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# The Ulster-Scots Musical Revival: Transforming Tradition in a Post- Conflict Environment

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## Introduction

- 1 The Ulster-Scots musical revival that started to flower in Northern Ireland during the late 1990s has attracted little academic attention compared to the controversies surrounding the Ulster-Scots language movement of the same period, perhaps because entrenched western modes of thought associated with Enlightenment rationalism and 19th century nationalism have tended to see language as the core of a “national culture”, and music as a somewhat frivolous optional extra<sup>1</sup>. I have previously made the case that music-making processes are central to the emergence and maintenance of political identities in Ulster<sup>2</sup>. A decade of ethnographic experience as a researcher and participant in Ulster-Scots music has convinced me that it is musical activism that has had by far the greatest effects in propagating the concept of Ulster-Scots identity, and often commitment to such an identity, within a significant section of the population of Northern Ireland.
- 2 Those academics who have paid attention to the musical revival have tended to dismiss it, along with the language movement, as a spurious “invented tradition”<sup>3</sup>. In this paper I will first give a brief account of the development of the revival. I will then move to consider to what extent Hobsbawm & Ranger’s (1983) concept of “invented tradition” is applicable to the movement, before going on to situate it in relation to Rosenberg’s (1993) theorisation of folk revivals as “the transformation of tradition”. I will then focus on similarities and differences between the Ulster-Scots revival and earlier “Irish traditional music” revivals, using Torino’s (2008) distinction between “presentational” and “participatory” musics to highlight aesthetic differences between the two contemporary genres which, I suggest, are related to the differing class composition of performance groups and audiences. Finally, I will consider the impact of the Ulster-Scots musical

revival on both musical practices and conceptions of identity within Northern Ireland, and on the challenges facing Ulster-Scots musicians in a period of economic hardship and associated hardening of ethno-political divisions.

## The Development of the Ulster-Scots Revival

- 3 The Ulster-Scots Language Society was formed in 1992, and by the time of the 1998 Belfast Agreement, the idea of Ulster-Scots language and culture as something different from both insular “Irish” and metropolitan “British” culture had become well-established. Largely at the behest of the Ulster Unionist Party, official status for Ulster-Scots was embedded in the Agreement and the Ulster-Scots Agency was established to conserve and promote both language and culture. Dowling<sup>4</sup> and others have suggested that this was motivated chiefly by a desire to provide a cultural counterweight to the co-option of the Irish language movement by nationalist political parties.
- 4 The agreement opened a space within which it was possible for cultural entrepreneurs to innovate. One of the most significant of such figures was Willie Drennan, a traditional musician and former marching band member from Ballymena, who returned to Northern Ireland with his family in 1997, after many years living in Nova Scotia. Drennan, who had released his first Ulster-Scots album whilst still living in Canada, established Fowkgates – described as an artists collective, which released the CD, *A Clatter O Fowk*, in 1999, with financial assistance from the Ulster-Scots Language Society. As well as various performances by Drennan, including one with a folk band alongside his daughter Eleesha, and another playing the Lambeg drum accompanied by bagpipes, the album included performances by the McNeillstown Pipe Band; traditional unaccompanied singing in the Ulster-Scots dialect; singer-songwriters Bob Speers and Roy Arbuckle<sup>5</sup> performing their own English language compositions with guitar accompaniment, the Co. Down based group Appalachian Strings; and reciter of Ulster-Scots poetry, Natty Shaw. This CD effectively defined what would be included in Ulster-Scots performances from this point on – tunes from the Scottish, Irish and Appalachian dance and march traditions performed by “folk” ensembles or marching bands; Lambeg drums; traditional and contemporary song in both the Ulster-Scots and English languages; and Ulster-Scots recitation.
- 5 The same year, and using funding from the same source, Drennan released an album entitled *Fae Oot O Slemish* with a new musical partner, John Scott Trotter, a multi-instrumentalist from Londonderry who made his living as a jazz-player. Built around Co. Antrim fiddle tunes of Scottish origin, the album also included Drennan’s own compositions, and introduced two more elements that would come to be central to Ulster-Scots performances, the songs of Rabbin Burns, and the unique rhythms of the fife tunes which traditionally accompanied Lambeg drums in certain Ulster counties<sup>6</sup>, some of which were closely related to Irish and Scottish dance tunes, whilst others were peculiar to the fife fraternity.
- 6 Both albums were well received both by critics and audiences, and in 2000, Drennan and Trotter formed the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra (USFO). The USFO produced a distinctive sound by bringing together fiddles, accordions, whistles and flutes with the backing rhythms of a double-bass and percussion provided by rope-tensioned military style drums<sup>7</sup>. Their repertoire included all the elements that had been defined in Drennan’s earlier work, although sometimes combined in innovative ways. Also distinctive amongst

folk groups was the size of the ensemble. As intimated in the name, the USFO put a lot of people on stage: a minimum of ten players could sometimes rise as high as twenty when musicians from other groups were invited to join them on stage. The scale of the ensemble, combined with the on-stage banter and musical interaction of Drennan's and Trotter's very different but complementary personalities gave the group a powerful stage presence.

- 7 Over the next four years, the USFO toured tirelessly, playing large numbers of village, church and Orange halls as well as major venues and festivals ranging from the Ulster Hall and the Orange Order's Twelfth of July celebrations, to the Portpatrick Folk Festival in Scotland. Performances outside Northern Ireland also included a Scotch-Irish Symposium at Emory University, Atlanta, and participation in an ethnomusicological workshop and concert at the Irish World Music Centre in Limerick (IWMC), which prompted the director, Michael O'Suilleabhain to write:

Their emphasis on their own identity existing as both an integral and separate aspect of Scottish and Irish cultures leads to a more inclusive definition of music and dance practice. The Ulster Scots Folk Orchestra have not just opened our eyes to another wonderful and enriching music and dance culture of this island but have also challenged us to redefine ourselves as musicians and our music as all our musics<sup>8</sup>.

- 8 This quotation appeared on the sleeve of the USFO's rousing debut album, *Planet Ulster*, released later in 2001. This was followed by another album in each succeeding year, culminating in the poignant *Somme*, released in 2004. It was this four-year period of performance and recording by USFO that effectively defined Ulster-Scots music in the eyes of its core audience, as well as the Northern Irish media and the wider population it reached.
- 9 During this period, other Ulster-Scots groups started to emerge, of which the most prominent were Ailsa, and The Low Country Boys. Ailsa were a three piece ensemble built around piper Wilbert Garvin, whose debut album, *The Misty Burn* (2003), set poetry from the Rhyming Weavers, whose work was central to the Ulster-Scots language movement, to Barbara Gray's newly composed or arranged tunes, sung by Michael Sayers. Their intimate presentation was significantly different to the expansive sound of the USFO. The Low Country Boys were different again - performing a repertoire of gospel songs in both Ulster-Scots and English, in four-part harmony accompanied by Appalachian style instrumentation<sup>9</sup>. The Low Country Boys often performed alongside the USFO and proved popular with audiences. Their debut album, *Gran Time Comin*, was released in early 2005.
- 10 Later in 2005, the USFO split, with John Trotter and a number of other players leaving to form a new group, the Ulster-Scots Experience (USX). The USX sought to maintain the "big band" presence which characterised the USFO, and as a result both groups drew more musicians into the field. Over the following five years, both groups continued to perform widely, and large numbers of smaller Ulster-Scots groups appeared, some associated with loyalist marching bands, whose members' eyes had been opened to new musical possibilities by USFO and USX performances. Most prominent of these were Maiden City Beat, which grew from the Churchill Flute Band in Londonderry, and Skullduggery, which had strong associations with Dunloy Accordion Band in Co., Antrim<sup>10</sup>. Other significant names were: Scad the Beggars, Session Beat, Rightly On, Risin' Stour, Keep 'Er Lit and the first Ulster-Scots folk-rock group, Sontas.

