Muse and Method in the Songs of Hamilton Harty: Three Early Works, 1895–1913

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music (Performance)
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Sydney, Australia
This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother.

To an Athlete Dying Young

A. E. HOUSMAN

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
    Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
    Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay,
    And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
    Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears.

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honours out,
    Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
    And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laurelled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
    And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl’s.
Statement of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes.

I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Signature

Name

Judith Carpenter.
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Preface

My first encounter with the works of Hamilton Harty occurred when my childhood flute teacher, Leslie Barklamb, then in his seventies, lent me his copy of *In Ireland*. He had been second flute in the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in 1934 when Harty had toured Australia as a conductor, and had played under him. My second encounter occurred at the Oxford Flute Summer School in 2009, when a member of the class performed *My Lagan Love* on flute. Harty has a connection with The University of Sydney, as he visited the main campus in 1934 during his conducting tour and composed a work for the carillon in the clock tower, *A Little Fantasy and Fugue for Carillon*, on his return to London. His ambition from his earliest youth had been to conduct a “mighty orchestra,” and realizing this dream with orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra from 1911 onwards meant a decrease in his compositional output. The First World War brought a further interruption to his creative endeavours, as Harty was called upon to work in the hydrophone service from 1916–1918. On account of his musical ear he was considered uniquely equipped to distinguish between enemy submarines and allied ships. As Harty died at the relatively young age of 61, one is left to ponder, how many more mature compositions might he have contributed to the canon, beyond his tone poem *The Children of Lir*, had he lived a few years longer? The French composer Henri Dutilleux was still writing at the age of 93. Rather than rue what can never be, this thesis affords the opportunity to hear from a voice that is now stilled. Within the context of a study on compositional method which began with a detailed examination of *An Irish Symphony*, the tone poem *With the Wild Geese* and the fantasy for flute and piano *In Ireland*, ultimately, my focus has become three songs, *Sea Wrack* (1905), *A Lagan Love* (1905) and *A Cradle Song* (1913). *In Ireland* is on the Australian Music Examinations Board syllabus for flute and the two symphonic works have already been covered in some detail by Jeremy Dibble in his new volume *Hamilton Harty: Musical Polymath*, so I have opted for the road less travelled, perhaps drawn to the songs by...
my experience of singing in a choir. I performed *In Ireland* and *My Lagan Love* (as a flute solo) in my third Master of Music recital and for a Lyrebird Music Society recital in 2011. I also performed *My Lagan Love* and *A Cradle Song* (as flute solos) in Musical Society of Victoria concerts in 2010 and 2011. Harty said of his symphony, “All my boyhood is in the *Irish Symphony*”—one might say that all of Ireland is in his Irish songs.
Acknowledgements

My most grateful thanks goes to my supervisors Kathleen Nelson and David Larkin, and my associate supervisors Lewis Cornwell and Jonathan Stock, for their erudition, insight, support and assistance, without which this thesis would not exist. I am also most grateful to Deidre Wildy and Diarmuid Kennedy for generous access to the Harty Collection, Special Collections, Queen’s University Belfast, and for their expertise and assistance. Elite Editing was very helpful in providing some editorial and proofreading assistance. I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of the following individuals and organizations:

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Irish Traditional Music Archive, Dublin

Royal Irish Academy of Music Library, Dublin

Ainé Mulvey, Dublin

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of the Gaelic Revival and the foundation of the Irish Free State Hamilton Harty plied his trade as an organist, pianist, conductor and composer. It is his compositional output that is the focus of this thesis, and, more specifically, his songs, Sea Wrack, My Lagan Love and A Cradle Song. Both Harty and Herbert Hughes wrote an accompaniment for the folk-song My Lagan Love and set to music the poem “A Cradle Song”—both Harty and Charles Villiers Stanford set to music the poem “Sea Wrack”, all of which make for an interesting comparison. The purpose of this investigation is to explore Harty’s aforementioned three works with a view to finding evidence for the development of Harty’s compositional voice. Despite the publication in 2013 of Jeremy Dibble’s substantial volume, Hamilton Harty: Musical Polymath, the opportunity remains to analyse individual works in a detailed manner. Therefore, this paper will examine features such as genre, motif, harmony, text-music relationship and Irish traditional music in the context of nationalism. It is my contention that Harty’s musical language developed a greater level of complexity as he synthesized more elements identifiable with Irish music, such as ornamentation, modal harmony, inflection and pentatonicism, in combination with word painting and musical symbolism, in the writing of recognisable genres such as a parlour song, a folk-song and a lullaby. My analysis clarifies Harty’s position on the continuum from Anglo-Irish to Irish composers and provides a response to remarks such as Raymond Warren’s claim that Harty’s nationalism was in melody alone.
Introduction

i. The Background

"O tempora o mores." —Cicero, In Catilinam I

Against the backdrop of the Gaelic Revival\(^1\) and the formation of the Irish Free State (1922)\(^2\) the Irish composer Sir Hamilton Hartly (1879–1941) plied his trade. The nineteenth century saw widespread political upheaval throughout Europe\(^3\) as well as the rise of nationalism in literature, music and politics. Musical nationalism had as its impetus a desire to assert individuality as a nation, often in response to political oppression. Chopin began composing his mazurkas—based on “the folk music of the Mazovian plains of central Poland”\(^4\)—at the time of the Warsaw uprising of 1830.\(^5\) Composers writing national music employed a number of devices in order to make reference to their homeland, such as quoting folk-songs, folk dances and folk rhythms. Edvard Grieg (1843–1907) used the folk-songs of his native Norway as a source of inspiration for works such as his *Slåtter*, op. 72 (*Norwegian Peasant Dances*) for

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\(^1\) The Gaelic Revival was a multi-faceted cultural movement of the late nineteenth century, comprising the Gaelic League (est. 1893), the Gaelic Athletic Association (est. 1884) and the Arts and Crafts Society of Ireland (est. 1894). The movement had as its objective “de-anglicizing” Ireland through the revival of the Gaelic language, literature, music and dance, as well as sports such as hurling, and arts and crafts such as stained glass design. William Edward Vaughan, ed., *Ireland Under the Union, II*, 1870–1921, vol. 6 of *A New History of Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), I, liii–iv, 103–5, 489; Sean J. Connolly, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 222, 225.


\(^5\) Ibid.
Another manner in which composers embraced nationalism in their works was via explicitly nationalistic subject matter. Smetana composed the six symphonic poems which comprise *Ma Vlast* (My Homeland), based upon poems depicting scenes and legends of Bohemia.⁷

Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, Irish composers referenced their homeland to varying degrees in their compositions. For the sake of inclusivity, the term “Irish composers” designates composers born in Ireland, composers with an Irish parent/parents, composers taking Ireland as their adoptive home, and composers with a penchant for writing Irish compositions. “Irishness” in compositions manifested itself in a number of ways, including:

1. Title
   - Irish reference
   - Gaelic word(s)

2. Text
   - Text by Irish writer
   - Text on Irish subject matter—daily life, history, myths, legends

3. Content
   - Inclusion of folk-songs and dances
   - Use of Irish traditional music⁸ melodic and rhythmic elements, e.g. pentatonicism and ornamentation
   - Arrangements of folk-songs and dances
   - Inspiration of landscape

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⁸ Irish traditional music comprises “singing, dancing and instrumental music” which has been passed down via the oral tradition. Instruments associated with Irish traditional music include the “uilleann pipes, fiddle, flute [and] tin whistle.” Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, *A Short History of Irish Traditional Music* (Dublin: The O’Brien Press, 2017), 2, 4.
While it is impossible to prove that all the composers of this era had the explicit intention of developing an Irish school of composition—John Larchet (1884–1967) was a fervent advocate, as was Carl Hardebeck (1869–1946)—nonetheless, their compositions added to the growing canon of Irish works.

The following table (table 1) details Hamilton Harty’s predecessors, and briefly outlines their “Irish” works:

Table 1. Harty’s predecessors and their “Irish” works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Irish works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles Villiers</td>
<td>1852–1924</td>
<td>Dublin, Ireland</td>
<td>Opera, orchestral works, songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanford</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michele Esposito</td>
<td>1855–1929</td>
<td>Sorrento, Italy</td>
<td>Orchestral works, chamber music, songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W.H. Grattan Flood</td>
<td>1857–1928</td>
<td>Lismore, County Waterford, Ireland</td>
<td>Songs, edition of Moore’s Irish Melodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas O’Brien Butler</td>
<td>1861–1915</td>
<td>Caherciveen, County Kerry, Ireland</td>
<td>The first Irish opera, songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert O’Dwyer</td>
<td>1862–1949</td>
<td>Bristol, England</td>
<td>Opera, choral works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Adelaide</td>
<td>1863–1945</td>
<td>Oldcastle, Co. Meath,</td>
<td>Songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needham</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Wood</td>
<td>1866–1926</td>
<td>Armagh, Ireland</td>
<td>Songs, arrangements, chamber music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Hardebeck</td>
<td>1869–1946</td>
<td>Clerkenwell, London,</td>
<td>Songs, arrangements, chamber music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>England</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Data from entries in Grove Music Online; Harry White and Barra Boydell, eds., The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2013) under the names of the composers.

Table 2 details Harty’s contemporaries and briefly outlines their “Irish” works (table 2). While the standard of some of the works has been branded as somewhat lacking—Thomas O’Brien

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Butler’s opera, *Muirgheis*,\(^{11}\) was excoriated by the press\(^{12}\)—the salient point is that none of Harty’s predecessors or contemporaries was writing in a vacuum. The opportunity to gain inspiration from the works of one’s colleagues is clearly evident in the works of Harty, and will be explored in detail in chapter three.

Table 2. Harty’s contemporaries and their “Irish” works

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Birthplace</th>
<th>Irish works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Herbert Hughes</td>
<td>1882–1937</td>
<td>Belfast, Ireland</td>
<td>Songs, folk-song arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Molyneux Palmer</td>
<td>1882–1957</td>
<td>Staines, Middlesex, England</td>
<td>Opera, songs, choral and instrumental works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnold Bax</td>
<td>1883–1953</td>
<td>Streatham, London, England</td>
<td>Tone poems, Celtic song cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Larchet</td>
<td>1884–1967</td>
<td>Dublin, Ireland</td>
<td>Miniatures, songs, folk-song arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ina Boyle</td>
<td>1889–1967</td>
<td>Enniskerry, Ireland</td>
<td>Gaelic hymns, settings of Irish poems, orchestral works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur Duff</td>
<td>1899–1956</td>
<td>Dublin, Ireland</td>
<td>Incidental music, orchestral music</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Data from entries in *Grove Music Online* under the names of the composers.

Harty’s compositions are the focus of this thesis; however, he was best known as the principal conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester from 1920–1933. Harty began his musical education under the tutelage of his father, an organist and pianist in Hillsborough, County Down. While initially employed as an organist in his native Ireland,\(^{13}\) on moving to London in 1901, his organ playing was replaced by a career as a piano accompanist, particularly in combination with his wife-to-be, soprano Agnes Nicholls, as well as with such artists as

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Fritz Kreisler and Joseph Szigiety. Harty had been in great demand as an associate artist from his early years in Dublin until his conducting career took off when he conducted the London Symphony Orchestra in 1911 in a performance of his tone poem *With the Wild Geese*. His early years in London were his most prolific as a composer, until a blossoming career as a conductor resulted in a decrease in compositional output.

According to Raymond Warren, Harty’s compositional output may be divided into three categories: Classical, Irish and arrangements. From an oeuvre which totalled approximately 116 works, including song cycles, the earliest were chamber music written for his family or as entries in the composition prize of the *Feis Ceoil*, a competitive national music festival which included a competition designed to feature works by Irish composers. On moving to London in 1901, not only did Harty establish himself first as a piano accompanist of exceptional talent, and later as a conductor, he also composed and performed many solo songs. In 1920 Harty began an appointment as principal conductor with the Hallé orchestra in Manchester, and his time there (1920–1933) coincided with the arrangement of Handel’s *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks* for full orchestra.

Given that Harty is best known as a conductor, proportionally more scholarship is devoted to his conducting career than to his careers as an organist, pianist and composer. His conducting career is the focus of two theses, a master’s thesis by American scholar Jonathan

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15 Ibid., 26.
16 Ibid., 30.
18 The first *Feis Ceoil* was organised in 1897 by Dr. Annie Patterson and her committee, and its success led to its becoming an annual event. In its first year there were 12 composition sections, 6 sections for vocal ensemble and 14 for solo performance. After over a century, there has been considerable expansion, and the competition now includes 185 sections, including those for orchestra. “Feis Ceoil: Our History,” accessed August 16, 2017, http://www.feisceoil.ie/About-Us/history.asp.
Haupt (2001) and a PhD by Irish scholar Declan Plummer (2011).\(^{19}\) Plummer had previously written a master’s thesis on Harty (2006), providing an annotated catalogue of Harty’s manuscripts at the McClay Library in Belfast.\(^{20}\) Existing books on Harty include a discography compiled by John Hunt,\(^{21}\) a brief annotated autobiography, *Early Memories*,\(^{22}\) which describes his early years in Northern Ireland, and David Greer’s volume, *Hamilton Harty: his Life and Music*,\(^{23}\) which presents a comprehensive account of his life, and an overview of his works. Greer also published an article on Harty’s 1939 tone poem *The Children of Lir*,\(^{24}\) analysing his compositional method, and in 2013 Jeremy Dibble published his comprehensive and substantial volume on the composer’s life and works, *Hamilton Harty: Musical Polymath*.\(^{25}\) Before 2013, little in the way of detailed research had been done on Harty’s earlier works. While Jeremy Dibble’s new book goes some way towards addressing this situation, and in fact, all three songs, *Sea Wrack, My Lagan Love* and *A Cradle Song*, are discussed in his book, there still remains the opportunity for a more detailed investigation of Harty’s musical language. The aforementioned studies, in addition to published articles on Harty, are examined in the literature review in chapter one.

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20 Declan Plummer, “A Catalogue of the Hamilton Harty Manuscripts held at Queen’s University Belfast” (master’s thesis, Queen’s University Belfast, 2006).


23 Greer, *Hamilton Harty*.


ii. The Topic

This thesis investigates Harty’s sources of inspiration for three early songs and analyses the manner in which these sources have been combined—the “muse and method” of the title. The main focus is on three published songs which Harty composed between 1895 and 1913, with the dual objectives being to contextualise the works from a biographical, historical and musicological perspective, and to provide a detailed analysis of the works. The compositions for voice and piano comprise a parlour song, *Sea Wrack* (1895?), a folk-song, *My Lagan Love* (1905), and a stylised lullaby, *A Cradle Song* (1913), all of which are to be found in the Sydney Conservatorium Library. This was deliberate as a secondary intention was to generate interest in works for which the scores are readily available. The year 1895 is the suggested earliest date of composition for the song *Sea Wrack*, and 1913 is date of composition of *A Cradle Song*. A more detailed discussion of the aforementioned sub-genres, including definitions thereof, will appear in the analysis chapter, chapter 3.

Harty was recognised internationally as a conductor—not only did he visit America on seven occasions, he also toured Australia in 1934 and was very supportive of the development of the ABC orchestras in each state. He was received with great acclaim and invited to return. While in Sydney he visited the University of Sydney and composed *A Little Fantasy and Fugue for Carillon*, for the carillon on the main campus. While it may be considered that his views on music are well represented in his memoir, in his published articles, and in the transcripts of lectures and pre-concert talks, his “voice” may also be heard in his many

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29 Ibid.
compositions. For it is in the songs and tone poems that one learns of the “hidden Ireland”; the ways and customs; the sorrows and hardships; the history, myths and legends that provide an unique insight into a bygone era.

As I have chosen to focus on three of Harty’s Irish songs, my analysis of the works will provide a response to comments of Raymond Warren, Harry White and Neville Cardus on Harty’s approach to writing in an Irish idiom, as well as his musical aesthetic:

Harty’s musical nationalism was a matter of interpreting an Irish musical experience within the terms of the Anglo-European musical language as he then understood it…In musical terms this was a matter of nationalism in melody rather than in harmony, which was in the broad European Romantic tradition and generally speaking diatonic or chromatic even when the melody was modal.

With very few exceptions, notably in Bax’s music and in certain tone poems by Hamilton Harty, the greater part of creative Irish music succumbed to the dutiful presence of the air.

[Harty’s] music, always composed with a civilised touch, did not vaunt itself in any “avant garde” directions. He was content to compose for pleasure, out of love of sound considered good to hear in his day.

