

‘Bhíodh muid ag damhsa go maidin’:
dance, music, and community in Árann

Deirdre Ní Chonghaile

Excerpted from:

Ón gCos go Cluas

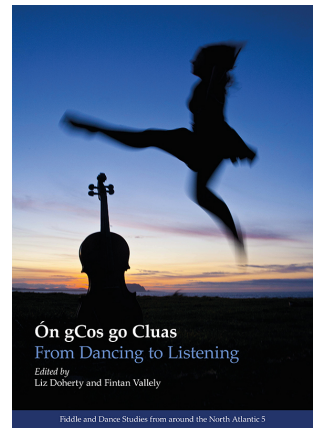
From Dancing to Listening

Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 5

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'Bhíodh muid ag damhsa go maidin': dance, music, and community in Árann

DEIRDRE NÍCHONGHAILE

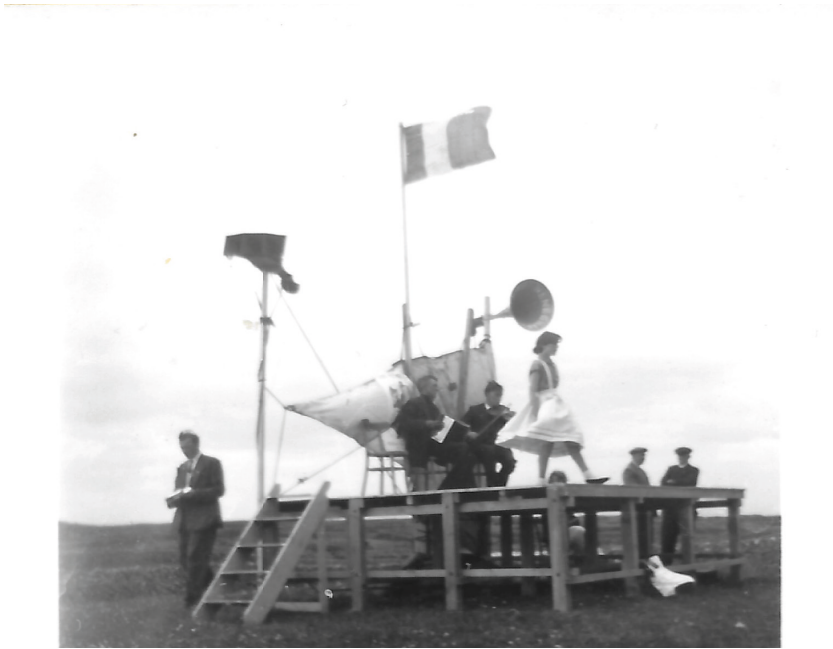


Figure 1 Dancing in Garraí Joe Watty, Cill Rónáin, Árann, 1950s. *Courtesy of Mary Conneely.*

For many people, Aran is, as Tim Robinson observes, ‘Ireland to the power of two’.¹ It is for this particular reason that the islands are often assumed to have sustained over time a rich music tradition. In song, they certainly have, but in instrumental music, not so much, largely for two related reasons: access to instruments; and the nature of music transmission. Access to instruments came much later to Aran than to other parts of Ireland because of its island location and shortage of local materials such as timber and metal; but primarily it was because of poverty, particularly in the nineteenth century, a period defined by recurrent famine and population decline.

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The historical dearth of instruments might well explain the second factor, music transmission in Aran, which, until very recently, relied more on osmosis and individual exploration than on one-to-one instruction. In such a milieu, it comes as no surprise to find that Aran hosted travelling pipers, and that lilting, whistling and smaller instruments – including the paper-covered comb and the Jew’s harp – were common and, indeed, valued; around a century ago, for instance, a blacksmith in Mainistir, Árainn, fashioned a silver tongue for a Jew’s harp. However, the dependence on these smaller instruments and on visiting pipers point to one important and seemingly paradoxical fact: of all the traditional performing arts practised in Aran, including music, song, storytelling and *agallaimh beirte* (poetic dialogues),² dance is a particular favourite. In the past, it played a pivotal role in traditional music because it dictated where, when and how islanders made music. Where music occurred, it was soon accompanied and led by dancing, whether in the kitchen, on the slip or pier, or on the numerous slabs of rock in the karst limestone landscape, at the handball alley or, even today, in the pub.³ In these places, Treasa Ní Mhiolláin told me, ‘bhíodh muid ag damhsa go maidin’ – ‘we used to be dancing until morning’.⁴ The evidence from Aran suggests that, in places where instruments were scarce or where the transmission of music was less prescribed, more casual and chaotic perhaps, the desire to dance was crucial to sustaining a local music tradition, especially if that tradition was comparatively limited. Evidence from communities that faced similar challenges – the Blasket Islands and Tory Island, for instance – corroborates this conclusion.⁵

