

Irish Nationalism, Print Culture and the *Spirit of the Nation*

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Recent investigations into the survival and dissemination of traditional songs have elucidated the intertwining relationship between print and oral song traditions. Musical repertoires once considered distinct, namely broadside ballads and traditional songs, now appear to have inhabited a shared space. Much scholarly attention has been focused on the print and oral interface that occurred in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain.

*Less attention has been paid, however, to music in Ireland where similar economic, cultural and musical forces prevailed. Yet, Ireland's engagement in various nationalist activities throughout the nineteenth century added a distinctly political twist to Ireland's print–oral relationship. Songbooks, a tool for many nineteenth-century nationalist movements, often embodied the confluence of print and oral song traditions. Lacking musical notation, many songbooks were dependent on oral traditions such as communal singing to transmit their contents; success also depended on the large-scale distribution networks of booksellers and ballad hawkers. This article seeks to explore further the print–oral interface within the context of Irish nationalism. Specifically, I will examine how one particular movement, Young Ireland, manifested this interface within their songbook, *Spirit of the Nation*. By examining the production, contents, and ideology of this songbook, the complex connections between literature, orality and nationalism emerge.*

Recent investigations into the survival and dissemination of traditional songs have elucidated the often-intertwining relationship between print and oral song traditions. Song cultures that were previously considered distinct, namely, broadside ballads and traditional songs, now appear to have inhabited a shared space.¹ Much of the scholarly attention has focused on the print and oral interface that occurred in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the range of interests in ballads at the time, from Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765)² to the late Victorian and Edwardian enthusiasts such as Sabine Baring-Gould, Lucy Broadwood, Frank Kidson, Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Less attention has been paid to music in Ireland, however, where a similar atmosphere prevailed. James Hardiman (referred to as the 'Irish Percy') published

¹ See David Atkinson, 'Folk Songs in Print: Text and Tradition', *Folk Music Journal* 8/4 (2004): 456–83; David Atkinson and Steve Roud, eds, *Street Ballads in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and North America: The Interface between Print and Oral Traditions* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014); Philip Connell and Nigel Leask, 'What is the people', in *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Phillip Connell and Nigel Leask (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 3–20.

² Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 3 vols (London: Dodsley, 1765).

his *Irish Minstrelsy, or Bardic Remains of Ireland* in 1831, and Edward Bunting and George Petrie headed Ireland's native school of enthusiasts and collectors.³ A factor existed, however, that added a distinctly national twist to Ireland's print–oral relationship. Throughout the nineteenth century, various strands of political and cultural nationalism held sway over the Irish popular consciousness.⁴ These movements had a lasting impact on the reception and treatment of Irish traditional music. With the decline of the Irish language, traditional music became the principal symbol of an idealized national culture.⁵ Collectors and translators, especially, played an important role in music's increasing cultural prominence, as the growing corpus of Gaelic songs translated into the English language 'became an important weapon in the long war against colonialism'.⁶

This article seeks to explore further the interface of print and oral traditions within the context of nineteenth-century Irish nationalism. Specifically, I will investigate how one particular nationalist movement, Young Ireland, manifested this interface within their songbook, *Spirit of the Nation*. In the examination of the production, contents and ideology of this songbook, various facets of the complex connections between literature, orality and nationalism come to light: printed songs often traversed the nebulous divide between print and oral traditions, the creators of the *Spirit of the Nation* took advantage of this fluidity to disseminate their nationalist message via text and/or musical arrangement, and as the *Spirit of the Nation* developed, it became a nationalist resource geared to inhabit both print and oral realms.

Many of the traditional melodies made popular by the published collections of antiquarians and enthusiasts, or by traditional means of oral dissemination, appeared also in nineteenth-century songbooks. Nationalist movements in Ireland, and indeed across Europe, commonly used songbooks as a means of spreading and popularizing their ideology.⁷ These songbooks frequently displayed a confluence of print and oral musical traditions. It was customary, for

³ James Hardiman, *Irish Minstrelsy, or Bardic Remains of Ireland*, 2 vols (London: J. Robins, 1831). For Hardiman as 'Irish Percy', see Charles Gavan Duffy, 'Introduction', *Ballad Poetry of Ireland* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845): xviii.

⁴ Broadly speaking, the major nineteenth-century Irish nationalist movements were as follows: Catholic Emancipation of the 1820s, Gaelic Revival of the 1830s, the Repeal Movement and Young Ireland of the 1840s, the Fenian Movement of the 1860s, Home Rule of the 1870s and 1880s and the Gaelic League of the 1890s.

⁵ Joseph Ryan, 'The Tone of Defiance', in *Musical Constructions of Nationalism: Essays on the History and Ideology of European Musical Culture 1800–1945*, ed. Harry White and Michael Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2001): 201–2.

⁶ Seamus Deane, 'Poetry and Song 1800–1890', in *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, ed. Seamus Deane (Derry: Field Day Publications, 1991): vol. 2, p. 5.

⁷ See Mary Helen Thuente, *The Harp Re-strung: United Irishmen and the Rise of Irish Literary Nationalism* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994) for a discussion of the songbooks used by the United Irishmen and by Young Ireland. See Hamish Mathison, 'Robert Burns and National Song', in *Scotland, Ireland, and the Romantic Aesthetic*, ed. David Duff and Catherine Jones (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2007): 77–92 for the role Robert Burns played in creating Scottish national song through his contributions to the *Scots Musical Museum* songbooks. See also Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997): 4–46 for an examination of cultural import of folk song collection and music's role in expressing nationalist ideology.

example, for songbooks to be published without musical notation, instead employing a textual caption to indicate to which tune the lyrics were to be sung. This practice relied on the oral-based culture of traditional music for successful acceptance and transmission of the songbook's contents. Songbooks also benefited from the printing techniques and large-scale distribution networks of booksellers and ballad hawkers that were component parts of nineteenth-century print culture.

The leader of Young Ireland was a young nationalist journalist named Thomas Davis (1814–1845). Davis was an ardent supporter of Irish traditional music and was a catalyst behind the wave of cultural nationalism that swept Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century.⁸ A cofounder of the influential Irish weekly, *The Nation*, Davis used the journal as a platform to lobby for the repeal of the Acts of Union (1800–01) between Britain and Ireland and to promote a brand of Irish nationalism distinctive for its non-sectarian appeal.⁹ Fiery editorial prose carried his message to the public, but so too did poetry and song, modes of cultural expression increasingly linked to nationalist agendas throughout Europe at the time. Davis and his followers focused their attention especially upon the traditional Irish song, celebrating the genre as an exemplar of their cultural heritage while harnessing its emotional power to strengthen their political cause.

