick; but that misplaced trust in the promise of invaders, and a too generous neglect of precaution, occasioned our disasters. It tells us that all the races and creeds in the country have at different times acted nobly for Ireland, and generously towards each other; and, therefore, that *all* have much to be proud and grateful for in the conduct of the other races and sects. It tells us that all these same races and sects have done injustice and vengeance (more or less) to each other, and, therefore, that they owe mutual forgiveness, and the repentance which shall prove its reality, by love and by succour for virtuous and common ends.<sup>11</sup>

Davis engaged with the events of Irish history to create an offensive (rather than defensive) nationalist strategy.

---

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Moore, *Notes from the Letters of Thomas Moore to His Music Publisher, James Power (the Publication of Which Were Suppressed in London)* (New York: Redfield, 1854), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 27.

<sup>11</sup> *The Nation*, December 17, 1842, 153.

The image of Ireland that Moore conveyed in his songs was one that won admission to the contemporary English mind via a romantic synthesis of legend, political allusion, personal sentiment, and the discourse of domesticated Celticism. The popularity of Celtic or pseudo-Celtic elements in music and poetry (thanks in large part to works such as Macpherson's *Poems of Ossian*) made it possible for Moore and his publishers to exploit their construction of Celtic identity through romantic ballads using English lyrics and Irish melodies.<sup>12</sup> As Seamus Deane has written, if sympathy for the Irish objections to the Union with Britain were to be won, those objections had to be publicized and commercialized in an attractive and recognizable form. To that end, "Irishness" had to be sold as a national character that was compatible with the familiar, successful, anti-revolutionary version of British national character. An important element in the Irish national character that had to be erased was the revolutionary element; for once that appeared, commercialization would fail and Ireland would become as "Other" as revolutionary France.<sup>13</sup>

In using the *Irish Melodies* to construct a new Irish national identity, Moore was apparently concerned to include elements of the musical past. Moore supplied new titles for the songs to represent his new lyrics, but he also ensured the titles of the original airs appeared directly below the new titles, suggesting an interest in connecting his songs back to an original body of traditional melodies.<sup>14</sup> And while

---

<sup>12</sup> White, *Keeper's Recital*, 44.

<sup>13</sup> Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 67.

<sup>14</sup> Leith Davis, *Music, Postcolonialism, and Gender: The Construction of an Irish National Identity, 1724-1874* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 147.

Moore took liberties with arranging the traditional melodies, the songbooks explicitly depend on the original music to justify and animate the poet's lyrical texts. Music's ability to act as cultural signifier, for example, plays an important role in establishing the whole seam of imagery in the *Irish Melodies* that relies on the projection of the Irish harp as a metaphor of dispossession.<sup>15</sup> As an example, consider Moore's song "Dear Harp of My Country!" from the sixth volume of the *Irish Melodies*, set to the traditional country-dance tune "New Langolee" (See Ex. 1).<sup>16</sup> The tune, which had first appeared in Charles and Samuel Thompson's *Twenty-Four Country Dances for the Year 1775*, had already been used in a comic song celebrating Irish phallic prowess:

Ye Ladies attend to your juvenile poet,  
Whose labours are always devoted to ye,  
Whose ambition it is, and most of you know it,  
To charm all your hearts, with his Langolee.  
Langolee! What sweet vowels compose it,  
It is the delight of each fair maid that knows it  
And she that does not, may with rapture suppose it,  
That Irish shillalee, call'd Langolee.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Harry White, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 68.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Moore, *Irish Melodies, with Symphonies and Accompaniments by Sir John Stevenson* (Boston: Oliver Ditson and Co., 1852), 168.

<sup>17</sup> The text is from *The Festival of Anacreon* 7 (London, 1789); quoted in White, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, 74. "Langolee" is Irish slang for "erect penis."

Example 1. "Dear Harp of My Country," from *Irish Melodies*, vol. 6

**DEAR HARP OF MY COUNTRY.**

AIR - NEW LANGOLEE.                      THE FAREWELL TO MY HARP.

*In moderate time, with much warmth of expression.*

\* Dear Harp of my Coun-try! in

darkness I found thee, The cold chain of silence had hung o'er thee long, When proudly my own Is-land

Moore altered the pace of the lively tune, slowing it down to reflect the sentiments of his poetry.<sup>18</sup> Instead of the ribald song, Moore's lyrics immediately establish a melancholy tone:

Dear Harp of my Country! In darkness I found thee;  
The cold chain of silence had hung o'er thee long,  
When proudly, my own Island Harp! I unbound thee,

<sup>18</sup> Harry White, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, 73. White refers to Moore's practice of adapting the music to fit the sentiments of his verse as the "hermeneutics of musical sadness."

And gave all thy chords to light, freedom, and song!  
The warm lay of love and the light note of gladness  
Have waken'd thy fondest, thy liveliest thrill;  
But, so oft has thou echoed the deep sigh of sadness,  
That even in thy mirth it will steal from thee still.<sup>19</sup>

No longer an occasion of subtle debauchery, “New Langolee” becomes a carrier for Moore’s own conception of Irish music. The lyrics to “Dear Harp of My Country!”—including its punctuation—themselves slow the pace of the tune; thus altered, the melody participates in the romantic lyricism that pervades Moore’s poetic output.<sup>20</sup> Moore’s quasi-redemption of “New Langolee” from its bawdy associations foreshadows Thomas Davis’s own efforts to replace the contents of Irish street ballads with more “morally appropriate” material.<sup>21</sup>

Even though all of Moore’s songs in the *Irish Melodies* make use of traditional music, only one-third of the lyrics contain Irish political content.<sup>22</sup> One of these songs, “When First I Met Thee, Warm and Young,” Moore wrote to express his frustration at the Prince Regent’s decision not to grant political concessions to the Irish, particularly Catholic emancipation. In an 1814 letter to his publisher, James Power, Moore wrote: “The one [song] I send has a good many verses to it, and is a subject I have long meditated. It is on the Prince’s desertion of Ireland, and done so as to appear like a love song, in the manner of some other political ones in the Collection. I am sure you will like it when you see the rest.”<sup>23</sup> The first verse illustrates how Moore was able to deftly express his nationalist sentiment:

---

<sup>19</sup> Moore (1823), 4:170.

<sup>20</sup> White, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, 75.

<sup>21</sup> See Thomas Davis, “Irish Songs,” in *Essays Literary and Historical*, ed. D.J. O’Donoghue (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1914), 273.

<sup>22</sup> R.V. Comerford, *Ireland, Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2003), 187.

<sup>23</sup> Moore, *Notes from the Letters of Thomas Moore* (1854), 36.

When first I met thee, warm and young,  
 There shone such truth about thee,  
 And on thy lip such promise hung,  
     I did not dare to doubt thee.  
 I saw thee change, yet still relied,  
 Still clung with hope the fonder,  
 And thought, though false to all beside,  
 From me thou couldst not wander.  
     But go, deceiver! go,—  
 The heart, whose hopes could make it  
     Trust one so false, so low,  
 Deserves that thou shouldst break it!<sup>24</sup>

To avoid the misperception that he was referring literally to a deceptive paramour rather than to the Prince's relationship with Ireland, Moore subsequently added the date 1789 to the song's title.<sup>25</sup> The song's message was not lost on its intended recipients. Ronan Kelly has pointed out that the song still held enough cultural currency in 1840 to serve as an allusion in Charles Dickens's *The Old Curiosity Shop*: "Go, deceiver go," says Dick Swiveller to Quilp, "...some day, sir, p'r'aps you'll waken, from pleasure's dream to know, the grief of orphans forsaken."<sup>26</sup> By that time, however, Irish readers sympathetic to the song's political intent had begun to find Moore's style too "artfully oblique" and would soon transfer their allegiance to the more direct style of Davis and Young Ireland.<sup>27</sup>

In setting poetry in which a young woman represented Ireland, Moore was taking part in the *aisling* tradition of Irish poetry, an allegorical genre that became popular in the eighteenth century and which was used to make political statements

---

<sup>24</sup> Moore (1823), 4:156.

<sup>25</sup> Russell, 2:65. In reference to adding the date, he explained to Power, "This I think quite harmless, and it will prevent...the confusion of supposing it to be Mrs. Fitzherbert, or some deserted mistress, instead of Ireland."

<sup>26</sup> Ronan Kelly, *Bard of Erin: The Life of Thomas Moore* (Penguin: Dublin, 2008), 260–61.

<sup>27</sup> Kelly, 262.

(often considered Jacobinical).<sup>28</sup> Indeed, in his collection *Ancient Music of Ireland* George Petrie described *aisling* poems as those that used the “guise of a love-song put on to conceal treason” and which had been “skillfully adopted by Moore in some of his finest lyrics.”<sup>29</sup>

### Thomas Moore’s Contradictions

As the “Bard of Erin” and a nationalist figurehead of his time, yet as one who also happened to live in England and circulate among the English aristocracy, Moore embodied an unstable position characterized by Joseph Ryan as “cultural duality.”<sup>30</sup> These contradictions, however, often made his nationalist sentiments harder to define, and, at times, difficult to believe. For instance, in 1807 Moore wrote to his musical collaborator on the *Irish Melodies*, Sir John Stevenson, to express his willingness to take part in such a “truly National” project and described the need to rescue Ireland’s traditional melodies, which “like too many of our Countrymen, for want of protection at home, have passed into the service of foreigners.”<sup>31</sup> Yet after experiencing the success of the first several volumes of the songbook, Moore wrote to his publisher: “I look forward to our doing something grand together in the musical way, when I return to London—for London, certainly, is the only Theatre for such things, and once I am settled there again, I shall not easily be tempted away

---

<sup>28</sup> Fintan Valley, ed., *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 7.

<sup>29</sup> George Petrie, *Ancient Music of Ireland* (Dublin: Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland, 1855), 1:37.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, Ph.D. diss., National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1991, 100.

<sup>31</sup> Moore (1823), 4:v.

from it."<sup>32</sup> Not only had the poetic voice of Ireland "passed into the service of foreigners," but Moore himself also expressed a desire to remain there. Indeed, as early as 1803 Moore declined the opportunity to serve as Irish Poet Laureate in the hopes of obtaining a more lucrative position under the British government.<sup>33</sup>

In Ireland, the *Irish Melodies* were having a dramatic effect in stirring up nationalist sentiments among the populace. In a speech to the Dublin Political Union, Daniel O'Connell praised Moore, saying: "I attribute much of the present state of feeling, and the desire for liberty in Ireland to the work of that immortal man [Moore]—he has brought patriotism into the private circles of domestic life."<sup>34</sup> If Moore had been the nationalist O'Connell presumed him to be, then surely he would have invested his efforts in ensuring the *Irish Melodies* met their (supposedly) nationalist goal. Yet Moore's correspondence provides a different perspective. In a March 1817 letter to his publisher, James Power, Moore indicated that, for him, the *Irish Melodies* were a secondary project in comparison to larger career plans:

I feel quite sure you will not press me now (in the crisis of my fate) more than is absolutely necessary, nor oblige me to bring out the Number [*Irish Melodies*, vol. 7] in a state I do not perfectly approve of. In addition to the feelings of kindness I know you have for me, it would evidently not be your own interest to do so, as if I fail in my great work I shall still have my fame in the lyrical way to retire upon; but, if I should so unluckily contrive it, as at the same time to fail in both, I am be-devilled, and you with me. You may depend, however, upon my doing every thing to have the Number out as soon after the Poem [*Lalla Rookh*] as possible, but I am the more anxious to have it good from looking upon it as a corps de reserve for my fame, in case the main attack is unsuccessful.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Moore, *Notes from the Letters of Thomas Moore*, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Russell, 1:127.