While neither Warren nor White makes a blanket statement about Harty’s entire oeuvre, all three quotes suggest that Harty’s “Irishness” was incidental to his compositional idiom, rather than intrinsic to it. It is my contention that Harty was in the process of developing an original voice well before the composition of The Children of Lir, and that the use of tried and tested forms such as parlour songs and lullabies were a vehicle within which to explore his compositional voice. The comments of Harry White will be examined in the context of the

33 Neville Cardus, sleeve notes for Hamilton Harty, Piano Concerto, with Lilian Clark (piano) and unnamed orchestra, conducted by Myers Foggin, recorded 1960, Herald HSL 106, 33⅓ rpm, quoted in Hammond, “Dublin and London,” in Greer, Hamilton Harty, 30.
preservation of folk-song. This thesis will explore whether there is more to Harty than Warren, White and Cardus would have one believe.

It is my objective to explore the manner in which Harty’s compositional voice develops over the period covered by the three songs, and to refute, if possible, the claims that:

a. Harty was, in essence, a Romantic composer, whose “Irish” works were no more Irish than those of any previous European composers who set an Irish melody.  

b. In Harty’s compositions there was nothing beyond his well-documented aesthetic regarding beauty.

c. A need to protect Irish folk-songs from extinction was the source of a creative paralysis in composing Nationalist works.

While it is generally considered that Harty was just using Romantic music idiom and no modal harmony, his compositions actually reveal multifactorial influences. These influences include the guidance of his father and of his mentor Michele Esposito. Harty’s professional experience as an organist, pianist and conductor also shaped his compositions. It is my contention that Harty, being to some extent self-taught as a composer, used major works of the canon as models in an effort to hone his skills as a composer, and that he did encounter Irish traditional music in his youth, but downplayed its significance in order to present himself as British in his adoptive country of England. All these aforementioned influences combined to produce his own musical language. An analysis of the three songs, Sea Wrack, My Lagan Love and A Cradle Song, reveals signs of development from the earliest years, as well as a greater coherence of musical elements such as motif, Irish traditional music, modal melody and harmony, Romantic music idiom and symbolism.

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With regard to the ordering of information in this thesis, the first chapter is devoted to the literature review; it provides an analysis of current Harty scholarship and explores the possibility that there is a gap in the literature on Harty’s compositions. The second chapter focusses on sources and influences of Harty’s compositional style. The Romantic era gave birth to a number of new genres of composition, including programme music. Where a Classical composer might have devoted himself/herself to the perfection of forms such as the sonata and the symphony, for the Romantic composer the focus was at once more personal, in the form of life experience, and more universal, in the form of themes. Literature and art, history and mythology, nature and the world of man—these all provided fertile sources of inspiration. The exploration of these aforementioned sources, as well as influences such as the Gaelic Revival, Irish traditional music, and the teachings of Harty’s father and the pianist Michele Esposito will set the scene for the subsequent chapter, chapter 3, an analysis and discussion of the manner in which Harty synthesizes multiple influences in the development of a succinct yet expressive musical voice. The third chapter examines the art song/parlour song, *Sea Wrack*, Harty’s arrangement of the folk-song *My Lagan Love*, and his song in the style of a lullaby, *A Cradle Song*. The final chapter provides a conclusion.

With regard to the components and methodology of the analysis chapter, chapter 3 will contain a detailed analysis of genre, motif, harmony, Irish traditional music, text-music relationship, and musical symbolism. Methods will include harmonic analysis, motivic analysis, and an examination of the scores to ascertain the presence of Irish idiom such as ornamentation, pentatonicism and inflected notes. The pictorial aspect of Harty’s settings, the way in which his music paints a picture, either through representation or symbolism, will also be examined. An examination of the manner in which Harty developed as a composer during the period in question, namely 1895–1913, will be achieved by a comparison between the three works. As the three songs under investigation have also been set by his contemporaries, Charles
Villiers Stanford and Herbert Hughes, a further comparison will be made between Harty’s versions and those of Stanford and Hughes. As indicated, the analysis will be contextualised from a biographical, historical and musicological perspective.
Chapter 1

Literature Review

The literature on and around the topic of Hamilton Harty’s early songs includes primary, secondary and tertiary sources. Primary sources include Harty’s *Early Memories* which, despite its autobiographical content, is germane to a literature review as it is heavily annotated by David Greer and contains a chapter by Harty’s wife, Agnes Nicholls. Additional primary sources include articles by Harty such as “Modern Composers and Modern Composition,” and an interview with Harty in published in *The Musical Times* in 1920. These articles provide an insight into the composer’s musical aesthetic, a matter which is covered in greater detail in chapter 2. Secondary sources on Harty include David Greer’s volume *Hamilton Harty: his Life and Music*, Jeremy Dibble’s *Hamilton Harty: Musical Polymath*, and three postgraduate theses, two by Declan Plummer and one by Jonathan Haupt. Secondary sources read as background material include Harry White’s *The Keeper’s Recital*, and his article “The Preservation of Music and Irish Cultural History.” Additional secondary sources include an article on nationalism by Axel Klein, James R. Cowdery’s *The Melodic Tradition of* 

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37 Harty, *Early Memories*.
40 Greer, *Hamilton Harty*.
41 Dibble, *Hamilton Harty*.
Ireland,⁴⁶ and Peter van der Merwe’s *Origins of the Popular Style.*⁴⁷ Tertiary sources include biographical entries on Harty appearing in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*⁴⁸ and in the newly published two volume *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland,*⁴⁹ edited by Harry White and Barra Boydell.

The following discussion will assess first the background literature and then the material which directly pertains to the thesis topic. Harry White’s *The Keeper’s Recital* provides a blend of music history and cultural theory, as does his article “The Preservation of Music and Irish Cultural History.”⁵⁰ In both these publications White expresses the opinion that Ireland did not have a tradition of art music before 1900.⁵¹ This issue has been explored by several authors, including Jeremy Dibble and Bennett Zon, who adopt a different view.⁵² It is possible there is more to consider. Nineteenth-century Irish composers may not have achieved a synthesis of art music and folk music on a par with Bartok, but in their own way, they contributed to the development of a canon, and indeed the very reasons for Bartok’s success—putting “technical competence and Western musical education first”⁵³ are attributes advocated for by Michele Esposito in 1906.⁵⁴ Table 1 in the introduction, listing Harty’s predecessors, serves to illustrate

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⁵⁴ Jeremy Dibble, *Michele Esposito* (Dublin: Field Day Publications, 2010), 64.
that art music was being composed in Ireland before 1900, even in the absence of a school of composition, laying the foundation for an art music tradition.

Axel Klein’s article, “An ‘old eminence among musical nations.’ Nationalism and the Case for a Musical History in Ireland” is of interest for a number of reasons. He indicates that “Musical historiography on Ireland has until quite recently been generally understood as a study of either traditional music or the bardic remains of the music associated with the Irish harp.” This statement is significant because it highlights the two traditions upon which composers of Harty’s era could draw for inspiration, should they so choose. Klein also discusses the Feis Ceoil music competition, whose composition section required “the use of folk-song in serious composition.” The Irish composer Carl Hardebeck (1869–1945) remarked, “Composers must familiarize themselves with the Irish idiom and then try to produce original music on these lines. In this way I believe a school of Irish music could be founded.”

An additional reference to the concept of an “Irish idiom” appears in Frank Howes’ article about An Irish Symphony, which contains extracts from Harty’s programme notes on the work, including (Harty’s) description of the work “as an attempt to produce a symphony in the Irish idiom.” This, of course, correlates with the regulations of the Feis Ceoil section for which he composed the work. Howes adds that Harty “founds his themes on the native melodies of his country in order that they may have ‘a characteristically Irish turn.’” In Irish Musical Studies Joseph Ryan presents the following objection to this method:

56 Ibid., 233.
57 Ibid., 239.
58 Ibid., 240.
60 In 1901 the Feis Ceoil committee resolved to introduce “a [composition] prize for a suite or symphony based on traditional Irish airs.” Harty, Early Memories, 29n25.
61 Howes, ibid.
The principal and predictable problem faced by those ambitious to fashion a distinctive music founded on a folk idiom was that the very constitution of the tradition, with its linear character and small structure, left it unsuited as the basis of extended composition; folksong is simply not the stuff of extended composition.\textsuperscript{62}

This is significant as the development of art music in Ireland is construed as also having been hindered by the perception of Irish traditional music as a pristine and untouchable source material for Classical composition.\textsuperscript{63} Both Harty and Esposito weigh in on the debate, and their comments on the use of folk-songs in original compositions are found in the section on Harty’s musical aesthetic in chapter 2. Ultimately, the answer to the conundrum lies in Ryan’s statement, as he refers both to folk idiom and to folk-song as though they are interchangeable. Folk-songs in their entirety may not lend themselves to extended composition, apart from theme and variations form, but the distilled elements of a native musical language, such as ornamentation, modality, etc., have broader application.

On the subject of Irish traditional music there are a number of books which provide useful insights. Both James R. Cowdery’s \textit{The Melodic Tradition of Ireland}\textsuperscript{64} and Tomás Ó Canainn’s \textit{Traditional Music in Ireland}\textsuperscript{65} offer a comprehensive view, including historical background, the tradition of \textit{sean-nós} (old style),\textsuperscript{66} form, traditional instruments, and ornamentation, thereby providing an invaluable tool in an analysis of the influence of Irish traditional music on Harty’s compositional style. Articles by Sean Williams and Julie Henigan devoted specifically to \textit{sean-}

\textsuperscript{63} White, “The preservation of music and Irish cultural history,” 123–138.
\textsuperscript{64} Cowdery, \textit{The Melodic Tradition of Ireland}.
nós song and dance traditions are also most useful in providing a description of differences in style between particular regions.\(^67\)

The encyclopaedic and dictionary entries cover Harty’s early life and his career as a pianist, composer and conductor. *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*, a recent and significant publication edited by Harry White and Barra Boydell, contains the most detailed entry on Harty to be found in a tertiary source.\(^68\) The author, Jan Smaczny, Harty Professor of Music at Queen’s University Belfast, is very complimentary about Harty’s songs, indicating that “they show a remarkable melodic sensibility occasionally touched by national colour.”\(^69\) The remarks about compositional influences upon Harty’s other works fail to factor in a phenomenon which I believe to be at the crux of many of his first-time works, namely the use of models. As a semi-autodidact, it is my belief that Harty trained himself as a composer, and that he did so via compositional models. If, as Smaczny suggests, Harty’s first and only piano concerto sounds like Rachmaninov,\(^70\) I would suggest it is because Harty used one of Rachmaninov’s *concerti* as a guide or, loosely, as a model. My theory on models, set out in the following table (table 3), is supported by Harty’s reference to the extensive nature of his father’s music library,\(^71\) and by Harty’s admission that he at one stage intended to become a concert pianist\(^72\) and, according to his sister Alice, practised all the classics.\(^73\) Furthermore, the songs by Parry listed in Table 3 were all performed by Harty when he accompanied the Irish baritone Harry Plunket Greene,\(^74\) and Philip Cranmer observes that Harty’s settings of poems by Campion, Lovelace and anon.

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\(^{69}\) Ibid., 474.


\(^{71}\) Harty, *Early Memories*, 12.

\(^{72}\) Ibid., 25.

\(^{73}\) Ibid., 23n18.

\(^{74}\) Dibble, *Hamilton Harty*, 53, 53n103.
“could easily have been written by Parry…or Quilter.” Additionnaly, Raymond Warren remarks that Harty’s violin concerto reminds him of Dvorak’s ‘cello concerto.

Table 3: Suggested guides or models for works by Harty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First works in a genre or sub-genre by Harty</th>
<th>Date composed</th>
<th>Model or guide</th>
<th>Date published</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Come, O come my life’s delight</em></td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Parry: <em>English Lyrics</em>, Set III, including <em>Through the Ivory Gate, Why so Pale and Wan?</em></td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Now is the month of maying</em></td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Parry: <em>English Lyrics</em>, Set VI, including <em>When Comes my Gwen? Love is a Bable.</em></td>
<td>1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Song of the three Mariners</em></td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Parry: <em>English Lyrics</em>, Set VII, including <em>Ye Little Birds that Sit and Sing. Follow a Shadow, Sleep.</em></td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Song of the Constant Lover</em></td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Parry: <em>English Lyrics</em>, Set VIII, including <em>Dirge in Woods.</em></td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tell me not, sweet, that I am unkind</em></td>
<td>1909</td>
<td>Parry: <em>The Laird of Cockpen</em></td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Violin Concerto in D minor</em></td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Dvorak: <em>Cello Concerto</em></td>
<td>1896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Piano Concerto in B minor</em></td>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Rachmaninov: <em>Piano Concerto no. 2 in C minor</em></td>
<td>composed 1900–1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rachmaninov: <em>Piano Concerto no. 3 in D minor</em></td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Data from entries in *Grove Music Online* under the names of the composers; Jeremy Dibble, *Hamilton Harty*, 53, 53n.

The dictionary entry is less charitable about Harty’s oeuvre, stating that “Harty often used derivative methods, and his works soon fell from the standard repertory.” Again, the comment about “derivative methods” may be explained in the context of the theory on models and Harty’s semi-autodidacticism, and this matter will be explored more thoroughly

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77 Holden, “Harty, Sir (Herbert) Hamilton.”
in chapter 2, under the sub-heading, “Influences on Harty’s Compositional Style.” With regard to the comment on works falling from the standard repertory, there are a few notable exceptions: *My Lagan Love* has a veritable cult following amongst lovers of folk music—both the unaccompanied melody and Harty’s setting continue to be performed. The Irish soprano and harpist Mary O’Hara, the Welsh singer-songwriter Charlotte Church and the expatriate Welsh folk singer and harpist Siobhán Owen have performed and recorded Harty’s version. Harty’s fantasy for flute and piano, *In Ireland*, has found its niche on the Australian Music Examinations Board syllabus, and Harty’s arrangement of Handel’s *Water Music* for full orchestra remains the definitive version.

Hamilton Harty is the subject of three dissertations—two master’s theses and a PhD—two of which are by Declan Plummer, and one by Jonathan Haupt. Plummer wrote “An Annotated Catalogue of the Works of Hamilton Harty held at Queens University Belfast” for his Master of Music dissertation. The McClay Library at Queens University was the recipient of Harty’s music library after his death in 1941, and the Harty Collection in the Special Collections is the largest collection of Harty’s original manuscripts and published works. Declan Plummer’s PhD is titled “Hamilton Harty: the Hallé Years” and the focus is Harty’s tenure as principal conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester from 1920–1933. Jonathan Haupt’s Master of Music thesis, “Hamilton Harty: an Irish Composer-Conductor in America,” examines Harty’s

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80 Plummer, “An Annotated Catalogue of the Works of Hamilton Harty held at Queens University Belfast.”

81 Plummer, “‘Music Based on Worth’: The Conducting Career of Sir Hamilton Harty.”
seven conducting tours of North America between 1931 and 1936.\textsuperscript{82} Both Plummer and Haupt provide biographical details of the composer. In addition to his PhD thesis, Plummer went on to publish an article on the Hallé years, titled “Hamilton Harty’s Legacy with the Hallé Orchestra (1920–1933): a Reassessment.”\textsuperscript{83} Although Plummer’s catalogue contains annotations of analytical nature, none of these theses has music analysis as its main focus.

During his tenure as Hamilton Harty Professor of Music at Queen’s University Belfast David Greer edited and provided detailed annotations, an introduction and prologue for Harty’s autobiography, Early Memories,\textsuperscript{84} as well as editing and writing one chapter for the book Hamilton Harty: his Life and Music.\textsuperscript{85} The memoir is a slim volume, its completion prevented by the death of Harty in 1941. By contrast, the biographical anthology Hamilton Harty: his Life and Music was the first detailed published study to be made of the composer’s life, and it also provides an overview of his compositional output. Greer also published numerous articles on Harty, including “Hamilton Harty’s Manuscripts” (1988),\textsuperscript{86} “The Composition of The Children of Lir” (1990),\textsuperscript{87} “Hamilton Harty’s Swansong” (1994)\textsuperscript{88} and “Hamilton Harty’s Music for Bells” (1997).\textsuperscript{89} “The Composition of The Children of Lir” is of significance as it is the only detailed study of a major work by Harty, and, as such, provides an insight into his compositional processes in the writing of a tone poem with Irish content.

The most recent, and by far the most significant contribution to Harty scholarship occurred in 2013 with the publication of Jeremy Dibble’s definitive volume Hamilton Harty: Musical

\textsuperscript{82} Haupt, “Hamilton Harty: an Irish Composer-Conductor in America.”
\textsuperscript{84} Hamilton Harty, Early Memories.
\textsuperscript{85} Greer, ed., Hamilton Harty.
\textsuperscript{87} Greer, “The Composition of The Children of Lir,” 74–98.
\textsuperscript{88} David Greer, “Hamilton Harty’s Swansong” (Belfast: The Queen's University, 1994).
Polymath. The book belongs to a series titled *Music in Britain, 1600–2000*, and in the preface Dibble indicates his objective “to assess Harty in both his British and Irish contexts, and, regarding the latter, to appraise his identity within the sphere of Irish cultural nationalism.”