Many other commentators have borne witness, as Treasa did, to the local obsession with dance – among them Liam O’Flaherty,⁶ John Millington Synge,⁷ Úna Ní Fhaircheallaigh,⁸ Thomas Mason,⁹ and Muiris Mac Conghail (1988) – but one visitor of the 1950s, Pierre Travassac, acknowledged its significance to Aran in a unique way. He went so far as to define and map Aran in terms of dance:

On aime beaucoup danser en Irlande, et peut-être davantage encore à Aran. On y danse en tout lieu et à toute occasion, dans le ‘salon’ ou même tout bonnement dans la cuisine de la petite ‘guest house’ de Kilmurvey, au son du plus moderne électrophone, aussi bien que dehors, au clair de lune et aux accents de l’accordéon, sur la grande dalle de pierre qu’on trouve au tournant du chemin, en haut du village. Que par hasard un musicien vienne au ‘pub’ où l’été les touristes résidents ont coutume de se rendre après dîner, en haut de la côte Cowrugh [Corrúch] sur la route de Kilronan, et aussitôt commencera la ‘ceilidhe’. Et tout cela, c’est Aran.¹⁰

Translation:

In Ireland people really love to dance, and perhaps even more so in Aran. They dance everywhere and at every opportunity, in the living room, or even quite simply in the kitchen of the little ‘guest house’ in Kilmurvey, with its modern electrophone. They dance by moonlight, to the accents of an accordion, on the big flagstone by the turn in the road at the top of the village. When a musician happens to stray into a pub where summer residents congregate after dinner, at the top of the Cowrugh [Corrúch] coast on the Kilronan road, the ceilidhe will begin right away [...] And all of that, that’s Aran.¹¹

I would like to consider here the essence of Aran as Travassac saw it and, indeed, as many islanders see it (as having a particular symbiosis of music and dance) in order to identify clearly its aesthetic basis, its potential and its impact. I will chart its history and its present, I will surmise as to its future, and I will assess the significance of that symbiosis in Aran and beyond. I should say that, although much of what I say applies to all three Aran Islands, I am speaking about the largest of them, Árann, or Inismór as it is also called, which has a small community of a little over 800 permanent residents as well as a sizeable population of migrant islanders like myself. For want of space and enough supporting evidence (because this research is still in its infancy), I do not include Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr.

Aesthetics and history of symbiosis

What exactly is the nature of the symbiosis of music and dance in Árann? The style of music played there is characterised largely by individualism and idiosyncrasy, resulting from the informal music transmission that I have described. Nonetheless, when the musicians of Árann play together, individual musical styles unite to express one common aesthetic belief: that traditional music is essentially enmeshed with traditional dance. Dance embodies the spirit and life of local music through movement and energy and through involving people physically in a tangible, as well as a sensory, tactile and emotional experience. So strong is this aesthetic connection between traditional music and dance in Árann that islanders commonly regard accompanying dance as the highlight of instrumental music-making. They recall successful musical events as dance events and they regard musicians who can play well for dancers as successful musicians. When they want to express their appreciation of good music, they dance. This understanding was demonstrated to me forcibly in the summer of 2009 when, at her niece's wedding, Delia Bheairtle Sheáin Uí Chonghaile complained to me that the dance-worthy music that we musicians were playing during the buffet was going to waste because the bride and groom had yet to perform their 'first dance'. Agitated, Delia requested that I do something about it, which I did, and once the guests were enabled to observe the modern wedding custom of the 'first dance' (to some pop ballad or other), the marquee floor overflowed with dancing by one and all, well into the night.

Musicians too are driven by the local desire to dance, as I discovered when I asked Paddy Mullen (1946–2016) to describe the style of music that he and his bandmates from Ceoltóirí Árann play. His response was phrased and framed in terms of local dance:

An chaoi a fheiceann's muinn é nuair atá muinn ag casadh do ghrúpaí, nó go mór mór lads, nó cailíní agus lads as Árann, Tí Chreig nó Tí Fitz nó pheibí cén áit, mara gcuirfidh muinne an sórt brí seo isteach ann – ní tharlóidh tada, ní ghabhfadh siad ag damhsa. So, sé'n chaoi atá linn, ní dheireann muinn leob a ghuil a' damhsa ach tarraingíonn an ceol amach iad. Agus mara gcasadh tú iad le brí agus, agus fuinneamh [...] titfidh siad ina gcodladh, titfidh muinne inár gcodladh freisin! So ní tharlóidh tada, beidh tú 'rith leat ach ní shin é muinne, 'dтуigeann tú? [...] má tá an ceol sách maith le h'iad a tharraingt amach [ag damhsa], tá sé ag déanamh ceart, tá sé ag déanamh sách maith. [...] Mara bhfuil, tá sé chomh maith dhuit fanacht sa mbaile. Sin é an chaoi atá linn.¹²

