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HARP PERSPECTIVES

HARP RESOURCES AT THE
IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC ARCHIVE (ITMA)

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Welcome to *Harp Perspectives*, Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland's online journal.

One of our strategic aims is to establish thought leadership across the harp sector by building up a body of thinking about the harp and harping through a historical and contemporary lens.

Harp Perspectives is a conversation about harping and features key informants, harpers and non-harpers, sharing their authentic views and ideas. We believe that this combination of scholarly research and personal insights will highlight the harping legacy inherited from our tradition bearers and help forge a contemporary harping identity, secure in its understanding of its origin and how it wishes to evolve.

In our July edition, ITMA archivist, Maeve Gebruers gives an overview of the wealth of harp related material collected, preserved and organised by the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) over the last 35 years.

Our thanks to each of our contributors for their willingness to add their voices. Their contributions will no doubt enrich and inform our thinking.

Aibhlín McCrann and Eithne Benson

Editors

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HARP RESOURCES AT THE IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC ARCHIVE (ITMA)

Maeve Gebruers

The Irish Traditional Music Archive's collections are teeming with resources related to the harp in Ireland which are freely available to access at our premises and, where possible, on-line at www.itma.ie. In the following piece, I will give you an overview of the wealth of harp related material collected, preserved and organised by ITMA over the last 35 years. If you are a harp performer, researcher, student, teacher, or very simply an enthusiast of the instrument and its music, then a visit to the Irish Traditional Music Archive is highly recommended.

The Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA)

The Irish Traditional Music Archive – *Taisce Cheol Dúchais Éireann* – is the “national public archive and resource centre for Irish traditional music, song and dance, and the globally-recognised specialist advisory agency to advance appreciation, knowledge, and the practice of Irish traditional music.”¹ ITMA is funded by the Arts Council / *An Chomhairle Ealaíon*, and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

History

Inaugurated at a meeting in the offices of the Arts Council on the 29 July 1987, the Archive arose directly from a proposal made by RTÉ music producer Harry Bradshaw and founding ITMA Director Nicholas Carolan to the Arts Council. The proposal was to preserve historic sound recordings of Irish traditional music, which they had uncovered while researching and producing an RTÉ radio series *The Irish Phonograph* (1983–1986). The Council accepted the proposal, appointed a voluntary board to oversee its operations, and funded it first as a pilot project and then on an ongoing basis. Additional funding was later received from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Since then the Archive has grown from a concept without premises or holdings to the largest collection in existence of the materials of Irish Traditional music, song and dance. It

¹ Irish Traditional Music Archive: Strategy 2019–2023 (2019) Dublin: Irish Traditional Music Archive. https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/downloads.itma.ie/ITMA_Strategy_ENGLISH_WEB.pdf

was first situated in Eustace Street, Dublin, and later moved to larger premises at 63 Merrion Square. In 2006 the archive relocated to its permanent home, courtesy of the Irish Office of Public Works, at 73 Merrion Square.

ITMA is a registered charity, with a staff of 11 full-time and part-time employees and a number of volunteers – staff are selected because of their involvement in the traditional arts, both as practitioners or having a keen interest in the area. This influences greatly the way the archive works and engages with those interested in traditional music, song and dance.

Aims

The guiding principles that inform what ITMA does are the pillars on which all archives are built: to **collect** all the significant materials of Irish traditional music; to **preserve** the materials collected indefinitely for present use and for future generations; to **organise** the materials and information in the collection; and to **make available** as widely as possible the ITMA collections.

Collections at ITMA

The ITMA collections are most definitely multimedia in nature reflecting how traditional music is ‘recorded’ in sound, print & image. ITMA collects all historic and contemporary formats – all new publications on the subject are acquired either by donation or purchase and historic material is acquired as it becomes available or where necessary through copying. New material is created for the ITMA collection in an ongoing programme of audio and video recording both in the field and in the ITMA premises.

Sound recordings include cylinders, 78s, SPs, EPs, LPs, reel-to-reel tapes, standard and DAT cassettes, CDs, and digital files. Printed items include ballad sheets, chapbooks, sheet music, song collections, instrumental and dance collections, music and contextual studies, reference works, periodicals, and ephemera such as programmes, catalogues, postcards, leaflets, posters and newspaper clippings. Visual items include prints and drawings, photographs and negatives, microfilms, video cassettes, DVDs and digital files. Also collected are manuscripts (music manuscripts, card indexes, research notes, letters, lecture scripts and typescript theses) and small artefacts such as badges, coins,

statues and trinkets. Some musical instruments are held for the information of users. In recent years, ITMA has acquired the personal papers of significant traditional musicians and researchers.

