

KNOWING BY DOING:

CONNECTING TO THE FIELD IN IRISH MUSIC THROUGH CREATIVE PRACTICE ON THE CELLO

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Introduction: Irish Traditional Music, the Cello, and Creative Practice

The cello is a unique instrument, full of a variety of sounds brought out by different playing techniques, used in a wide range of performance styles, and, in practiced hands, can be used to bring the listener through a journey of emotions within a performance. The range of the cello, with the full resonance of the low strings and the delicate sounds of the treble notes on the upper strings, allows for it to be played in nearly any capacity, making the creative possibilities seemingly endless. The cello has been used in classical music for centuries, in contemporary Western art music for decades, and, more recently, in various popular music genres because of the creative potential it holds as an instrument.

Despite its creative potential, the cello did not become widely used in Irish traditional music. Concert programmes indicate that the works of Haydn, Corelli, Geminiani, and other Baroque and classical composers were popular in Ireland, demonstrating that the cello would have been known and used within Ireland (Cooper 2002). In the music of the Gaelic courts, the bass viol¹ appears in some inventories alongside the Irish harp, indicating that Irish music and Anglo-European art music blended in the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Boydell and Houston 2009: 18-19). Francis Bacon (alive between 1561-1626) in his work *Sylva sylvarum* cited the two instruments, bass viol and Irish harp, as sounding well together, demonstrating that they were played together in seventeenth century court music (Boydell and Houston 2009: 19). Following the era of court music, there are two references to the cello being played in Irish traditional music settings prior to the 1970's. One was at a gathering in Streamstown, Sligo in 1782 where Irish traditional music and European art music may have been mixed (MacAoidh 1994: 26). The other refers to a Mr. Curran playing a tune, 'Monks of the Screw,' at a house session in the 1850's with a 'depth of sensitivity to melody' in a manner deemed 'unmistakably and – may I add? – so admirably Irish' (Cooper 2002: 138). Since the 1970's, however, cellists can be found on recordings of Irish traditional music in melodic and accompaniment roles, featured to accompany singers and tunes alike.² Bands, including Dé Danann and The Chieftains, have used cellists on their albums and the Kilfenora Céilí Band has employed cellists for long-term performance and recording contracts. This evidence indicates that cellists can perform Irish traditional music, but how are they coming to participate in the music tradition?

Through my own creative practice as a cellist, I have sought insight into how cellists participate in Irish music performance and experience the transition from the classical tradition to the Irish tradition. The embodied and experiential knowledge gained through active participation in the transition and the new music culture was key to engagement in musician-to-musician interviews. Dara Culhane argues that 'we come to know ourselves and each other through multiple avenues, including cultural traditions, political/economic relations, familiarly and individual biographies, and sensory experience and

communication' (2017b: 46). Helena Wulff came to a similar realization in her research with Irish traditional dance. Her background as a professional ballet dancer gave her knowledge of many technical skills and the physical experience of dance. This, combined with her experience of learning the nuances of Irish dance through her research, gave her experiential knowledge to talk to dancers as a dancer, contributing a depth of understanding and embodied knowledge to her research (Wulff 2007: 1-6). Thus, this ethnographic research engages multiple avenues of understanding through analysis of my own creative practice using auto-ethnography, observation of other cellists currently performing Irish music, and interviews with cellists that involved cello playing and conversation musician-to-musician. Together, these methods unveiled how cellists develop technique, experience the transition from classical to Irish traditional performance contexts, use key elements and structures of Irish traditional music, emphasize personal expression, and use imagination to discover new ways to perform on cello as they participate in the living, melodic tradition of Ireland.

Creative Practice in Ethnographic Research

Creative practice can be an essential source of information for an ethnomusicologist to discover ways of doing, knowing, and being within a music culture. The researcher becomes directly engaged with the music, transmission processes, teaching and learning practices, performance skills and expectations, and performance aesthetics that are essential to the music tradition (Aitkenhead 2006; Baily 2001; Berliner 1978; Castro et al. 2016; Smith 2011; Witzleben 2010). An in-depth, often immersive, experience in learning the music that one wishes to study, therefore, can be a key tool to developing understandings about the creative practices in a music tradition and the factors determining the musical decision-making of performing musicians (Aitkenhead 2006; Baily 2001; Berliner 1978; Hood 1960; Wong 2008). In many ethnomusicological studies, the researcher engages in the new music culture by learning a new instrument or singing style within the tradition (Baily 2001; Berliner 1978; Hood 1960). This research involves engagement with a new music culture, but through an instrument which is already mastered by the researcher. I chose this method in response to research such as that undertaken by Lindsay Aitkenhead with viola players of English folk music, in which she performed a non-traditional instrument, viola, in English folk music and used this experience to relate to other folk-violin performers in the field (2006). Similarly, I gained experiential knowledge of the culture and performance of Irish music on cello, a non-traditional instrument, to develop a connection through experience with other cellists in the music community.