The songs and ballads of Thomas Davis and Young Ireland quickly became one of the most popular features of *The Nation*. The public response was so positive, in fact, that Davis and his colleagues decided to publish the best entries in a songbook entitled *Spirit of the Nation*. First appearing in 1843, it was successful enough to warrant multiple reissues in the years that immediately followed. The songbook, being an anthology of the best of the movement's verses, served as a distillation of the ideas Davis wished to put forward, namely, a non-sectarian nationalism inclusive of all Irishmen, an emphasis on the knowledge of Irish history, and a militaristic rhetoric that called for Irish cultural and political independence.¹⁰

⁸ Thomas Davis's involvement with Irish traditional music can be seen in his correspondence with figures such as William Elliot Hudson, John Edward Pigot, James Hardiman and William Forde (see Thomas Davis Papers, National Library of Ireland MS 2644), as well as in his personal collection of Irish airs (see 'Collection of Irish Airs', National Library of Ireland MS 14,099). Davis also wrote extensively on music, particularly in his three essays – 'Irish Music and Poetry', 'A Ballad History of Ireland' and 'Irish Songs' – which appeared first in *The Nation* and were posthumously published in his collected writings, see *Essays Literary and Historical*, Centenary Edition, ed. D.J. O'Donoghue (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1914). In these writings, he issued prescriptive norms for the role of traditional music within Irish society, and he wrote with disdain about the influence of European art music, what he called the 'paltry, scented things from Italy'.

⁹ Davis co-founded *The Nation* with John Blake Dillon (1814–1886) and Charles Gavan Duffy (1816–1903); the first issue was printed on 15 October 1842. The stated goal of the three men was to create a journal that would 'raise up Ireland morally, socially, and politically, and put the sceptre of self-government into her hands'. See Charles Gavan Duffy, *Thomas Davis: Memoirs of an Irish Patriot, 1840–1846* (London: Kegan Paul; Trench, Trübner & Co., 1890): 72.

¹⁰ See D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, third edition (London: Routledge, 1995): 155–69; Helen F. Mulvey, *Thomas Davis: A Biographical Study* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003): 225–7; David Cairns and Shaun Richards, *Writing Ireland: Colonialism, Nationalism and culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988): 31–40.

The blossoming of print culture in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland set the stage for the success of *Spirit of the Nation*, as the public had grown accustomed to a wide variety of ballads and songs in print. Albert Friedman noted that a period understanding of the term 'ballad' referred to 'a doggerel poem written to a familiar tune, printed on a folio sheet or long slip, and sold at bookstalls or hawked about the streets by ballad-singers'.¹¹ As an indication of overlapping print and oral song traditions, the wide availability of broadside ballads supported and enlarged the popular deposit of an oral folksong repertoire as printed ballads were quickly memorized and internalized as part of a growing oral repertoire. This process subsequently aided future song anthologies.¹²

Indeed, in Ireland at this time the experience of print for many ordinary people would have been communal and public, an experience in which the ordinary lines between oral and literate culture would have been blurred. As Jonathan Barry has pointed out, the public consumption of the popular ballad epitomized this experience.¹³ The boundaries between print and oral communication became less clear with the practice of the performance or reading aloud of a text. Communal gatherings for storytelling, known as *áirneáil* or *scoraíocht*, were a common feature of rural life from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries.¹⁴ Furthermore, in many areas of Ireland around 1820, with the loss of disposable income due to the economic downturn, and rising literacy rates due to state funded primary education, communal reading became common practice even among groups of literates. These forms of reading aloud were interactive and most likely had many interruptions, explanations, comments and criticisms to determine the meaning of the text. These practices facilitated the entry of printed texts into a communal, predominantly oral culture.¹⁵ Thus printed songs and ballads, whether on loose broadsides or collected in songbooks or even in newspapers, regularly crossed the blurred divisions between the oral and literate cultures. Indeed, because nineteenth-century Ireland was still marked by what Walter Ong referred to as 'residual orality', writing usually served merely to recycle knowledge back into the oral world.¹⁶

¹¹ Albert Friedman, *The Ballad Revival: Studies in the Influence of Popular on Sophisticated Poetry* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961): 6.

¹² Connell and Leask, 'What is the people', 19.

¹³ Jonathan Barry, 'Literacy and Literature in Popular Culture: Reading and Writing in Historical Perspective', in *Popular Culture in England, c. 1500–1850*, ed. Tim Harris (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995): 82.

¹⁴ Terms such as *áirneáil*, *scoraíocht* and *céilí* were used to describe communal gatherings centred around singing and storytelling. See Stiofán Ó Cadhla, 'The Gnarled and Stony Clods of Townland's Tip: Máirtín Ó Cadhain and the "Gaelic" Storyteller', *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 34/1 (Spring, 2008): 40–46. Henry Glassie wrote extensively on the folk culture of Fermanagh, Ireland and provided important clues as to the social and cultural importance of these gatherings, 'While stories use the social unity of the ceili to explore painful, explosive issues, songs assume the social disunity of the pub and use their art to bring people into momentary accord. So Fermanagh's great events are told both in story and in song, and historical understanding unfolds between the intimate hearth and the clattery public house'. See Henry Glassie, *Irish Folk History: Tales from the North* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982): 13.

¹⁵ Niall Ó Ciosáin, *Print and Popular Culture in Ireland, 1750–1850* (London: Macmillan, 1997): 187, 190.

¹⁶ Walter J. Ong, *Literacy and Orality: The Technologizing of the Word* (London: Routledge, 2012): 68, 117.

Before coming to *The Nation*, Davis had no experience as a lyricist. The credit for introducing ballads and songs into the journal's pages belonged to his friend and colleague, Charles Gavan Duffy. As editor of the Belfast journal the *Vindicator* (1839–42), Duffy began to write and publish national songs because he 'was persuaded that among a race whose public festivities were always enlivened by ballad poetry, chanted by minstrels and chiefs, song was an immense though greatly underrated force'.¹⁷ Duffy received some assistance from fellow journalist T.M. Hughes, who would also later contribute to *The Nation*, as well as from other local poets; a revival of national spirit in the north quickly followed. Upon founding *The Nation* with Davis and John Blake Dillon, Duffy pushed to continue the practice of publishing national songs.¹⁸ Inexperienced in the genre, his new colleagues reluctantly agreed.

Dillon bowed out after several attempts at verse, but Davis seemed to have unlocked a hidden talent. Almost surprisingly, he was able to express 'his passionate convictions on the past, and his rapturous reveries on the future, in the only shape in which they would not appear extravagant or fantastic'.¹⁹ The journal's ballads and songs became an unequivocal success, with Davis's verses leading the way. National spirit began to awaken, and the journal was soon inundated with songs and poems sent in by readers. After only four months in print, this notice appeared in *The Nation* praising the popular response to their musical programme:

The quantity of patriotic poetry – rude, strong breathings of the national spirit – which we have evoked since we commenced our labours, is little less than miraculous. We receive at least twenty songs every week, full of bitter complaints of the fallen condition of our country, or hopes of her speedy resurrection. Every one of these we reckon of more value, as an evidence of the condition of the popular mind, than a dozen speeches or a score of petitions. They echo the true, inner, heartfelt feelings of the people. Song is the language of enthusiasm, and cannot lie – above all, when addressed to or springing from the millions.²⁰

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

Once Davis and his colleagues had produced a sufficient body of verse, the idea of collecting them into a songbook inevitably arose. Just six months after the founding of *The Nation*, a notice was printed in the journal's pages declaring their intention to reprint 'the best political songs, national ballads, epigrams, and squibs, that have appeared in our journal, in a little book, with the title of the *Spirit of the Nation*, which we will sell, or rather give away, for sixpence. We hope to circulate it by tens of thousands among the people ...'²¹ The low price of the songbook indicated that Davis and Young Ireland's objective was mass accessibility. If *The Nation* proved to be too costly, then readers could still afford *Spirit of the Nation* and thus imbibe their nationalist doctrine the easiest way possible: through song.