<sup>34</sup> Howard Mumford Jones, *The Harp That Once: A Chronicle of the Life of Thomas Moore* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1937), 292.

<sup>35</sup> Moore, *Notes from the Letters of Thomas Moore*, 57.



Apparently, for Moore, the attainment of personal fame was a more significant impulse than the promotion of Ireland's national cause. Another letter supports this supposition. Asked by his publisher to again take up the task of producing another volume of his famous songbook, Moore replied: "I shall, as you wish it, immediately set about rummaging my old stock of Irish Melodies for another Number, and need not say that I shall endeavour (for my fame sake) to make it as good as the materials left will allow me."<sup>36</sup> Again, one gets the impression that Moore viewed his status as Ireland's national poet as nothing more than collateral acclaim, garnered as a result of his pursuit of personal fame.

Two examples from Davis's correspondence and notes provide a countervailing example and shed light on his personal motivation. In a letter to Charles Gavan Duffy, Davis described his commitment to the Repeal cause: "I shall not work for praise or popularity. I want our cause to succeed and shall in pursuit of success shrink from nothing but dishonour."<sup>37</sup> In a set of notes largely pertaining to the United Irishmen and his planned memoir of Wolfe Tone, Davis wrote that some men join politics because "they detest injustice, because they long to rectify the disordered and feeble condition of society, and are moved to realize some great idea of national life."<sup>38</sup> Whereas the primary purpose of Moore's works appears to have been commercial success and personal fame, Davis's purpose was tied more directly to Ireland's political and cultural improvement.

---

<sup>36</sup> Moore, *Notes from the Letters of Thomas Moore*, 100.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Davis to Charles Gavan Duffy, 8 September 1843, NLI 5756.

<sup>38</sup> Volume of notes and letters by Thomas Davis relating to the United Irishmen, NLI MS 1791.

With that being said, Moore's writings also show that he maintained an interest in Irish affairs. In an 1825 letter to Power, Moore happily wrote that the political affairs in Ireland "never before looked half so promising." And, in 1827 he severed his connection with the London newspaper the *Times*, to which he often contributed humorous squibs and political commentary, because they were "so wrong on the Irish Question that I could not consistently continue even my slight connexion with them any longer."<sup>39</sup> His anonymously published poem "Intolerance" (1808) and his prose writings such as *Captain Rock* (1824) and the *Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald* (1831) make strong claims for the just treatment of Irish Catholics and the political reform of Ireland. The outraged tone of "Intolerance" is a far cry from the parlor songs of his *Irish Melodies*:

...to think that such a blooming part  
Of the world's garden, rich in Nature's charms,  
And fill'd with social souls and vigorous arms,  
Should be the victim of that canting crew,  
So smooth, so godly, yet so devilish too,  
Who, arm'd at once with prayer-books and with whips,  
Blood on their hands, and Scripture on their lips,  
Tyrants by creed, and torturers by text,  
Make *this* life hell, in honour of the *next*!<sup>40</sup>

Yet, even as a proponent of Catholic emancipation, Moore's correspondence shows that he had sharp words for his fellow Irishmen and Catholics. In 1807 he wrote to his mother in an almost disdainful tone:

Dublin is again, I find, or rather *still*, the seat of wrangle and illiberal contention. The Roman Catholics deserve very little, and even if they merited all that they ask, I cannot see how it is in the nature of things they should get it. They have done much towards the ruin of Ireland, and have been so well

---

<sup>39</sup> Moore, *Notes from the Letters of Thomas Moore*, 119, 148.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Moore, *The Works of Thomas Moore, Comprehending All His Melodies, Ballads, etc.* (Paris: A. and W. Galignani, 1823) 6:46–47.

assisted by the Protestants throughout, that, between them, Ireland is at this instant as *ruined* as it need be.<sup>41</sup>

In another letter, Moore referred to Irish politicians as a “bigoted, brawling, and disgusting set of demagogues,” most likely referring, at least in part, to the popular leader Daniel O’Connell, for whom Moore held a personal dislike.<sup>42</sup> He also blamed Catholicism for the political behavior he found so reprehensible: “that wretched faith, which is again polluting Europe with Jesuitism and inquisitions, and which of all the humbugs that have stultified mankind is the most narrow-minded and mischievous...”<sup>43</sup>

Moore’s ability to embody what Ryan called the “cultural duality” of his age is especially confounding because the two cultures in which Moore partook were not just dissimilar, but were at times antagonistic. It appears that the sense of “Irishness” that Moore projected through his written works did not always correspond to his own personal sense of “Irishness.” For instance, Moore would often consort with expatriate Irishmen like himself and would even take part in certain superficial traditions like St. Patrick’s Day festivities; but, at the same time, he could casually refer to himself as “the only Englishman” at a party. Such examples suggest that, despite his antipathy to the Act of Union, Moore’s personal “Irishness” was essentially regional, a subset of his “Englishness.”<sup>44</sup> This phenomenon, however, was not uncommon. Feelings of nationalism and national identity were not

---

<sup>41</sup> Russell, 1:231.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Davis also came to dislike O’Connell’s political style. Had the two poets ever discussed such matters, they most likely would have been in agreement.

<sup>43</sup> Russell, 2:73.

<sup>44</sup> Kelly, 358. This represents a major difference from Thomas Davis. For Davis, Irish-English identities were so antithetical that he, at times, boasted that he would rather be Cherokee than English. See John Mitchel, *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)*, (Glasgow:R&T Washbourne, 1861), 85.

necessarily the same thing. By linking the political state to the idea of the nation, movements of nationalism often made claims of exclusivity and homogeneity that were not necessary components of forming one's national identity. In the United Kingdom, for example, the ruling authorities took care to build loyalty to its institutions, not to its people. As a result, Britain and the British came to be identified with the Crown, Parliament, and the empire.<sup>45</sup> Ireland's Celtic neighbor, Wales, demonstrated an ability to construct the Welsh national identity in the nineteenth century and to participate as a significant economic contributor to the empire. In fact, most Welsh cultural and intellectual figures found in the empire a "wider justificatory stage for the Welsh character."<sup>46</sup>

In Ireland, the discourse surrounding ideas of colony and empire reveal significant differences among nationalist figures. In the earlier part of the nineteenth century, Daniel O'Connell, for instance, tended to argue that Ireland was by definition an integral part of the empire, and that its problems would not be solved by complete separation but by proper imperial participation. By the 1840s, Thomas Davis and Young Ireland, however, critiqued British imperial policy and often evinced a sense of solidarity with the victims of British imperial aggression. As Irish cultural historian Sean Ryder has noted, Davis's analysis of empire consistently attempted to give attention to the perspective of the "subaltern." It could be argued that with his *Irish Melodies* Moore offered a literary voice to the subaltern experience. Many of his songs with Irish subjects contain the central theme of

---

<sup>45</sup> Krishan Kumar, "Nation and Empire: English and British National Identity in Comparative Perspective," *Theory in Society* 29, no. 5 (October 2000): 579–80.

<sup>46</sup> John M. McKenzie, "Empire and National Identities, the Case of Scotland," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* Sixth Series, vol. 8 (1998): 219.

cultural dispossession, and the melancholic Irish character that Moore described in his songs appears to derive from the effects of colonization or imperial conquest. Davis, with many of his articles and songs in *The Nation*, attempted to reverse this cultural dispossession by arguing for the preservation of the relics and reminders of Ireland's pre-colonial past.<sup>47</sup>

### Moore's Reception

Ronan Kelly, one of Moore's most recent biographers, vividly describes a scene during one of the poet's visits to Ireland in 1835. Arriving in Wexford, his mother's county, Moore's carriage was greeted by an elaborate welcome that demonstrated the extent of his popularity and the influence of his writing:

A party of horsemen bearing green banners came to meet the parade, the advance guard of further detachments on foot; ladies in their carriages lined the roadside, while labourers in the fields paused in their work and saluted. Nine local girls stepped forward, decked out as the Muses, one of whom crowned him with a myrtle wreath. Then a marching band appeared, leading the way through the lanes, under a series of triumphal arches, at the last of which the master of ceremonies turned to the crowd...Flags and banners fluttered overhead, emblazoned with phrases like 'The Minstrel Boy' and 'Erin go Bragh'; others were addressed to the guest of honour, in familiar terms, for he was one of their own: 'Welcome Tom Moore' and 'Live for ever Tom Moore.'<sup>48</sup>

Since their publication, Moore's *Irish Melodies* had filtered into the public consciousness through a variety of channels. They were sung in drawing rooms and at concerts, interpolated into opera performances, played by regimental bands on state occasions, and by the 1830s and 1840s were played by bands at meetings of

---

<sup>47</sup> Sean Ryder, "Defining Colony and Empire in Early Nineteenth-Century Nationalism," in *Was Ireland a Colony? Economy, Politics, Ideology, and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, ed. Terrence McDonough (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005), 177–83.

<sup>48</sup> Kelly, 1–2.

Father Theobald Mathew's temperance movements and at Daniel O'Connell's "monster meetings."<sup>49</sup> The *Irish Melodies* indeed played a key role in O'Connell's rhetorical repertoire, as he peppered his rousing speeches with Moore's familiar lyrics.<sup>50</sup> The dichotomy of his life as a darling of the English aristocracy and his role as Ireland's national bard did not reduce his popularity.<sup>51</sup> Many critics, including Thomas Davis, wrote that Moore's songs were unknown outside of the upper classes. French historian Charles de Montalembert, however, regarding his tour of Ireland in the early 1830s, wrote that, "I used to hear the 'Melodies' sung, and really felt, in every priest's house and every peasant's cabin where I halted."<sup>52</sup> This indicates that Moore's songs had more grassroots appeal than his detractors were willing to admit.

There were at least some who thought Moore was doing his part to preserve Ireland's traditional melodies, and by using them for his songs he had rescued them from oblivion. In August, 1823, John Windele, a Cork antiquarian, wrote Moore to urge him to produce more volumes of his *Irish Melodies*, asking "When would Ireland again find such a Combination of Patriotism Scientific Knowledge and Poetic Capability to rescue her music from the neglect with which it has been so long unmeritedly overlooked."<sup>53</sup> Five years later, Windele again wrote to Moore, this time including twelve airs with his letter, hoping that a fresh supply of melodies would

---

<sup>49</sup> Ita Beausang, "From National Sentiment to Nationalist Movement, 1850–1900" in *Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, ed. Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny, Irish Musical Studies 9 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 38.