Translation:

The way we see it, when we're playing for groups, or especially for lads, or girls and lads from Aran, in Tí Chreig or Tí Fitz [both pubs] or wherever, if we don't put this sort of life into it – nothing will happen, they won't dance. So, the way we are, we don't tell them to go dancing but the music draws them out. And if you don't play it with life and, and energy [...] they'll fall asleep, we'll fall asleep too! So nothing will happen, you'll be running along, but that isn't us, you understand? [...] if the music is good enough to draw them out [dancing], it is doing alright, it is doing well enough. [...] If it isn't, you may as well stay at home. That's the way we are.

Paddy's aesthetic understanding of how best to play traditional music in a communal setting and Delia's insistence that dance should accompany music illustrate a tacit appreciation of the power of dance to consolidate the experience of sharing music and to transform that experience for musician and listener alike. Islanders understand the potential of music and dance to enable them to express themselves and their sense of community, individually and collectively, at the same time. They understand that music and dance enable them to celebrate life and being alive by keeping them from sitting or sleeping through it or shying away from it. Together, Delia's and Paddy's testimonies demonstrate how islanders cultivate and capitalise on the symbiotic relationship between music and dance.

Origin of aesthetic

The aesthetic principles upon which this music-dance symbiosis is founded emerged, I believe, from the traditional performance milieu that existed in Aran from the beginning of the nineteenth century at the very latest up until the 1960s. During that time, musicians and singers performed at communal gatherings in local homes and out-of-doors and, on occasion, in the neighbouring islands and on the mainland at parties, dances, festivals and pilgrimages.¹³ Some of these events were spontaneous occurrences whereas others were more organised.¹⁴ This pattern remained stable over generations because its essentially integrated and inclusive nature cultivated a regenerative aesthetic of communal performance in which oral transmission could flourish. The home in particular encouraged inter-generational and inter-communal transmission of music, song and dance in an inclusive environment. The significance of the element of transmission or 'education' within this milieu was highlighted by Peadar Ó Concheanainn (1878–1957) of Baile an Lisín, Inis Meáin; he called the *airneán* (night-visit) a 'university'.¹⁵

I have signalled the 1960s as the period when the traditional performance milieu came to an end, as the Public Dance Halls Act of 1935 did not impact on music in Aran as negatively or as dramatically as it did in other parts of Ireland.¹⁶ Dancing, music-making and singing in homes and at outdoor gatherings continued for longer in Árainn than elsewhere, alongside the céilithe in the old schoolhouse and in the dance hall. The introduction of the dance-hall in the 1940s marked a decisive shift away from traditional venues for communal music-making and the undoing of the longstanding stable traditional musical milieu that I have described.