- 11 A significant factor in the growth of the Ulster-Scots folk scene was the establishment in 2000 of the Ulster-Scots Folk Festival in Cairncastle, a small village situated between Larne and the Glens of Antrim which overlooked the North Channel coast and the Mull of Kintyre. Originally conceived as a celebration of the centenary of the village's Orange Lodge, the first festival was a small-scale single-day affair. However, in subsequent years it grew considerably in size, attracted funding from the Ulster-Scots Agency, established links with Ulster-Scots groups in Scotland, brought over Scottish performers, and became a significant showcase for Ulster-Scots music and dance.
- 12 The success of the first festival also gave birth to another phenomenon, the establishment of a monthly musical "soiree" held in Cairncastle Orange Hall. Again, Willie Drennan was the primary musical initiator, but as the soirees increased in popularity, leadership passed to the Grousebeaters, fronted by Cecil Knox, a local, accordion-based group which grew from the informal music-making. Whilst Knox compered, and called up local and visiting musicians, reciters and dancers to perform, the Grousebeaters provided musical continuity and accompaniment when required. The soirees also increased in popularity to the point that they outgrew the Orange Hall, and had to be moved to a hotel in neighbouring Ballygalley. Similar soirees occasionally take place in other parts of the country, but none have proved as popular or durable as Cairncastle's.
- 13 Funding for Ulster-Scots media agreed in the 1998 settlement has provided a platform for Ulster-Scots musicians to reach wider audiences through radio and television, and the Republic of Ireland's RTE and TG4 have also produced programs featuring Ulster-Scots music. The genre has received very limited exposure outside the island of Ireland, however, and an attempt by the Ulster-Scots Agency to stage a large-scale musical production, *On Eagle's Wing*, in the USA, had to be abandoned due to poor ticket sales<sup>11</sup>.
- 14 As the popularity of Ulster-Scots folk music grew, the movement started to influence music-making within the established marching-band genres, with an increasing interest in "traditional" material, and tunes introduced by groups such as the USFO and Low Country Boys began to be played as street marches. Some bands introduced the term "Ulster-Scots" into their names<sup>12</sup>, and Ulster-Scots concerts became a common form of fundraising event.
- 15 The 2008 financial crisis has had a noticeable negative effect on the Ulster-Scots folk scene, with numbers of events decreasing, a number of musical groups disappearing, and widespread problems due to cuts in funding. The Cairncastle Festival, for instance, lost funding from the Ulster-Scots Agency in 2012 but has managed to survive on a reduced scale thanks to local support. Whilst Ulster-Scots music is probably now too well established to disappear and the appetite for it remains, it is financially struggling rather than flourishing.

## An Invented Tradition?

- 16 Dowling entitled his 2007 paper on the Ulster-Scots revival "Confusing Culture and Politics" whilst Vallely's 2008 heading was "Scenting the Paper Rose". Both titles carry connotations of inauthenticity associated with the idea of an "invented tradition". Both Dowling and Vallely point out the significance of the political context created by the 1998 Belfast Agreement, and the institutionalisation of Ulster-Scots culture and language through the establishment of the Ulster-Scots Agency in providing a milieu in which the

musical movement could develop. Since it is unarguable that “Ulster-Scots music” was almost unheard of before the Belfast Agreement<sup>13</sup>, it could be seen as a paradigmatic example of an “invented tradition”, as theorised in Hobsbawm & Ranger’s seminal work. Hobsbawm asserted that insofar as such traditions refer to a historic past, “the peculiarity of ‘invented’ traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious<sup>14</sup>”.

- 17 “Factitious continuity” is precisely the allegation put forward in Vallely’s paper, which claims that “Ulster-Scots music [...] does not arise from an assortment of extant objects and practices” and that “[w]hile it may have Scottish antecedents, this identified music does not have Scots continuity<sup>15</sup>” but is the product of an “importation strategy<sup>16</sup>” focusing on “bagpipes [...] marching bands and Scottish dancing [...] all a nineteenth century highly evolved Victorian Scottish legacy<sup>17</sup>”. In his book, published later the same year, Vallely goes further, asserting that: “The music does not draw for resources on the surviving extant traditional music” but involves “a music acquisition exercise” which is “a profoundly ahistoric, unartistic stab at irredentism<sup>18</sup>”.
- 18 Dowling presents a considerably more nuanced picture, but also claims there is a tendency to “import recently evolved cultural practices like Scottish Highland dancing, rather than focusing on practices embedded in historic Ulster itself<sup>19</sup>”.
- 19 Drennan’s discussion of the broad range of musical practices included in the Ulster-Scots revival (in this issue) shows that Vallely’s case depends upon a selective focus on certain of the revival’s practices and the exclusion of many others from consideration. Vallely’s claim, also asserted by Dowling, that the revival does not draw on traditional music within Ulster is a significant misconception, for as Drennan makes clear, local elements such as marching band styles, Lambeg drums and the fiddle tradition were central to the revival from its inception, and there are few Ulster-Scots events that do not include traditional jigs, reels and hornpipes played on fiddles, accordions, whistles and other instruments: including many tunes also played in the “Irish traditional music” of which Vallely and Dowling are both devotees. Whilst Vallely claims that the music of the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra is dominated by Scottish Highland music<sup>20</sup>, the group’s discography shows that this has only ever been one element of their repertoire, which also includes jigs, reels, hornpipes, fifeing tunes and marches from the north of Ireland, Ulster/Lowland Scots and English language song, and music and song deriving from the Ulster-Scots diaspora<sup>21</sup>. The IWMC Report on Ulster-Scots Music noted that the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra’s arrangements were “indicative of a traditional performance practice in the more literate and harmonically aware *Scottish* tradition – yet the actual choice of tunes was more *Irish* in nature<sup>22</sup>” (original emphasis).
- 20 Moreover, whilst Dowling and Vallely are correct in their assertion that Scottish Highland Dancing is a recent import to Ulster, the same cannot be said of the other musical strand on which Vallely focuses: the pipe band. Pipes had been played in Ulster for centuries, whilst pipe bands appeared in the first decade of the 20th century, massively increased in popularity following World War Two, and had become the dominant genre in Orange Parades by the early 1950s<sup>23</sup>. By the 1990s, Northern Ireland already had the largest branch of the Scottish Pipe Band Association, with more bands than any of the Scottish districts, and Northern Ireland pipe bands were already winning top honours on the global competitive circuit, which they still dominate. It is not credible, then, to claim that pipe bands were merely imported “tartan iconology”, since they were a strongly established musical tradition in Northern Ireland for nearly a century before the Ulster-Scots movement of the 1990s.