ITMA and the Harp

ITMA is not exclusively a harp organisation but includes the traditional harp in its remit. This is very much reflected in ITMA’s audio, print, image, manuscript and

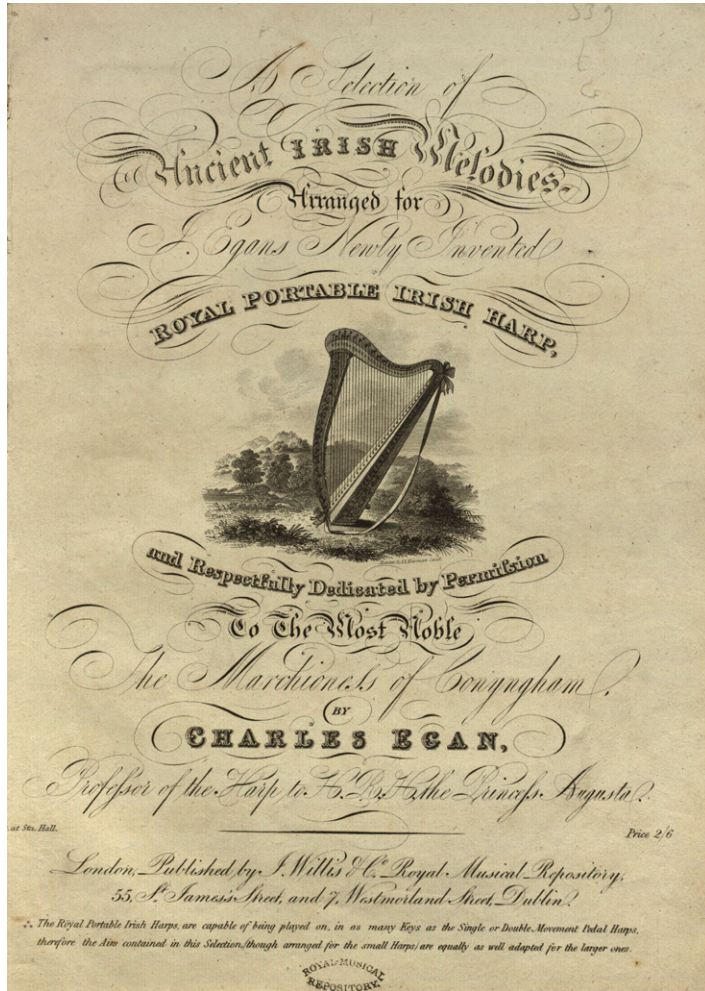


Figure 1 Title page of Charles Egan sheet music (ITMA CID 95700)

audiovisual collections. A search of the ITMA archival and library catalogues² for the terms ‘harp’, ‘cruit’ or ‘clairseach’ yields over 7,400 results. The ITMA library collection contains many historic and contemporary collections of Irish, Scottish and Welsh harp music both in book and sheet music form. Also in the printed collections are tutors for the wire-strung and lever harps by among others Chris Bayer, Nancy Calthorpe, Cynthia Cathcart, Mother Attracta Coffey, Sylvia Crawford, Sheila Larchet Cuthbert, Patricia Daly, Ann Heymann, Alison Kinnaird, Reidun Lynch, Laurie Riley, Javier Sáinz, Reidun Schlesinger, Michael Glenn

Stewart, Bill Taylor, Ank van Campen and Laurel Wright. Monographs and studies relating to the harp, journal articles and encyclopedia entries on all aspects of the harp can also be found in the ITMA collection. ITMA houses many harp organisations’ newsletters, bulletins and periodicals including: Cairde na Cruite Newsletters 1990–

2 ITMA Archival Catalogue - AtoM <https://itma-atom.arkivum.net/> and the ITMA library Catalogue - Soutron <https://itmacatalogues.ie/Portal/Default/en-GB/Search/SimpleSearch>

2021; *Harp Foundation Newsletter*³; *Harp Perspectives*, 2021–2022; *Folk Harp Journal*⁴ 1973–2015; the bulletins, newsletters and journals of the Historical Harp Society 1990–2008;⁵ *The American Harp Journal* 1960s–2018; and some issues of various harp journals published in the 1990s including *Harpa: International Harp Journal*,⁶ *Harp Today*,⁷ and *Sounding Strings: The Magazine of the Small Harp & Music To Go*. Harp related material in the ITMA printed collection dates back to the early 18th century and covers a period up to the present day.