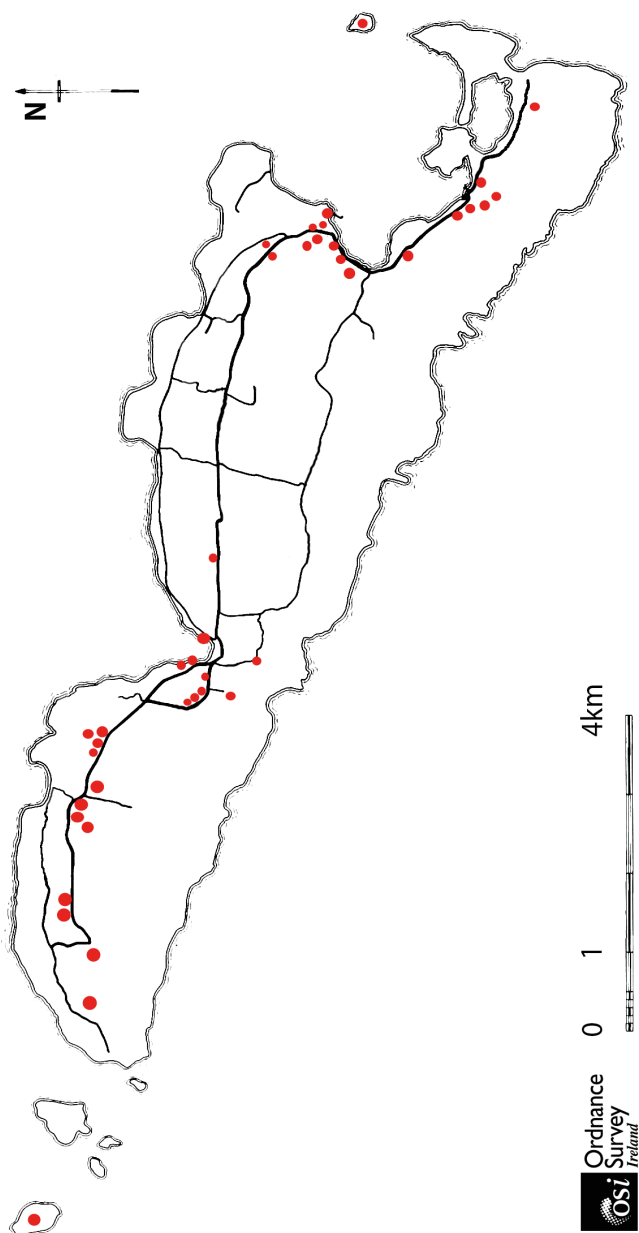


Figure 2 Dance sites in Árann, c. 1800–2000.

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This map is a work-in-progress awaiting data on the mid-section of the island.

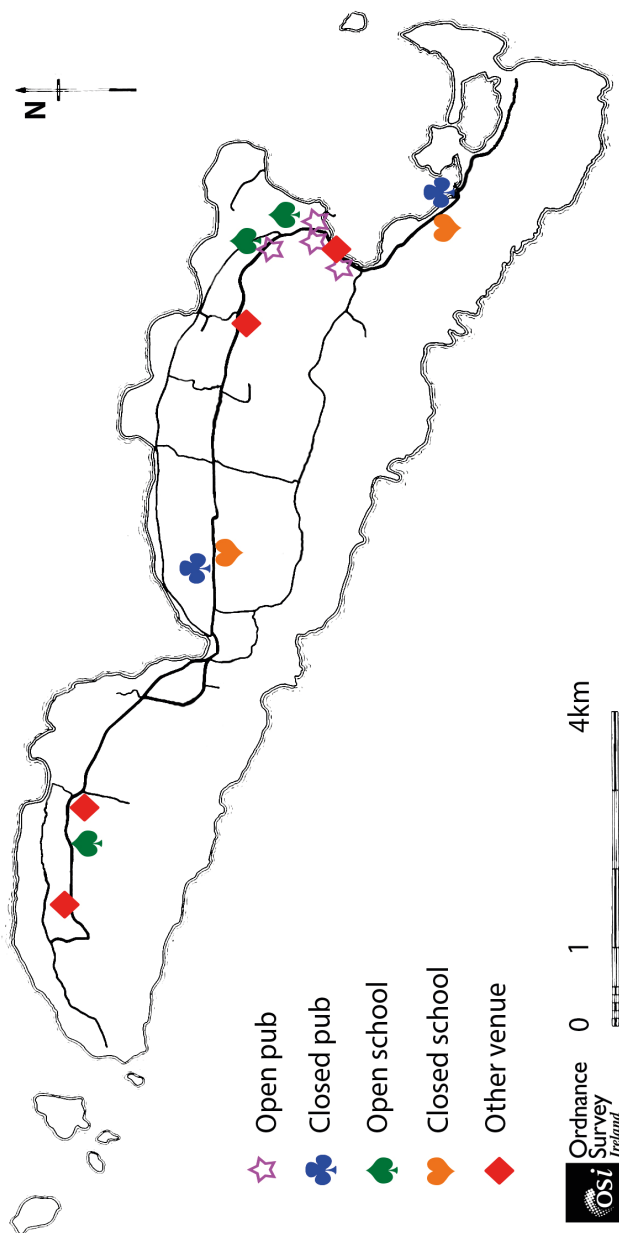


Figure 3 Dance sites in Árainn, 2001-2012.

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Census Returns for the Aran Islands 1861-2011