- 21 For Hobsbawm the term “invented tradition” includes “both ‘traditions’ actually invented, constructed and formally instituted, and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and dateable period”<sup>24</sup>. Hobsbawm offers the British royal Christmas broadcast (instituted 1932) as an example of the first, and the practices surrounding the English Cup Final as an example of the latter. Vallely, and to a lesser extent, Dowling, claim that the Ulster-Scots musical movement is very much of the first type – an invented, constructed and formally instituted “tradition” that owes little to what has actually gone before. Vallely strengthens his case by pointing out that the “tartan iconology” on which he claims the Ulster-Scots movement is based is itself of comparatively recent provenance<sup>25</sup>. In fact Trevor-Roper’s chapter concerning “The Highland Tradition of Scotland” in Hobsbawm & Ranger’s (1983) text has frequently been cited as describing a paradigmatic example of an “invented tradition”.
- 22 There is no question that Dowling and Vallely are right to assert that the 1998 political settlement and institutions such as the Ulster-Scots Agency and the Ulster-Scots Heritage Council played a crucial role in the emergence of the Ulster-Scots revival. Moreover, the origins of Ulster-Scots music can be pinpointed to a certain place, time and individual. It seems clear that Willie Drennan, in association with his musical partner John Scott Trotter and the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra they formed, invented Ulster-Scots music, as a genre, between 1996 and 2000 in precisely the same way that Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys invented Western Swing in the mid-1930s and Bill Monroe and The Bluegrass Boys invented Bluegrass music during the late 1940s. None of these genres, however, were invented out of thin air – all owed a great deal to what had preceded them.
- 23 The Ulster-Scots revival seems in many ways to be closer to Hobsbawm’s second type of “invented tradition”, for unlike the royal Christmas broadcast, and more like the practices surrounding the Cup Final, it was never under the control of a single authority, but emerged over a period of years as a result of the commitment of a wide range of diverse actors with different and sometimes conflicting agendas, including organisers, musicians, (professional, semi-professional and community) and audiences.
- 24 In fact, I suggest the Ulster-Scots revival is neither just an officially instituted invention, nor an entirely spontaneous popular movement, but both occurring in tandem – sometimes moving together, sometimes at loggerheads, as the differing motives of participants lead to shifting alliances and conflicts. Both the “official” and “popular” revivals, however, are dependent upon each other. As Dowling points out<sup>26</sup>, funding from government sources has been highly significant in providing performance opportunities for Ulster-Scots performers, but I would also note that official agencies are dependent upon performers and audiences to sustain their credibility. Moreover, rather than consisting entirely of freshly imported practices, much of the revival seems rather to fall into what Hobsbawm described as the “more interesting” category of those which use “ancient materials to construct invented traditions of a novel type for quite novel purposes<sup>27</sup>”.
- 25 Both Handler (1984) and Burke (1986) have pointed out the conceptual difficulties of attempting to differentiate “invented” from “authentic” traditions, since all tradition is at some point, humanly created and instituted<sup>28</sup>. An alternative lens through which to examine the Ulster-Scots musical revival is put forward in Rosenberg’s (1993) edited volume on North American folk revivals: *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined*, in which it is suggested that such revivals are not so much inventions of tradition, as transformations, or reinventions<sup>29</sup>.

## A Transformed Tradition?

- 26 As the title suggests, the idea of revival as transformation runs through most of the papers in Rosenberg's (1993) volume, but it is a particular type of transformation on which they focus. In Jabbour's foreword to the book, he observes that: "What we were doing (in the old-time string-band revival) is [...] easy to describe as a cultural transfer of a musical tradition from one segment of American society to another<sup>30</sup>". Rosenberg's introduction summarises the view presented in many of the papers in his volume that "folk music revivals [...] constitute an urban middle-class intellectual community [...] that [...] appropriates, and consumes the music<sup>31</sup>" of a lower-class, and usually rural originating community. Rosenberg's own paper adds that "Revivalists [...] view the tradition's past [...] from the viewpoint of a different class" and that "[...] revivalists [...] are from a dominant class and therefore have the power to choose the terms on which they will assimilate<sup>32</sup>", whilst Lederman observes that, in this context, "neither revival audiences nor members of traditional societies appreciate the music of the other<sup>33</sup>". Finally, Narváez observes that: "Like many other forms of sociological change, folk revival arises out of a restless or vehement dissatisfaction with one's own contemporary culture<sup>34</sup>".
- 27 When we apply this model of transformation to the Ulster-Scots revival, we find a disjuncture in every dimension. Rather than being a transfer of a musical tradition from a rural lower-class to an urban dominant class, the majority of the musicians, and the majority of the audiences for Ulster-Scots music are drawn from the working-class and lower middle-class in which the revived traditions originated. Rather than being appropriated by an urban middle-class, Ulster-Scots music has often been ignored or ridiculed by the urban middle-class, precisely because it remains attuned to the aesthetic tastes of the "backwoodsmen" of the rural lower-classes<sup>35</sup>. There is little conflict between the tastes of "traditional society" and revivalists, since the revivalists are largely drawn from the traditional society, and finally, the revival arose less from "dissatisfaction with one's own contemporary culture" as from a dissatisfaction with the ways in which that culture was perceived, or not perceived, by those outside it. Much of Willie Drennan's motivation, for instance, came from his experiences as a traveling musician in North America, where he found himself expected, and sometimes economically compelled, to fit into what he regarded as a one-dimensional stereotype of romantically nationalist, Catholic and crassly commercialised "Irishness": an image which he felt bore no relation to his own identity as a northern unionist of Scots Presbyterian heritage.
- 28 Rather than a transferral of a musical tradition from one social group to another, I suggest that the Ulster-Scots revival is a transformation of a different kind: a deliberate shift to the performance context of the "folk band" by musicians who had matured in other musical contexts, and who were interested in both broadening their own musical practice, and in performing for different or broader audiences than they had hitherto reached. These performers had previously performed in a range of different settings. The most significant of these in terms of numbers were probably those whose musical background was in loyalist marching bands. There were others whose primary performance opportunities had been in Irish traditional sessions and groups, piping competitions, Scottish or Irish céilidh bands, country or showbands and churches or gospel halls, whilst some had played in a number of these contexts. Moreover, many of

these musicians continued to play in their original settings, alongside their “Ulster-Scots folk” performances, leading to the perception amongst audiences that many of these genres were, or could be to some extent, “Ulster-Scots”.

- 29 Moreover, the context of the “folk band performance” allowed these different genres to be combined in new and innovative ways, bringing together previously separate practices such as fiddling, marching band percussion and gospel singing to create something that was genuinely new, and yet still sounded familiar to traditionalist audiences.
- 30 I suggest, therefore, that the Ulster-Scots musical revival is indeed a “transformation of tradition”, but of a significantly different type to those documented in Rosenberg’s (1993) volume. There are interesting comparisons to be made in this regard to the “Irish traditional music” revivals of the 20th century which preceded the Ulster-Scots movement.

## The Ulster-Scots Revival Compared to Irish Traditional Music Revivals

- 31 I will consider two significant “revivals” of Irish traditional music, the first associated with the Gaelic League and the “Celtic Twilight” of the early 20th century, the second associated with the counter-cultural folk revival of 1960s North America.
- 32 Both Fairbairn and McCarthy describe how, following Douglas Hyde’s call in 1892 for the de-Anglicisation of Ireland, there was a deliberate attempt by the urban intelligentsia to “revive” traditional music, and that this revival was an attempt to transform a tradition of solo performance, usually in a domestic setting, into a “public” art form in a concert context suitable for a “national” music<sup>36</sup>. Some similarity may be seen here in regard to the USFO’s declared intention of “presenting Ulster Scots cultural traditions at a professional level” (sleeve notes: *Planet Ulster* CD), or as Willie Drennan put it, “taking kitchen music on to the stage<sup>37</sup>”. The ways in which this was done in the two cases were quite different, however, as were their effects.
- 33 In 1897, academic and composer Annie Patterson set up the first Feis Ceoil. Modelled on the Welsh cultural revival’s Eisteddfod, it was a competition that brought peasant performers from all parts of Ireland to be judged by classically trained musicians with quite different aesthetic values<sup>38</sup>. Unsurprisingly, the judges did not appraise the native performers highly, and as a result, formal training was introduced to render performances acceptable to a middle-class which measured them by the criteria of European art-music. Breathnach claimed that by the 1920s, the competitors in the Feis Ceoil were not traditional players “in the sense that the early ones had been”<sup>39</sup>. Continuing attempts to not only “revive” but also “improve” the music continued throughout the 20th century, culminating in the establishment in 1951 of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, a government-sponsored traditional music association which introduced “classical” fiddle techniques and organised competitive festivals known as fleadh (Henry 1989). Henry observes that:
- the music at the higher level fleadh is [...] removed from the communities in which it was an authentic expression of local experience. It is also music no longer controlled by the originating communities<sup>40</sup>.
- 34 This process seems to follow Rosenberg’s conception of revival as the appropriation of the music of a rural working-class by an urban middle-class. Traditional music continued

