

## Letters of Support

Le

26 MARS 2018

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UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN  
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

20 March, 2018

Ms. Aibhlín McCrann,  
Cruit Éireann Harp Ireland,  
c/o 26 Herbert Place,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Aibhlín,

I fully support the nomination of Irish harping to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and am acutely conscious of the necessity to preserve our harp tradition.

The harp has been played in Ireland for over a thousand years. It enjoyed a high status in early Gaelic society due to the sophistication of the instrument and the considerable technical ability of the harpers which was acquired from a young age. The harper, along with the file (poet) and the reacaire (reciter), were the epitome of Gaelic aristocratic culture.

The Coat of Arms of Ireland and the Presidential Standard include an image of a gold harp with silver strings set against a blue background. The instrument is also the main element in the seals of office of Uachtarán na hÉireann (the President of Ireland) and all government ministers and departments.

The Harp has appeared on coins minted in Ireland since 1530 including on all Euro coins minted in Ireland today.

Culture and creativity enhance civilisations where they exist, and have been central to Ireland's development. As Ireland's national symbol, the Irish harp is undoubtedly the most recognisable image associated with our nation. It has inspired fidelity to, and pride in, the nation over many hundreds, indeed thousands, of years. This symbol of the people is most appropriate to Ireland because it is one of creativity, culture and inclusivity.

As the President of Ireland, I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for Irish harping to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely,

Michael D. Higgins  
Uachtarán na hÉireann  
President of Ireland



Ardmhéara Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Lord Mayor of Dublin  
**Mícheál Mac Donncha**

Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland  
[info@harpireland.ie](mailto:info@harpireland.ie)

16<sup>th</sup> March 2018

A Chara

I support the application by Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland to UNESCO to have the Irish Harp recognised as having intangible cultural heritage status.

This Irish harp is an ancient instrument dating back 1,000 years and its music has a central place in Irish culture. It is the National Instrument of Ireland and features on our currency, passports and all legal documents and as such holds a special place in our culture.

I am very happy to support the application by Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland and hope you will look favourably on it.

Regards

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Mícheál Mac Donncha  
Ardmhéara Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Lord Mayor of Dublin



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Dublin 2, Ireland

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Minister Josepha Madigan,  
Minister of State Joe McHugh  
Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2

15 March 2018

A Aire Madigan agus a Aire McHugh, a chairde

Re: Irish harping – an intangible cultural heritage

I am writing in connection to the bid by Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland for Irish harping to be recognised as a distinct intangible cultural heritage.

The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon would support recognition of the Irish harping tradition as a distinct intangible cultural heritage firstly as part of Ireland's pending national list of intangible cultural heritage and also to be put forward as a world heritage.

Irish harping is a living artistic tradition, which represents cultural continuity and is characterised by artistic diversity, invention and resilience. I quote below from the *Report on the Harping Tradition in Ireland* by Toner Quinn, and published by the Arts Council in 2014;

*Over several centuries, from at least 1,000ad, a rich culture of performance, composition, improvisation, ensemble and craftsmanship developed around the harp in Ireland.*

The practice of Irish harping has been central to Irish music for an unbroken period of more than 1,000 years. It was core to the Gaelic artistic practices, and is associated with other well-known Gaelic forms such as bardic poetry. These Gaelic artforms were sophisticated and rigorous and connected to a distinctive civilisation.

The disruption of Gaelic society, particularly from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards forced the evolution of Irish harping, contributing to the association of nomadism among harpers. This precipitated the continuing relationship of the harp to Irish traditional music, which has been carried by the people through oral learning and transmission over many centuries. This artistic tradition is characterised by great creative ingenuity by individual artists and by communities, as the phenomenal repertoire of music and song and the methods of transmission demonstrate.

One of the famous examples of artistic initiative to safeguard the Irish harping tradition is the Belfast Harpers Assembly of 1792. On this occasion, eleven elderly harpers came together and worked with the nineteen year old Edward Bunting to transcribe their music so that - at this most precarious time for the Irish harp - the repertoire of these tradition bearers was salvaged for future generations.



Individual artists and communities continue to play the lead role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and recreation of Irish harping, which are important processes recognised in the Convention for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage.

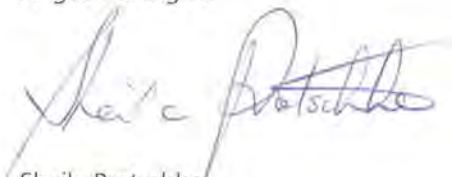
Individual harpers, such as Deirdre Granville, Cormac de Barra, Caitriona Yeats, Laoise Kelly, Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Siobhán Armstrong, Paul Dooley and many other outstanding artists have recently come together to establish Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland. This is a national, artist-led initiative to safeguard the Irish harping tradition for the next 1000 years.

Many of these artists are also connected deeply in community initiatives to enable meaningful artistic participation in harping practice. For example, Laoise Kelly works with a local committee to run the Achill International Harp Festival; Aibhlín McCrann and Áine Ní Dhubhghaill work with many others to run An Chúirt Chruitireachta which includes a week-long immersion studies for harpers of all levels; Siobhán Armstrong, Sylvia Crawford and others work to run the Early Irish Harp Summer School annually in Kilkenny; Kathleen Loughnane, Máire Ní Chathasaigh and Cormac de Barra are regular tutors at the Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy, an annual event crucial to the transmission of Irish traditional music; Dearbhail Finnegan works with her community in Meath to present the annual O'Carolan Harp Festival Nobber; Stephen Hennessy and a local voluntary committee lead the O'Carolan Harp Festival in Keadue, where the famous harper and composer Turlough O'Carolan is buried.

The exponents of the Irish harping tradition have exceptional skills and values to share world-wide in terms of artistic practices and methods that enable safeguarding and transmission of cultural heritage that has suffered from or is experiencing threat to its survival.

Please do contact me if I can be of any assistance in relation to consideration of the status of Irish harping as an intangible cultural heritage of world importance.

Le gach dea-ghuí



Sheila Pratschke  
Cathaoirleach, An Chomhairle Ealaíon

CC: Aibhlín McCrann, Cruit Éireann



**FairPlé: Gender Balance in Irish Traditional & Folk Music**

Cruit Éireann  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2.

RE: Consideration of the Irish harp for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to you on behalf of FairPlé, an initiative which aims to achieve gender balance in the production, performance, promotion, and development of Irish traditional and folk music. FairPlé strongly supports the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Irish harp, our national symbol, is an intrinsic part of our identity and has been central to our cultural musical heritage for over a 1000 years. We strongly believe that it is essential to preserve its legacy and ensure its sustainability.

We have many harp players as members of FairPlé and these members actively make every effort to pass on this rich tradition by encouraging young players, by performing to many different audiences and by enabling young people to promote our national instrument. It is critical that we safeguard the tradition of harping in Ireland and encourage the development of harp performance, education, academia and harp making.

On behalf of the FairPlé steering committee we would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Kind regards,

Karan Casey, Pauline Scanlon, Niamh Dunne, Dr. Síle Denvir, Muireann Nic Amhlaoibh and Dr. Úna Monaghan (members of the FairPlé Steering Committee)

FairPlé, c/o Síle Denvir, 62 Newgrange Rd, Cabra, Dublin 7

[www.fairple.com](http://www.fairple.com); <https://www.facebook.com/FairPleMusic/>; <https://twitter.com/FairPle>



01<sup>st</sup> March 2018

To Whom it Concerns,

We wish to support that the Irish Harp be considered under the *UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage*. The harp is so intrinsic to our Irish identity, and over the years at Clifden Arts Festival we have been privileged to hear the wonderful harp playing of Kathleen Loughnane and Maeve Gilchrist. Their playing leaves us like a great Wordsworth poem "*The music in my heart I bore, long after it was heard no more*".

The Harp deserves recognition. Clifden Arts Festival stands proudly in support of your effort.

With Best Wishes

- Brendan Flynn (Director)



# COMHALTAS

THE LIVING TRADITION

Altmush,  
Kilmainhamwood,  
Kells,  
Co. Meath.

8<sup>th</sup> March 2018

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I write in support of Cruit Eireann/Harp Ireland's application for the harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, convention for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The harp has been a symbol of Irish culture for centuries. We are the only county in the world that features a musical instrument as our national emblem.

I have been associated with the harp since 1988 when the O'Carolan Harp Festival in Nobber was founded. I am very proud of the fact that harp playing has gone from strength to strength since those early days.

One has only to attend any of the Fleadh Cheoils held in Ireland and many other countries throughout the world to witness the joy and standard of harp playing today.

Thanks to the promotion and dedicated work of Harp Ireland and others, the Irish harp is flourishing.

I trust that UNESCO will consider the application favourably.

Yours faithfully,

Uachtaran (President) Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann

*Alan Finnegan*





Aibhlín McCrann, Chair  
Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland,  
c/o Communiqué International,  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018

Dear Aibhlín

**Re: In Support of UNESCO Ratification for The Irish harp**

DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama is pleased to support the Irish Government, in its case for the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In recognition of the distinctive national cultural significance of the Irish harp, the Conservatory has nurtured and supported the study of the national instrument, its history and repertoire for over sixty years.

Dr Orla McDonagh  
Head of Conservatory

Kevin Hanafin  
Head of Orchestral Studies

Conservatory of Music and Drama  
Dublin Institute of Technology  
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E-mail: David.Byers@btinternet.com

Web: www.byersmusic.com

www.byersfamilies.com

www.bloomfieldbelfast.co.uk

3 March 2018

Aibhlín McCrann, chair,  
Harp Ireland/Cruit Éireann

Dear Ms McCrann,

### **A Plea to UNESCO for the Safeguarding of the Irish harp as an Intangible Cultural Heritage**

I write as a composer based in Northern Ireland (Belfast), with 25 years' experience as a music producer and presenter for the BBC (retiring as Chief Producer, Music and Arts in 2002 but continuing to produce music recordings to this day as a freelance), and a further eight years as Chief Executive of the Ulster Orchestra (retiring in 2010). I also write programme notes and articles for a range of organisations. Further information at [www.byersmusic.com](http://www.byersmusic.com).

The Irish harp, of course, is integral to the history of this island, going back to the earliest pre-Christian Celtic times and the oral traditions of the ancient bards, many of whom are believed to have sung or recited their poems or their employer's family genealogies to the accompaniment of the harp.

The Irish harp's story since those times, as we know, has suffered frequent rises and falls. By the 17th and 18th centuries that bardic tradition survived in the hands of a few itinerant harpers who travelled from big house to big house.

I take some pride, particularly given several centuries of division and distrust in the north of Ireland, that Belfast and some of its enlightened Presbyterians hosted an Assembly of many of the surviving harpers in 1792 and instigated the noting down of their music. That led to the founding in Belfast of a school for harpers (mainly young blind boys) in 1808, followed by a similar school in Dublin in 1809. When the Belfast venture ran out of funds in 1813, some northern Irish soldiers in the Bengal Army of the East India Company sent funding for a new Belfast harp school in 1819. That one lasted until the late 1830s.

Belfast again led the way in 1903 with a major exhibition (a real encouragement to builders of the instrument) and second Assembly, now called the Belfast Harp Festival. That spark has been kindled across the years and the revival of the Irish harp is in full flow in the 21st century across the whole island – including here in Northern Ireland. It's a real example of cultural diversity and understanding which crosses differing traditions and brings together people of different backgrounds and seemingly intractable views on ownership of this rich and shared heritage.



Ireland's 'traditional' music, as with its contemporary music, is the result of centuries of cross-fertilisation and interaction between the home-grown, the incoming (be they friend or foe!) and an awareness of musics from elsewhere (what would nowadays be termed 'globalisation'). Ireland's unique music mix is nowhere more evident than in the rich heritage of music for the Irish harp. That music, and the instrument itself as it has developed across the centuries, has suffered from varying degrees of disinterest and subsequent loss of aspects of this important cultural heritage.

It is a major positive step that the Irish harp is now being sustained and supported by organisations like An Chomhairle Ealaíon (the Arts Council) and Cruit Éireann (Harp Ireland). Cruit Éireann, a collective of harp players from all over Ireland promoting the national instrument, specifically works to gain recognition for the Irish harp, to ensure its sustainability, and to support makers of the instrument. A vital and extensive part of this work is, and has been, with young people.

Along with many others, I believe an essential underpinning and safeguarding of this work would be for the Irish harp to be granted UNESCO status to protect what is undoubtedly an important intangible cultural heritage. Thanks to the participation of young and old, north and south, east and west, the Irish harp has made a significant contribution to cultural diversity on this island.

Nor is Cruit Éireann's promulgation of Irish harp music limited to the 'ancient' and the traditional. It extends healthily to new music for the instrument by 21st century composers, ensuring a contemporary relevance and extending the meaning and reach of tradition: creativity in performance, in technique, in research and in developing new voices.

This is such important work for future generations, for promoting deeper understanding and for encouraging greater co-operation between communities who are perhaps not as fully aware as they should be about shared heritage.

I urge you to support this plea to safeguard the future of the Irish harp and recognise its cultural significance by granting it special UNESCO status under the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Byers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

(David Byers)

67 Saddle Ranch Lane  
Hillsdale, NJ 07642  
USA

March 4, 2018

Ms. Aibhlín McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Éireann / Harp Ireland  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2, Ireland

Dear Ms. McCrann,

What an extraordinary opportunity it would be if the Irish harp, cruit in Irish, would be given the exemplary status as an intangible cultural heritage item Ireland as defined by the UNESCO 2003 Safeguards. I am writing my letter to you and to the UNESCO committee for its strong consideration.

Ireland is the only country in the world to have a musical instrument as its national symbol. That is how highly regarded the harp is in modern and ancient Irish culture. It was a purveyor of the oral traditional over hundreds of years. When in the presence of the ancient Irish chieftains, it was the harper and his instrument that was accorded a place of honor in the castles and at the chieftans' dining table. The harpers not only performed musically, but they also were part of the recitation of a chieftain's genealogy and of his war escapades and victories. Ireland's museums house some of her most treasured ancient Irish harps, in particular the wire strung Brian Boru harp at Trinity College in Dublin. There is national pride in the instrument and in those who perform with it. Most recently, there was the first annual National Harp Day and its high success is to be expanded to a far greater extent next year.

Here in the United States, we honor our folk traditions by yearly recognizing those practitioners who truly exemplify crafts, music and dance that have had cultural significance and may be in danger of being lost. The National Endowment of the Arts and the Smithsonian Museum are the venues for such honoraria. I truly believe that UNESCO's place in this cultural sphere would do well to place the harp into that same revered category as an intangible cultural heritage instrument. These harps in the Irish museums and Trinity College survived through very harsh times. By a string and a note, some of its music was preserved through Bunting's collection from 1792 and from individuals having the foresight to safeguard the harps from plundering, fires, the famine and moisture damage.

I am a practitioner on the Irish harp since I was a child and as an American, I have always been aware that this instrument, these strings and melodies, were not my own, but came from my Irish heritage, passed down from one generation to the next, via that oral tradition, that is so valued in so many cultures.

I truly hope that UNESCO will give strong consideration to Cruit Éireann's application for ratification and inclusion of the Irish harp in the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Ireland.

Very truly yours,

Deirdre M. Danaher





Comhairle Cathrach  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council

Oifig Ealaíon, Seirbhísí Cultúir, Áineasa & Eacnamaíochta

Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath, An LAB, Sráid Uí Fhoghlú, Baile Átha Cliath 1, Éire

Arts Office, Dublin City Council, Culture, Recreation and Economic Services,  
The LAB, Foley Street, Dublin 1, Ireland  
T. 01 222 5455 [artsoffice@dublincity.ie](mailto:artsoffice@dublincity.ie) [www.dublincityartsoffice.ie](http://www.dublincityartsoffice.ie)

5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

To whom it may concern

Dublin City Council fully supports the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. We are acutely conscious of the necessity to preserve our harp tradition.

Culture and creativity enhance civilisations where they exist, and have been central to our national development. As Ireland's national symbol, the Irish Harp is undoubtedly the most recognisable image associated with our nation. It has inspired loyalty and pride over many hundreds, indeed thousands, of years. This symbol of the people is most appropriate to our small nation because it is one of creativity, culture and music.

Dublin City, home to the 14<sup>th</sup> century Brian Boru Harp, housed in Trinity College Dublin, has had a long association with the harp. The National Museum of Ireland safeguards a priceless collection of 17<sup>th</sup> century harps, which unfortunately is in storage through lack of resources. It is critical that these vestiges of our harp tradition are safeguarded and that the harp continues to evolve with the changing times.

On behalf of Dublin City Council, I would like this application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Ray Yeates

City Arts officer



Woodview House,  
Cordevlis,  
Co. Monaghan.  
Ireland.  
5/2/18

To Whom It May Concern:

I support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The harp is Ireland's national symbol and has been for many years. The harp is used as a symbol for many other organisations throughout the country of Ireland and is a part of many people's identity. There is long history of interest and respect for the instrument and it is essential that we preserve its legacy and ensure the harp remains an instrument of interest.

As a harp player and a teacher of the harp, I have the opportunity to pass on a rich tradition of music associated with the instrument. I am fortunate to have the opportunity to encourage and inspire a younger generation to provide an interest in the harp. Performances on the instrument promote our national instrument and encourage others to take up learning it. For future generations, it is essential that provisions are in place for the preservation of the harp, securing the harp as an instrument connected to our heritage.

I would like to recommend consideration of the harp under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Mise le meas,



Eilís Lavelle.

Dooagh  
achill  
Co. Mayo

6<sup>th</sup> March 2018

The harp is very important because Ireland is the only country in the world that has a musical instrument as its symbol.

I love the harp because it is fun to play on.  
I like the harp because of its sound and I can play eight tunes on it.

I think the harp should always be kept special.

From stofra

Age: 8





## Foras na Gaeilge

### The Irish Harp and the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

To whom it may concern,

Foras na Gaeilge is the Government Agency responsible for promoting the Irish language on the island of Ireland. Our organisation was established in 1999 as one of the six Cross-Border Implementation Bodies, responsible to the North South Ministerial Council, under the Belfast Agreement.

Foras na Gaeilge fully endorses the case for ratifying the Irish Harp, *Cruit na hÉireann*, under the UNESCO Convention 2003.

In our view, the Irish harp is an integral and unique aspect of the cultural heritage of the whole island of Ireland. As a language organisation we recognise the importance of our intangible cultural diversity, particularly in the Irish and Celtic contexts. We also recognise the threats posed by globally dominant languages and cultures to our indigenous cultural heritage and languages, as globalisation increases. We acknowledge the support of UNESCO for languages and aspects of cultural heritage throughout the world and here in Ireland.

The Irish Harp tradition is intrinsically linked to the Gaelic language, and like the language, it is undergoing a resurgence of interest due in no small part to the efforts of a small number of enthusiasts throughout the island. The harp tradition of Ireland is closely associated with the language revival both historically, when enthusiasts and antiquarians collected Irish harp music and sought to revive the language and the music in tandem, and latterly where harp schools are closely linked to Irish-language immersion schools, north and south.

While both our language and harp traditions are undergoing a revival of interest, their position in Irish society, juxtaposed as they are with global languages and cultures, is by no means secure, nor their longevity assured.

In 2018 Ireland is celebrating Bliain na Gaeilge, the year of the Irish language, and the establishment in Belfast of a commemorative festival to celebrate the 1792 Belfast Harp Festival organised in honour of music collector, Edward Bunting, who recorded much of the harp music that enriches our modern, traditional-music traditions. Foras na Gaeilge hopes that many of the new generation of harpers will come from the Irish language movement throughout the country, thereby maintaining that intrinsic historical link between the music and language traditions of Ireland.

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**Lóchrann  
Feabhais**  
Comaidiúir Óir sa Phalastín



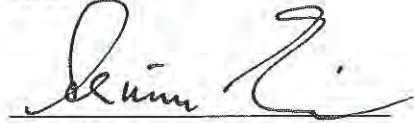
**NSAI**  
Deimhniú Comhlionachta  
REG-014  
SWIFT 3000  
E-01000000-0  
Foras na Gaeilge



The Irish Harp is intrinsic to the cultural identity of those living on the island of Ireland. Its music features prominently in many of our Irish-language events annually. Harp tutoring is an important feature in the music curriculum of many of our Irish-language immersion schools.

As a Government organisation with a duty of care to the linguistic dimensions of our indigenous cultural heritage throughout the island, Foras na Gaeilge wishes to tender its support for Cruit Éireann's application to UNESCO for recognition of the Irish Harp.

Le dea-ghuí,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seán Ó Coinn', written over a horizontal line.

Seán Ó Coinn

Príomhfheidhmeannach

## **The Irish Harp and the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Gael Linn is an NGO which promotes the Irish language and culture. Established 65 years ago, we are Ireland's oldest music publisher and recording label. We are proud to add our voice in support of the case for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention of 2003.

Gael Linn is strongly of the view that the Irish Harp constitutes the most potent symbol of our intangible cultural heritage. It represents a living form of heritage that cannot be touched but which affects people in a very direct way. The Irish Harp is central to the lives and identities of our communities and individuals. Its music has played a central role in Irish ceremonies and celebrations spanning millennia.

The representation of the Irish Harp is instantly associated with our sense of identity. It features on coins, notes and in public life. The music of the Irish Harp speaks to our soul. It is played during the installation of our President and at other State functions.

Gael Linn has proudly issued several recordings of Irish harp music, most notably:

- *The Belfast Harpers' Festival* (1992) by Gráinne Yeats. This double CD, with two very important booklets, is both a historical reminder of the bicentenary of the Belfast Harp Festival (1792), and an example of the craft and spirit of Gráinne Yeats, one of the pioneers who nurtured the tradition of the Irish Harp, and the music of Carolan, in particular.
- *Cruit* (1990) by Patrick Cassidy

Consequently, Gael Linn is keenly aware of the significance of the Irish harp to our cultural heritage. As our national symbol, the harp is intrinsic to our Irish identity and to our sense of identity as a people. It is for this reason that we wholeheartedly endorse Cruit Éireann's application to UNESCO for recognition of the Irish Harp.

Signed:



Antoine Ó Coileáin  
Chief Executive  
Gael Linn



GALWAY CITY MUSEUM

Músaem Cathrach na Gaillimhe  
Pharáid na Spáinneach  
Gaillimh  
Éire

Galway City Museum  
Spanish Parade  
Galway  
Ireland

6 March 2018

A Chara,

Galway City Museum fully supports the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. We are acutely conscious of the necessity to preserve our harp tradition. Our mission is to be a centre of learning, inspiration, engagement and enrichment for all our visitors by collecting, preserving and displaying the material of Galway.

Culture and creativity enhance civilisations where they exist, and have been central to our national development. As Ireland's national symbol, the Irish Harp is undoubtedly the most recognisable image associated with our nation. It has inspired loyalty and pride over many hundreds, indeed thousands, of years. This symbol of the people is most appropriate to our small nation because it is one of creativity, culture and music. We have hosted numerous concerts of harp music at our Museum and recently convened Cruit Éireann / Harp Ireland's all-island Harp Forum meeting. These events enrich our community space, enabling young people (performers and concert goers) to come together to promote our national instrument and symbol and to celebrate the idea of passing on our rich heritage from generation to generation at social gatherings.

It is critical that these vestiges of our harp tradition are safeguarded and that the harp continues to evolve with the changing times.

On behalf of Galway City Museum, I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under UNESCO's 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Le mórmheas,

Eithne Verling  
Director  
Galway City Museum

Fáilteú / Reception: +353 (0)91 532460  
Rphost / Email: [museum@galwaycity.ie](mailto:museum@galwaycity.ie)  
Líon / Web: [www.galwaycitymuseum.ie](http://www.galwaycitymuseum.ie)





February 28, 2018

Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland  
Aibhlin McCrann, Chair  
Teresa O'Donnell, Secretary

Regarding: UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

It is my great privilege to write you in support of the Irish Harp. For the Irish Harp and its music to be recognized in this special way by an organization as important as UNESCO would bring a sense of satisfaction to members of the harp community worldwide. I can think of nothing better for your consideration.

As President of the *International Society of Folk Harpers and Craftsmen*, I see the impact of the Irish Harp everyday. Interest in the Irish Harp leads to interest in Ireland and Irish culture in many forms. The harp is truly the best Ambassador that Ireland could ever have.

The Irish Harp has a rich musical heritage that is appreciated by all musicians, but the instrument is also well represented by contemporary performers. In addition, craftsmen around the world are fascinated by the Irish harp and continue to build instruments that reflect its history while embracing modern techniques.

The ISFHC publishes *The Folk Harp Journal*. When this process is completed, it would be an honor to cover it in our pages.

Thank you.

David W. Kolacny  
President: International Society of Folk Harpers and Craftsmen  
Member: Lyon & Healy/Salvi Harp Technicians Guild  
Recipient: American Harp Society Lifetime Achievement Award

7 March 2018

Cnuasach  
Bhéaloideas  
Éireann

National  
Folklore  
Collection

To whom it concerns:

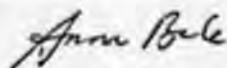
On behalf of the Irish National Folklore Collection and the Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore in University College Dublin, we are writing in order to express our wholehearted support for the application currently being made by Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland to have the Irish harp and the associated art of harp playing included by UNESCO on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The National Folklore Collection is one of the largest archives of oral tradition and vernacular culture in the world, with a global reputation for the quantity and quality of the material it contains. Its importance was recently recognized by UNESCO when the Irish Folklore Commission Collection, which constitutes the core element of the National Folklore Collection, was inscribed into UNESCO'S Memory of the World Register. As a unique repository of information on the cultural context and history of traditional music in Ireland, the Collection provides valuable documentation and recordings of forms of music which are complementary to, and have a close association with, Irish harp music. An understanding and knowledge of Irish traditional music is vital to a proper understanding of the Irish harp, and a distinct relationship might thus be said to exist between the National Folklore Collection and Irish harping.