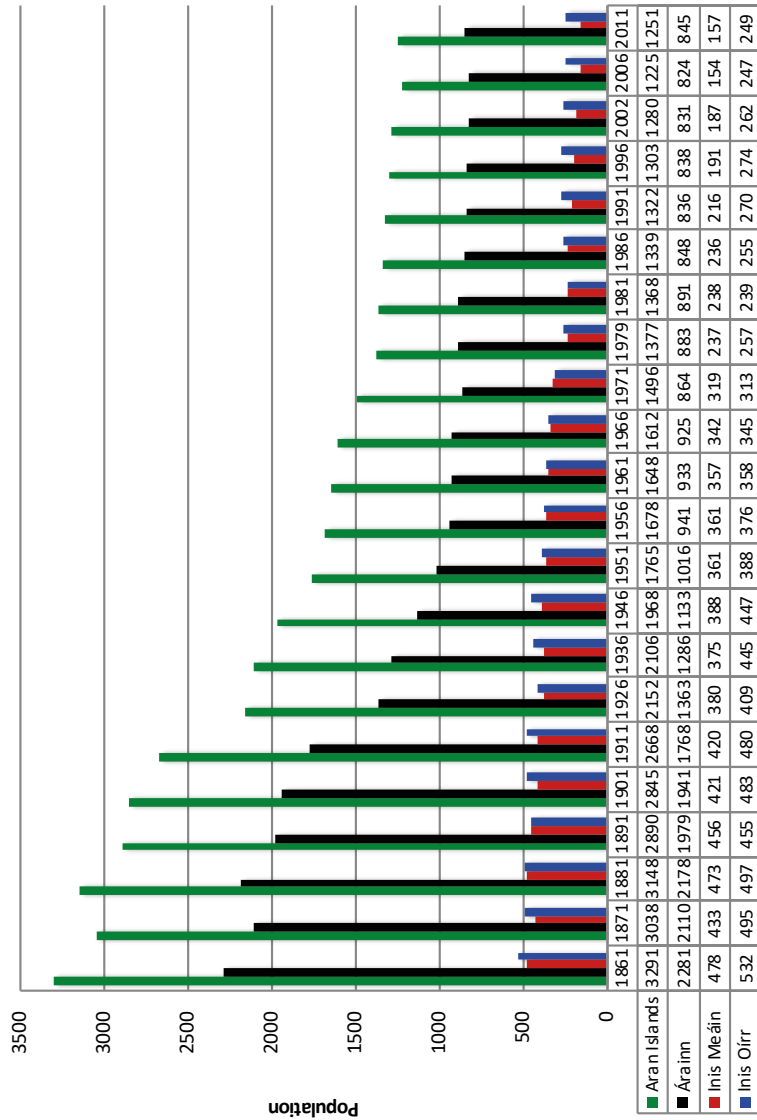


Figure 4 Census returns for the Aran Islands, 1841-2011.

In the 1960s, some women in Aran started going to the pub, a development that coincided with, and also contributed to, the decline of house-visiting, with a dramatic effect on the traditional performance milieu. The pub became institutionalised as the primary venue for communal socialising and, consequently, for communal music-making. The impact of this change of venue I consider here in terms of space, time and critical mass. In relation to space (and where Travassac used prose to map Aran in terms of dance, I have used maps), we see (see Figure 2) how, in the traditional performance milieu, people danced ‘everywhere’, as Travassac observed: in villages, at ball alleys, piers and road intersections. This map also suggests the community had a critical mass of population who were capable of supporting and sustaining all this dancing, and that it had time, or made time, for dancing. There was passionate interest in dance, demonstrated by the fact that islanders rowed in currachs to the westernmost island of the archipelago, Oileán Iarthach – a challenging place to land, one that demands fine weather conditions – to dance in the lighthouse there. The combination of the wooden floor high up in the tower and the cylindrical resonating space below offered a uniquely appealing kinaesthetic and acoustic experience as they danced.

The second map (see Figure 3), showing contemporary dance sites, demonstrates graphically a huge contraction in the number of dance venues in the last thirty to forty years. In this contraction, we can also read the sharp decline that has occurred in the frequency of local dance events. In essence, the progression we see in these two maps charts the atrophy the community has experienced in the last few decades as a result of emigration, through which the population of Árainn declined by two thirds since the mid-1800s (see Figure 4), and, more recently, the community becoming the most mobile it has ever been. There are now fewer dance spaces, fewer islanders to sustain local dancing on a regular basis, and those who migrate to and from the island do not have the time to participate in as many community activities as they might wish. As the frequency of dance events declines, there is also less room for spontaneity, a quality islanders have prized in their communal entertainments.

Effect of contextual change on aesthetic

These maps indicate the extent to which the previously interdependent and enmeshed music and dance practices of the island have been displaced by pub culture, by the formalisation of dance venues, by television in private homes, and by population decline. In so doing, they help to give some sense of the impact of these changes on the music-dance symbiosis, an impact that is felt most keenly by young people. The formalisation of music classes, for instance, means that young musicians typically do not learn as their ancestors did about what tunes go with what dances. For example, they will learn how to play ‘The Stack of Barley’, but it could be some time later before they learn the corresponding dance and to play the parts singly when playing for dancers. They may be taught about local music-dance aesthetics but, as the frequency of music and dance events contracts, they rarely get to put the theory into practice themselves, a task that is, of course, essential to the learning process. So, young musicians are not learning first-hand how their music can serve local dance and, thereupon, their own community. Only on rare occasions do they get to learn from first-hand observation and experience how to instigate music and/or dance, how to

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lead and how to yield, what repertoire is most appropriate to the situation, and how to enact spontaneity, that element that is so prized in local communal entertainment.