Participation within a music culture creates a clear link between the researcher and the interview participants by demarking a clear role for the researcher within the music community. Interviews become 'specialized conversations between co-creators' and allows the relationship between participants and researcher to significantly shape the content of the interview (Culhane 2017a: 12). It creates the opportunity for the music to be played and discussed openly with an experiential understanding of the music as a foundation for conversation to develop beyond discussion of technical features and into the nature of the music itself (Baily 2001; Berliner 1978; Castro et al. 2016; Cottrell 2007; Hood 1960; Rice 2016: 109; Wong 2008; Wulff 2007). It allows the researcher to focus on the way that performance is practiced, the ways it has effects, and how these are negotiated and used within the music culture (Wong 2008: 78-80, 87-88). In addition to this experiential knowledge, it also allows the

researcher to make informed observations of performances, both live and recorded, and to engage in interviews as one practitioner to another (Wulff 2007: 17-21). Within this research, experience of the transition from one music tradition to another allowed me to connect with other cellists who have experienced the same transition. It also allowed us to speak and make connections musician-to-musician, and enabled us to use alternative methods to communicate at times when words fall short in the description of music.

Creative practice also allows the researcher to reflect on their own learning and performance experience, which brings reflective and reflexive elements into the research (Aitkenhead 2006; Baily 2001; Burnard 2012; Hood 1960; Rice 2016; Wong 2008; Wulff 2007). Through auto-ethnography, the researcher can engage with reflexively, drawing on their own experience in the field. When ethnomusicologists use music experience and involve their creative practice directly in the research, it exemplifies an interactive and 'embodied scholarship' through the development of embodied knowledge (Kisliuk 1998: 314). Embodied knowledge, as discussed in this article, refers to the depth of knowledge gained through direct engagement in participation within a music culture and the experience of transition from one music culture to another. An intimate knowledge of the challenges of the music, techniques essential to successful performance within the music community, and their personal relationship to the music will be developed through this embodied piece of the research. This can also give the researcher a chance to experiment and explore what is viable and acceptable within the musical tradition by trying new things with other musicians in the community that they have come to know through performance. The researcher, thus, has the ability to reflect and generate personal understandings about the music and music culture, which will later contribute to the generation of new theories through the combination of knowledge and lived experience. As discussed by Karen Barbour in her own creative practice through dance:

It is through rigorous and reflective practice that theoretical knowledge and lived experiences can be embodied, made meaningful and thus contribute to the generation of new understandings. I contend that this embodied knowledge is then available for subsequent expression and aesthetic communication via a wide range of mediums and interdisciplinary practices (2011: 74).

Creative practice, therefore, is an essential tool to explore and develop ways of knowing, being, and doing within a music culture through experience. It reveals the music culture to the participant and creates foundational knowledge that can be referenced in interviews, develop deeper connections with musicians interviewed through shared experience or experiential knowledge of the music, and opens new communication opportunities. In the moments when words fall short and the musician desires to say or demonstrate something beyond words, short performed examples or the imitation of instrument-specific sounds and gestures can be used to communicate meaning. As a musician familiar with the music culture, I can understand, easily navigate, and respond to these moments and use them to understand the musician's experience on a deeper level.

Personal Creative Practice: An Auto-Ethnography of Cello in Irish Traditional Music