<sup>50</sup> Kelly, 188.

<sup>51</sup> Beausang, 38.

<sup>52</sup> Lord John Russell, ed., *Memoirs Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore. Edited and Abridged from the First Edition* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), 651.

<sup>53</sup> John Windele to Thomas Moore, August, 1823, RIA MS 12 L 6/39.

induce the poet to “resume once again that Harp which all who wish the preservation of our country’s beautiful music should so much regret to see you lay down forever.”<sup>54</sup> Windele also serves as an interesting common point between Moore and Davis. As Windele looked to Moore to help preserve Irish music, Davis looked to Windele in hopes of advancing his own cultural agenda. In an 1843 letter to Windele, Davis wrote: “Even had I not had the pleasure of a personal introduction to you, your name would have been quite sufficient to have made me attend to your wishes... I shall always be happy to hear from you and to cooperate with you in any project for advancing Irish art or literature.”<sup>55</sup>

Moore was not without his critics, however, and the response to the early numbers of the *Irish Melodies* split along sectarian lines. In one response, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* claimed that the songbooks were written with the aim of becoming popular in “a very disordered state of society” and were the “melancholy ravings of the disappointed rebel, or his ill-educated offspring.”<sup>56</sup> Several of the more politically conservative British journals, such as *Blackwood’s Magazine* and *New Monthly Magazine*, wrote of the subversive nature of the *Irish Melodies*, using descriptors like “mischievous,” “a vehicle for dangerous politics,” and “jacobinical.”<sup>57</sup>

Moore also faced his share of Irish criticism from those who may have agreed with his nationalist politics but who found fault with his works on stylistic grounds. The first two volumes of the *Irish Melodies* drew heavily from Edward Bunting’s

---

<sup>54</sup> John Windele to Thomas Moore, 28 April 1828, RIA MS 12 L 6/43.

<sup>55</sup> Thomas Davis to John Windele, 22 November 1843, RIA MS 4 B 2/156.

<sup>56</sup> *Anti-Jacobin Review* 58 (1820):314; quoted in White, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, 49.

<sup>57</sup> Leith Davis, 140.

*General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music* (1796). Moore, with Sir John Stevenson's assistance, reset some of the melodies from Bunting's collection, gave them key signatures, added grace notes and passing notes, and set new lyrics he believed were in keeping with the spirit of the "original" melodies. It was for this act of "translating" the supposedly pristine Irish melodies into the romantic idiom of the drawing room—worse still, the English drawing room—that Moore earned his most severe criticism. The aura of betrayal surrounds many of these responses, not the least of which being Bunting's own.<sup>58</sup> In the preface to his *Ancient Music of Ireland*, Bunting lamented the fact that Moore altered the tunes to fit his lyrics and, in making them acceptable for the drawing room, he had taken them from "their old sphere among the simple and tradition-loving people of the country—with whom, in truth, many of the new melodies, to this day, are hardly suspected to be themselves."<sup>59</sup> One of Moore's more potent critics was the composer Charles Villiers Stanford, who in the preface to his edition of the *Irish Melodies* took exception to the alteration of the traditional melodies as well as the addition of lyrics that were incompatible with the style of the tune:

...there is scarcely a melody which Moore left unaltered, and, as a necessary consequence, unspoilt. Whether he or his arranger was responsible for these corruptions is a matter which is lost to history; but as the name of the poet has the greater prominence in the original publication, I have laid to his door any blame which I am compelled to allot.

Stevenson, supposedly imitating Haydn, altered scales and characteristic pitches such as the flattened seventh scale degree, which were idiomatic of Irish traditional

---

<sup>58</sup> Gerry Smith, *Music in Irish Cultural History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), 17–19.

<sup>59</sup> Edward Bunting, preface to the *Ancient Music of Ireland* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840),



music. Moore, Stanford continued, “has assisted this transmogrification, by supplying words often beautiful in themselves, but quite out of keeping with the style of the airs, such as sentimental poems for jig-tunes, dirges for agricultural airs, battle-hymns for reels.”<sup>60</sup>

In the “Prefatory Letter Upon Music” attached to the third volume of the *Irish Melodies*, Moore attempted to justify his treatment of the music by claiming that Irish traditional music through the ages had become amenable to the laws of counterpoint and harmony while still avoiding the tinge of foreign innovation. The chief corruptions, Moore claimed, came from the unskillful performance of Irish musicians who encumbered the music with their “tasteless decorations” and “ignorant anomalies.” Moore even defended the “symphonies” (preludes) that Stevenson added to the melodies, likening them to the illuminated initials found in old manuscripts (See Ex. 2).<sup>61</sup>

#### Moore, Davis, and the Gendering of Irish Nationalism

To many observers, the image of Ireland that Moore projected in his *Irish Melodies* was encoded with feminine gender traits. As Leith Davis asserts, the gendered politics of taste that influenced judgments about Moore’s work cannot be separated from the gendered colonial relationship between Ireland and England.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup> Charles Villiers Stanford, ed., preface to the *Irish Melodies of Thomas Moore* (London: Boosey and Co., 1895), 3–4.

<sup>61</sup> Moore (1823), 4:61–62, 67.

<sup>62</sup> Leith Davis, 162.

Example 2. "Go Where Glory Waits Thee" preceded by one of Stevenson's "symphonies"

10

**GO WHERE GLORY WAITS THEE.**

AIR—MAID OF THE VALLEY. FOR ONE OR TWO VOICES.

*Tenderly.*

*f p pp*

*cres. f ff p*

*espress. lento.*

Go where glo - ry waits thee ; But while fame e - lates thee, Oh ! still re - - mem - ber me.

Go where glo - ry waits thee ; But while fame e - lates thee, Oh ! still re - - mem - ber me.

*Sym.*

At a time when Ireland was campaigning for Catholic Emancipation and the right to govern itself, the gendered perception created by Moore's songs had political consequences. In William Hazlitt's collection of essays *Spirit of the Age; or Contemporary Portraits* (1825), the Englishman wrote of Moore's work:

If these national airs do indeed express the soul of impassioned feeling in his countrymen, the case of Ireland is hopeless. If these prettinesses pass for patriotism, if a country can heave from its hearts' core only these vapid,

varnished sentiments lip-deep, and let its tears of blood evaporate in an empty conceit, let it be governed as it has been.<sup>63</sup>

With Moore as Ireland's representative, the Irish nation was viewed by contemporary onlookers as either feminine or emasculated, and therefore incapable of the kind of judgment necessary for national self-determination. His *Irish Melodies* may have carried Irish nationalism into the parlors of the oppressor, but it also provided a means by which detractors could disregard that nationalism as too "pretty."<sup>64</sup>

The gendered perception of Moore and his works was also echoed in Ireland. The editor of *The Citizen: A Monthly Journal Politics, Literature, and the Arts*, after lamenting Moore's absence from Ireland and the bygone opportunities for him to have been Ireland's "honoured chieftain," continued to describe Moore in maternal terms:

How many myriads are there of the present generation, with those dearest recollections he is inseparably mingled,—whose young hearts he cradled in a new delight, and rocked them with those sweet songs, into Elysian dreams, such as otherwise they had never known?<sup>65</sup>

Moore's maternity, however, was presented as a failure due to his abandonment of his native land.<sup>66</sup> Projects for Ireland's national literature, which had he stayed in Ireland "must have suggested themselves to his fertile, all-embracing spirit, are now among the still-born children of time," while those that he did produce "have yet an untimely paleness, as reared in a strange clime, and wear not that hue of strength

---

<sup>63</sup> W. Carew Hazlitt, ed., *Spirit of the Age; or Contemporary Portraits* (New York: George Bell and Sons, 1906), 326.

<sup>64</sup> Leith Davis, 162–63.

<sup>65</sup> *The Citizen*, December 1, 1839, 88.

<sup>66</sup> Leith Davis, 164.

and gladness which they would, had they been born beneath our skies..."<sup>67</sup> Moore's works, though beautiful, lacked the cultural purity and vigor necessary for national formation in the eyes of such critics.<sup>68</sup>

It was this aspect of Moore's legacy that Thomas Davis sought to undermine. In his criticisms of his predecessor and in his own lyrics he sought to re-masculinize the Irish nationalist movement. Davis framed Moore's work as being too "pretty" for Irish nationalism, describing it as having "too much chiseling and polish" or being "too delicate and subtle" for the Irish multitudes.<sup>69</sup> The case to disqualify Moore's poetry was explicitly stated in a March 1843 issue of *The Nation*, when a correspondent's suggestion to republish some of Moore's melodies received this scathing response:

The Heavens forbid—Moore's melodies are full of whining lamentations over our eternal fall, and miserable appeals to our masters to regard us with pity "while they rivet our chains." We have learned to speak a different language now—and we fancy the throbbings of the popular heart find a better interpretation in the less polished, but more vigorous verses of the poets of our own gallant band. *They* neither fear nor doubt for their country.<sup>70</sup>

In his essays, Davis also sought to guard against Moore's influence. In his "Irish Songs," Davis described Moore's output in gendered terms: "...though he is perfect in his expression of the softer feelings, and unrivalled even by Burns in many of his gay songs, yet, that he is often deficient in vehemence, does not speak the sterner passions, spoils some of his finest songs by pretty images, is too refined and subtle

---

<sup>67</sup> *The Citizen*, December 1, 1830, 89.

<sup>68</sup> Leith Davis, 165.

<sup>69</sup> *Nation*, October 29, 1842, 44; April 4, 1843, 425.

<sup>70</sup> *Nation*, March 25 1843, 376.

in his dialect, and too negligent of narrative.”<sup>71</sup> Moore’s parlor songs lacked the directness of expression and emotional intensity needed to make them truly national.

For Davis, the project of creating an image of Irish nationality meant creating one that could stand up to the ultra-masculine image of British imperialism.<sup>72</sup> In his “Irish Music and Poetry,” Davis described Ireland’s native music in masculine terms in an effort to reject Ireland’s feminized colonial status: “Its antique war-tunes...stream and crash upon the ear like the warriors of a hundred glens meeting; and you are borne with them to battle, and they and you charge and struggle amid cries and battle axes and stinging arrows.” Even non-war tunes are portrayed as martial in spirit, as jigs and planxties rank not only as dancing tunes, but “the finest quick marches in the world.”<sup>73</sup>

In his “A Ballad History of Ireland,” Davis proposed a ballad history that would serve the citizens of the nation in both a maternal and paternal capacity, guiding them through various stages of life. Of course, for Davis, the paternal aspects were more important.<sup>74</sup> The ballad history is welcome in childhood because of “its rhymes, its high colouring, and its aptness to memory.” In boyhood, the “violent passions, the vague hopes” and the “romantic sorrow” are suitable to the “fitful and luxuriant feelings.” In manhood the “condensed narrative, the grave firmness, the critical art, and the political sway of ballads” are prized. And, finally, in old age they

---

<sup>71</sup> Thomas Davis, *Essays Literary and Historical*, ed., D.J. O’Donoghue (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1914), 269.