As part of the School of Irish, Celtic Studies and Folklore, and in close co-operation with the National Folklore Collection, the Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore offers programmes in folklore and ethnology as academic subjects within the university. Two modules in Irish Folklore are devoted to the subject of Irish traditional music, including harp music, and these modules have been delivered in their entirety in the recent past by an accomplished Irish harpist, again underlining the connection between the Irish harp and Irish Folklore studies in University College Dublin.

In conclusion, and as specialists in the field, we believe that the Irish harp can justifiably be described as one of the jewels in the crown of Irish music – renowned throughout the world as a form of musical expression of the highest artistic standard – and as a valuable element in the established canon of that inheritance. For this reason, the National Folklore Collection and the Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore strongly support the nomination of the Irish harp and the associated art of harp playing for inclusion on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, as an item of international significance which should be safeguarded for future generations.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Críostóir Mac Carthaigh, Director, National Folklore Collection  
Anna Bale, MA, Head of Sound Archive, National Folklore Collection  
Dr Bairbre Ní Fhloinn, Head of Subject, Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore  
University College Dublin.

Cnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann  
Áras Newman  
An Coláiste Ollscoile  
Baile Átha Cliath, Belfield  
Baile Átha Cliath 4, Éire

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www.ucd.ie/irishfolklore

National Folklore Collection  
Newman Building  
University College Dublin  
Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland

Éarlámh:  
Micheál D. Ó hUiginn  
Uachtarán na hÉireann

Patron:  
Michael D. Higgins  
President of Ireland



2003 UNESCO Convention for the  
Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage



## The Irish Harp

On behalf of the Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA), I would like to offer my support for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

ITMA is home to the largest collection of multimedia resources in existence dedicated to Irish traditional music. Resources relating to the Irish harp are an integral, substantial and central part of the collection, testimony to the role of this instrument in Ireland's historical and contemporary musical and cultural heritage. Expressions of the Irish harp are represented in a documented timeline from manuscripts & printed texts in the pre- audio era to wax cylinder recordings and 21<sup>st</sup> century downloads. Its sound and repertoire have been, and continue to be, sustained in the memory bank of an oral musical culture; documented by collectors and revitalised in various waves of transmission of information, techniques of playing, repertoire and research. The collection of material held in ITMA documents in a tangible way these aspects of a living harp tradition.

Contemporary Irish traditional music continuously dips in to the well spring of instrument and repertoire tradition to renew and revitalise itself. UNESCO status for the Irish harp will focus attention on the need to nurture & perpetuate this living tradition: a unique intangible expression of Ireland's cultural heritage which deserves to be recognised and maintained for future generations.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Grace Toland.' The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

---

**Grace Toland**  
**Director Irish Traditional Music Archive**





Aibhlín McCrann,  
Chair,  
*Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland*,  
c/o/ Communiqué International,  
26 Herbert Place, Dublin 2.  
7 March 2018

Dear Aibhlín McCrann,

I am writing to express my strongest support for your bid to have the Irish harp ratified under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2003). Delighted as I am that *Uilleann* piping won its place last year on the representative list of humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage, I believe the Irish harp and all it represents has an even stronger claim.

The harp is linked solely to the arts of peace. Its distinctive shape and sound have represented refinement since ancient time. It has been a wholly positive and long-standing symbol of identity for many groups, Celtic-speaking, Anglophone, and other, in Ireland, Britain, the European continent, and beyond. Yet it is well-known that the reputation for making sublime harp-music was credited *uniquely* to Ireland since early medieval times. We are better for knowing that masters of harping were always honoured in Irish society, that the names of outstanding individuals were entered in the Irish annals from earliest times, that we have many important poems about them and by them, as well as many poems addressed to the harp itself. We are the very fortunate inheritors of a significant part of their music.

No other instrument was implicated as the harp was in the entire Irish repertoire of poetry, song, story-telling, performance and dance. No other instrument is as prominent in iconography on churches, church-furnishings, and High Crosses. No other instrument was as lavishly decorated by the master-craftsmen of medieval and early modern Ireland, and the continuity between their work, still exquisitely tangible today in surviving harps, and contemporary instruments, is invigorating and inspiring. Our connection to all this glorious past, having outlived the cataclysmic cultural ruptures of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is now vested in the musicians, composers, instrument-makers and interpreters of the harp music of today - and tomorrow. The sum of all that is involved is inestimable, but all the more deserving for that of the safeguarding that can be afforded to it by UNESCO's Convention.

Wishing you every support,  
Is mise, le meas,

Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha  
Professor of Old and Middle Irish,  
School of Humanities,  
National University of Ireland, Galway.

Derek Ball  
5 Milngavie Road  
Bearsden  
Glasgow  
G61 2DR  
Scotland

phone : 0044 141 931 5373  
email : dmhball@BTopenworld.com

19 Feb 2018

Dear Aibhlín McCrann,

## **The Irish Harp**

I'm writing to add my support to the application to have the Irish Harp recognised as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

### *My background*

I'm an Irish composer living in Scotland. My musical career, albeit sometimes patchy, has covered about 50 years.

### *My involvement with the Irish harp*

I first became aware of the small harp at first hand when my daughter took up the "clàrsach" or Scottish small harp, which of course is similar (but not identical) to the Irish harp but quite different from the Irish "cláirseach". Since then I have written somewhere between 10 and 20 pieces involving the Scottish or Irish instrument either as a solo instrument or as part of an ensemble, and also have a very rudimentary ability to play the small harp.

### *My view of the instrument*

The Irish small harp is of course a member of the large family of harps worldwide. As we know at first hand from attending international harp festivals, it shares similarities with small harps in surrounding Celtic countries and regions, and yet there are both physical and cultural features which make it unique. Even between the Scottish and Irish instruments, there are differences between harp makers and strong differences in the traditional style of harp playing. There is a large body of traditional music in the harp repertoire, but growing numbers of Irish composers – like Anne-Marie O'Farrell for example – have used it in 'cross-over' work, and in complex contemporary pieces, demonstrating that its supposed limitations as a folk instrument can be exploited in new ways.

It's good to see the Irish harp in a relatively healthy state at present, both

within its long tradition and in its modern development, considering how precarious its position was before the Irish cultural revival. Anything which can help to consolidate the position of this unique and wonderful instrument is to be welcomed.

Yours sincerely,

Derek Ball

Derek Ball





Aibhlín McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Éireann / Harp Ireland  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2  
Ireland

March 5, 2018

Dear Aibhlín,

My name is Barry Stapleton and I'm the Director of the Ward Irish Music Archives in Milwaukee. I'm also the Entertainment Staff for Milwaukee Irish Fest, the largest Irish Fest in North America. I'm writing this letter in support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Harp is unique in its position as a beautiful musical instrument with over a 1,000 year history in Ireland, and in its overall symbolism of Ireland itself being its national symbol.

At Milwaukee Irish Fest we have 17 stages going during our 4 day festival which attracts over 100,000 folks to Milwaukee and the U.S. each year. One of these stages is devoted solely to the harp. Top harpists in the world have graced our harp stage such as Derek Bell, Dennis Doyle, Patrick Ball, Máire Ní Chathasaigh and Kim Robertson to name a few. Just as important are the countless harpists from local music schools and regional performers.

These past two years we had harpists from the University of Limerick Irish World Academy of Music and Dance. This is a scholarship award program.

So as you can see the harp has always played a major role at our festival. For the Ward Irish Music Archives we have hundreds if not a thousand, recordings, images, objects that would be inclusive of the harp. Once again its duality within Irish and Irish American culture as a musical instrument and as an icon for Irish music in general is well represented in our archives.



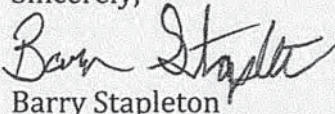
Thirdly we have the Milwaukee Irish Fest School of Music which takes place in fall and spring and averages around 40 students each semester. Also the Milwaukee Irish Fest Summer School where around 300 students engage in musical, childrens & cultural classes in the week before the festival where Harp is taught. We have several teachers each semester including world renowned harpist Kim Robertson.

At CelticMKE, the home of Milwaukee Irish Fest, Ward Irish Music Archives, Milwaukee Irish Fest School of Music, Milwaukee Irish Fest Summer School and the Milwaukee Irish Fest Foundation we have promoted harp music for nearly 38 years. Our mission is:

The mission of CelticMKE, home of Milwaukee Irish Fest, is to promote and celebrate all aspects of Irish, Irish American and Celtic cultures, and to instill in current and future generations an appreciation of their heritage.

We are very proud to highly recommend the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Sincerely,



Barry Stapleton

Director: Ward Irish Music Archives

Entertainment Staff: Milwaukee Irish Fest

Barry Stapleton  
c/o CelticMKE  
1532 Wauwatosa Ave.  
Milwaukee, WI 53213

414-476-3378  
barry@celticmke.com



*Gort na nEan,  
Dublin Road,  
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*00353 (0)1 4782135  
00353 (0) 87 9725518  
[moya\\_cannon@eircom.net](mailto:moya_cannon@eircom.net)  
28th February, 2018*

Dear Chairperson,

It is with the greatest of pleasure that I write in support of Cruit Eireann/Harp Ireland's application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The harp has been a symbol of Irish cultural identity for centuries; it has been central to the development of Irish traditional music for at least a millenium and, in the last three or four decades, we have seen the harping tradition flourish in an astounding way.

As a poet with a deep love of Irish traditional music, I have been invited, on a number of occasions, to participate in events at An Chúirt Chruitireachta, the international harp festival in Termonfeckin, Co Louth. It is an inspiration to see so many young people, mostly from Ireland, but many also from abroad, entirely focused on improving their skills and connecting with fellow musicians. It is also an inspiration to see Ireland's top professional harpers gathered together and intent on sharing their expertise with the next generation. While working abroad myself, I have met harpers from as far away as Japan, who come regularly to study in Ireland.

In recent decades the harp has rejoined the vital mainstream of Irish traditional music and is played alongside the fiddle, flute and pipes. Harp classes are an important component of the Willie Clancy summer school in Milltown Malbay in Co Clare, the hub of Irish traditional music. Again, students travel from all over the world to attend classes. Much research has recently been done on the body of music written by Irish harper-composers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This, in addition to new music being composed, has greatly increased the repertoire and scope of this versatile instrument.

A twelfth century visitor to Ireland, Geraldus Cambrensis, Gerald the Welshman, wrote of Irish harpers '...they are incomparably more skilful than any other nation I have ever seen. For their modulation on these instruments.... is not slow and harsh, but lively and rapid, while the harmony is both sweet and gay. It is astonishing that in so complex and rapid a movement of the fingers, the musical proportions can be preserved'. The extraordinary thing is that Geraldus's description of technique, with its emphasis on rhythm, ornamentation and improvisation, could equally be used to describe contemporary harping.

In the sixteenth century, during the reign of King Henry VIII, the harp surmounted by a crown was stamped on Irish coinage. At the end of the eighteenth century the revolutionary Society of United Irishmen adopted an uncrowned harp icon along with the motto 'It is new-strung and shall be heard'. During the nineteenth century, in songs such as 'The

Minstrel Boy' and 'The Harp that once through Tara's Halls', by Thomas Moore, the harp is used as the symbol of an oppressed nation, an enslaved people and a shattered civilisation. The winged-maiden harp was also adopted as a symbol by the Anglo-Irish protestant ascendancy.

The symbolism of the harp is deeply woven into Irish history and culture. It crosses genres and cultural divisions. Seventeenth and eighteenth century tunes are dedicated to both Gaelic and Anglo-Irish patrons. After the collapse of the Gaelic order at the end of the seventeenth century, many Irish harpers travelled to mainland Europe and taught and played there. The current repertoire of the instrument includes ancient Irish harp tunes and airs, many of which were carried by uilleann pipes and fiddle during centuries when the harping tradition was under threat of extinction. Harpers, young and old, also play tunes composed last year or even last week. In recent decades links have been reestablished with the Scottish harping tradition and links have been newly established with the South American harp world.

Thanks to the indefatigable work of Cruit Ireland and others, the Irish harp is indeed 'new-strung' and *is* heard. I trust that UNESCO will consider this application favourably and thereby strengthen the harp's position as part of our commonly held Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Moya Cannon", is displayed on a light blue rectangular background.

Moya Cannon (Poet)

# THE IRISH TIMES

12<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Aibhlín McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Éireann Harp Ireland  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2

Dear Ms. McCrann,

I am very pleased to hear that Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland is to make the case for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. I wholeheartedly support this nomination.

In my role as the Irish Times Traditional Music Critic, I am keenly aware of the role which our national symbol, the Irish harp plays in our cultural identity.

The Irish Harp has a rich and varied history that spans a millennium, and I believe that it is essential to preserve its legacy and ensure its sustainability in a number of ways. These include the active fostering and support of harpists nationally, and the promotion of our rich harp tradition among audiences young and old, local, national and international.

Securing UNESCO recognition for the key place of the Irish harp as a symbol of our Intangible Cultural Heritage is a natural next step, in my opinion.

As both a music critic and a lover of our rich Irish musical tradition, I am of the view that it is critical that we safeguard it and it is for these reasons that I am endorsing in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely,



---

Siobhán Long  
Traditional Music Critic  
The Irish Times



28 February 2018

Re: letter of support for ratification of the Irish harp under UNESCO 2003, UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage of Ireland

To Whom it May Concern:

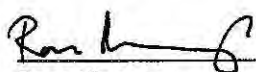
I am writing in support of the case for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Ireland.

Here in Co Laois, since 2012, we have developed a harps-in-schools programme which has been central to a revival of the Irish harp in the County. Having gone from approximately 10 people actively playing harp in 2011, we now have over 110 young people participating in weekly harp lessons, primarily in their own schools. We have 3 harp ensembles, a harp orchestra, and we produce an annual national event - a Tionol (gathering) for harps and uilleann pipes each November.

The safeguarding, development and sustainability of the Irish harp, alongside uilleann piping, is a key focus of Music Generation Laois and we support every effort to secure the Irish harp being ratified as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO. The harp is a critical part of Irish history and culture, and that case will be made across the board by many individuals and organisations in Ireland. What is central to our activity in Laois, is the creation of access to this wonderful Irish instrument to children and young people, so that every child in Ireland has the opportunity and right, to receive tuition on our national instrument, regardless of social, cultural or economic barriers.

I wish Cruit Eireann every success with this initiative.

Yours faithfully,



Rosa Flannery

Rosa Flannery  
Co-ordinator, Music Generation Laois

February 26, 2018

TO WHOM IT CONCERNS

Na Píobairí Uilleann fully supports the nomination of The Irish Harp and its Music to UNESCO for inscription on the *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

The harp has been an important feature of Irish culture for over one thousand years, and the sound of the Irish form of the instrument attracted the attention and admiration of observers throughout that time.

Since the time of the Tudors the harp has been the national emblem of Ireland. For centuries it was the primary instrument for expressing the native music of Ireland, and it retains its position as a core instrument of Irish traditional music.

Nowadays the instrument is attracting young players in higher numbers than ever before, and they are using their skills and imaginations to discover ways in which the instrument and its music can thrive and remain a vital part of Ireland's cultural life.

Players of our instrument – the uilleann pipes – have always regarded the music of the Irish harp as an important part of their cultural inheritance, and see the community of harpers as a crucially important factor in supporting and enriching Irish life and Irish heritage.

Yours sincerely,



Gay McKeon  
CEO,  
Na Píobairí Uilleann

O'Brien International



Clann Uí Bhriain

SINCE 1914

Aibhlín McCrann,  
Chair Cruit Éireann Harp Ireland  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place Dublin 2 Ireland

March 12, 2018

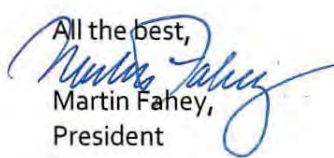
Dear Aibhlín,

As a member of the Irish community of Chicago I am delighted to express my support of the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In addition to being a member of the community as a musician, I am a Curator for an important collection of Irish Art and Antiques that contains *two John Egan Harps and two James McFall harps*, each of which are deemed as important to the collection as any of the paintings, sculptures or pieces of cherished furniture. The attached link details the recent restoration and conservation efforts undertaken on their behalf. (Bernacki and Associates: The Conservation of Historic Irish Harps: <https://www.conservation-design.com>)

Both as a symbol of Irish music and as a symbol of Ireland's national identity, the harp stands alone in its centrality and importance and any effort undertaken to underscore those facts certainly has our deepest support.

All the best,

  
Martin Fahey,  
President

phone 847.581.4200

fax 847.581.4250

5215 Old Orchard Road

Suite 630

Skokie, Illinois 60077

[www.obrienintl.net](http://www.obrienintl.net)





15th March 2018.

To Whom It May Concern.

My Name is Phil Coulter. I have been professionally active in the music industry as a composer, orchestrator, performer and Record Producer for more than 50 years. During this career I have amassed a collection of gold and platinum albums, numerous international awards and a Grammy Nomination. I have been a Visiting Professor in the Irish Studies Programme at Boston College and my work has been recognised by four Honorary Doctorates.

A significant part of my activities has been in Celtic music, and I feel I can speak with some authority on the subject.

Not only is the sound of the Irish harp a fundamental part of the tapestry of our music, it has also become a National symbol, carried on everything from Government papers to airline logos.

In short, it has become part of our national identity, recognised throughout the world.

The Irish harp, as opposed to the concert harp, has a history that dates back over one thousand years. It has played an important role in the rich legacy of Irish music, a role that must be recognised and preserved.

In a fast moving high tech world the future of the Irish harp is as delicate as the very sound that it produces. It must be protected and promoted to future generations of Irish musicians.

I wholeheartedly endorse the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

*Phil Coulter*

To whom it may concern

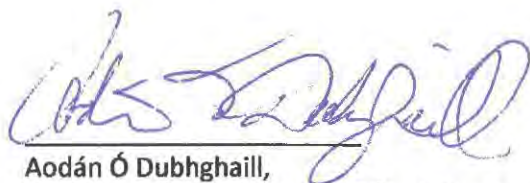
RTÉ lyric fm, Ireland's National Music and Arts station, recently issued a CD entitled '*Masters of the Irish Harp*'. On it we featured sixteen outstanding players. This is only the tip of the iceberg with regard to the number people playing and studying the Irish harp.

Used as the emblem of Ireland since the time of Henry VII, the harp is the instrument most associated with this country. The symbol of the harp is everywhere: on our coins, passports, tax demands etc. It is probably one of our most enduring and recognisable images and today there are more professional harpers and students of our national instrument than ever before.

But the harp is much more than a symbol of Ireland. The harp was at the social centre of Ireland and up to the seventeenth century harpists enjoyed a high status among all other musicians and in society. By the nineteenth century harp-making declined, society and tastes changed and this way of life died out. The playing technique of the Irish harp has developed from what was a highly formalised aristocratic music to becoming in more recent years a standard at folk and traditional music 'sessions'.

As Ireland's National Music and Arts station, RTÉ lyric fm is very happy to support the application by Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Ireland.

Yours sincerely,



Aodán Ó Dubhghaill,  
Head of RTÉ's Orchestras, RTÉ lyric fm, Quartet & Choirs

23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2018.

# RIAM

Royal Irish  
Academy of Music

27<sup>th</sup> February 2018

To whom it may concern,

**Re: letter of support for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.**

On behalf of the Royal Irish Academy of Music, I would like to support in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This application is being led by *Cruit Eireann, Harp Ireland*, a body of national and international standing.

As Ireland's national symbol, the Irish Harp is undoubtedly the most recognisable image associated with our nation. It has inspired loyalty and pride over many hundreds, indeed thousands, of years. This symbol of the people is most appropriate to our small nation because it is one of creativity, culture and music. Culture and creativity enhance civilisations where they exist, and have been central to our national development.

The Royal Irish Academy of Music has supported both the making and teaching of the Irish Harp since its foundation as the national conservatoire in 1848. Our alumni have gone on to perform and teach this magnificent instrument with distinction on the world stage. It is an instrument that evokes the sound world of the Irish people at a stroke. We believe that it is important that this national symbol continue to be shared amongst the next generation so that it remains vibrant and present in our lives and we are committed to continuing to teach it.

It would be an enormous boost for the standing of the instrument if it could achieve this important UNESCO status.

Yours faithfully,



**Deborah Kelleher, MBA, MA (Musicology), BA (mod.) FTCL**

**Director, Royal Irish Academy of Music**





Scoil Ruaidhrí Dall  
51 Bealach Uí Threasaigh  
Dún Geimhin  
Contae Dhoire

A Chairde,

Ba mhian le Scoil Ruaidhrí Dall i nDún Geimhin Contae Dhoire aitheantas a lorg ó UNESCO do chláirseach agus cláirseoireacht na hÉireann. Tá scoil s'againne ainmnithe in ómós do chláirseoir gaelach, Ruaidhrí Dall Ó Catháin a mhair sa 17ú aois. Tá ceangal ag pobal Ghleann na Rua le ceol na gcláirsí chomh fada siar le Naomh Cholmcille sa 7ú aois, suas go Donnchadh Ó hAmsaigh a fuair bás ag deireadh 18ú aois ina theachín in Aird Mhic Giollagáin i gContae Dhoire. Tagann oidhreacht na gcláirsí síos chugainn ón ré sin agus ba lárnach an chláirseach i saol na nGael in Éirinn go himeacht na nIarlaigh. Rinneadh scríos ar chultúr na nGael faoin am seo. Is léir afach gur aithin Banríon Eibhlís I luach na gcláirsí d'oidhreacht na nGael nuair a d'ordaigh sí cláirseacha a scríos agus cláirseoirí a chur chun báis. Manma reabhlóid na nÉireannaigh aontaithe ag deireadh 18ú aois ná, 'Cluinfear arís í'. Cé go raibh an chláirseoireacht curtha chun báis ag an am sin bhí lorg na gcláirsí go fóill ar DNA na ndaoine. Musclaíodh í san aois seo mar gheall ar an cheangal doimhin sin idir an chláirseach agus muintir s'againne. Tá anois 26 cláirseoirí i Scoil Ruaidhrí Dall i gceantar Ghleann na Rua agus cluintear í! Tá achoimre a léiríonn tábhacht na gcláirsí in amhrán ón 18ú aois, Mo Ghile Mear, 'Seinntear stair ar chláirsigh cheoil'

The Ruaidhrí Dall Harp School in Dungiven would like to seek recognition from UNESCO for the Irish harp/ Irish harping as an intrinsic part of our indigenous Gaelic culture. Our harp school is named in honour of the famous Gaelic harper and composer of the 17th century, Ruaidhrí Dall Ó Catháin. The Ó Catháin family was the ruling clann in the Roe Valley area for centuries and many of the habitantes of the area are directly descended from this family. The roe valley area of County Derry has a significant link with harping extending as far back as St Colmcille in the 7th Century and right up to Dennis Hempson, one of the last of the Gaelic Harpers who died at the end of the 18th century in his cottage in Magilligan in County Derry. It was his sharing of music and history with Edward Bunting that preserved the tunes, traditions, history and language for our generation. With the flight of the earls the Gaelic order was brought to an end and severe damage inflicted upon the Gaelic culture. It is evident that Queen Elizabeth I recognised the instrinsic value of harping to the Gaelic people as after the Battle of Kinsale she ordered that all harps be burned and harpers hung! From the time of St Colmcille to the end of the 18th century harping was integral to the Gaelic way of life. The call of the United Irishmen at the end of the 18th Century was, 'She (the harp) will be heard again!'. Indeed the harp was the symbol of the movement. In spite of the destruction of harping in that epoch, the imprint of this beautiful art-form was in our DNA. Harping was therefore easily revived in this century and we now have 26 harpers in the Roe Valley area in County Derry and 'she' is being heard again! The Irish harp is the embodiment of our Gaelic history and our spiritual and cultural life. Summarised succinctly in the 18th century song, Mo Ghile Mear,

*'Our history is played by the music of the harp'.*

Le meas,  
Nodlaig Ní Bhrollaigh  
Scoil Ruaidhrí Dall

# Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy

Fón: 086 8773747 / 087 9500006 / 087 9264256

Email: [angleann@oceanfree.net](mailto:angleann@oceanfree.net)

Willie Clancy Summer School

*Sráid na Cathrach,*

Miltown Malbay.

*Co. an Chláir.*

Co. Clara.

6-3-2018

To: whom it may concern.

Re: Cúirt Éireann-Harp Ireland application for UNESCO recognition of the Irish Harp.

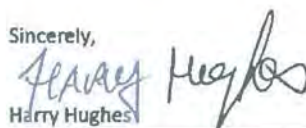
Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy (SSWC) supports the application by Cúirt Éireann-Harp Ireland for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ireland.

The Harp is the national symbol and the instrument has been an intrinsic part of the Irish music heritage for centuries. The instrument, in all its manifestations, is singular to and resonates with Irish culture. At present the instrument is enjoying a renaissance in interest and performance, and features prominently at formal and informal performances at summer schools, festivals and allied musical events.