¹⁷ Charles Gavan Duffy, *My Life in Two Hemispheres* (New York: MacMillan, 1898): vol. 1, pp. 55–7.

¹⁸ Duffy, *Two Hemispheres*, 64.

¹⁹ Duffy, *Thomas Davis*, 93.

²⁰ *The Nation*, 14 January 1843, 216.

²¹ *The Nation*, 25 March 1843, 376.

Davis and Young Ireland's first experiment in national literature – what Duffy referred to as the 'little sixpenny brochure' – was a marvellous success.²² The first edition of *Spirit of the Nation* appeared in May 1843 and was printed out of *The Nation* office on Trinity Street in Dublin. If affordability and accessibility were Young Ireland's aims, they achieved both. It was an unassuming work with the image of a harp interwoven with shamrocks on the paper cover (see Figure 1).²³ The songbook's small size, just 4 × 6½ inches, meant the volume was portable and affordable.²⁴ There were 55 poems, 29 of which were paired with traditional airs; and *Spirit of the Nation* contained no music. The melodies to which the lyrics were to be sung were indicated in the songbook's Table of Contents and/or by a textual indicator beneath the poem's title.

The absence of notated music should not indicate, however, that the lyrics were divorced from their melodic partners.²⁵ Nick Groom has noted that even a printed ballad or song lyric, missing its musical component, still created a sound world all its own – by its known historical relation to a melody, by its word choice or by the rhythms and sounds of its refrain. The reading or performing of the text brought the music to mind. As Groom wrote, 'the noise cannot be silenced so easily'.²⁶

Choosing tunes that were well known to their readers also eliminated the necessity of having printed music. The familiarity of the tune provided a constant minimum level of knowledge to those who were reading or singing from *Spirit of the Nation*. That bare minimum of knowledge had real significance, especially when new ideas were introduced through the song's text. It meant the ability to know in the reading process how the words would go and how they would come out in the cadence of one's own voice. This was also an enormous aid to memorization, contributing to the songs' ability to inhabit both the literate and oral cultures.²⁷

Immediately after its publication, Davis and his colleagues began to promote *Spirit of the Nation* as a model for aspiring lyricists. Only a week after the songbook appeared, a notice printed in *The Nation* suggested that 'young gentlemen' who wished to say something new with their verse, or at least to say something old in a new way, should study *Spirit of the Nation* for suitable examples.²⁸ The following week an announcement appeared begging for a reprieve from the subpar verses submitted by many of the journal's readers. Again, the songbook proved to be the yardstick for acceptable submissions:

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

²² Duffy, *Thomas Davis*, 141.

²³ Title Page, *The Spirit of the Nation*, second revised edition (Dublin: James Duffy, 1844): i.

²⁴ T.F. O'Sullivan, *The Young Irelanders* (Tralee: Kerryman, 1944): 58.

²⁵ Kirsten McCue, "'An Individual Flowering on a Common Stem": Melody, Performance, and National Song', in *Romanticism and Popular Culture in Britain and Ireland*, ed. Philip Connell and Nigel Leask (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 89.

²⁶ Nick Groom, "'The Purest English': Ballads and the English Literary Dialect', *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 47/2–3 (2006): 187–90.

²⁷ Mark W. Booth, *The Experience of Songs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981): 111–12.

²⁸ *The Nation*, 20 May 1843, 504.

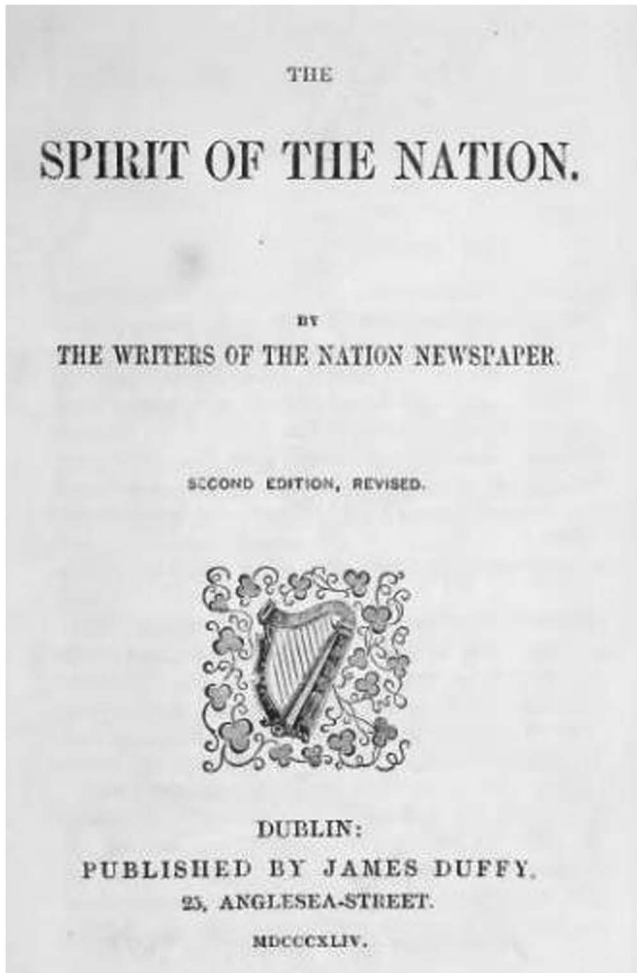


Fig. 1 Title Page, *Spirit of the Nation* (1844)

repealed. Let none of them within that time venture to send us a contribution, unless a jury of twelve competent persons pronounces it superior to anything published in 'The Spirit of the Nation'. This arrangement will, as the advertisements say, 'be mutually advantageous'. Meantime there will be no lack of poetry in our pages, as the gallant and gifted band who produced 'The Spirit of the Nation' will still pour out their soul-thrilling music, like the giant harmony of a great waterfall – awful, irresistible, eternal! Not a doubt of it.²⁹

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

²⁹ *The Nation*, 27 May 1843, 520.

Davis and his colleagues were undoubtedly very proud of their songbook, but they decided nonetheless to issue a revised edition later that same year to correct some minor issues. For one, they realized they had fallen into a trap common among non-Irish speakers in that they spelled some of the Irish words and phrases phonetically, instead of per Irish orthography. Considering the cultural platform Davis's nationalism stood on, this was a slightly embarrassing blunder. For another, they were unhappy with some of the airs suggested for the texts because 'some of these are Scotch, and some are not characteristic'.³⁰ This second, revised edition was published in September 1843.