<sup>72</sup> Leith Davis, 174.

<sup>73</sup> *Essays Literary and Historical*, 160.

<sup>74</sup> Leith Davis, 176–177.

are “companions and reminders of our life, the toys and teachers of our children and grand-children.”<sup>75</sup> In contrast to the maternal rendering of Moore in *The Citizen*, whose songs have “cradled” Irish children into “Elysian dreams,” Davis’s ballad history would ensure the channeling of “fitful and luxuriant feelings” into patriotic and masculine “firmness.”<sup>76</sup>

Davis’s attempt to assert a masculine Irish national identity can be seen graphically on the illustrated title page of *Spirit of the Nation* (1845) songbook. The title page of *Spirit of the Nation*, illustrated by Irish artist F.W. Burton (1816–1900), spoke to the confidence underpinning Davis’s nationalist message (see Fig. 1). His correspondence with Charles Gavan Duffy, in fact, indicates that Davis was responsible for persuading Burton to provide the drawing: “B[urton] wants time only, so I suppose he will make the sketch. But don’t mention his name to anyone at all. I feel bound to secure him in this, as it is for me he is going to make the design.”<sup>77</sup> Whereas the title page of the earlier editions of the *Spirit of the Nation* bore a simple harp entwined with shamrocks, the title page of the 1845 edition was replete with masculine imagery and nationalist symbolism.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> *Essays Literary and Historical*, 241.

<sup>76</sup> Leith Davis, 177.

<sup>77</sup> Duffy, *Thomas Davis*, 231.

<sup>78</sup> As innocuous as the harp and shamrocks may seem, an antagonistic reviewer of the songbook took offense that the image of the harp appeared without the British crown. See the review from the *Quarterly Review*, reprinted in *The Nation*, September 16, 1843, 779.

Figure 1. Title page of *Spirit of the Nation* (1845)



In the immediate foreground, above the name of the songbook etched on a stone slab, an Irish eagle safely soars above a “vast, wounded and hissing” serpent.<sup>79</sup> As a representation of Ireland’s strength and independence, the imagery makes no attempt at subtlety. The focal point of the illustration, however, is arguably the

---

<sup>79</sup> Thomas Davis, “Irish Art,” in *Essays Literary and Historical*, ed. D. J. O’Donoghue (Dundalk: W. Tempest, Dundalgan Press, 1914), 164. Concerning the visual politics surrounding the harp’s image, Barra Boydell has written that by the end of the eighteenth century, the harp’s currency as an abstract symbol far outweighed its familiarity as an actual instrument of music. “The harp *was* Ireland.” See Barra Boydell, “Constructs of nationality: the literary and visual politics of Irish music in the nineteenth century,” in *Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, Irish Musical Studies 9, ed. Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny (Dublin: Four Court Press, 2007), 55.

young, harp-bearing bard on the right side of the picture. Bearing laurels on his head and standing on a broken chain, he boldly plays his harp to sound forth Ireland's national call. Below him, an old bard clutches his broken harp and looks hopefully at the young man, for "the singing of the minstrel of the Nation has broken the old harper's spell, and his hand is rising, and there is life coming into his huge rocky face."<sup>80</sup> The two young brothers-in-arms on the left side of the picture look wildly at the passing bard. One of them wears the gold torque of an Irish knight; the other holds a sheathed sword, ready to be drawn for action.<sup>81</sup> The message presented by the allegorical illustration was unapologetically nationalistic, masculine, and self-promoting. The music of the young bard (perhaps signifying Davis and Young Ireland) awakens the older generation of Irish and strengthens the younger generation in preparation for the nationalist struggle.

The confidence of the message struck a much different tone from the one presented by Moore's *Irish Melodies*, whose artwork depicted a feminized Ireland weeping over a broken harp (see Fig. 2).<sup>82</sup> In this image, note the presence of the chain draped across the instrument, as if the Irish harp, or Irish culture itself, were enslaved to British rule. Contrast that depiction with the illustration from *Spirit of the Nation* in which the young bard is standing on the broken chain. The triumphalism in the latter image rendered the outcome of the confrontation between Irish culture and British hegemony a foregone conclusion. In the true spirit

---

<sup>80</sup> Davis, "Irish Art," 165.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>82</sup> Thomas Moore, *Irish Melodies* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1845). This edition was illustrated by Irish artist Daniel Maclise.



of Romantic nationalism, the young bard sounded his harp and Ireland awoke from her slumber and shook off her chains.

Figure 2. Illustration from Moore's *Irish Melodies* (1845)



Young Ireland songs commonly employed tunes used by Moore in his *Irish Melodies*. Mary Helen Thuente has identified twenty-seven different melodies from Moore's songbook that were used for songs in *The Nation* between 1843 and 1844.<sup>83</sup> Thirteen of Davis's songs use airs that formerly appeared in the *Irish Melodies*,

---

<sup>83</sup> Thuente, 204.

which could indicate an attempt to redeem those airs from their association with Moore's "softer" emotions and to replace the "polished" lyrics with ones considered more appropriate for Davis's brand of nationalism (see Table 1).<sup>84</sup>

Table 1. Songs of Davis and Moore with Shared Melodies

<u>Title—Davis</u>	<u>Air</u>	<u>Title—Moore</u>
Irish Hurrah	Nach m-baineann sin do	They May Rail at This Life
The Lost Path	Gradh mo Chroide	The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls
Duty and Love	My Lodging is on the Cold Ground	Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms
Native Swords	Boyne Water	As Vanquish'd Erin Wept
Song of the Volunteers	Boyne Water	As Vanquish'd Erin Wept
Eibhlin a Ruin	Eibhlin a Ruin	Erin, the Tear and the Smile in Thine Eyes
Vow of Tipperary ( <i>Spirit of the Nation</i> , 1843)	Nora Criena	Lesbia Hath a Beaming Eye
Men of Tipperary ( <i>Spirit of the Nation</i> , 1843)	Nora Criena	Lesbia Hath a Beaming Eye
Battle of Limerick	Garryowen	We May Roam Through This World
O'Sullivan's Return	An cruisgín lan	Tomorrow, Comrade, We
The Men of '82	An cruisgín lan	Tomorrow, Comrade, We
Tone's Grave	Savourneen Deelish	'Tis Gone and For Ever
The Girl I Left Behind Me	The Girl I Left Behind Me	As Slow Our Ship Her Foamy Track

To this end, some of Davis's songs can be seen as responses to Moore's. One pair of songs in particular makes this point clearly.

---

<sup>84</sup> Three airs are used multiple times.

Davis's song "Duty and Love" and Moore's "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms" begin in an almost parallel manner, with the protagonists of each addressing his loved one, promising that his heart remains true despite the passing of time. But whereas Moore spends the subsequent verse proclaiming the fidelity of true love, Davis goes on to explain that union with his love cannot be complete until he has fulfilled his patriotic duty:

But it is that my country's in bondage, and I  
Have sworn to shatter her chains!  
By my duty and oath I must do it or lie  
A corse on her desolate plains:  
Then sure, dearest maiden, 'twere sinful to sue,  
And crueller far to win,  
But, should victory smile on my banner, to you  
I shall fly without sorrow or sin.<sup>85</sup>

Davis's message is clear, graphically illustrated by the fact that he placed "Duty" before "Love" in the title of the song. His simply stated call for personal sacrifice and commitment to Ireland's freedom was intended to replace Moore's emotional outpourings as the model for national songs.

Reviews of *Spirit of the Nation*, not surprisingly, often drew comparisons to the *Irish Melodies*. In describing the difference between the two songbooks, writers employed gendered language. A note from the *Dublin Review* described the Young Ireland songs as:

...often of that vigorous and bold character which is sure to grasp the enthusiastic feelings of a nation under popular excitement. They are not drawing-room verses, like Moore's, but good, rough, open-country songs, likely to echo well among crags; not to be accompanied on the harp of Tara's

---

<sup>85</sup> Thomas Davis, *The Poems of Thomas Davis, Now First Collected, with Historical Notes and Illustrations*, (James Duffy: Dublin, 1846), 44.

Hall, but to be widely played to by that of old Brian Borou, or some such bard.<sup>86</sup>

The reviewer masculinized the songs of Davis and his colleagues by referring to them as “vigorous” and “bold,” but in tying them to the Irish countryside—and by extension to the common folk—he also asserted their authenticity as national songs. In referencing the “harp of Tara’s Hall,” the reviewer was referring to Moore’s well-known song “The Harp That Once Through Tara’s Halls,” which lamented Ireland’s lost glory: “The harp that once through Tara’s halls/The soul of music shed,/Now hangs as mute on Tara’s walls/As if that soul were fled.”<sup>87</sup> “Brian Borou,” on the other hand, was a much-celebrated Irish king from the eleventh century who extended his rule over most of Ireland and died in the Battle of Clontarf in 1013. The contrast was clear. Whereas Moore’s harp was silent from disuse, Davis’s was played by a warrior-king.

Another review of *Spirit of the Nation*, this time from the *Drogheda Argus*, explicitly linked Moore’s songs to women and those of Young Ireland to men:

If Moore’s desponding strains were once cherished by our fair countrywomen, they will, now that a more chivalrous and manly spirit has been created, echo the songs of brighter hopes and happier days. It is to be expected, now that the most inspiring verse is linked with the sweetest music, that Irish gentlemen will cast aside their songs of maudlin sentiment and bacchanalian uproar, and that hereafter the songs of Ireland shall alone be heard at their social and convivial meetings. We have said this much because we really look upon this publication as forming a part in the education of the Irish people.<sup>88</sup>

Just as Davis envisioned the ballad history nurturing Irish citizens into a mature national spirit, this reviewer hoped that the songs of *Spirit of the Nation* would

---

<sup>86</sup> *The Dublin Review* 29 (September, 1843); reprinted in *The Nation*, October 14, 1843, 843.

<sup>87</sup> Moore (1823), 4:16.

<sup>88</sup> Review reprinted in *The Nation*, August 24, 1844, 730.

convince Irishmen to give up their morally intemperate songs in favor of the “chivalrous and manly” offerings from Young Ireland.<sup>89</sup>

### Battle Hymns vs. Art Song

Davis and his colleagues knew Moore’s work well. Beyond the shared practice of adding newly written texts to existing melodies, however, they were scarcely in position to imitate him, even had they wished to do so.<sup>90</sup> Moore was a poet by trade, whose motivation behind the production of the *Irish Melodies* was largely governed by artistic expression and a desire for commercial success. His nationalist sympathies were voiced, but in a non-threatening version of “domesticated Celticism.” Davis was primarily a journalist/activist and only a part-time poet. He aspired to be counted among nationalist figures such as Wolfe Tone and Henry Grattan rather than literary figures such as Moore or Oliver Goldsmith.<sup>91</sup> His motivation stemmed from his love of Irish history and culture, and his song lyrics were aimed toward promoting his nationalist ideals rather than toward critical success.

