CONCLUSIONS

I trust I am offering to my countrymen an acceptable present: the gift has novelty, at least, to recommend it. Though Ireland has been long famed for its poetry and music, these subjects have never yet been treated of historically. I do not pretend to have done completely, what has lain so long undone: no doubt, many sources of information still remain unopened, and many documents unconsulted. However, I have marked out a path, which may facilitate the pursuit of those who shall hereafter follow me.¹

It may be ironic to conclude this latest study of Irish traditional music with the words that Joseph Cooper Walker used to open what is regarded as the first book on the subject, yet the sentiment is shared. In many ways, the best of what both studies have achieved is to draw attention to the vastness of that which still remains unknown. Similarly to Walker, the focus of this study is not on comprehensiveness but on the investigation of a pathway that may be useful beyond the scope of this thesis.

The fundamental objective of this research was to develop and refine a process through which an archive of explicit stylistic data could be constructed and then to determine what practical outcomes would emerge from working with explicit stylistic data in this way. One of the more interesting results of the project was that from conversations with other musicians and academics I found that the basic idea of codifying and using stylistic knowledge was not new. Kristiina Ilmonen, the former director of the Folk Music Department at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, told me that she uses the term ‘treasure box’, to describe the mental space where her musical knowledge is stored and from which she can select elements of it for use in performance. This is not unlike the idea of the ‘bag of tricks’ to which jazz musicians refer. While on a trip to Brittany, France I was reminded that in folk belief there is the idea that ‘to name something is to control it’.² In many respects, the desire to codify stylistic data could be understood as a realisation of these better-known concepts.

When writing Chapter One, a great deal of groundwork was required before the study could begin in earnest. Concerning the literature, it was evident that recent publications in the area of style tended to cite a small body of work written from the 1960s up to the late 1970s that was as much limited as it was served by its introductory-level objectives.³ This sentiment was articulated in the introductory section of Niall Keegan’s MA Thesis *The Words of Traditional Flute Style* where he stated that:

There are still only four published works which concern themselves to any length with ‘style’, these are Breathnach’s ‘Folk Music and Dances of Ireland’ (1983), Ó Canainn’s ‘Traditional Irish Music’ [sic] (1978), the transcriptions of Séan Ó Riada’s radio series entitled ‘Our Musical Heritage’ (1982) and the article by Lawrence McCullough in ethnomusicology entitled ‘Style in Traditional Irish Music’ (1977). The work by McCullough presents an account of the techniques which, when combined in many possible ways, constitute what is style […]. However, in the other three we are presented with the mixture of three separate ideas about style. The first and most popular is shared by all three and is regional style. Breathnach and Ó Riada present regional categories for the fiddle, flute and (by Breathnach alone) the pipes, but their observations are not at all in agreement with each other or even convincing.⁴

While these sources were useful when read critically, gradually it emerged that much valuable information on style was contained in books and papers that dated from significantly earlier; the great majority of which are now long out of print or are difficult to find. Although the literary sources consulted here were revealing on many levels and were sufficient for the purposes of the research, it would require a historiographical study in its own right to uncover further content from sources such as correspondence,⁵ album sleeve notes and discussions on some of the earlier radio shows.⁶

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³ Although in the following quotation from Keegan, dates in the 80s are given for Ó Riada’s publication, its content originates in 1963. Breathnach’s *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland* was first published in 1971. Also Keegan incorrectly terms Ó Canaim’s work ‘Traditional Irish Music’ whereas it’s actually entitled ‘Traditional Music in Ireland’.


⁵ One such letter I had found in the Irish Traditional Music Archive came from Arthur Darley and expressed his views on the traditional music of the time. Another source from the ITMA was an email from Caoimhín MacAoidh explaining the characteristics of the mazurka! A trawl through these types of sources would yield interesting and potentially significant information.

⁶ See: Kearney, David: *Towards a Regional Understanding of Irish Traditional Music*, (PhD Diss., University College Cork, 2009), 214. It is worth remembering that Ó Riada’s *Our Musical Heritage* was first a radio series and later a book.
As will be noted also, audio recording analysis was generally underused in this study. Similarly, it is without doubt that a selected discography, organised in terms of stylistic features, would be a great resource for future studies and make the process of stylistic abstraction much more efficient.

In the literature, style in Irish traditional music is often understood in a very anecdotal manner and so an effort was made to draw from theoretical work by authors such as Leonard B. Meyer and Robert Pascall whose publications deal with Western music in general but was useful in this context. One notable author from within the tradition is Niall Keegan whose framework formed the basis of my own seven-degree framework. This had the effect of locating the area of style being dealt with and having completed this study, the previously-noted difficulty in dealing with areas such as individual and regional styles without an adequate body of terminology can perhaps be understood. Indeed, with some of the more micro areas of style made explicit, it should be possible to consider addressing the more macro areas now that there is the basis for a language and an approach with which to do so.

In terms of the difficulties of stylistic development in the third-level context, Liz Doherty’s 2002 report reads like an affirmation of the issues of which musicians, including myself, are generally well aware. However, it transpired that aside from Doherty’s work, relatively few studies exist that focus on the transmission processes of Irish traditional music. While Kari Kristen Veblen’s *Perceptions of Change and Stability in the Transmission of Irish Traditional Music: An Examination of the Music Teacher’s Role* remains the most relevant study, it does not provide a framework for understanding either the experiences or the terminology of Doherty’s report.