The list of musical examples provides somewhat of an insight into the focus of the book—in a 365 page volume, there are twenty-one examples in total. The point is that this volume is not intended to be a detailed musical analysis of Harty’s entire oeuvre. Some larger works do receive a more detailed treatment than other smaller compositions—*An Irish Symphony* and the two tone poems *With the Wild Geese* and *The Children of Lir* receive the most attention.

Of the three books which directly pertain to the topic of this thesis, one of the noticeable differences between David Greer’s two edited volumes and Jeremy Dibble’s is the tone. One presumes that Harty did not intend his autobiography to be an academic treatise, and it has a more familiar quality, that of an engaging raconteur at a dinner, or a pre-concert talk, telling an often told tale of an idyllic childhood in a village of Northern Ireland. In a 44 page volume, ten pages contain photographs, presumably chosen by Greer as editor, and some of them are quite eccentric in their candour—the sextone of Magheragall Church smoking a pipe, and Harty on all fours in the garden patting an unidentifiable black pet (a cat or dog?). The volume nonetheless provides insights into Harty’s childhood, his compositions and his early career in London, and is fleshed out by extensive annotations from Greer. Many of Harty’s recollections reappear in both Greer’s edited volume and Dibble’s later book, and in this respect they must have proven invaluable as first-hand accounts. One should add that by the time Harty began

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90 Dibble, *Hamilton Harty*.
91 Dibble, preface to *Hamilton Harty*, xi.
93 Ibid., 41.
writing, he was already gravely ill with a recurrence of the brain cancer which had been treated in 1936, and was unable to write more than the first chapter of his memoir.

The full length study edited by Greer, *Hamilton Harty: His Life and Music*, is certainly more scholarly, and contains chapters from four former Harty scholars including Greer. And yet the work seems to be directed at a range of audiences, both as a celebration of Harty’s life and works, and as an academic volume. An example of a more informal mode of writing, Cranmer’s remark that “the music [of *Sea Wrack*] reeks of Ireland, of the sea, and of tragedy”\(^{94}\) will be challenged in chapter 3. By contrast, his observation about *My Lagan Love* is more detailed:

…‘My Lagan Love,’ a haunting melody with an imaginative harp-like accompaniment which contains the first use by Harty of octave passages between the hands which became a characteristic in later songs like ‘Denny’s Daughter,’ ‘Hush Song’ and ‘A Mayo Love Song.’\(^{95}\)

Jeremy Dibble treats the three songs in greater detail and he describes *My Lagan Love* as Harty’s Rosetta stone. If Dibble is saying that *My Lagan Love* (1905) is the key to all of Harty’s Irish works *vis à vis* Irish idiom, I would suggest so too is the earlier composition, *An Irish Symphony* (1904). In 1904 Harty won the *Feis Ceoil* with *An Irish Symphony*, and in the 1915 revised manuscript,\(^{96}\) an example of Irish idiom is found at the opening of the third movement, “In the Antrim Hills,” which contains a high register unison introduction in the winds—


\(^{95}\) Ibid., 118.

\(^{96}\) Hamilton Harty, “An Irish Symphony,” score, 1915, Special Collections, Harty Collection, Queen’s University Belfast. The 1904 original manuscript did not survive. Dibble, *Hamilton Harty*, 44.
pentatonic, ornamented, and containing an inflected note, accompanied by pizzicato strings and
the harp (ex. 1).\textsuperscript{97}

Example 1. Harty, \textit{An Irish Symphony}, 3\textsuperscript{rd} movement, mm. 1–4\textsuperscript{98}

The entire symphony, according to the rules of the competition, is based on Irish airs which are
first stated, then developed, and Harty’s harmony is modal throughout. Harty continued to
revise his only symphony until its publication in 1927, and he programmed a movement of the
work on his travels to Australia and America, such was its significance to him. If one seeks
evidence of the birth of an “Irish idiom” in Harty’s early works, one should not ignore this
symphony.

\textsuperscript{97} Due to the loss of the 1904 manuscript, one cannot identify the revisions made between the 1904 and
1915 scores. However, Irish idiom in the form of pentatonicism, modal harmony, ornamentation and inflected
notes is found throughout the symphony.

\textsuperscript{98} Hamilton Harty, “An Irish Symphony,” score, 1915, MS14/1/12a. Reprint with kind permission
Special Collections, Queens University Belfast.
There are also two small details I would question; the first concerns Harty’s early exposure to Irish folk-song, and the second concerns the meaning of a particular song. The first matter, dealt with in chapter 2, concerns whether or not Harty had any contact with Irish folk-songs during his childhood. The second matter is addressed in chapter 3—Dibble indicates that the topic of *A Cradle Song* is a nativity theme,\(^{99}\) when there is some evidence to suggest the subject of the poem by Pádraic Colum is the death of a particular child. A more detailed analysis of the three aforementioned songs, also found in chapter 3, will include reference to genre, motif, harmony, text-music relationship, Irish traditional music and will provide a context with regard to Harty’s contemporaries, and musical nationalism.

From the works pertaining directly to the compositions Hamilton Harty, namely Plummer’s thesis on the works in the Harty Collection, the article on *The Children of Lir* and the two books covering Harty’s life and works, one may conclude that herein lies the gap: the thesis does not deal specifically with musical analysis; David Greer’s *Hamilton Harty: His Life and Music* provides an *analytical overview* of the works and his article on *The Children of Lir* provides a detailed analysis of *one* work. In his book Dibble makes analytical remarks about the three songs, *Sea Wrack, My Lagan Love* and *A Cradle Song*, but a detailed analysis of these works has yet to be conducted.

Chapter 2

Setting the Scene

This chapter comprises four sections—the first contextualises the three songs within Harty’s oeuvre, and the second provides an insight into the sources of inspiration for his works. The third section outlines the professional influences of Harty’s father, his mentor, Michele Esposito, and his wife, soprano Agnes Nicholls. It also suggests a connection between Harty’s childhood experiences and his choice of poems for his songs. The fourth section examines Harty’s musical aesthetic, as it is revealed in interviews, articles and papers.

i. Harty’s Oeuvre

Within an oeuvre which comprises chamber music, orchestral and vocal works, Harty composed over sixty works for accompanied voice, more than in any other genre. The comparatively large number of vocal works in Harty’s oeuvre is at odds with a tendency on his part to write only one or two works in each genre. There are several possible reasons for the large vocal output, both pragmatic and personal. As a conductor, pianist and composer, Harty would have been pressed for time—in his autobiography he describes his early years in Ireland thus:

What with my church work, concerts of chamber music, organ recitals, orchestral concerts and accompaniment work, my life was fairly full and any spare time was devoted to composition, principally songs.\(^{100}\)

\(^{100}\) Harty, *Early Memories*, 23.
A song is quicker to compose than a symphony, and he could also earn an income from their publication. The weekly Ballad Concerts in London, “founded by the publisher [Chappell] to promote sales of their Ballad sheet music,”^101 provided both a “steady income” as an accompanist and an opportunity to see his compositions in print.^102 Harty had held positions as organist and choirmaster in several churches in Ireland, and one in London:

- Magheragall Church: 1894 (informally since 1891/1892)^103
- St Barnabas, Belfast: 1895
- Christ Church, Bray: 1896
- All Saints Church, Norfolk Square, London, 1901^104

From this he would have gained insight into the capacities of the human voice, and his work as an accompanist in Dublin and London would have given him an understanding of the technicalities of vocal composition. This allowed him to play to his strengths in composing, notwithstanding his lack of formal tuition.

Some of the songs might have been intended as an expression of gratitude to those who assisted him professionally, a suggestion made by Declan Plummer in his annotated catalogue of Harty’s oeuvre.^105 Plummer notes that the only works which contain a dedication were composed between 1901 and 1908, during which time Harty was establishing his career in London. Harty married the acclaimed soprano Agnes Nicholls in 1904, and, as many of his songs are for female voice, it is likely that Nicholls was the intended performer. In Harty’s autobiography she recounts an early rehearsal:

> At that time I had no idea he composed, until one day he brought a song and very shyly handed it to me. It was ‘The Song of Glen Dun’. I thought it lovely and put it

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^102 Harty, Early Memories, 34.
^103 Ibid., 20n14.
^104 Ibid., 8.
into my programmes whenever the opportunity occurred. Shortly after he dedicated a song called ‘Rose Madness’ to me.  

Composing songs for the woman whom he was courting could also be construed as a personal gesture of affection.

For many years after leaving his family home in Hillsborough, Harty returned for a summer break, and it was there that some of his songs were written. Their composition may therefore have had a more personal motivation—the wish to reconnect with family and friends in the more informal setting of family musical gatherings and soirées. Harty’s art song/parlour song, Sea Wrack, may have been performed at family gatherings, but this style of song was also performed during “At Homes’ given at the houses of the richer classes,” and programmed at the Ballad Concerts also. The fairly simple vocal part was within the scope of a parlour singer or family member, and the virtuosic and descriptive accompaniment provided the gentle excitement so relished by a Victorian audience.

ii. Sources of Inspiration

Harty indicated in his memoirs that he composed the song, Sea Wrack, in 1895, while he was still living in Ireland. The source for Sea Wrack is a poem by the Irish poet Moira O’Neill (1864–1955), whose poems he set on nine subsequent occasions after moving to London. In setting poems by contemporary Irish poets such as Moira O’Neill and Pádraic Colum, Harty was supporting the Irish Literary Revival. By arranging the publications of

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107 Ibid., 9, 23.
108 Ibid., 23n20.
109 Ibid., 34.
110 Ibid., 23. This date (1895) will be challenged in chapter 3.
111 The Irish Literary Revival was a late nineteenth and early twentieth-century (c.1891–c.1914) Anglo-Irish movement which involved writers of prose, poetry and plays. At the forefront of this movement was the poet William Butler Yeats (1865–1939). Much of the literature of the revival was inspired by Irish myths and legends, recounted in English. Connolly, *The Oxford Companion to Irish History*, 2nd ed., 334.
collectors of Irish folk-songs and melodies such as Hughes, Harty was supporting the Irish Antiquarian Movement\textsuperscript{112} and the Gaelic Revival. While his decision to set poems by Irish poets may be construed as a gesture in support of the Irish Literary Revival; however, it is not precisely correct to view Harty solely as an Irish composer who set Irish poems to music, as evidenced by a gradual expansion in his sources to include non-Irish writers on arriving in London. In addition to the Irish contingent of O’Neill, Pádraic Colum, Elizabeth Shane, P.W.Joyce, W.L.Bultitaft, Emily Lawless, Katherine Tynan, Cathal O’Byrne, Alice Milligan, Cahir Healy, Lizzie Twigg, and Seosamh MacCathmhaoil (Joseph Campbell), Harty selected a small but significant collection of non-Irish poets. The English writers were John Campion, John Keats, Harold Simpson, Sir John Suckling and Richard Lovelace—Riccardo Stephens was the solitary Scot, and the Americans were Walt Whitman and Richard Hovey.

The setting of five English poems from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to music between 1907 and 1909 was certainly not a coincidence. Instead, I would suggest it was a conscious decision to fall into step with composers such as Charles Villiers Stanford, who published his \textit{Six Elizabethan Pastorales} in 1892–7.\textsuperscript{113} It is plausible that Harty looked to Irish-born Stanford as an example of how to make good in London. The extent of Stanford’s acceptance as an English composer is evidenced in no small part by his central role in the education of a generation of English composers at the Royal College of Music. His long list of students included Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Herbert Howells, Eugene Goossens, Gordon Jacob, Charles Wood and John Ireland.\textsuperscript{114} Also of significance is that Harty chose

\textsuperscript{112} Beginning in the 1830s, the Irish Antiquarian Movement “was marked by scholarly and artistic interest in Irish antiquities.” Derek B. Scott, “Fine Arts in the Celtic Revival,” \textit{The Victorian Web}, accessed October 13, 2017, \url{http://www.victorianweb.org/art/design/ce\l t\i c/ringel10.html}.


Keats’ *Ode to a Nightingale* when composing a work for voice and orchestra for the Cardiff Festival in 1907, a work composed for and premiered by his wife Agnes Nicholls. Harty indicated that he composed works for festivals in order to gain conducting experience,\(^\text{115}\) but the astute use of a well-known English poem for his subject matter was more likely to secure him a performance than a more obscure choice. If it was Harty’s intention to rebrand himself as an English composer, as Stanford has done before him, then setting English poems allowed him to avoid the Irish composer-Irish works pigeon hole.

An examination of the lyrics of Harty’s published songs from 1895 to 1913 reveals a number of recurring themes, such as love, death, life on the land, life on the sea, customs, superstitions and the supernatural. While these were common themes in the popular songs of the time,\(^\text{116}\) there is also a degree of overlap between the themes and Harty’s childhood experiences in Northern Ireland. Experiences such as the death of a sibling in her infancy,\(^\text{117}\) chancing upon the wake of a young girl while walking in the countryside (an encounter that inspired the third movement of *An Irish Symphony*, according to Harty’s preface to the work)\(^\text{118}\) and volunteering to play the organ at the funeral of a child who had died of croup when the composer was still a young child himself\(^\text{119}\) may have inspired Harty to set poems such as *The Wake Feast* and *A Cradle Song*. The books on Irish poetry and folklore in his father’s library\(^\text{120}\) may have piqued Harty’s interest in Gaelic literature, and in local customs and superstitions. Likewise, his father’s habit of conducting séances\(^\text{121}\) may have drawn Harty towards the supernatural as a theme. One precedent for making a connection between Harty’s themes and

\(^{117}\) Harty, *Early Memories*, 16n9.  
\(^{118}\) Harty, preface to *An Irish Symphony* (London: Boosey, 1927).  
\(^{119}\) Barry, “Hillsborough Years,” 13.  
\(^{120}\) Ibid., 17.  
\(^{121}\) Ibid., 15, 17.
his early years is the programmatic content of his symphony. Harty said of *An Irish Symphony*,

“All my boyhood is in the *Irish Symphony*.!”

The titles of the movements are:

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I  On the shores of Lough Neagh
II The fair day
III In the Antrim Hills
IV The twelfth of July
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Lough Neagh is a lake near Harty’s home town of Hillsborough and Antrim is a town on the
dege of the lake, both of which were frequented by Harty in his youth. He spoke of attending
the fairs in County Down in an interview with the American author Leonora Woods Armsby.

> My sister and I used to attend the county fairs in Ireland and it was there that I
picked up the tunes that you hear in my Irish Symphony…On fair days the town
was filled with people dancing to joy tunes and penny whistles…The songs I
heard kept running about in my mind; I whistled them; I sang them; finally I
put them on paper.

Given this precedent, one might reasonably infer from the themes of his songs that his
childhood experiences also influenced his choice of poems to set to music.

Almost as significant in this examination of sources of inspiration are two types of
poetry which Harty did not set to music, political poetry and poetry in Gaelic. As Harty was

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- I: “Avenging and Bright” and “The Croppy Boy”
- II: “The Blackberry Blossom” and “The Girl I Left behind Me”
- III: “Jimín Mo Mhile Stór”
- IV: “Boyne Water”


124 Armsby, ibid., 144. It is interesting to note that Harty indicated in his interview with Colles for *The Musical Times* in 1920 that he had no contact with Irish folk-song during his childhood, instead being brought up on “the sonatas of Mozart and Beethoven”, “Anglican church music” and Scottish folk-music. Colles, “Hamilton Harty,” 227. An explanation for this is that he was playing down his Irishness on the occasion of being appointed principal conductor of an English orchestra, the Hallé Orchestra, in order to give the impression his musical upbringing and tastes were international. While it is true that there was Scottish settlement in County Down due to the Plantation of Ulster, Harty’s parents were from the south, namely Limerick and Dublin, so his background was not Ulster-Scots. Barry, “Hillsborough Years,” 1–3. 8. The interview with Armsby was conducted in the U.S.A. over ten years later, and there was therefore no need to conceal his Irish heritage.
Anglo-Irish, from what was then the North of Ireland, Protestant and Unionist, it was most unlikely that he would have set poems expressing any anti-English sentiment, compared with those Irish composers whose sympathies were Catholic and pro-Republican.\footnote{According to Jeremy Dibble, Harty never publically admitted his political views, and the composer’s great love of Ireland was for both the north and the south. Dibble, Hamilton Harty, 296.} The English composer Arnold Bax, by comparison, having become enamoured of all things Celtic, set the writing of the rebel poet Patrick Pearse (1879–1916), who was one of sixteen Irishmen executed after the Easter Rising of 1916. Given the sensitive material, Bax’s In Memoriam for orchestra, subtitled “I gcuimhne ar bPádraig mac Piarais” (“In memory of Pádraig Pearse”) was not performed in England until 1998, and his In Memoriam (1916) for chamber ensemble was premiered in London with the less politically sensitive title of An Irish Elegy.\footnote{Aidan Thomson, “Remembering Pearse in Music: Arnold Bax’s In memoriam,” accessed March 20, 2017, \url{http://qpol.qub.ac.uk/remembering-pearse-music-arnold-baxs-memoriam}.} Having moved to London in 1901, Harty wrote songs with English lyrics only, and the titles also were in English. These would have been more accessible to the non-Gaelic speaker in performance, and more likely to find a publisher. Although Harty was Anglo-Irish, he did not identify as closely with the English as did Stanford,\footnote{Stanford famously dismissed the idea of microtonal tuning in Irish folk music with the remark, “a lot of peasants singing out of tune.” Angela Hughes, Chelsea Footprints: a Thirties Chronicle. (London: Quartet, 2008), 8–9.} nor did he follow Herbert Hughes in adopting a Gaelic pseudonym like Padraic Mac Aodh O’Neill. There is also no evidence that Harty spoke or read Gaelic. In this respect Harty may be seen as occupying a position somewhere in the middle of the continuum between Irish composers who were Irish speaking and Anglo-Irish composers who became part of the English musical establishment such as Stanford and Charles Wood.
iii. Influences on Harty’s Compositional Style

a. Family Influences

As the influence of Harty’s father during his early years has been covered in detail in David Greer’s book, Hamilton Harty: His Life and Music; it is necessary only to provide an overview at this point. Harty's father, William Michael Harty (1852–1918), was the organist and choirmaster at Hillsborough Church in County Down, a teacher of organ, piano and violin, cello and voice, and an occasional composer. Harty’s initial musical education was at the hands of his father, from whom he learnt piano, organ, viola and composition. His father was in possession of a substantial music library, sacred and secular, orchestral, instrumental and vocal, and he counselled his son:

There is most of the greatest music that has been written: play through it, all of it – everything – and at the end you will have gained a good musical education.