Following quickly on the heels of the revised edition, Young Ireland published a second collection of their songs and poems, which they aptly titled *Spirit of the Nation*, Part II; thereafter, they referred to their original effort, in its revised version, as Part I. Published in November 1843, Part II was identical to Part I in size and shape. It contained 50 poems, 33 of which were to be sung to traditional melodies. Again, no authors' names were given and no written music was provided. To handle the popular demand for the songbook, the publishing duties were taken over by a professional printer and publisher, James Duffy, at his office in Angelsea Street in Dublin.³¹ In the preface to Part II, Davis explained that the success of the first songbook was what prompted them to issue another instalment. Claiming that 'the Tory has praised [the songs] more than the Liberal, and the anti-Repealer as much as the Nationalist', as well as referencing the songbook's popularity in the United States and Canada, Davis predicted *Spirit of the Nation's* continued success.³²

Political and Popular Impact

Aesthetic products can hold enormous power in creating or reviving a national identity. In Ireland, as in other European nationalist movements, music became a potent means of transmitting ideas about national culture. Given that music performance, whether in the concert hall or in the local market, was one of the main forms of public entertainment in the nineteenth century, it came as close to anything as a mass medium.³³ Davis's songs and those of Young Ireland were no different. The popularity of *Spirit of the Nation* meant that their songs were sung throughout Ireland wherever people assembled – in the cottage, in the village forge, in the harvest field, in the workshop, in the lawyers' chambers, in the universities, in the public houses and in concert halls. They were even discussed and sung in the aristocratic drawing rooms.³⁴ The breadth of the songs' appeal is important. One must recognize that music does more than symbolize or articulate nationalism: it participates in its formation. As ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlman declared, modern nation-states most powerfully came into being when their citizens sang together.³⁵

³⁰ *The Nation*, 20 May 1843, 504.

³¹ O'Sullivan, *The Young Irelanders*, 62. James Duffy (1809–1871) was a prominent Dublin-based Irish publisher. He specialized in publishing nationalist and Catholic religious items, and became the de facto publisher of the Young Ireland movement.

³² Preface, *Spirit of the Nation*, Part II (Dublin: James Duffy, 1843), iii–iv.

³³ Benjamin Curtis, *Music Makes the Nation: Nationalist Composers and Nation Building in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambria Press: Amherst, 2008): 24, 26.

³⁴ O'Sullivan, *The Young Irelanders*, 58.

³⁵ Philip V. Bohlman, *The Music of European Nationalism: Cultural Identity and Modern History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2004): 35.

The reviews of *Spirit of the Nation* provide an indication of the popular fervour for the songbook. The praise from the *Waterford Chronicle* reached religious proportions:

We have pored with delight over this beautiful wreath of genuine Irish song, which may aptly be termed a Rosary of National Feeling – its every verse, and line, and word, breathing scorn for the foe – love of native land – defiance to the oppressor – freedom for the slave – death to tyranny, and invoking the light of liberty, pure, bright, and unshackled as the breeze or beam of Heaven, for all who deem the glorious gift worth struggling for. The *Spirit of the Nation* is a manual of martial and patriotic sentiment worthy of the sacred cause – the noble people – and the glorious land from which its animating strains derive their inspiration ... As a popular songbook, this work may be regarded in the light of a morning hymn to a new era, just suited to the age, in soul, sentiment, and music.³⁶

A review from the English Radical journal the *Leeds Times* took a more earnest, militaristic approach and imagined the songs of *Spirit of the Nation* leading the Irish to freedom by whatever means necessary:

And, to speak the truth, the book is a very serious matter both to friends and foes. It is impossible to make light of it – or to laugh over its pages. Earnestness, like the grip of death, breathes throughout every line; and in every word there is a soul, armed with swords.

Neither can we mistake the spirit of these songs. They mean simply this, and no more – ‘FREEDOM’ – by peaceable means if we can get it – but if not – ‘FREEDOM’.

The boldest utterances are they which ever come from a strong and fiery heart conscious of the misery and degradation of its father-land. And Ireland has at last – after these weary and dumb ages of suffering, of oppression, and of wrong – found a voice which speaks to some purpose. In this book five centuries of pain and injustice plead sternly and eloquently unto God and man for judgment and redress. The iniquity could last no longer – could be endured no longer – and the soul of the Irish people has burst out in flames here – in these very songs – and it will burn the injustice to ashes.³⁷

Songs that could arouse such passion from those who supported Irish nationalism were sure to elicit similarly strong feelings from those who opposed it. In June 1843, *The Nation* reported on a large anti-Repeal meeting that was held at the Rotunda in Dublin, at which the prominent Unionist barrister Isaac Butt spoke.³⁸ After attacking the Repeal movement as a treasonous activity, he held aloft a copy of *Spirit of the Nation* as proof of the movement’s dangerous intent. Butt read aloud from several ballads, including Davis’s ‘Men of Tipperary’ and ‘Vow of

³⁶ Review reprinted in *The Nation*, 17 June 1843, 562.

³⁷ Review reprinted in *The Nation*, 21 October 1843, 26. The Radicals were on the liberal end of the British political spectrum. They favoured reform of the parliamentary system and the Church of England, and they often sided with O’Connell and his Irish MPs in supporting issues such as Catholic emancipation and reform of the tithing system for the Church of Ireland. See Howard Martin, *Britain in the Nineteenth Century* (Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes, 1996): 109–11.

³⁸ A staunch advocate of a union with Great Britain in his early life, Butt’s experiences with the Great Famine led him to turn to Irish nationalism and to support the establishment of a domestic legislature. In 1873 he formed the Home Rule League.

Tipperary', as well as Edward Walsh's 'War Song of Ireland, A.D. 1843', labelling the last as 'murderous invective'.³⁹ In a final example, the *Times* in London saw nothing but danger in Young Ireland and their songbook and advised readers to stay away,

If any one wishes to doubt that the Irish movement has a character, and that character is one of revenge, and that that revenge is too likely to be a bloody one, we advise him to keep clear of the *Spirit of the Nation*.⁴⁰

A Bigger, Better Songbook

After the success of *Spirit of the Nation* Parts I and II, Davis and his colleagues decided to issue another edition of the songbook in a guise altogether different than its previous iterations. The public was given a hint as to the plans for the new work in January 1844, when an announcement appeared in *The Nation* declaring that the publisher had in mind two new formats of the songbook,

one for the drawing-room, in the most beautiful style of typographic art; the other for the millions, in a little pocket volume that the farmer can take to the fair, and the labourer to the field with him, and which either can purchase for a trifle.⁴¹

Nothing else was said of the new edition until April of the same year when the finalized form was disclosed. The 'Library Edition' as it was called, was to be printed in small quarto size with large type on thick vellum paper. It was to be issued in six parts, with each part containing two musical accompaniments – one newly composed air and one traditional air – along with the poets' names.⁴² By June 1844 the proposed number of parts had already grown from six to eight, where it would remain.⁴³ The parts were intended to be issued on a monthly basis, a pattern that generally held true with only slight deviation (see Table 1). After all eight parts were published individually, the entire work was combined and made available for purchase by the end of January 1845. In its final form, the songbook totalled 350 pages and included music for 17 original melodies and arrangements of 20 traditional tunes, as well as an Irish language index.⁴⁴

In offering the new edition of the songbook in two formats – individual numbers and the combined work (the 'Library Edition', hereafter known as the 1845 edition) – Davis and Young Ireland were appealing to multiple markets. The individual numbers were affordable and portable and thus were targeted at the farmers and laborers who formed the bulk of Davis's audience. Capitalizing on the success of Parts I and II, he sought to further impress his nationalist vision upon the popular mind. In doing so, he also attempted to replace the vulgar street songs commonly known to the Irish poor and working classes, songs Davis once referred to as 'faded finery of the West End, the foul parodies of St. Giles's, the

³⁹ *The Nation*, 17 June 1843, 576.