Instead, literature on cognitive apprenticeships and tacit knowledge was used to better understand the issues that were raised in the report. While it sufficed for the aims of this

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7 See: Chapter One, 26-27.  
8 Veblen, Kari Kristen: *Perceptions of Change and Stability in the Transmission of Irish Traditional Music: An Examination of the Music Teacher’s Role*, (PhD Diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1991). Another key scholar in this area is Marie McCarhy but again, little was found in her published research that was of relevance to this particular line of enquiry. See: McCarthy, Marie F.: *Passing it On: The transmission of music in Irish culture*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999). The terminology in the report is also without definition.
study, it is notable that this area is still virgin territory in the context of Irish traditional music. Similarly, in an effort to understand and contrast the traditional avenues of stylistic transmission with that of its transmission as explicit knowledge using the MCA, a seven-degree framework was employed. Again, while it was useful in the context of this study, undoubtedly, there is a much more nuanced understanding to be had, particularly in terms of what avenues of transmission are most frequently utilised, and what their impact might be, both respectively and in various combinations, on the stylistic development of the musician.

As was evident from the historiography/literature review in Chapter One, to date, the musical catalyst process offers the only known model that is specifically constructed for the gathering, systematic organisation and generation of new stylistic data. It is now evident that the four sources used; literature, audio recordings, permutation and variation, and practice-based research could in the future be used to produce significantly more stylistic data. This would certainly be helped by an annotated bibliography and discography that is constructed on the basis of specific stylistic features. In contrast with the relatively basic formulae used here, permutation specialists could also be engaged to construct more task-specific formulae. Most evidently, given what was produced with just seven volunteers, it is encouraging to imagine what could be achieved with a larger number of musicians over a greater period of time.

Significantly exceeding my initial expectations, from the list of areas selected for study in Chapter Two,¹³ 13,314 stylistic elements across 211 conceptual fields were found. However, it is important to note that the basic areas of style studied here are but a small part of what could potentially have been studied. Based on the list generated from the historiography and found in Chapter Two, there is a range of areas that have yet to be addressed. However, as will be explained later, it is most likely that in addition to this, many more exist that have not previously been described in the literature and which would benefit from a dedicated exploration. Of the areas highlighted but which have not previously been discussed, a brief overview of the possibilities of each is now given.

¹³ See: Chapter Two, Table 2.2, 57-58.
• Emotion/ Feel, which may be understood in relation to terms such as ‘melancholy’, ‘joyous’ etc. Despite the fact that there is a high degree of subjectivity involved in the interpretation of emotion and therefore the end result would be variable, this is considered of value as a catalyst because it can be used to transform a tune.\(^\text{10}\)

• Form – As noted in Chapter Three, the form used in Irish traditional music does not always comply with the regular two eight or sixteen-bar structures. In this chapter, irregular forms were highlighted in the set dance and even the quadrille and lancer sets. It was also noted that various metres can sometimes be found within the same tune. These types of forms, no matter how rare, could also be used as catalysts and there is a diversity of possibilities that have yet to be catalogued. While initially a list of metres was included in this Chapter, from the practice-based research it was found that such is the association of the double jig with 6/8, the slip jig with 9/8 and the hornpipe and reel with 4/4, that they were doubling the function covered by the tune-types and were omitted.

• Instrument-specific techniques such as the uilleann piper’s ‘hard D’ and concertina-players’ use of octaves in melody playing would be beneficial to catalogue because as virtuosity and instrument design continues to evolve, the instrument-specific nature of some of these stylistic elements may change. For instance, as a piano-accordionist, I now know that it is possible to play faster melodies in octaves and to be able to play microtonal slides between notes. In the past this would not have been thought feasible.

• Instrumental timbre or tone is of important aesthetic value for classical musicians. In surveying the range of traditional music recordings, particularly those of fiddle-players, it is evident that there is an enormous variety of timbral qualities at play, so much so that they can help define a traditional musician’s

\(^{10}\) Indeed, there is a history of emotion-related terms used as performance directions in Western art music scores.
style. In the case of instruments such as the accordion and tin-whistle where a lesser degree of control over the timbre is possible, a knowledge of the timbral qualities of the various types of tin-whistle and accordion could greatly enhance how the performer might choose to play or even orchestrate and arrange various tunes.

- As noted in Chapter One, the subjects of microtonality and temperament were addressed by Richard Henebry in the early-twentieth century and by at least one other author, Ryan Molloy, in more recent times. Current performers, most notably the fiddle-player Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh (1979–) use a number of different temperaments. Indeed, fiddler-player Aidan O’Donnell (1985–) claims that a series of distinct temperaments can be found in the Donegal fiddle tradition. Using software programs such as melodyne, it may be possible to realise Henebry’s ambition of establishing a number of authentic temperaments. Using this type of computer programme, it may also become possible to realise the nature of other microtonal features, such as slides, in a more precise manner.

- As noted in Chapter One, Niall Keegan found it untenable to define the regional styles of flute playing. Yet, the term is still meaningful to many musicians who often prefer to understand it in the context of smaller, more specific areas as opposed to the county level that was mostly employed by Ó Riada. However, since no study has yet adequately defined the stylistic elements that characterise particular regions, it could not be used as a part of this research.

- Styles associated with particular individuals can also be used to transform how other musicians play a tune. Unlike regional styles, which can be difficult to conceptualise, the style of some of the main figures in the genre are widely

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11 For instance, compare the timbres achieved by Con Cassidy and Martin Hayes.
12 The term ‘orchestrate’ is used here to mean instrumental combinations and does not refer to the standard ‘classical’ orchestra.
13 Molloy, Ryan: Microinterval Modality in Irish Music, (PhD Diss., Queen’s University Belfast, 2013).
14 In both cases, this information comes from informal conversation.
familiar. To many, the playing of Martin Hayes implies the use of slower tempi with *rubato* for dance tunes while the style of a band such as Altan can mean faster energetic reels and jigs. While it is difficult to quantify the style of an individual or band in full, the main features could be used as a composite catalyst to enable the construction of a performance in a similar style.