Harty presented himself as an autodidact, but this is not entirely correct. Given that his father was both a professional musician and a professional music teacher, studying with a parent was not the same as either receiving instruction from an amateur, or receiving none at all. Studying music with a parent had several notable precedents, such as that of W.A. Mozart, who studied with his father Leopold, and that of C.P.E. Bach who studied with J.S. Bach. As a church organist, Harty senior may have been a fluent extemporizer; however, he was by no means a prolific composer, and was therefore less able to guide his son in the art of...

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129 Harty, Early Memories, 12–13n7.
130 Ibid., 12, 12n7.
131 Ibid., 12.
132 Ibid.
composition. A “semi-autodidact” has a less Romantic ring to it, but is more precise. Jeremy Dibble indicates that Harty also received some tuition on the viola and in harmony and counterpoint.\textsuperscript{135}

Harty’s academic education, on the other hand, was a much more haphazard affair, and the composer describes how he and his siblings “mitched”\textsuperscript{136} (played truant) from school. According to his sister Alice, Harty had no formal education after the age of twelve, instead being home-schooled by his mother.\textsuperscript{137} His education did not end with his mother, however—as an adult Harty taught himself foreign languages and Greek philosophy.\textsuperscript{138}

Harty’s early musical encounters were with repertoire both sacred and secular. From an early age Harty deputised for his father on the organ,\textsuperscript{139} and he was appointed organist at the nearby Magheragall Parish Church in County Antrim in 1894 at the age of fourteen.\textsuperscript{140} Harty gained an understanding of chamber music repertoire by playing viola in the family string quartet with his parents and sister,\textsuperscript{141} and he performed duos with his sister Edith at concerts in the district, himself on piano and his sister on violin.\textsuperscript{142} He appeared in Musical Society concerts, competed in the \textit{Feis Ceoil}, and was a frequent participant in local music-making.\textsuperscript{143}

\textbf{b. Professional Influences}

The most significant professional influence outside Harty’s family came from the Italian composer and pianist Michele Esposito. The latter was a piano teacher at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin and Harty encountered him after taking up the position of organist.
at Christ Church, Bray in 1896. Esposito declined to take on Harty as a private student in piano (on account of the size of his thumbs)\(^ {144}\) but was to become his mentor in composition for many years, as well as a close friend.\(^ {145}\) Harty indicated that he sent all his compositions to Esposito for criticism during his time in Dublin,\(^ {146}\) but he remained in contact with Esposito after moving to London, and visited him when he returned to Ireland.\(^ {147}\) Thus the period during which he was showing Esposito his compositions may have continued for some time in an informal way. While Harty indicates that he did “not indeed [become] a regular pupil of the Maestro,” he also credits his mentor with putting “freely and fully at [his] service…everything he had learned during his own years of study at Naples, and afterwards as a concert pianist and conductor”\(^ {148}\). The implication of these statements is that Harty may have received advice on accompanying and conducting, as well as receiving feedback on his compositions.

Harty’s friendship and ultimate marriage to the soprano Agnès Nicholls was both personally and professionally beneficial. Although they appeared in the same programme in a *Feis Ceoil* concert in Belfast in 1900,\(^ {149}\) Harty and Nicholls first met properly in 1902 in London, when he was engaged to accompany her for two sets of songs in a ‘cello recital.\(^ {150}\) From this point on he assisted her in preparing repertoire, and, on learning that he composed, she gradually began to include his songs in her programmes.\(^ {151}\) Their first major recital together was in 1903 at the Hovingham Musical Festival.\(^ {152}\) Two years older than Harty, and already

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\(^ {146}\) Ibid., 26.
\(^ {147}\) Ibid., 148.
\(^ {148}\) Ibid., 26.
\(^ {150}\) Harty, *Early Memories*, 37, 40.
\(^ {151}\) Ibid., 40.
\(^ {152}\) Hammond, “The Hallé Years and After,” 40.
established as a singer,\textsuperscript{153} she was able to introduce him to her milieu of professional musicians such as the conductor Hans Richter.\textsuperscript{154}

iv. Harty’s Musical Aesthetic

Harty’s musical aesthetic may be gleaned from the articles he wrote and papers he gave during his career, as well as from his autobiography, Early Memories. While one must concede that these documents postdate the period under examination (1895–1913), it is apparent that they represent both considered and firmly entrenched beliefs on Classical music, and, as such, are relevant in a discussion of his earlier compositions. During his career as a conductor, composer and pianist, Harty wrote articles for The Musical Times and presented papers for such organisations as the Organ Society of England. They discuss topics such as modern music, music in England, the experience of listening to music, piano accompaniment, Beethoven, Berlioz, Brahms, to name but a few, and provide an insight into the composer’s attitudes and preferences. Philip Hammond suggests that it was Harty’s autodidacticism that shaped his musical aesthetic because an absence of institutional musical training resulted in a corresponding lack of contact with the “new sounds and new ideas of other young musicians.”\textsuperscript{155} A significant coda to this is the striking originality of his later work, The Children of Lir, with its mesmeric and fragmented soundscape, suggesting that the avant garde may have been anathema to Harty, except on his own terms.

The articles and papers not only reveal the attributes of particular musical eras which appealed to Harty, but also aspects of specific composers’ styles which he found reason to celebrate. He appreciated the “perfect logic and balance” of Brahms’ Variations on a theme of

\textsuperscript{153} Hammond, “The Hallé Years and After,” 37.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 30.
Haydn. His article, “On Listening to Music” provides more specific commendations and reservations: of Mozart Harty said, “every mood, every thought finds its just and perfect translation,” listening to Bach was like “living on the top of a high mountain,” Wagner was “unholy,” Brahms and Beethoven were able to convey “deep tragedy in their music,” and Schubert’s music was “innocent” and “wistful.” Harty reveals fairly conventional musical tastes in this article, and, despite the lack of provenance, one may reasonably assume from the title and the accessibility of the content that it was intended to be pedagogical in nature, providing an insight into the cornerstones of the orchestral repertoire for the benefit of the listening public. Harty gave pre-concert talks similar to this during his tour of Australia in 1934.

Harty’s concern about the absence of national character in English music and how this might be remedied is discussed in his paper “The Discouragement of English Music.” Having allayed any concerns on the part of the audience that he, being Irish, might not be qualified to comment upon English music by claiming to be a fellow Briton, Harty rues the “characterless cosmopolitanism” of English music and the fact that a “sense of nationality is

156 Hamilton Harty, “Variations on a theme of Haydn: Brahms” (paper, Royal College of Organists, 16 February 1929).
157 Hamilton Harty, “On Listening to Music” (unpublished manuscript, [1926–1936?]). The Harty Collection contains Harty’s writings (published and unpublished) dating between 1926 and 1936. It is reasonable to assume this article from the collection falls between these two dates. MS14 Harty Collection outline, accessed October 16, 2017, https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/TheLibrary/SpecialCollections/FileStore/Fileupload_753277_en.pdf. By 1936 Harty was beginning to suffer from symptoms of a brain tumour, for which he received radiation and surgery, so 1936 onwards is a less likely date for the article. Dibble, Hamilton Harty, 261–3.
159 Ibid., 9.
160 Ibid., 11.
161 Ibid.
162 Ibid.
163 Dibble, Hamilton Harty, 229.
165 Ibid., 1. At the beginning of this paper Harty describes his works as British with an Irish accent, anticipating the objection that he is not qualified to comment on English Music.
166 Ibid., 13.
often lacking.” By “characterless cosmopolitanism” one presumes he means a tendency to adopt the characteristics of the German musical hegemony, (Brahms, Mendelssohn, Beethoven et al.) rather than striving to create a distinct national voice in one’s compositions. On the topic of establishing a national character, Harty makes the following observations:

a. [Those who claim that] any insistence on nationality is a cramping thing …probably mean that any school that bases itself upon the free use of folksong and imitations thereof is bound to be narrow and circumscribed.\(^{168}\)

b. There is a sense of nationality in music which is impressed by much more subtle means, and which is really a reflection in sound of broad national characteristics. If an experienced musician opens a score by a typical German, French, Italian or Russian composer he can invariably tell to what nationality the composer belongs by a certain definite idiom or flavour in the music itself.\(^{169}\)

c. Nobody wants an obvious and continuous use of folksong tricks\(^{170}\)

One might reasonably infer that Harty’s attitude towards nationalism in English music was in accord with his views regarding nationalism in Irish music. The rejection of folk-song quotation in favour of the assimilation of characteristic features of folk music such as modal harmony, ornamentation, \textit{et cetera}, parallels the development of Harty’s own oeuvre during the period under discussion. These above statements suggest that Harty has distanced himself from the compositional process found in \textit{An Irish Symphony} (1904), composed according to the regulations of the \textit{Feis Ceoil}, in which he quoted a folk-song at the beginning of each movement and then developed it. His remarks also reflect the views of his mentor Michele Esposito, who cautioned against the use of “this material [folk-songs] in ways that were merely naïve and crude” and instead advised that “Irish composers…master their art as musicians to

\(^{168}\) Ibid., 12.
\(^{169}\) Ibid.
\(^{170}\) Ibid., 13.
the fullest possible extent: then, go back to the wonderful store of folk-melodies and build them into their music.”171

A few remarks on the context of Harty’s paper, “The Discouragement of English Music,” are useful at this point. The paper itself was intended as a rallying cry—Harty indicated his “main contention, that the native art of music in this country is unfairly handicapped and discouraged.”172 His objective was to encourage his fellow-organists to rise up and wield their influence to form a musicians’ union,173 become active in municipal politics174 and engage with the press.175 In such an impassioned address, his remarks on English music may be reinterpreted as somewhat sweeping. While Ireland was experiencing the Gaelic Revival and the foundation of the Gaelic League, across the Irish Sea in England a similar renaissance was taking place. The Folk-Song Society was founded in 1898176 and the English Folk Dance Society was formed in 1911.177 Both Cecil Sharp178 and Lucy Broadwood179 went on collecting tours in the English countryside, just as Herbert Hughes had done in the hills of Ulster, and folk-songs from Sharp’s published collections were used by Vaughan Williams, Holst and Butterworth in their compositions.180 Additional composers—both English-born and

171 Dibble, Michele Esposito, 64. Esposito expressed these views in the course of an interview for the Irish Independent in February 1906 with the actor and playwright James Cousins.
173 Ibid., 16–17.
174 Ibid., 20.
175 Ibid., 21.
177 Ibid.
180 Howes, “Sharp, Cecil.” If Harty was genuinely unfamiliar with the “native” compositions of his English contemporaries, one might again attribute this, as Philip Hammond had done, to Harty’s autodidacticism. Hammond, “Dublin and London,” in Greer, Hamilton Harty, 30.
immigrant—who used folk-songs in their compositions included Parry, Stanford, Warlock, Finzi, Moeran and Grainger.¹⁸¹

In his conducting, Harty championed the works of Hector Berlioz,¹⁸² and in a pre-concert talk on Berlioz’s Requiem and his Funeral and Triumphal Symphony for the BBC, he described the composer as “a writer of programme music…who looked on music primarily as a means of illustrating literary and pictorial ideals” and eschewed absolute music.¹⁸³ He further commended him as “an inventor of strange new sonorities”¹⁸⁴ and a creator of “new and striking touches of colour”¹⁸⁵ which afford Berlioz the opportunity to write “dramatic, expressive and tragic music.”¹⁸⁶ Harty’s use of a virtuosic clarinet cadenza reminiscent of Debussy in opening of the third movement of An Irish Symphony¹⁸⁷ may be construed as an exploration of orchestral colour. An examination of Harty’s oeuvre reveals that the majority of his instrumental compositions are programmatic in nature, a not altogether surprising circumstance given that programme music was a popular style during the Romantic era, and also unsurprising given his predilection for the works of Berlioz. It may be said of Harty too, just as he said it of Berlioz, that his music expresses “scenes, pictures, literary and poetic images, emotions and states of feeling.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 6.
¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 7.
¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 6.
¹⁸⁹ Harty, “The Modern Orchestra: History and Growth of the Orchestra” (lecture, University of Liverpool, October 13, 1931).
views on the comparative strengths of major composers—Beethoven is not interested in tone
colour, but Wagner and Berlioz are. 190 Ravel has discovered “strange sonorities.” 191 Hart
poses the question, “Has the technique of music outrun and partly dispersed the intrinsic beauty
of music itself?” 192 This inquiry recalls his position on modern music as revealed in the article
“Modern Composers and Modern Composition.” In this article Harty offered the following
laws by which he believed music must be governed:

1. Music must be beautiful in shape
2. Melody must be the first reason for its existence
3. What appeals only to the brain cannot live
4. It is the emotional quality of music which gives it value, and the nobler the
   emotion aroused, the greater the music 193

Harty counters the idea that merit may reside solely in technical virtuosity by asserting
that “technique in itself has little to do with music…[or] a Strauss [would be] a finer composer
than a Sibelius or a Delius” 194 and discourages “too close an absorption in the invention and
development of material.” 195 Instead, he suggests that listeners are “weary of all the ceaseless
experimenting,” 196 and he extolls the virtues of “simplicity of means, cleanness of logic, and
transparency of workmanship” 197 as an antidote to the excesses of the modern era.

With regard to the matter of meaning in music, Harty espouses a common-sense
philosophy. He describes what one might experience on listening to Beethoven, and implies
that any reasonably intelligent person will hear these things. 198 This is germane for his
compositions, because if one thinks one hears a quotation of the opening of Richard Strauss’

191 Ibid., 9.
192 Ibid., 10.
193 Hamilton Hart, “Modern Composers and Modern Composition,” 328.
195 Ibid.
196 Ibid., 13.
197 Ibid., 14.
Tod und Verklärung, op. 24, in the piano accompaniment of Sea Wrack, it is probably because Harty wished for it to be heard (ex. 2) (ex. 3).  

Example 2. Harty, Sea Wrack, m. 41

![Tod und Verklärung, op. 24, in the piano accompaniment of Sea Wrack, it is probably because Harty wished for it to be heard (ex. 2) (ex. 3).]  

Strauss’ Tod und Verklärung was composed between 1888 and 1889 and published in Germany in 1891, premiered in London in 1897 and reprinted in London in 1905. There is a facsimile reproduction of a handwritten score of the Strauss work in the Harty Collection, with a publication date of 1900, meaning that Harty had the score in his private music library. If, as I shall argue, Sea Wrack was composed at the later date of between 1904 and 1905, the presence of the 1900 Strauss score in Harty’s personal library is a strong argument for his knowledge of the work, and support for the idea he is quoting from Strauss in Sea Wrack.

Example 3. Richard Strauss, Tod und Verklärung, op. 24, timpani and strings, mm. 12–15

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199 This similarity was suggested by David Larkin in conversation with the author in 2012. In an e-mail message to the author, September 15, 2017, Lewis Cornwell noted the similarity in texture between the Strauss and Harty excerpts.


203 In a letter Strauss wrote to Friedrich von Hausseger in 1894, he details the programmatic content at the opening of Tod und Verklärung: “The sick man lies in bed asleep, breathing heavily and irregularly.” Willi Schuh, Richard Strauss: a Chronicle of the Early Years, 1864–1898, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 180. This may be construed as describing the rhythmic motif in example 2. The statement in Strauss’ letter lends further credence to the idea Harty is using a “dying man motif” as an omen.