The instrument became part of the tuition programme at Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy in 2005 and since then has steadily grown to be an integral component of the summer school programme. The tutors at the summer school cater for beginners, intermediate and advanced levels, on all types of harps and all styles of harp performance. These workshops are, thankfully, attracting many younger musicians, thus ensuring the future of the instrument in the Irish traditional music canon.

SSWC is aware of the excellent work of Cúirt Éireann-Harp Ireland in promoting the study and practice of the Irish harp and endorses this important initiative to have harp playing recognised as a unique expression of living Irish culture.

Sincerely,



Harry Hughes

---

Director Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy





Reçu CLT / CIH / ITH

Le 26 MARS 2018

N° 0113

26 Br. Feá Cuileann,

Raghnallach,

Baile Átha Cliath 6

D06CK66

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2018To whom it may concern

Cairde na Cruite, since its establishment in 1960, has played a central role in the revival and development of interest in the Irish harp. While its original objectives espoused the provision of expert tuition and the publication of music for the Irish harp, its mission has evolved considerably over the last 50+ years and the society has made a significant contribution to the development of a vibrant dynamic role for the Irish harp, and its positioning within Irish traditional music.

Currently through its international harp festival and its other activities, the society is actively involved in:

- promoting interest in the Irish harp nationally and internationally,
- continuing to integrate the wire and gut strung harps with mainstream Irish music through the medium of the Irish language where appropriate,
- facilitating the provision of teachers of the Irish harp,
- introducing a wider audience base to the ancient courtly harping tradition through information giving, recording and performance of the music,
- publishing music for the Irish harp,
- facilitating harp-hire on a short term basis for beginners.

Cairde na Cruite sees the harp as central to Irish identity. Its music has for centuries embodied and expressed the highest form of our artistic endeavour. While our state has adopted the harp as its iconic symbol, our musicians, composers, harp makers and artists have been the reason why it resonates the quintessence of what it means to be Irish throughout the centuries.

Cairde na Cruite wholeheartedly supports the application to have the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely

Áine Ní Dhubhghaill

Chairperson Cairde na Cruite



26 Oakley Road,

Ranelagh,

Dublin 6

D06CK66

A Chara,

I am a professional harpist and teacher. As a young child I started to play the harp in the 1970's and I was fortunate to have wonderful teachers in Dublin one of whom was a founding member of Cairde na Cruite which was founded in 1960 with the primary function to revive the Irish harp which had fallen into serious decline. It's been wonderful to witness and be part of the revival of our national instrument over the years. The richness of the ancient harping tradition is now celebrated and the Irish Harp has now been safely returned to its central position in Irish music. The support of the Irish harp makers throughout this time was central to the revival of the vibrant harping tradition.

While the Irish Harp is the national emblem of Ireland the richness of its music, ranging from ancient to contemporary, expresses Irish identity in a unique and authentic artistic manner.

I wholeheartedly and passionately support the application for the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

Le deá ghuí,

Áine Ní Dhubhghaill

Principal Harp Teacher, Royal Irish Academy of Music

To whom it concerns,

I am writing to lend my fullest support for the nomination of the Irish Harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Irish Harp, more than any other symbol or emblem, is the very Identity of the Irish people, representing over a thousand years of Ireland's history. It is therefore essential that the Irish Harp be recognised throughout the World as the official and unmistakable badge of Irish Culture.

Yours faithfully,

  
Eithne Ni Bhraonain  
pka ENYA





**Roinn an Cheoil**  
Department of Music

**Coláiste na nEalaíon, an Léinn Cheiltigh  
agus na nEolaíochtaí Sóisialta**  
College of Arts, Celtic Studies, and  
Social Sciences

Music Building,  
Sunday's Well Road,  
Cork.

T +353 (0)21 490 4530  
E [music@ucc.ie](mailto:music@ucc.ie)  
[www.music.ucc.ie](http://www.music.ucc.ie)

12/3/2018

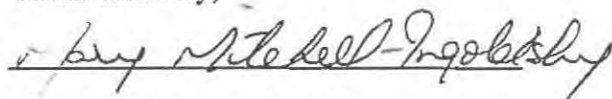
To whom it concerns,

The Irish harp is such an important part of Irish cultural heritage that it is the official emblem of Ireland and so therefore, it appears on all governmental stationery and on the official seal of the President of Ireland. From the middle ages up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century the instrument was extremely important to the Irish people and the harpers skill at playing the instrument was so good, that it was universally recognised and revered throughout Europe. Harpers held a highly respected position in Irish society, especially between 1200 and 1600, after which time the political scene in Ireland changed. The harp first appeared on our coinage in the mid 1500's. The oldest surviving harp in Europe is the Small-Low-Headed Irish harp which dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century and it is housed in Trinity College, Dublin.

As a lecturer in Irish Traditional Music at University College Cork, I feel that the harp and its history is so important in Irish musical story that the first lecture I deliver to my first year music students in the course 'Studies in Irish Traditional Music' MU1021 and to my international students in the course 'Exploring Irish Traditional Music' MU1008 is based on the harp.

The harp holds a special place in the hearts and minds of the Irish people and because of this it is intrinsically linked to our culture. Therefore, I would like to lend my support to *Cruit Éireann* (Harp Ireland) in its bid for the harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely,



Mary Mitchell-Ingoldsby,

Lecturer in Irish Traditional Music

Department of Psychology & Technology.  
Faculty of Film, Art & Creative Technologies.  
Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT).  
Kill Avenue,  
Dun Laoghaire.  
Co. Dublin

Dear Aibhlin,

I would like to support Harp Ireland in their application to UNESCO, to have the harp recognised under intangible cultural heritage.

My daughter Lauren started to play the harp around two years ago and has gained so much pleasure from playing this instrument. On National Harp day she played a pop up concert in a local nursing home and the residents gathered long before she was due to play in response to the opportunity to hear somebody play the harp. Their reaction was fantastic with some singing along with her and others telling her stories of harps in their lives when they were younger. In fact they didn't want her to leave!

On the other hand, every single child who comes into our house is attracted to the harp, my daughter teaches them all a small piece on it. They are thrilled to play it and ask for us to video them and send to their parents. The harp seems to transcend all age groups, and musical tastes.

I think that the harp plays a very significant role in our heritage and it would be wonderful to see that recognized by UNESCO.

Kind regards,  
Dr. Irene Connolly.



Cornstown House,  
Ashbourne,  
Co. Meath  
A84N512

6 March 2018

To whom it may concern,

My name is Fiona Gryson. I am a harp teacher, student and performer of both the Irish lever harp and the concert pedal harp. I wish to support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The harp is the national symbol of Ireland. Ireland is one of very few countries in the world that has an instrument as its national symbol. Some countries have the harp as their national instrument but in Ireland it is more than that; it is our symbol. It is a part of our identity, our culture, traditions, heritage and part of who we are.

The rich history of the harp in Ireland dates back over one thousand years. It has been evolving and changing since it first arrived on the shores. It has not always been an easy road with the harp almost disappearing less than one hundred years ago. It is only thanks to a small group of dedicated people that the tradition of harp playing survived and has been revived. Never has it been more present and popular in the lives of Irish people than it is today but it is still in danger and needs support. It is essential to preserve this ever-growing legacy and ensure the safety and sustainability of the harp in Ireland.

As a harpist, teacher, student, performer it is important to me that we continue to work to pass on and encourage the rich tradition of harp playing and harp making in Ireland. We are a community that is ever-growing and flourishing but we need support. We must continue to encourage young players to explore and grow with their new and exciting ideas, to inspire audiences and enable them to promote our national symbol. Music brings people together and the harp is central to this. The harp has fascinated people and audiences for generations but many do not realise the importance and significance of it in our history and culture. It is imperative that we safeguard our National instrument and ensure that it continues to prosper, evolve and grow into the future.

I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Mise le meas,

Fiona Gryson  
BMus  
[fionagryson@gmail.com](mailto:fionagryson@gmail.com)  
0833651138

28 O'Donnell Gardens  
Glasthule  
Mobile: 086 8267236  
Phone: 01 2801292

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing to express my support for the case for the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Is mise le meas,

Germaine D'Alton



DRAFT

To Whom it Concerns,

The **Irish Chamber Orchestra** wishes to extend its support to the case for the nomination of the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2 the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Irish harp is a national symbol of pride, which is widely recognized as the official emblem of Ireland. This status dates back several centuries with the instrument's history telling much about the history of our country. Less than a dozen Celtic harps survive from the pre-1700 period. The oldest is, the one on which the 'official' national emblem of Ireland is based, the Trinity College Harp. This magnificent 15th century Irish harp can be seen in Trinity College, Dublin.

The harp symbol is deeply rooted in our heritage - a representation of the traditional harp is evident on the Presidential Seal. It appears on many official documents, on passports, on the Leinster flag, the Irish euro coin and as a logo for a number of prominent state-supported organisations such as the National University of Ireland.

The **Irish Chamber Orchestra** regularly engages Irish harpists to perform with the orchestra as our repertoire demands. This is our way of supporting up-and-coming young Irish harpists and providing them with an elite platform for performance. The concert harp enjoys a colourful role in the performance of classical music of all styles. Its versatility allows it to shine as a recitalist, an accompanist, an orchestra member, or a concerto soloist. In Ireland, we promote the harp as a national instrument and take great pride in its teaching – it is a tradition that has traversed the centuries.

The resurgence of interest in harp playing has led to an unprecedented demand for Irish-made harps, which are made, from locally sourced timber, by master-craftsmen. It is critical that we safeguard all aspects of the harp, from its creation, to its playing.

On behalf of the **Irish Chamber Orchestra**, I strongly endorse the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Culture Heritage.

Yours sincerely,

**Gerard Keenan**  
CEO, Irish Chamber Orchestra

11 March 2018

To whom it concerns,

I wish to add my voice to the nomination of the Irish Harp for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The harp occupies the prestigious position of the national emblem of Ireland. Its historic significance is paramount to our journey as a nation and it continues to be critically integral to our identity as Irish people.

For centuries, harping has been a key conduit of cultural expression in Ireland. The harping tradition is being kept alive both in Ireland and way beyond its shores, by leading performers, teachers, makers and organizations, who champion, celebrate and transfer this critical element of our cultural heritage.

Newly formed Cruit Éireann has galvanized harping communities both nationally and internationally by providing a forum for all to come together in the shared purpose of celebrating and promoting the Irish harp and ensuring its sustainability. Recent Cruit Éireann events, such as Lá na Cruite, revealed a huge level of engagement in harp playing and making, by people of all ages the length and breadth of the country. It is vital that this distinctively Irish aspect of our cultural expression is nurtured and sustained.

The time is now right to recognize the critical status of the harp in Ireland and I strongly endorse that it be included on the UNESCO Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely  
Imelda Dervin  
Arts Consultant, Ireland



Lecturer in Composition  
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
100 Renfrew St,  
Glasgow,  
G2 3DB  
United Kingdom

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my support for the Irish Harp to be considered under the UNESCO Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage. As a composer and composition educator, cross genre approaches to musical collaboration are at the forefront of my own work and the sound world of the Irish harp has long been an inspiration, particularly in my own merging of Irish traditional elements with classical and electronic.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linda Buckley', is written over a long, thin horizontal line that spans across the width of the signature area.

Dr. Linda Buckley.

**From:** lorna cushe <[lornacushe@gmail.com](mailto:lornacushe@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** 5 March 2018 at 12:31:56 GMT  
**To:** Aileen Kennedy <[aileenkennedy1@gmail.com](mailto:aileenkennedy1@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** HARP

Dear Aibhlin,

I am writing this email in relation to UNESCO and having the harp recognised under intangible cultural heritage.

The harp is a significant element of the Irish Culture. It's not only an instrument that is enjoyed by all. It is a symbol that is recognised globally. The harp has been played for almost 1000 years proving it's an important part of our heritage and tells the story of how Irish culture has developed and progressed over the past 1000 years.

The harp is an instrument like no other. It's unique sound and music is a joy to listen to which has been evident through it's growing popularity among the musicians of Ireland. Generation after generation, the Harp is becoming more and more popular with more young musicians than ever taking interest in learning the instrument. The current standard of harp playing in Ireland needs to be sustained for the generations to come. It is a beautiful instrument which everyone should be given the opportunity to learn, to listen to but most importantly to enjoy it.

Mag Cushe.

--

Lorna .



Re: Cruit Éireann's application for the Irish harp to receive UNESCO status as an element of intangible cultural heritage.

As Ireland's national emblem, the harp is an instrument which is inextricably linked to Irish identity. The harp is used as a visual representation of Ireland both at home and abroad through our passports, currency and government documentation. As a result, the harp is instantly recognisable as a symbol of Ireland. Due to its strong links with our national identity, the harp tradition is one which should be preserved and safeguarded.

As well as holding an important symbolic value, the harping tradition is a vibrant and living one. The harp continues to bring communities together through organisations such as Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland, Cairde na Cruite, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and the Historical Harp Society. Harpers across the country are involved in classes, performances and festivals on a regular basis.

The harp tradition is of great cultural significance and has the potential to enrich the lives of all those who engage with it. The harp plays an important role in my own local community. In Wicklow a number of young people come together to play the harp in classes, a harp ensemble and a trad orchestra under the auspices of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. The harp provides a means for these young musicians to socialise in a creative environment. Through performances this in turn has an impact on the wider community, enabling them to engage with Ireland's cultural heritage. The harp plays a key role in events in our area including marriages, funerals and community gatherings and the craft of harp making provides employment and a further means of engaging creatively with Ireland's cultural history.

The growth of the harp tradition in Ireland over the past century has been unprecedented. Cairde na Cruite was established in 1960 to promote what was then a tradition very much in decline. In 2005 the harp activity in Ireland was such that Dublin was selected as the venue of the World Harp Congress. The tradition has continued to grow and flourish in the intervening years. The vibrancy of the harp tradition in Ireland was recently showcased through Cruit Éireann's inaugural National Harp Day.

UNESCO status would help in safeguarding the status of the harp in Ireland and in continuing the momentum of this revival, ensuring that as many members of the public as possible can engage with this rich part of Ireland's cultural history.

In conclusion, I believe that the harp is worthy of this status due to its symbolic role as Ireland's national emblem, the rich musical value of the harp tradition, the role which it plays in the cultural life of my local community, particularly in relation to young people, and the impact which this status would have on the future growth of the harp tradition.

Martin Loughman

13 Rathmore Tce

Bray

Co.Wicklow



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of  
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22 February 20918

OILLSCOIL LUIMNIGH  
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### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The story of the harp in Irish tradition spans 1000 years and is even then based on earlier forms of plucked stringed instrument from which the harp itself emerged. Its centrality to Irish identity is demonstrated clearly in the use of the harp as the national emblem of Ireland. The Irish Harp is the carrier of a medieval oral-tradition classical' music which in spite of the ongoing changes of the structures of Irish society has maintained a central place within the musical tradition of this island.

Taking its place alongside other classic plucked stringed instruments globally such as the Koto of Japan, or the Kora of The Gambia, the Irish Harp merits a special designation as requested in this application to UNESCO.

I wish to fully support this application from *Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland*.

Dr Micheál Ó Súilleabháin  
Emeritus Professor of Music  
Founding Director Irish World Academy

From:  
Niamh Dunne  
Portglenone,  
Co.Antrim  
BT44 8BY

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support of the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This is a subject that is important and poignant in terms of celebrating our national identity, heritage and culture. In light of the rich history and cultural significance of the harp in Ireland, it is my opinion that we are obliged to try and ensure it's status going forward as an important and significant part of our identity; both here in Ireland and on a global scale.

I am a professional musician with the band Beoga for 13 years. I have been lucky enough to travel the world representing my country and my traditional music and have seen first hand the power and influence our nation's music can have in promoting Ireland. Beoga recently performed and recorded with Ed Sheeran and I witnessed the impact of Irish music in influencing young people and how we, as a nation, can affect popular culture through our own musical landscape. I feel the recognition of the harp under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage would safe guard it's status and lend itself to doing the important work of passing on this rich tradition, encouraging young players, building up audiences, bringing our community together and enabling young people to promote our national instrument.

I ask that we celebrate and cherish the unique living culture that the harp embodies in Ireland. The harp is our national emblem. This supports the notion that the harp signifies and represents our deep-rooted heritage on a national scale. A recognition of this will lead to securing and further developing it's cultural importance and historical significance as we move forward in today's Ireland.

Thank you

Le meas,



Niamh Dunne





Oriel Arts [www.orielarts.com](http://www.orielarts.com) Ph: 00353870671602

To whom it concerns

**ORIEL ARTS** is an organisation dedicated to promoting Irish traditional music, traditional instruments and folklore, through research, reclamation, renewal, publication and practice in the cross border region of Oriel.

**Oriel Arts**, collectively and unanimously, supports the nomination of the Irish harp to **UNESCO** for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The harp is synonymous with Ireland's national identity – both as a symbol and as an ancient and contemporary instrument. The harp is its national instrument. It is the oldest identifiable instrument in the Irish tradition, which has survived in the unbroken tradition of music in Ireland for over one thousand years.

It is also at the core of the transmitted tradition of music in the Oriel region. **ORIEL ARTS** (see Harp Tradition section on website) actively seeks to transmit the living tradition of folk music, with a special emphasis on the harp – both the early Irish metal strung harp and the Irish harp. This enables us to illuminate through performance, inform through publication and research the unique and essential contribution the harp continues to make to the corpus of Irish traditional music, to Irish cultural life, to the craft of harp making and to the enrichment and well being of community social life.

We urge **UNESCO** to guarantee the preservation and integrity of Ireland's National Instrument.

On behalf of **ORIEL ARTS**, I would like to endorse, in the strongest terms, the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Sincerely yours

Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin

---

Dr Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin BA D.Phil

Director Oriel Arts.

133 Corke Abbey

Bray

Co Wicklow

Aibhlín McCrann

Chair Cruit Éireann

c/o Communiqué International,

26 Herbert Pace

Dublin 2

05/03/2018

Dear Ms McCrann,

I write to you to offer my support to Cruit Éireann's application for the Irish harp to receive UNESCO Status as an element of intangible cultural heritage.

I strongly believe that the Irish harp deserves and would benefit from this UNESCO status.

The publicity that this would give the Irish Harp would encourage more students to take up this beautiful instrument. And more harp makers would result in this.

The harp is truly an unique instrument that is associated with Ireland as it is our national emblem and appears on our currency .

This is an instrument that when played is a pleasure to listen to. It would be lovely to hear and see more harps in action.

Yours sincerely

Pauline Duffy

**From:** Samantha Redmond <[samantha.murray.redmond@gmail.com](mailto:samantha.murray.redmond@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** 5 March 2018 at 19:38:57 GMT  
**To:** [aileenkennedy1@gmail.com](mailto:aileenkennedy1@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Harp recognition UNESCO

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Samantha Redmond <[samantha.murray.redmond@gmail.com](mailto:samantha.murray.redmond@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** 5 March 2018 at 7:25:16 p.m. GMT  
**To:** [aileenkennedy1@gmail.com](mailto:aileenkennedy1@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Harp recognition UNESCO

Dear Aibhlín,

I would like to wholeheartedly lend my support to the move to have the harp, our 'cláirseach', recognised as a vital part of our intangible cultural heritage.

We are the only country with an instrument - the harp - as our national emblem - on our coinage, passports, presidential seal etc ; thus reflecting the invaluable contribution of the harp to our national history and intrinsic identity for over 1000 years.

There is a unique sound and emotive quality to harp music - it's soothing tone and magical quality need to be preserved and revered and to be passed down to future generations.

The current revival in harp playing needs to be further encouraged and this recognition by UNESCO would be a strong move in this direction.

My daughter has been playing harp for over two years now and adores it - she can easily lose herself for hours practicing and it always makes me smile to hear the beautiful tones of the harp fill our home.

We need to nurture this beautiful national treasure going forward so I would again love to see this recognised as the important part of our cultural heritage that it is.

Yours sincerely,

Samantha Redmond  
Carn Roe  
Park Avenue  
Gorey  
Co. Wexford



Hi Aibhlín,

Thank you for your email.

I'm sending a letter to you with my home address.

Yes, I have signed the petition.

Best wishes

Sayaka

I listened to a CD of Irish harp music for the first time when I was a baby.

I stayed in Ireland from 2000 to 2002. I learned basic and overall techniques and especially expressive performances in playing the Irish harp from Kathleen Loughnane in Galway, during this period.

I started teaching the Irish harp in Japan in 2007 and teach about 50 students between 6 and 72 years old now.

Not all the students are Irish traditional music enthusiasts but they enjoy learning and playing Irish tunes on the Irish harp.

2 students have grown up in teacher and they teach playing the Irish harp in their towns now.

The Irish folk song "The Last Rose of Summer" and the Scottish folk songs like "Auld Lang Syne" and "Comin' Thro' the Rye" had been very popular with Japanese people as songs of Ministry of Education for more than 100 years since 1880's.

I sometimes play the Irish music on the Irish harp and talk about Irish music and culture at events held by the Board of Education. Especially older people feel nostalgic when I play a tune of "The Last Rose of Summer".

Irish harp music is living and loved by various generations in Japan.

Sayaka Ikuyama

135-148 Tsukahara,

Yufuin-cho,

Yufu-shi,

Oita-ken 879-5101

Japan

Ballintlea,  
Hollyfort,  
Gorey,  
Co. Wexford.  
5/3/18

Dear Aibhlin,

I wish to support Harp Ireland in their application to have the harp recognised under Intangible Cultural Heritage.

I have two daughters who play the harp. It has a special sound and produces beautiful music when played. I consider myself privileged to be able to listen to its beautiful sound on a daily basis. It is just captivating.

The harp is our National Symbol and has been played for more than 1,000 years all over Ireland. We need to sustain it and save it for future generations.

Yours in support  
Siobh an Browne

**From:** Breda O'Donoghue <[Breda@jacksonstone.net](mailto:Breda@jacksonstone.net)>  
**Date:** 5 March 2018 at 19:39:38 GMT  
**To:** "[aileenkennedy1@gmail.com](mailto:aileenkennedy1@gmail.com)" <[aileenkennedy1@gmail.com](mailto:aileenkennedy1@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Harp email from Siofra O'Donoghue

Siofra O'Donoghue  
The Fairy Lane  
Tomsilla Upper  
Courtown Road  
Gorey  
Co. Wexford  
Eire

Dear Aibhlin,

The Harp is our national emblem and I want it recognised. The Harp means a lot to me because I love music and the history behind the Harp is fascinating. I like playing the Harp because it makes a beautiful sound and I have always wanted to play the Harp. The reason I would like it to be recognised is that Harp makers and wood workers spend so much time to make these beautiful instruments that we must embrace them so that the Harp will live on for many years to come.

Kind Regards,  
Siofra O'Donoghue  
Age 10



**From:** Siobhan Kavanagh <[kavanaghblackstick@eircom.net](mailto:kavanaghblackstick@eircom.net)>

**Date:** 5 March 2018 at 19:10:24 GMT

**To:** [aileenkennedy1@gmail.com](mailto:aileenkennedy1@gmail.com)

Dear Aibhlinn

The harp is regarded as our national symbol. It represents all that is good about our country past and present. My 15 daughter has been playing harp since she was 8 under the wonderful direction of Aileen Kennedy . As a family we have all begun to appreciate the wonder of its beautiful sound. We have used it in the past to lull her younger brother to sleep. When people hear it played they are compelled to stop and listen and it transports them to a place of calm. The harp is our past and future and it needs to be recognised.

The kavanagh family  
Blackstick lane  
Courteencurragh  
Gorey  
Wexford

The Laois Arts Office, Laois County Council, Potlaoise, Co Laois.

E: [mnichona@laoiscoco.ie](mailto:mnichona@laoiscoco.ie)<<mailto:mnichona@laoiscoco.ie>>

Telephone: 057-8664033 087-2257512

3rd March 2018.

A Chara,

I wish to pledge my support towards getting the harp in Ireland considered for ratification under UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The harp represents Ireland and is to be found on the official documents of the country, as well as on our coins. Having it recognised by UNESCO would ensure a stronger positioning of the national instrument and could support a greater interest in harp tuition and the crafting of harps.

I was very fortunate to have received tuition in the harp as a young girl from one of the finest harp teachers, Nancy Calthorpe (RIP) in the 1980's. I brought my passion for music into my professional career as Arts Officer in Co Laois and established the Laois School of Music in 2001 under the Council's arts programme. I assisted with the establishment of Music Generation Laois in 2011. The Harp and Uilleann Pipes were centrally placed as key initiatives of the Music Generation Laois programme. Since the establishment of the Music Generation programme, the level of interest in learning the Irish harp has been phenomenal. The numbers of young people availing of harp tuition exceeds 120. We are very fortunate to have a dedicated and passionate teacher, Siobhán Buckley, leading out on the programme under the direction of Rosa Flannery the Music Generation Laois Coordinator.

Music Generation Laois have commissioned a number of musicians/composers to write music compositions specifically for the student harper members of the Harp Ensemble groups, namely, Caitriona Mc Kay and Michael Rooney. Other compositions we have commissioned by Elaine Agnew and Martin Tourish, involve the harp as a key instrument within the Laois School of Music orchestra and Music Generation traditional orchestra. We run an annual Tionól, which is a residential weekend, focussing on tuition in Harp and Uilleann Pipes and attracting students from all over Ireland.

This is just a sample of what happens, in a seven year period, in one county, when a decision is made to place the harp at the centre of a music education programme for young people and children.

