

## SU406 NEGOTIATING IDENTITY IN IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCE (3 Credits)

**COURSE OBJECTIVE:** This course will examine key practices in Irish traditional music and dance since 1800. Both music and dance offer opportunities for negotiating identity within communities, and declaring those identities externally. The changes which took place in performance practice reflect wider changes in society, and were an essential part of both culture in Ireland and among the Diaspora. Underlying much of the recent intellectualising of traditional music, and indeed the whole question of identity, is the issue of authenticity and tradition. Students will explore these issues and will also have the opportunity to take sean-nós singing and dance workshops as vocational support to the academic programme.

### **COURSE OUTLINE:**

Week 1 Introduction to Irish music and dance

Week 2 Piping  
Song traditions

Week 3 Development of ensemble  
Irish dance 1870-1960

Week 4 Revivals of Irish music and dance 1960

Week 5 Music identity in the new millennium

### **Selected readings**

- R.I.Best, "The Feis Ceoil", *Leacbar na hÉireann*, 1(1908):154-56.
- Breandán Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland*. Cork: Mercier (1993) [1971].
- Philip Bohlman, *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press (1988).
- Helen Brennan, *The Story of Irish Dance*. Dingle: Brandon Press (1998).
- Chris Curtin, Riana O'Dwyer and Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *Irish Studies: A General Introduction*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan (1988).
- Pj Curtis, *Notes from the Heart*. Dublin: Torc Press (1994).
- Rachel Fleming, "Resisting cultural standardization: Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and the revitalization of traditional Irish music", *Journal of Folklore Research*, Vol.14, No.2/3 (2004) 227-257.
- Mary Friel, *Dancing as Social Pastime in the South-East of Ireland, 1800-1897*. Dublin: Four Courts Press (2004).
- Susan Gedutis, *See You at The Hall: Boston's Golden Era of Irish Music and Dance*. NH: Northeastern University Press.
- Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time at Ballymenone*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press (1995).
- Reg Hall, *The Social Organisation of Music-making: The Irish in London After the War*. Cork: Traditional Music Archive (1995).
- Colin Harper and Trevor Hodget, *Irish Folk, Trad and Blues—A Secret History*. London: Cherry Red Books (2005).
- Harry Hughes, "The Willie Clancy Summer School—Retrospectives", *Dal gCais*, 11(1993): 6-9.
- Adam Kaul, "The limits of commodification in traditional Irish music sessions." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13:709-719.
- Louis Marcus, "Seán Ó Riada and the Ireland of the Sixties" in *The Achievement of Seán Ó Riada*, edited by Harris and Freyer. USA: Dufour Editions (1981).
- Pat Mitchell and Jackie Small, *The Piping of Patsy Touhey*. Dublin: Na Piobairí Uilleann (1986).
- Mick Moloney, *Far From the Shamrock Shore*. Cork: Collins Press (2002).
- Diane Negra, "Consuming Ireland: Lucky charms, cereal, Irish Spring Soap and 1-800

Shamrock", *Cultural Studies*, 15 vol.1 (2001):76-97.  
Tomás Ó Canainn, *Traditional Music in Ireland*. Cork: Ossian (1978).  
*What is Irish Traditional Music?* Dublin: Irish Traditional Music Archive (1989).  
Nuala O'Connor, *Bringing It All Back Home*. London: BBC Books (1991).  
Barbara O'Connor, "Safe Sets: Women, Dance and Communitas," in *Dance in the City*. NY: St. Martin's Press (1997).  
Diarmuid Ó Giolláin, *Locating Irish Folklore*. Cork: Cork University Press (2000).  
Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, *A Pocket History of Irish Traditional Music*. Dublin: O'Brien Press (1998).  
Francis O'Neill, *Irish Minstrels and Musicians*. Dublin: Mercier Press (1987) [1913].  
Seán Ó Súilleabháin, *Irish Wake Amusements*. Cork: Mercier Press (1967).  
Fintan O' Toole, *The Ex-Isle of Erin*. Dublin: New Island (1996).  
Bernadette Quinn, "Changing festival places: insights from Galway", *Social and Cultural Geography*, Vol.6, No. 2 (2005): 237-252.  
Martin Stokes (ed.), *Ethnicity Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*. USA: Berg (1994).

**Reading materials will be made available at class.**

### **REQUIREMENTS FOR CREDITS:**

1. Attendance at lectures and participation in seminars.
2. One essay of 1,500 words assigned by instructor.
3. Examination of material discussed in classes and seminars.

### **COURSE PROFESSOR:**

**Méabh Ní Fhuartháin, M.A.**

Méabh Ní Fhuartháin was educated at University College Cork, Boston College and Brown University. She has taught in Boston College and University College Cork and presently is affiliated with the Centre for Irish Studies at NUI, Galway. An ethnomusicologist, her main research area is in Irish traditional music, specifically in emigrant communities and also contemporary platforms for music and dance. Méabh is currently a Government of Ireland Scholar, researching Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann during the period 1951-1971. She has published numerous reviews and articles on Irish traditional music, and is a subject editor for *The Encyclopaedia of Music in Ireland*.