As a writer of programme music, Harty was untroubled by an anxiety about meaning in music, eschewing the position of his contemporaries such as Stravinsky, who indicated:

Music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, or psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature, etc…Expression has never been an inherent property of music. That is by no means the purpose of its existence.²⁰⁵

Stravinsky was at the time referring to absolute music. According to pure formalists, by virtue of its extra-musical content, programme music does not refute the claim that absolute music is without meaning.²⁰⁶ Instead, programme music presents the listener with a different medium—a symbiotic relationship between the music and the text whereby the music enhances the text

and the text informs the music. For Berlioz, the text takes precedence— for Harty, the text and music are in partnership.

For Harty the relationship between the text and the music itself is a direct one—a musical pictorialism. I suggest this may be attributed in part to the experience of having listened to his father conduct Sunday school classes at the organ, narrating passages from the Bible to the accompaniment of excerpts from Handel’s Messiah. The musical symbolism of composers such as Bach, whose works were held in the music library of Harty senior, may also have influenced him. An example of musical pictorialism may be found in the undulating accompanimental figure of Sea Wrack, depicting the motion of the waves (ex. 4).

Example 4. Harty, Sea Wrack, mm. 1–10

![Musical notation](image)

The accompanimental motif in Scythe Song (1910) is almost certainly intended to represent the sound and action of a scythe cutting through grass (ex. 5).

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208 Barry, “Hillsborough Years,” 12.
209 Harty, Early Memories, 12.
An example of symbolism, one which will receive a more detailed explanation in chapter 3, is found in the final bars of *A Cradle Song*. The influence of Berlioz, with his aforementioned avoidance of absolute music in favour of programmatic, is also likely to have affected the manner in which Harty alchemized text into sound.

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210 Hamilton Harty, *Scythe Song* (London: Boosey and Co., 1910), 1, Harty/q MHA43.S SCYT. Reprint with kind permission Special Collections, Queens University Belfast.
Chapter 3

Analysis of the Songs

It has often been remarked, and oftener felt, that our music is the truest of all comments upon our history.

—Thomas Moore, Moore’s Irish Melodies

This chapter focuses on three vocal works, the early works Sea Wrack and My Lagan Love, both published in 1905, and the later work, A Cradle Song, published in 1913. After a brief description of the works, an exploration of the manner in which Harty approached genre, motif, harmony, Irish traditional music, the text-music relationship, context and nationalism will follow. The works will be assessed in chronological order, starting with Sea Wrack, and the purpose of this exploration is to ascertain whether Harty’s compositional style underwent any changes, and whether these changes could be interpreted as either supporting or refuting Raymond Warren’s claim (mentioned in the introduction to this thesis) regarding the character of Harty’s musical nationalism:

Harty’s musical nationalism was a matter of interpreting an Irish musical experience within the terms of the Anglo-European musical language as he then understood it…In musical terms this was a matter of nationalism in melody rather than in harmony, which was in the broad European Romantic tradition and generally speaking diatonic or chromatic even when the melody was modal.\(^{211}\)

The following table provides the essential details of the three works:

Table 4. Brief comparison of Sea Wrack, My Lagan Love and A Cradle Song

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details</th>
<th>The Songs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Sea Wrack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of composition</strong></td>
<td>Solo song: voice and piano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice type</strong></td>
<td>Contralto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre</strong></td>
<td>Art song/parlour song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key/mode</strong></td>
<td>B♭ major key signature, parlour mode: Mi (Phrygian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure</strong></td>
<td>Modified strophic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of verses</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dedicatee</strong></td>
<td>Clara Speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Composed</strong></td>
<td>1904–1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Published</strong></td>
<td>1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publisher</strong></td>
<td>Boosey and Co., London</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** Data from Harty, *Sea Wrack*; Harty, *My Lagan Love*; Harty, *A Cradle Song*; entries in *Grove Music Online* under the name of the composer; entries in the *Dictionary of National Biography Online* under the names of the poets.

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**i. Sea Wrack**

According to Harty, *Sea Wrack* was one of the works he composed in 1895, while living in Hillsborough and working in Belfast, making it one of his earliest essays at song-writing. There are several reasons for dating the composition of this song somewhat later. The date 1895 was provided by the composer and Harty was not always precise about dates in his autobiography. To be fair, he commenced writing his memoir when he was gravely ill with cancer and died before its completion. Greer says of the autobiography that “when [Harty]

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213 Ibid., 7.
mentions his age at various junctures he is almost always wrong,”\textsuperscript{214} and adds that Harty claimed to be 17 when he moved to London when he was actually 21.\textsuperscript{215} Declan Plummer in his catalogue of Harty’s manuscripts held at Queen’s University Belfast disagrees with 1895 and puts the date of composition slightly later at 1898, indicating that Harty mentioned having composed it at the same time as the String Quartet in A minor, and suggesting that Bray on the coast was a more likely source of inspiration for such a song than Belfast, where Harty was an organist in 1895.\textsuperscript{216} Jeremy Dibble suggests that one cannot determine a definitive date of composition, but both he and Plummer indicate that a ten year delay between writing and publishing (i.e. between 1895 and 1905) would have been rather unusual.\textsuperscript{217} Dibble also suggests that the presence on the title page of the original manuscript of the source of the lyrics, namely the volume \textit{Songs of the Glens of Antrim} by Moira O’Neill, is of significance, as this volume was published in 1900. The insights of Greer, Plummer and Dibble lead to the conclusion that the song was composed between 1900 and 1905. I believe it is possible to be more precise. The address on the original manuscript is 2 Manor House, Marylebone [Rd?],\textsuperscript{218} a London address Harty moved to on the occasion of his marriage to Agnes Nicholls in 1904.\textsuperscript{219} Therefore, the song \textit{Sea Wrack} is very likely to have been composed between 1904 and 1905.

The song was published in 1905 by Boosey and Co. It is a setting of the poem of the same name by the Irish-Canadian poet Agnes Shakespeare Higgins, who went by the \textit{nom de plume} of Moira O’Neill and lived in Cushenden in County Antrim on the coast of Northern Ireland. Stephen Gwynn in \textit{Experiences of a Literary Man} indicated that \textit{Sea Wrack} was one

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\begin{tabular}{l}
\textsuperscript{214} Harty, \textit{Early Memories}, 8. \\
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{216} Plummer, “A Catalogue of the Harty Manuscripts,” 2. \\
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid.; Dibble, \textit{Hamilton Harty}, 36–7. \\
\textsuperscript{218} Hamilton Harty, “Sea Wrack,” score, [1904–5?], Special Collections, Harty Collection, McClay Library, Queen’s University Belfast. \\
\textsuperscript{219} Dibble, \textit{Hamilton Harty}, 35.
\end{tabular}
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of O’Neill’s first poems, written in about 1886.\textsuperscript{220} It was first published as an individual poem in 1893 in \textit{Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine},\textsuperscript{221} and was reprinted in 1900 in a collected volume of O’Neill’s poems titled \textit{Songs of the Glens of Antrim}.\textsuperscript{222} One cannot determine whether Harty was familiar with the 1893 publication, but the fact that he mentions Moira O’Neill’s 1900 collected volume as the source for his song on the title page of \textit{Sea Wrack} suggests the latter was his first encounter with the poem.

\textbf{Sea Wrack}\textsuperscript{223}  

\textit{Moira O’Neill}

The wrack was dark an’ shiny where it floated in the sea,  
There was no one in the brown boat but only him an’ me;  
Him to cut the sea wrack, me to mind the boat,  
An’ not a word between us the hours we were afloat.  
The wet wrack,  
The sea wrack,  
The wrack was strong to cut.

We laid it on the grey rocks to wither in the sun,  
An’ what should call my lad then, to sail from Cushendun?  
With a low moon, a full tide, a swell upon the deep,  
Him to sail the old boat, me to fall asleep.  
The dry wrack,  
The sea wrack,  
The wrack was dead so soon.

There' a fire low upon the rocks to burn the wrack to kelp,  
There' a boat gone down upon the Moyle, an’ sorra one to help!  
Him beneath the salt sea, me upon the shore,  
By sunlight or moonlight we'll lift the wrack no more.  
The dark wrack,  
The sea wrack,  
The wrack may drift ashore.

\textsuperscript{223} Ibid., 10–11.
It is of interest to note that there exists another setting of *Sea Wrack*, composed in about 1900, but not published until 1912, namely that of Charles Villiers Stanford. As illustrated in table 5, both Harty and Stanford set to music a number of O’Neill’s poems, but never at the same time. Jeremy Dibble indicated that “Stanford…deeply impressed the young Harty as a template for Irish art music,” which would seem to support the theory on compositional models set out in chapter 1.

In *Songs of the Glens of Antrim*, Moira O’Neill was committed to depicting the lives of her compatriots in her native Cushenden, and the poems in this collection describe the hardships of life on land and sea. The title, *Sea Wrack*, refers to one of two categories of seaweed, wracks and kelps, and the poem depicts the gathering of sea wrack in small boats. A footnote to the 1905 score of *Sea Wrack* explains the process of harvesting the wrack, drying it on rocks and burning it in pits or kilns along the coast to produce a potash used for chemical purposes, namely fertiliser. As the poem unfolds one learns of a tragedy—the man has drowned in a storm at sea and the woman is left alone on the shore.

Table 5. Poems by Moira O’Neill, set by Stanford and Harty

---


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of</th>
<th>Harty</th>
<th>Stanford</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Corrymeela</td>
<td>A Broken Song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>The Fairy Lough</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Cuttin’ Rushes</td>
<td>Johnneen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td></td>
<td>Back to Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Song of Glen Dun</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td><em>Sea Wrack</em>, comp. 1904–1905</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>The Ould Lad</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Grace for Light</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td><em>At Sea</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Lookin’ Back</td>
<td><em>Sea Wrack</em>, comp. c.1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>The Rachray Man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td></td>
<td><em>At Sea</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Lookin’ Back</td>
<td><em>Lookin’ Back</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td><em>Denny’s Daughter</em></td>
<td><em>The Sailor Man</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>The Boy from Ballytearim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>I Mind the Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td><em>Denny’s Daughter</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td><em>The Sailor Man</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Data from David Greer, ed., *Hamilton Harty: his Life and Music*, 145–151; *Grove Music Online* entry under the name of Charles Villiers Stanford.

Key: Normal = Published by one
     Bold = published by both
     Italicised = first published

Genre and style

Harty’s *Sea Wrack* is an art song which also has several characteristics of a parlour song. The parlour song or drawing room-ballad\(^{230}\) was a popular genre from the mid-nineteenth

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to the early twentieth century. Its rise in popularity coincided with the greater prevalence of pianos in private homes, and the move towards private music-making.\(^\text{231}\) Parlour songs had a number of manifestations, such as arrangements of Irish folk-songs, transcriptions of operatic arias, sacred songs, or simple secular songs\(^\text{232}\) such as *The Last Rose of Summer*. The following description sets out one of the desirable attributes of a parlour song:

> What a lyrical composition intended to be popular ought to be—it has no unnecessary difficulties, and lies within a moderate range—being thus available for all who sing to amuse themselves or their friends, as well as of those who sing for the public.\(^\text{233}\)

Additional characteristics included parlour modes such as the “mediant-octave mode,”\(^\text{234}\) whereby the third degree provides a floor and ceiling note for the melody\(^\text{235}\) (ex. 6), and the submediant-octave mode.\(^\text{236}\) By the end of the nineteenth century the distinction between parlour songs and art songs was less marked, and parlour song accompaniments were becoming more virtuosic.\(^\text{237}\)

A brief detour into theory is useful at this point: in an effort to codify the relationship between the genres of art music, folk music and popular music (e.g. parlour songs), the musicologist Philip Tagg formulated an axiomatic triangle.\(^\text{238}\) This diagram was intended to

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\(^{233}\) Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois*, chap. 2.

\(^{234}\) This term is coined by Peter van der Merwe in his book, *Origins of the Popular Style: the Antecedents of Twentieth-Century Popular Music*, to describe a melody enclosed between two mediants an octave apart. Van der Merwe, *Origins of the Popular Style*, 104.

\(^{235}\) The terms “ceiling note” and “floor note” have also been coined by Peter van der Merwe, to describe a well-defined upper and lower limit of a melody. Ibid., 232.

\(^{236}\) The term “sub-median octave mode” is used to describe a melody enclosed between two sub-median notes an octave apart. Ibid., 232–4.


illustrate the mutual exclusivity of all three genres, but this mutual exclusivity was challenged by the existence of hybrid compositions possessing characteristics of more than one genre. Harty’s setting of *Sea Wrack* resembles these later model parlour songs in that it has a simple vocal part, with a melody in mediant-octave mode (ex. 6), and a more virtuosic piano accompaniment reminiscent of art song.

Example 6. Harty, *Sea Wrack*, vocal part, mm. 1–20

A second feature of this song, apart from its hybrid genre, is that Harty has used elements of popular song which had their origins in the *Ombra* style of eighteenth century opera. This style was found in operatic depictions of death and the supernatural, and relied upon such elements as chromaticism, tremolo, syncopation, sudden pauses and modal inflection, *inter alia*. These elements in turn became features of parlour music. These aspects will receive a more detailed examination in the section titled “Harmony”. A third

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239 Tagg’s model is discussed in greater detail in the analysis of *My Lagan Love*.


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noteworthy feature is the presence of motivic development, which will be examined in the section titled “Motif”. A fourth point worthy of examination is that Harty uses elements of Irish traditional music such as inflected notes and a pentatonic interlude—this issue will also be explored in the section titled “Irish Traditional Music.” Thus one finds that in *Sea Wrack*, Harty has composed an early twentieth century art song/parlour song with a virtuosic piano accompaniment, enhanced by *Ombra* elements of popular music and the use of motivic development.

**Motif**

There are many precedents for musical works which describe water—nineteenth-century examples include Smetana’s tone poem *The Moldau* and Schubert’s lied *Die Forelle*, and early twentieth century examples include Debussy’s tone poem *La Mer* and Stanford’s song cycle *Songs of the Sea*. It is interesting that the piano part in Stanford’s setting of *Sea Wrack* resembles the piano part of *Die Forelle* (ex. 7)—except that Stanford uses four ascending semiquavers instead of a sextuplet on the first beat of each bar—as this suggests that Schubert’s accompaniment has influenced Stanford in his depiction of the waves.

Example 7. Charles Villiers Stanford, *Sea Wrack*, piano part, mm. 1–4

![Example 7: Charles Villiers Stanford, *Sea Wrack*, piano part, mm. 1–4](image)

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The use of a motif to represent a babbling brook or the pounding of the waves results in both tone painting and a unifying feature for the composition. Motivic development is a major feature of Harty’s Sea Wrack, and nearly every ascending figure in the accompaniment has as its intervallic counterpart a corresponding descending figure—in this manner does he depict the waves. This may be seen on both a small scale and medium scale. In bars 1 and 2 the rising crotchet motif in the piano in the left hand is answered by the falling crotchet on the last beat of the bar in both the left and right hands. Furthermore, bars 1–3 are essentially instances of an ascending figure in the left hand, while bar 4 answers with a descending figure in the left hand (ex. 8). Harty varies the waves motif so that the contour of the waves covers an irregular and changing number of bars (ex. 8),

Example 8. Harty, Sea Wrack, mm. 1–10

which makes the song more musically interesting, and the variation follows the narrative, such that an increase in tension is reflected in the diminution of the crotchet motif, as one finds in the left hand part of the piano in bars 19–22 (ex. 9).
Example 9. Harty, *Sea Wrack*, mm. 16–22

The struggle to lift the heavy wrack into the boat corresponds to a *tremolo* in bars 19–21 (ex. 8) in the right hand and quavers in the left hand for the wave motif. By the time the storm arrives, the sea is represented from bar 47 onwards by a roiling mass of septuplets and nonuplets in the piano part (ex. 10).

Example 10. Harty, *Sea Wrack*, mm. 45–9

Example 10. (continued)
Not only does Harty have the motif of ascending and descending arpeggios to suggest the waves, he also has a motif within a motif—the descending figure in bars 45–46 (ex. 10): B♭ – Ab – Gb – F has already made an appearance in bars 22–3 (ex. 11) and is reminiscent of the tears motif of John Dowland\textsuperscript{243} and the sighing grief motif of J. S. Bach.\textsuperscript{244}

Example 11. Sea Wrack, mm. 21–3

The figure recurs in bars 67–9, after the storm has subsided, as a mournful commentary on what has transpired (ex. 12).