⁴⁰ Review reprinted in *The Nation*, 16 December 1843, 154.

⁴¹ *The Nation*, 27 January 1844, 248.

⁴² *The Nation*, 20 April 1844, 440.

⁴³ *The Nation*, 29 June 1844, 593.

⁴⁴ The preface for the 1845 edition states that there are 22 old Irish airs arranged for voice and piano. A careful count of the songbook's index as well as the actual printed music, however, yields a count of 20. Perhaps Davis intended to have 22 arrangements but then had to cut them out immediately before the songbook went to press.

Table 1 Dates of Publication for *Spirit of the Nation*, 'Library Edition', Nos. 1–8

No. 1	29 June 1844
No. 2	28 July 1844
No. 3	31 August 1844
No. 4	19 October 1844
No. 5	2 November 1844
No. 6	7 December 1844
No. 7	21 December 1844
No. 8	20 January 1845

drunken rigmarole of the black Helots – or, as they are touchingly classed in the streets, “sentimental, comic, and nigger songs”⁴⁵. Davis was well versed in this body of songs, as he had his own collection of street ballads.⁴⁶ The literary imitations of street balladry, which Davis and his colleagues cultivated in *Spirit of the Nation*, strengthened the popular understanding of music as a functional resource, one which continually advanced the cause of Irish self-determination. While Davis repudiated the commonplace vulgarity of street ballads, he took advantage of the central influence they exerted on forming popular opinion.⁴⁷ Their reach was extensive. In the mid-nineteenth century, printed song texts circulated very widely, socially as well as geographically, and were disseminated along with all sorts of everyday commodities, passed from hand to hand, pasted onto walls, sung out loud, copied and learned aurally.⁴⁸

The 1845 edition of the songbook, with its substantial size, music in piano arrangement, and green silk binding was appropriate for the drawing room. Utilizing this format, Davis and Young Ireland were targeting the Irish middle-class, particularly the Irish Protestants who may have been open to the cultural nationalism espoused by Davis but who were uncomfortable with the Catholic populism of nationalist Repeal leader Daniel O’Connell.⁴⁹ Davis knew public

⁴⁵ *The Nation*, 28 June 1845, 616. In referring to Irish peasants as ‘black Helots’ and their songs as ‘nigger’ songs, Davis was drawing on a rhetorical trope of the period that linked Spartan helots, Irish peasants and African slaves of the West Indies. Irish authors even frequently used ‘Helots’ as a pseudonym for Irish peasants. See Stephen Hodkinson and Edith Hall, ‘Appropriations of Spartan Helotage in British Anti-Slavery Debates of the 1790s’, in *Ancient Slavery and Abolition From Hobbes to Hollywood*, ed. Edith Hall, Richard Alston and Justine McConnell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 90. For example, one Irish author of the period wrote: ‘Oppression is the inevitable result of a state of things in which a marked class has the ascendancy over another; no matter whether the inferior caste be black or white, Irishmen or Helots, Catholics or Plebians, injury and insult must of necessity be its lot’. See William Sampson, *Memoirs of William Sampson, an Irish Exile; Written by Himself* (London: Whittaker, Treacher, and Arnot, 1832): xiv.

⁴⁶ See ‘Forty-Five Irish song-sheets, some from the collection of Thomas Davis’, NLI LO 2210.

⁴⁷ Harry White, *The Keeper’s Recital, Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770–1970* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1998): 69.

⁴⁸ Atkinson, ‘Folk Songs in Print’, 463.

⁴⁹ Daniel O’Connell was Ireland’s popular leader. He rose to prominence in the 1820s for his role in campaigning for Catholic Emancipation, a role which earned him the moniker ‘The Liberator’. Through the 1830s and 1840s, O’Connell engaged in an intermittent campaign for Ireland’s release from the Act of Union with Britain. With Davis’s assistance,

speeches and meetings would be utterly useless in winning middle-class Protestants to a cause associated with the name of O'Connell, for their prejudice could not be softened by verbal assault. In employing national songs, Davis took advantage of the social and intellectual forces that could break down that prejudicial divide.⁵⁰

A contemporary reviewer from the *Kilkenny Journal* noted the songbook's drawing room appeal:

This new issue was called for – it will be the harbinger of nationality into the drawing-rooms of our aristocracy – it will be found upon the study table, and in the libraries of the intellectual men of the country, and it will have its place in boudoirs, and on the music-stands of the women of Ireland. The book is got up with great taste and elegance – the illustrated cover, and the printing, as a specimen of Irish typography, is most creditable to the country, and shows the progress we are making as a literary people ... We would teach them [songs and ballads] to our children, and we would rather hear our daughters sing them than any other music we know of; and the advent of Ireland's liberty will be at hand, when the puny ballads which have been too long Irish drawing-room companions are laid aside – when such songs as those of THE NATION are heard beside the harp and piano, and the reply of our youth, to woman's soft voice, asking 'What shall I play?' shall be 'The Men of Tipperary' – or if pathos be the ruling influence of the hour, 'The Lost Path'. Such songs will ever be acceptable to our fair countrywomen, and such songs poured from their lips will carry love of country with them, and plant it in the hearts of our youth.⁵¹

This format of the songbook proved to be very popular and would reach its fiftieth edition by 1877.⁵² The wide appeal of the songs of *Spirit of the Nation* – from the marketplace ballad monger to the drawing room pianist – indicated the popular attraction of Irish traditional music and underlined the efficacy of that music as a vehicle for carrying Davis's message.

The Music of *Spirit of the Nation*

Adding printed music to *Spirit of the Nation* was a significant step in the development of this songbook and further tied *Spirit of the Nation* to the world of print culture.⁵³ In the process, this addition changed this body of music in fundamental ways. For example, the folk tunes represented as 'Irish' in the collection actually came from a variety of socially distinct repertoires, including shepherds' songs, church songs, farmers' songs and other types. By labelling them all as simply 'Irish', the creators of the *Spirit of the Nation* positioned these diverse songs to represent the entire nation, not just its component parts.⁵⁴

O'Connell's Repeal Association became a major nationalist movement which reached its zenith in 1842–43. O'Connell's close relationship with the Catholic clergy and his appeal for Catholic rights made him untrustworthy in the eyes of most Protestant nationalists and put him at odds with Davis's own non-sectarian brand of nationalism.

⁵⁰ Charles Gavan Duffy, *Young Ireland: A Fragment of Irish History, 1840–1850* (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1880): 278–9.

⁵¹ Review reprinted in *The Nation*, 21 December 1844, 171.

⁵² Mulvey, *Thomas Davis and Ireland*, 105.

⁵³ To be clear, not every song received musical notation. Seventeen original airs and 20 traditional airs were notated.

⁵⁴ Curtis, *Music Makes the Nation*, 107.