Commercial Sound Recordings of the Harp at ITMA

Commercial sound recordings of the harp in the ITMA collection spans a period of over 100 years. In the following paragraphs I will look at the earlier recordings in ITMA dating from the 1910s–1970s on cylinder, 78 rpm disc and vinyl.

Cylinders

The earliest recordings of the harp in the ITMA collection date back to the beginning of the 20th century. These are not recordings of the Irish harp but recordings of Irish airs and popular Irish songs and ballads played on the pedal harp. The two earliest recordings found on commercial cylinders published by Edison in the United States of America date from 1914. They are of New York Metropolitan Opera violinist, Charles D’Almaine (1871–1943) playing ‘Mother Machree’ & ‘Peg o’ My Heart’ with harp accompaniment – unfortunately, the harpist on these recordings is not identified.⁸ The earliest cylinder recording with a named solo harpist dates from 1922, published by Edison, of harpist and arranger Anna Pinto playing the air ‘Kathleen Mavoureen.’⁹ There are some thirteen known 78 rpm disc recordings of harpist Anna Pinto published in America by Edison between the years 1922 and 1928.¹⁰

3 Published by The Harp Foundation and The Belfast Harp Orchestra

4 Published by the International Society of Folk Harpers and Craftsman it contains many articles relevant to the study of the Irish harp <https://folkharpsociety.org/folk-harp-journal/>

5 Based in the United States of America The Historical Harp Society is an international association of people who love the harp, particularly in its historical context. <https://historicalharpsociety.org/>

6 The official publication of a number of harp organisations including the World Harp Society and the European Harp Society.

7 Published by Lyon & Healy

8 Edison Blue Amberol 2419, 1914 (ITMA CID 43298) and Edison Blue Amberol 2263, 1914 (ITMA CID 43304)

9 Edison Blue Amberol 4699, 1922 (ITMA CID 43255)

10 *Discography of American Historical Recordings*, s.v. “Pinto, Anna,” accessed June 9, 2022, <https://adp.library.ucsb.edu/names/207982>

78 rpm Disc

A number of harpists feature in the ITMA 78 rpm collection, some are accompanying singers and others perform solo or in ensembles. The majority of these performers are pedal harpists. They include Frederick Charles Barker (d. 1924), a solo harpist who can be heard playing two airs ‘The Irish Exile’ and ‘The Cruiskeen Lawn’ on a very early Zonophone 78 disc published c. 1913–1914.¹¹ New York harpist Francis J. Lapitino (1880–1949)¹² who can be heard on a 78 published by HMV in 1928 accompanying American tenor Colin O’More (1890–1956) singing ‘Has Sorrow Thy Young Days Shaded?’ and ‘When Irish Eyes are Smiling.’¹³ Italian Mario “Harp” Lorenzi (1894–1967) who was at the height of his popularity in mid-1930s London can be heard singing a number of Irish and Scottish songs to harp accompaniment on a disc from 1933.¹⁴ Laura Newell (1900–1981) can be heard on two ITMA recordings published in the 1940s by Columbia.¹⁵ On these recordings Newell accompanies Rathkeale, Co. Limerick born tenor Christopher Lynch (1920–1994), a protégé of the great Irish tenor John McCormack. Islington born harpist Pauline Barker (1899–1942)¹⁶, who spent time in Belfast, features on four early 78 recordings with Northern Ireland actor, broadcaster, film-maker and popular singer Richard Hayward (1892–1964).¹⁷ Hayward was also a player of the Irish harp and published *The Story of the Irish Harp* in Dublin in 1954.¹⁸ Other solo harpists who feature in this collection from the first half of the 20th century include: Alberto Salvi (1893–1983) playing the air ‘Last Rose of Summer’ published by Victor in 1922;¹⁹ an undated recording of Clifford Hughes performing the ‘Irish Exile’ published by Ariel;²⁰ and the ‘Last Rose of Summer’ recorded in 1930 by British harpist John Cockerill published by Zonophone.²¹