Example 12. Harty, Sea Wrack, mm. 67–70

\textsuperscript{243} Peter Holman, Dowland: Lachrimae (1604) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 38.
Unlike in Schubert’s *Die Forelle*, where the water motif is heard in the accompaniment but not in the vocal part, in Harty’s *Sea Wrack* the waves motif is heard not only in the accompaniment but also in the vocal part. There is an ascending three note figure in bars 2–3, B♭ – C – D; short, short, long; another in bar 4, D – Eb – F, and another in bars 4–5, G – A – B♭, all suggestive of lapping waves (ex.8). The melodic contour of the vocal line, ascending and descending in bars 2–3, and again in bars 4–5, (ex. 8) also has a gently undulating quality reminiscent of waves. That the waves motif appears in both the vocal part and the accompaniment is an additional unifying feature of the song. Furthermore, the frequent reiteration of the dotted crotchet-quaver-crotchet-crotchet rhythm, every second bar with minor variations (ex. 6), could suggest the action of rowing a boat.

**Irish Traditional Music**

The Irish traditional music elements which appear in *Sea Wrack* include pentatonicism and inflected notes. Inflected notes are found in the sighing motif in the piano part in bar 22 (Ab and G♭, a flattened 7th and 6th note). The pentatonic interlude in the piano part in bars 23–25 functions both as a release of the dramatic tension building up due to elements such as *tremolo* and the sighing motif of bars 22–23 and 45–46 (B♭ – A♭ – G♭ – F) and as an Irish trope within a European art song (ex. 13), a sort of storytelling device, a musical way of reminding the audience that the plot takes place off the coast of Ireland.
Example 13. Harty, *Sea Wrack*, mm. 21–25

![Example 13](image)

**Harmony**

In the piano accompaniment Harty employs several *Ombra* musical devices associated with popular song, namely *tremolo*, mixture chords, chromaticism, syncopation and sudden pauses. The piano introduction provides the first example, a tonic prolongation achieved via the mixture chord IV, the minor subdominant, a chord which introduces a sense of unease (ex. 14). Robert Gauldin observed in *Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music* that the chords “IV and ii₇ are particularly well suited to inject a sense of ominous foreboding in the major mode. In nineteenth-century opera, pre-dominant mixture chords were frequently and effectively exploited in arias when the composer wished to project a feeling of dread.”

He cites as an example Desdemona’s aria in the final act of Verdi’s *Otello*.

Example 14. Harty, *Sea Wrack*, piano part, mm. 1–3

![Example 14](image)

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246 Ibid.
Initially the popular song elements associated with *Ombra*, namely *tremolo*, chord iv, chromaticism, syncopation and a sudden pause appear separately, but Harty combines these elements in order to build tension, as illustrated by the following table (table 6):

Table 6. Popular song elements in *Sea Wrack*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar number</th>
<th>Popular song elements associated with <em>Ombra</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1–3</td>
<td>Chord iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19–20</td>
<td><em>Tremolo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><em>Tremolo</em>, chord iv, added 6th note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Chord iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35, 37, 41</td>
<td>Syncopation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42–43</td>
<td><em>Tremolo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td><em>Tremolo</em>, chord iv, added 6th note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Sudden pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64–7</td>
<td><em>Tremolo</em>, sudden pause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69–70</td>
<td><em>Tremolo</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The *tremolo* in bars 19–20 and 42–43 coincides with the words “the wet wrack, the sea wrack,” and “the dry wrack, the sea wrack” respectively, and while one might be tempted to conclude that the *tremolo* imbues the sea vegetable with a sinister meaning as an agent of doom, a more likely interpretation is that Harty is suggesting a struggle with the powerful wrack before it is pulled free, within the context of a growing unease (ex. 15).

Example 15. Harty, *Sea Wrack*, mm. 16–20
The final *tremolo* in bars 69–70, after the storm has subsided, and the danger has passed, is a subtle reminder of the omnipotence of the ocean (see ex. 12).

**Text-music Relationship**

While Philip Cranmer, in his chapter in David Greer’s book, *Hamilton Harty: his life and music* observes that Harty “has caught the mood of Moira O’Neill’s poem, and the music reeks of Ireland, of the sea, and of tragedy,”²⁴⁷ my claim is slightly different: Harty, through a gradual layering of complexity, erodes a sense of calm, i.e. the tragedy unfolds gradually. At the opening, Harty uses mixture chords to create a sense of light and shade, and to introduce a sense of unease. As illustrated in table 6, the popular song elements with their origins in *Ombra* are added gradually, then the tension is undercut by the pentatonic interlude in bars 23–5 (ex. 13) with its perfect authentic cadence in bar 25. This brief interlude may be considered to “reek” of Ireland, as the pentatonicism is an obvious Irish trope which generates a release in tension by a sudden shift in character. A similar technique is found in horror movies where suspense builds and is undercut repeatedly before the final ghastly *denouement*. The modal harmony is that of a parlour song,²⁴⁸ so, strictly speaking, the mode does not reek of Ireland. The inflected notes are a feature of parlour music as well as Irish traditional music, so, in this respect they are doing double duty. Again, the tragedy is implied by devices such as *tremolo* in the accompaniment, but it is not revealed until the lyrics in bar 51 inform of the boat going down. So the song does not “reek” of tragedy, nor of Ireland, as Cranmer suggests,²⁴⁹ but it may be said to “reek” of the sea, given the wave motif throughout.

²⁴⁸ Irish traditional music uses modes Do, Re, Sol and La, whereas a parlour mode is based around the mode of Mi, on the mediant degree of the scale, corresponding to the Phrygian mode. Breandán Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland*, rev. ed. (1971; repr., Dublin: The Mercier Press, 1977), 9.
ii. *My Lagan Love*

Hamilton Hart's accompanied folk-song *My Lagan Love* came into being as the result of two time honoured traditions: the first was the collection of folk-songs; the second was the tendency to add an accompaniment. This section will begin with a background to the collection of folk-songs in Ireland, followed by a discussion of the folk-song in question, including the relationship between the original, collected by the composer and musicologist Herbert Hughes (1882–1937), and Harty’s version. An analysis of Harty’s setting will complete the section.

The earliest collections of Irish folk music and songs date back to 1724.250 The most significant collections include those of Edward Bunting (1773–1843), Thomas Moore (1779–1852), Patrick Weston Joyce (1827–1914) and George Petrie (1789–1866). Bunting published his three volumes of *A General Collection of Ancient Irish Music* in 1797, 1809 and 1840,251 *Moore’s Irish Melodies* was published between 1808 and 1834 in a ten part series252 and Joyce published his *Ancient Irish Music* in 1873.253 Petrie published *The Complete Collection of Irish Music* in 1855, and a later, unaccompanied version edited by Charles Villiers Stanford was published between 1902 and 1905.254 With the exception of Stanford’s edition of Petrie, all previous collections were published with an added piano accompaniment.

The process of collecting of folk-songs, originating from an antiquarian interest in preserving Ireland’s traditional music,255 gained momentum as part of the Gaelic Revival,

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250 John and William Neal, *A Collection of the most celebrated Irish tunes proper for the violin, German flute or hautboy* (Dublin, 1724); John T. Koch, ed., *Celtic Culture: a Historical Encyclopaedia* vol. 3 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 1021.
which championed the Irish language and culture. During the summer of 1902 a folk-song collecting field trip visited County Donegal in the north of Ireland for the purpose of recording the music of its inhabitants, including the residents of the Dunfanaghy Workhouse. The field trip was organized and financed by Belfast solicitor Francis Joseph Bigger, an avid antiquary and conservationist, and undertaken by Herbert Hughes, then a student at Royal College of Music in London, his brother Fred, and the artist John Campbell.256 There they sought “the fast disappearing Gaelic culture of the region, especially the unrecorded airs and folksong”.257 On their return the poet Joseph Campbell, brother of John, set words to the folk melodies which had been gathered. The collection *Songs of Uladh*, which translates as *Songs of Ulster*,258 published in 1904, included songs collected by Hughes, accompaniments added by Hughes, original lyrics provided by James Campbell and illustrations by James’ brother John.

One of the folk-songs in *Songs of Uladh* is titled *My Lagan Love*, a reconstructed song whose melody began its life as the song *The Belfast Maid*.259 The lyrics of *The Belfast Maid* are found in print as a broadsheet ballad,260 but by the time the musicologist and composer Herbert Hughes encountered the melody during the aforementioned field trip of 1902, the lyrics had become lost and the melody was known as a fiddle tune only.261 Hughes’ notes for *My Lagan Love* explain how the melody survived:

> I got this tune from Proinseas mac Suibhne, who played it to me on the fidil. He had it from his father, Seaghan mac Suibhne, who learned it from a sapper

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257 Ibid.
259 Herbert Hughes, arr., *Songs of Uladh* (Belfast: W. Mullan, 1904), 32.
261 Hughes, arr., *Songs of Uladh*, 32. It is important to note that while the lyrics of *The Belfast Maid* survived in print, the melody survived separately via the oral tradition, and was recorded by Hughes after listening to a violinist.
working on the Ordnance Survey in Tearmann about fifty years ago. It was then sung to a ballad called “The Belfast Maid,” now forgotten in Cill-mac-nEnain.  

Therefore Hughes reconstructed the folk-song with new lyrics provided by James Campbell (Seosamh MacCathmhaoil) and added his own accompaniment to the melody he had collected.  

Harty’s setting of My Lagan Love is an arrangement made from the melody and lyrics in Songs of Uladh. According to an account by John Paddy Browne, Harty was a friend of Hughes and he espied Hughes’ transcription of the melody for My Lagan Love in the latter’s field notebook. He asked if he might “have a crack at arranging it,” and Harty also arranged two more songs which first appear in Songs of Uladh in a collection titled Three Traditional Ulster Airs.  

The following two verses of James Campbell’s five verse poem were used by Harty in his setting:

My Lagan Love

Seosamh MacCathmhaoil (James Campbell)

Where Lagan stream sings lullaby
There blows a lily fair:
The twilight gleam is in her eye,
The night is on her hair.
And, like a love-sick *lenanshee,
She has my heart in thrall;
Nor life I owe, nor liberty,
For love is lord of all.

And often when the beetle’s horn

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262 Hughes, arr., Songs of Uladh, 32

263 In an email message to the author, March 9, 2017, John Paddy Browne, currently in possession of Hughes’ field notebooks, indicated that they were small, pocket book-sized documents in which the composer jotted down melodies only. Therefore, it is unlikely that the notebook contained the entire 5 verses from James Campbell.


265 Hamilton Harty, Three Traditional Ulster Airs (London: Boosey, 1905). The other two songs in this publication are The Blue Hills of Antrim and Black Sheela of the Silver Eye.

Hath lulled the eve to sleep,
I steal unto her shieling lorn,
And thro’ the dooring peep.
There on the cricket’s singing-stone
She spares the bog-wood fire,
And hums in sad sweet undertone
The song of heart’s desire.

*Fairy Mistress*

Table 7 provides a comparison between Hughes’s and Harty’s settings of My Lagan Love. Hughes’ setting most closely resembles the accompanied folk-songs of Joyce,\(^{267}\) with regard to the sparse texture and dyadic chords. Angela Hughes described her father as a “purist”\(^{268}\) who “eschewed drawing-room accompaniment”\(^{269}\) in his settings of the folk-songs in Songs of Uladh. The latter remark may be construed as a veiled reference to Moore’s Irish Melodies, which, with their simple accompaniments, were popular as parlour songs.\(^{270}\)

Table 7. Comparison of Hughes’ and Harty’s settings of My Lagan Love

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Hughes’ version</th>
<th>Harty’s version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tonal centre</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>Mixolydian or mode of Sol</td>
<td>Mixolydian or mode of Sol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentatonicism</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar lines</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double bar lines</td>
<td>Yes—at ends of verses</td>
<td>Yes—at ends of phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time signature</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular pulse</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes, minims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompaniment</td>
<td>Octave unison and dyadic chords at cadence points</td>
<td>Triadic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>First statement of melody unaccompanied, then octave doubling of melody for 2 verses</td>
<td>Piano introduction, interlude and postlude, 2 verses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{267}\)Joyce, *Ancient Irish Music*.
\(^{268}\)Angela Hughes, *Chelsea Footprints*, 9.
\(^{269}\)Ibid.
Table 7. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Hughes’ version</th>
<th>Harty’s version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crooked melody</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Less crooked: note lengths doubled for second, fourth, sixth and eighth line of lyrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression markings</td>
<td>No dynamics, tempo markings or expression markings</td>
<td>Dynamics, tempo markings, expression markings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubato</td>
<td>Notated via pauses</td>
<td>Notated via pauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornamentation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strophic</td>
<td>Yes, 5 verses</td>
<td>Yes, 2 verses—first and third from Hughes’s setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>Footnotes on Gaelic terminology and folklore</td>
<td>Translation of Gaelic term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Data from Harty, *My Lagan Love*; Hughes, *My Lagan Love*

As Harty’s “setting eclipsed that made by Hughes, and is the one now chiefly used by performers,” it is tempting to disregard Hughes’ somewhat minimalist arrangement as less than successful. It does, however, raise some important issues in the arranging of folk-song. First, if the melody is ancient, how might one craft an appropriate accompaniment? Second, how does one allow the simple beauty of a folk-song to shine forth, unobscured by a complex accompaniment? Third, given that folk-song was traditionally performed unaccompanied, how might one justify adding an accompaniment at all?

It is possible that Hughes’ dyadic chords were an attempt to recreate ancient music, given that dyadic chords were found in music of the ninth century in Western Europe in the form of “organum [which]…moved in parallel fifths and fourths.” By providing a

particularly sparse accompaniment, the melody is not overpowered. The octave unisons of the melody throughout make the accompaniment appear curiously un-pianistic; however, this might be a tacit acknowledgement of the unaccompanied tradition associated with folk-song, and a suggestion of vocal part-writing. The dyadic chords (pitched on tonic and dominant) are also somewhat reminiscent of the drones on the Uillean pipes (ex. 16).


Notwithstanding his efforts at authenticity, Hughes’ objective was altogether more commercial—his intention was that folk-song, “popularized through attractive performances by concert artists...would be given a fresh currency, a new lease on life.” It was not his desire to reintroduce nearly extinct folk-songs to the populations whence they had originated,

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275 Herbert Hughes, arr., *Songs of Uladh* (Belfast: William Mullan, 1904), 33.
but to introduce them to an altogether different audience. In this goal he had more in common with the composers of drawing room accompaniments than he might have wished to concede. It seems the edition is intended to charm the reader with a fantasy world of music, poetry, illustration and explanatory notes (fig. 1).

Figure 1. Illustration from Herbert Hughes, arr., *Songs of Uladh*²⁷⁷

![Illustration from Herbert Hughes, arr., *Songs of Uladh*](https://example.com/illustration.png)

In *Songs of Uladh* Hughes presents the melody first unaccompanied, then, with a simple accompaniment which doubles the melody. Dyadic chords, missing a third, appear at the cadence points of Hughes’s version for the first half of the verse, and then more frequently for the latter half (ex. 15). Harty’s arrangement differs from Hughes’s version in several respects—while preserving the melody at the original pitch, Harty adds a pentatonic flavoured piano introduction, interlude and coda, and adds bar lines and fills out the piano part with arpeggiated chords which resemble a harp part.²⁷⁸ The introduction is linked thematically to the verse via

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²⁷⁷ Hughes, *Songs of Uladh*, 32.
their shared first four notes and by virtue of the filled in double octave between beginning and end of the first phrase and of the introduction, thereby achieving a smooth transition (ex. 17).

Example 17. Harty, *My Lagan Love*, piano introduction, mm. 1–2

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**Irish Traditional Music**

Irish traditional music employs four modes, Doh, Re, Sol and La, corresponding to the Ionian, Dorian, Mixolydian and Aeolian modes.\(^{280}\) The melody of *My Lagan Love* is modal—it is in the Sol mode or C Mixolydian, and it also contains inflected notes. Tomás Ó Canainn states, “A note which appears in both sharpened and unsharpened forms in a tune is said to be inflected and such inflection is common in Irish music.”\(^{281}\) In *My Lagan Love* the E\(^{\#}\) in bar 9 becomes an E\(\flat\) in bar 10, and the B\(\flat\) in bar 10 becomes a B\(\sharp\) in bar 11 (ex. 18).


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While one might be tempted to regard such inflections as a modulation away from C Mixolydian to a new mode, this would not be correct.\^282 A better way to interpret the inflected notes is as a form of ornamentation.