Although the printing of traditional music may have put forward an image of national unity, the reliance on print culture also had negative ramifications for the cause of Irish nationalism. As Irish author Seamus Deane noted,

The movement from an oral to a print culture is not simply a matter of translating folk tales or customs from the mouths of the people to the page. It involves an attempt to control a strange bodily economy in which food, drink, speech and song are intimately related.⁵⁵

The printing of native music undeniably altered both its musical form and its cultural significance; it also changed the terms by which traditional music confronted the print-based marketplace of Anglo-Irish culture. Whereas most native tunes changed or varied across time in the process of oral dissemination, the act of printing enforced uniformity on Irish tunes. Additionally, when Irish music was printed, it was often designated for instruments foreign to the native tradition: the flute and violin in the eighteenth century and then the piano in the nineteenth century.⁵⁶

The transferal of music from the oral tradition to print represented a dramatic shift in the practice and dissemination of traditional music. It was only through the medium of print, however, that a wider audience could be found and established for this music. If broad sympathy for Ireland's woes was to be won across social classes and other divides, the music had to be publicized and commercialized in a recognizable and attractive form.⁵⁷

Even with this shift, the attitude of Davis and Young Ireland toward Irish music and Irish composers were still tied directly to the folk. In an 'Answers to Correspondents' column in *The Nation*, the anonymous author castigated a reader who dared to doubt the existence of Irish composers:

Some one who cannot spell, and who writes insolence in bad English, has attacked us for praising Irish music. He asks – 'Was there ever an Irish composer?' Aye! [Turlough] Carolan was one, and [Cornelius] Lyons another, and [Ruadhri Dall] O' Cathain another, and there were a hundred nameless men beside, who composed the most haughty and sustained marches, and the tenderest love-tunes, and the deepest dirges, ever heard by mortal ears. The names of these great geniuses, like those of the authors of the *Border Ballads*, of the *Songs of the Cid*, and, indeed, of the fountain works in most countries, are gone; but, thank Heaven! their creations are here. If we could recall the direction of the chap who sent the letter (we tore his letter in disgust), we would recommend him for a settlement in a Connaught bog.⁵⁸

The Irish composers referred to in the text were all harpers from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. No mention was made of contemporary composers such as Michael Balfe, William Rooke or John Stevenson. Additionally, the 'nameless men' who composed the 'fountain works' of their native countries refers directly to the anonymous compositions that formed the cornerstone of native musical culture, passed down orally from generation to generation. Rather

⁵⁵ Seamus Deane, *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): 55.

⁵⁶ Leith Davis, *Music, Postcolonialism, and Gender: The Construction of an Irish National Identity, 1724–1874* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006): 29–30.

⁵⁷ Deane, *Strange Country*, 67.

⁵⁸ *The Nation*, 24 May 1845, 536.

than choosing an established composer to arrange the melodies for *Spirit of the Nation*, as John Stevenson had done for Thomas Moore's *Irish Melodies*, Davis chose two of his nationalist colleagues who were amateur musicians and experienced folk song collectors.⁵⁹ In securing William Elliot Hudson and John Edward Pigot to arrange traditional melodies as well as write original compositions for *Spirit of the Nation*, Davis chose men whose style was anchored in their native traditional music.⁶⁰ In his mind, the works of Pigot and Hudson followed in the same line as Carolan, Lyons and O' Cathain.

Pigot's and Hudson's arrangements and newly composed music for the song-book, scored for piano and voice, are simple, direct and devoid of ornamentation; some present-day scholars have characterized the settings as 'bland'.⁶¹ What these musical settings were lacking were the *carte blanche* arrangements of the *Irish Melodies*. In those volumes, John Stevenson added 'symphonies' (preludes) and postludes to each song, and Moore felt free to alter the tune's melodic contour to fit his texts.⁶² Those tunes had been modified to such an extent that contemporaries such as Edward Bunting lamented that the melodies were 'hardly suspected to be themselves'.⁶³ He would not have encountered that difficulty with the arrangements of Hudson and Pigot.

The simplicity of the arrangements likely resulted from an attempt to remain as true to the original melodies as possible. In such a model of folk song notation, skilled performers would be expected to enhance the skeletal framework of the notation by drawing upon an orally transmitted body of performance practice conventions. Whereas some consumers of *Spirit of the Nation* may not have been familiar enough with the traditional style to do so, there were many who would have been. As Irish ethnomusicologist Niall Keegan has noted about the

⁵⁹ In his *Irish Melodies* (10 vols, 1808–34), Thomas Moore paired his newly written lyrical verses with traditional Irish tunes. The success of his songs, some of which carried nationalistic undertones, earned him the popular title 'Bard of Erin' and drew international attention to the beauty of Irish music. Moore can be seen as the nationalistic forebear to Davis and Young Ireland. See White, *The Keeper's Recital*, 36–51 and *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 35–78; Ryan, 'The Tone of Defiance', 197–211; Malcolm Brown, *The Politics of Irish Literature from Thomas Davis to W.B. Yeats* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972): 58–62; Gerry Smith, *Music in Irish Cultural History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009): 16–23.

⁶⁰ John Edward Pigot (1822–1871) was an avid music collector and barrister. He met Davis while they were both attending Trinity College Dublin and he quickly became an active member of Young Ireland and a contributor to *The Nation*. Along with Hudson, Pigot provided valuable assistance in preparing the music for the 1845 *Spirit of the Nation*. Pigot's personal collection of traditional music is now housed in the Royal Irish Academy in the Forde-Pigot Music Collection (RIA MS 24 O 20). Over 150 of Pigot's airs were passed on to P.W. Joyce, and appeared in his *Old Irish Music and Songs* (1909). William Elliot Hudson (1796–1853) was a barrister and a patron of literature, art and music. He financially supported the *Citizen*, a monthly journal of politics and culture. William and his brother Henry were responsible for the 'Native Music of Ireland' portion of the journal, in which they published traditional airs from their own music collection as well as newly composed tunes modelled on traditional ones. See O'Sullivan, *The Young Irelanders*, 320–27.

⁶¹ See White *The Keeper's Recital*, 60, and Joseph Ryan, *Nationalism and Music in Ireland* (PhD diss., National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1991): 115. Both use 'bland' to describe the music in the *Spirit of the Nation*.

⁶² White, *Music and the Irish Literary Imagination*, 47–8.

⁶³ Edward Bunting, preface to *The Ancient Music of Ireland, Arranged for Piano Forte* (Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1840): 5.

Ex. 1 'Our Own Little Isle', bars 1–6, *Spirit of the Nation* (1845)

OUR OWN LITTLE ISLE.

AIR.—"The Carabhat Jig."

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Our Own Little Isle'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in G major, 6/8 time, and begins with the lyrics 'Oh I - rish-men ne - ver for - get 'Tis a fo - reigner's farm your'. The piano accompaniment is in the same key and time, featuring a simple triadic chordal accompaniment. The second system continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'own lit - tle isle; Oh I - rish - men when will you get some'. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar triadic accompaniment, including a trill in the right hand in the fifth measure. The tempo is marked 'Vivace' and the dynamic is 'm. f.'.

eighteenth- and nineteenth-century transmission of tunes via notation, many elements of traditional music performance – variation, ornamentation, phrasing and articulation – were not accounted for in the notation, and often the melody was represented in a very basic manner.⁶⁴ Perhaps this practice helps explain the blandness of Pigot's and Hudson's arrangements, despite the fact that the music in *Spirit of the Nation* occasionally specifies dynamics or articulation. The music was clear and direct enough for those outside of the traditional music culture to perform while also providing ample opportunity for the embellishments characteristic of traditional music performance.