- Texture describes how various timbres interact to create the full sound and this may include monophonic, homophonic or polyphonic-type textures. These can apply to individual instruments such as the button-accordion, *uilleann* pipes, harp and guitar and are particularly relevant to ensembles, the members of which would consider this particular conceptual field when constructing arrangements.

Initially, I was not convinced that many of the conceptual fields between Chapters Three and Nine could be explored.\(^{16}\) Yet, as the rules of the MCF were applied and once I had created an appropriate coding method, the stylistic data began to increase. In the case of such conceptual fields as phrasing and structural relationships, more than one coding approach was tried before settling on that which was deemed most suitable. In each case, the stylistic data that was found outweighed every expectation. It should be noted at this point also that the total number of stylistic elements and conceptual fields that is given for each chapter is only intended to highlight the maximum number of possibilities found; the viability of each stylistic element is specific to both the tune in question and the performer’s individual circumstances.

In Chapter Three, forty-four stylistic elements were noted across two conceptual fields. Following a brief look at tempo, the composite catalyst of tune-types was explored. This study was begun by listing as many tune-types as could be remembered. A great deal more were found when the literature was consulted but as noted, there are many tune-type terms that are either synonymous with each other or have no specific musical meaning. It is likely that a thorough analysis of audio recordings would result in the identification of even more tune-types. However, given the scope of the collection held at the ITMA and lack of a selected discography pertaining to stylistic features, this was

\(^{16}\) As it transpired, this was only true in the case of the note duration measurements.
Having taken the approach of addressing tune-types using the terminology that is already employed within the tradition, it is worth noting that despite being outside of the remit of this study, another approach is also possible. Specifically, the repertoire could be surveyed with the aim of acknowledging a tune-type where the tempo, metre, rhythmic characteristics and/or formal characteristics, are sufficiently distinct. However, an analysis on the scale necessary for such an objective would most likely require a longitudinal study involving a team of researchers and advanced computer algorithms. My assumption is that while this approach would undoubtedly better illuminate the richness of the genre, it would also include many stylistic elements with only one known example.

Perhaps another area for further study would be to investigate the variation in the tempi used for particular tune-types. For instance, although the tempo given for the strathspey was taken from the respected fiddle-player Tommy Peoples, there are numerous other musicians who could be considered to be authoritative but who would play the strathspey at a notably slower tempo. If this approach were to be adopted, it would likely be found that a number of sub-styles of particular tune-types both exist and are evolving. In any case, this would be a major project in its own right.

17 See Chapter One, Fig 1.1, for an idea of the scope of the ITMA’s holdings. Indeed, it would take a team of researchers a significant period of time to produce such a discography.
19 However, it is also likely that composers would relish the idea of creating more examples of unusual tune-types.
20 The slow reel is one example of this type of evolution.
21 See: Tourish, Martin: The James Tourish Collection: its stylistic significance within its cultural
In Chapter Four, the distinction between tacit and implicit knowledge became evident when it was not possible to codify the various types of swing that were found through the note-duration analysis of audio recordings. While ultimately, three basic points along the spectrum of swing were identified, as was evident from Chapter Ten there are significantly more varieties than those listed. The conclusion to be drawn here is that note duration alone is not a sufficient means for understanding swing and it is more likely that if tangible results were to be found, it would be achieved through a study of how tempo, accent patterns and note duration are combined.

In terms of rhythm, it was found that it was not possible to generate exhaustively all of the information from the analysis of audio recordings alone. Consequently, the use of permutation was required to get a sense of what is likely to be the scope of stock rhythmic variation in the genre. This is in stark contrast with the discussion on tune-types in Chapter Three where it was possible to provide contextual information on each of the stylistic elements. In this case, it would require a long-term area-specific study to produce enough analyses to determine which of the rhythms are the most and least used and by what demography of performers. It may also be useful to concentrate on a thorough collection of two-bar rhythms but since the use of permutation in this respect would generate an unwieldy series of combinations, realistically these could only be observed from empirical sources. In Chapter Four, a total number of 2,619 stylistic elements were identified across nine conceptual fields.

In terms of modality, it has long been established that, generally, Irish traditional music is played in a range of heptatonic, hexatonic and pentatonic modes using key signatures of up to three sharps. In this study, 864 stylistic elements were identified, each being included for their distinct ‘colour’. Now that this information exists, it becomes apparent that the frequencies with which each are used in practice remains unknown. This will undoubtedly prove a challenging but exciting question for future research to address.

While inflection is not as commonly-used in modern performance practice, it is a context, (BMus Thesis, Dublin Institute of Technology, 2008). I took this approach for my undergraduate dissertation on the music of The James Tourish Collection.
characteristic feature of the styles of musicians such as John Doherty and Con Cassidy who recorded during the 78RPM and LP era. Twenty-nine possibilities were found in this study but as illustrated, it functions primarily as a subtle decorative feature. Again, a larger scale analysis of audio recordings would be required to determine what types of inflection are most popular. While inflection is a performance feature, modal modulation is a compositional feature and so the frequencies with which it is employed in the tradition could be ascertained from the analysis of tune transcriptions. Transitory chromatic modulation had to be acknowledged when it was observed in the playing of the accordionist Peter Browne. In this case, the modulation could not be conceptualised using the modal system. Further research would be required to ascertain the extent to which, if at all, this unusual stylistic device is used in the genre.

In this chapter, it was something of a surprise to find 929 stylistic elements across thirty-five conceptual fields. While I contend that these options are likely to occur within the tradition, again it poses the bigger question of the extent to which each is used in practice. In one sense, the transcriptions found in tune-collections, particularly the online user-generated variety, could be used to find the frequency of the modes employed. Ultimately however, a true account of the modes used in the tradition would require an analysis of audio recordings because transcriptions found in collections are invariably presented in in a way that is most suitable for all traditional instruments.