One cannot continue to explore features of Irish traditional music such as ornamentation and performance style without first making brief mention of the matter of \textit{sean-nós}. \textit{Sean-nós} translates as “old custom,”\^283 and, as indicated in the literature review of this thesis, refers to a traditional style of singing folk-songs which is “characterised by unaccompanied performance in free rhythm, relative lack of vibrato or dynamic change, and especially by the use of rapid, melismatic ornamentation.”\^284 The \textit{sean-nós} styles of Munster, Connemara and Donegal are quite distinct. The Donegal \textit{sean-nós} “is much less ornamented…[and it] may also contain a steady pulse,”\^285 and a more open vocal tone.\^286 Hartý’s arrangement of \textit{My Lagan Love} contains several mordents, \textit{acciaccaturas} and \textit{gruppettas}, but is otherwise sparsely ornamented. Jeremy Dibble indicates that Hartý’s \textit{My Lagan Love} suggests \textit{sean-nós},\^287 and I would further add that

\^283 Henigan, “\textit{Sean-nós in Donegal}.”
\^284 Williams, “Melodic Ornamentation in the singing of Joe Heaney,” 122.
\^286 Henigan, “\textit{Sean-nós in Donegal}.”
\^287 Dibble, \textit{Hamilton Hartý}, 61.
the Donegal style seems the most appropriate for a singer wishing to perform Harty’s *My Lagan Love* in a traditional manner.

Harty has included a number of ornaments found in Irish traditional music in his version of the melody which are at variance with Hughes’s transcription of the song in *Songs of Uladh*. The following table provides Harty’s ornaments and their rough equivalent in Classical music:

Table 8. Table of ornaments in Harty’s *My Lagan Love*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bar number in Harty</th>
<th>Irish Traditional Music ornament</th>
<th>Classical approximation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Long roll</td>
<td><em>Grupetta</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cut</td>
<td><em>Upper acciaccatura</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,10</td>
<td>Shake</td>
<td><em>Mordent</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Slide</td>
<td><em>Glissando</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Strike (in Hughes’ version)</td>
<td><em>Lower acciaccatura</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


One finds a long roll in bar 6, a cut in bar 7, a shake in bars 8 and 10, and a slide in bar 11. At the point which corresponds to the unornamented bar 4 in Harty’s version, Hughes has included a strike after the minim G, and the long roll in bar 6 appears as a strike in Hughes’ setting. By altering the position of the ornaments, Harty presents a first utterance of the melody, bars 3–5, in an unornamented form (ex. 19).

While these ornaments are found in Classical music, known respectively by the names of grupetta, acciaccatura, mordent and glissando, the purpose of including them in My Lagan Love was to replicate the performance practice of traditional musicians. That these particular Irish traditional music ornaments had a corresponding form in Western music notation enabled Harty to document the characteristics of folk-song performance in a notation accessible to Classical singers. He thereby managed to arrange a folk-song for the concert platform which not only lacks a jarring schism between Classical harmony and a modal melody, but also uses ornaments as a unifying feature. As indicated, the arpeggiated piano accompaniment is reminiscent of idiomatic harp writing and Harty’s setting of My Lagan Love also appears in The Irish Harp Book without editing. Harty’s harp-friendly accompaniment neatly sidesteps

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Hughes’ problem of how to avoid a drawing room accompaniment by having recourse to the most iconic instrument in Ireland—a further unifying feature. Several additional examples of Irish folk-songs being set to a harp-style accompaniment may be found in Granville Bantock’s *One Hundred Folksongs of All Nations* in the form of his arrangements of Thomas Moore’s *The Last Rose of Summer, The Minstrel Boy* and *The Daughters of Erin*.

**Harmony**

The following harmonic analysis provides the chord progression for the piano introduction and first verse of *My Lagan Love*—the second verse is omitted as it is essentially the same as the first (ex. 20).


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290 Ibid., 14-17.
Example 20. (continued)

Where Lagan stream sings lullaby There blows a lily fair:

The twilight gleam is in her eye, The night is on her hair.

And, like a love-sick Ilenan shee, She hath my heart in thrall;
As indicated, the melody is modal, in C Mixolydian mode. The primary chords of I, IV and V of diatonic harmony seem to have been replaced to a large extent by a vocabulary of I, IV and bVII, the major chords of the Mixolydian mode, and they are used to harmonise the modal melody. While it is tempting to construe the minor tonic chords functionally as pivot chords, leading into F Dorian at bar 10, C Ionian at bar 11 and back to C Mixolydian at bar 12 via C Dorian, there is an alternative interpretation. If the inflected notes are regarded as having a coloristic effect within one mode, the chords which harmonise them can be explained in terms of providing a sympathetic coloristic effect within one mode, i.e. non-functional or non-sequential harmony. The perfect authentic cadence: ii – V7 – I in bar 11, (ex. 20) therefore becomes a feature, as the single example of functional harmony. If one interprets the piano introduction as a tonic prolongation by way of the subdominant, the entire verse may also be considered a more extended form of tonic prolongation by way of the subdominant and subtonic (the subtonic acting as an ersetz dominant in a modal context). A reductionist view of all this tonic prolongation is that Harty’s arrangement is based upon one chord function, the tonic (!), and I believe the reason for this is that it moves the piano part into the background. The accompaniment is supportive yet unobtrusive, and allows a certain degree of rubato in between the piano chords, as well as at the pauses at the ends of phrases.
the “quasi-extemporary environment” Harty has created in his accompaniment. This freedom permits a Classical singer to replicate more closely the performance practice of a traditional folk singer, should he/she so wish. Dibble provides an extract on performance practice by the Irish baritone Harry Plunket Greene, dedicatee of My Lagan Love, who discusses ornamentation and rubato in the singing of unaccompanied folk-songs.

Text-music Relationship

The inflected notes between bars 9–12 correspond to a point of heightened emotion in the lyrics, and as the melody of My Lagan Love has already been provided, Harty uses the accompaniment for text painting. According to Plunket Greene, the original folk-song melody has an improvisatory quality and one finds in Harty’s arrangement initially the harmonic rhythm is fairly slow. From bar 10 the harmonic rhythm quickens, culminating in a climax at the end of bar 11. It is only with the B natural in bar 11 that the dominant chord is used in a perfect authentic cadence, the only one in the song. In the first verse, the cadence corresponds to the lyrics, “she hath my heart in thrall.” The metaphor of a struggle between the fairy mistress and the protagonist coincides with the inflected notes in the melody between bars 9–12 and an increase in the harmonic rhythm. The finality of the cadence may be construed as a symbol of the capitulation of the star-struck lover.

Motif

Harty uses the four-note ascending figure of the opening of the verse, G – A – B♭ – C, as a recurring motif at the start of his piano introduction, interlude and postlude (ex. 20). The significance of this particular motif is that it is derived from the opening of each verse, and

291 Dibble, Hamilton Hart, 61.
292 Ibid.
293 Ibid.
contains the flattened seventh of the Mixolydian mode, which is its characteristic note. By repeating it at the start of each piano section, he is making a feature of an element of Irish idiom, namely modal melody, as well as creating a unifying feature across the piano and vocal parts.

**Genre**

Irish folk-songs are traditionally regarded as being unaccompanied, so an accompanied folk-song is already a hybrid creature. As mentioned, nineteenth-century accompanied folk-songs tended towards parlour songs, such as *Moore’s Irish Melodies*. Harty’s arrangement of *My Lagan Love* makes it more substantial in several respects—the piano interludes lengthen the work, and the harp-like piano accompaniment is a clever enhancement to a folk-song melody. By doing so, he has turned the work into a concert piece, thereby blurring the boundaries between folk-song and art song. This situation was also observed in *Sea Wrack*—the tone painting with its vivid depiction of a storm at sea lifts the work from the status of a simple parlour song.

The fact that all three songs have characteristics of more than one sub-genre: *Sea Wrack*—art song/parlour song; *My Lagan Love*—folk-song/art song; *A Cradle Song*—lullaby/art song has parallels in the breakdown of clear demarcations between genres. As indicated in the analysis of *My Lagan Love*, Philip Tagg in his 1982 article “Analysing Popular Music: Theory, Method and Practice” formulated the axiomatic triangle as an explanation for the relationship between art music, folk music and popular music. According to his theory, the three genres possess mutually exclusive characteristics. His theory was not met with

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297 Ibid., 42.
universal acceptance and in 2014 Christopher Partridge discusses tensions within Tagg’s axiomatic triangle by challenging the mutual exclusivity of the definitions of folk music and popular music.²⁹⁸ While there is a temptation to reject Tagg’s analytical framework as no longer relevant—one solution to be posited is the family tree model²⁹⁹ to explain the relationship between sub-genres—my solution (fig. 2) is to provide an updated version of the axiomatic triangle, thereby retaining a hierarchical relationship between genres and sub-genres.

Figure 2. Reconceiving Tagg’s axiomatic triangle

Fig. 2 illustrates how one may superimpose the axiomatic triangle on a colour wheel such that the primary colours correspond to the genres of art music, folk music and popular music and


the secondary and tertiary colours correspond to the sub-genres or hybrid genres which fall between the three major categories. In my model, a hybrid genre such as a folk-song/art song would be found between the primary colours of blue and yellow, as a hue of green.

iii. A Cradle Song

The original purpose of a cradle song, lullaby, berceuse, *Wiegenlied* or hush song was to lull children to sleep. A typical accompanied lullaby in the tradition of nineteenth century lied is in a flat key, in triple or 6/8 meter and with a rocking accompaniment. Harty’s *A Cradle Song* was published in 1913, and is a setting of the poem of the same name from the volume of collected poems by Pádraic Colum (1881–1972) titled *Wild Earth: a Book of Verse* (1907). Colum was an Irish poet prominent in the Gaelic Revival. In 1913 Herbert Hughes (*Songs of Uladh*) published a setting of this poem in America, which makes for an interesting comparison. Harty’s version contains several features typical of a lullaby, namely repeated formulae in the form of a recurrent melodic motif of a stepwise three quaver descending figure in bars 1, 3, 5, etc. and a recurrent rhythmic motif of a quaver and four semiquavers in bars 2, 4, 6 and 11. In 3/8 meter, the song conforms to the tradition of being in 6/8 or triple meter, although it lacks flats in the key signature. Harty’s version also contains a rocking accompaniment (ex. 21).

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302 Ibid.
Example 21. Harty, *A Cradle Song*, mm. 1–11

By way of comparison, Hughes’ setting is in 6/8, with five flats in the key signature and a rocking accompaniment (ex. 22).

Example 22. Herbert Hughes, *O Men from the fields: A Cradle Song*, mm. 1–3

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Motif

It is the subtlety with which Harty manipulates his nominated musical vocabulary in this work that sets his version apart from that of Hughes, which, upon examination, proves slightly less seamless. Both composers engage in thematic development, but Harty is both more economical in his use of material, and more innovative. Harty’s rocking figure in bars 1 and 2 contains all the thematic material upon which his accompaniment is based, and yet the material metamorphoses with such subtlety and ease against a stanzaic vocal melody that the permutations and combinations never protrude from the texture. Placing the piano introduction in the bass clef makes for a rather heavy opening to Hughes’ version (ex. 22), which is less apposite for a cradle song, but signals that there may be more going on in the text-music relationship than first appears. Harty’s opening is light and spacious, but has a keening quality which, again, suggests more might be afoot. Hughes’ song is titled *O Men from the Fields*, which is the first line of the poem, and subtitled *A Cradle Song*, while Harty retains the original title of *A Cradle Song*. The implication is that Hughes has written an art song, which has qualities of a *cradle song* (author’s italics) and that therefore there is a degree of abstraction from the genre of lullaby *vis-à-vis* faithfulness to the typical characteristics. Following this reasoning, in the case of Harty, whose work is titled *A Cradle Song*, and contains no subtitle, the primary aim was to compose an accompanied cradle song. Evidence for this is found in the
solitary 9/8 bar in Hughes’ otherwise 6/8 setting and in the pungent chromaticism of his harmony throughout (ex. 23). The shift in time signature and the chromatic harmony are more suggestive of an art song than an accompanied cradle song.

Example 23. Hughes, *O Men from the Fields: A Cradle Song*, mm. 36—40

Of interest in Harty’s setting is the relationship between the first bar and the second (ex. 24).

Example 24. Harty, *A Cradle Song* mm. 1–2
The descending stepwise sighing figure in parallel sixths in the right hand of the accompaniment becomes an ascending stepwise figure in parallel sixths in the left hand in bar 2. The descending parallel sixths in bar 5 are also derived from those in bar 1, but appear a tone lower. The descending quaver and four semiquavers figure in bar 2 may be construed as an embellished version of the stepwise descending three quaver figure of bar 1, with the second quaver ornamented with a mordent (a shake in Irish traditional music) and the third quaver displaced to the final semiquaver of the bar. This modified sighing ostinato figure appears throughout the verses, as well as in bar 64 of the vocal part, and its hypnotic effect contributes to the soothing nature of this cradle song. The repeated motif also adds coherence to the work. This degree of symmetry within a varied accompaniment has also been seen in Sea Wrack.

In the accompaniment, interest is also maintained through variation in the chordal forms articulated in the accompaniment. The closed position chords in bars 1 and 3 lead to open position chords in bars 2 and 4, and the arpeggiated chords of bars 5 and 6 may be construed as an expansion of the open position chord in bar 2 (ex. 21). The chord in bar 2 becomes an ascending arpeggio in bar 11 (ex. 21), which has as its counterpart a descending arpeggio in bar 12 (ex. 25).

Example 25. Harty, A Cradle Song, mm. 12–14
This arpeggio accompanies a reiteration of the modified sighing figure of bar 2 over bars 11 and 12 (ex. 21) (ex. 25). Additional variation is found in the repositioning of the modified sighing figure, which appears in the inner part in bars 2 and 4 of the treble stave, and in the outer part in bars 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, etc. (ex. 21) (ex. 25). The original sighing figure from bar 1 moves to the outer part in the bass stave in bar 7 (ex. 21). In bar 23 the quaver arpeggio figure becomes a semiquaver arpeggio figure with a pentatonic quality (ex. 26). The significance of such small variation in the motif is that the work retains its coherence and the soporific quality of a lullaby is preserved, while avoiding monotony—a subtle balance between repetition and variation. *A Cradle Song* is concise, varied and unified, which shows a development since *Sea Wrack*, where several shifts between motifs are less than seamless. Also in bars 23–24 Harty introduces a *hemiola* figure to vary the rhythm (ex. 26).

It is noteworthy that as each new element is introduced in the rhythmic interplay, it appears several times, at different pitches, thereby creating coherence. The three-bar arpeggio figure introduced at bar 11 appears four times in succession. The hemiola at bar 23 appears four times also. In bars 29 and 30 the G♭ and F# are upper neighbours, ornamenting the sustained F. The introduction of mordents or shakes at bar 35 provides an embellishment of the modified sighing figure. Harty introduces added notes in bars 52, 56 and 57, but the coloristic effect is not jarring (ex. 27). Again, concision, variety and unity are present in a balanced combination.

Example 27. Harty, A Cradle Song, mm. 50–59

It is of interest that the rhythmic motifs change independently of line or sentence endings in the poem as this creates a moto perpetuo feel. The accompaniment weaves in and out, sometimes silent for the second and third beats while the voice continues, which brings a
lightness of texture to the song and confers an intimate quality. Though the accompaniment is almost unrelentingly motivic, the melodic quality of the motif allows it to stand on equal footing with the vocal part. A further implication of the independently changing rhythmic motifs is that the accompaniment has a degree of autonomy beyond the text of the poem, that it is complementing the meaning of the text, and adding further insight, just as one found in *Sea Wrack* with the portents of doom in the form of interjections such as *tremolo* and mixture chords. An actual interpretation of the lyrics will be posited in the coming paragraphs. Also of interest in *A Cradle Song* is that the original eight bar phrase of the introduction is replaced by 12 + 12 phrasing for the verse, with subdivisions of 3 + 3 + 6. This is achieved by extending the second bar of a 2 + 2 + 4 configuration, and this hesitation within the phrase removes the four-square predictability and lends a reflective quality to the song. This change in rhythmic groupings has ramifications for the relationship between the vocal line and the accompaniment, as it allows the weeping/sighing motif of a quaver and four semiquavers to come to the fore while the vocal line has a sustained note. The prolongation of particular notes in the phrase allows the composer to accentuate a single word within the phrase, which adds shape to the vocal line. Ex. 26 provides an example of accentuation of the word “going”, the highest point of the song, by extending it over two bars.

As indicated, the original purpose of a cradle song was to lull a child to sleep, and, in this stylised cradle song, the performance directions point to certain characteristics of a cradle song that are evident in the work:

- With flowing motion
- *Sempre dolce e legato*
- Simply and quietly
- Dreamily
- *Misterioso*
• *Con espress.*

There are a number of ways in which the work might evoke a dreamlike state between waking and sleeping. The absence of leading notes, the switching between two tonal centres of A and D, and the modal melody all create an ethereal timbre. The tonal ambiguity resulting from the two tonal centres and the lack of primacy of one tonal centre over the other is not resolved until the very end. The mixture chord in the final three bars, an arpeggiated A major chord, provides a *tierce de Picardie*, and perhaps suggests the point at which sleep finally overwhelms the child.