My creative practice as a cellist is grounded in training as a classical musician. I participated in lessons from master teachers to develop technical proficiency on the cello and to develop the skills necessary for further musical performance, exploration, and experimentation through orchestra, chamber group, and solo performances. Alongside performance, I gained extensive knowledge of music theory, which has since allowed me to analyse and discuss the various components and structural aspects of the music. These technical skills as well as strategies for continuous development provided a basic foundation that allowed me to approach Irish traditional music performance, but the transition from one music culture to another posed many new challenges. The transition from a primarily written tradition – classical music – to an oral/aural tradition – Irish traditional music – required extensive practice in ear training, pattern recognition, and rapid re-creation of tunes and songs in the moment. To begin the learning process, I listened extensively to a wide range of instrumentalists, especially fiddle players, in both recorded and live performances. I actively listened for the unique sounds to Irish music, patterns in tunes, sequences within melodies, and potential harmonic and ornamentation options. In addition to the assimilation of these new musical components, new performance contexts and social aspects surrounding the music had to be learned and navigated. I had become accustomed to the concert hall settings of European classical music, with a quiet audience and very little interaction between the audience and the performer. Stage performances of Irish traditional music were the most similar to this, but in many observed instances, more interaction between the audience and the performer was present. I have seen many performers speak to the audience and engage them with the story of the music. The narration is meant to add meaning to the performance and to the experience of the performance. Pub music sessions, however, greatly contrasted the stage performances in that they are more informal as a performance space. These spaces require nuanced social interactions as part of the experience. Musicians can have very relaxed relationships with each other, or they can be full of tension, especially depending on the viewpoints of the leaders of the session group, competition between musicians, and tensions related to payment. Customers in the pub may or may not choose to listen to the music - they can be listening in or talking over the musicians. The atmosphere created by these dynamic factors can all influence the experience of the music and requires each musician to be responsive to the environment. This exploration of a new music culture thus fostered new understandings through experience as each challenge was undertaken.

In addition to extensive listening, it was essential to learn the technical components of Irish traditional music before entering music sessions or making performance observations. I engaged in lessons on bodhrán and sean-nós singing from key tradition bearers to develop a grounding in suitable performance techniques including: tune structures, rhythmic patterns, accompaniment techniques, phrase patterns, variation strategies, ornamentation, and expressive techniques. I also learned finger patterns, bowings, and ornamentations on the fiddle from experienced contemporaries. I was then able to transfer the lilt, rhythmic patterns, melodic patterns, tune structures, and song structures to performance observations and to learning tunes and airs on cello. This foundation made it possible to assimilate melodies, musical

patterns, ornamentations, and tune variations into my repertoire from a larger range of sources including recorded performances, live stage performances, and music sessions in pubs.

I finally gained enough knowledge of the music, accompaniment strategies from guitar players, and tune sets to attend weekly pub sessions at the Blarney Castle Hotel, in a quaint bar in the front of the hotel, crowded with a combination of locals and tourists. The musicians are always at a table in the far back corner of the bar because it has the most space for musicians to move as they play, and the sound carries most easily through the whole space. This session is led by a pipe player, a whistle player, and a fiddle player. Most weeks, there were between five and ten musicians and most of them were fiddle and concertina players, with the occasional bouzouki and box player. Each of the musicians came in from different areas of the country, or from America, and there were always plenty of new tune sets each week. I often took my fiddle and bodhrán to this session. I had to travel there by cab with three other women and the cello can be difficult to fit into an already-crowded vehicle. On two occasions, however, I did bring the cello. The first night I brought it with me, it seemed that everything stopped. All eyes were on me. I expected some surprise, as I know a cello is not common in a session, so I started to joke with the other musicians that my fiddle grew, and we'd have to see what we can do with it. After sharing a few laughs with the other musicians, I was asked to introduce a set. I had assimilated enough of the sound and sets of Irish music to be able to fit right into their session sound, enough so that later in the evening, I was invited to introduce another set and to play one of the Irish airs I had learned.

As I continued to play in this session, a second weekly session at An Spailpín Fánach in Cork City, and to practice at home, it became clear that the size of the instrument, the weight of the bow, and the lack of an E-string requires a degree of virtuosity of the player to be able to attain a quality sound while playing some of the melodies of tunes, especially at fast speeds. This is attainable through practice but requires more time to learn on cello than on the much smaller and much lighter fiddle. Practice, however, does allow cello players to participate in music sessions in a similar melodic capacity to a fiddle player. Cello players can also take on an accompanimental role, similar to that of the guitar and bouzouki player. The lower octaves available on the cello make it possible to play a lower accompaniment in the form of drones, similar to a regulator on pipes, or in the form of rhythmic accompaniment in which the bow is used to imitate strumming patterns of guitar players on pitches appropriate to the chords of the tune. The chord changes follow the melodic shape of the tune, so it was easy to develop an accompaniment in the moment by responding to the melody player musically. Previous knowledge of the tune itself and knowledge of common tune structures and chord patterns also helped inform where I changed chords or how I provided rhythmic and harmonic support for the melody player.