11 Zonophone 1104, c.1913–1914 (ITMA CID 33772)

12 Lapitino also accompanied John McCormack on various recordings see Nimbus CD NI7874, 1993 (ITMA CID 29707).

13 HMV B 2776, 1928 (ITMA CID 35091)

14 Broadcast Twelve 3205, 1933 (ITMA CID 38151)

15 Columbia LB 99, 1940s (ITMA CID 40625) and Columbia Masterworks 4504-M, 1947 (ITMA CID 240414)

16 Pauline Barker was the daughter of Frederick Charles Barker.

17 For more information and recordings by Hayward see <https://www.itma.ie/features/playlists/the-orange-standard-78s-by-richard-hayward>

18 Richard Hayward. *The Story of the Irish Harp*. Dublin: Guinness, 1954.

19 Victor 45315, 1922 (ITMA CID 40688)

20 Ariel 343, n.d. (ITMA CID 26444)

21 Zonophone 5578, 1933 (ITMA CID 30222)

As well as these international harpists a number of Irish born harpists can also be heard in the ITMA 78 collection. Northern Irish harpist Aileen MacArdle (1925–2018) is featured accompanying Richard Hayward on three recordings published by Decca.²² MacArdle “had a distinguished career as an orchestral harpist, and for 30 years was an influential harp teacher in Wales and Northern Ireland.”²³ Sanchia Pielou (1915–1993) who was also born in Ireland, was “one of the founding members of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in 1935 and continued playing until 1980. She taught both the concert harp and Celtic harp at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama for most of her career.”²⁴ Pielou can be heard on a 78 recording published by Columbia in 1950 accompanying Scottish tenor Sydney MacEwan (1908–1991).²⁵ Christopher Casson (1912–1996), a harper and a ballad singer, although born in England became an Irish citizen in 1946. Casson was an actor who joined the Edwards and Mac Liammóir Company at the Gate in Dublin in 1938. He was best known for his role as Canon Browne on RTÉ’s *The Riordans*.²⁶ There are three recordings of Casson in ITMA singing to an ‘Irish harp’ accompaniment on 78s published by Copley in Boston in the 1950s.²⁷ Also recorded in the 1950s on the Decca label was Mary O’Hara, ITMA has four early 78 recordings of O’Hara singing to harp accompaniment.²⁸ ITMA’s collections of early sound recordings are quite comprehensive; however, there are still some notable gaps in the collection. For example, the earliest commercial recording made of Carolan’s music was a version of ‘Lord Inchiquin’ on an Irish HMV 78 recorded by Sheila Larchet in 1956;²⁹ unfortunately, ITMA does not have a copy of this recording in its collection.

22 Decca F 9084, 1940s (ITMA CID [32099](#)), Decca C 16148, n.d. (ITMA CID [29899](#)), Decca C 16126, n.d. (ITMA CID [35824](#))

23 Ardal Powell. “Aileen MacArdle Obituary.” *The Guardian*. 9 December 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/dec/09/aileen-macardle-obituary>

24 “Sanchia Pielou.” *The Herald Scotland*. 20 October 1993. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12714487.sanchia-pielou/>

25 Columbia 33519-F, 1950 (ITMA CID [23662](#))

26 Lisa Coen. “Christopher Casson Collection.” Dublin City Archives. November 2010 https://www.dublincity.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2018-06/ITA263christopher_casson_collection.pdf

27 Copley 9-162, n.d. (ITMA CID [26157](#)), Copley 9-163, n.d. (ITMA CID [26158](#)) and Copley 9-165, n.d. (ITMA CID [26159](#))

28 Decca MU 13, n.d. (ITMA CID [37662](#)), Decca MU 14, n.d. (ITMA CID [29785](#)), Decca W 5280, n.d. (ITMA CID [40022](#)), Decca W 5281, n.d. (ITMA CID [39958](#))

29 Nicholas Carolan. “Turlough Carolan: An Archival View” lecture delivered at the Turlough O’Carolan Harp Festival, Nobber, Co. Meath, 2 October 1991