Such developments speak to a destabilisation of traditional music and dance practices in Árainn. Indeed, the trends in local demographics and in local dancing combine to suggest the same. Yet, through all of the sea-changes that local musical practices have incurred, people have remained loyal to their music-dance aesthetic. Despite the relative infrequency of opportunities to express that aesthetic, it is managing, nonetheless, to survive the new milieu, thanks to the islanders' lasting desire to dance. Clearly, the appeal and the longevity of this aesthetic has been a key factor in the perpetuation of the music-dance symbiosis in Árainn.

Nevertheless, islanders understand that aesthetic values need to be expressed if they are to be understood, appreciated, valued, practised and sustained. The infrequency of opportunities to express that aesthetic worries some of them. Their fear is that it will precipitate a complete destabilisation of traditional music and dance practices and, in turn, of island life in general. In response, they have taken a more proactive approach to encouraging the practice of music and dance in Árainn. I give you here two recent examples. Primary schoolteacher Catherine Buckley Uí Chonghaile instigated a weekly hour-long session of music, song, and dance from October to Easter in the old schoolhouse in Fearann a' Choirce. Its purpose is to enable schoolchildren at primary and secondary level to experience a communal music-making event beyond the classroom. Though she hoped all ages would attend, the session is frequented mostly by primary-level children and by a handful of parents



Figure 5 Dancing on An Leic, Inis Óírr, 1960/70s, to the accordion music of Ruairí Sheáin Ó Conghaile. *Heinrich Becker Collection, James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway.*

and relatives. In addition, the principal of the local technical school, Michael Gill, taught the Aran set to some of his teenage pupils. Dancing to the music of their talented peers, the

Ó hIarnáin brothers, they then demonstrated the set for tourist groups staying in the local hotel.

At the root of these islanders' apprehension for local music and dance practices lies their very real and most urgent concerns – unemployment, depopulation, and the unsettling sense of transience that comes from migration and emigration – factors that threaten the future of their community. As the community seems to be always approaching the brink of dissolution, balancing precariously on a precipice and wondering where the tipping point lies, some might think that dance – in essence, a leisure activity in which people are 'at play', escaping for a moment their everyday woes – is irrelevant to the daily 'work' of trying to stem the tide. But, as we have seen, some islanders still believe, as their ancestors did, in the special power of dance to bring people together. They believe that dance is essential to life. That creed lives on in the music-dance aesthetic of Árainn and reveals itself each time the community makes music and dances together. Those who organise and participate in dance events clearly believe that dance will help the community to stand its ground. Nevertheless, as long as the population continues to decline, efforts to perpetuate local music and dance traditions will be haunted by the fear of the death of the island, the fear that lies behind Treasa Ní Mhiolláin's use of the past habitual in her observation '*bhíodh muid ag damhsa go maidin*' ['we used to be dancing until morning']. Into the uncertain future, islanders will cling stubbornly, like barnacles to a rocky shore, to the hope that they can maintain a resident community. While they do, it seems more than likely that they will be dancing, as often as they can.

Notes

¹ Tim Robinson, (ed.), 'Place/Person/Book: Synge's The Aran Islands', in *The Aran Islands*, J. M. Synge (1907; London: Penguin Books, 1992), pp. vii–liii.

² See S. Ó Mórónaigh, *Agallamh na hÉigse Cioradh agus Cnuasach* (Camus: An Comhlachas Náisiúnta Drámaíochta, 2001).

³ On 22 August 2008, Mícheál Tom Burke Ó Conghaile showed me a *creig*, an area of karst limestone slabs, to the south of the village of Cill Mhuirbhígh where dancing took place on moonlit nights long ago. The pale rocks were suitably smooth, level and large, and they reflected the light of the moon. The traditional approach to this area – a *strapa*, from the base of a low cliff beside the village well, up to the *creig* – is now concealed by overgrowing bushes, thus illustrating how the practice of dancing there has died out. The *creig* can now be accessed more easily by walking a more circuitous route along the gravel path to Dún Aonghusa and then leaving the path to climb over a stone wall.

⁴ Treasa Ní Mhiolláin, interview, 27 August 2001.