Melodic variation was addressed in terms of structural tones and implied harmonic structures. At this point it is difficult to know which of these might be most frequently used although it can be said with a greater degree of certainty that the use of structural tone variation is relatively implicit while harmonic structures are more likely to be used on a more explicit level to conceptualise variation. The latter would appear to be most common in situations where an accompanist is also playing. I have observed that in the pub-gig scene where the guitarists are often hired more for their vocal abilities than their knowledge of dance music, that melody-players frequently alter the notes in a tune to conform to the basic harmonic structure imposed by the guitarist. Other musicians such

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22 See: Chapter Five, Ex. 5.5, 193.
23 Although this can change with the period in question: the nineteenth-century collections typically feature melodies in key signatures of up to four flats.
as Ciaran Tourish of Altan deliberately compose tunes based on strong harmonic progressions.

However, it is likely that the most commonly used approach is for musicians to have a repertoire of melodic variations, also known as ‘stock variations’, which are either specific to a particular tune or are transferable across tunes that are in the same metre. There may also be stock variations that are used by a number of musicians but it is difficult to assess whether the time required for the study would produce any valuable results.

Again, it would be interesting to know the frequencies with which the codes found in the chapter are used. It is likely that an algorithm could be created that would analyse online tune collections to find this information. It is also likely that meaningful data on melodic contours could be found by using the same approach. Then in light of the concept of the melodic hierarchy as discussed in Chapter Seven, it becomes possible to pose the question of whether or not there are any clear preferences for variation in relation to primary, secondary, auxiliary or travelling material. Similarly, it is likely that there is a correlation between the various styles of harmony, motivic development and various ranges with particular tune-types and/or styles of performance. However, additional research would be required to ascertain to what extent this might be the case.

Chapter Seven began with an overview of the various tune-part configurations concerning tune models of up to seven parts. A notable development to this study would be codes that reflect potential variations on particular parts. For instance, the C-part of the reel ‘The Glen Road to Carrick’ at Ex. 7.3 is a variation of its A-part and so might ideally be represented as A₁. However, an exploration on this level would have again brought the study beyond its remit.

When looking at the structural relationships inside the tune-part, as previously stated, in his article ‘Between the Jigs and Reels’, Breandán Breathnach noted that the material within the first two bars of a tune is of particular importance in establishing a tune’s
identity. Through a number of preliminary analyses, it became evident that there are other forms of structural relationship within a tune. These were dealt with at one, two and four-bar conceptual resolutions that yielded 2,118 stylistic elements across forty-two conceptual fields.

In general, the options at a two-bar resolution are the most accessible to use and while the options at a one-bar resolution account for structural variety on a more subtle level, the repetition of the same letter consecutively within a part is not always a feature found in Irish traditional music. Incidentally, these options would apply much more to traditional Breton music as well as to some Asturian music.

During the course of this particular study, it appeared that a very interesting system of relationships were at play at the conceptual resolution of a minim. However, given how the options increased dramatically at a one-bar resolution, a study undertaken at this scale would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Traveling material was explored in terms of tune-types up to four parts and so there is room for further study on this level also. Again, it is likely that it would be possible to gain an idea of the frequencies of use of each stylistic element by applying a specifically designed algorithm on the contents of one of the large online collections such as thesession.org.

Chapter Eight was concerned with phrasing where an initial challenge was that given the idea that tune-parts consist of either two four-bar phrases or four two-bar phrases, it was difficult to determine whether or not there was anything more to explore. However, on reading studies by Lawrence McCullough and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, it soon became clear that a much more complex and nuanced reality was at play. This more complex phrasing style could not be found from a perusal of any of the major collections such as those of Francis O’Neill or by listening to performers who prefer faster tempi, which seemed to confirm the traditional concept of phrasing. Rather, it appeared that this more complex approach to phrasing was to be found in the performances of particular musicians, primarily those who prefer slower tempi, rather than in any generic transcriptions.

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This observation was made on listening to Martin Hayes’ album *Under the Moon* and subsequently when transcribing his performance of ‘The Cloonagroe Reel’ I noticed that his use of slower tempi seemed to allow for quite complex phrasing patterns to be implemented. Upon listening to further recordings by Hayes and other musicians such as the fiddler Tommie Potts, it became apparent that more unusual types of phrasing are indeed a feature of Irish traditional music and hence, worthy of exploration.

This realisation also opened up a proverbial ‘can of worms’ in the sense that not only did phrases often cross bar-lines but that they could also cross the traditional eight or sixteen-bar part length, blurring the distinction between where a tune-part begins and ends. After a period of experimenting with various possibilities for codifying the types of phrasing identified in the analyses, I decided that an exploration of phrasing possibilities for circular tunes, or phrases that do not end within the boundaries of the tune-part would be greatly beyond the remit of this study. Similarly, while the Hayes example demonstrates that a tune-part can contain more than four phrases that begin or end on an upbeat, an exploration of the possibilities beyond this would again have resulted in more possibilities than would have been practicable. Moreover, the examples had to be limited to the two most common metres, 4/4 and 6/8. As with many of the other areas, this is a study that could be easily expanded greatly but without any real guarantee of what is or is not commonly used in the tradition.

In terms of the various means for shaping a phrase, six conceptual fields were identified but it is likely that more exist. For instance, in studying the area I found quite a substantial range of implied harmonic cadences that were used to draw a phrase or part to a close. However, in order to apply the concept of cadences to modal music, some new terminology had to be created. In addition to this, ornaments such as the cut or *acciaccatura* can also play a role in defining the shape of a phrase but considering the number of ornaments found in Chapter Nine and the overall structure of the thesis, their introduction as hybrid catalysts would have been awkward to introduce at that point. It is likely that other approaches exist for shaping a phrase that have not as yet been discovered, with the use of tone and note placement being at least two additional areas
for potential future study.