LP

Sheila Larchet and Mary O’Hara’s recording careers may have begun in the 78 era but they very quickly moved onto vinyl LP. There is some overlap with the 78 and vinyl eras as the different technologies co-existed for about 10 years, and the same material appeared on more than one format. Larchet for example recorded in 1955 with the Irish Festival Singers on an LP called *Feis Éireann* published by Angel records in New York.³⁰ ITMA has 25 LP and EP recordings of Mary O’Hara in the collection which span a period of 30 years from 1957–1987. To ensure that ITMA creates a comprehensive collection of Irish traditional music all issues & re-issues of a recording are collected. Material may overlap in terms of content, but often recordings published in different countries and on different labels, may contain additional artwork and information of interest to the user. Other LP recordings in ITMA from the 1950s include those of Róisín Ní Shé (1919–2005), who recorded with An Claisceadal singing group in 1958 on the Comhlucht Ceirníní Éireann label.³¹ Also in that year Deirdre Ní Fhloinn recorded an entire album of Irish language song for the American label Folkways Records³² and in the following year, 1959, harpist and singer Deirdre O’Callaghan recorded no less than three albums, with various record labels, of popular Irish songs and ballads.

Moving into the 1960s we encounter the first commercial recording of Gráinne Yeats (née Ní Éigeartaigh) *Irish Folk Songs Sung in Irish and English* published by the New York based label Spoken Arts, this LP was published in 1962³³ and re-issued on cassette in 1986. Yeats would go on to publish a number of LPs in her career spanning the years 1962–1994. Yeats also featured on numerous compilation albums over the years. British harpist Marie Goosens can be heard accompanying Derry born tenor Michael O’Duffy on a 1963 recording published by PYE³⁴ of Thomas Moore songs and in 1964 and 1965 there are two recordings of Russian harpist Maria Korchinska (1895–1979) accompanying Irish tenor Charles Kennedy (d. 1979) & Waterford born soprano Patricia McCarry (d. 2012).³⁵ Harpist, Mercedes Bolger can be heard on a 1966 recording published by Argo called *Over Here*; on this recording, Bolger

³⁰ ITMA CID [44018](#)

³¹ ITMA CID [24780](#)

³² ITMA CID [42107](#)

³³ ITMA CID [34008](#)

³⁴ ITMA CID [26264](#)

³⁵ ITMA CIDs [30086](#) and [28034](#)

accompanies Irish mezzo-soprano Bernadette Greevy (1940–2008) along with Jeannie Reddin on piano.³⁶

Recordings of the harp increase significantly in the 1970s with over 45 LPs featuring the harp noted in the ITMA catalogue. As in the previous decades recordings of harpers and harpists accompanying Irish popular ballads and songs continued to be a feature, with recordings by singer and harpist Mary Murphy Demers (Lyrichord, 1970),³⁷ New Zealand harper Cathie Harrop (Emerald Records, 1972)³⁸ and Áine Nic Gabhann (Cara Records, 1974).³⁹ The 1970s also sees the emergence of recordings of the harp in traditional groups some examples include Moya Brennan with Clannad *Clannad* (Philips, 1973),⁴⁰ Aibhlín McCrann performing with Ceoltóirí Laighean in 1975 on *The Star of Munster* (Gael Linn, 1975),⁴¹ and Derek Bell's first recording with The Chieftains on *The Chieftains 4* (Claddagh 1973).⁴² Bell's solo and collaborative recording career spans four decades and is very well represented in the ITMA commercial audio collections. Other recordings of note from this decade include: harper Lily O'Dea performing with whistle and zither player Pádraig Ó Carra, accordion player Patsy McDonagh and fiddlers Íde Ní Fhaoláin & Séamus McGuire on the album entitled *Abhan Tríreach; The Bardic Moods of Music* (Gael Linn, 1976);⁴³ Californian harpist Bonnie Shaljean's recording *The Half Door* (Dingle's Records, 1977)⁴⁴ with whistle player and singer Packie Byrne (1917–2015); harper Patricia Daly (Outlet, 1977);⁴⁵ and Antoinette McKenna's recording with uilleann piper Joe McKenna (Shanachie, 1979).⁴⁶ Breton harper Alan Stivell, Manx harper Charles Guard and American harpers Ann Heymann and Sylvia Woods also feature in the recordings from this decade.