to be popular in working-class communities, however, in the form of the céilidh band, originally a product of the revival which was exported to the USA, re-appropriated by the Irish rural lower class and which abandoned the pursuit of “pure” Irishness for a hybrid dance music which combined fiddle and flute with newly imported instruments from drum-kits to saxophones<sup>41</sup>.

- 35 The second, and perhaps better known, Irish traditional music revival of the 1960s was in some respects an outworking of the dynamics of the earlier revival in a changed cultural context, in which the strident nationalism of the early 20th century revival was tempered by counter-cultural values emanating from the American folk revival. A significant actor in the 1960s movement was composer Sean Ó Riada, who attacked the céilidh bands which he claimed “bore as much relation to music as the buzzing of a bluebottle in an upturned jamjar<sup>42</sup>”. Ó Riada sought to replace these popular dance groups with a “folk chamber orchestra”, the prototype of which was his own group Ceoltoiri Cualann but which came to full fruition in the influential Chieftains<sup>43</sup>. O’Shea describes the music of The Chieftains as “the rationalised music of modernity, marketed as traditional<sup>44</sup>”.
- 36 The Chieftains, in turn, influenced the growing popularity of the “session”, an informal grouping of musicians which by the 1970s had displaced the céilidh band as the primary context for the performance of “traditional” music. Whilst the céilidh bands had performed primarily in dance halls, the session was usually located in a pub, with little room for dancing, the music was increasingly seen as a “listening” rather than a “dance” music, with significant effects on the way it was played: often faster, with more variable rhythms and an increased emphasis on individual virtuosity<sup>45</sup>. This change in context attracted middle-class “revivalist” audiences and players who eventually came to dominate the genre.
- 37 Chapman has observed that folk music revivals are an enactment of romanticism involving the appropriation of “peripheral” features by trend-setters at the centre<sup>46</sup>. He notes that for such appropriation to work – to result in the accumulation of “cultural capital” in Bourdieu’s terms – the feature must be dying out even in the periphery<sup>47</sup>. Chapman gives the example of the Scottish harp revival, observing that:

If you are an aesthetically-minded 19th-century Edinburgh lady, you can play the harp in your Georgian drawing room, and expect to elicit admiration and nostalgia for the misty and fugitive beauties of this forgotten tradition, and for your own sensitivity in recapturing it. The trick does not work, however, if outside on the street every peddler and roughneck has a ‘Celtic’ harp, which he habitually uses to accompany the latest bawdy songs<sup>48</sup>.
- 38 Ó Riada’s attack on the céilidh bands may be seen as an attempt to hasten the abandonment of traditional music by “roughnecks” freeing it to be appropriated by those whose “aesthetic disposition”, better equipped them to appreciate its potential, and thus speeding the processes started by earlier revival movements, through which originating communities lost control of the music<sup>49</sup>.
- 39 Since the 1960s, “Irish traditional music” has indeed been abandoned by most of the rural working-class who have turned to genres such as Showbands, or Country & Irish for the dance music that remains central to rural social life, but is regarded with condescension or disdain by the urban middle-class. The Irish traditional music revival, however, has gone on to become perhaps the most prolific “transformation of tradition” ever-expanding to become the music of a trans-national middle-class affinity group stretching from Berlin to Tokyo.

- 40 The Ulster-Scots revival of the 1990s has followed a radically different path from the Irish revivals in either their early or late 20th century forms. The informal and non-competitive performances of the Ulster-Scots folk revival have not resulted in a radical change in aesthetics between the revivalists and the earlier genres on which they draw. Ulster-Scots folk music remains under the control of the originating communities, and as a result, Ulster-Scots performers feel freer to innovate without the obsessive concern for “authenticity” which tends to characterise middle-class folk revivals of the kind documented in Rosenberg’s (1993) volume and which has been a perennial feature of Irish revivals<sup>50</sup>.
- 41 There is a significant price to be paid, in terms of cultural capital, for this indigenous control, however. One problem for the Ulster-Scots movement is the age of its core audiences. Folk revivals internationally, including that in Ireland, have been seen to a considerable extent as youth cultures. Whilst the Irish traditional revival has strong appeal amongst twenty and thirty-somethings, audiences for Ulster-Scots performances tend to be predominantly over forty, some considerably over. In part, this is because the Ulster-Scots folk movement is, to a significant degree, a genuine revival – a return by an older generation to types of music they had enjoyed in their youth, but which had largely disappeared from their lives during “the troubles”. A frequent question put by academic visitors I have brought to Cairncastle soirees, is “where are all the young people<sup>51</sup>?”
- 42 Moreover, insofar as Ulster-Scots performers remain close to the tastes of their aging lower-class core audience, they may find it harder to appeal to the trendier, more affluent demographic which have made the Irish traditional revival a global phenomenon. The strong country-music influence on the Cairncastle based Grousebeaters, for example, distances them from the aesthetics of many Irish and international folk revivalists, whilst I have heard earthy humorous recitations concerning rural sexual adventures condemned as unworthy of the tongue of Rabbie Burns and USFO performances described as “just bad trad”. Such critiques can feed into wider middle-class discourses concerning the inauthentic or “backward” nature of the Ulster-Scots language and cultural movement.
- 43 The description of some Ulster-Scots performances as “bad trad” by a middle-class Irish traditional music revivalist is interesting. Whilst recognising affinities with the traditional music he enjoyed, the speaker found USFO performances aesthetically unsatisfying. I suggest that even though the tunes may be the same, there are real aesthetic differences between the Ulster-Scots and Irish Traditional genres, that have their roots in the class base of their performers and core audiences.

## Presentational and Participatory Musics: The “Aesthetic Disposition” and the “Taste for Revelry”

- 44 Ethnomusicologist Thomas Turino’s seminal (2008) work distinguishes between “participatory” and “presentational” performance, offering Shona mbira ensembles and Aymara panpipe groups as exemplars of the first, and western orchestras as exemplars of the second. “Participatory performance” is characterised as:

a special type of artistic practice in which there are no artist-audience distinctions, only participants and potential participants performing different roles, and the primary goal is to involve the maximum number of people in some performance role<sup>52</sup>.