As I continued to practice sets at home and use the cello in melodic capacities in Irish music, I began to experiment with air playing and quickly found that the sound of the cello and the flowing melodic airs are well suited to each other. The cello has a range that falls within multiple vocal ranges, making it well-suited to the performance of song airs in addition to its capacity as a session instrument. Since the key of an air changes by singer, the air can be played in any key that provides a comfortable hand position for the cellist. Any necessary shifting, movement, or ornamental figures can be executed at a more relaxed pace and easily placed in comfortable and meaningful points within the melody. The bow is not long enough to create a phrase the same length as a singer, but the cellist can plan to use the bow so that the

melody is not interrupted or disconnected. As I thought through these expressive elements, I listened to a range of singers including Mary Black, Máire Ní Chéilleacháir, Karan Casey, and singers at a local singer's session in Cork City to inform how I chose to create phrases, ornamentations, and expression in the airs, despite not using the lyrics directly. I also used the book of airs created by Ilse de Ziah, *Irish Airs for Solo Cello* (2009), as a reference as I began to perform and create my own performances of airs. In this book, Ilse has arranged ten Irish airs for solo cello, combining the melodies of the air and vocal ornamentations with the techniques, drones, and sounds available on the cello. She created arrangements based on the strengths of the cello. Thus, she created expressive arrangements that use the cello to meaningfully convey each air, even without the use of lyrics. In the introduction to the book, she has included a note to cellists to express each air as they feel and to take her arrangements as suggestions, not the only means of performing the airs (de Ziah 2009: 4). This maintains the emphasis on personal expression of the melody that is central to Irish traditional music performance and continuation of the living tradition. I have used the book to encourage my exploration of personal expression of airs and use these ideas as a reference as I continue to perform airs beyond those included in the book.

Personal experience through my creative practice and reflexivity through auto-ethnography gave me in-depth experience with the technical aspects of playing Irish traditional music on cello, negotiation of the music session setting on a non-traditional instrument, and exploration into personal expression of tunes and airs. Auto-ethnography provided the space to reflect and articulate the experience of participating in a living music tradition. This developed the foundation of knowledge that I needed to analyse different aspects of the music, such as phrase structures and ornamentations within tunes. It also provided experiential and embodied knowledge that became essential in interviews with other musicians and in the development my own understandings about the music. Karen Barbour explains the value of embodied knowledge in this way:

In using an embodied strategy for knowing, we can experience ourselves as already embodying knowledge and also as able to create knowledge. This means that we must value our own experiential ways of knowing, such as dancing or paddling or playing the violin, and that we can work towards reconciling knowledge gained from these experiences with knowledge gained through other strategies, in a personally meaningful way as we live out our lives. In this sense, we individuals, using an embodied way of knowing, attempt to understand knowledge as constructed or created rather than existing as independent truths 'out there in the world' and, more importantly, as embodied, experienced, and lived (2011: 83).

Thus, embodied knowledge through my creative practice encouraged the development of meaningful and relatable experiential knowledge. It allowed me to perform with other musicians and to use music and experience to communicate that which cannot be put into words. I was able to understand the embodied practices within Irish traditional music performance, relate to the experience of transition between musical traditions, and use this in interviews with other musicians as we discussed their creative practices, musical experiences, and Irish traditional music performance on cello.

Cellist to Cellist: Contributions of Creative Practice to Fieldwork

My personal creative practice was the essential first part of fieldwork, which then influenced how I was able to approach and analyse the other three aspects: reviews of recorded performances, observation of live performances, and interviews with cellists involved in Irish traditional music. Reviews of recorded performances revealed the participation of cellists in Irish traditional music over time and the roles that cellists are undertaking in the music. On CD recordings, I found that cellists have been participating in Irish traditional music performance since the 1980's, with recordings made by The Chieftains and Dé Danann that involve cellists to accompany songs, provide melodic introductions, and create harmonic support to songs on their albums. The cello continues to be used more recently, such as when Karan Casey involved cellist Kate Ellis in her album *Ships in the Forest*, released in 2008. On tour and in the recordings of Karan Casey's songs, cello was featured as both a solo instrument and in an accompanimental role.³ Performing groups also employ cellists as members of their traditional Irish music groups. The Kilfenora Céilí Band currently employs a cellist who features in solo and accompanimental roles both in live performance and on their CD's *Chapter Eight* and *Now is the Hour*. I also found duos, such as Alasdair Fraser and Natalie Haas, who perform cello and violin duets in a range of folk music genres including Irish traditional music.