I wish Cruit Eireann every success in their pursuit of the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Is mise le meas,

Muireann Ní Chonail

Arts Officer

26 Oakley Road,

Ranelagh,

Dublin 6

D06CK66

A Chara,

I am a professional harpist and teacher. As a young child I started to play the harp in the 1970's and I was fortunate to have wonderful teachers in Dublin one of whom was a founding member of Cairde na Cruite which was founded in 1960 with the primary function to revive the Irish harp which had fallen into serious decline. It's been wonderful to witness and be part of the revival of our national instrument over the years. The richness of the ancient harping tradition is now celebrated and the Irish Harp has now been safely returned to its central position in Irish music. The support of the Irish harp makers throughout this time was central to the revival of the vibrant harping tradition.

While the Irish Harp is the national emblem of Ireland the richness of its music, ranging from ancient to contemporary, expresses Irish identity in a unique and authentic artistic manner.

I wholeheartedly and passionately support the application for the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

Le deá ghuí,

Áine Ní Dhubhghaill

Principal Harp Teacher, Royal Irish Academy of Music



05 March 2018  
Aibhlín McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Éireann / Harp Ireland  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2  
Ireland

Dear Aibhlín McCrann,

I am writing in support of the nomination of the Irish Harp for UNESCO'S inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

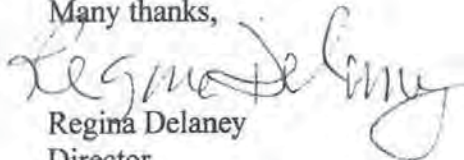
My name is Regina Delaney and I am the founder and director of The New England Irish Harp Orchestra. I have studied the Irish Harp here in the United States with Aíne Minogue and in Ireland with so many of the best Irish Harpers. When I teach about the harp here in the United States, I always mention that it is the National Symbol of Ireland and how it was almost destroyed centuries ago. But the national love of the harp has not only protected it but has now caused resurgence in harp playing throughout the country.

The harp has marked the passage of time for one thousand years in Ireland and has told its' history through the music played on it. You can hear the battles of wars, the victories and defeats, the love of country and place – all in the various musical styles played on the Irish harp.

There is a long tradition of Harping being passed down from one generation to the next and that must continue. It is part of the soul of the Irish country. We must make every effort to engage the young and have them become part of this larger tapestry of Irish Culture.

I whole-heartedly endorse the application for the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. This will help insure the continuation of the over one thousand year tradition of Irish Harping.

Many thanks,



Regina Delaney  
Director  
The New England Irish Harp Orchestra  
28 Park St.  
Exeter, NH 03833 USA  
regina@reginadelaney.com  
603.502.7698

To whom it concerns,

I have played the harp for the last five years. I attend harp lessons once a week. I attend the Harp Ensemble on Saturdays.

I love the distinctive sound of the harp and the wide range of notes it has. I have made a lot of friends through my Harp music.

During the Summer I go busking with my friends. People stop and listen and are very interested in the harp. They take photos and ask questions about it. It's a uniquely Irish instrument and I am very proud of its heritage. My mother plays the harp also and sometimes we play together at home in the kitchen. My sister plays the concertina.

Yours sincerely,

Luther Kelly.

To Whom It May Concern:

The harp has been played in Ireland for over a thousand years. Traditionally, from the time of Giraldus Cambrensis to the close of the eighteenth century, the Irish harp was strung with copper alloy wire and plucked with the fingernails. Another distinctive feature of the instrument was its soundbox, typically carved out of a single block of willow. Irish harpers were held in high esteem and renowned for their skills throughout Europe.

Although this tradition is no longer extant, its influence is still felt in Irish society and music today. Harps of all types continue to be played in Ireland, including metal-strung harps. The Irish harp now embraces of a rich diversity of styles. Approaches to the instrument vary from those honouring the legacy of the old harpers to more contemporary genres including modern Jazz, Irish traditional dance music and classical.

As a maker and player of the Irish harp in its historical form, and having researched the instrument extensively for over three decades, I am happy to support the case put forward by Cruit Eireann for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Paul Dooley

07/03/2018



05/03/2018

**As a harpist of many years I fully support Harp Ireland in their bid to have the Harp recognised by UNESCO. I have travelled most countries throughout the world playing the Harp. It is a widely recognised and welcomed instrument. It is also the national emblem of Ireland. I know that currently Harpists of my generation work tirelessly to educate young harpists especially in the format of workshops throughout the country. Safeguarding and creating awareness for future generations is of vital importance to us. The Harp is associated with Ireland. It is a beautiful and highly specialised instrument. I would love to see the Harp achieve the recognition it deserves.**

**I wish Harp Ireland every success with their application**



**Noreen O'Donoghue  
71 Roselawn Road  
Castleknock  
Dublin 15**

'd The Gre  
Clonattin Vill  
Corey,  
Co. Wexford

Dear Aibhlin,

I love playing the harp. It's my favourite instrument to play. I have been playing harp since I was 6. That was 5 years ago! The harp makes me feel so happy. I love learning new tunes, going to competitions and going to lessons. I think it's important that my generation keeps the harp alive because the harp is thousands of years old and it's Ireland's symbolic instrument. I think harps have changed massively over the years. I much prefer my harp than Brian Boru's! I hope I'm still playing harp until the day I die and I hope the next generation carries on the tradition.

Yours sincerely,  
Niamh  
Byrne



Portroyal,  
Partry,  
Claremorris,  
Co. Mayo.  
23/2/18.

To Whom it may concern,

I would like to apply for international recognition for the Irish harp through the granting of UNESCO status as an item of 'Intangible cultural heritage.'

The harp is our national symbol and has been played for more than 1000 years throughout Ireland. The harp has a unique and special sound.

I enjoy playing the harp because its different, has a beautiful sound and has an amazing history. It has definitely enhanced my social life and the amount of friendships I've made from playing is incredible, and these friends I've made, are friends for life.

It is vitally important to sustain it for future generations.

The harp means a lot to me because from playing it, my confidence has grown so much. It is such a beautiful instrument and Ireland is lucky to have it as our national symbol.

Yours sincerely,

Molly Granahan.



24/2/17

To whom it may concern,

I think the harp is important for the future because it is our country's national symbol and has been played here for over 1,000 years. We all meet new people and make new friends from going to loads of different events. Each tune we learn has a different story behind it. The harp is important for the future because it keeps our country's history and tradition alive.

Mia Walsh

Malroc House, South Mall,  
Westport, Co. Mayo

5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

To whom it may Concern,

We at Music Generation Louth (MGL) are committed to the development of harp playing in the county. Our Junior and Senior Harp Ensembles provide a social environment for their members. The majority learn with MGL or CCÉ Craobh Dhún Dealgan and with the ensemble, they come together to explore various genres. We have engaged with other Music Generation Programmes and Cairde na Cruite to consolidate the community of harping practice regionally and nationally.

This is our national instrument, it is also depicted on our coinage, government documentation and national and provincial logos in the sporting and commercial world. The harp and its heritage should be protected and enjoyed and we fully support Harp Ireland in its endeavour to do so.

Yours Sincerely

  
Gemma Murray  
Co-ordinator, Music Generation Louth

Music Generation Louth LMETB Clapel St Dundalk 042 9334047/042 9364635 musicgeneration@lmetb.ie www.musicgenerationlouth.ie



UNIVERSITY  
of  
LIMERICK

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH

OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH  
UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

7 March 2018

To Whom It Concerns

I write to support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. I welcome the opportunity to join with Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland and members of the Irish and global communities of harp players who work to promote the Irish harp, secure its sustainability and advocate for its unique status.

Our national symbol, the harp derives its potency from its important historical and contemporary roles at the heart of Irish musical culture. Today, the instrument occupies a more significant place than ever in Irish artistic life; music, both old and new, from the traditional to the experimental, can be heard and performed on a wide range of harp types, including the early wire-strung harps, concert harp and neo-Irish harp.

As an Irish traditional musician for nearly 50 years, I have had the privilege of performing with many Irish harpers, and as a professional music educator for the last 30 years; I have been committed to supporting the transmission of the rich and distinctive tradition of Irish harp playing. Just as the sonorities of the Irish harp have been a constant resonating presence in the soundscape of my life, harp music sounds in the memory spaces of millions of Irish people at home and abroad.

It is vital that we safeguard the harp's past and its future. For this reason, I pledge my ardent support for the nomination of the Irish harp for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Sincerely,

.....  
Professor Mel Mercier  
Chair of Performing Arts  
Irish World Academy of Music and Dance  
University of Limerick  
Ireland



4<sup>th</sup> March '18


Dear Aibhlin,

Recently it has come to my attention that Harp Ireland is applying to UNESCO to have the harp recognised under intangible cultural heritage and personally I think this would be fantastic!

As a mother of a teenage girl who began playing the harp many years ago I have been brought into the amazing world of harping! It has become evident to me that the harp plays an important role in Irish music today. Fleadh's, concerts, school shows today are full of talented musicians playing the harp! It is clear the harp is enjoyed equally by those who listen and those who play.

The harp has played an important role in Irish history and is recognised today as our National symbol. Great harpists such as Turlough O'Carolan are being studied in schools today and this speaks volume to the impact the harp has made today. I truly hope the harp continues to grow in our musical nature as it plays a big role in my life, my family's life and in my community.

Yours sincerely

Solhan M. 

- member of the public /  
mother of a harper.

5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Dear Aibhlin

I'm writing today in the hope that soon the harp will be recognised under intangible cultural heritage.

It is without a doubt that the harp has, and currently does, play a vital role in the life of musicians. It is our National Symbol and has been played by musicians for thousands of years throughout Ireland. Its special sound is one which has been enjoyed by listeners for years and continues to be enjoyed in music today whether it be solo or in groups such as grapa ceols. As a person who has been playing music since primary school the harp is of great importance to me, playing it provides me with enjoyment and offers relief from daily pressures such as school and exams.

We as a musical country need to sustain the harp so it can be played and enjoyed by our kids, grandkids and future generations. It has offered me many great opportunities playing in ensembles, school shows, exam practices, busking, fleadh and much more and I hope the generations to come get the same opportunities I got as a result of my harp.

Mise le meas

Kate Millar - harp player.



**From:** Breda O'Donoghue <[Breda@jacksonstone.net](mailto:Breda@jacksonstone.net)>  
**Date:** 5 March 2018 at 19:41:43 GMT  
**To:** "[aileenkennedy1@gmail.com](mailto:aileenkennedy1@gmail.com)" <[aileenkennedy1@gmail.com](mailto:aileenkennedy1@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Harp

Breda O'Donoghue  
The Fairy Lane  
Tomsilla Upper  
Courtown Road  
Gorey  
Co. Wexford  
Eire

Dear Aibhlin,

The Harp is our national emblem. National identity is such an important cause to support.  
The legacy of our national symbol needs to be protected.

I have attached a picture of our youngest daughter Siofra with her much loved Harp. In our modern times when children are asking Santa for iPads and Computers our daughter instead asked for her very own Harp, that's how much the harp means to us and her.

Kind Regards,  
Breda



Sráid Eoin,  
Daingean Uí Chúis,  
Co. Chiarraí,  
28ú Feabhra 2018.

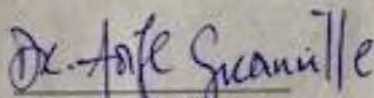
To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in full support of the nomination of Cláirseach na hÉireann, the Irish harp, to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is imperative that the harp tradition of Ireland is preserved and also that it receive the full support of organisations such as UNESCO in order to achieve this.

The harp and harpist have always held significant status in Ireland. For centuries, the harp has served as Ireland's national emblem and it is one of our most significant national symbols. The harp has been a source of great pride over centuries and has instilled a tremendous sense of loyalty and nationalism amongst generations of Irish people through to today. Scholars and historians often say that to tell the history of the harp is to tell the history of Ireland and this is very true. There is no other instrument and musical tradition in Ireland, in my opinion, that deserves this status more than the harp.

On behalf of myself, as a performer and researcher, and the Department of Folklore, UCC and Sacred Heart University (Ireland Campus), I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Tacaim go láidir leis an feachtas seo.

Le meas,



Dr. Aoife Granville  
B.A., B.Mus., PhD.

Performer, Lecturer & Researcher,  
Department of Folklore/Béaloideas (University College Cork)  
Sacred Heart University (Ireland Campus)

Tel: +353868560562  
Email: [aoifegraville@gmail.com](mailto:aoifegraville@gmail.com)

Coolnaveagh,

Gorey,

Co. Wexford.

06/03/2018

Dear Aibhlín,

I am writing to you as Director of Cruitirí Loch Garman-Wexford Harp Ensemble to support your quest to gain UNESCO intangible cultural heritage recognition for the Irish Harp. As a harp player and teacher, I can recognise the huge importance of the instrument to our heritage, our culture and to who we are as a people. The mere image of the harp in any country of the world brings our thoughts to Ireland and everything Irish.

The harp has been part of our culture and heritage for over a thousand years and it finds a way into our history books for all types of gatherings and settings. Harp music comes from the courts of the gentry to the sorrowful music of war and loss.

One of my pupils summed up the importance of the Irish harp for me when she gave me a beach art creation which read "Harp is not something I do, it is who I am."

I look forward to our National Emblem joining the UNESCO ranks for intangible cultural heritage.

Yours in harp,

Aileen Kennedy

# William Jackson

Scottish Harp. Composer. Music Therapist

Knockrickard. Claremorris. Mayo. Ireland

wjharp@earthlink.net www.wjharp.com 087 905 4571

To whom it may concern.

It is generally accepted that when most people think of the Harp, regardless of where they live in the world, they think of Ireland.

Although coincidentally the harp is the national instrument of Paraguay, there are probably only these two countries in the world that have a musical instrument associated with them at a national level.

Although Scotland has a strong association with the Highland bagpipe, it is not officially the national instrument. Both harp and bagpipe are found in various forms throughout the world, but only Ireland has the widely recognised association with this ancient instrument, The Gaelic Harp.

From as early as the the 13th century the Harp was associated with the arms of the King of Ireland, this was followed by its adoption by King Henry VIII in 1541 when the harp was integrated into a unified royal coat of arms.

The Harp is depicted on many objects of Irish daily life, such as currency, passports, flags and coats of arms. Ireland is the only country than honours a musical instrument in such a way, and the Harp honours Ireland in return. Its associations with Ireland's history and culture are well known.

Among the family of musical instruments the Harp is unique in its ability to soothe and stir, heal and hearten.

The Harp has a unique structure and appearance and stands out among other instruments. It is probably the only musical instrument through which the player can see the audience as they perform. A musical window to another world and a Celtic portal through which the world may see and hear Ireland's true soul.

For these reasons I strongly endorse the application for the harp to receive UNESCO status as an element of intangible cultural heritage.

William Jackson

5/4/18







01/03/2018

Dear Aibhlin

Just a short note to tell you about how much the Harp has played a vital part in my daughters life –

Kate was introduced to the harp at a young age and has always had an interest. At the age of 12 now she plays in a harp ensemble which was setup and run by her very talented music teacher Aileen Kennedy. By playing the harp in this ensemble of over 30 harpists in the South East of Ireland Kate has had the opportunity to play in places which she would never had played before and met people she would never had met through her love of the instrument.

The harp is such a beautiful and wonderful instrument and is very much so an important symbol for Ireland over the past 1000+ years. It is so so so important to have it now in our culture and for future generations to come. I know that you can understand how important that this is for our country and heres to the next 1000 years of hearing this beautiful music !!!!

Thank you for reading my letter.

Fiona McDonald

# harpcolumn

PO Box 441 • Zeeland MI 49464  
ph 215-564-3232 • info@harpcolumn.com • www.harpcolumn.com

March 2, 2018

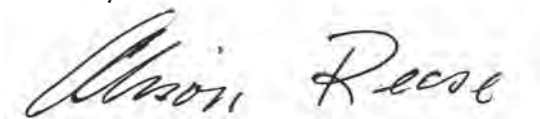
To Whom It May Concern:

The harp is the national symbol of Ireland and has been so for centuries. We modern day harpists owe a debt of gratitude to Ireland for keeping alive its musical and cultural heritage that is associated with the harp, which is now played worldwide. We at *Harp Column* are in full support of Cruit Éireann's efforts to have UNESCO recognize the Irish harp as part of its own mission to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage of humanity.

*Harp Column* magazine is a bi-monthly print publication serving the worldwide harp community. Since 1993 we have been providing practical news for practical harpists. Our magazine recognizes the importance of the arts and music to bring communities together and we focus on the harp in its many permutations. The Irish harp serves as a great musical ambassador for the culture of Ireland and the number of artists who play it continues to grow and have enormous influence far beyond that tiny island. They play the old, ancient harp repertoire as well as all the modern genres of music. The Irish harp is alive and well.

We endorse the recognition of the Irish harp in UNESCO's upcoming deliberations and we wish you success in your efforts.

Sincerely,



Alison Reese  
Editor, *Harp Column*

---

hc

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Nancy Hurrell  
www.hurrellharp.com

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hurrellharp@aol.com ♦ 82 Parkside Avenue ♦ Braintree, MA 02184, USA ♦ Tel 781.848.3393

Cruit Éireann Harp Ireland  
UNESCO Letter of support

March 1, 2018

Dear Committee:

I am a harp historian and a harp consultant at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. I'm writing in support of the application submitted by Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland, in the case for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Irish harp is unique among Irish instruments for its dual roles of playable instrument and national symbol. From early times, Ireland's harp was renowned in Europe for its unusual form, decoration, sound and repertoire. Although the organology of the Irish harp changed around 1800 (from a wire-strung Gaelic harp to a gut-strung portable harp), the instrument continued to have a revered place in society owing to its visual and aural distinctiveness and its elevated position as Ireland's emblem.

My area of expertise focusses on the harps of early nineteenth century Dublin maker, John Egan (fl.1797-1829), whose 'Portable Irish Harp' became the prototype for the modern Irish harp. Studying historical instruments and the people who played them, the early 1800s harps were central in the music-making of the time and the transmission of Irish harp repertoire. Played in Ireland's Great Houses and also abroad, harp performances in drawing rooms in London and on the Continent introduced Ireland's musical culture to a wider audience. Egan's Irish harp was adorned with patriotic shamrocks painted in gold on a green ground, and the model became so desirable, it was copied a century later by subsequent harp makers in England and America. The Irish diaspora abroad was eager to embrace the small green Irish harps for their symbolic associations and bright sound. These iconic instruments provided a meaningful connection to the homeland via a soundscape of familiar melodies and songs. An elite instrument in former centuries, in the twentieth century the small portable Irish harp became more widely accessible to players worldwide. It remains a vehicle for transmitting Irish music, and the small harp's portability makes it a suitable instrument for taking to gatherings of harps and other instruments where players connect through the music.

The antique Irish harps of John Egan, treasured as valuable historical objects, are now held in forty museums in sixteen different countries worldwide. The tangible historic Irish harps in museums universally elicit intangible responses of appreciation for their place in Ireland's heritage. An historic Irish harp connects people to the past, to roots and ancestors, and the fine painted decoration on the harps conveys craftsmanship and period style. The symbolic harp continues to be a prominent image used in promoting Irish culture. In 2014 an Egan Irish harp was featured on a commemorative Irish stamp in the European post offices 'National Musical Instruments' series, and similarly, an Irish harp was selected as the promotional logo for Art Institute of Chicago's major exhibition, *IRELAND: Crossroads of Art and Design, 1690-1840* in 2015. The Irish harp is a living expression of a longstanding inherited musical tradition, and the official recognition of the instrument will help safeguard Ireland's harp for future generations.

Sincerely,



Nancy Hurrell  
www.Hurrellharp.com



25 Segrave The Links Portmarnock Co. Dublin

1 March 2018

Ms Aibhlin McCrann  
Chair, Cruit Eireann  
c/o Communique International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2

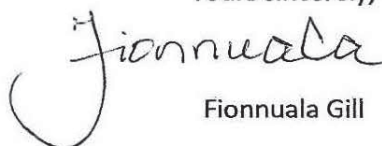
Dear Ms McCrann,

I write to support the application by Cruit Eireann / Harp Ireland, for the formal recognition by UNESCO of the harp as an element of intangible cultural heritage.

It is difficult to imagine any musical instrument, other than the harp, which is so emblematic of a nation. It is equally difficult to complete a comprehensive list of the uses to which the symbol of the harp has been put in Ireland - it appears on the personal flag of the President of Ireland; it is also used on the British royal arms, one quartering of which is a harp; it appeared on the first coinage of the Irish Free State and is still used on Euro coinage; it appears as the formal symbol of all documentation of the Irish state. The harp design has been widely used for commercial and cultural purposes, e.g. the association of the harp with Guinness, and its adaption for Ryanair. Its skilful use by your own organisation is also noted.

As a professional musician who has performed all over the world with an Irish harp, I also know the profound impact this wonderful instrument has on all those who are mesmerised by its beauty. The harp is such an iconic part of our heritage and culture that I have no doubt it fulfils abundantly all the criteria required by UNESCO for formal recognition.

Yours sincerely,

  
Fionnuala Gill





279 Maple St, bsmt level  
Brooklyn NY 11225  
[www.maevegilchristmusic.com](http://www.maevegilchristmusic.com)  
03.06.18

To whom it concerns,

I'm writing in the most heartfelt support of Cruit Eireann/Harp Ireland's application to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

My life has been shaped by the Irish harp since before I can remember, growing up listening to the playing of my aunt, the great harpist Kathleen Loughnane. I, like so many, was drawn to the intangible mystery of the sound and moved by the deep rooted music that I heard. Since then, I've made my own living as a harpist, performing on both sides of the atlantic and I'm truly grateful for the opportunities and experiences the harp has brought me including my contact with the Cruit Eireann and the wonderful opportunities I've had to teach and perform there.

The Irish harp, the globally recognized symbol of Ireland is a direct link both to the history of the country and to so many other musical traditions over the globe. It stands at once alone and unique in it's essence of Irish-ness while also being a great connector between musical traditions across the globe that have had their own harp-like instrument through the ages .

It's currently a thrilling time for the harp in Ireland as droves of young people are being called to learn, continuing the legacy of the instrument in a traditional setting while pushing the boundaries of its musical capabilities and utilizing it in all kinds of way that breath new life into it's strings. I believe, that with the right support and recognition, the possibilities for the instrument are endless and it will serve the country as an instantly recognizable ambassador of Irish culture and the world as a beacon of peace and joy. Whether in a mystical setting, a school workshop, a therapeutic music program, a concert or simply in the hands of one who cares, the harp has provided healing and joy for centuries and it's time that it got the support and recognition that it deserves.

I'd be happy to provide any supplementary materials or answer any further questions you may have.

Very best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maeve Gilchrist', written in a cursive style.

Maeve Gilchrist



Sráid Eoin,  
Daingean Uí Chúis,  
Co. Chiarraí.

A chara,

On behalf of Dingle Tradfest and CCE Craobh an Aghasaigh, Daingean Uí Chúis I wish to fully support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. We are acutely conscious of the necessity to preserve our harp tradition.

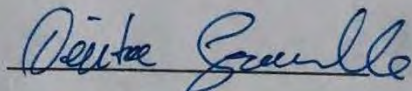
Culture and creativity enhance civilisations where they exist, and have been central to our national development. As Ireland's national symbol, the Irish Harp is undoubtedly the most recognisable image associated with our nation. It has inspired loyalty and pride over many hundreds, indeed thousands, of years. This symbol of the people is most appropriate to our small nation because it is one of creativity, culture and music. Dublin City, home to the 14<sup>th</sup> century Brian Boru Harp, housed in Trinity College Dublin, has had a long association with the harp. The National Museum of Ireland safeguards a priceless collection of 17<sup>th</sup> century harps, which unfortunately is in storage through lack of resources. It is critical that these vestiges of our harp tradition are safeguarded and that the harp continues to evolve with the changing times.

We wish to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Guímid gach ráth ar Harp Ireland agus an tairiscint i leith do UNESCO.

Le dea-ghuí

Deirdre Granville, BA, BMUS, PGDE, PDME, MA; Cruitire, Cahaoirleach Dingle Tradfest & CCE Craobh an Ághasaigh.



24 FEABHRA 2018

I wish to support the application of Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland to be considered under UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland is a collective of harp players from all over Ireland, working together to promote our national instrument, gain recognition for its unique status and secure its sustainability.

The Harp is intrinsic to our Irish identity and to our sense of ourselves.

Recognition of this from UNESCO would be most welcome, and would help to further its status and cultural importance in Ireland and worldwide.

i fully endorse this application.

Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaoich

Ms Seosaimhín Ní Bheaglaoich, traditional singer. Adjunct Professor of Amhránaíocht  
DIT, Conservatory of Music.



# NORTH TEXAS IRISH FESTIVAL

Southwest  
Celtic  
Music  
Association

7324 Gaston Ave.

#124-382

Dallas, TX 75214

March 6, 2018

Aibhlin McCrann

Chair, Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland

Dear Aibhlin,

I am writing to add my full support of the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The harp, as Ireland's national symbol, is immediately recognizable as Ireland; the two are inextricably linked. It is essential as a part of Ireland's identity.

For well over 1000 years, the harp is woven throughout Irish history and culture. I can't imagine Irish music without the harp. It is critical that the harp be recognized as the icon that it is to preserve its legacy and ensure its sustainability. That unique sound created by plucked strings in talented hands is unmistakable, and completely captivating.