The 1980s/1990s sees a further surge in LP recordings with over 80 recordings featuring the harp. Cassette recordings are also found in the ITMA collections however much of what was published on cassette also appeared on LP or CD. The 1980s also

36 ITMA CID [23685](#)

37 ITMA CID [25873](#)

38 ITMA CID [33820](#)

39 ITMA CID [44837](#)

40 ITMA CID [23811](#)

41 ITMA CID [25235](#)

42 ITMA CID [29009](#)

43 ITMA CID [23734](#)

44 ITMA CID [25085](#)

45 ITMA CID [26166](#)

46 ITMA CID [26393](#)

sees the introduction of the compact disc (CD) format and not unlike the 78 and LP eras the formats overlap for a period before the CD becomes dominant in the 1990s. A search for harp CDs in the ITMA catalogue reveals over 1,350 results and spans five decades from the 1980s right up to the present day. A detailed breakdown of the harpers featured in these decades is outside the scope of this piece but suffice to say that a visit to the ITMA reading room in No 73 Merrion Square will provide the harp aficionado with 1,000s of hours of harp music to enjoy! Harpers of note who emerge on the recording scene in the 1980s include Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Janet Harbison, Patrick Cassidy, Kim Fleming, Noreen O'Donoghue, Patrick Ball to name but a few.

Non-commercial Audio/Audiovisual Recordings

The non-commercial audio collections in ITMA comprise of donations of recordings made by private individuals, collectors and other institutions. Recordings of the Irish harp are most prevalent in the RTÉ Radio Collection of which copies are held in ITMA. Launched in 1993 this RTÉ Radio Collection Remastering Project was a collaboration between ITMA and RTÉ in which the national broadcaster's radio archive of Irish traditional music sound recordings dating back to the 1940s were remastered, copied and catalogued for public access in ITMA. Over 15,000 items were processed during this project and many radio programmes drawn from them. ITMA staff have also researched the traditional music holdings of the early decades of RTÉ Television (1960–1990s), and of other television and film archives such as those of Ulster Television and BBC Northern Ireland in Belfast.

In a similar collaborative project ITMA is now cataloguing the Irish music content in the RTÉ acetate collection. “The acetate disc is the earliest sound recording format held by RTÉ Archives and was used for recording and broadcasting.”⁴⁷ These at-risk discs were digitised by RTÉ in 2020 thanks to funding from the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. In 2021 ITMA received a digital copy of every acetate in the RTÉ Archive Collection which amounts to 4,500 discs. Dr Pádraic Mac Mathúna, son of the late broadcaster Ciarán Mac Mathúna, is cataloguing the Irish music content in this collection for ITMA. The recordings date from 1937–1971 and have unearthed some interesting early recordings of the Irish harp. The earliest recording of the harp

⁴⁷ For more information on the RTÉ acetate collection see <https://www.rte.ie/archives/2020/0309/1121094-acetate-disc-collection/>

on these discs is of harpist Treasa Nic Cormaic⁴⁸ and dates from 12 September 1940. On this recording she plays two airs ‘Where Were You All the Day’ and ‘Chúilfhionn’ and two jigs ‘The Banks of Ahasnagh’ and ‘The Miners of Wicklow’.⁴⁹ Also included in this collection are recordings of Mary O’Hara from 1955, recordings of the McPeake Trio from 1961 and 1962⁵⁰, Dolores Collier from 1961, Alan Stivell from 1972 and both Kathleen Watkins and Sheila Larchet from 1973.

Field Recordings

Since 1993 ITMA has been involved in an active programme of audio and video field recordings at festivals and events throughout the island of Ireland, the United Kingdom and North America. ITMA has also carried out recordings in its studio and premises at No 73 Merrion Square including interviews and session recordings. In recent years ITMA has “connected artists with archival material to inspire new art” in its series *Drawing from the Well* which is now entering its third year.⁵¹ There is much material of relevance to the harp in these collections including, but not limited to, recordings from: the 9th World Harp Conference, held in Dublin in 2005; Cairde na Cruite Summer Sessions, 2005; harp recitals & lectures at Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy dating back to 2012; Achill International Harp Festival; The International Festival for the Irish Harp, An Chúirt Chruitireachta organised by Cairde na Cruite; a number of festivals and events organised by the Historical Harp Society of Ireland including interviews, performances, lectures and workshops at the Kilkenny based Scoil na gCláirseach: Festival of Early Irish Harp 2012–19; the Harp Ireland Gala Concert held in Dublin Castle in 2019.