The analysis of recordings allowed me to see how prevalent cello has been in staged performances of Irish traditional music from the 1980's to the present. It required me to reference my own creative practice, which allowed me to hear the roles that cello plays in the music, how they choose to structure phrases, ornamentations they employ, and how the cellist interacts with other musicians musically without being able to see the musicians. I was able to determine that the cello is used as both a melodic and accompaniment instrument and confirmed my observations from practice that accompaniment is primarily provided as a chordal or harmonic rhythmic accompaniment. I was also able to determine that in performances of airs, the phrasings and ornamentations were similar to those used by singers as opposed to other instrumentalists. I could discern variations in tunes, sets, and ornamentations and how cellists interact with the tradition in general. I found that they take on the roles of a fiddle, a guitar, or a voice depending on the tune set, air, and instrumentation chosen. Cellists participate in the living tradition by adapting themselves to fit within these traditional roles while still creating unique personal expressions of tunes and airs within the tradition.

As I observed live performances and interviewed musicians, I was able to get a deeper understanding of how Irish traditional music fits into their creative practice and how cellists interact with Irish traditional music in general. Festivals have emerged to promote performances in which cellists engage directly in the performance of styles outside of classical music. I attended the Spike Cello Festival in Dublin on 10-12 February 2017 and used these live performances to observe how cellists use Irish traditional music in their live performances. I attended a workshop on creating grooves and accompaniments with Rushad Eggleston.⁴ The workshop was the perfect setting to combine the development of creative practice with observation of successful accompaniment strategies in Irish traditional music and other styles. The techniques for creating accompaniments has since proved useful in music sessions in pubs, as the style was designed to fit with tune accompaniment.

On the second night of the Spike Cello Festival, Neil Martin came onto the small, cozy stage and performed airs on cello that he had learned to sing or perform on the pipes in his youth. He was relaxed on the stage and treated the performance as an opportunity to share his music and the stories behind the airs. To introduce each air, he would tell its story – the history of the song, who he learned it from, where he was when he learned it, and what it meant to him personally. These narratives set the stage for the air that would follow. Each air began with the melody, sparsely ornamented and simple. As he continued through repetitions of the verses, he would add chords in places where the melody needed more weight or support to be expressed with the most meaning. He added ornamentations in places where a singer would normally place them, using finger patterns that allowed him to imitate the sound of the voice making the same ornament shapes. He adapted the use of the bow so that changes in bow direction emphasized the start of a new phrase or key sections of the melody. Throughout the performance, he demonstrated how the cello can be used to express a song effectively without lyrics, using his knowledge of the song tradition and engagement with the nuances of the melodic tradition to create a deeply meaningful, personal expression of each air in the moment.

I made similar observations of Ilse de Ziah's work on her documentary *Living the Tradition* (2014) and her book *Irish Airs for Solo Cello* (2009). The documentary is based on the stories and performance of ten Irish airs – the same airs that Ilse arranged for her book. For each of the airs, she researched the history of the melody and lyrics, and gathered historical and personal stories associated with the air (de Ziah 2014). For Ilse, this added to the narrative meaning of the airs and added layers that can be used to inform expression in the moment of performance. In an interview on 27 April 2017, she described it in this way:

It informs your expression of yourself. And I think that music is about that. It's that you need to keep developing layers so that you can express what you're trying to express. And it's like the more layers, the more stories, the more...like I can play an air that I have played since, you know, twenty-five years ago and...every time, it's fresh. Like, that's the Cape Clear one, which was the first one I learned. It's like, every single time I go back to it, I go 'ah, I love this.' I might do it slightly differently every time, which is...part of that, you know. So, there's always that improvisatory element, in the airs.

She acknowledges the need to develop layers of meaning in order to express the air in a way that is meaningful to yourself, meaningful to the music tradition and culture, and retains the improvisatory element that accompanies personal expression in the moment. She also kept this in mind as she arranged the airs into the book, along with the nature of the living, oral/aural and melodic tradition that defines Irish music. In the opening to the book, Ilse encourages cellists to listen to other musicians and to create their own expressions of the airs (de Ziah 2009: 4). She did not intend her arrangements to be fixed texts, but suggestions for cellists to begin to perform Irish airs, especially if they are other cellists who come from a classical music background as she did herself.