- 45 Turino defines “participation” as “actively contributing to the sound and motion of a musical event through dancing, singing, clapping and playing musical instruments when each of these activities is considered integral to the performance<sup>53</sup>”.
- 46 Conversely “presentational performance” refers to a context in which “one group of people, the artists, prepare and provide music for another group, the audience, who do not participate in making the music or dancing<sup>54</sup>”. Turino goes on to argue that participatory performance is a “separate art” and cannot be judged aesthetically by the standards of “presentational performance”. In fact, he notes that: “Participatory values place a priority on performing in ways that invite participation, even if this might limit a given performer’s desire for personal expression<sup>55</sup>”.
- 47 Whilst characterising participatory and presentational forms as separate arts, Turino acknowledges that like the Zydeco band in which he himself plays, many musical genres may exemplify a compromise between the two aesthetics<sup>56</sup>. I would suggest that if we view the participatory and presentational frames as the ends of a continuum, Irish traditional music, whilst still some distance from the formality of western art music, has moved steadily from the participatory toward the presentational over the last century. The values of the Ulster-Scots revival, in contrast, remain firmly rooted to the participatory end of the spectrum. This participatory ethos is evident in the size of the early Ulster-Scots folk ensembles, a willingness to invite amateur musicians and even children to join them on stage, and frequent invitations to the audience to clap, sing along, dance or engage in call and response interaction with the band, all of which are less frequently seen in the polished performances of Irish “folk chamber orchestras” from the Chieftains to Dervish. It is also evident in the openness of Ulster-Scots soirees to performances of every level of skill, from beginner to expert, which contrasts with the Irish traditional session, where musicians may find themselves overtly or covertly excluded or marginalised if their performances are judged inadequate<sup>57</sup>.
- 48 The different evaluation of participatory and presentational aspects of performance may be one reason why Ulster-Scots performances generate enthusiasm amongst their core audiences and many visitors, but may leave “Irish trad” aficionados and other folk revivalists cold<sup>58</sup>. Such different evaluations, I suggest, are not purely arbitrary, but may be associated with the different class positions of both performers and audiences. Whilst there is a middle-class ideological influence on the revival, particularly through government agencies and funding bodies, a large proportion of Ulster-Scots folk musicians have come from the background of working-class marching bands, genres which promote a communalist ethos in which even when individual virtuosity is valued, as in the piccolo player of a part-music flute band, it is subordinated to the needs of the ensemble<sup>59</sup>. Audiences too come primarily from working-class communities where musical forms ranging from marching bands to showbands have always been evaluated as much on the quality of the “crack” as on the quality of the sound.
- 49 Bourdieu (1984) has contrasted the “aesthetic disposition” of the dominant classes – the mode of listening suitable for “art” music, which Irish traditional music has increasingly aspired to be – with the “taste for revelry” of the working-classes – a taste which is often felt to be coarse or vulgar by those further up the social hierarchy. Whilst neither Irish Traditional nor Ulster-Scots music can be seen as monolithic in terms of class participation or aesthetic values, I suggest that the increasing domination of Irish Traditional music by middle-class revivalists may be related to its move towards more

presentational contexts, whilst the continuing rootedness of Ulster-Scots music in originating communities can be correlated with the participatory “taste for revelry”.

- 50 The boundaries of social class, then, have significant effects on the aesthetics of the Ulster-Scots revival. In contrast, the apparently more salient boundaries of ethnic identity may have rather less effect than might be supposed.

## Ulster-Scots Music as an Articulation of Ethnic Identity

- 51 Both Dowling and Vallely describe the Ulster-Scots revival as a Protestant response to strong assertions of cultural nationalism by Northern Irish Catholics, and Vallely in particular emphasises the combative attitude of Ulster-Scots ideologues toward “Irishness”, claiming that: “For the Ulster-Scots [...] ‘Irish’ is a dirty word<sup>60</sup>”. Both Dowling and Vallely suggest that the purpose of the Ulster-Scots movement is to buttress the boundaries of the established sectarian divisions in Northern Ireland, between Protestant/Unionist/Ulster-Scots on the one hand, and Catholic/Nationalist/Irish on the other. They may well be right, in regard to the “significant group of politicians and businessmen” that Dowling identifies as having cultivated a “thin [...] identification with Ulster-Scots” in order to articulate connections between cultural activists and “anti-Agreement political constituencies<sup>61</sup>”. Dowling describes a “thin identification” as:

one based on consumption, rather than production, of cultural practices, accessed through spectacle and the new media forms rather than in engaged practice and daily interaction, and which has a superficial presence in the formal education curriculum and the culture and heritage departments and nondepartmental bodies of the state<sup>62</sup>.

- 52 When we look at the performance practices, listening practices and discourses of those musicians and audiences who actually sustain the Ulster-Scots revival, those who, in Dowling’s terms, might be said to cultivate a “thick identification”, a very different relationship to Irishness and a very different embodied politics is apparent.
- 53 The foundational performances of the Ulster-Scots Folk Orchestra enacted an Ulster-Scots identity, the boundaries of which were neither coterminous with Protestantism or Unionism, nor exclusive of Irishness. As the IWMC Report noted, Irish traditional tunes formed the core of the USFO’s repertoire from its early years<sup>63</sup>. Given that, as Vallely has documented, many Protestants had turned away from Irish traditional music during the troubles, re-introducing these tunes to Unionist audiences constituted a challenge in the early years of the revival<sup>64</sup>. One way this challenge was overcome was by a discursive emphasis on the role of the British army in the propagation of Irish traditional music. The jig, “St. Patrick’s Day”, for example, would not be introduced as the nationalist party tune that it once was, but as the regimental march of the Irish Guards. As audiences became more accustomed to this kind of material, such discourses became less necessary.
- 54 The vision of Ulster-Scots identity articulated by the USFO was clearly outlined in the musical stage show, *Fae Lang Syne*, which presented a musical history of the Ulster-Scots people. The show premiered at the 2004 Edinburgh Fringe Festival and was performed at 23 further venues over the following two years. *Fae Lang Syne* did indeed include staples of Unionist and Protestant popular history and culture: the Covenanters, the Siege of Derry, the Lambeg Drum, the 1912 Ulster Covenant and the Battle of the Somme. This, however, was by no means the whole story. The first three musical numbers were dedicated to pre-

Plantation Ulster, starting with an evocation of the earliest Mesolithic hunter-gatherers whose home was the shores, seas and islands of the North Channel, moving to the arrival of St. Patrick and ongoing waves of migration in both directions including the Ulster settlements in Argyll and Galloway, the influx of gallows soldiers to Ireland and the settlement of Scottish highlanders in the Antrim Glens, before addressing the Protestant Plantation in the fourth tune. Significant parts of the show were also devoted to the Ulster-Scots roles in the American Revolution against British rule, and the 1798 United Irish rebellion in Ulster. In fact three songs were dedicated to the United Irishmen, in comparison to just one instrumental tune representing the Williamite Wars. The fact that this broad conception of Ulster-Scots identity had real resonance was poignantly apparent during the performance in Belfast's Lyric Theatre, when the overwhelmingly Unionist audience joined in singing the 23rd Psalm, in a re-enactment of the final act of United Irish rebel, William Orr, before his execution.