⁵ Aoife Granville, '*Ceol gan Ceol: The Field Recordings of Blasket Island Musicians by Aodh Ó Tuama, University College Cork, 1977–1978*' (unpublished paper presented at ICTM Ireland conference, University College Dublin, 28 February 2009; Lillis Ó Laoire, *On a Rock in the Middle of the Ocean: Songs and Singers in Tory Island*, Europe: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities, no. 4 (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005; Indreabhán: Cló Iar-Chonnachta, in association with Scarecrow Press, 2007).

⁶ Liam O'Flaherty, *Thy Neighbour's Wife* (1st edn, 1924; Dublin: Wolfhound, 1992).

⁷ Synge, *The Aran Islands* (1907).

⁸ Úna Ní Fhaircheallaigh, *Smuainte ar Árainn* (Baile Átha Cliath: Conradh na Gaeilge, 1902).

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⁹ Thomas H. Mason, *The Islands of Ireland* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1936).

¹⁰ Pierre Travassac, *Les Îles Aran: Scènes et paysages d'Irlande* (Paris: Imprimerie Centrale de Paris, 1960).

¹¹ Translation by Olof Gill.

¹² Paddy Mullen, interview, 1 September 2001.

¹³ In his youth, Tomás Bhaba Pheige Ó Miolláin rowed to Conamara where he attended parties (conversation, 16 February 2008). Doolin musician Micho Russell (1915–1994) recalled ‘seeing the half-set of Inis Thiar being danced at Ballahaline on Doolin quay on Sunday afternoons during the late 1940s, the islanders having made the nine mile ‘currach’ journey from the quay of Inis Thiar, which generally took half an hour’s rowing by four good oarsmen’, see Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, ‘Micho Russell of Dunagore’, in *Traditional Irish Music from County Clare*, by Micho Russell, Celtic Music CMCD077, 1997. The distance is closer to six nautical miles but Micho may have felt his occasional journeys to Inis Oírr with his brothers Packie and Gussie Russell were longer than they actually were because he suffered, it is said, from sea sickness. Máire MacNeill describes how islanders incorporated music-making into an annual pilgrimage to Dabhach Bhríde in Co. Clare: ‘While new-world ways bring people to the Patron at Lehinch [*sic*] by train and omnibus, some pilgrims make the journey exactly as their ancestors might have made it a thousand or two thousand years ago. From Inisheer, the nearest of the Isles of Aran, the islanders row across in their currachs to the little fishing hamlet of Doolin at a break in the cliffs. They leave the currachs drawn up on the beach and walk five miles over the cliffs to the holy well. Arrived there, they make the rounds and then stay about the well in vigil, singing through the night. The Clare people gather there too and, no doubt, in times past contributed their part to the night of song, but all modern accounts agree that it is the islanders’ singing which makes the night memorable. Sometimes a group of the young people start a dance, and nearby taverns keep open house all night. In bygone days the peopled slope was fitfully lit by candles, and tradition fondly asserts that, however wild the night, the candles were unquenchable’, Máire MacNeill, *The Festival of Lughnasa: A Study of the Survival of the Celtic Festival of the Beginning of the Harvest* (Baile Átha Cliath: Comhairle Béalóideas Éireann, 1962; 1982), p. 278.

¹⁴ Tom O’Flaherty, *Aranmen All* (Dublin: Three Candles, London H. Hamilton, 1934; Daingean Uí Chúis, Co. Kerry: Brandon Press, 1991), pp. 131–140; Mason, *Islands of Ireland*, pp. 83–86; Donal Ó Flannagáin, *Ó Thra Anoir* (Cathair na Mart, Co. Mhaigh Eo: Foilsíúcháin Náisiúnta Teo, 1985), pp. 62–63, 121, 212.

¹⁵ Peadar Ó Concheanainn was particularly given to ‘airneáin’, despite his mother’s remonstrations, which seem reasonable on an island where fuel is precious: ‘Nach iomaí casaoid agus éirí shlí a d’fhaighinn ó mo mháthair faoin oiread tóir a bheith agam ar chuarta. “Amuigh go meán oíche duit,” a deireadh sí, “suas ón tine sínte ar theallai fuara, ag coinneáil mhuintir an tí sin ó chodladh ag dó tine agus solais leatsa agus le do leithéid nach bhfuil barainn a leasa faoi.” Go deimhin ní uair ná dhó a léadh an soiscéal sin dom, ach na scórtha babhtai; ach cén leas dí a bheith ar siúl ná a bheith á léamh dom – ní raibh aon aird agam ar a glór. Nach ag cur a cainte ar sraith a bhí sí nuair a bhíodh sí ag cur comhairle orm fanacht ó na cuarta agus ón gcomhluadar. Is minic nach bhfanainn le mo leathdhóthain a ithe le méid an deabhadh agus an fhoinn a bhíodh orm ealú liom nuair a d’fhaighinn an fhaill. Is minic a bhíodh mo chaipín istigh faoi mo chóta agam sa gcaoi nach dtóigfí aon suntas dom dá dtéinn amach an doras. Ach nuair a d’fhaighinnse tairseach an dorais agus tóin na binne glanta, ba gearr orm píosa bóthair a shiúl, agus níorbh fhada go mbínn idir chlár agus chuinneog istigh i dtigh Choilm Mhic Thualáin.’ Translation: ‘Many were the complaints and waylaying from my mother about my great fondness for visiting. “You’re out until midnight,” she would say, “up from the fire stretched on cold hearths, keeping the people of the house from sleep, burning fire and light for you and the likes of you who haven’t a sprout of sense.” Indeed it was not once or twice that that