As we discussed her view on Irish traditional music performance and arrangements and her musical decisions in arranging the music, my creative practice as a cellist became an essential grounding point for discussions and allowed us to communicate through our instruments and through sound in times when

words fell short of what we were seeking to express to each other. As we discussed arrangement of tunes for her book *Trad on Cello: Traditional Irish Tunes in Cello Friendly Keys* (2016), for example, we discussed the awkwardness of many shifts to achieve the same sound and octave as fiddle players in some tunes as well as the difficulty of some bowing techniques because of the size of the bow. My experience playing Irish tunes on both fiddle and cello gave me the ability to be able to understand and discuss how finger patterns that are simple and right under the fingers for fiddle players are less ergonomic for cellists, which led to a discussion about how we can adapt tunes to fit cello by simply changing the key or by creating arrangements with written finger patterns to make them more accessible for those who are new to the music to approach and practice the tunes. We discussed how she chooses bowing suggestions for the tunes as well as the airs. At this point playing became an essential piece of our interview. Many descriptions of bowings sound similar when discussing them verbally but produce different sounds on the instrument when they are used. Because of this, we played examples of bowings for each other to describe our thoughts and to demonstrate the process that Ilse used as she chose bowings for arrangement. This made it possible to discuss the use of the bow in Irish traditional music without the risk of misunderstanding each other. We were able to play to convey our thoughts, effectively using the skills we have developed in our creative practices to communicate with each other cellist-to-cellist.

Musician-to-musician communication provides a unique perspective to interviews because the moments when words fall short are easy to navigate. It is possible to play what we mean for each other, providing an experiential depth of understanding to the interviews. It fosters ease of communication and creates the opportunity for us to be able to talk about the smallest of musical details in arrangement and in performance. Much as Helena Wulff found in her interviews with other dancers as a dancer, the use of experiential and embodied knowledge leads to a depth of understanding that enriches the perspectives and analysis involved in the later stages of research (2007: 17-19). It also provides a detailed view of the creative practices of musicians as they interact with the music and navigate the music culture. Many cellists in Irish traditional music have previously had classical training and also experienced a musical transition or period of acculturation when exploring Irish traditional music repertoire. Since I have also experienced this transition, I understand the difficulties in approaching this exploration and we can relate to each other's experience and discuss our different strategies and techniques as we approached a new music culture. We can better discuss, describe, sing, and play for each other the difficulties we experienced in the initial transition, musical explorations we have been able to engage with, and musical knowledge we gained as we assimilated new techniques. This provides a foundation to discuss with other cellists their approach to the tradition, how they navigated different aspects of the music, and how they have created a place for themselves in Irish music performance.

Conclusions: Creative Practice and Culture

Engagement in the creative practices of a musical culture provides an experiential component to music research that makes the knowledge gained deeply embodied. An intimate, embodied knowledge of a music culture can lead to discussion with other musicians that encompass a deeper level of understanding by delving beyond the doing of the music and into the being of the musician within the music culture. Creative practice embodies other ways of knowing and being in the world that cannot be

fully expressed in verbal communication. Incorporating creative practice into fieldwork interviews and ethnographies therefore allows for a more extensive documentation and analysis of living musical cultures, the process of transition from one musical culture to another, and the social and creative processes inherent to the cello in Irish traditional music. Musical and cultural understandings, once embodied, can then be expressed with more sensitivity, ethical understanding, and accuracy in scholarship and outreach initiatives.

As a living tradition, Irish music is growing and changing with the musicians actively participating in the tradition. Discussion of creative practices with current practitioners makes it possible to see how the lilt, flow, and sound of the music is applied and maintained in new contexts such as the case presented here, on a non-traditional instrument, through the use of traditional roles, sounds and aesthetics. As a musician and researcher in the field, I was able to connect with current practitioners and engage in these discussions about creative practice through the use of embodied knowledge. The fusion of creative practice with traditional interview techniques, thus, creates a space where interviews can go beyond words, into direct engagement with the music and music culture, demonstration of technical and melodic skills, and depth of experiential knowledge. These tools will continue to aid in development of an embodied understanding of Irish music, transition from other music cultures into Irish music, and the insights into performance, creative practice, and culture that come with a deep understanding of doing and being within a living music culture.

Notes

¹ Bass viol is the early ancestor of the cello.

² See Recordings list for a sample list of performances involving the cello in Irish traditional music.

³ Kate Ellis discussed this in an interview on 9 April 2017.

⁴ The workshop was held at the National Concert Hall in Dublin on 11 February 2017 as a part of the Spike Cello Festival in Dublin. Rushad Eggleston performs in a range of styles including classical, jazz, rock, pop, and folk music, but specializes most in groove-based music and accompaniment. Recently, he has been involved in Irish traditional music arrangement and performance through concert tours with concertina player Cormac Begley.

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Recordings

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