- 55 *Fae Lang Syne* was a carefully scripted show, but at the less formal and more spontaneous performances at the Cairncastle soirees, the boundaries between the Ulster-Scots and the Irish are similarly blurred. In-between the Burns songs, flute band tunes, reels and recitations, one may hear someone sing "The Cliffs of Dooneen", "My Lovely Rose of Clare", or other stereotypically "Irish" offerings. In part, this is because this is a "real" revival – a return by a pre-troubles generation to the music of their youth, when they made much less distinction between Irishness and their Ulster identity than the generations who grew up during the troubles. In fact, far from regarding "Irish" as a dirty word, the Ulster-Scots revival seems to have made many Protestants more comfortable with their Irishness, by providing a context in which it can be expressed without any danger of that expression being hijacked to support a nationalist agenda.
- 56 Another reason expressions of Irishness are unproblematic in Cairncastle is because many participants in the soirees have a grassroots "reconciliation" agenda – for them good neighbourliness, regardless of religious or political commitments, is an important part of the Ulster-Scots heritage. This agenda derives in large part from the members of the Cairncastle Orange Lodge, who organise the soirees. Although the events were held in the Orange Hall for the first few years, the Union Flag was not flown during soirees, in order to make it clear that all were welcome. No "party" songs, Orange or Green are performed at the soirees, although humorous songs or recitations making fun of Ulster's political and religious divisions are not uncommon. Moreover, the tradition was established of finishing the evening, not with "God Save the Queen", as would be usual at social events in Orange Halls, but with "Auld Lang Syne", during which the entire audience stand and link arms in an inclusive act of sociality. As a result, the soirees have been successful in attracting Catholic performers and audience members, and establishing a warm and inclusive atmosphere which has been appreciated by visitors from a wide range of backgrounds.
- 57 There is no doubt that the Ulster-Scots revival has emerged primarily from Unionist communities, and that it has therefore produced a social environment in which Unionists are culturally comfortable and numerically dominant. On occasions, Unionism is embraced as a central part of Ulster-Scots heritage, for example, in the Ulster-Scots Experience's CD, *The Songs My Father Sung*, which focuses on traditional Orange material, and in Ulster-Scots performances at loyalist band parades and the annual Twelfth of July celebrations. On other occasions, Unionism is downplayed, as in the unspoken exclusion of Orange songs from the Cairncastle soirees; is decentred, as in the focus on the United

Irishmen in *Fae Lang Syne*; or even challenged, as in the song *Young Sons of Erin* on the USFO album, *Somme*, which questions Unionist appropriations of memories of the battle by highlighting the contribution of nationalist soldiers.

- 58 The relationship between the Ulster-Scots revival and Protestantism is also far from straightforward. The vast majority of revival performers and audiences hail from Protestant backgrounds, but the focus of the revival has not been on the heritage of Protestantism *per se*, but on Presbyterianism. In particular, the narratives propagated through the songs of the revivalists tend to promote Presbyterianism as principled, egalitarian, the province of the lower-classes or “plain folk” and always potentially rebellious in the face of injustice, opposing it to the pragmatic and hierarchical Anglicanism of the upper-classes as well as to the Catholic hierarchy. This interpretation of Presbyterianism unites the rebellion of the 17th Century Presbyterian Covenanters, the closing of the gates of Derry by Presbyterian apprentice-boys, the anti-British rebellions of 1776 America and 1798 Ireland, and the Unionist rebellion of “Carson’s Army” in 1912 in a single coherent narrative of resistance to upper-class oppression. In so doing, however, it challenges the “banns of marriage” between the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Ireland proposed by Henry Cooke in 1834, reviving memories of the role of upper-class Anglicans in the oppression of lower-class Ulster-Scots. The emergence of this narrative of resistance cannot be divorced from the increasing economic and cultural class-divide within Protestantism in post-industrial Northern Ireland.

## The Impact of the Ulster-Scots Revival

- 59 As Dowling noted, the Ulster-Scots revival provoked fiercely hostile reactions from two quarters: firstly from those Irish nationalists committed to a monocultural view of the Irish nation, and secondly, and in Dowling’s view, more significantly, from “bourgeois Unionists of the ‘Ulster-British’ multicultural stripe<sup>65</sup>”. The main weapon in the discursive onslaughts from both these constituencies has been ridicule, particularly of the Ulster-Scots language, portrayed as both inauthentic and “backward”.
- 60 The musical revival, whilst not immune to such attacks, has proven less vulnerable to them than the language movement, in part because Irish cultural nationalists cannot characterise traditional music as either inauthentic or “backward” due to its central place in their own constructions of identity, and in part because song and recitation give a context for the language which is clearly neither inauthentic nor ridiculous, even to “bourgeois Unionists” of a “multicultural stripe”. Valley’s academic assaults on the musical revival have not been widely replicated in more popular discourses, and Ulster-Scots music and dance performances have become familiar elements of events across Northern Ireland ranging from working-class loyalist band parades to middle-class multicultural festivals such as the Belfast Mela<sup>66</sup>. In so doing, they have given the lie to the view propagated by nationalist historian Tim Pat Coogan that “unionists have no culture”.<sup>67</sup> They have achieved this less by the “invention” of a new culture than by the “transformation” of long-established cultural practices into “folk” contexts in which they are acceptable both to the originating communities, and to the urban middle-class that, in practical terms, has the power to define what is and what is not “culture”. Turino has observed that a similar strategy of “folkloricization” was adopted by Andean migrants in order to make their musical practices acceptable to urban Peruvians in Lima<sup>68</sup>.

- 61 This process of transformation has also had broader effects on musical practices within the originating communities. The now common practice of staging Ulster-Scots folk performances at Orange celebrations or the fundraising parades of loyalist marching bands has given Ulster-Scots folk groups an opportunity to reach younger audiences and has largely reversed the “tuning out” of working-class Protestants from traditional music documented by Vallely<sup>69</sup>. A second generation of loyalists are now growing up with the assumption that traditional tunes played on fiddles are part and parcel of their Orange heritage, and such performances have become increasingly common at loyalist events whether or not those performances are labeled as “Ulster-Scots”.
- 62 Finally, the Ulster-Scots movement has influenced developments within the marching band tradition itself. The “blood & thunder” flute bands which came to dominate the marching band world in the 1970s and 1980s had largely turned their back on jigs and other dance tunes in favour of simple sing-along party tunes played in a uniform 2/4 march time. Only in the Ballymena-Ballymoney area of north Antrim, with its strong Scottish links, did jigs, hornpipes and reels remain a common element in blood & thunder repertoires. Blood & thunder bands from this area were referred to as “jig-style” bands, but their music was regarded with some suspicion, and sometimes derided as “Fenian” by loyalists from other areas<sup>70</sup>.
- 63 The discourses of the Ulster-Scots revival were adopted enthusiastically by jig-style bands as a justifying ideology for the musical habitus they had preserved. Characterising their style as “Ulster-Scots” rather than “Fenian”, jig-style bands became increasingly influential within the blood & thunder scene, winning significant numbers of cash prizes at the “battles of the bands” which are held in nightclubs in loyalist neighbourhoods throughout the winter months. The jig-style spread as traditional dance tunes were increasingly adopted outside the north Antrim area by bands seeking to lift audiences and gain a competitive edge on their rivals. Whilst the Ulster-Scots folk groups had drawn in part on marching band repertoires in the establishment of their genre, the flow of influence was now reversed as tunes first aired in folk performances increasingly made their way on to the street.
- 64 This process was possible because revival performances had stayed close to the aesthetic tastes of the working-class communities from which they had sprung, and this interaction between “folk” revivalists, playing for predominantly older audiences, and the marching bands which constitute the youth culture of the originating communities may be seen as confirmation that this musical transformation was a real revival, and not merely an appropriation of the kind theorised by Rosenberg (1993).

## The Future: Revival or Recessional?

- 65 The Ulster-Scots revival came to fruition in the post-Agreement years which were probably the most economically prosperous Northern Ireland has ever seen. Following the 2008 financial crisis, we are now living in a very different climate, and the Ulster-Scots music scene has been squeezed both financially and ideologically. Cuts in funding from government agencies have led to reduced performance opportunities, the large “folk orchestra” ensembles that characterised the early years of the revival have proven unviable in the changed economic environment, and a number of smaller bands have also folded, often because their members have found it necessary to concentrate on more

lucrative work, musical or non-musical. Members of two different folk groups, one now folded, the other still performing, told me during 2012 that the scene is “dying”.