Finally, it only became evident after working with the volunteers that while some of the approaches to ending and beginning phrases had been explored, what had not been addressed was the challenge of reworking the natural cadence points within a tune to allow specific phrasing patterns to be properly realised. This again is another area that could benefit from a future study.

On beginning Chapter Nine, initially, I was unaware of any difference between ornaments and ornamentation and to my knowledge this distinction has not been drawn in writings on Irish traditional music to date. In Chapter Ten, it becomes evident that there are styles of ornamentation also and that these may even be more important to performers than what ornaments are used. However, at the moment it is not clear to what extent this may be due to the limited number of ornaments known by any one musician. This would be both a major and challenging study in its own right.

With regard to ornaments, I began by listing what I knew and this list contained little more than the cut, treble, roll and cran. While I had envisaged this particular archive expanding to a small extent beyond this, the final number was very much unexpected. The two main factors that created such a large catalogue of ornaments were the distinction between the cut and acciaccatura, and the exploration of different interval variations that were thought likely to occur in practice.

Chapter Ten constituted an investigation into how the archive of explicit stylistic data may be used in the context of stylistic development and creativity. In terms of offering a mode of transmission that acts as an alternative to the master-apprentice model, what was actually found was that while the MCA acted as distinct avenue of transmission, comparisons could still be made with the master-apprentice model. The most obvious difference is that there is a distinctly greater ratio of explicit knowledge being transferred in using the MCA. However, it gradually became apparent that implicit knowledge was also being transferred. This was particularly obvious in terms of ornaments where the volunteer would often imitate the style of ornamentation.
demonstrated by myself. In terms of modality, it became clear that having the correct scale did not imply its correct realisation and that this actually was linked to understanding the particular harmonic progressions commonly used with each of the modes. This was more of an issue in terms of those who play other genres of music but once this additional aspect was made apparent, a melody could be improvised that was stylistically congruent with the traditional idiom. Therefore, the participation of volunteers who are not exclusively traditional musicians was very helpful in discovering these types of conceptual fields.

It is important to note that the facilitator-volunteer relationship is similar to the master-apprentice model in the sense that I found the volunteers would initially often imitate my demonstration of one stylistic element to get an idea of how the codes in that particular conceptual field were to be realised. However, the MCA departed from the master-apprentice model when the volunteer randomly-selected and correctly executed a stylistic element without any external influence or help. It is in this context, that particular explicit stylistic data was transmitted without the aid of any ‘master’ figure.

The creative aspect of the MCA was evident on two fronts: the creation of new stylistic elements and the use of existing ones to transform tunes. The most striking example of the former was the enthusiasm with which new ornaments were created following Triona Marshall’s accidental creation of the harmonic cut. Indeed, wherever possible across the other areas of style but particularly with regard to ornaments, there was a strong sense of the volunteers wanting to contribute new information by either finding ornaments that were not included in the list or by creating new ornaments of their own. Despite having so few volunteers, this was encouraging with regard to the future potential of the archive as an interactive framework.

The creative transformation of tunes, sometimes to the point of it being possible to classify them as new compositions, was explored extensively in Chapter Ten. As the study progressed, it became evident that the quality of the creative realisation depended on factors such as the musicality and personality of the volunteer, how well the stylistic element in question fitted a particular tune and perhaps that quite simply, that some
stylistic elements facilitate better results than others. For reasons outlined in Chapter Two, stylistic development could not be measured absolutely but it was clear that each of the performers gained new stylistic knowledge by virtue of the fact that much of what was demonstrated was simply not previously known on an explicit level. In terms of how this might work in a third-level situation, it is likely that the volunteer would be responsible for taking stock of their increasing levels of stylistic knowledge, which could then be tested by randomly selecting stylistic elements in an exam-type scenario.

Although the MCA was never intended for musicians who would not be considered high-level performers, it also became clear that the MCA cannot act as a substitute for the master-apprentice model for musicians whose style is not already well-developed. As the sessions progressed, it became increasingly evident that it is essential for a musician using the MCA to have a thorough knowledge of their instrument, music theory and an ability to improvise.

In conclusion, while working through the various stages of this project, very often I found myself sometimes concerned or even convinced that particular areas of style could not be codified, or that little or nothing would be found. I was very much surprised to find that not only was so much information possible, but that what has been covered in this study will, possibly at some point in the future, prove to be a fraction of what actually exists. Now that a framework has been established and once the method of codification has been selected for a particular area of style, it is relatively straightforward to generate the contents of a particular conceptual field.

While the archive has the potential for significant growth, the burning question remains as to the frequency of use of each of the conceptual fields and their stylistic elements. However, by using the MCF in combination with the aforementioned advances in technology, it is likely that this type of information will, in the future, be found.

As observed earlier in this study, online collections of Irish traditional music exist that contain over 10,000 tunes, which would provide a healthy sample size from which the frequency of use of particular stylistic elements could be determined. With the creation
of purpose-specific algorithms, it should be possible to use these to find information on tune-types, modality, structural relationships and transcriptions where melodic and rhythmic variation is at play. As technology improves, it is likely that it will be feasible to create more detailed tune-databases through software-aided transcriptions of tunes taken from audio recordings. From this, information on tempo, ornaments and their frequencies of use over the recorded history of the genre could be mapped. It may even be possible to attribute particular stylistic elements to particular performers or regions etc.