As a presenter and promoter of Irish music with a mission statement mandating the preservation of Irish music, dance and culture, this application has my strongest endorsement. We are blessed in this area to have an internationally known Irish music festival and the equally well-known O'Flaherty's Irish Music Retreat, where young players of all levels have the chance to work and study with some of Ireland's master musicians. We are growing the next generation of top musicians steeped in a love of Ireland's music, culture and traditions. I have been lucky enough to present Ireland's most revered harpists on the stages of NTIF, people such as Máire Ní Chathasaigh, Moya Brennan, and Cormac de Barra, to mention only a few. We are doing our best to pass on this incredibly rich tradition to our young people, bring this community together, encourage the younger players, and build up their audiences in order to promote this national treasure of an instrument.

The passage of this nomination is critical to safeguarding Ireland's national symbol and ensuring that the harp retains its place as the face of Irish music and that the tradition lives on.

Sincerely,



Sheri Bush

President

Southwest Celtic Music Association

Entertainment Director

North Texas Irish Festival





Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge

Cruit Éireann  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2.

RE: Consideration of the Irish harp for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Síle Denvir and I am a lecturer in Dublin City University. I am also a harpist and a traditional 'sean-nós' singer and I am an active performer. Having played and studied the Irish harp as a practitioner and as an academic for many years I strongly believe that the Irish harp should be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Irish harp underpins the musical history of Ireland and its role in music making in this country can be traced over the centuries. The harp has played a central role in our cultural heritage for over a 1000 years and it is essential to preserve its legacy and ensure its sustainability. As a lecturer of the Irish language and of Irish music I encourage third level university students to take an interest in the history of the harp. As a teacher of the instrument I try and encourage young and interested potential harpists to hone their musical skills on the instrument. As an active performer I engage with various audiences and do my best to promote the instrument. Having UNESCO status for the Irish harp would support the work that the harp community do on an ongoing basis to safeguard and enrich the cultural heritage of Ireland.

I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Is mise, le meas,

Dr. Síle Denvir



THE HISTORICAL HARP  
SOCIETY OF IRELAND  
Cumann Cláirsí Stairiúla na hÉireann

05 March 2018

To whom it may concern,

The Historical Harp Society of Ireland supports the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The early Irish harp was played in Ireland for at least 800 years and possibly more than 1000 years and, as such, the harp has defined Ireland and the prominence of place that our music has occupied here for the best part of a millennium, not least as our national emblem.

An inscription on the UNESCO Representatives List of Intangible Cultural Heritage would help resource organisations such as our own with our mission to preserve the legacy of the instrument and would help us substantially to ensure its sustainability going forward, building player and audience numbers.

Indigenous culture is threatened ever more in the 21st century with stressors working against the preservation of intrinsic, fragile, intangible culture such as that of Irish harping.

I therefore strongly endorse the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

Le dea-ghuí –

---

Siobhán Armstrong  
Founding Director

33 Altamont Park, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny, Ireland  
info@irishharp.org +353 (0) 86 8623430 www.irishharp.org

The Historical Harp Society of Ireland is kindly supported by *An Comhairle Ealaíon* (The Arts Council of Ireland), Music Network and the Dept of Arts, Heritage and the *Gaeltacht*, Kilkenny County Council, and by our Associate members.



Ms Justice Mary Irvine

9<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

Re: The Cultural Heritage of the Irish Harp.


Dear Sirs,

As is perhaps obvious from this letter, the Irish Harp is used as the emblem by the Irish Courts Service on all of its official documentation.

The Irish Harp appears on the cover of the Irish Constitution 1937 and on all legislation published by the Irish parliament (the Oireachtas). Might I suggest that the fact that this is so demonstrates that the Irish Harp is seen as something which is uniquely representative of Irish culture and heritage?

I write this letter of support in my personal capacity.

Yours sincerely,

  
Mary Irvine.





PARLAIMINT NA hEORPA

Feisire de Pharlaimint na hEorpa

**Liadh Ní Riada MEP**  
**6 Cé Phádraig,**  
**Corcaigh**  
**T23 F88F**

6ú Márta 2018

**RE: Support for the inclusion of the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage**

A chairde,

I write to you on behalf of the Cruit Éireann / Harp Ireland, in support of their nomination of the Irish Harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Within Ireland, the harp is a national symbol. It is a part of our cultural identity and is a symbol which is synonymous with Ireland around the world. The symbol of the Irish harp has over 800 years of history and culture associated with it. It is essential that this legacy is preserved and protected.

As an MEP for Ireland South within the European Parliament, and a member of the Committee on Culture and Education, I understand the importance of passing on the rich cultural tradition associated with the Irish Harp.

Sustainability of this legacy is essential and will encourage younger players to continue their learning and promote our national instrument. This designation will also assist in building up Irish harp audiences once more, which in turn brings communities together to celebrate a symbol of their culture and heritage. It is critical that the Irish harp is given all possible safeguards and designation to encourage the making of Irish harps, and support its sustainability going forward.

As the Sinn Féin MEP for Ireland South, I wish to fully endorse the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Le gach dea-ghuíf,

**Liadh Ní Riada MEP Ireland South**

# Lisa Dunn



1129 Mabry Hood Road  
Knoxville, TN 37932  
865-966-2357  
lisaddunn@outlook.com

March 9, 2018

Aibhlin McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Eireann / Harp Ireland  
c/o Communique  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2  
Ireland

Dear Aibhlin McCrann,

My name is Lisa Dunn and I live in Knoxville, Tennessee in the United States. I completed my Master's degree in Music from the University of Tennessee. I currently serve as an adjunct professor at the Pellissippi State Community College and provide private piano instruction. I have developed a passion for the harp and the music of Ireland. I have been playing the harp for over 5 years and study with 2 harp instructors. For several years and currently, I have had the privilege to study Harp with Maire Ni Chathasaigh.

The purpose of this introduction is to communicate my support of the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It has always seemed to me that the Harp is Ireland's national symbol - part of its identity. The harp has a 1000-year-old history and it is essential to preserve its legacy and ensure its sustainability. As a harpist, professor and lover of the Irish tradition, I appreciate the importance of passing on this rich tradition, encouraging young players, and attracting audiences.

I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Dunn". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid and personal.

Lisa Dunn



30 Twin Oaks,  
Clonattin,  
Gorey,  
Co. Wexford.

0876613211

Dear Aibhlinn,

I strongly wish to support Cruite Eireann/Harp Ireland in requesting UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage that they consider the Irish Harp Instrument needs to be recognised and protected for future Irish generations.

Everybody is aware the Harp is our National symbol. The Irish Government incorporate the Harp symbol in Government business from signage on their buildings, to the logo on their envelopes!  
Similarly the company DIAGEO use it as part of the Guinness brand - which everyone recognises all over the world for being linked to Ireland. The Harp has a very distinct identity.

For over 1000 years the harp has been played in Ireland. What other instrument can come close to that?? It is a major living form of our heritage that we need to recognise and protect its soulful music.

The sound of the harp is so unique it gives any audience a captivating experience. For the person who gets the opportunity to learn/play/teach the instrument they immediately fall in love with this precious instrument and sound. Personally I can speak from experience I have a son and daughter who play the harp. They are so fortunate to have Ms Aileen Kennedy as their teacher. Aileen's experience, enthusiasm, devotion, dedication and absolute love of not alone teaching the harp, but the history of the harp and the creation of the instrument has certainly encouraged and created a continuing love of harp playing within our community and for our next generation. Teachers like Aileen are vital in sustaining the future music of this sacred Instrument.

Last year we purchased a harp. We waited a year for it to be made. Our family feel it is one of the most treasured items (besides our children!) we have in our home. We believe that it will be an heirloom to pass on to future generations. Foreign friends when visiting are amazed that an instrument such as the Harp can sound so mystically beautiful. Most importantly it has been played for so many years that's its uniqueness continues to stound people.

On the 22 September 17, during Irish Cultural week a group (approx 30) Harpists played in the old Selskar Abbey Medieval Ruins in Wexford. It was a mesmerising experience & show cased Harpists of all different ages. Sadly Selskar is falling down, it proves we can never recreate that part of history to its own original form it will be lost only to history books. Whereas, I believe if we can protect our traditional Harp instrument, its history, its life will continue to remain alive as a unique part of Irish music and cultural for future generations.

Please help to ensure our Children, our Communities, our Country will never lose its original true identity, the fantastic Harp instrument as a major part of Irish Cultural life.

Go raibh Mile Maith Agat,



Margaret McQuillan

5/3/18



Mary Black  
2018  
1 Westfield Road  
Harolds Cross  
Dublin 6w

March 8th

To whom it concerns,

As a professional singer and director on the board of RAAP in Ireland (Recorded artists, actors and performers) I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application of the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the Unesco Convention for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The harp is Ireland's national symbol, part of our identity for over 1,000 years.

The harp is also an intrinsic part of the Irish tradition and culture and is recognised as such throughout the world.

Thanking you,  
Yours Sincerely  
Mary Black

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Black', written in a cursive style.



Distributed and Mastered by



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www.facebook.com/florygallagher | www.twitter.com/florygallagher | Vat Reg: 461 6881 23

2nd, March '18

c/o Arblinn McCrann  
Chair  
Crúis Éireann | Harp Ireland  
c/o Communique International

To Whom it Concerns

Dear Sir or Madam

May I take this opportunity to add my name in supporting the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO, for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

In my fifty professional years of working with musicians ( from management to production), in an International arena, the Harp is recognized by all I've encountered as Ireland's national symbol.

As a London based Irishman, the icon instrument is integral in our national identity too and is embossed on our European passports.

The harp with it's ancient history, that links today's World back through the genetic codes of the tribes and their musicians who would have settled in our Island, so it is essential to preserve its legacy and ensure its sustainability.

It is of utmost importance that we preserve and encourage the construction, education and teaching of the harp. It is an inherited legacy that we have a duty to preserve, so in turn we can bequeath to the generations to follow.

In the days of synthesized and computerized music, the real instrument's importance should not be overshadowed nor it's fate be dangled on a string.

Therefore, I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention, for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely

  
Dónal Gallagher  
Managing director

**From:** Donal O'Donnchadha <[donalo@microsoft.com](mailto:donalo@microsoft.com)>

**Date:** 5 March 2018 at 18:14:40 GMT

**To:** Aileen Kennedy <[aileenkennedy1@gmail.com](mailto:aileenkennedy1@gmail.com)>

**Cc:** Breda O'Donoghue <[Breda@jacksonstone.net](mailto:Breda@jacksonstone.net)>

**Subject:** Harp

Dear Aibhlin,

The Harp is our national symbol with over a thousand years of history, it is a symbol that I feel we should sustain and build upon for future Irish generations. It represents a huge amount in terms of our national identity in Ireland and as such is an important cause to support & protect.

On a personal level the Harp brings great joy to my youngest daughter Síofra and has played a significant role in just her musical and educational development, with that in mind I firmly believe the legacy of the Harp in Ireland should be safeguarded long into the future.

thanks,

Dónal O'Donnchadha



4 March 2018.

I, Claire Keville support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

I support this bid as a musician, music teacher, Ethnomusicologist and broadcaster.

The Irish Harp is part of our cultural landscape/ soundscape.

It has been part of our identity for a 1000 years or more. We as Irish people are very proud of the great harping tradition and the wonderful repertoire of music which is still such a valuable resource.

The music of the Gaelic Harpers continues to be an inspiration for many musicians /Irish instrumentalists on this Island. In the past the Irish harpers were renowned all over Europe for their musicianship, composing, mastery and virtuosity.

Its beautiful resonance conjures images from many eras in our past. Lets hope we can safe guard it for future generations.

The harp almost died out before the Belfast Harp festival of 1792. Luckily much music was notated/collected at this festival and can still be accessed today.

We need to ensure the harp (in its many shapes and sizes), our national emblem remains prominent and relevant in all music making today and for future generations.

It is our past, present and hopefully will be part of a vibrant music making future. It must continue to be part of the living tradition to allow for growth and development. This growth also encourages gifted harp makers who are so vital within this living tradition.

At a time when young people are bombarded with so much social media, it is vital that future generations appreciate and understand the timeless value of our native heritage. They in turn become captivated, are taught how to play and then bring this rich music forward once again.

The harp represents us the Irish people!



Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Dear Aibhlin,

I am writing this letter to please have the Harp recognised under Intangible Cultural Heritage. The harp is our national symbol and has been played for more than 1000 Years all over Ireland. It has a special sound and its music has a captivating effect.

We really need to sustain it and save it for future generations.

I adore playing the harp and listening to its music.

Please have the harp recognised and save our heritage.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Caoimhe Kenny

Harp Player

The harp wasn't invented by the Irish, but it might as well have been. No one knows who brought the first harp to Ireland, but there it has had a long and noble history, spanning centuries, maybe millennia. The bard harpers of Ireland were tradition bearers of song, news bearers in ballad form, and upholders of education and of Erse, the language of the Irish Gaels.

When Queen Elizabeth had all the fiddles and harps burned and made speaking Erse punishable by imprisonment and/or death, she knew what she was doing. The one who controls the songs, the stories and the language controls the country. But the Irish have always found ways around the strictures of unjust laws. They secretly taught their children behind the hedgerows, celebrated mass in the hills far from towns, and kept the old traditions alive.

While the bard harper played the last note in the 1700s, thanks to literate and musical followers we have their tunes in notation form to play today. The language is growing in use and popularity, even in far-away countries such as the United States. The dance and the music remain popular as well. And the number of harpers playing the old songs in the old style are legion. The harp is Ireland's National Symbol, that should tell us something.

So yes, the harp should be considered a heritage instrument. It is the symbol on the Irish flag, on the majority of bottles containing beer, stout, draft and ale, and the harp is found on every coin of the realm. No instrument is as universally appealing, even magical, than the harp.

It was said that a harper could be considered a master if three emotions could be conjured from their playing: joy, laughter and sorrow. What else cuts so close to the heart of being a human being than an instrument which, in the right hands, can elicit so much awe and delight?

Regards,



Beth Kollé  
[www.bethkollé.com](http://www.bethkollé.com)  
Celtic and Nordic music for harp, flute and voice



Don té go mbaineann sé leis:

A Chara,

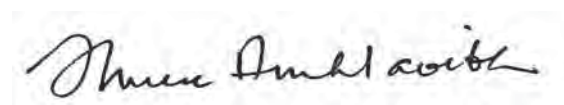
Táim go mór i bhfábhair an rún go n-ainmneofaí Cruit na hÉireann ag UNESCO mar inscríbhinn ar Liosta Ionadaíoch na hOidhreacht Chultúrtha Dholáimhsithe.

Tá an chruit lárnach do shaol agus do stair na hÉireann le breis is míle bliain. Bhí an chruit ann riamh mar phríomhuirlis cheoil na nGael agus aitheanta mar uirlis éagsúil Éireannach ar fud na hEorpa, fiú ag Dante na hIodáile (1265-1321) a dúirt, *“Tháinig an uirlis iontach ársa seo chugainn ó Éirinn, áit a ndéantar iad go dearsnaitheach, iad líonmhar agus á gcleachtadh ag lucht cónaithe an oileáin leis na cianta.”*

De dheascaibh ionraidh, gabhála agus ansmachta, bhí cultúr éagsúil na hÉireann ag teip, traidisiún na cuite san áireamh, go dtí gur éirigh le duine den uasaicme nua ó Thuaisceart na hÉireann, Edward Bunting (1773–1843), na sean-chruitirí a bhí fágtha lena linn a bhailiú le chéile ag Féile na Cruite i mBéal Feirste i 1792. Dheimhnigh Bunting cuntas a choimeád ar gach a bhain le traidisiún a bhí ar an dté deiridh, idir an cheol ársa, stíl na gceoltóirí, dearadh na cruite féin agus téarmaí an cheoil. Mar thoradh ar seo, bhí cuid thábhachtach agus lárnach do chultúr na tíre tarrthála dos na todhchaí agus an chruit arís i réim sa phobal.

Ní haon ionadh gur roghnaíodh an chruit mar shiombal oifigiúil na tíre ag bunú an Stáit i 1922, agus a thug aitheantas do ról na cruite mar shiombal ar phobal neamhspleách mórálach cultúrtha.

Is mise,



Feargal Mac Amhlaoibh  
14 Márta 2018

Reçu CLT / CIH / ITH

Le

29 AOUT 2018

Translation Feargal Mac Amhlaoibh, Tralee Kerry

N° .....

I am in total agreement that the Irish Harp should be inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

The harp is central to Irish life for more than 1000 years. It was always known as Ireland's national instrument and Irish harping was renowned all over Europe in the Middle Ages. It was recognised by Italy's Dante when he said: "This noble dignified instrument has come to us from Ireland, a place where they are found in plenty and played by many of the island's natives for centuries".

Because of siege, attack and tyranny, Ireland's unique culture was in decline, (including the harping tradition), until one of the noble classes, a young organist named Edward Bunting, was commissioned to collect harpers' music and the remnants of their tradition. He faithfully collected the ancient harping repertoire, the harping styles, information about harp design and the terminology used by the harpers.

As a result, an important and central part of our cultural heritage was preserved for future generations and this is what is now being played today by harpers.

It is no surprise that the harp was recognised as our national symbol, on the foundation of the State in 1922 and recognition was given to the important role of Irish harping, and the harp itself - reflecting a proud, independent and cultured people.

Yours sincerely,







## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

### REF: SUPPORT OF THE HARP IN IRELAND - UNESCO

My name is Gemma Prince and I am a harpist living in Northern Ireland. I have been playing the harp for over twenty years and it has been an important role in my education and life.

I studied Harp for performance studies during my university degree and I have always loved playing the instrument. I am a harp teacher and direct a Harp Ensemble for the Education Authority Southern Region. I am passionate about promoting the beautiful music of the harp and compose music for solo harp and arrange pieces for my Harp ensemble. I believe that it is vital that the tradition of the harp in Ireland be continued and thrive and I love to share my knowledge and love of the harp to my students and colleagues.

The Irish Harp is such a significant and integral part of Irish life and its history, being played around Ireland for more than 1,000 years. It is vital to preserve this history and enhance its future for generations to come.

A national composer with an international stature, the 'blind harper' Turlough O'Carolan's life story reflects the social and political upheaval of 18th century Ireland. He was born in Nobber, Co Meath, in 1670 - 15 years before Bach - and he died in 1738, 18 years before the birth of Mozart. Blinded by smallpox at the age of 14, he looked to his art and travelled the island of Ireland on horseback, his harp slung over his shoulder. His musical legacy consists at least 214 pieces of music, several of which are classics in the repertoire.

O'Carolan was a sophisticated artist, not formally trained at an academy, who composed music influenced by the Italian style, best described as "Irish Baroque", which he played on a complex instrument. The initial survival of his work is due to the dedicated efforts of a young Belfast musician and musicologist, Edward Bunting (1773-1843), who gathered the pieces and notated them, including them in his three collections of Irish music. O'Carolan would have a later champion in the form of the great Seán O'Riada who revived and popularised O'Carolan's music in the late 1960s when it had almost been forgotten.

I wish to vigorously endorse the support of the Harp in Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gemma Prince". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'G' and 'P'.

Gemma Prince

5 March 2018

## Vermont School of Irish Traditional Music

[www.vermontirishtrad.com](http://www.vermontirishtrad.com)

70 Markham Rd.

East Montpelier, VT 05651 USA

Regarding UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Status for the Irish Harp:

The only country in the world to have a musical instrument as its national symbol is Ireland. Nonetheless, the nearly 1,000 year-old Irish harp tradition had almost disappeared by the time of the Belfast Harp Assembly of 1792. In an effort to preserve what remained and to encourage a revival of harp music, a group of musicologists advertised throughout Ireland for harpers to compete at the assembly, offering cash prizes. Nonetheless, only eleven harpers attended.

The fact that the Irish harp was rescued from near oblivion cannot fail to remind us of how fragile these traditions can be, and how easily they can be lost through social change. Therefore, we encourage UNESCO to consider giving this beautiful and important instrument cultural heritage status to ensure that the Irish harp, and the music played on it, will not be lost again.

As teachers and players of Irish traditional music in America, we urge you to consider this application.

Sincerely yours,

Hilari Farrington and Benedict Koehler

(Bramble Lodge)  
Coolcull  
Foulksmills  
Wexford  
5/3/18

Dear Aibhlin,

I would like to pledge my support to have the Irish harp recognised under intangible cultural heritage. The harp is our national symbol and has been played for hundreds of years all over Ireland. It is intrinsic to our Irish identity and a sense of who we are.

It has a special sound and I find the sound captivating. It makes me feel very proud to play the harp. We need to protect it and sustain it for future generations.

Yours sincerely,

Hollie French  
Tammy O'Leary French



Lauren O'Neill,  
12 Hillside Road,  
Garvagh,  
Co. Derry,  
BT515DH  
05/03/18

Harp Ireland,  
info@harpireland.ie

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of Harp Ireland's application to the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible cultural heritage of the Irish harp.

Irish harp performance and practice is part of a culturally vibrant, niche scene in 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland. However, the harp itself represents and reflects centuries of harp practice, culture, society and conflict in Ireland. As a PhD researcher and contemporary Irish harper interested in the performance of historical harp music, I am passionate about recognising the historical significance of the Irish harp and the foundations upon which our current, vibrant harping tradition has been built upon. Medieval Ireland witnessed the harp not only as a solo instrument, but as an instrument which accompanied and complimented Gaelic bardic poetry also. This practice alone illuminates the diverse historical heritage of the Irish harp as it acted as an instrument and symbol of unification between the Irish and English settlers in Ireland. As a harp tutor, I believe it is extremely important to inform our youth of the history of the Irish harp, and how it has evolved throughout the centuries. I am but a minority of Irish harpers teaching and promoting harp practice in Ireland, and I feel strongly that the harp should receive support in safeguarding its diverse and historical cultural heritage, which will promote and ensure the Irish harps further development for our future generations.

Yours faithfully,

Lauren O'Neill

Courteencurragh,  
Gorey,  
Co. Wexford.

Dear Aibhlin,

I love playing harp because it makes me feel happy, relaxed and very Irish. I've been playing harp for three months now and I am really enjoying it. I love learning new tunes each week. Everyone thinks playing harp is complicated but I don't think so. The harp has been played for thousands of years. I hope to keep playing the harp for many years and keep the beautiful Irish tradition of playing harp alive. The harp is very popular in our area. A lot of my good friends also play the harp. The harp is our national symbol.

Yours Sincerely,

Abbie O'Donohoe

(age 11)

Anna Burke  
 Ballincnally,  
 The Meate,  
 Ballinrobe,  
 Co. Mayo.

To whom it may concern,

My name is Anna Burke and I have been playing harp for 3 years now and thoroughly enjoy it!! I bought my harp a year ago and until then I was wanting a harp. I passed it just exam during May 2016. I recently joined a harp ensemble in Castlebar. I go to harp lessons near Garraheen every week. The harp, as an ornament as well as an instrument, is a beautiful piece of work and every one is unique in sound and in appearance. My harp was picked by me because I loved its sound especially. It was 'crafted' from flamed beech, maple and many other woods. I really enjoy playing the harp with strings as well as alone. Every year, at the end of June, I go to a harp camp in Louth. Also, during October I go to a harp camp in Achill. At these camps I learn new songs and meet new friends. The harp is Ireland's emblem and is depicted on the back of Irish coins also. It has been used as long ago as 1000 years ago!!! In history the harp was a very well loved instrument with lots of people learning harp in Ireland. In past years fewer people have been playing harp but numbers have been increasing steadily. It brings me great joy to play harp.

Thank You,

Anna Burke.



92 Brookwood Avenue,  
Artane,  
Dublin 5

06.03.2018

A Chairde,

I fully support Harp Ireland's application for the harp in Ireland to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Ireland is the only country in the world to have a musical instrument – the harp – as its national emblem. As such it is intrinsically important to Ireland's national identity. The harp is more popular than ever in Ireland at the moment – it is omnipresent, a living breathing tradition. This ratification will raise awareness of the harp in Ireland and give it the international recognition that it deserves.

I leave you with a poem I penned in 2017 in celebration of the harp in Ireland, and look forward to hearing the outcome of Harp Ireland's application to UNESCO in the near future.

#### FROM FLAGS AND COINS AND COATS OF ARMS

Oh, strike up the sound of our nation's emblem  
From flags and coins and coats of arms  
To wire-strung clarity of copper and brass  
Or levered tones that ne'er fail to surpass  
That pride of place – our musical nation

Collectors, professors and cultured dignitaries  
Indebted are we to their noble vision  
As they guard and protect our living tradition  
For harpers like to harp, to glissando and play  
Heralding news of National Harp Day

From harmonic curve to sound-box and pillar  
Its three-sided theorem a symbolic shape  
Etched on monuments for us to explore  
Of gloried tribute through legacy and lore  
Its melody: collective; harmonious; ethereal

From flags and coins and coats of arms  
Hear now the sound of ubiquitous charm.

Le gach dea-ghuí,

*Caitriona Rowsome*

Caitriona Rowsome

Harper and Author, *The Complete Carolan Songs & Airs*

Sophus Bauditzvej 8,  
DK2800 Kgs. Lyngby,  
Denmark.

March 5th, 2018

Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland, of which I am a member, was established in 2016 and is an important Irish Cultural Institute representing the Harp in Ireland. It brings together harp players from all over Ireland and elsewhere, who cooperate on introducing the harp to new audiences with an annual harp day and concerts throughout the country, including pop up concerts.