- 66 For those trying to make a living from their music, times are hard, particularly because Ulster-Scots, as a genre, has failed to achieve widespread international recognition or distinguish itself effectively from the already globally recognised brand of “Irish Traditional Music”. Some of those bands who are still performing, therefore, choose not to brand themselves as “Ulster-Scots”. The Lyttle Family from Co. Armagh, for instance, well-known international performers who have long been favorites at the Cairncastle Festival describe themselves, on their website (<http://www.davidlyttle.com/thelyttlefamily>), as a “Celtic” group, and avoid both the terms “Ulster-Scots” and “Irish”. Many lesser-known professional or semi-professional musicians may also move strategically between Ulster-Scots, Irish or Celtic identities in order to maximise performance opportunities.
- 67 At the amateur level, the Ulster-Scots scene has been less damaged by the recession, and some elements may even have benefitted. The Cairncastle soirees continue to play to packed houses despite the fact that travel expenses paid to musicians have been significantly reduced. Highland Dance groups appear to be flourishing, and are starting to achieve competitive success outside Northern Ireland<sup>71</sup>. Marching bands have always done well during recessions, when unemployment leaves people with time on their hands and few other leisure options, and whilst some bands have reduced the numbers of parades to which they travel, the scene remains extraordinarily vibrant. In the pipe-band world, Northern Ireland continues to maintain a leading position in international competitions.
- 68 Not all the effects of the recession have been financial, however. As the dominant political parties in Northern Ireland, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin have cooperated to enforce neo-liberal austerity policies on Northern Ireland, they have simultaneously engaged in a string of symbolic battles over flags and other issues, which a cynic might suggest are calculated to distract their working-class voters from their failure to deliver the promised peace dividend. These disputes have sometimes led to street disorder, and the hardening of the division between British and Irish identities which has accompanied these conflicts might seem to leave less room for the nuances of the Ulster-Scots narrative. In fact, however, as the alienation of the loyalist working-class from both the Unionist politicians who are supposed to represent them, and from the British state to which they assert loyalty has increased during the recession, intense debate has been generated within these communities, and the association of Ulster-Scots identity with class oppression continues to offer an alternative to the traditional Unionist narrative. Considerable numbers of Ulster-Scots flags continue to fly amongst the Union Jacks in working-class loyalist neighbourhoods in both Belfast and Glasgow.
- 69 Perhaps just as significantly, after a decade and a half of intensive musical activity, the idea that the Ulster-Scots thread is an essential element in the cultural weave of Northern Ireland has become firmly established even in the minds of those nationalist and urban unionist elites who were most hostile to it. This was first evident when Sinn Féin Lord Mayor of Belfast, Alex Maskey, included Ulster-Scots performers in the 2003 St. Patrick’s Day celebrations, and Ulster-Scots performances have since become a feature of many of the multi-cultural events patronised by Belfast’s middle-class.
- 70 Whilst the situation of many individual performers remains financially precarious, then, and the future of the revival is uncertain, there is no question that it has changed the

cultural landscape within Northern Ireland in palpable ways, has influenced significant transformations in musical practice within Protestant communities, and has provided new narratives which offer Protestants alternative ways of thinking about their situation in a rapidly changing world.

- 71 Ulster's people currently face a future in which little can be taken for granted. Unionism is being torn apart by class divisions; the stability of the United Kingdom is overshadowed by the possibility of Scottish independence; continued membership of the UK in the European Union, and the continued existence of the Eurozone itself are open to doubt; and it remains unclear whether the ongoing crisis of capitalism is merely long term, or indefinite. The narratives of the Ulster-Scots revival, embodied in music, song and dance performance, will undoubtedly remain significant tools through which various groups negotiate their positions and identities in this ongoing maelstrom of change. Whether, in the long term, Ulster-Scots is seen as a central or a marginal element of communal identity may be largely decided by processes and events which are beyond the capacity of musicians, audiences or academics to predict.

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## NOTES

1. See Crowley (2005); Fenton (2000); Kirk (1998); Kingsmore & Montgomery (1995); Mac Póilin (1999); McBride (2000); McCall (2002); Montgomery (1997,1999); Nic Craith (2001); Stapleton & Wilson (2003,2004) for a range of perspectives on the language revival.
2. Gordon Ramsey, *Music, Emotion and Identity in Ulster Marching Bands: Flutes, Drums and Loyal Sons*, Oxford, Peter Lang, 2011.
3. Martin Dowling, "Confusing Culture and Politics: Ulster Scots Culture and Music", in *New Hibernia Review* 3(11) Autumn 2007, p. 51-80; Fintan Vallely, "Scenting the Paper Rose: The Ulster-Scots Quest for Music as Identity" in Mervyn Busteed, Frank Neal & Jonathan Tonge (eds.), *Irish Protestant Identities*, Manchester, University Press, 2008, p. 247-256; and Fintan Vallely, *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland*, Cork, University Press, 2008.
4. Martin Dowling, "Confusing Culture and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 51-5.
5. Arbuckle was lead singer with the cross-community group Different Drums of Ireland, which whilst not defining itself as Ulster-Scots, had a significant influence on the practices of the revival by taking the Lambeg drum out of the parading and competition contexts and introducing it to a "folk" milieu. Percussionist Stephen Matier of Different Drums also performed on some tracks on *A Clatter O Fowl*.
6. The Lambeg tradition was until recently limited to Co. Antrim, Co. Down, north Armagh, south Londonderry and east Tyrone. As a result of the Ulster-Scots movement, it has now spread into other areas such as Co. Fermanagh.

7. Marching bands have largely abandoned the mellow sound of the rope-tensioned drum for the sharper sound of the screw-tensioned drum, which allows higher tension to be achieved and more elaborate rhythms to be played, at the expense, some would say, of the tone. In some ways, the USFO's sound was reminiscent of experimentation by English folk-rock band Fairport Convention during the 1970s.

8. Irish World Music Centre, *Ulster-Scots Music: An Ethnomusicological Report*, 2001.

9. The original line-up of the Low Country Boys was Gibson Young, Mark Thompson, Graham Thompson, and Ivan Ferran. Mark and Graham Thompson are no longer members, and sometimes perform under the name, The Thompson Brothers.

10. Skullduggery broke up in early 2013, partly as a result of performance opportunities being limited by the economic recession.

11. See Dowling, "Confusing Culture and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 68-71, for an analysis of this production, which was very much a top-down product of the "official" revival emanating from the Ulster-Scots Agency. See *infra*.

12. For instance, Lower Woodstock Ulster-Scots Flute Band in Belfast and Bready Ulster-Scots Pipe Band in Co. Tyrone.

13. So far as I can ascertain, Willie Drennan was the only person referring to himself as an Ulster-Scots musician prior to the 1998 Belfast Agreement, and his (1996) CD, *Its A Quair Guid Yin*, was the only Ulster-Scots musical recording in existence before that time.

14. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction", in Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 2.

15. Fintan Vallely, "Scenting the Paper Rose", *op. cit.*, p.254.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

18. Fintan Vallely, *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland*, *op. cit.*, p.23.

19. Martin Dowling, "Confusing Culture and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 72.

20. Fintan Vallely, *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland*, *op. cit.*, p. 212.

21. It seems likely that this misconception results from limited fieldwork. The fieldwork for Vallely's 2008 book was completed in 1992, before the Ulster-Scots revival began. Vallely's writing does not refer to any actual Ulster-Scots performances, and his data on the revival appears to have been gathered primarily from documentary sources.