The differences between Moore’s and Davis’s working methods were also correspondingly vast. First, Moore would select an air that he found suitable. Although he had access to manuscript collections of Irish airs, he largely drew from

---

<sup>89</sup> The use of Davis’s and Moore’s songs in the context of gender, nationalism, and education did not stop in the nineteenth century. In conversation with the author, the Irish musicologist Harry White has recalled that during his school days the boys of his class were taught Davis’s songs, whereas the girls were taught Moore’s. The exceptions were songs such as Moore’s “The Minstrel Boy” and “Avenging the Bright,” which came close to the militaristic air of Davis’s “A Nation Once Again.”

<sup>90</sup> White, *Keeper’s Recital*, 60.

<sup>91</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *Thomas Davis: Memoirs of an Irish Patriot, 1840–1846* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1890), 120.

published sources.<sup>92</sup> Once Moore chose a melody, he would determine the appropriate key and modify the rhythmic contour in order to suit both his newly composed verses and his capacities as a performer. Only at this point was Stevenson given the air to arrange and to fit with “symphonies” (preludes) and postludes for piano. In musical terms, it is Stevenson’s work—and especially the added material—that appears awkward and naïve.<sup>93</sup> Moore labored over his lyrics in an effort to perfect the desired sentiments and ensure the compatibility of the text with the music, often sending revisions to publishers up until the last minute. In an 1812 letter to James Power, Moore wrote:

The above is the air from Crotch, and it has puzzled me more than any air we have had since the commencement of the Melodies, except perhaps the “Fairy Queen.” It is to be sure a most irregular strain. The only way I could get over the difficulty was by those convenient triple rhymes, “Wearily,” etc.; but I find it very hard to find ones equally tripping and graceful for the second verse. The above has taken me four days in twisting and altering, and yet I am far from satisfied.<sup>94</sup>

Throughout the *Irish Melodies*, Moore’s text setting closely observes the phrase structure and rhymed cadences of the original airs, resulting in verses that were largely syllabic.<sup>95</sup>

Davis’s working method was much simpler. Unable to read music proficiently, Davis most likely learned an air by listening to it. Once it was internalized, his verses were “struck off in a heat” when a flash of inspiration came. Scrawled on a piece of paper in pencil, with lines unfinished or blanks for phrases

---

<sup>92</sup> Veronica ní Chinnéide, “The Sources of Moore’s Melodies,” *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 89, no. 2 (1959): 113.

<sup>93</sup> *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, 47.

<sup>94</sup> Russell, 1:324.

<sup>95</sup> *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, 70.

that did not come immediately to mind, Davis's lyrics were essentially written in one sitting. If time permitted, he would make revisions, but if the occasion demanded, the song went immediately to the printer. Unlike Moore's songs, most of Davis's were initially printed without musical accompaniment. Relying on the popular knowledge of the airs he chose, Davis depended on the practice of oral transmission for his songs' success, thus linking his work to the Irish song tradition in a way that Moore did not. Like Moore's, Davis's lyrics followed the phrase structure of the underlying melody, resulting in largely syllabic text setting.

Moore's *Irish Melodies* had a considerable influence in Europe, particularly in France. In 1830, Berlioz wrote his *Neuf melodies imitées de l'Anglais (Irish Melodies)*, which he dedicated to Moore and subsequently retitled *Irlande*. All nine songs in the collection were settings of Moore's verses, eight of them translations from the *Irish Melodies*. Not only did Berlioz set French translations of Moore's verses, he also composed melodies modeled on those in the *Irish Melodies*.<sup>96</sup> It may well have been Berlioz's settings of Moore's texts that gave rise to the French term *mélodie*, which was the term adapted as an equivalent to the German *Lied* to designate the genre of French art song.<sup>97</sup>

It also appears that Moore had an eye toward justifying the *Irish Melodies* in terms of the European aesthetic of art music. In defending Sir John Stevenson against charges of interfering with the natural purity of the traditional melodies,

---

<sup>96</sup> White, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, 54.

<sup>97</sup> David Tunley and Frits Noske, "Mélodie," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 16, 2015, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42953>.

Moore invoked the name of Haydn to explain the “musical science” of Stevenson’s arrangements:

...allow me to add a few words in defence of my ingenious coadjutor, Sir John Stevenson, who has been accused of having spoiled the simplicity of the airs, by the chromatic richness of his symphonies, and the elaborate variety of his harmonies. We might cite the example of the admirable Haydn, who has sported through all the mazes of musical science, in his arrangement of the simplest Scottish melodies; but it appears to me, that Sir John Stevenson has brought a national feeling to this task, which it would be vain to expect from a foreigner, however tasteful or judicious.<sup>98</sup>

In seeking to make Irish music intelligible in terms of European art music, Moore claimed for the *Irish Melodies* a vital role in the modernization of Irish culture.<sup>99</sup>

Moore’s explicit intention of reanimating the folk repertoire via his dynamic treatment of the melodies stands in stark contrast to Davis’s antiquarian attitude toward the airs used in his songs.<sup>100</sup> Davis, who referred to Moore’s arrangements as “very corrupt,” was driven by a sense of cultural nationalism that occluded any desire to make Irish music more compatible with a wider European aesthetic.<sup>101</sup> Whereas Moore’s musical influence was felt across Europe, Davis’s had a lasting impact at home. During the second half of the nineteenth century Davis’s songs and those in *Spirit of the Nation* remained the model for most patriotic lyricists.<sup>102</sup> Even in the first decades of the twentieth century, the form and style of nationalist compositions reflected the norms and respectability that Davis advocated. Political song took its place as a substantial component in the repertoire of popular song that

---

<sup>98</sup> Moore (1823), 4:67.

<sup>99</sup> Harry White, “Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Cultural Stasis of Music in Ireland,” in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800-1945*, ed. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001), 262.

<sup>100</sup> White, “The Preservation of Music and Irish Cultural History,” 128.

<sup>101</sup> Davis, *Essays Literary and Historical*, 275.

<sup>102</sup> Georges-Denis Zimmerman, *Songs of Irish Rebellion, Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs 1780-1900* (Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1967), 82.



flourished throughout the nineteenth century and beyond, at weddings, fairs, races, in drawing rooms, music halls, and concert rooms.<sup>103</sup> Writing in the mid-twentieth century, Colm O Lochlainn, asserted that more songs from *Spirit of the Nation* were still popular than were those of the *Irish Melodies*.<sup>104</sup>

#### Davis and Moore: Nationalist Legacies

In 1832, two representatives from Limerick arrived at Moore's Sloperton Cottage to try to convince the poet to run for MP. The discussion led to the topic of the Repeal of the Union, and what Moore had to say stunned his guests: he warned of the consequences of separation from England, of the likelihood that a Catholic House of Commons in Dublin would confiscate the property of the Established Church and the absentee landlords, and of the legislative difficulties with tariffs and trade were the separation to stand.<sup>105</sup> Finally, he offered this somber analysis of the chance of Repeal:

As the only chance of Ireland's future resuscitation I would be almost inclined to run the risk of Repeal even with separation as its too certain consequence, being convinced that Ireland must go through some violent and convulsive process before the anomalies of her present position can be got rid of and thinking such riddance well worth the price, however dreadful would be the paying of it.<sup>106</sup>

Was Thomas Moore for or against the cause of Repeal? Much hinges on the phrase "almost inclined." As with the nationalist sentiments in his *Irish Melodies*, he preferred to leave an element of ambiguity in his words.

---

<sup>103</sup> Comerford, 190.

<sup>104</sup> Colm O Lochlainn, *Anglo-Irish Songwriters Since Moore* (Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1950), 3.

<sup>105</sup> Kelly, 492.

<sup>106</sup> Wilfred S. Dowden, ed. *The Journal of Thomas Moore* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983-91), 4:1501-02.

Moore did not run for MP, choosing to stay in England and labor at his writing. The Repeal cause languished for another decade, as O'Connell supported it to varying degrees, depending on what political advantage could be gained. That situation began to change on April 19, 1841 when Davis joined the Repeal Association. Having written for the *Morning Register* and for the *Citizen*, Davis realized that he and his colleagues would be unable to attract much public notice if they remained outside of O'Connell's nationalist movement. Davis came to the conclusion that to achieve his goal he had to join O'Connell. Charles Gavan Duffy described what such a decision meant to Davis as a Protestant announcing himself as one of O'Connell's followers: "The son of a Roman centurion who left the retinue of Caesar to associate with the obscure Hebrews gathered round Saul of Tarsus scarcely made a more surprising or significant choice."<sup>107</sup> The following year, Davis, Dillon, and Duffy founded *The Nation* and their national program began in earnest.

A glimpse of the way in which Davis and Moore were perceived by their countrymen can be seen in the actions surrounding their respective statues. Davis's statue was carved by John Hogan. Completed in 1853, it made a circuit around Dublin, being displayed at the Irish Exposition, at the Royal Dublin Society for a time, and even at the Mount St. Jerome Cemetery, where Davis was buried. Eventually it was placed in the foyer of the Dublin City Hall beside Hogan's statue of O'Connell, a fitting place for a highly regarded nationalist figure.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Duffy, 58,63.

<sup>108</sup> Helen Mulvey, *Thomas Davis and Ireland: A Biographical Study* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 202.

Christopher Moore sculpted Moore's statue, completed in 1857. Oddly, given Moore's continued popularity, as witnessed by the crowd of thousands that came for the unveiling, the subscription list for the statue was poorly supported.<sup>109</sup> The *Irish Quarterly Review* wrote that the statue "will stand before the world a disgrace to Ireland; not a testimony of honor to the genius of the Poet, but the recording mark of Irish ingratitude, of Irish lip homage, and of Irish apathy..."<sup>110</sup> And, as an added slight to Moore's legacy, the statue's location on College Green just outside the walls of Trinity College is situated above a public toilet.<sup>111</sup>

Moore would continue to hold a place in Irish hearts because of his lyrical genius and his role abroad as an ambassador for Ireland and its music. Yet it was ultimately Davis's vision of Irish nationalism that won out. Charles Gavan Duffy asserted that Davis's campaign was successful because "the case of Ireland was no longer (to borrow the metaphor of Moore) the lament of a beggar who showed his sores to excite compassion, but the remonstrance of an injured and angry partner, who insisted on fair play or a close of the partnership."<sup>112</sup> In the end, it was Davis's ability to make Irish readers see themselves as an "angry partner" to England rather than a "beggar" that made the difference.