The well known harper and singer Gráinne Yeats (1925 - 2013) who devoted her career to reviving the Irish Harp, as well as the wire strung Irish Harp, would have been delighted to think that Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland might be recognised under the UNESCO Convention for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. While she did not live to see the establishment of Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland, she was a founding member of An Chúirt Chruitireachta, an International Harp Festival that takes place in Ireland annually. I would like to join my voice to hers in the hope that the Irish Harp as embodied in Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland may be recognised by UNESCO as the enormous asset it is to the Cultural Heritage of Ireland.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Caitriona Yeats". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Caitriona Yeats



Aibhlín McCrann, Chair  
Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland,  
c/o Communiqué International,  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018

Dear Aibhlín

**Re: UNESCO 2003 ratification for The Irish harp**

I am pleased to write in support of the case presented by the Irish Government for the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The unique national heritage and identity of the Irish Harp has been celebrated and recognised by the international harp community for many years, from the invitation issued to Mercedes Garvey and Gráinne Yeats to attend the first International Harpweek in Queekhoven (The Netherlands) in 1960, to its significant presence at the triennial World Harp Congress meetings that succeeded the HarpWeeks. When Ireland hosted the World Harp Congress in 2005, the Irish Harp, as the country's national instrument, was central to the programming and identity of the Congress. The Opening Concert at St Patrick's Cathedral celebrated its ancient history through the evocation of the harper and the poet, represented by Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney and Ireland's leading harpers, through to its place within contemporary practice.

It is very heartening to see the ever-increasing role that the Irish Harp plays throughout the country and internationally. As a member of the Board of Directors of Music Generation, I have admired the vitality of the harp community in the transmission of the national instrument to many children and young people.

I am privileged to work with many emerging harpists and to supervise research on the instrument at DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, where the Irish Harp's national significance has been fostered for over sixty years.

It is my belief that the ratification of the Irish Harp under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage would further strength its valuable and distinguished national role and identity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Cliona Doris'.

Professor Cliona Doris  
Conservatory of Music and Drama, Dublin Institute of Technology  
Chair, World Harp Congress Dublin 2005  
Board of Directors and Member of Corporation, World Harp Congress  
Board of Directors, Music Generation  
Board of Directors, Music Network  
Former Chair, Contemporary Music Centre of Ireland





GALWAY CITY MUSEUM

Músaem Cathrach na Gaillimhe  
Pharáid na Spáinneach  
Gaillimh  
Éire

Galway City Museum  
Spanish Parade  
Galway  
Ireland

28 February 2018

A Chara,

I am writing with a short personal anecdote about the Irish harp and how it helped to ease an awkward situation.

When I finished college, in 2004, my then-girlfriend (now wife) and I spent three months touring South America. While travelling from northern Chile to Argentina, en route to Salta, our bus was stopped at a military border crossing in the middle of nowhere. We were ordered off the bus and one-by-one had to enter a small green shack where three stony-faced men in full military attire, adorned with medals, scrutinised our passports; needless to say, I was ill at ease. After recording my details, one of the three started to strum the cover of my passport, repeating the word *tocar*. I was a little confused but then recalled that *tocar* was the Spanish verb 'to play (an instrument)' and I nodded enthusiastically. Their stern faces eased, the seemingly tense situation became lighthearted and, after a difficult conversation in pidgin Spanish, they encouraged me to try and see Boca Juniors Vs River Plate when visiting Buenos Aires. Afterwards it struck me that it was unusual to have an instrument on the cover of a passport – much better than an imperialistic eagle or the likes – and that the harp was an internationally identifiable symbol of Ireland (even to soldiers in a hut in the middle of a mountainous desert in a remote corner of the southern hemisphere).

This incident highlighted for me the importance of the harp to the citizens of Ireland – not just as a musical instrument, but as a distinctive symbol, a cultural object and a link to our ancient past – and I wish to endorse Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland's application for UNESCO intangible Cultural Heritage status.

Finally, as a musician from a family of musicians, I am immensely proud that Ireland is symbolised by an instrument.

Le mórmheas,

*Brendan McGowan / Breandán Mac Gabhann  
Education & Outreach Officer / Oifigeach Oideachais agus For-rochtana  
Galway City Museum / Músaem Cathrach na Gaillimhe  
Spanish Parade / Paráid na Spáinneach  
Galway / Gaillimh  
H91 CX5P*

*T: (091) 532465 / (085) 8331148  
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Fáiltiú / Reception: +353 (0)91 532460  
Rphost / Email: [museum@galwaycity.ie](mailto:museum@galwaycity.ie)  
Lion / Web: [www.galwaycitymuseum.ie](http://www.galwaycitymuseum.ie)

24 Ocean Towers

Blackrock Upper Salthill

Galway

## **Cruit Eireann: Letter of support :Unesco Harp Bid**

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I heartily support Cruit Eireann's bid to have the Irish Harp recognised as an intangible component of Irish Culture.

After all the Harp has featured in the social life of Irish Celtic society for many centuries and has survived many adversities.

It is a Symbol and the National Emblem of Ireland!

There are many songs , for example, to mention one of Thomas Moore's\* , ' *The Harp that once through Tara's Halls*' which connect the harp with the *Soul* of music or the *sorrow of loss* in war .

The last (so-called) of the Bards ,Turlough O'Carolan\*\*, composed , over 200, melodies for the harp . Many of his compositions are popular with modern day harpers.

Carolan put words to most of his tunes ,depicting the *nature and character* of his Patrons. He used an Irish language dialect :eg *Sí Beag – Sí Mór*

Edward Bunting\*\*\* made a large collection of music as played by groups of journeyman harpers at the time

He published several volumes and many of those tunes and airs are popular today :

All these old 'tunes' are been played by harpers all over Ireland and many parts of the world today and fashion the soul of our cultural heritage.

Hence this letter !

Sincerely Yours

Justin Manning

\*Thomas Moore(1779-1852)

\*\*Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738)

\*\*\*Edward Bunting (1773-1843)

40 Avondale Park,  
Dundalk,  
Co.Louth  
5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

To whom it may Concern,

As an educator, musician and harpist, my love for the harp knows no bounds. Working with Music Generation Louth and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, Craobh Dhún Dealgan collectively we have forged a thriving community of harpers in County Louth and surrounding areas. Through performances by the Junior and Senior Music Generation Louth Harp Ensemble, along with many more accomplished young harpers taking part in various Grúpaí Cheoil, Junior Orchestras and Nós Nua – Louth Youth Folk Orchestra we are raising public awareness of the harp where there was none previously. County Louth and the Oriel Region were once the home of many harpers and the tradition has now returned to the area through teaching, social engagement and performing groups of young harpers involved in these organisations. We are also very lucky to have Cairde na Cruite's International Harp Festival in Termonfeckin, on our doorstep. This Festival played an integral part in my development as a harper and now a harp teacher.

*"Harp playing is experiencing a renewal and vibrancy in the Oriel region, once again. It is worth noting that Oriel had the last Harp Society which was in Drogheda, founded in 1842 by Thomas Burke, who appointed Hugh Frazer as the teacher for the school in which there were 15 students and 12 harps.*

*The contemporary Irish harp is made in Omeath County Louth by Neville Mac Anna of Narrow Water Harps, serving its widespread enthusiastic renewal"*

Padraigín Ní Uallacháin: [www.orielarts.com](http://www.orielarts.com)

Music Generation, Comhaltas along with Cairde na Cruite and Harp Ireland, are focused on securing a strong future for the harp in Ireland. The harp is our national instrument, it is present on our coinage, State and Presidential Documentation and many logos in the sporting and commercial world. But not only is it a symbol, it is part of who we are as people. The harp, its heritage and music deserves to be protected for the future and enjoyed by all, therefore and I fully support Harp Ireland in its endeavour to do so.

Yours Sincerely

---

Deirdre Ní Bhuachalla

Music Generation Louth & CCÉ Craobh Dhún Dealgan



5 Beechwood Park  
Ranelagh  
Dublin 6

Aibhlín McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland

5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**Re: UNESCO/Irish harp**

Dear Aibhlín

I am writing to add my support to the initiative that asks UNESCO to add the Irish Harp to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The harp, and the culture and creativity that it represents, is globally recognised as a living symbol of the identity and character of Ireland and Irish people. This symbolic value is grounded in practical reality as well – the harp is the unbroken musical and cultural link with the old Gaelic order, it is a lens through which we can observe and understand how Irish music and cultural expression has developed across the centuries, and, importantly, the harp is part of our living thriving tradition of music. A living tradition has to be built on a process of transmission, it relies on continuity, it welcomes the new as much as it cherishes the ancient, and it adapts with changes in society and the cultural environment. Any objective examination of the place of the harp in Irish music and culture will show that the harp meets all of these criteria.

In recent years the status of the harp has been recognised by national cultural agencies here in Ireland. For example, An Chomhairle Ealaíon/Arts Council has commissioned a detailed report into the Harp, and as a result of this the Council has supported a programme of development and nurturing of the harp, focused on performers, audiences and composers. And the national Irish-language broadcaster TG4 recently made a special award recognising the value and resurgence of interest in the harp in Ireland. These national acknowledgements show that the Irish State, and its cultural agencies, has deepened and consolidated its understanding and appreciation of the harp and of the culture and tradition that comes with this ancient living tradition.

As a traditional musician, teacher and recently retired Chairman of Taisce Cheol Dúchais Éireann/Irish Traditional Music Archive I wish to add my support in the strongest and most enthusiastic terms to this proposal to secure recognition from UNESCO.

Yours faithfully,



Dermot McLaughlin



IRISH WORLD ACADEMY OF MUSIC AND DANCE  
DÁMH CHRUIÑNE ÉIREANN  
RINCE agus ceol

Irish World Academy Building, IW1.29  
University of Limerick  
Castletroy  
Limerick  
V94 DK18  
Ireland

**From: Dr Eleanor Giraud**  
Course Director of the MA in Ritual Chant and Song

Tel: +353 (0)61 234743  
Fax: +353 (0)61 202589  
[Eleanor.Giraud@ul.ie](mailto:Eleanor.Giraud@ul.ie)

7<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Letter of support for nominating the Irish harp to Intangible Cultural Heritage status

To whom it may concern:

I am a harpist, an Irish citizen and an academic whose interest lies in medieval music.

The harp is a symbol of Irish identity. I write this letter while on a short fieldtrip to Paris, and as I paid for dinner this evening, my colleagues were delighted to see the harp on my Irish euro coins. This depiction of the Brian Boru harp is an iconic Irish symbol, known across the world not just on our money but also on our passports and of course on bottles of Guinness. Within my own small cohort of students, half of the international students (who visit Limerick for a year of study) have opted to study the Irish harp as an 'elective' for a term. As such the harp is clearly viewed by students world-wide as an essential part of their experience of Irish musical culture.

The international recognition of the Irish harp is not a recent phenomenon. From as early as the twelfth century, the Irish were lauded for their skills as harpists (by the Welsh chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis). This early Irish harp has inspired both performance and academic study (I had the pleasure in November 2017 of examining a PhD thesis on the tuning of medieval Irish harps). We are lucky to have surviving transcriptions of compositions by Irish harpists dating back to the seventeenth century, the most famous of whom being of course Turlough O'Carolan.

This rich, long-lived and evolving tradition of Irish harp playing deserves to be passed on for generations to come, both within Ireland and abroad. I fully support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely,

Eleanor Giraud



Tel: 353 42 9370200  
Fax: 353 42 9370201  
Web: www.dkit.ie  
E-Mail: reception@dkit.ie  
E-Mail: first.surname@dkit.ie

Ms Aibhlín McCrann  
c/o Harp Ireland,  
Communiqué International,  
26, Herbert Place,  
Dublin 2

1/iii/18

A Aibhlín, a chara

I am writing to add my full support for Harp Ireland's application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. As a composer and member of Aosdána, the state-sponsored academy of Irish creative artists, I cherish the Irish harp as an inspirational source which uniquely symbolizes my cultural and artistic identity. I have written many works in which our national instrument has been an integral voice, including solo, ensemble and orchestral works. In my educational roles as Head of Music in third-level colleges I have always promoted the importance of the harp and its iconic role in our musical heritage.

To me and to many of my fellow musicians, composers and educators the harp is so much more than a musical instrument, but is a unifying symbol for Ireland and the great richness of our musical inheritance and tradition. We must ensure that this precious legacy is preserved, fostered and protected for future generations. I therefore join wholeheartedly with you in the application to UNESCO to safeguard the Intangible Cultural Heritage that is the Irish harp.

Is mise le meas,

Dr Eibhlís Farrell,  
Ceannasaí, Roinn Ceoil agus Meáin Chruthaitheacha  
Head of Music and Creative Media  
Stiúrthóir, Ionad Taighde Ceoil  
Director, Centre for Research in Music  
Dundalk Institute of Technology

Dr Eibhlís Farrell, BMus(Hons) (QUB), MMus (Bristol), PhD (Rutgers), Dip Ir (UU),  
LLCM, FRSA, Member of Aosdána



Ireland's EU Structural Funds  
Programmes 2007 - 2013  
Co-funded by the Irish Government  
and the European Union





Letters of Support from members of the  
Music Generation Mayo Harp Ensemble.

c/o Grainne Hambly  
Knockrickard  
Claremorris

Co. Mayo

CS6 2932520

grainnehambly@gmail.com

Blank lined paper on the left side of the page.

①

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>  
February 2018

To whom it may concern,  
I began playing the harp  
around December/January  
2014 when I turned 9  
along with Catherine, who I  
became closer to through  
music and is now my  
best friend! I instantly  
fell in love with it, and  
while people think it's a  
difficult instrument to learn,  
if you practice hard,

especially at the start,  
you get the hang of it  
pretty quick.

As my mum says, no  
matter what you play  
on the harp (except maybe  
chords that don't match the  
melody!) it sounds gorgeous.  
Even if my little cousin,  
who has never learned  
the harp, plays a few  
strings, it sounds  
alright!

Even though the harp  
has been played in  
Ireland for over 1,000  
years, the design hasn't  
really changed at all.  
Nowadays, there might be  
less celtic swirls here  
and there, but harps are  
more or less the same.

It's a privilege to  
be able to play the harp,  
and you could jump into  
a session with it any day!  
- Aibhe McBride



To whom it concerns,

I started playing the harp four years ago at eight years old. I picked it up quite quickly because I play the piano and they are two very similar instruments. I love playing at sessions because they are great fun. I play the harp in the Rolling Waves Grupa Ceoil, and we came second in the All-Ireland in 2016. I love to play with the Harp Ensemble also.

Lyraíne and Billy are two ~~of~~ excellent teachers and have improved my techniques. I feel very proud to be a harpist and when I'm older, I hope to teach it!

(Hannah Lyons  
Music Gen. Mayo Harp  
Ensemble Member)

To whom it may concern,

I am an 11 year old girl who loves the sound of the harp. I am lucky that I have the chance to play it.

With the harp, I think the music should take you over, let it flow through you, then have you pause to figure out the notes.

The harp is the Irish national instrument too.

It also appears on our coins. It takes time to learn to play the harp and I am lucky to have had that chance.

Yours truly  
Caoimhe Curley



Belclare  
Westport  
Mayo  
Ireland

24<sup>th</sup> February 2018

To whom it may concern,

In considering the Irish harp for international recognition by UNESCO, I would like to tell you about its cultural importance to me and my country and its personal significance for me.

The harp has been used as the symbol of Ireland since at least the 6<sup>th</sup> century. One of our high kings Brian Boru played the harp. In fact in traditional Gaelic society every clan and chief of any importance had a resident harp player.

The harp has been used on coins from 1542 to the present euro. The harp is used on all official state documents. I value it highly as a sign of my Irishness, on my passport.

Some major companies have built the harp into their logo, eg. Guinness, Ryanair. The harp has been used in Christianity where angels are seen playing the harp.

For me personally, I love the sweet sound which



the harp gives. I can play solo, and in my ensemble with other harpists.

Through organisations such as Music Generation, I have made lots of friends through the harp. We have gone to harp festivals, to weekends devoted to the harp and we recently played in Westport Town Hall, to celebrate the very first National Harp Day. Many people came to listen to us and celebrated our heritage.

Playing the harp requires commitment, work and compromise. No greater instrument represents the UNESCO aims of peace and respect than our Irish harp.

Generations before us preserved its beauty for us to enjoy, in asking you for UNESCO status for the Irish harp, we will keep its importance alive for years to come.

Slán agus beannacht,

Orla Ní Mhaolmhuaidh.

Farmhill,  
Claremorris,  
Co. Mayo,  
Ireland.  
Tel: 094-9371645  
23/2/2018

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is Róisín Horkan I am 10 years old. I have been playing the harp for 3 years and I really like it. My older sisters have always played the harp and I grew up listening to it.

I know from history that the harp has been played in Ireland for over 1,000 years and is also one of our national symbols.

I go to harp lessons every week. I also play the harp with Mayo Harp Ensemble every 2 weeks. I like meeting my friends while we're practicing at Ensemble.

I like playing and listening to the harp, there is no other instrument like it anywhere. Although it is quite big and heavy to carry around, it also takes up a lot of space in our car when bringing it to practice, but I think it's worth it.

I hope my harp will stay with my family for years to come.

Yours sincerely,  
Róisín Horkan.



Dromada Joyce,  
Killassey,  
Swinfod,  
Co. Mayo  
22/2/18

Dear Grainne,

My name is Aisbheann. I am 13 years old.

I love playing the harp. I love everything to do with it. It's amazing to be able to play the harp. I'm one of the lucky members in the Mayo Music Generation Harp Ensemble. The friends I've made will be ones for a long time. We went on a trip to Portlaoise we went to Tríona which is a harp and pipe festival in Portlaoise. We did amazing workshops with tutors such as Michael Rooney, Tríona Marshall, Grainne Hanbly, Billy Jackson to name a few. Little did I think three years ago I'd get such an opportunity. This was my first time away from home, I wasn't the slightest bit homesick for a second. This time last year I wouldn't have thought that after a concert Tríona Marshall would come and help me put my harp back in its case!

Shortly afterwards we were invited to perform for the Irish National Harp Day in the Town Hall Theatre, Westport. We were joined by the amazing and talented, Aoise Kelly, Alannah Thornburgh, Grainne Hanbly, Freda Hatton and Eadsain Ni Mhaicín. I never thought I'd be playing on the same stage as the best harpers in Ireland. It was the first time many of my extended family came to a harp concert, and they loved it.

My mum never got the chance to learn the harp when she was young as there were no teachers within an hour and a half of a drive! It's so different now, there are so many excellent teachers in County Mayo.



Playing the harp has opened so many doors for me. A few months ago, I was asked to play the harp in a Grúpa Ceoil. I'm only 13 and I'm in the 15-18 group!! I play in concerts, masses, and school events. I recently got my own Paddy Caffrey harp. It was amazing to meet the man who made such a beautiful instrument. To hear him explain how he crafted the instrument was fascinating. I've a lovely photograph with him which I will cherish forever.

People love the sound of the instrument and ask me so many questions about it. It's such a unique sound. I recently got to play with Seán Kelly when the 'Lynce FM' quartet came to my school. She has played in Buckingham Palace, with Coldplay, on the soundtrack of Paddington 2 and many more, and it all began for her on the Irish harp. It was amazing to play along with her.

My younger sister is now playing the harp, too. We love attending all the local harp workshops. Whether you are just beginning or in an advance class the tutors treat everybody the same.

Playing the harp is not something I have to do, it's something I WANT to do. I love playing it in between getting ready for school exams just to chill out.

I am so proud to be able to play the harp and it is something I will continue forever.

Yours thankfully,

Aisbheann





Tel: 353 42 9370200  
Fax: 353 42 9370201  
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E-Mail: [reception@dkit.ie](mailto:reception@dkit.ie)  
E-Mail: [first.surname@dkit.ie](mailto:first.surname@dkit.ie)

**Letter of support: UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Ireland, The Irish Harp**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to give my full support to the Cruit Éireann application to include the Irish harp as part of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Ireland. I am course director for the MA in Traditional Music Studies at Dundalk Institute of Technology and convenor of the forthcoming World Harp Traditions Conference at the University of Limerick. My research has focused on the history and musical ethnography of the harp and includes two books, *Contemporary Irish Harping* (Four Courts Press, 2012) and an edited volume of essays by leading academics, Sandra Joyce & Helen Lawlor, *Harp Studies* (Four Courts Press, 2016). I have lectured on harping internationally including lectures at Harvard University and Boston college.

The Irish harp has occupied a place in the Irish psyche for centuries both musically and ideologically. An identifiably Irish instrument, its repertoire and style has provenance in Ireland to at least the ninth century AD, thus bolstering its import in terms of cultural and ideological associations. It is the national symbol of Ireland and throughout its long history has been a musical voice, visual symbol and inspiration for Irish culture, society and identity.

The twentieth-century revival led to widespread growth in harping in Ireland and abroad, particularly over the past twenty years. Today there are more harpers than any time in the past two hundred years active as performers, teachers and students (Arts Council Report, 2016).

Harping as a cultural activity gives a musical sounding to not only our contemporary arts practice scene but to the generations of musicians and composers who have gone before. Despite the existence of notated manuscripts, the essential core of the harping tradition is in its renewed expression and performance by each generation, each lending their own interpretation of this



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historic music. This is a tradition that must be protected to allow its continued growth.

The processes of globalization and social transformation are evident in the use of the harp as a musical symbol of Ireland by performers internationally. Harpist Mary O'Hara, for example, was one of the leading figures in folk and popular music performance during the twentieth century. Historically, we can look to the use of the harp symbol in temperance rallies in 19<sup>th</sup> century USA to depict Irishness and indeed its use by many political organisations in Ireland including the United Irishmen and the revolutionaries of 1916.

My research in Irish harping (2012, 2016) has shown that the music of the harp in the twentieth century was shaped and promoted by indigenous communities and individuals who dedicated their life to the promotion of this instrument, including harpers such as Gráinne Yeats, Róisín Ní Shé and others. It is essential that their contribution is celebrated, not forgotten and it is my opinion that the UNESCO convention will provide for this.

The Irish harp as a vehicle for music making consistently provides the opportunity for human interaction and cultural exchange. There exists an infrastructure of festivals, summer schools, competitions and teaching activities to bring harp practitioners together to develop creative practice. Given recent developments, such as the foundation of Cruit Éireann and the proliferation of contexts for performance this application is timely and will give further international profile and support to this tradition.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Helen Lawlor

Programme Director, MA Traditional Music Studies

Dundalk Institute of Technology



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# The Irish Community of Chicago

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March 14, 2018

Aibhlín McCrann  
Chair, Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2 Ireland

Dear Aibhlín,

The Irish community of Chicago is delighted to express our support of the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

We the undersigned represent a diverse array of individuals and organizations active in the arts, business, politics, media, sports, and community life of the Irish diaspora in Chicago. As participants in a large and historically significant diaspora community, we are deeply aware of the importance of culture in shaping and maintaining Irish identity. From music teachers to policy-makers; from dancers to diplomats; from cultural institutions and businesses to parents hoping to pass their heritage on to their children, we are committed to cultural resurgence as an integral part of our daily lives, and uniquely positioned to understand its requirements. All of us are keenly aware that we require our cultural practices and representations in order to exist as a community; these are in fact a most essential part of our lives and give expression to our deepest selves.

As Ireland's national symbol, the harp is an irreplaceable expression of our identity. The Irish community of Chicago has first-hand experience with the importance of passing on its rich tradition. Here, the millennial history endures as part of a living tradition; harps are found not only on our Irish passports or coins stashed in a drawer for the next trip, but can also be found at our social gatherings and business functions, at weddings, wakes, and funerals, in informal sessions at pubs and private homes, and on the concert stage.



Irish harp instruction of the highest caliber is available, rooted in Chicago's own rich community and legacy of traditional music and influenced by harping innovations pioneered in Ireland. These efforts have been recognized with at least ten prizes have been awarded to Chicago harpers at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann. Several of the most historically significant antique Irish harps have been displayed to the public at our world-renowned Art Institute. Chicago harpers maintain relationships with harp makers, from the internationally famous, locally based Lyon & Healy Harps to family lutherie businesses around the country in order to increase the availability of student instruments and to devise innovations in harp design.

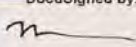
Our community's experiences with the harp have demonstrated both the critical importance of and the challenges inherent in preserving its legacy. Local efforts are currently concentrated at the grassroots level and rely upon the harp teachers and harp parents who drive for hours in Chicago traffic to get to their lessons, the volunteers who hand-build wooden stands for student harps, the community centers and businesses that generously donate space for teaching and harp-building classes, and the many, many people who co-create both music and community with us via the reciprocal act of listening – deepening our connection to this vital part of ourselves, and thus to each other. This in turn enables us to engage in relationships of deep reciprocity with other individuals and communities.

We are very proud of the work being done in Chicago, and deeply honored to be a participant in larger efforts to ensure the sustainability of the harp's legacy, such as those of Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland. We will continue to develop the role of the harp in bringing community together by encouraging players of all ages while emphasizing the importance of nurturing the next generation; by working to make harps accessible to all; by innovating technically and musically; and by building and maintaining relationships with harpers and harp communities in Ireland and throughout the diaspora. We will do this, as we have always done, because it is critical to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage – the practice-based knowledge – contained within our living harp tradition.

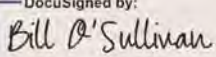
Thus, we would like to endorse the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in the strongest possible terms.