Example 1 presents the first six bars of Pigot's song 'Our Own Little Isle', sung to the melody of the 'Carabhat Jig'.⁶⁵ The syllabic text setting is accompanied by a basic, triadic chordal accompaniment that deviates only slightly in bars 5 and 6 when the beat is subdivided into three quavers, presumably to mark the new line of text. The opening tempo of *Vivace* and dynamic of *mezzo-forte* are given, but other than those indications, the score is quite bare. Clear, 'bland' arrangements such as this met the needs of both the parlour performer and the traditional musician.

Davis's idealism led him to believe that Irishmen of all creeds would join under the common banner of nationalism, given the right impetus. His herculean task was to convince groups who harboured ancestral animosities to lay aside their

⁶⁴ Niall Keegan, 'Literacy as a Transmission Tool in Irish Traditional Music', in *The Maynooth International Musicological Conference 1995: Selected Proceedings*, ed. Patrick Devine and Harry White (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996): 337–8.

⁶⁵ John Pigot, 'Our Own Little Isle', *The Spirit of the Nation* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845): 12.

A New SONG.



*Ho Brother Teague dost hear de Decree, Lil-li Burlero Bullen a-la, Dat we sfall have a
new Debittie, Lil-li Bur-le-ro Bullen a-la, Le-ra, Le-ro, Le-ro Le-ra, Lil-li Bur-le-ro,
Bullen a la, Le-ra, Le-ro, Le-ro, Le-ra, Lil-li Burlero Bullen a la:*

<p><i>Ho by my Shoul it is a T-----t, Lilli Burlero, etc. And he will Cut de English Troat, Lilli, etc. Lera, Lero, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Though by my shoul de English do Prat, Lilli, etc. DeLaw's on Dare side, and Christ knows what, Lilli, etc. Lera, Lero, etc. Lera, Lero, etc.</i></p> <p><i>But if Dispence do Come, from de Pope, Lilli, etc. Weelhang Magno Carto & demselves in a Rope, Lilli, etc. Lera, Lero, etc. Lera, Lero, etc.</i></p> <p><i>And the good T-----t is made a Lord, Lilli, etc. And he with brave Lads is coming aboard, Lilli, etc. Lera, Lero, etc. Lera, Lero, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Who 'l all in France have taken a swear, Lilli, etc. Dat day will have no Protestant h-----r</i></p>	<p><i>Lilli, etc. Lera, Lero, etc. Lera, Lero, etc.</i></p> <p><i>O but why does he stay behind, Lilli, etc. Ho by my shoul 'tis a Protestant wind Lilli, etc. Lera, Lero, etc. Lera, Lero, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Now T-----I is come a-shore, Lilli, etc. And we shall have Commissions gillore, Lilli, etc. Lera, Lero, etc. Lera, Lero, etc.</i></p> <p><i>And he dat will not go to M-----s, Lilli, etc. Shall turn out and look like an Ass, Lilli, etc. Lera, Lero, etc. Lera, Lero, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Now now de Hereticks all go down, Lilli, etc. By Christ and St. Patrick the Nation's our own, Lilli, etc. Lera, Lero, etc. Lera, Lero, etc.</i></p>
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Fig. 2 Thomas Wharton's broadside ballad, featuring the tune 'Lilliburlero'

grievances and realize that their best interests lay in working together for a unified Ireland. An important tool in creating his non-sectarian nationalism was his attempt to redeem divisive party songs. One such song, 'The Protestant Boys', is a prime example of the interface between print and oral musical traditions present in Irish nationalism. The air for this song, 'Lilliburlero', had a strong anti-Catholic pedigree, dating from a 1687 broadside ballad by Thomas Wharton, an English politician who used the song to attack the Catholic Lord Deputy of Ireland, Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnell (see Fig. 2).⁶⁶ Even though the origins of 'Lilliburlero' are based in the print traditions of broadside ballads, there is evidence of its survival in a variety of print and oral contexts. One description of

⁶⁶ David Cooper, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diaspora, Community and Conflict* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 15. The image for Figure 2 is used with permission of the English Broadside Ballad Archive, EBBA 32857, National Library of Scotland, Crawford EB.513.

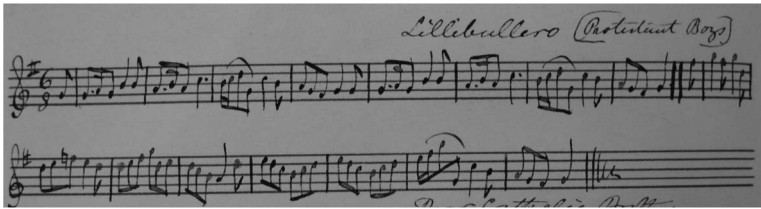


Fig. 3 'Lillibullero' from John Pigot's Music Collection

seventeenth-century London musical life reveals the tune's presence in the world of traditional music and dance: 'some were dancing to a bagpipe; others whistling to a Base Violin, two Fiddlers scraping Lilla burlero, My lord Mayor's Delight, upon a couple of Crack'd Crowds'.⁶⁷ The tune also appeared in John Playford's *The Dancing Master* (1690) and in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728).⁶⁸ Davis's colleague, John Edward Pigot had a copy of the tune in his personal collection of traditional tunes, which according to his notes, he in turn copied from Thompson's *Hibernian Muse* collection of 1790 (see Fig. 3).⁶⁹ As David Cooper writes, 'Lillibullero' had a potent influence on Irish politics of the time and served as the setting for numerous other seventeenth-century ballads.⁷⁰ In Davis's time the tune was most commonly heard in 'The Protestant Boys', especially within the context of the annual sectarian Orange processions, celebrating the anniversary of William of Orange's victories at the Boyne (1690) and Aughrim (1691).

It was to the tune of this song that Davis set his 'Orange and Green Will Carry the Day' (see Ex. 2). It was originally published in *The Nation* as one of the first numbers in the series entitled 'Songs for the Times'. Songs of this series were to be 'simple in expression, vigorous in thought, propagandist of some popular principle, and written to a popular air', to gain quick access to mass consciousness.⁷¹

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

Ireland! rejoice, and England! deplore –
 Faction and feud are passing away.
 'Twas a low voice, but 'tis a loud roar,
 'Orange and Green will carry the day'.
 Orange! Orange!
 Green and Orange!
 Pitted together in many a fray –
 Lions in fight!
 And link'd in their might,
 Orange and Green will carry the day
 Orange! Orange!

⁶⁷ George S. Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String: A History of Scottish Dance Music* (London: Dent, 1971): 188.

⁶⁸ See John Playford, *The Dancing Master*, 8th ed. (London, 1690): 216. Regarding Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, the Act III song 'The modes of the court so common are grown' is sung to 'Lillibullero'. See Frank Kidson, *The Beggar's Opera: Its Predecessors and Successors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922): 75.

⁶⁹ Forde-Pigot Music Collection, Royal Irish Academy, RIA MS 24 O 20. Image used by permission of the Royal Irish Academy © RIA.

⁷⁰ Cooper, *The Musical Traditions*, 15–17.

⁷¹ *The Nation*, 14 December 1844, 152.