In the future, the development of the MCP would, hopefully, allow for the transmission, evolution and mutation of stylistic elements to be mapped. A number of years ago, I read Richard Dawkins’ *The Selfish Gene* (1976) in which he introduced his idea of the meme.25 While he does not present a strict definition of the meme, he describes it as ‘a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of imitation’ and cites examples such as tunes or ideas that ‘propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation’.26 In the time since Dawkins introduced the idea, a number of more specific definitions have emerged from other scientists working in the field of memetics. Once such understanding comes from John S. Wilkins for whom a meme is ‘[t]he least unit of socio-cultural information relative to a selection process that has favourable or unfavourable selection bias that exceeds its endogenous tendency to change’.27 This definition resonates with Leonard B. Meyer’s definition of style as a series of choices as discussed in Chapter One. Francis Helighen defines a meme as ‘an information pattern, held in an individual’s memory, which is capable of being copied to another individual’s memory’.28 As this process goes, various memes evolve, mutate into variants, and may eventually diversify into new stylistic elements. Indeed, this process could be observed in terms of the ornaments and process

26 Ibid., 192.
discussed in chapters nine and ten respectively.\textsuperscript{29}

The idea of using data to better understand the humanities may be recent but it is not without precedent. In 2010, I came across an article in the \textit{New York Times} entitled ‘Digital Keys for Unlocking the Humanities’ Riches’ in which Patricia Cohen argues that rather than ‘isms’, data may be the ‘next big idea in language, history and the arts’ and discusses how it can enable forms of research that previously were not possible.\textsuperscript{30}

The future of this project may be a case in point where an online archive of the material would enable a greater number of musicians to contribute both conceptual fields and stylistic elements and provide contextual information about them.

The aesthetic foundation for this approach is already well established in Irish traditional music where the sharing of explicit knowledge such as tunes, styles and stories is perhaps the keystone of the genre. ‘Giving back’ is a key phrase in the tradition and this value is demonstrated time and time again in the great work of organisations such as CCÉ, The Piper’s Club, the Irish Traditional Music Archive, third-level institutes, the many festivals and workshops and informal sessions globally. This has even been demonstrated online where websites such as thesession.org enable the sharing of repertoire, information and stories in such a manner that geographical distance is no longer a factor. With the exception of transmission through performance, the main issue to date is that, stylistic data as implicit and tacit knowledge has been very difficult to manage and share. Now that this barrier has begun to be broken down, there is no reason that it cannot also be shared, added to and enjoyed \textit{en masse}.

One obvious audience for an online version of the archive is undergraduate and postgraduate students, and high-level musicians who could both use it as a resource and in turn, contribute to it, much in the same manner as the tradition functions ordinarily. Given the more recent advances in technology, it would be possible to embed audio files

\textsuperscript{29} The development of the cut into the harmonic cut and then into further ornaments is one such example.

where musicians could even play examples of how they realise particular stylistic elements.31

As noted in Chapter One, other western European folk music genres such as those of Scotland, Wales, England, Brittany, Shetland, Galicia and Asturias, as well as American folk music traditions such as those of Nova Scotia, Appalachia and Newfoundland are closely related to Irish traditional music. Another future possibility for the MCP is that it could be applied to these genres. Not only would this help to provide a greater understanding of the elements of these particular styles but may even encourage a greater cross-fertilisation of ideas.

This thesis opens up a new area of study in Irish traditional instrumental music that has the potential to extend far beyond that found within these pages. Ultimately, the tradition is much greater than any one individual and so the realisation of any objective such as this must be a community project, albeit with gatekeepers. This area of study need not be the preserve of academics but could very well function much like the living tradition itself, with anyone who can contribute stylistic data being able to access, use and add to a shared body of knowledge. As the Irish proverb reads ‘Ní neart go cur le chéile’, there is strength in unity.

31 The online service soundcloud is one such avenue that could be explored.
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APPENDIX A

ANALYSIS OF NOTE DURATION

In Chapter Four, a series of transcriptions (between Ex. 4.13-4.18) were combined with coloured graphs illustrating the duration of each note. In Tables A.1 and A.6 below, the calculations used to create the examples are presented. In the left column, the letter name for each note may be found, then the note’s onset and offset time is presented, from which the respective durations are derived. It will be noted that an extra 0.01 is added to each of these lengths to account for the 0.01 difference between the previous note’s offset value and the subsequent note’s onset value. When the respective lengths of each note in the bar are added, the individual note durations are divided into this figure and multiplied by one hundred over one to find what percentage of the bar each note comprises. Note that while the full percentage is given in the tables below, this was rounded off correct to two decimal places in the graphic illustrations found in Chapter Four.

Table A.1 Note duration analysis of ‘The Frost is all Over’, bars 1-8.

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743
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APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INVITATION TO THE PRACTICE-BASED STUDY

Martin Tourish
79 Island Key Apartments,
Eastroad,
Dublin 3.

Dear <insert name>,

Many thanks for your interest in taking part in this research project. This is a formal invitation to participate in the study which will require your signature below to confirm that you have been provided with enough information about the project, your role within it and the research ethics, in accordance with DIT’s research ethics principles.

1. About this Project

In traditional music, much of the learning process is based upon the learning and sharing of tunes. It is easy to take stock of what is known and develop repertoire by learning what is not known. However, style is largely unconsciously acquired as tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is when someone knows how to do something but has no term for it. For example, some musicians can play a tune in the key of D but don’t know what key they are playing in. This makes it difficult to take stock of what is known and develop. However, when terms are known, stylistic development can be clearly directed. For instance, with the correct vocabulary, a musician can state that they can play in D, G and A but that they don’t have fluency in the nine other keys perhaps. This approach of putting terms on aspects of style and using them to develop a musician’s stylistic potential is an attempt into developing a conscious or formal means of learning style and is what I term The Musical Catalyst Method.
The process so far has focused on creating the largest single archive of stylistic data in existence. The material is taken from literature ranging from 1786 to 2011, from recordings and personal knowledge. These lists are organised as stylistic options, in fields such as modality, ornamentation, motific structure and the like and all of them can be used in your own playing.