Yours Sincerely,  
The Irish Community of Chicago

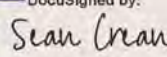
## Signatories, Page 1

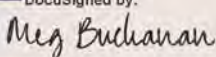
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Marta Cook, Irish Harper, performer, teacher

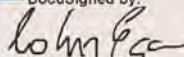
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Chicago Gaelic Park  
Bill O'Sullivan, President  
Sean Crean, Director

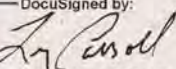
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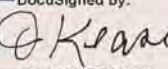
The Irish American Heritage Center  
Meg Buchanan, Executive Director

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Colm Egan, Games Development Officer  
Chicago Gaelic Athletic Association

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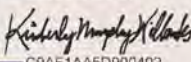
Liz Carroll, Irish Fiddler, Composer, Recording Artist

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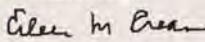
Jimmy Keane, Accordionist, Composer, Recording Artist



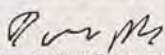
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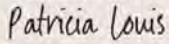
Kimberly Murphy Wilbanks, Irish Harper, performer, teacher

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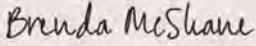
Eileen Crean, Irish Harp adult student

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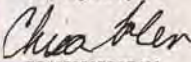
Noreen McGonagle, Irish Harp adult student

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Patricia Louis, Irish Harp adult student

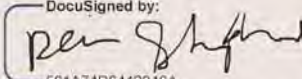
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Brenda McShane, Irish Harp adult student

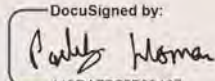
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Chisa Tolen, Irish Harp adult student

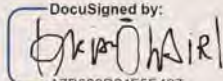
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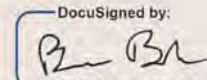
The Shepherd School of Irish Music  
Devin Shepherd, Fiddler, Founder and Director

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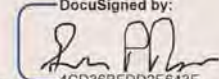
Paddy Homan, Irish Tenor, Recording Artist

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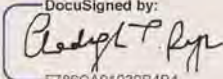
Brían O hAirt, Irish Language Instructor, Sean-nós singer, dancer, concertina player

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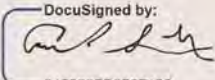
Brendan Bulger, Irish Fiddler

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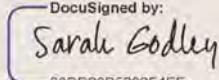
Sean Ryan, Irish Flute Player and Uilleann Piper

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Dr. Clodagh Ryan, MD, Concertina and Fiddle Player

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Andrew Serb, Irish Flute and Guitar Player

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Sarah and Rich Godley, music parents  
Aileen Godley, Irish Fiddler  
Liam Godley, Bodhrán and Tin Whistle

## **List of Supporters, Page 1**

Chicago Irish Immigrant Support  
Michael Collins, Executive Director  
Paul Dowling, Social Services Coordinator

The Irish Musicians Association of America, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann  
Tim McGinness, President

Consul General Brian O'Brien

Chief O'Neill's Pub and Restaurant  
Brendan and Siobhán McKinney, Proprietors, Flute Players

The Galway Arms Irish Bar and Restaurant  
Terry Geoghegan, Proprietor

Mrs. Murphy and Sons Irish Bistro  
James Murphy, Proprietor  
Matt Maroni, General Manager

Lillian Reasor, Irish Harp, performer, teacher  
Caitlin Cavannaugh, Irish Harp, singer, actor  
Magdalena Cervantes Cassel, Irish Harp

Fiona Hanly, Irish Harp parent and adult student  
Catriona Hanly, Irish Harp student, age 14

Maureen Krause, Irish Harp parent  
Shaylynn Krause, Irish Harp student, age 15

Sherri Bradley, Irish Harp parent of Alyssa, age 7



## **List of Supporters, Page 2**

Devon C. Bruce

Partner, Power Rogers & Smith, L.L.P.

Michael D. Nichol森, PhD, Irish Fiddler

Associate Professor of History, Oakton Community College

The Academy of Irish Music

Noel P. Rice, Flute Player, Founder and Director

Laurence Nugent, Flute Player, Recording Artist

Pauline Conneely, Banjo Player, Recording Artist

Seán Gavin, Irish Flute Player, Uilleann Piper

Leandra Baker, Irish Fiddler

Patrick Finnegan, Irish Flute Player

Jennifer and Dave Jensen, music parents

Morgan Jensen, Irish Fiddle Student

Sarah and Rich Godley, music parents

Aileen Godley, Irish Fiddle Student

Liam Godley, Bodhrán and Tin Whistle Student

Kelly Murphy, Music Parent

Michael Murphy, Irish Fiddle Student



# Irish|Harp Orchestra



Evolved from the BELFAST HARP ORCHESTRA launched in 1992 celebrating the Bicentenary of the Belfast Harpers' Assembly and renamed to the Irish Harp Orchestra in 2002, this is a professional (part-time) touring company comprising average 26 artists: 8-12 harps, 6 musicians, 8 dancers/choir and 2 lead singers. With management Muenchen Musik (Munich, Germany) since 1999, this company toured annually (month of December) to 2011, and again from 2017 performing in the prime concert halls of Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Netherlands.

This company is the showcase of Janet Harbison – composer, performer, teacher, stage producer and former director of the Irish Harp Centre (2002-2016, residential college for professional harpers in Castleconnell, Co. Limerick) and currently based in Derry, Co. Londonderry where she is Visiting Professor (Irish Music) at Ulster University.



# janet harbison

## IRISH HARP

[www.JanetHarbisonHarp.com](http://www.JanetHarbisonHarp.com)

24A Northland Road, L'Derry BT48 7JD Northern Ireland, UK  
157 Village Way, Beckenham, London BR3 3NL, UK

Re: Letter of support for UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Status

February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Dear Aibhlín,

I write to support the quest of Harp Ireland seeking ratification of the Irish harp for special status with UNESCO so to support its unique tradition and heritage here in Ireland.

My career over 40 years now has prominently featured the harp in a number of ways. Starting out as a professional performer in 1975, winning all national and a number of international harp performance competitions, touring extensively with Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann, the band Oisín (for European Music Year) and the production of Rudiger Opperman entitled 'International Harfenfestival' as well as in her own right, I was also pursuing academic studies in Edward Bunting's harp music manuscripts (from the 1792 Belfast Harpers' Assembly) which brought me to Belfast in 1984. Awarded a Junior Research Fellowship at the Institute of Irish Studies at Queen's University (2 years), I found that the harp could be an instrument that could serve in the journey toward peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

As an emblem, the Irish harp was important to both nationalist and loyalist traditions. For the nationalists, it was the emblem of the Irish state (also used by the nationalist terrorist groups), and for the unionists, it was the emblem of Ulster in the British realm and of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). This ambiguity contributed to the extremely small number of players of the harp in Ulster, but I saw this as an opportunity to bring 'education toward mutual understanding' which was my remit as Curator of Music at the Ulster Folk Museum (from 1986).

For the Linen Hall Library's bicentennial festival, I created a cross-community concert production with 22 young people aged 10 – 18 featuring a programme of music from the Belfast Harpers Assembly of 1792 performed in the Ulster Hall. The concert proved to be a resounding success – for the harpers featured on stage, for the families involved, for the community celebrating an aspect of shared heritage, for the Linen Hall Library board whose history with the original 1792 event was highlighted, and for the BBC who recorded the concert, created 2 radio programmes that were repeated on a number of occasions after the event. Invitations to perform the production again guaranteed that the project had a future, and in 1992 it was launched as the Belfast Harp Orchestra in a yearlong programme of events celebrating the Belfast Harpers' Assembly itself. With chair of the civil service, Maurice Hayes, chair of the Cultural Traditions Group and Community Relations Committee, Jimmy Hawthorne, and myself as Curator of Music at the UFTM, we established the Belfast Harpers' Bicentenary Ltd, and I directed a year of festivities including an inaugural Irish national concert tour for the Belfast Harp Orchestra, a 6 month exhibition of artefacts at the



museum, a summerschool, a major archive project recording harpers in 1992 (200 years on from the original event), a conference, a national competition (with Waterford Crystal), and a 12 day World Harp Festival featuring 42 international harp players from all 5 continents. The Belfast Harp Orchestra was scheduled to perform the first half of the opening and closing concerts of the festival headlined by the Chieftains and Alain Stivel respectively.

Our performance with the Chieftains led to further extraordinary adventures and success. They took us on tour with them immediately to the National Concert Hall (Dublin) and the Royal Festival Hall (London) where 'The Celtic Harp' album (on the RCA Victor label) was recorded with us – and this album won the Grammy Award for Belfast Folk Music Album of 1993. With the Chieftains, the Belfast Harp Orchestra performed in the world's top venues including New York's Carnegie Hall, Washington's Kennedy Centre, Boston's Symphony Hall and within a year, we had achieved extraordinary recognition.

To support the work of the orchestra and the harp schools established to continue with the harpers' training, I took a sabbatical from my post at the museum and established the Harp Foundation Ireland Ltd. After a short return to the museum, I departed my post to become the Harp Foundation's CEO for 8 years during which time, the harp in Northern Ireland flourished, the Belfast Harp Orchestra enjoyed a number of extraordinary years of popularity internationally – and many of Ireland's star players of today received their training. Until, in 2002, after the failure of the peace process in Northern Ireland, the decision was made to drop the word 'Belfast' in our title, and to move south of the border so to maintain our international touring and training activities. We were founded because of a political ideal, and while we sailed on the crest of the wave toward peace in Northern Ireland, we were also defeated when the peace process failed as our association with Northern Ireland became difficult for our management and international audiences.

Nevertheless, as the Irish Harp Orchestra and now with our permanent Irish Harp Centre established in Limerick, the movement continued to animate my life and showcase our activity. The recent recession took its toll on our touring after 2011, but happy to report that our management have renewed our contract and we performed again in Germany at the Munich Philharmonic Hall in December 2017. In 2016, I sold the Harp Centre and returned to Northern Ireland on my appointment as Visiting Professor (Irish Music) at Ulster University. The university has been enormously supportive partner to me in a number of new activities in harping in Northern Ireland including the hosting of teacher training courses (accredited by the university), various projects with the Belfast Harp Orchestra archive and with hosting a new harp festival entitled 'Northwest Harpfest' which will be inaugurated on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018

So, the harp has been enormously meaningful throughout my life – not only as a great music to entertain myself and my audiences, but as an expression of my cultural identity, a powerful tool to build bridges of shared heritage, peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland, a tradition of honour, antiquity and excellence that has inspired my career and sustained me for over 40 years, and given my life its *raison d'être*.

I heartily support the recognition of the Irish harp with UNESCO with safeguarding our Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Harbison (Dr)  
Visiting Professor, Ulster University, Magee Campus

Richard Allen  
LISCI-ZAGLIO  
38/a Via Avigliana  
10138 Torino,  
Italia

To whom it may concern,

My name is Richard Allen. I am a musician and I am now 25 years old. I grew up in Belfast, Northern Ireland studying the Irish harp since childhood and going on to become a professional harpist now living and working in the UK and Europe. I would like to express my support for the Harp Ireland application to UNESCO for ratification of the Irish harp.

Without my modest early attempts on the Irish harp I am convinced that I would not be where I am today. The skills I have learned through this valued and rarely found oral tradition have been absolutely indispensable in my career as a musician and in many cases has allowed me to reach levels I had previously thought unattainable. The two worlds of traditional and classical music may seem very different, but at heart they are in fact very close, sharing my similarities. What I find most interesting about the Irish harp tradition is that everything is passed from student to teacher without notation – entirely by ear! Coupled with the improvisation skills taught and acquired through complete immersion in this world, training in traditional Irish music develops skills that in fact are often absent from classical musicians, and so I believe it is an extremely valuable resource afforded only to those who are fortunate enough to be born into it or actively seek it out as I did. My path as a musician is not a common one, straddling the two music styles, but thanks to the inspirational work of composer, classical cellist, and uilleann piper Neil Martin and his West Ocean String Quartet I felt no need to choose one over the other but instead use skills from each to improve my playing in the other. I find myself reaping the benefits of this training on an almost daily basis, and given that this has been an opportunity not accessible to every musician, I feel very fortunate indeed.

The Irish harp boasts a proud and vibrant tradition in Ireland (both Northern Ireland and in the Republic) which attracts many visitors and musicians every year from all over the world for the likes of the Termonfeckin, O'Carolan Harp Festivals not to mention the Fleadh Cheoil celebrating traditional Irish music and dance in all its forms. Having taken part myself for many years, I have only happy memories of meeting other young harpists like myself, many of whom have become lifelong friends and colleagues. The Irish harp community is both widespread and close-knit, with hubs found across the globe. Thanks to modern technology it is no longer isolated to the island of Ireland and players and friends of the Irish harp can be found in almost every country. A fond memory of mine is arriving in Boston, USA as a teenager with my Irish harp in tow. Knowing only my host family, I brought my harp to an Irish bar in town where they were having a 'session' of Irish music where I played for hours with the locals, leaving at the end of the night with a whole network of Irish music lovers most of which had never heard the harp before. This is something I believe is truly unique to Irish music – it brings people of all ages and communities together to enjoy something beautiful, no matter where they are from or what language they speak. In my opinion, this act of unification is something that we need now more than ever given the current global political climate!

As you may be aware, the political activities in the Northern Irish government in recent months and years have put the arts in grave danger. The arts have been cut to ribbons year after year affecting all kinds of music, but the recent dispute over the preservation of the Irish language concerns me greatly. Perhaps in the coming years Irish *music* could come under fire, and I am not prepared to stand by and



watch this happen. I offer my full support to Harp Ireland's application for the preservation of the Irish harping tradition to be consider for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is vital that this tradition is preserved for future generations as it has a far-reaching and profound meaning to all who come into contact with it. We are very fortunate that a small proportion of its repertoire was salvaged in 1792 by Edward Bunting at the Belfast Harp Festival, without which we surely would have lost much of the music we know, love, and play today. The harp, being one of the oldest instruments of very simple construction, has a unique effect on its audience and has the ability to touch a human heart in a way no other instrument can – in my opinion it could not be more deserving of protection.

Yours sincerely,



---

Richard Allen  
Turin, Italy  
5<sup>th</sup> of March 2018

+447803464797

[Richard.harp.93@gmail.com](mailto:Richard.harp.93@gmail.com)

[richardharp93.wix.com/site](http://richardharp93.wix.com/site)



Dr Adrian Scahill  
Deputy Head of Department,  
Music Department  
Maynooth University  
2-3-2018

To whom it may concern

I am writing in support of the proposal that the Irish harp be considered for inscription by UNESCO as part of the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. As a lecturer in traditional music and ethnomusicology, I have researched and published on the Irish harp, and have organised teaching for harp students within the Music Department. We have been fortunate in having many excellent harpers over the past decade or so, some of whom have continued to play and record as part of their later careers.

The harp has a long history in Ireland, and has been central to the notion of Irish identity from as far back as the twelfth century, when the Welsh cleric Giraldus Cambrensis wrote about the excellence of the Irish harpers in the aftermath of the Norman Invasion. In iconography, ballads, poetry, antiquarian writing, trademarks and official emblems, the harp has consistently been used as a symbol of Ireland. Thus the instrument is considered within Ireland, and also internationally, as a distinctively national instrument. The unique repertoire and practices of the instrument are also perceived as being distinctively Irish, and are highly valued within the wider field of Irish music and beyond.

The modern harp tradition derives from a number of sources; the music of the wire-strung harpers, dating from around the sixteenth to early nineteenth century; the music of the gut-strung harp which became popularised through the nineteenth and early twentieth century; and the most recent development in Irish harping, its integration within the wider instrumental dance music tradition. The harpers of today thus share a large traditional repertoire, with some harpers playing in one or more of the historical styles. The tradition is also being refreshed by the harp's use within new performance contexts (traditional groups and orchestras) and by new compositions.

The transmission of repertoire and technique are predominantly oral in nature. While individual teaching is an important dimension to this, with expert harpers passing on the tradition to new harpers, the role of traditional music organisations is also important in

organising masterclasses, summer schools and other workshops. The instrument has generated, and is part of, a strong community of players, supported by organisations such as Cairde na Cruite; it is also part of the wider community of traditional musicians, and is supported through the activities of various organisations. The instrument also has a strong international community of players, with players of many different nationalities drawn to the instrument.

In conclusion, the harp is central to the music of Ireland, central to Irish culture, and in my position as a lecturer at Maynooth University, I strongly support the efforts to have the Irish harp and harping added to the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrian Scahill". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dr Adrian Scahill



# Meath Archaeological and Historical Society

## Cumann Seandálaíochta agus Staire na Mí

Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland  
Aibhlín McCrann,  
Chair Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland,  
c/o Communiqué International,  
26, Herbert Place.  
Dublin 2

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018

Attn: Teresa O Donnell, Secretary, Aibhlín McCrann, Chair

### UNESCO Status

Contact Reference: [info@harpireland.ie](mailto:info@harpireland.ie)

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Dear Sirs,

We are aware that *Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland* is anxious to achieve UNESCO status for the harping tradition in Ireland.

We, the Meath Archaeological and Historical Association are a heritage organisation and celebrate the centenary of our foundation this year [2018]. We have prompted the preservation of Irelands heritage through our many and varied activities over the last 100 years. Each year we publish a now highly acclaimed academic book [*Ríocht na Midhe*] comprising referenced papers from leading academics and historians from Ireland and from around the world. In addition we organise a series of talks and outings each year focusing on various aspects of Irelands heritage (built, archaeological and cultural).

We were exited to learn of the initiative currently being progressed by *Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland* and fully support this enlightened initiative. We have in the past published papers on Irelands Musical Heritage. One of the more recent papers, which we published, was by Dr. Ann Buckley, Trinity College Dublin. Her paper entitled '*Musical Monuments from Medieval Meath*' was published in the 2008 edition of *Ríocht na Midhe* and in it she examines ancient monuments such as Irelands famed Celtic High Crosses and the famous Book of Kells, for depictions of music. These depictions are mainly of the Harp. [Copy of this paper is enclosed]

Given that the Harp was actually carved onto some of these limestone high crosses and also in the Book of Kells, illustrates just how important it has been in Ireland's cultural heritage. Indeed, a significant number of Ireland's Saints travelled to Europe in the early and mid Medieval periods. Name's such as *Peregrini pro Christo* who, while born and educated in Ireland, spent their adult lives in permanent exile to preach in foreign lands. Among these are Columbanus of Bobbio (Italy), Gall of St Gallen (Switzerland), Kilian of Würzburg (Germany), Fursa of Péronne (France).

---

**Correspondence to the society:** Tom French, Meath County Library, Navan, Co. Meath

**M.A.H.S. President:** Kieran Cummins, **Hon. Secretary:** Tom French (087 4119633); [tomfrench@mahs.ie](mailto:tomfrench@mahs.ie)

**Patrons:** Bishop Michael Smith, Professor George Eoghan, Dr. Edel Bhreathnach, Thomas Pakenham

**Charity:** Registered Charity Number: 20016456,

Revenue Number: CHY 7473

**Web:** [www.mahs.ie](http://www.mahs.ie)

**Estd. 1918**





# Meath Archaeological and Historical Society

## Cumann Seandálaíochta agus Staire na Mí

Cont/d.

Much music was composed for them and this is preserved in various manuscripts in Ireland and across Europe. The instrument of choice at the time was the harp, which was suited to liturgical music. In deed it is fair to say that the Concert Harp probably developed from these earlier simple harp's.

As it happens the last major talk organised and hosted by our society was on a related topic; '*Medieval Chant for Irish Saints*'.

The Harp has always been a major part of Ireland's cultural heritage and though it suffered greatly during the penal laws where itinerant (travelling) harpist's were in fact outlawed (for fear of carrying information), it nevertheless survived, thanks to the efforts of a number of foreseeing and dedicated people. So too has much of the ancient Harp Music, much of which was collected by Edward Bunting at the 1792 Harp Festival. In fact much of this music is very popular today and is often played on other instruments such as Violin; *The Coolin of An Chúileann or An Chúilfhionn* is perhaps one of Ireland's better know air's. While it's usually played on Violin or Mandolin in modern times, Edward Bunting in fact collected this tune at the 1792 Belfast Harp Festival.

We are aware that the pipe's have already achieved an enhanced status from UNESCO and given that the Harp is in fact Ireland's national symbol and perhaps better know, we would like to see it receive the recognition it deserves.

In conclusion, we fully support this very worthy cause and firmly believe that the harp should be awarded the status it rightfully deserves.

Kieran A. Cummins,  
President

Enclosures: -

1. '*Musical Monuments from Medieval Meath*' by Dr. Ann Buckley, Trinity College Dublin, *Riocht na Midhe* 2008 edition.

Fiana Ní Chonaill,  
Woodpark House,  
Castleconnell,  
Co. Limerick,  
Ireland.

Aibhlín McCrann,  
Chair Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland,  
c/o Communiqué International,  
26, Herbert Place,  
Dublin 2,  
Ireland.

To Whom It May Concern,

As a harp teacher, performer and PhD candidate at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, University of Limerick I am pledging my support towards Harp Ireland/Cruit Éireann's bid for the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

From the moment I began learning the Irish harp under the guidance of Dr. Janet Harbison, a love for the instrument, its culture and heritage was fostered within me. It was obvious to me that the Irish Harp has the power to bring communities together and create relationships among players as well as audiences, as I not only took part in weekly solo lessons but performed with my friends as a member of the Irish Harp Orchestra. While studying, I also competed at local harp competitions (O'Carolan Harp Festival's in Granard, Co. Longford, Keadue, Co. Roscommon and Nobber, Co.Meath), and at the All Ireland Fleadh Cheoil run by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, where I achieved many merits including the Senior Harp Slow Airs title in 2012.

This inspired me to dedicate my time to complete an undergraduate degree (University of Limerick) and Masters (Newcastle University, UK) on Irish harp performance. Currently I am located at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance where I am undertaking doctoral research. I am also a guest lecturer and teach Irish harp at the music department. I am a member of Ionad na Cruite, the UL Harp Research Cluster, and I am a committee member for the upcoming international conference entitled *CFP: World Harp Traditions International Conference* scheduled for May 2018.

Furthermore, I teach the Irish harp for the international organisation Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann at local branch level in Co. Tipperary, where my students are now beginning to receive recognition through performances, exams and competitions. I voluntarily set up the 'Cuisle Harp Ensemble' three years ago to provide an outlet for my students to come together and perform. This afforded opportunities to take part in cultural and musical exchanges with harp players

from other traditions and thus far we have visited France, the Isle of Man and England.

This is a summary of my engagement with the Irish Harp to date but there are many more projects occurring which bring people together in their satellite communities. Recognition under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage would help to further connections among these communities to ensure that a two thousand year old tradition is safeguarded for future generations.

Is mise le meas,

Fiana Ní Chonaill,  
Assistant to the Performing Arts Coordinator  
Irish World Academy of Music and Dance  
University of Limerick  
Mobile 0857827937  
Email [Fiana.NiChonaill@ul.ie](mailto:Fiana.NiChonaill@ul.ie)  
Web [www.irishworldacademy.ie](http://www.irishworldacademy.ie)



10 Wilton Grove, Bessbrook, Newry, Co. Down, BT35 7EU



06/03/18

Dear Aibhlín McCrann, chair, Harp Ireland/Cruit Éireann,

My name is Sharon Carroll and I am a professional traditional Irish harp player and teacher from Newry, Co. Down. I am writing to you to demonstrate my support in Harp Ireland's case for the Irish harp's ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

It is my belief that as the National Symbol of Ireland, harp music is in the soul of the Irish people, evoking peace, wonder and awe wherever it is played. It has an amazing ability to bring people closer together and feel a real sense of belonging and community.

Growing up in Ireland I was surrounded by the harp as a symbol, seeing it on coins, official logos and signs, jewellery, china and souvenirs but my passion for the harp began on seeing a real one for the very first time in the music room of my school. I can't explain why seeing the harp stopped me totally in my tracks and how the shape of the wood and strings moved me. I just had to touch the harp and I most definitely had to hear the strings sing. I was in total awe of the look, sound and feel of the harp and its music from that moment on. Shortly after my discovery of my first harp, I was fortunate to have my first harp lesson and learnt the tune 'Brian Boru's March'. My harp journey had begun.

Many years later, I now have my own private harp school, the 'Carroll School of Harp' and also, having returned as a tutor to same school I learnt in, passing on my knowledge and experience to the next generation. I am one of the very few teachers in my community and like to feel that I am helping in my own small way to continue the musical tradition.

Playing the harp has changed my life and enriched it in so many ways. I've been fortunate to have performed solo and as part of an ensemble, throughout Ireland, in Germany, Italy and Wales. I see daily how the music and process of learning and playing has affected my pupils

and their families in such a positive way. I see weekly how my pupils' confidence grows. I delight in the performance opportunities they are given, as part of my own harp ensemble 'Sonas', with other groups and of course solo. It's a privilege to see them play at cultural events such as St Patrick's Day, Culture Night, feis, fleadh's etc.

I have just completed another personal musical journey by releasing my own harp album 'The Irish Harp - A Journey in Time'. Inspired by Brian Boru's tune and the recent commemoration of 1000 years since Brian Boru's most famous victory at the Battle of Clontarf in 1014, I set myself the challenge of researching a millennia of Irish harp music and have told the story of the history of the harp in the CD with an accompanying 16-page booklet. Through this task, I have learnt so much about how the harp is intrinsically linked to being Irish. Playing the harp and its ancient repertoire is central to our lives and identity. It's a core part of me as an individual, my pupils, their families and to our local community in the South Armagh and South Down area.