### Conclusions and Implications for Further Research

For centuries, music has carried immense cultural significance in Ireland. The testimony of figures such as Gerald of Wales describe the existence of an

---

<sup>109</sup> Kelly, 555. Hogan was up for the commission but did not get it.

<sup>110</sup> *Irish Quarterly Review* (June, 1853): 3:495.

<sup>111</sup> *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, 36.

<sup>112</sup> Charles Gavan Duffy, *My Life in Two Hemispheres* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1898), 1:64.

established, sophisticated musical culture dating from the twelfth century. When Britain's hegemonic forces began to affect Irish culture to such a degree that the Irish language began to decline, Irish music became the bulwark of traditional culture.

Guided by his own engagement with the traditional repertory, Thomas Davis harnessed music's emotional power to the advantage of his own nationalist ends. As significant as his achievement was, it was born out of the historical context in which Davis found himself. The United Irishmen provided a framework for popularizing nationalist ideology through the medium of song and print. Thomas Moore showed that setting original lyrics to traditional airs could be successful on both a commercial and a popular level. The works of James MacPherson brought Celtic legend and history to the rest of Europe, while figures at home and abroad—Bunting and Herder—emphasized the cultural import of preserving traditional music. Last, the Gaelic Revival, begun in the 1830s by figures like Hardiman, Ferguson, and Petrie, provided the perfect nexus for Davis's antiquarian and nationalistic endeavors. The stage was set for someone who could absorb and combine these various influences and focus them into a single nationalist message. Thomas Davis was that figure.

Davis unearthed a seemingly latent poetic talent to become Young Ireland's most prolific lyricist. Additionally, as the leader of the movement he oversaw music's inclusion into the very fabric of their nationalist campaign. At no time was Davis's movement without a musical soundtrack.

Davis's nonsectarian ideology and his emphasis on historical memorialization meant that, to a large extent, he was concerned with both the preservation and fabrication of memory, musical and historical. He was concerned with musical memory in his idealization of traditional culture (and its oral traditions) and in his promotion of musical collection and transcription. He sought to protect Irish traditional culture and to delimit its growth at the same time. Furthermore, his appropriation of sectarian party tunes was a musical act of remembering and forgetting as he sought to erase the tune's undesirable associations and to establish nonsectarian ones in their place. Davis was concerned with historical memory in his promotion of a contentious past while attempting to establish a shared historical experience for all Irish parties. In a past filled with uprisings, sectarian animosities, and betrayal, Davis, rather naively, hoped to educate Irishmen and women about their history in the expectation of creating Irish unity.

What could have happened had Davis not died in 1845? What other musical plans might he have pursued? In what direction would Davis have taken Young Ireland after the emergence of the Great Famine in 1845 and the death of O'Connell two years later? He may have succeeded in healing the split between Young Ireland and the Repeal Association, continued his work with *The Nation*, and eventually triumphed in his quest for Irish cultural and political independence. He may have never recovered from his falling out with O'Connell, ceased his writing, and died in obscurity. He may have prevented Young Ireland's abortive uprising in 1848. He may have led it. Regardless of the hypotheticals and suppositions, in just three years

of writing for *The Nation*, Davis helped ignite a nationalist fervor throughout Ireland. His songs and essays educated the public and convinced them that Ireland was worthy to be called a nation. He has previously been considered an important figure in Irish politics; he deserves now to be considered a towering figure of Irish music as well.

Although I have endeavored to provide a thorough exploration of Thomas Davis's engagement with Irish traditional music and nationalism, this dissertation nevertheless suggests many avenues for future research. I have focused my efforts on the years 1842–45, when Davis was writing for *The Nation*. Additional investigation can be done concerning Davis's life prior to his work on the journal, when his ideas of nationalism were formed. Much work can also be done on Davis's influence on later generations of Irish nationalists, specifically those involved with the Gaelic League in the late nineteenth century and those involved with the Easter Rising of 1916. I have begun a discussion of the interplay between the oral and print traditions of Irish music as it pertains to the songs of Davis and Young Ireland. Further research can extend this investigation to other songbooks and music collections of the nineteenth century, especially those by Bunting, Hardiman, Moore, and Petrie. Further study can only enhance our understanding of Thomas Davis and his role within nineteenth-century Irish musical culture.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I. Primary Sources

#### A. National Library of Ireland (NLI)

A collection of Irish airs. Manuscript 14,099. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

A Collection of Notes and Cuttings Relating to Thomas Davis. Manuscript 14,056. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Correspondence of Charles Gavan Duffy. Manuscripts 5756 and 5758. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Correspondence of William Smith O'Brien. Manuscript 432. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Drafts of Papers Read by Thomas Davis. Manuscript 3199. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Forty-Five Irish song-sheets, some from the collection of Thomas Davis. Manuscript LO 2210. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Notes made by Eugene O'Curry on Gaelic items in the index to the *Spirit of the Nation*. Manuscript 4571. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Partial prepublication copy of *Spirit of the Nation* that includes additional ballads and annotations by Davis. Manuscript 34,980. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Thomas Davis Papers. Manuscript 2644. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

Volume of Notes and Letters by Thomas Davis Relating to the United Irishmen. Manuscript 1791. National Library of Ireland, Dublin.

#### B. Library of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA)

Forde-Pigot Music Collection. Manuscript 24 O 20. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

Gavan Duffy Bequest Collection, Box 1. Notes on Irish History, written by Thomas Davis. Manuscripts 12 P 15/16 and 12 P 15/17. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

\_\_\_\_\_. Box 2. Miscellaneous Letters and Papers. Manuscript 12 P 16. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

\_\_\_\_\_. Box 3. Letters and Papers of Thomas Davis. Manuscript 12 P 19. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

Letters to and from W. E. Hudson and others, concerning contributions to *The Nation*. Manuscript 3 C 6. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

Letters to James Hardiman. Manuscript 12 N 20. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

O'Gorman Collection. 116 Airs, at least some sent to *The Nation*. Manuscript 23 H 27. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

Scrapbook, including miscellaneous correspondence, songs, etc., mainly in connection with *The Nation*. Manuscript 23 O 47. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

*The Nation* 1. 1842–43. Personal Copy of Thomas Davis. RRG/4/F/9. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

*The Nation* 2. 1843–44. Personal Copy of Thomas Davis. RRG/4/F/10. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

*The Nation* 3. 1844–45. Bequest of William Elliot Hudson. RRG/4/F/ 13. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

### C. Other Libraries

Denny Lane Papers. Manuscript U611. Cork County and City Archives, Cork.

Manuscript notebooks containing drafts of Davis's poems and song texts. Manuscripts 10660 and 10661. Trinity College Dublin, Dublin.

Windele Manuscripts. Windele's correspondence with Thomas Moore and Thomas Davis. Manuscript 4 B 2 and 12 L 6. Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

Pamphlets Belonging to Thomas Davis. 16 vols. P2.6.27–37, P2.6.39–42, P2.6.44. Marsh Library, Dublin.

## II. Secondary Sources

Adamson, Walter L. *Hegemony and Revolution: A Study of Antonio Gramsci's Political and Cultural Theory*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.



- Adler, Hans and Wulf Köpke, eds. *A Companion to the works of Johann Gottfried Herder*. Rochester: Camden House, 2004.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.
- Atkinson, David. "'Edward,' Incest, and Intertextuality: Problems of Authority and Indeterminacy in the Traditional Ballad," *Southern Folklore* 55, no. 2 (1998): 102-32.
- . "Folk Songs in Print: Text and Tradition." *Folk Music Journal* 8, no. 4 (2004): 456-83.
- Baker, Joseph Wynn. *Practical Agriculture Epitomized, and Adapted to the Tenantry of Ireland*. Dublin, 1771.
- Barry, Jonathan. "Literacy and Literature in Popular Culture: Reading and Writing in Historical Perspective." In *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500–1850*, edited by Tim Harris, 69–94. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.
- Bayard, Samuel. *Dance to the Fiddle, March to the Fife: Instrumental Folk Tunes in Pennsylvania*. University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 1982.
- Beausang, Ita. "From National Sentiment to Nationalist Movement, 1850–1900." In *Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*. Irish Musical Studies 9, edited by Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny, 36–51. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007.
- Beckett, J.C. "The Irish Writer and His Public in the Nineteenth Century." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 11, no. 2 (1981): 102–116.
- Blake-Forster, Charles Ffrench. *The Irish Chieftains; or, A Struggle for the Crown*. Dublin: McGlashan and Gill, 1872.
- Bohlman, Philip V. *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History*. ABC-CLIO World Music Series. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004.
- Bonfield, Caitlin. "Manuscript Irish Music in the Library of the Royal Irish Academy." <http://www.ria.ie/getmedia/43d7cca8-7eb7-4079-a492-32f72fe2722d/Music---Bonfield-article.pdf.aspx> [accessed September 12, 2013].
- Booth, Mark W. *The Experience of Songs*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981.
- Boyce, D. George. *Nationalism in Ireland*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Routledge, 1995.

- Boydell, Barra. "Constructs of nationality: the literary and visual politics of Irish music in the nineteenth century." In *Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*. Irish Musical Studies 9, edited by Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny, 52–73. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007.
- . "The United Irishmen, Music, Harps, and National Identity." *Eighteenth-Century Ireland* 13 (1998): 44–51.
- Brown, Malcolm. *The Politics of Irish Literature: From Thomas Davis to W.B. Yeats*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972.
- Cairns, Davis and Shaun Richards. *Writing Ireland: colonialism, nationalism and culture*. Cultural Politics. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988.
- Cambrensis, Giraldus. *The History and Topography of Ireland*. Translated by John J. O'Meara. London: Penguin Books, 1982.
- Chambers, Robert, ed. *The Life and Works of Robert Burns*. New York: Harper and Brother, 1852.
- Chinnéide, Veronica ní. "The Sources of Moore's Melodies." *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland* 89, no. 2 (1959): 109–34.
- Comerford, R.V. *Ireland. Inventing the Nation*. London: Arnold, 2003.
- Connell, Philip and Nigel Leask. "What is the people." In *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, edited by Philip Connell and Nigel Leask, 3–48. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Coolahan, John. *Irish Education: Its History and Structure*. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1981.
- Cooper, David. *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and Its Diaspora: Community and Conflict*. Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series. Surrey: Ashgate, 2010.
- . "On the Twelfth of July in the Morning...(Or the Man Who Mistook His Sash for a Hat). *Folk Music Journal* 8, no. 1 (2001): 67–89.
- Cragoe, Matthew. *Culture, Politics, and National Identity in Wales 1832–1886*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Curtis, Benjamin. *Music Makes the Nation: Nationalist Composers and Nation Building in Nineteenth Century Europe*. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2008.