48 For more information on Treasa Nic Chromaic see <https://simonchadwick.net/2016/12/teresa-mccormac-dublin.html>

49 RTÉ Collection. Acetate 519–520

50 Both James McPeake (b. 1936) & Kathleen McPeake played harp with the trio see Adrian Scahill. “The harp in the early traditional group” in *Harp Studies* Sandra Joyce & Helen Lawlor, eds. (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016), pp. 148–155

51 *Drawing from the Well* from December 2021 is of particular interest to harp enthusiasts. In this episode Laoise Kelly presents the story of fellow Mayo native Hugh Higgins who played at the Belfast Harp Festival in 1792, and whose airs were documented by Edward Bunting. Watch it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iqm-oI1woUw&t=1s>

Irish Harp Iconography in ITMA

For centuries the harp has been a common visual emblem of the island of Ireland and of the concept of Irishness, the only Irish instrument to have this function. Representations of it have appeared on a range of artefacts: coins and medals, buildings and monuments, flags, tourist goods, etc. The ITMA photographic and visual collections contain many images of the harp both as an instrument used in performance and as a symbol or emblem of the country.



Figure 2 Tom Barrett, fiddle and Róisín Ní Shé, harp. Cashel, 1958 (ITMA CID 9931)

Large Multimedia Collections

In recent years, ITMA has been extremely fortunate to acquire the personal papers of two significant individuals in the Irish harping tradition. Derek Bell (1935–2002) Chieftains harper, oboist, arranger, composer, researcher and recorded artist and Gráinne Yeats (1950–2013) professional harper, singer, teacher, arranger, historian and recorded artist. Both of these acquisitions are large multimedia collections and provide the researcher with extensive, unique, primary source material on the subject of the Irish harp. ITMA continues to organise, catalogue, digitise and make available these important collections to the harping community.

Derek Bell Collection (DBE-239678)

This collection was donated to ITMA in 2015 by Derek Bell's widow Stefanie Bell with assistance from Lindsay Armstrong, one of Derek Bell's first oboe pupils. The collection of music manuscripts, sound recordings, printed items, photographs, personal papers, artifacts, musical instruments etc. was compiled by Derek during his lifetime. The materials relating to classical music, mostly printed books, sound recordings and music manuscripts were donated by Stefanie Bell to the Dublin Institute of Technology in the same year.⁵²

Gráinne Yeats Collection (GYE-255503)

This rich collection was donated to ITMA by the Yeats Family in 2018 with the assistance of Aibhlín McCrann. The collection contains 27 boxes of music manuscripts, commercial and non-commercial sound recordings, video recordings, photographs, slides, lecture scripts, diaries, music arrangements (mostly for the Irish harp), ephemera and ten shelves (8.5 metres) of printed books. In 2018, forty-seven reel-to-reel and cassette tapes from this collection were digitised. ITMA engaged harper Rachel Duffy to catalogue these recordings in detail, and this work is on-going. Photographs and slides from the Yeats collection were digitised in 2021 as part of a Heritage Council of Ireland funded project and a selection of these images have been made available on the ITMA website.⁵³

This article has given an overview of the collections relevant to the harp in ITMA. As demonstrated, ITMA has rich resources for those interested in the history, music, iconography and performance of the harp in Ireland. By highlighting some of the artists, music and publications in the collection, my hope is that it will entice the reader to explore the ITMA resources in more detail at their leisure.

52 Full details of this collection can be found in ITMA's archival catalogue here
<https://itma-atom.arkivum.net/index.php/dbe-239678>

53 Three galleries of images from the Gráinne Yeats Collection can be seen at the following links
<https://www.itma.ie/features/galleries/heritage-week-2021-grainne-yeats-collection>,
<https://www.itma.ie/features/galleries/heritage-week-3>, <https://www.itma.ie/features/galleries/heritage-week-5>

Maeve Gebruers



Maeve Gebruers, originally from Cobh, Co. Cork, is a professional Archivist with over 25 years' experience in archival management. Since graduating with an MA in the History of the Book from the University of London in 1997 Maeve has worked at the Irish Traditional Music Archive, specialising in the care of the Archive's printed and manuscript collections of Irish traditional song, music and dance. She

returned to part-time study at University College Dublin in 2016 and graduated in 2018 with an MA in Archives & Records Management. She has presented on behalf of ITMA at several archival conferences, lectured at a number of third level institutions, written on the subject of Irish music and digital preservation and advised organisations on archival best practice. Maeve has had a life-long interest in the Irish harp having studied harp with Máire Ní Chathasaigh in the late 1980s and early 1990s.