*However*, to construe the lyrics of the poem as a reference to a child being rocked to sleep leaves many unanswered questions and an apparent dislocation in the text-music relationship. In *The Musical Times* of 1913, a review of Hartys’s *A Cradle Song* describes it as a “lullaby of death.”* Hamilton Harty indicates that the poem refers to a wake, an interpretation which makes sense of the lyrics. The sighing motif of the descending quavers in the opening motif is perhaps suggestive of *keening* (*caoineadh*), which would explain its presence throughout the song. Keening was an integral part of the wake and the funeral in rural Ireland, and continued in rural areas such as Nure, County Leitrim, until 1950.* A similar motif may be found in the inner voice-leading parts of the piano introduction by Herbert Hughes (A♭ – Ab – Gb – Eb) (ex. 28).

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310 Anne Ridge, *Death Customs in Rural Ireland: Traditional Funeral Rites in the Irish Midlands* (Galway: Arlen House, 2009), 58.
Example 28. Herbert Hughes, *O Men from the fields: A Cradle Song*, mm. 1–3

![Musical notation](image)

The interval of a tritone from E to Bb in bars 24–26 (ex. 29)

Example 29. Harty, *A Cradle Song*, mm. 22–26

![Musical notation](image)

in the vocal part of Harty’s setting, which at first appeared incongruous given the seemingly innocuous lyrics, “from me and from you,” takes on a symbolic meaning as the point at which the baby dies, or the sense that a sinister force is hovering in the form of Death. The baby is leaving her parents and the soul is leaving the body (see ex. 30). Deryck Cooke describes how composers have used the augmented fourth “to express alien, eerie, hostile and disruptive
forces,” and cites as an example Vaughan Williams' use of the interval to depict “the frozen wastes of his Sinfonia Antartica.”

The name “Mary” may not be an implied reference to a nativity scene—in a Catholic household Mary is ever present in the icons on the wall and in the “Hail Mary.” Further evidence beyond Ainé Mulvey’s claim, which, in e-mail correspondence with the author on June 12, 2016, she indicated was part of common knowledge in an interpretation of Colum’s poem within Ireland, is to be found in a stained glass window by Harry Clarke (1889–1931) titled The Geneva Window. Depicted above lines from Calum’s poem,

Mavourneen is going  
From me and from you,  
Where Mary will fold him  
With mantle of blue!

one finds the mother holding her baby and the virgin Mary in the background. The mantle of blue is associated with the Virgin Mary in sacred art from the eleventh and twelfth centuries onwards. Given all this background, the tierce de Picardie in the form of an ascending arpeggio in the final three bars may be regarded as symbolic of the soul’s ascent into heaven, (ex. 30).

Example 30. Harty, A Cradle Song mm. 60–70

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311 Cooke, The Language of Music, 89.
312 Ibid.
314 Lucy Costigan and Michael Cullen, Strangest Genius: The Stained Glass of Harry Clarke (Dublin: The History Press, 2010), 262. Harry Clarke was a significant figure in the visual arts in Ireland who created stained-glass windows for several churches in Dublin and Cork. Vaughan, Ireland under the Union, II, 1870–1921, 492.
316 Christine Barrely, The Little Book of Mary (San Francisco: Chronicle Books LLC, 2014), 44.
Edward Lippman refers to the use of the high register to symbolise heaven thus:

High and low pitch can represent not only physical position and virtually perceptible ascent and descent, but also abstract conceptions which are somehow associated with high and low, such as God and angel, and hell and death. In whatever period of Western music we look, we find the same spatial symbolism.\textsuperscript{317}

and Albert Schweitzer describes how J. S. Bach uses an ascending motif to symbolise the triumphant ascension [of man] into Heaven.\textsuperscript{318}

When Harty composed \textit{A Cradle Song} in 1913 he had been living in England since 1901. There are some similarities between his song and the arrangement of an English folk-song by another expatriate living in England, the Australian expatriate composer Percy


Grainger, who collected and arranged a Lincolnshire folk-song, *Died for Love*, between 1906–7 and published it in 1912. Yehudi Menuhin said of English music:

> I am drawn to English music because I love the way it reflects the climate and the vegetation which know no sharp edges, no definitive demarcation, where different hues of green melt into each other and where the line between sea and land is always joined and changing.319

The similarities between the landscape and climate of England and Ireland are such that one might extrapolate that this description is apt for the Irish landscape also. Harty’s *A Cradle Song* resembles *Died for Love* with respect to the *moto perpetuo* accompaniment, the three note descending motif in the right hand of the piano part (ex. 31), the modal melody, and the emotional restraint of the melody, with its intervals of steps or small leaps over a range of an octave.

Example 31. Percy Grainger, *Died for Love*, piano part, mm. 1–3320

Two crucial differences are that Grainger has transcribed a pre-existing folk-song, while Harty has composed an original lullaby which sounds like a folk-song, and Harty has a motif which is melodic in quality and undergoes frequent permutations, while Grainger’s *ostinato* figure deliberately has less melodic content and is far less varied. The point of the comparison is that while Harty used an original melody and Grainger used a folk-song, their settings show a degree of similarity, indicating that Harty had absorbed a folk-song idiom and was able to

replicate it in original works. Jeremy Dibble notes that Harty’s piano quintet, *Quintet in F, op. 12*, bears a resemblance to Grainger’s folk-song settings in the use of *pizzicato*, and he also mentions that they shared the same programme in Chappell Ballad Concerts, which suggests they may have met.

Table 9. A comparison of Harty’s musical language in the three songs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements of Harty’s Musical Language</th>
<th>Sea Wrack</th>
<th>My Lagan Love</th>
<th>A Cradle Song</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish poem</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish music genre</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish mode: melody</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish mode: harmony</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original folk-song</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sounds like an original folk-song</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ornamentation</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentatonicism</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hybridised genre</td>
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<td>Parlour mode: melody</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parlour mode: harmony</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parlour music elements: <em>tremolo</em>, pauses, syncopation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chromaticism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motivic development</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Leitmotif</em> (tears)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatic shift in tension</td>
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<td>Quotation</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious symbolism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Data from Harty, *Sea Wrack*; Harty, *My Lagan Love*; Harty, *A Cradle Song*

Key: Green = element associated with Irish idiom
Blue = element not associated with Irish idiom
Yellow = element which enhances Irish idiom, or Irish text

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322 Ibid., 50.
Summary

Having analysed the three songs, it is useful to compare Harty’s musical language therein (table 9). This table illustrate several crucial points:

1. There is a significant increase in the use of elements associated with Irish idiom between Sea Wrack and My Lagan Love, suggesting that Harty was expanding his creative palette.

2. The relative scarcity of elements associated with Irish idiom in Sea Wrack may potentially be attributed to the presence of elements associated with parlour music. Sea Wrack is an art song/parlour song hybrid with aspects of Irish idiom.

3. There is a very close similarity between the musical language of My Lagan Love and A Cradle Song, suggesting that once Harty had settled upon his musical palette, he remained faithful to it.

4. Text-painting is a constant, found in all three songs. The implication is that this device was not specific to a particular sub-genre.

5. Motivic development is a constant, found in all three songs, again implying that it was a characteristic of Harty’s compositional style. One finds evidence of motivic development in Harty’s An Irish Symphony (1904).

6. Harty makes use of Dowland’s “tears motif” in Sea Wrack and returns to it in A Cradle Song.

7. All three songs are hybridized genres: e.g. art song/parlour song in the case of Sea Wrack.

It is now possible to respond to the three statements set out in the introduction with recourse to the results in the above table. In response to Raymond Warren’s claim that Harty’s musical nationalism was in melody alone, and that his harmony was “generally diatonic or chromatic even when the melody was modal;”

323 this is not the case for the three songs examined in this thesis. In each case the melody and harmony match—parlour mode and

parlour harmony for Sea Wrack, and an Irish modal melody and Irish modal harmony for the other two songs. The examples of “Anglo-European musical language”\textsuperscript{324} found in Sea Wrack (mixture chords), My Lagan Love (perfect authentic cadence) and A Cradle Song (tierce de Picardie) are there for effect.

In response to Harry White’s observation that “the greater part of creative Irish music succumbed to the dutiful presence of the air,”\textsuperscript{325} it is useful to examine Harty’s oeuvre for proof. Harty arranged Irish folk-songs or melodies on six separate occasions: An Irish Symphony (1904); Three Traditional Ulster Airs (1905); Colleen’s Wedding Song (1905); The Londonderry Air (1924) Three Irish Folksongs (1929); The Lasses of Donaghadee (1936). The folk-songs in An Irish Symphony were included in accordance with the regulations of the Feis Ceoil, and Harty treated them motivically. It is possible that the Feis Ceoil played a part in encouraging composers to treat their heritage with slightly less hesitancy when arranging folk music in a Classical context, thereby overcoming the creative paralysis\textsuperscript{326} alluded to by Harry White. The rest of Harty’s oeuvre is original compositions or arrangements of works by Handel, John Field and Berlioz. Thus, White’s statement seems to have less relevance for Harty’s oeuvre.

I would accept Nevil Cardus’ remark that Harty’s music “did not vaunt itself in any “avant garde” directions,”\textsuperscript{327} but the subsequent comment that [Harty] was content to compose for pleasure, out of love of sound considered good to hear in his day”\textsuperscript{328} seems somewhat dismissive when applied to his entire oeuvre. Harty was using modal harmony at a time when

\textsuperscript{324} Warren, “Orchestral Music,” 90.
\textsuperscript{325} White, “The Preservation of Music and Irish Cultural History,” 133.
\textsuperscript{326} Ibid.
Vaughan Williams was developing an interest in it also,\textsuperscript{329} so he was at least keeping pace with this contemporary. To see nothing beyond Harty’s well-documented aesthetic regarding beauty,\textsuperscript{330} is to miss much of what is going on in his works. Tone painting and the use of Irish idiom are obvious additions, not to mention an element of theatre. I would like to suggest an axis between the following three aspects to describe Harty’s Irish works:

- Beauty
- Irish idiom
- Text-painting

To overlook the manner in which Harty uses text-painting to represent and symbolise the lyrics, and to provide the hidden meaning of the text, is to miss out on an entire layer of meaning in his songs. Even the manner in which Harty varies his motif in \textit{Sea Wrack} and \textit{A Cradle Song} is an aesthetically pleasing aspect of the songs. While one may concede that the interjections of pentatonicism and \textit{Ombra} elements in \textit{Sea Wrack} are a deliberately theatrical effect, the greater synthesis of elements in \textit{A Cradle Song} puts it on a par with Grainger’s \textit{Died for Love} as a masterpiece in miniature.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{329} Hugh Ottaway and Alain Frogley, “Vaughan Williams, Ralph,” \textit{Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online} (Oxford University Press), accessed September 6, 2017, \url{http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42507}.
\end{itemize}
Conclusion

Hamilton Harty was born during a time of great change in his native Ireland, a time which saw a renaissance in Gaelic culture, including literature and music, and a time of political unrest resulting in the eventual carving up of a nation into the Irish Free State in 1922. He belonged to a group of composers born in the second half of the nineteenth century, such as Herbert Hughes (1882–1937) and Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924), who took a particular interest in folk music—Hughes was a collector in the tradition of composers such as Bartók, and Stanford edited a volume of the collector George Petrie. Harty was also a contemporary of John Larchet (1884–1967) and Carl Hardebeck (1869–1945), both of whom were keen to establish an Irish school of composition. Composers of the time were arranging Irish folk-songs, or writing original compositions with an Irish flavour, as illustrated by Tables 1 and 2 in the introduction to this thesis, and in his Irish songs Harty set poems about love and loss, hardship, life on the land and life on the sea. This thesis has focussed on three of Harty’s early Irish compositions—*Sea Wrack* (1905), *My Lagan Love* (1905) and *A Cradle Song* (1913)—with the intention to examine the development of his compositional voice.

Harty is known principally as a conductor and accompanist, and there have been claims that his compositional style is somewhat derivative. Much has been made of Harty’s autodidacticism as a composer, or semi-autodidacticism, to be precise, a matter explored in Chapter 2, a background chapter, but the issue is not that he was self-taught, it was the methods he used. My response to the charge that Harty’s works were derivative (a claim found in

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331 McGarry, “Southern Ireland, 1922–32: A Free State?”
333 Holden, “Harty, Sir (Herbert) Hamilton.”
Chapter 1, the literature review) was that they were deliberately so. He used compositional models in order to teach himself how to write in a particular genre and style, such as a piano concerto in the style of Rachmaninov. A further implication of this theory on models is that many of his early works, and in particular first off works in a particular genre, were, in effect, compositional exercises that Harty the teacher imposed on Harty the pupil, and therefore should not be judged harshly as mature works. This recalibration reduces the number of mature works in Harty’s oeuvre, an important detail for those wishing to make qualitative remarks.

Harty’s originality has also been challenged on the level of his musical language, with Raymond Warren claiming that Harty used Romantic music idiom and no modal harmony, implying that Harty’s Irish compositions lacked a degree of synthesis between melody and harmony. With this claim to be proved or disproved, the three songs were analysed in terms of genre, motif, harmony, text-music relationship, Irish traditional music and symbolism. The results were at times surprising. *Sea Wrack* did turn out to have most of the attributes of a parlour song, and the mode of the melody was a parlour mode, not an Irish traditional music one, nor a diatonic melody. It also had the musical language of nineteenth century Romantic music, but the crucial points were that:

a. while the balance in the song was greatly in favour of parlour song characteristics, Romantic music idiom such as mixture chords were employed to harmonize the occasional inflected notes in the melody, inflection being a feature of both parlour song and Irish traditional music

b. the one very distinctive example of Irish traditional music in the form of a pentatonic piano interlude is used as a dramatic shift in tension

The song, while cleverly constructed and dramatic in the right hands, tended to have a series of elements, occurring as brief interjections, such as the portents of doom in the form of

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tremolos, borrowed from the Ombra tradition. High drama on the high seas. By contrast, it was found that more unifying features (such as idiomatic harp writing) were employed in both My Lagan Love and A Cradle Song, resulting in a greater degree of synthesis of elements such as Irish traditional music, motivic development, modal harmony and text painting. The additional element of musical symbolism to represent the soul’s ascent into heaven at the end of A Cradle Song is a further expansion of Harty’s musical language.

The conclusion is that Raymond Warren’s remark is not as inaccurate as expected—Harty does use the language of nineteenth century Romantic composition in these three works, but he uses it to further his own compositional aims and he uses it in a modal harmonic context—either that of a parlour mode or an Irish traditional music mode. He uses pivot chords to modulate between modes instead of between keys and he uses mixture chords (a feature of Schubert) to harmonise the inflection in the vocal line and to create tension in Sea Wrack. He employs motivic development to develop a modal melody in A Cradle Song, and secondary dominants provide colour. On balance, the three works may be said to be mostly modal, but a nineteenth-century Romantic diatonic idiom is used occasionally where effective.

An unexpected finding was the element of drama in Sea Wrack, in the form of the interjection of a pentatonic interlude to release tension and various Ombra elements designed to build suspense and create a sense of impending doom. This interpretation provides a justification for these brief interjections, rather than attributing their presence to the relative inexperience of the composer in failing to create a unified work by integrating disparate

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337 A similar device was used by Alfred Hitchcock, who, in creating suspense, employed “a hierarchy of knowledge [such that]...the audience sometimes [had] knowledge that the character in the scene [did] not have.” In the case of Harty’s Sea Wrack, the composer is at the top of the hierarchy, followed by the audience, who are fed portents of doom, followed by the characters in the song, unaware of the fate to befall them. Philip J. Skerry, *Psycho in the Shower: the History of Cinema’s Most famous Scene* (New York: Continuum, 2008), 149.
elements seamlessly. As an art song with features of parlour music, it was programmable both in a serious voice recital and in the lighter Chappell Ballad Concerts in which both Harty and Nicholls performed. The storm at sea, depicted by roiling cascades in the piano part, was an opportunity for the accompanist to enthrall with his/her virtuosity in either context.

With regard to further research, having analysed a mere three songs from a possible sixty, I have barely scratched the surface. Jan Smaczny has indicated that Harty’s songs are his best works, and Jeremy Dibble felt that The Drover was particularly effective. In correspondence with the author on February 27, 2017, Declan Plummer indicated that The McClay Library at Queen’s University Belfast had moved premises, and during the move, an amount of uncatalogued Harty manuscripts were discovered.

The most desirable outcome of this research would be a greater interest in the performance of the works of Harty, Stanford and Hughes. Stanford’s Sea Wrack is a song of transcendent beauty and lyricism, and yet it is rarely heard. A practical application would be the funding of a reprint of this hard to find work. More performances of My Lagan Love on flute or voice and more performances of A Cradle Song on voice would both be desirable outcomes. The German countertenor Andreas Scholl has recorded a CD of folk-songs titled “Wayfaring Stranger” including a version of “She Moved through the Fair,” a reconstructed folk-song collected by Herbert Hughes on a field trip, evidence of interest in this repertoire amongst classical musicians.

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