Ex. 2 Davis's 'Orange and Green Will Carry the Day' from *Spirit of the Nation* (1845)

Vivace *f*

Ire - land! re - jice, and Eng - land! de - plore, Fac - tion and feud are
pass - ing a - way. 'Twas a low voice, but 'tis a loud roar, 'O - range and Green will
car - ry the day." O - range! O - range! Green and O - range! Pitt - ed to - ge - ther in ma - ny a fray!

Green and Orange!
Wave them together o'er mountain and bay.
Orange and Green!
Our King and our Queen!
'Orange and Green will carry the day!'⁷²

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

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

⁷² *The Nation*, 14 December 1844, 153.

Leaving no doubt as to his intention to appropriate this melody for his own nationalistic purposes, Davis even textually responded to the lyrics of 'The Protestant Boys', which contain the repeating phrase 'For Orange and Blue/Will be Faithful and True', proclaiming Protestant loyalty to the English throne.⁷³ Davis replaced this Orange and Blue refrain with his own 'Orange and Green will carry the day!' With each repetition of this non-sectarian refrain he textually excised the 'Blue' of the British and replaced it with the 'Green' of the Irish. In this not-so-subtle syntactical manoeuvre Davis emphasized his larger point: a unified Orange and Green renders the Blue unnecessary.

In addition to redeeming divisive sectarian songs, Davis's song texts were intended to arouse historical pride and national feeling within his listeners. In his 'The West's Asleep', Davis extols the rugged beauty of the west of Ireland and the heroic deeds of its inhabitants engrained in Irish historical memory. Yet, he fears for the fate of the Irish nation if the West does not rise again to take on its heroic mantle. His apprehensions are put to rest in the final stanza:

And if, when all a vigil keep,
The West's asleep, the West's asleep –
Alas! and well may Erin weep,
That Connaught lies in slumber deep.
But – hark! – some voice like thunder spake:
'The West's awake, the West's awake' –
Sing oh! hurrah! let England quake,
We'll watch to death for Erin's sake!⁷⁴

Davis's lyrics are set to the traditional air 'The Brink of the White Rocks'. A footnote to Davis's song in *Spirit of the Nation* states that 'As here set this air slightly differs, in the end of the second line, from the version in Bunting's third volume and agrees with that to which Mr. Horncastle sang "The Herring is King"'.⁷⁵

This note alerts the reader to an intriguing interface of print and oral traditions. The basic melody for *Spirit of the Nation*'s 'The Brink of the White Rocks' was taken from Edward Bunting's *Ancient Music of Ireland* (1840). In Bunting's collection, he highlighted the tune's provenance in oral tradition, noting that it is 'very ancient' and that he transcribed it from a blind man at Westport in 1802.⁷⁶ When the tune was arranged for *Spirit of the Nation*, however, the arranger (Pigot or Hudson) was apparently influenced by Horncastle's rendering of 'The Herring is King', which is a variation of 'The Brink of the White Rocks'.⁷⁷ Horncastle was in Dublin in early 1843 presenting his 'Irish Entertainment', an evening of lectures on and singing of Irish traditional music. On 18 February 1843, a lengthy review of Horncastle's 'delightful entertainments' appeared in *The Nation*.⁷⁸ Many of the airs he sang were drawn from Bunting's collections and it is likely that this was the

⁷³ M.J. Barry, ed., 'The Protestant Boys', in *The Songs of Ireland* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845): 73–4.

⁷⁴ Thomas Davis, 'The West's Asleep', in *The Spirit of the Nation: Ballads and Songs with Original and Ancient Music, Arranged for the Voice and Pianoforte* (Dublin: James Duffy, 1845): 73.

⁷⁵ Davis, 'The West's Asleep', 72.

⁷⁶ Bunting, *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, x.

⁷⁷ Aloys Fleischmann, ed., *Sources of Irish Traditional Music, c. 1600–1855*, vol. 1, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities (New York: General Music Publishing, 1988): 717.

⁷⁸ *The Nation*, 18 February 1843, 300.

venue in which Horncastle's version of 'The Herring is King' was heard. In arranging the melody for *Spirit of the Nation*, elements from Bunting and Horncastle were combined to create yet another variation of the melody. This was essentially an expedited process of Cecil Sharp's principles of continuity, variation and selection.⁷⁹ Yet, whereas Sharp's ideas were predicated on oral transmission and communal composition, the act of printing the arrangement made the process much quicker and more definitive. Rather than a quasi-Darwinian evolution in which the tune's structure would gradually be shaped over the course of generations, printing the notated music essentially locked the tune's form in place.

Walter Ong likens the act of printing the oral word to that of pressing living flowers to death between the pages of a book. The dead flower, once alive, is the psychic equivalent of the verbal text. A paradox exists, however, in that the 'deadness' of the text – its removal from the living oral life world and its rigid printed fixity – assures its endurance and its potential for being 'resurrected' into a limitless number of living contexts by a plethora of living readers.⁸⁰ A printed song on a broadside or in a songbook needed only to be internalized, sung aloud, and passed on to re-enter the oral tradition, to be 'resurrected', so to speak. While Ong may not have had traditional music in mind, his example accurately describes the print–oral interface in the nineteenth-century song culture, as traditional melodies traversed the blurry boundaries between printed and oral sources.⁸¹ 'The Protestant Boys' and 'The Brink of the White Rocks' are prime examples.

Thomas Davis and Young Ireland's songbook, *Spirit of the Nation* straddled the divide between the print and oral song traditions and did so in a way that benefited the spread of Young Ireland's nationalist ideology. The persistence in print of Davis's lyrics meant that his songs became the model for nationalistic verse for the remainder of the nineteenth century. So great was his legacy that at the turn of the twentieth century Irish author John Eglinton called for the 'de-Davisation' of Irish literature.⁸² Even such a figure as William Butler Yeats wrote of Young Ireland's long-lived cultural influence, lamenting:

many at that time found it hard to refuse if anybody offered for sale pepper-pot shaped to suggest a round tower with a wolf-dog at its foot, who would have felt it inappropriate to publish an Irish book that had not harp and shamrock and green cover, so completely did their minds move amid Young Ireland images and metaphor.⁸³

The songs of *Spirit of the Nation* dominated the Irish cultural landscape precisely because they met the needs and abilities of oral and literate audiences alike. Davis's skilful marriage of print and oral discourses in the service of Irish nationalism ensured his songs' longevity and cultural impact.

⁷⁹ Cecil Sharp, *English Folk-Song: Some Conclusions* (London: Simpkin; Novello; Taunton: Barnicott and Pearce, 1907): 16–31.

⁸⁰ Ong, *Literacy and Orality*, 80.

⁸¹ See David Atkinson, 'The Popular Ballad and the Book Trade: "Bateman's Tragedy" versus "The Demon Lover"', in *Street Ballads in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and North America: The Interface between Print and Oral Traditions*, ed. David Atkinson and Steve Roud (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014): 195–218. Atkinson shows how some traditional ballads not only crossed the boundaries between print and oral tradition, but also actually depended on the broadside trade for survival.

⁸² John Eglinton, *Bards and Saints* (Dublin: Maunsel and Co., Ltd., 1906): 36–43.

⁸³ William Butler Yeats, *Autobiographies: The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats*, ed. William O'Donnell and Douglas Archibald (London: Simon and Schuster, 2010): vol. 3, p. 172.