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

*gospel was read to me, but scores of times, but what use was it to her to be carrying on or reading it to me – I didn't heed her voice. Wasn't she wasting her breath when she was advising me to stay away from visits and company. I often did not wait to eat half enough with the amount of rushing and desire I had to escape when I got the chance. I would often have my cap under my coat so that no one would pay attention if I went out the door. But once I had cleared the threshold and the corner of the gable, it took no time for me to walk some distance and it would not be long till I'd be ensconced in Colm Mhic Thualáin's house'. (Translation by Fionnghuala Ní Choncheanainn), see Peadar Ó Concheanainn, *Inis Meáin Seanchas agus Scéalta* (1st edn 1931; Baile Átha Cliath: An Gúm, 1993), pp. 37–39.*

¹⁶ For the impact of this in Co. Clare as recalled by Junior Crehan, 8 July 1976, see Barry Taylor, 'Junior Crehan of Ballymackea Beg: Profile of a West Clare Fiddle Player', in *Musical Traditions*, no. 10, MT048 (Spring 1992), <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/crehan.htm> [accessed 18 October 2015]. Dara Mullen (b. 1926) of Cill Rónáin recalls how Fr Tomás Ó Cillín, who served as parish priest from 1935 to 1948, tried but failed to prevent some dances in houses and out-of-doors: 'Bhíodh an sagart ag cur in aghaidh na damhnsaí *alright* ar an *slip*, agus bhíodar ar an *slip* blianta fada, bhíodar ann romhamsa, ach bhí, tá's a'm go raibh, tháinig, dream 'An Réalt', má chuala tú caint ariamh orthab, tháinig bhí damhnsaí thíos acub ann bhí, bhí do sheanathair [Seán Ó Concheanainn] ann beannacht Dé lena anam, ach ní raibh sé pósta an t-am sin. Agus do sheanmháthair freisin. Ach chuir an sagart an, sairsint anuas – Sairsint Maude – len' é a stopadh. Bhí an-sáraíocht ann. Bhuel sé do sheanathair a bhí ag sáraíocht leis ach, stop siad! Stop'dar *alright* ach dúirt siad, ní raibh aon chead aige é a dhéanamh tá mé a' ceapadh ní raibh, dúirt an sairsint leis, nach – "níl mise do do stopadh," a deir sé "ach sé'n sagart a chur anuas mé." Ach thug, é fhéin agus fear eile níl's a'm cé an fear eile a bhí ann ba strainséara dhomsa é, chuaigh an *crowd* a'ainn soir ansin ag, ag a' *dance hall* ar an mbóthar ansin ar a' *gcrossbhóthar*. Ní fhéadfaí damhnsa a stopadh an t-am sin ar an *gcrossbhóthar* agus ní raibh aon charrannaí ann, sin é'n áit ar chríochnaigh an damhnsa, chríochnaigh sé ann tuairim is trí a chlog ar maidin.' Translation: 'The priest used to oppose the dances *alright* on the *slip*, and they were on the *slip* for many years. They were there before me, but . . . the group 'An Réalt' . . . they had dances down there. Your grandfather [Seán Ó Concheanainn] was there, God bless his soul, but he was not married at the time. And your grandmother too. But the priest sent the sergeant down – Sergeant Maude – to stop it. There was a great argument. Well, it was your grandfather who was arguing with him. But they stopped! They stopped *alright* but they said he had no permission to do it I think [...] The sergeant said to him that – "I'm not stopping you," he said "but it was the priest who sent me down." [...] the crowd of us went east then to, to the dance hall on the road there at the crossroads. One could not stop a dance that time at a crossroads and there were no cars there. That is where the dance ended. It ended there around three o'clock in the morning.' (Interview, 1 September 2001).