- Curtis, Jr., L. Perry. "Moral and Physical Force: The Language of Violence in Irish Nationalism." *The Journal of British Studies* 27, no. 2 (April 1988): 150–89.
- Davis, Leith. *Music, Post-colonialism, and Gender: The Construction of an Irish National Identity, 1724-1874*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.
- Davis, Thomas. *Essays Literary and Historical*. Centenary Edition, edited by D.J. O'Donoghue. Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1914.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Letters of Thomas Davis, Part I." *The Irish Monthly* 16, no. 179 (May 1888): 261–70.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Letters of Thomas Davis, Part II." *The Irish Monthly* 16, no. 180 (June 1888): 335–48.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Poems of Thomas Davis. Now First Collected, With Notes and Historical Illustrations*. Edited by Thomas Wallis. Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1846.
- Deane, Seamus. *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing Since 1790*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Dublin Music Trade. "W. Holden." <http://www.dublinmusictrade.com/node/212> (accessed September 25, 2014).
- Duffy, Charles Gavan. *My Life in Two Hemispheres*. New York: The MacMillan Co., 1898.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Short Life of Thomas Davis*. The New Irish Library. Dublin: Sealy, Bryers, and Walker, 1895.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Thomas Davis: The Memoirs of an Irish Patriot, 1840-1846*. London: Kegan Paul, 1890.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History, 1840-1850*. London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin, and Co., 1880.
- Emmet, Thomas Addis, Arthur O'Connor, and William James McNevin. *Memoire, or, Detailed Statement of the Origin and Progress of the Irish Union: Delivered to the Irish Government, by Messrs. Emmet, O'Connor, and M'Nevin*. London: P. Robinson, 1802.
- Ferguson, Samuel. "A Dialogue Between the Head and the Heart of an Irish Protestant." *Dublin University Magazine* 2, no. 11 (November 1833): 586–93.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Hardiman's *Irish Minstrelsy*," 4 parts. *Dublin University Magazine* 3–4 (April–November, 1834).

Fitzhenry, Edna. *Henry Joy McCracken*. Dublin: Phoenix, 1936.

Fleischmann, Aloys, ed. *Sources of Irish Traditional Music, c. 1600-1855*. 2 volumes. Garland Reference Library of the Humanities. New York: General Music Publishing Co., 1998.

Flood, W. H. Grattan. Introduction to *The Spirit of the Nation, or Ballads and Songs with Original and Ancient Music, Arranged for Voice and Pianoforte*. Dublin: James Duffy and Co., 1911.

Foster, Roy. *Modern Ireland 1600-1972*. London: Penguin Books, 1988.

Fox, Charlotte Milligan. *Annals of the Irish Harpers*. London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1911.

Friedman, Albert. *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961.

Gelbart, Matthew. *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music": Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner*. *New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism*, edited by Jeffrey Kallberg, Anthony Newcomb, and Ruth Solie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Translated and edited by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. New York: International Publishers, 1971.

Gregory, John. *A Comparative View of the State and Faculties of Man with those of the Animal World*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. London, 1777.

Groom, Nick. "'The purest English': Ballads and the English Literary Dialect." *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 47, no. 2–3 (Summer–Fall 2006): 179–202.

Hazlitt, W. Carew, ed. *Spirit of the Age; or Contemporary Portraits*. New York: George Bell and Sons, 1906.

Herder, Johann Gottfried. "Critical Forests, or Reflections on the Art and Science of the Beautiful: First Grove." In *Selected Writings on Aesthetics*, edited and translated by Gregory Moore. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Hodkinson, Stephen and Edith Hall. "Appropriations of Spartan Helotage in British Anti-Slavery Debates of the 1790s." In *Ancient Slavery and Abolition from*

- Hobbes to Hollywood*, edited by Edith Hall, Richard Alston, and Justine McConnell, 65–102. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Hudson, William Elliot [?]. "National Music and Musicians." *The Citizen*, January 1841.
- Hutchinson, John. *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: the Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State*. London: Allen and Unwin, 1987.
- Jenkins, Brian. *Irish Nationalism and the British State From Repeal to Revolutionary Nationalism*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006.
- Jones, Howard Mumford. *The Harp That Once: A Chronicle of the Life of Thomas Moore*. New York: H. Holt and Company, 1937.
- Kedourie, Elie. *Nationalism*. London: Hutchinson, 1960.
- Keegan, Niall. "Literacy as a Transmission Tool in Irish Traditional Music." In *The Maynooth International Musicological Conference 1995: Selected Proceedings*. Irish Musical Studies 4, edited by Patrick Devine and Harry White, 335–42. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996.
- Kelly, Ronan. *Bard of Erin: The Life of Thomas Moore*. London: Penguin Books, 2009.
- Kumar, Krishan. "Nation and Empire: English and British National Identity in Comparative Perspective." *Theory in Society* 29, no. 5 (October 2000): 575–608.
- MacDonagh, Oliver. *Ireland: The Union and its Aftermath*. London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1977.
- Martin, Howard. *Britain in the Nineteenth Century*. Challenging History. Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes, 1996.
- Mathison, Hamish. "Robert Burns and National Song." In *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic*, edited by David Duff and Catherine Jones, 77–92. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007.
- McCann, May. "Music and Politics in Ireland: The Specificity of the Folk Revival in Belfast." *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 4 (1995): 51–75.
- McCue, Kirsten. "'An individual flowering on a common stem': melody, performance, and national song." In *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, edited by Philip Connell and Nigel Leask, 88–106. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

- McHale, Maria. "Singing and Sobriety: Music and the Temperance Movement in Ireland, 1838–43." In *Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*. Irish Musical Studies 9, edited by Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny, 166–86. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007.
- McKenzie, John M. "Empire and National Identities, the Case of Scotland." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6, vol. 8 (1998): 215–31.
- Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. New York: Orion Press, 1965.
- Miller, David. *Peep O' Day Boys and Defenders: Selected Documents on the County Armagh Disturbances 1784–96*. Belfast: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, 1990.
- Mitchel, John. *The Last Conquest of Ireland (Perhaps)*. Glasgow: R and T Washbourne, 1861.
- Molony, John. *A Soul Came Into Ireland: Thomas Davis 1814–1845*. Dublin: Geography Publications, 1995.
- Moore, Thomas. *The Journals of Thomas Moore*. 6 vols. Edited by Wilfred S. Dowden. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1983–91.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Letter to the Students of Trinity College." *Press*, December 2, 1797. Quoted in Mary Helen Thuente, *The Harp Re-Strung: The United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Notes from the Letters of Thomas Moore to his Music Publisher, James Power (the publication of which was suppressed in London)*. New York: Redfield, 1854.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Life and Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*. New York: M.P. Haverty, 1855.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore, Collected by Himself*. 10 vols. London: Longmans, 1840–41.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Works of Thomas Moore, Comprehending All His Melodies, Ballads, etc.* 7 vols. Paris: A and W Galignani, 1823.
- "Moore's Alcipheron." *The Citizen: A Monthly Journal of Politics, Literature, and Art*, December 1, 1839.
- "Moore's Journals and Correspondence." *Irish Quarterly Review*, June 1853.
- Moran, Jimmy O'Brien. "Irish Folk Music Collectors of the Early Nineteenth Century: Pioneer Musicologists." In *Music in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*. Irish Musical

- Studies 9, edited by Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny, 94–113. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007.
- Morash, Christopher. *A History of Irish Theatre, 1601–2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Mulvey, Helen F. *Thomas Davis: A Biographical Study*. Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003.
- Ó Ciosáin, Niall. *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland 1750–1850*. Early Modern History: Society and Culture. London: MacMillan Press, 1997.
- O'Connor, Dónal. "Ireland's Music Collectors." *Treoir* (Spring 2001).  
[http://comhaltas.ie/music/treoir/detail/irelands\\_music\\_collectors/](http://comhaltas.ie/music/treoir/detail/irelands_music_collectors/)  
 [accessed September 17, 2013].
- O'Farrell, Patrick. *Ireland's English Question: Anglo-Irish Relations 1534–1970*. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.
- O Lochlainn, Colm. *Anglo-Irish Songwriters Since Moore*. Dublin: At the Sign of the Three Candles, 1950.
- O'Sullivan, T.F. *The Young Irishmen*. Tralee: Kerryman, 1944.
- Rolleston, T.W., ed. *Prose Writings of Thomas Davis*. Camelot Series. London: Walter Scott, 1889.
- Russell, Lord John, ed. *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*. 8 vols. London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853.
- Ryan, Joseph. *Nationalism and Music in Ireland*, Ph.D. diss., National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1991.
- . "The Tone of Defiance." In *Musical constructions of nationalism: Essays on the history and ideology of European musical culture, 1800–1945*, edited by Harry White and Michael Murphy, 197–211. Cork: Cork University Press, 2001.
- Ryder, Seán. "Defining Colony and Empire in Early Nineteenth-Century Nationalism." In *Was Ireland a Colony? Economics, Politics, and Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, edited by Terrence McDonough, 165–85. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2005.
- . "Young Ireland and the 1798 Rebellion." In *Rebellion and Remembrance in Modern Ireland*, edited by Laurence M. Geary, 135–47. Nineteenth-Century Ireland 5. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2001.

- Sampson, William. *Memoirs of William Sampson, an Irish Exile; Written by Himself*. London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Arnot, 1832.
- Schaffer, Patricia. Introduction to "Laws in Ireland for the Suppression of Popery." <http://library.law.umn.edu/irishlaw/intro.html> (accessed October 1, 2014).
- Simms, J.G. *War and Politics in Ireland, 1649–1730*. Edited by David Hayton and Gerard O'Brien. London: Hambledon Press, 1986.
- Smith, Anthony. "Culture, community, and territory: the politics of ethnicity and nationalism." *International Affairs* 72, no. 3 (July 1996): 445–58.
- Smith, Gerry. *Music in Irish Cultural History*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009.
- Smyth, Jim. *The Men of No Property: Irish Radicals and Popular Politics in the Late Eighteenth Century*. Studies in Modern History, edited by J.C.D. Clark. London: MacMillan Press, 1992.
- Spenser, Edmund. "A View of the Present State of Ireland." <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/825/ireland.pdf?....>[accessed September 11, 2013].
- Stokes, William. *The Life and Labours in Art and Archaeology of George Petrie*. London: Longman's, Green, and Co., 1868.
- Teeling, Charles Hamilton. *History of the Irish Rebellion of 1798: A Personal Narrative*. London: Henry Colburn, 1828.
- Thuente, Mary Helen. *The Harp Re-Strung: The United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994.
- Tone, Theobald Wolfe. *An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland*. Belfast, 1791.
- Trumpener, Katie. *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Valley, Fintan, ed. *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music*. New York: New York University Press, 1999.
- Walker, Joseph C. *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*. Dublin: Luke White, 1786.
- White, Harry. *The Keeper's Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770-1970*. Critical Conditions: Field Day Essays. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998.