22. Irish World Music Centre, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

23. Dominic Bryan, *Orange Parades: The Politics of Ritual, Tradition and Control*, London, Pluto, 2000, p. 58 & p. 70.

24. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction", in Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

25. Fintan Vallely, "Scenting the Paper Rose", *op. cit.*, p.252.

26. Martin Dowling, "Confusing Culture and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 51-5.

27. Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction", in Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

28. See also Richard Handler & Jocelyn Linnekin, "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious", in *The Journal of American Folklore* (385), 1984, p. 97.

29. Burt Feintuch, "Musical Revival as Musical Transformation", in Neil V Rosenberg (ed.), *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined*, Urbana, University of Illinois, 1993, p. 184.
30. Alan Jabbour, "Foreword" in *ibid.*, p. xiii.
31. Neil Rosenberg, "Introduction" in *ibid.*, p. 19.
32. Neil Rosenberg, "Starvation, Serendipity, and the Ambivalence of Bluegrass Revivalism", in *ibid.*, p. 196-197.
33. Anne Lederman, "Barrett's Privateers: Performance and Participation in the Folk Revival", in *ibid.*, p. 172.
34. Peter Narvaez, "Living Blues Journal: The Paradoxical Aesthetics of the Blues Revival", in *ibid.*, p. 244.
35. The term "backwoodsmen" is often used in the Belfast-based media as a derogatory reference to the socially conservative rural lower classes elsewhere in Northern Ireland.
36. Hazel Fairbairn, "Changing Contexts for Traditional Dance Music in Ireland: The Rise of Group Performance Practice", in *Folk Music Journal* 6 (5), 1994, p. 578; Marie McCarthy, "The Transmission of Music and the Formation of National Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Ireland", in *Irish Musical Studies* 5, The Maynooth International Musicological Conference 1995 Selected Proceedings: Part 2, Dublin, Four Courts, 1996, p. 147.
37. Willie Drennan, pers. com. 2004.
38. Marie McCarthy, "The Transmission of Music and the Formation of National Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Ireland", *op. cit.*, p. 148.
39. Hugh Shields, "Recent Meetings: The Feis Ceoil and Irish Music" in *Ceol Tire*, 10/1982, p. xxii.
40. Edward O. Henry, "Institutions for the Promotion of Indigenous Music: The Case for Ireland's Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann", in *Ethnomusicology*, 33 (1), 1989, p. 93.
41. Hazel Fairbairn, "Changing Contexts for Traditional Dance Music in Ireland: The Rise of Group Performance Practice", *op. cit.*, p. 578.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 579.
43. Helen O'Shea, "Getting to the Heart of the Music: Idealizing Musical Community and Irish Traditional Music Sessions", in *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland* 2, 2006-7, p. 48.
44. *Idem.*
45. Hazel Fairbairn, "Changing Contexts for Traditional Dance Music in Ireland: The Rise of Group Performance Practice", *op. cit.*, p. 574-7.
46. Malcolm Chapman, "Thoughts on Celtic Music", in Martin Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, Berg, Oxford, 1994, p. 41.
47. Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital", in Nicole Biggart (ed.), *Readings in Economic Sociology* [1986], Malden, Blackwell Publishers, 2002.
48. Malcolm Chapman, "Thoughts on Celtic Music", in Martin Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, *op. cit.* p. 41.
49. Pierre Bourdieu describes the "aesthetic disposition" as the bourgeois orientation that makes it possible to experience something as "art". Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, p. 28-30.

50. Helen O'Shea, *The Making of Irish Traditional Music*. Cork, University Press, 2008, p. 51-62 & p. 78-104.
51. The answer is frequently: "at a loyalist band parade". The relationship of these events to the Ulster-Scots revival will be discussed below.
52. Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, Chicago, University of Chicago, 2008, p. 26.
53. Thomas Turino, *Ibid.*, p. 28.
54. Thomas Turino, *Ibid.*, p. 26.
55. Thomas Turino, *Ibid.*, p. 33.
56. Thomas Turino, *Ibid.*, p. 55.
57. Helen O'Shea, "Getting to the Heart of the Music: Idealizing Musical Community and Irish Traditional Music Sessions" in *Journal of the Society for Musicology in Ireland* 2, 2006-7, p. 7-8; Helen O'Shea, *The Making of Irish Traditional Music*, *op. cit.*, p. 99-101 & p. 119-40.
58. Having brought many academic visitors to Ulster-Scots soirees, I have noticed that whilst Asian scholars often respond with passionate enthusiasm to the music and social interaction, European and American scholars tend to be more restrained in their approval, and more inclined to be critical of aspects of performances. This may be because "western" scholars bring more in the way of preconceived notions of musical quality and authenticity to the venue.
59. Martin Dowling, "Confusing Culture and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 73.
60. Martin Dowling, "Confusing Culture and Politics", *op. cit.* p.54 ; Fintan Vallely, *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland*, *op. cit.*, p. 251.
61. Martin Dowling, "Confusing Culture and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 73.
62. Martin Dowling, *Ibid.*, p. 73.
63. Irish World Music Centre, *Ulster-Scots Music: An Ethnomusicological Report*, *op. cit.*
64. Fintan Vallely, *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland*, *op. cit.*
65. Martin Dowling, "Confusing Culture and Politics", *op. cit.*, p. 73.
66. Fintan Vallely, "Scenting the Paper Rose", *op. cit.*; Fintan Vallely, *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland*, *op.cit.*
67. Ruth Dudley-Edwards, "The Outsider" in *Britain and Ireland: Lives Entwined II*. British Council, London, 2006.
68. Thomas Turino, *Moving Away from Silence: Music of the Peruvian Altiplano and the Experience of Urban Migration*, Chicago, University of Chicago, 1993, p. 219-220.
69. Fintan Vallely, *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland*, *op.cit.*
70. Gordon Ramsey, *Music, Emotion and Identity in Ulster Marching Bands: Flutes, Drums and Loyal Sons*, *op. cit.*
71. The Sollus Dancers, based in Bready, Co. Tyrone, for example are current European Choreography Champions.

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## ABSTRACTS

This paper describes the Ulster-Scots Musical Revival which started in the late 1990s, and argues that neither Hobsbawm & Ranger's conception of "invented tradition" nor Rosenberg's theorisation of folk revivals as appropriations of tradition are adequate to understand this ongoing musical and social movement. By comparing the Ulster-Scots revival with earlier "Irish traditional music" revivals, I will argue that the Ulster-Scots movement is significantly different both from Irish revivals and from the American folk revivals theorised in Rosenberg's volume, in that it is not the appropriation of a working-class music by a middle-class constituency, but a deliberate transformation of tradition undertaken by members of the originating communities.

Cet article décrit la renaissance qu'a connue la musique Ulster-Scots à partir de la fin des années 1990, et suggère que ni la notion élaborée par Hobsbawm & Ranger d'une « tradition inventée », ni la conception proposée par Rosenberg des festivals folkloriques comme appropriations de la tradition n'arrivent à cerner ce qui se passe au sein de ce mouvement musical et social en pleine évolution. La comparaison entre la renaissance Ulster-Scots et celle qu'a connue la « musique irlandaise traditionnelle » par le passé nous montrera que le mouvement Ulster-Scots est radicalement différent à la fois des renaissances irlandaises et des renaissances folkloriques américaines étudiées par l'ouvrage de Rosenberg, puisqu'il ne s'agit pas de l'appropriation d'une musique « ouvrière » par la bourgeoisie, mais d'une transformation délibérée de la tradition entreprise par des membres des communautés dont cette tradition est issue.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** musique, Ulster-Scots, héritage culturel, identité collective, Irlande du Nord

**Keywords:** Ulster-Scots, collective identity, cultural heritage, music, Northern Ireland

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