As you will already know some of these stylistic elements, the ultimate aim is to investigate how a musician’s stylistic potential can be expanded. Stylistic potential can be seen as analogous to vocabulary and aims to increase the stylistic possibilities that could potentially be used, hopefully resulting in a much greater degree of stylistic versatility. The project is now nearing its experimental stage which is where your involvement would be greatly appreciated.

2. Your Role in the Project

There are seven musicians involved in the experiment, each of whom represent a different instrument which is popular within the tradition. There is two stages to the experiment.

The first stage involves working through the lists of stylistic elements in order to map what each musician knows so what is yet to be known can be determined. During this process, each stylistic element is categorised at one of three levels. 1. Known (e.g. I know what the key of D is and I can play in it), 2. Tacit Knowledge (where someone can play in the key of D but doesn’t know what it is called. Most often, there isn’t a term in use within the tradition and this, I imagine to be the most common category). 3. Unknown (where the musician doesn’t know the term, the key of D nor how to play in it).

It is difficult to know exactly how long the first stage will take but it is likely to take a number of sessions depending on your availability. During this stage, any stylistic elements that are unknown are explained after they have been checked. It is also likely
that not all of the elements on a particular list may be possible on the given instrument and so these are discounted; for example, playing in Eb on a D tin whistle! Following completion of this stage, the scope for increasing stylistic potential will be evident from the stylistic elements marked as either tacit knowledge or unknown.

The second stage begins with the volunteer being given a folder containing the complete list of stylistic elements with the categorisations from the first stage (what there is to do). Although the stylistic elements will have largely been explained, this document contains examples of every stylistic element in staff notation and audio examples can be made available where requested. I’ll also be available by phone or email to explain anything. This will enable you to structure your practice time, know what has to be learned and keep track of your own progress.

The time commitment to this second stage involves meeting once a week for an hour for up to seven weeks. Each week, progress is mapped by the difference in what’s known from unknown and tacit knowledge. This is the data needed in order to determine if the method is effective. Seven weeks is selected as a cut off point because this is the first attempt at formalising a style-centred learning approach.

The experiment also entails that the volunteer has their instrument for each meeting as playing is a central focus. Each meeting will also be recorded. As the musicians involved are all highly in demand, I will endeavour to be as flexible as possible if set meeting times need to be changed but an attempt is made to stick to the plan in as much as is possible.

3. Research Ethics

In accordance with DIT’s research ethics policy, the following questions must be agreed to in order to ensure best practice guidelines are followed. Hence, I hope the above description in addition to the attached examples has fully informed you about this study and of course I would encourage you to ask questions either by email
(martintourish@gmail.com) or by phone (086 1534961). There are no health and safety risks involved as this study simply requires playing a musical instrument and learning but if you know of any potential risk, please do inform me. Of course you are entirely free to withdraw from this study at any time, without giving a reason for withdrawing and without affecting your future relationship with the Institute (DIT).

The results of this study are likely to be published. We can discuss if you wish to remain anonymous in any published versions.

Finally, for the project to begin, I will need to ensure that you have understood this document fully and are able to answer positively to the consent form on the following page.

Best regards,

Martin Tourish.

3.1 Have you been fully informed/read the information sheet about this study? YES/NO

3.2 Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study? YES/NO

3.3. Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions? YES/NO

3.4 Have you received enough information about this study and any associated health and safety implications if applicable? YES/NO

3.5 Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from this study?
   • at any time
   • without giving a reason for withdrawing
   • without affecting your future relationship with the Institute
   YES/NO
3.6 Do you agree to take part in this study the results of which are likely to be published?

YES/NO

3.7 Have you been informed that this consent form shall be kept in the confidence of the researcher?

YES/NO

Signed____________________________________ Date ____________

Name in Block Letters

________________________________________________________

Signature of Researcher ________________________________ Date
APPENDIX C

TRACK LISTING FOR EACH OF THE SEVEN CDS

Peter Browne, Disc 1.

3. ‘Dinkey’s’, tune-type example 1.
4. ‘Dinkey’s’, tune-type example 2.
5. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, swing example 1.
9. ‘Dinkey’s’, accent example, simple time.
10. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, accent example, compound time.
11. ‘Dinkey’s’, rhythmic variation, simple time.
14. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, heptatonic example.
15. ‘Dinkey’s’, hexatonic example.
16. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, pentatonic example.
17. ‘Dinkey’s’, inflection example.
18. ‘Dinkey’s’, modulation between parts.
19. ‘Dinkey’s’, modulation within a part.
20. ‘Dinkey’s’, structural tone variation, simple time.
22. ‘Dinkey’s’, Harmonic-based variation, four-bar resolution.
23. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, compass example.
24. ‘Dinkey’s’, motivic variation.
25. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, part configuration example.
26. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, structural relationships, four-bar resolution.
27. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, structural relationships, two-bar resolution.
28. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, structural relationships, one-bar resolution.
29. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, travelling material example.
30. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, two-phrase example.
32. ‘Dinkey’s’, four-phrase example.
33. ‘Dinkey’s’, ornament example 1.
34. ‘Dinkey’s’, ornament example 2.
35. ‘Dinkey’s’, ornament example 3.
37. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, ornament example 5.
Michaela Cunningham, Disc 2.

1. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, tempo example 1.
2. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, tempo example 2.
5. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, swing example 1.
8. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, accent example, simple time.
12. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, home-note alteration.
14. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, hexatonic example.
15. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, pentatonic example.
16. ‘The Kid on the Mountain’, inflection example.
17. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, modulation between parts.
20. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, structural tone variation, compound time.
22. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, harmonic-based variation, four-bar conceptual resolution.
23. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, compass example.
24. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, motivic variation.
25. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, part structure configuration example.
27. ‘Langstrom’s Pony’, structural relationships, two-bar conceptual resolution.
29. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, travelling material example.
30. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, two-phrase example.
32. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, four-phrase example.
33. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, ornament example 1.
34. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, ornament example 2.
35. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, ornament example 3.
37. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, ornament example 5.
Adrian Hart, Disc 3.

1. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, tempo example 1.
2. ‘Dinkey’s’, tempo example 2.
4. ‘Langstrom’s Pony’, tune-type example 2.
10. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, accent example, simple time.
11. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, accent example, compound time.
14. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, home-note alteration.
15. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, heptatonic example.
16. ‘Morrison’s’, hexatonic example.
17. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, pentatonic example.
18. ‘Tommy Betty’s Waltz’, inflection example.
19. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, modulation between parts.
22. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, structural tone variation, compound time.
23. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, harmonic-based variation, two-bar conceptual resolution.
25. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, compass example.
27. ‘Langstrom’s Pony’, part structure configuration.
30. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, structural relationships, one-bar conceptual resolution.
31. ‘Dinkey’s’, travelling material example.
32. ‘Langstrom’s Polka’, two-phrase example.
33. ‘Langstrom’s Polka’, three-phrase example.
34. ‘Langstrom’s Polka’, four-phrase example.
35. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, ornament example 1.
36. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, ornament example 2.
37. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, ornament example 3.
39. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, ornament example 5.
Robert Harvey, Disc 4.

1. ‘Dinkey’s’, tempo example 1.
2. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, tempo example 2.
5. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, swing example 1.
10. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, accent example, simple time.
11. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, accent example, compound time.
13. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, rhythmic variation, compound time.
15. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, heptatonic example.
17. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, pentatonic example.
18. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, inflection example.
20. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, modulation within a part.
22. ‘The Kid on the Mountain’, structural tone variation, compound time.
25. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, compass example.
26. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, motivic development.
27. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, part structure configuration.
30. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, structural relationships, one-bar conceptual resolution.
31. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, travelling material example.
32. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, two-phrase example.
33. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, three-phrase example.
34. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, four-phrase example.
35. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, ornament example 1.
36. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, ornament example 2.
37. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, ornament example 3.
Mark Redmond, Disc 5.

1. ‘The Kid on the Mountain’, tempo example 1.
2. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, tempo example 2.
5. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, swing example 1.
6. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, swing example 2.
7. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, swing example 3.
8. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, accent example, simple time.
9. ‘The Kid on the Mountain’, accent example, compound time.
10. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, rhythmic variation, simple time.
11. ‘The Kid on the Mountain’, rhythmic variation, compound time.
15. ‘Langstrom’s Pony’, heptatonic example.
16. ‘Langstrom’s Pony’, hexatonic example.
17. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, pentatonic example.
18. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, inflection example.
19. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, modulation between parts.
20. ‘Tommy Betty’s Waltz’, modulation within a part.
21. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, structural tone variation, simple time.
22. ‘The Kid on the Mountain’, structural tone variation, compound time.
23. ‘Dinkey’s’, harmonic-based variation, two-bar conceptual resolution.
24. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, harmonic-based variation, four-bar conceptual resolution.
26. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, motivic development.
27. ‘Langstrom’s Pony’, part configuration.
28. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, structural relationships, four-bar conceptual resolution.
29. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, structural relationships, two-bar conceptual resolution.
30. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, structural relationships, one-bar conceptual resolution.
31. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, travelling material example.
32. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, two-phase example.
33. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, three-phase example.
34. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, four-phase example.
35. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, ornament example 1.
37. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, ornament example 3.

1. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, tempo example 2.
2. ‘The Kid on the Mountain’, tempo example 2.
5. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, swing example 3.
6. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, accent example, simple time.
7. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, accent example, compound time.
16. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, compass example.
17. ‘Langström’s Pony’, modulation within a part.
18. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, structural relationships, four-bar conceptual resolution.
19. ‘Farewell to Ireland’, structural relationships, two-bar conceptual resolution.
20. ‘The Kid on the Mountain’, travelling material example.
21. ‘Morrison’s Jig’, two-phrase example.
22. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, three-phrase example.
23. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, four-phrase example.
2. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, tempo example 2.
3. ‘Langstrom’s Pony’, tune-type example 1.
5. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, swing example 1.
8. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, accent example, simple time.
15. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, heptatonic example.
16. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, hexatonic modulation.
17. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, pentatonic modulation.
18. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, inflection example.
19. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, modulation between parts.
20. ‘Langstrom’s Pony’, modulation within a part.
27. ‘Dinkey’s’, motivic development.
29. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, structural relationships, four-bar conceptual resolution.
32. ‘McKenna’s Polka’, travelling material.
33. ‘Dinkey’s’, two-phrase example.
34. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, three-phrase example.
35. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, four-phrase example.
37. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, ornament example 2.
38. ‘The Connaughtman’s Rambles’, ornament example 3.
40. ‘The Maid Behind the Bar’, ornament example 5.
APPENDIX D

CDS PERTAINING TO EACH OF THE SEVEN VOLUNTEERS

Peter Browne

Michaela Cunningham
Adrian Hart

Robert Harvey
Mark Redmond

Triona Marshall
Enda Cloke

USB Key containing all recordings as MP3s