- \_\_\_\_\_. *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Nationalism, Colonialism and the Cultural Stasis of Music in Ireland." In *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800-1945*, edited by Harry White and Michael Murphy, 257-272. Cork: Cork University Press, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Preservation of Music and Irish Cultural History." *International Review of Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 27, no. 2 (December 1996): 123-38.
- Yeats, Gráinne. "Irish Harp Music." In *Four Centuries of Music in Ireland*, edited by Brian Boydell. London: BBC, 1979.
- Yeats, William Butler. *Autobiographies: The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats*. Vol. 3. Edited by William O'Donnell and Douglas Archibald. London: Simon and Schuster, 2010.
- Zimmerman, Georges-Denis. *Songs of Irish Rebellion: Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs 1780-1900*. Hatboro, PA: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1967.

### III. Music Collections and Songbooks

- Barry, Michael Joseph, ed. *The Songs of Ireland*. Dublin: James Duffy, 1845.
- Bunting, Edward. *A General Collection of the Ancient Irish Music, Containing a Variety of Admired Airs Never Before Published, and also the Compositions of Conlan and Carolan; Collected from the Harpers etc., in the different Provinces of Ireland and Adapted for the Piano Forte with a Prefatory Introduction*. London: Preston and Son, 1796.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland: arranged for the pianoforte: some of the most admired melodies are adapted for the voice, to poetry chiefly translated from the original Irish songs by Thomas Campbell, esq., and other eminent poets; to which is prefixed a historical and critical dissertation on the Egyptian, British, and Irish Harp*. London: Clementi and Co., 1809.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Ancient Music of Ireland, Arranged for Piano Forte*. Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840.
- Duffy, Charles Gavan, ed. *The Ballad Poetry of Ireland*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Dublin: James Duffy, 1845.

Graves, Albert Perceval. *The Celtic Song Book: Being Representative Folk Songs of the Six Celtic Nations*. London: E. Benn, 1928.

Hudson, William Elliot. "Native Music of Ireland." *The Citizen*, January–June 1842.

Moore, Thomas. *Irish Melodies*. London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1845.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Irish Melodies, National Airs, Sacred Songs, Ballads, Songs, Etc.* London: Collins and Payn, Royal Saloon, 1828.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Irish Melodies, with Symphonies and Accompaniments by Sir John Stevenson*. Boston: Oliver Ditson and Co., 1852.

Petrie, George. *Ancient Music of Ireland*. Vol. 1. Dublin: Society for the Preservation and Publication of the Melodies of Ireland, 1855.

Stanford, Charles Villiers, ed. *The Complete Collection of Irish Music as Noted by George Petrie*. 3 vols. London: Boosey and Co., 1902.

\_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Irish Melodies of Thomas Moore*. London: Boosey and Co., 1895.

United Irishmen. *Paddy's Resource, Being a Collection of Original and Modern Patriotic Songs*. Philadelphia: Stephens, 1796.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Paddy's Resource, Being a Select Collection of Original and Modern Patriotic Songs*. New York: Wilson, 1798.

Writers of *The Nation*. *The Spirit of the Nation*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. rev. Dublin: James Duffy, 1843.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Spirit of the Nation. Part II*. Dublin: James Duffy, 1843.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Spirit of the Nation: Ballads and Songs with Original and Ancient Music, Arranged for the Voice and Pianoforte*. Dublin: James Duffy, 1845.

## APPENDIX 1

### MELODIES IN JOHN EDWARD PIGOT'S MUSIC COLLECTION MARKED AS BEING OBTAINED FROM *THE NATION*<sup>1</sup>

1. "Search all the world over"
2. "One bottle more"
3. "The Mother's Lamentation"
4. "Anonymous"
5. "Tally ho, in the morning"
6. ("Irish version of Johnny Cope")
7. (Third part of) Mo cailín deas cruite na m-bo" ["The pretty girl milking the cow"]
8. "Anonymous" (from Connaught)
9. "Ta me mo Codlad"
10. "Antient War Cry"
11. "The Wild Song"
12. "The trip o'er the mountain"
13. "Irish air"
14. "Through the green woods"
15. "Black slender Boy"
16. "Shane O'Deera Glanna"
17. "Irish air"
18. "Irish Molly O"
19. "Hawthorn Blossom"
20. "Carolan's Devotion"
21. [Unnamed] (taken down at Cushenden)
22. "The heart of my Kitty soon turns to me"
23. "Rakes of Kildare"
24. "Irish air"
25. "Mo vourneen slaínte"
26. "The Dairy Girl"
27. "O'Sullivan's March"
28. "Generous and good"
29. "The Dawning of the Day"
30. "The World's turn'd upside down"
31. "I went to the rock"
32. [Unnamed]
33. "The black slender boy"
34. [Unnamed]
35. [Unnamed]
36. [Unnamed]
37. [Unnamed]
38. [Unnamed]

---

<sup>1</sup> Titles listed as written in RIA MS 24 O 20.

## APPENDIX 2

### TRADITIONAL AIRS SHARED BETWEEN THE MUSIC COLLECTIONS OF THOMAS DAVIS AND JOHN EDWARD PIGOT

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. "Speed the Plough"                    | 39. "Banshee Peelers"              |
| 2. "An buacailín buide"                  | 40. "I'm akin to the Callaghans"   |
| 3. "Bang 'em Up"                         | 41. "One bottle more"              |
| 4. "It was in the Year 1804"             | 42. "The lasses of Dublin"         |
| 5. "Judy now can't you be easy"          | 43. "The Brink of the White Rocks" |
| 6. "Shane O Dheer a Glana"               |                                    |
| 7. "Corraboith Jig"                      |                                    |
| 8. "Colleen Dhas Dhoan"                  |                                    |
| 9. "The Washerwoman"                     |                                    |
| 10. "The Devil Skin the Peelers"         |                                    |
| 11. "Limerick Lasses"                    |                                    |
| 12. "Good Morrow to your<br>nightcap"    |                                    |
| 13. "The Gobby O"                        |                                    |
| 14. "Wash your face"                     |                                    |
| 15. "Old Hag in the Corner"              |                                    |
| 16. "Castle Oliver Chases"               |                                    |
| 17. "Welcome Home from<br>Newfoundland"  |                                    |
| 18. "The Rocky Road"                     |                                    |
| 19. "Funny Eyes"                         |                                    |
| 20. "I'll go home and tell my<br>Mother" |                                    |
| 21. "Rakes of Clonmel"                   |                                    |
| 22. "Rakes of Mallow"                    |                                    |
| 23. "The Croppy Boy"                     |                                    |
| 24. "Oh the Marriage"                    |                                    |
| 25. "As I was going down to Bray"        |                                    |
| 26. "Cummillum"                          |                                    |
| 27. "The Irish lad's a Jolly Boy"        |                                    |
| 28. "Galtee Hunt"                        |                                    |
| 29. "Drogheda"                           |                                    |
| 30. "Peter Street"                       |                                    |
| 31. "Stay my Nancy"                      |                                    |
| 32. "Bunch of green rushes"              |                                    |
| 33. "Miss Grizzle the gray mare"         |                                    |
| 34. "Off she Goes"                       |                                    |
| 35. "Trip to the Cottage"                |                                    |
| 36. "Barney Bralaghan's Jig"             |                                    |
| 37. "Jack's alibi"                       |                                    |
| 38. "Paddy O'Carrol"                     |                                    |

APPENDIX 3  
LETTERS OF PERMISSION

Mr Timothy Love.  
4625 Parkoaks Drive 35,  
Baton Rouge,  
LA 70816,  
USA.

13 March 2015

NLI reference: RP 15/525

Dear Mr Love,

Further to your request for permission to reproduce images from the National Library of Ireland's collections, we are pleased to grant reproduction rights as outlined below:

Images: Ms 34,980 & Ms 2644

Title: Thomas Davis, The Nation and songs of Irish Nationalism.

Use: For PhD Thesis.

No reproduction fee is payable to the National Library.

All reproduction rights are subject to the National Library's terms and conditions including the requirement that all reproductions are accompanied by the acknowledgement, **Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland.**

Yours sincerely,  
James Harte.  
Manuscripts Department,  
National Library of Ireland.

No fee

**ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY**

19 DAWSON STREET  
DUBLIN 2

Telephone: (+ 353 1) 6762570, 6764222

Fax: (+ 353 1) 6762346

e-mail: [library@ria.ie](mailto:library@ria.ie)

<http://www.ria.ie>

**- PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE FORM -**

Requester's Name / Address / Contact Details:

Timothy Love

4625 Parkoaks Drive #35

Baton Rouge, LA 70816, USA

Phone: 816-896-5996

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: tlove5@tigers.lsu.edu

Body on behalf of which permission is sought (if different from above):

Permission is requested to reproduce the following item(s) from the Royal Irish Academy's collections:

- MS 23 O 47 pg 181-83
- MS 12 P 16 - "proceeds fit for making Ireland a Nation"
- \_\_\_\_\_

cont'd

in the following:

Book / Periodical: Thomas Davis, The Nation, and Songs of Irish Nationalism (doctoral dissertation)

Exhibition: .....

Website: .....

DVD / Video / TV Programme: .....

CD-ROM: .....

Print Run / Circulation: .....

Rights sought: .....

Requester to complete this section:

1. I confirm that the requested image(s) is/are for reproduction as described above and will not be used for any other purpose. A further request for permission to reproduce the above image(s) will be made in the event that such is required.
2. The Academy byline will be used in association with each image reproduced, viz.: 'By permission of the Royal Irish Academy © RIA'.
3. Internet / Web reproductions will be appropriately watermarked.
4. The appropriate fee will be paid within 30 days of receipt of invoice. (Our invoice will be issued when the material to be reproduced has been agreed and this form has been duly completed.)

Signed: .....

on behalf of requester

Date: 3/12/15

Authorised by: .....

on behalf of RIA

Date: 19/03/15

Fee payable: €.....

*This information is stored on computer and is protected under the Data Protection Acts 1988 & 2003.*

*Please return the completed form by post or email to  
The Library, Royal Irish Academy, 19 Dawson Street, Dublin 2, Ireland;  
email: [library@ria.ie](mailto:library@ria.ie)*

## VITA

Timothy Love, a native of Birmingham, Alabama, received his Bachelor of Music degree from Furman University in 2004. He then attended the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance where he earned a Master of Music degree in trumpet performance in 2006 and a Master of Music degree in musicology in 2009. His thesis, "The Film Music of Seán Ó Riada" was supervised by William Everett.

In 2009, Timothy began his doctoral studies in musicology at Louisiana State University under the auspices of a Board of Regents Fellowship. After completing his coursework, he undertook archival research in Dublin, Ireland upon receiving a Graduate Fellowship for International Study from the Institute for International Education. Professionally, Timothy has presented his research at the local, national, and international levels. He is a member of the American Musicological Society and served as the Southern Chapter Student Representative to the AMS from 2010 to 2012. He also belongs to the Society for Musicology in Ireland, the Society for Ethnomusicology, and the Phi Beta Kappa musical honor society.