Through my research for the CD, I discovered that evidence suggests that it was the Celts who came to Ireland about 300BC with the harp and their rich love of music and poetry. Through time, harp playing and its music became a very important part of life in Ireland and by medieval times, harpers were honoured above all other musicians by Irish Chieftains and Celtic Society. In fact, the fame and prestige of the Irish harpers was so great, that in 1541, the Tudor King of England, Henry VIII chose the harp as the official national symbol of Ireland and even stamped the harp's image onto his new coins.

Harpers were clearly part of the cultural fabric of Irish society but unfortunately due to many factors, it became in great danger of being lost forever. The number of harp players in Ireland reduced to just a handful by the late 1700s and when the Belfast Harp Festival took place in 1792, there was a real sense of urgency to write down the harp music before it disappeared. If it wasn't for Edward Bunting, commissioned to transcribe the tunes played by the harpers during the festival, the harp music may have been lost forever. Edward Bunting's manuscripts survive to this day and are among the most important cultural documents in the history of the Irish Harp tradition and of course, Irish heritage and culture.

History shows us clearly how fragile the harp and its music is, and the great importance of safeguarding it as an intangible Cultural Heritage. Since the late 1700s, the future of the harp required the help of forward looking individuals and organisations to preserve it and

care for it for future generations. How enriched our lives are now thanks to those people and the organisations they set up to foster the tradition? Such a rich heritage must not be forgotten today and it should continue to be nourished and cherished for all forever.

I feel a strong passion and need to help sustain the harp playing tradition and save it for future generations. The harp's ancient repertoire will soon be totally in the hands of the young harpers of Ireland; the young enthusiastic pupil who plays in ensembles, who joins in at local sessions, performs at school, summer schools, festivals, competitions and weddings now with influences from the wider International world of music. The legacy of the Irish harp is theirs to take forward into the future. I sincerely believe that the UNESCO status will help ensure that these young people have every opportunity to learn and experience the harp's uniqueness as well as be in a strong position to pass the musical skills and passion on to the generations to come.

Yours sincerely,



Sharon Carroll

Irish Traditional harpist

CARROLL SCHOOL of HARP

S O N O S  
Harp Ensemble



Avondale,  
Killarney Road,  
Abbeyfeale,  
Co. Limerick  
3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018

To whom it may concern,

I, Michelle Mulcahy, support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The harp has long been a symbol associated with Ireland and all things Irish dating back to Ireland's mythic and political history. The Irish harp itself represents the mysticism, the lyrical majesty and beauty of Irish music, song, poetry and language. But yet it also stands for steadfast independence, loyalty, pride and the centuries long striving and struggle for an Irish identity. The Irish harp is an instrument of ancient lineage and a poignant symbol of tradition within the dimensions of cultural, musical and aesthetical associations.

Within the history and folklore of Ireland many references are made to the symbolic potency of the Irish harp and its music, a tradition that is over one thousand years old. The historical evidence pertaining to the harping tradition in Ireland are documented in various historically significant eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century printed sources such as Bunting (1796), O' Curry (1873), Rimmer (1969), Boydell (1996), Armstrong (1904), O' Donnell (2009) to name a few. These important documentations leads to a manifestation that the harp was an important part of the nation's cultural life over many centuries. Within the old Gaelic aristocratic society the harp, in particular, was considered a noble instrument of royal dignity. The music cultivated in ancient Ireland was at the highest degree of excellence and harpers were held in the uppermost of regard as accounted for by Giraldus Cambrensis in his *Topography of Ireland* (1187).

Since the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the symbol of the harp and harper rose to a level of political stature that represented a powerful political symbol of Irish nationalism. The iconic emblem of the harp itself represented a political driving force in Irish history and became the country's national symbol with the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922. Not only is the harp engraved on the seal of office of the President of Ireland and on the national flag, it is also an important symbol of Irish coinage and Irish government documents, a design based on the fourteenth century 'Brian Ború Harp' preserved in the Museum of Trinity College, Dublin.

As a performer, teacher, doctoral researcher and having toured extensively worldwide, I have become more and more aware of how significant the Irish harp is in the cultural and performative world. My own doctoral research stemmed from my practice as an Irish Harpist that ultimately paved the way for a unique academic journey in which I undertook intercultural musical exchanges to Burma between 2009 and 2012. The harp is also an iconic instrument in Burma or Myanmar as it is referred to today, a musical instrument that has played an important role in the development of Myanmar culture over centuries. Establishing cultural connections and dialogue among the two countries was ultimately facilitated by my practice as an Irish harpist. The harp allowed for a sharing of two cultural histories between Ireland and Burma, an experience that enriched cross cultural diversity and creativity. Being a performing harpist is a representation of a living form of Irish heritage. Performing harpists throughout Ireland play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the instruments intangible cultural heritage.

Having the experience of performing worldwide I have long been aware that there seems to be a reoccurring theme surrounding the sound of the Irish harp, in which diverse audiences report that the instrument's resonant tone creates a sense of cultural attachment and affinity. Audiences worldwide are loyal supporters and followers of the Irish harping tradition, a tradition which is celebrated at many music festivals throughout the globe. It is an instrument symbolising indigenous culture and natural beauty through which audience members relate to in a very profound way. The instrument itself has also been and remains a channel for the creative energies of both artisan and musician.

It is essential to preserve its legacy and ensure its sustainability. As a teacher it is imperative to me that students are educated not only on the technique, repertoire and craftwork of the instrument but also of the centuries of pride harpers and harpists alike share in performing the national instrument of Ireland. A specific skill set is required in order to play the harp but also creativity, imagination and an understanding of Irish musical culture and the harp's ancient history are key components in passing on our musical tradition to the current and next generation of harpers.

It is critical we safeguard our unique cultural tradition and raise an awareness of the importance of protecting our cultural heritage that is the Irish harp. In the last forty years or so the Irish harping tradition has witnessed an extraordinary renaissance not only in performance, composition, recording and research but also in the craft of harp making. Irish harp makers are renowned worldwide and they continue to be guardians and craft makers of an ancient musical tradition. In a recent historic report on the Harping

Tradition in Ireland (2017), compiled by Toner Quinn for the Arts Council of Ireland, it states that 'due to an outstanding effort by a small Irish harping community over the past sixty years, however, Irish harping has been revived and reimagined, and this thousand-year-old bedrock of Irish artistic life is now stronger than it has been for two hundred years. It is an exciting niche scene in contemporary Irish musical life, undergoing a new wave of performance, composition, collaboration and experimentation, and enriched by world-class Irish and international practitioners.'

Let us recognise the outstanding efforts by this community who have and continue to do such extraordinary work in promoting and preserving the legacy of our ancient instrument, the Irish Harp. I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Michelle Mulcahy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Michelle Mulcahy,  
PhD, MA, Grad. Dip, BA



10 Pittville Street,  
Portobello,  
Edinburgh,  
EH15 2BY.

5/03/18

## **The Irish harp and ratification as Intangible Cultural Heritage**

To Whom It May Concern,

Regarding Cruit Éireann's bid for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (which Ireland signed in 2015), I'm happy to add my unqualified support for this move to secure official international endorsement for a unique strand of living Irish culture.

As an Edinburgh-based freelance writer contributing a regular column on folk, jazz and related music to *The Scotsman* newspaper (for which I was formerly a long-standing staff features and arts writer), and who, as it were, married into Irish culture, I have spent much time in Ireland and with Irish musicians. The harp has long been recognised as a national symbol of Ireland, its heraldic significance drawing on an ancient bardic culture which vanished with the 17<sup>th</sup>-century decline of Gaelic Ireland. While itinerant harpers, such as the renowned Turlough O'Carolan, continued to play and compose under patronage, the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the instrument precariously close to extinction, until a fashionable revival of interest in things Celtic saw it re-adopted, largely as a drawing-room instrument.

Over the past four decades or so, however, the harp has enjoyed a spectacular renaissance in Ireland, associated with the general revival of interest in traditional music, but specifically pursuing both the study of the Irish harp's ancient history and historical music as well as forging new paths within the traditional and contemporary music scenes, making it very much a part of contemporary Irish cultural life.

Helping foster steadily growing interest has been the society *Cairde na Cruite* – "Friends of the Harp", founded in 1960 and probably the oldest Irish organisation devoted to a single instrument, and more recently Cruit Éireann – "Harp Ireland", established in 2016 with the support of the Irish Arts Council. Seminal figures in the present flourishing have included the late Grainne Yeats, singer, player and historian, who is credited with the particular revival of the ancient *cláirseach* or wire-strung harp. Among other things she helped regenerate public awareness in the music of the great 18<sup>th</sup>-century Irish harper Turlough O'Carolan during the Sixties and Seventies, as also did contemporary-classical composer and folk ensemble pioneer Seán Ó Riada, although he himself was not a harper. Subsequent to that, the addition of



harper Derek Bell to the Chieftains, who became international ambassadors for Irish traditional music, helped bring the instrument on to the international stage.

Similarly engaging with the ancient, wire-strung Irish harp in more recent years has been Siobhán Armstrong, while Kathleen Loughnane has helped bring historical repertoire to wider audiences, both with the popular “Irish-baroque” trio Dordan and in her own playing and researches.

At the same time, harpists such as Anne Marie O’Farrell have helped develop new playing techniques and composers such as Shaun Davey and Cormac Cassidy have used the Irish harp within orchestral contexts.

Emerging during the 1970s Máire Ní Chathasaigh had a considerable impact, demonstrating the harp’s flexibility and indeed muscularity in handling traditional jigs and reels, while new generations of virtuosi such as Laoise Kelly, Gráinne Hambly and Michelle Mulcahy have helped usher Irish harping well and truly into the 21st century.

The music of a people informs and at the same time reflects both their image of themselves and their culture and how they are perceived by others outwith that culture. The renaissance of the Irish harp has firmly established it as far more than a mere national symbol, but as a national instrument, well placed to look to the future with real confidence.

One is tempted to regard the Irish harp’s current situation in the nation’s contemporary culture as sounding out what the legendary Irish hero Fionn mac Cumhaill is said to have described as the sweetest sound of all – “the music of what is happening”.

**Jim Gilchrist**

**0131 669 8235 (home)**

**0771 8700 696 (mobile)**

[gilchrist767@btinternet.com](mailto:gilchrist767@btinternet.com)

133 Corke Abbey,  
Bray,  
Co. Wicklow

Aibhlín McCrann,  
Chair Cruit Éireann,  
c/o Communiqué International,  
26 Herbert Place,  
Dublin 2

4 March 2018

Dear Ms McCrann,

I am writing in relation to Cruit Éireann's application for the Irish harp to receive UNESCO status as an element of intangible cultural heritage.

As a harp player and teacher I believe that the Irish harp should receive this status due to the key role which it has played and continues to play in Irish cultural life.

As Ireland's national emblem, the harp is an instrument which is inextricably linked to Irish identity. The harp is used as a visual representation of Ireland both at home and abroad through our passports, currency and government documentation. As a result, the harp is instantly recognisable as a symbol of Ireland. Due to its strong links with our national identity, the harp tradition is one which should be preserved and safeguarded.

As well as holding an important symbolic value, the harping tradition is a vibrant and living one. The harp continues to bring communities together through organisations such as Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland, Cairde na Cruite, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and the Historical Harp Society. Harpers across the country are involved in classes, performances and festivals on a regular basis.

As a harper I believe that the harp tradition is of great cultural significance and has the potential to enrich the lives of all those who engage with it. The harp plays an important role in my own local community. In Wicklow a number of young people come together to play the harp in classes, a harp ensemble and a trad orchestra under the auspices of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. The harp provides a means for these young musicians to socialise in a creative environment. Through performances this in turn has an impact on the wider community, enabling them to engage with Ireland's cultural heritage. The harp plays a key role in events in our area including marriages, funerals and community gatherings and the craft of harp making provides employment and a further means of engaging creatively with Ireland's cultural history.

The growth of the harp tradition in Ireland over the past century has been unprecedented. Cairde na Cruite was established in 1960 to promote what was then a tradition very much in decline. In 2005 the harp activity in Ireland was such that Dublin was selected as the venue of the World Harp Congress. The tradition has continued to grow and flourish in the intervening years. The

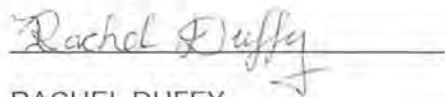


vibrancy of the harp tradition in Ireland was recently showcased through Cruit Éireann's inaugural National Harp Day.

UNESCO status would help in safeguarding the status of the harp in Ireland and in continuing the momentum of this revival, ensuring that as many members of the public as possible can engage with this rich part of Ireland's cultural history.

In conclusion, I believe that the harp is worthy of this status due to its symbolic role as Ireland's national emblem, the rich musical value of the harp tradition, the role which it plays in the cultural life of my local community, particularly in relation to young people, and the impact which this status would have on the future growth of the harp tradition.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rachel Duffy". The signature is written over a horizontal line that extends across the width of the signature.

RACHEL DUFFY

**itma**

Irish Traditional  
Music Archive

Taisce Cheol  
Dúchais Éireann

7 March 2018

**To Whom It May Concern**

This is to support wholeheartedly the application of Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland for the IRISH HARP to be included by UNESCO on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in accordance with the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, to which the Government of Ireland is a signatory.

The Irish harp, in all its forms, has a history of at least 1,000 years in Ireland. Played both as a solo instrument and as an instrument of accompaniment, it has been central to Irish social life through the centuries. The harp and the power of its music feature prominently in early Irish mythology; its image is found on stone and metal artifacts of early periods of Irish archaeology; the skill of its players is praised in early ethnographic descriptions of Ireland; its earliest surviving instrument belongs to the middle ages; its music begins to appear in manuscript in the 16th century; it begins to be played outside Ireland, in Europe, in the 17th century; the first collection of Irish music, published in the early 18th century, consists largely of harp music.

But the Irish harp is not only an instrument of historic significance. More importantly, it an instrument of contemporary significance and it has become an international musical instrument. It is widely played today, in Ireland and throughout the world (largely in Europe, North America, and Asia), and is currently enjoying an unprecedented period of expansion. Young players and adult virtuoso players are now numerous, and they interact in various classes, workshops, and festivals. Printed collections of music, published tutors, sound recordings and video recordings are many, and demand for instruments often outstrips supply. The instrument is increasingly played in concert with other instruments of Irish traditional music, and its sound is immediately recognisable as an iconic sound of Ireland.

Although the Irish harp is essentially a musical instrument, it also has importance as an image highly symbolic of Irish nationality. It is the official symbol of the Irish State, featuring on its currency, on the logos of its government departments and agencies, and on its stamps. In popular culture, it enjoys worldwide recognition as a symbol of Ireland and features prominently on tourism artifacts.

In all, the Irish harp and its music is undoubtedly a significant element in the intangible cultural heritage of the world and its recognition as such by UNESCO is greatly to be desired.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicholas Carolan". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Nicholas Carolan

Director Emeritus

Irish Traditional Music Archive





Chiara Pedrazzetti  
Scima Gron  
6537 Grono (GR)  
Switzerland

Aibhlín McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Éireann / Harp Ireland  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2  
Ireland

Grono, March 10, 2018

Dear Sirs,

I want to declare my support to the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for Inscription on the Representative List of the intangible Cultural Heritage .

This ancient instrument has a millenary history, which makes it one of the major means man has used to produce and enjoy music. The world cultural background owes a great credit to the Irish tradition of harp players. Besides being a symbol of the Irish nation, and evoking intense historical times, it is a peculiar instrument.

Not only we have the duty to preserve and pass the rich Irish musical tradition to young people all over the world, but we also have to explore and exploit the large potential of this extraordinary instrument and encourage players to discover its versatility.

As musician, harpist, teacher, choir conductor, co-president of the Swiss Harp Association and founder of a unique Atelier dedicated to harp in Switzerland, I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for

the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

With my fondest regards

Chiara Pedrazzetti

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chiara Pedrazzetti". The script is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end of the name.

tit. ARPAtelier

harpist/ choir conductor

co-President Swiss Harp Association

<http://www.chiarapedrazzetti.com/>

<http://www.labirintoduo.com/>

<http://www.pentafogliomusic.ch>

<http://harpmasters.com/>

<http://www.christoffelkonsort.ch/>

<http://www.swissharp.org>

<http://www.schertler.com>

**EDWARD WALSH  
CONSTANCE CASSIDY S.C.  
Lissadell House  
Co. Sligo**

13 March 2018

Aibhlín McCrann

By Email: [aibhlin.mccrann@communique.ie](mailto:aibhlin.mccrann@communique.ie)

**Re: UNESCO: The Irish Harp**

To whom it may concern:

Dear Sirs,

We write in support of the case for the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

We are aware that Piobari Uileann has achieved this status.

We write to you as the owners of Lissadell House and Gardens in County Sligo, the home of the Gore Booth family and in particular, the childhood home of Countess Markievicz, the great female revolutionary who fought for Irish freedom and who became the first female cabinet minister in a western democracy.

Constance grew up in Lissadell with her sister Eva Gore Booth: both girls were trained (as girls were then) in the art of needlework, drawing, painting and to play musical instruments, in this particular instance, the piano and the Irish harp.

When we acquired Lissadell, we set about acquiring as many of the contents of that “old grey mansion” as we could.

In particular, we were fortunate to have acquired Booth magnificent Erard harps which had been owned by the Gore Booth family and which had been played by both Constance and Eva.

These two harps (and others we subsequently acquired) form part of the Lissadell collection and attract significant public visitor interest.

We are aware that there are many persons and organisations supporting this cause who have no doubt explained why the harp **MUST** be considered for ratification under the convention. These people and organisations have probably urged their support in much more fluent and persuasive terms than us: suffice it for us to say that this magical musical instrument has been inextricably bound up with the Irish national identity for upwards of 1,000 years.

We are proud to be a voice urging its ratification under the UNESCO convention.



Yours faithfully,

**EDWARD WALSH S.C. / CONSTANCE CASSIDY S.C.**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2018

To whom it may concern,

I write on behalf of Music Network and in support of the bid, led by Cruit Éireann/Harp Ireland, to have the Irish harp ratified under UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ireland.

Music Network is a national music touring and development organisation of 32 years' standing, whose mission is to provide access to high quality live music for people throughout Ireland, regardless of location or circumstance, and to support the career development of musicians. The organisation was established by The Arts Council of Ireland and holds a unique position within the Irish music sector, achieved through its far-reaching and multi-faceted partnership model and extensive range of programmes (details of which are available at [www.musicnetwork.ie](http://www.musicnetwork.ie)).

In recent times, Music Network has witnessed a revival of interest in the Irish harp, with many young players taking up the instrument, for example. This is in part due to our establishment of Music Generation, The National Music Education Programme ([www.musicgeneration.ie](http://www.musicgeneration.ie)) in 2010 which aims to provide every child in Ireland with access to affordable music tuition and currently has over 40,000 benefiting, as well as the stintless work of many individual harpers and relevant groups and organisations over the years.

Cruit Éireann is a highly professional and dynamic organisation comprising Ireland's leading harpers, who have strived tirelessly to promote our national musical instrument and raise awareness of, and respect for, our unique living tradition of harping in all its richness and diversity. As our national symbol, the harp is intrinsic to our Irish identity and to expression of our distinctive creative 'voice', and Music Network commends the work of Cruit Éireann in making this bid to UNESCO to gain recognition for its unique status and secure its sustainability for generations to come.

Accordingly, Music Network recommends unreservedly that the Irish Harp is granted UNESCO-protected status given its central importance to the lives of individuals, groups and communities throughout Ireland, past, present and future.

Yours faithfully,



Sharon Rollston

Chief Executive Officer

Aibhlín McCrann, Chair,  
Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland,  
c/o Communiqué International,  
26 Herbert Place,  
Dublin 2.

Monday, 26 February 2018

**RE:** Letter of support from Music Generation DAC

Dear Aibhlín,

Music Generation supports the case put forward by Cruit Éireann and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Ireland, which was signed in December 2015.

Music Generation is Ireland's national music education programme, initiated by Music Network, co-funded by U2, The Ireland Funds, the Department of Education and Skills and Local Music Education Partnerships. Established in 2009, Music Generation currently creates more than 41,000 opportunities each year for children and young people to engage in vocal and instrumental tuition across all musical genres and styles, in 20 different areas of the country.

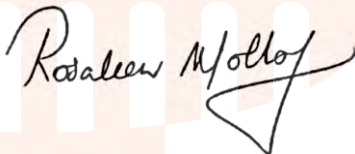
Music Generation recognises the Irish harp as a significant part of our cultural heritage and national identity. Across many of our partnership areas we are growing the level of harp tuition among younger people, building capacity in the sector by encouraging new communities of players and harp-makers, and in turn enhancing the indigenous economy. We view this as essential to preserving the legacy of our national instrument and to ensure its sustainability into the future.

In County Laois, for instance, 118 young people ages 7 to 18 currently receive harp tuition through Music Generation. The partnership has established three harp ensembles and a county harp orchestra, in addition to hosting an annual national festival which draws young and professional harpers from counties throughout Ireland.

Such initiatives, developed to celebrate and sustain harp-playing, have a pivotal role in 'bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them'. We view our provision in harp tuition as vital, 'Considering the need to build greater awareness, especially among the younger generations, of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage and of its safeguarding'.

We invite you to include this statement of support in making your application to UNESCO and we wish you every success in achieving this significant status for the Irish harp, an object in and symbol of our unique living culture.

Yours sincerely,



Rosaleen Molloy  
National Director, Music Generation

Music Generation  
c/o Music Network  
National Concert Hall Building  
Earlsfort Terrace  
Dublin 2

t: +353 1 475 8454  
f: +353 1 475 8873

e: [info@musicgeneration.ie](mailto:info@musicgeneration.ie)  
w: [www.musicgeneration.ie](http://www.musicgeneration.ie)

Directors: Leo Blennerhassett [Chair], Pat Burke, Dr Clíona Doris, Martin Drury, Jackie Maguire, Deirdre McCrea, James Morris, Chantal O'Sullivan, Shaun Purcell, Bill Whelan  
National Director: Rosaleen Molloy  
Music Generation DAC is a subsidiary company of Music Network CLG limited by shares, registered in Dublin. Company number 491331.  
Music Generation is a registered charity. CHY number 19679.



# moya brennan

7, crofton terrace, dun laoghaire, co. dublin, ireland  
tel/fax. 01 230 4615 email: mobren52@eircom.net

Moya Brennan  
7 Crofton Terrace  
Dún Laoghaire,  
Baile Átha Cliath

To whom it may concern,

I have been a performing artist for over four decades now, as lead singer and harper with the group, Clannad. We have been fortunate enough to have received many awards and accolades for our music, including a BAFTA, an Ivor Novello and a Grammy. I also received an Emmy for my work on a television series called 'Music of Ireland: Welcome Home' which traced the rich tapestry of Irish music as it has evolved.

A central and constant feature of my own music and the music of Clannad has been the Irish harp. Its sound and its music connects us with our past in a way that no other instrument does.

The harp is also our national symbol and has carried an intrinsic element of our cultural identity with it for over ten centuries now. This tradition has been passed down to us and must be safeguarded and passed onto the next generation and beyond in the same way.

I am writing to express my heartfelt support for the application to have the Irish harp ratified under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of this Intangible Cultural Heritage.

le meas is buíochas,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Moya Brennan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Moya Brennan



The University of  
Nottingham

UNITED KINGDOM · CHINA · MALAYSIA

**Dr Lonán Ó Briain**

**Assistant Professor of Music**

**School of Humanities**

*Department of Music*

*The University of Nottingham*

*University Park*

*Nottingham*

*NG7 2RD*

**t:** +44 (0)115 951 4641

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**e:** [Lonan.OBriain@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:Lonan.OBriain@nottingham.ac.uk)

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/music/people/lonan.obriain](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/music/people/lonan.obriain)

19 March 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to wholeheartedly endorse the ratification of the Irish harp under the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). This letter is intended to support an application for UNESCO ICH status for the Irish harp by Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland in collaboration with the Government of Ireland Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Similar to the 'Traditional music of the Morin Khuur' (inscribed in 2008) and the 'Khaen music of the Lao people' (inscribed in 2017), the music of the Irish harp is popular throughout the island of Ireland. Festivals and major occasions are regularly marked with performances by harpists, and grassroots educational initiatives ensure that the tradition continues to be passed onto the next generation. Beyond the musical sound of the instrument, the image of the harp functions as a central icon of the State. This iconography draws on the centuries-old Celtic harping traditions of northwestern Europe in general and Ireland in particular. Inscription of the Irish harp on the UNESCO List of ICH would enhance the profile of the instrument and provide important impetus to ongoing sustainability initiatives.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any queries about this application.

Sincerely

Dr Lonán Ó Briain

Cashel,

Achill Island,

Co. Mayo.

5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

**To whom it may concern.**

I am a visual artist living on Achill Island and it is a dream of mine to see our national emblem getting the recognition it deserves and to ensure that it will become stronger as part of our national identity.

I fully support the nomination of the Irish Harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. I believe it is so important to promote our historic culture and the harp has been with us for more than 1000 years and embedded in our identity. We deserve to have it included on all our arts and culture official documentation.

I am lucky to have been a participant and supporter of the Achill International Harp festival created and organised by the renowned Harpist Laoise Kelly. It has had wonderful support locally, nationally and internationally and is going from strength to strength. I made a harp at their workshop and am happy to have the wonderful Laoise as my tutor. She was also responsible for putting our National Harp Day in place in 2017. The awareness in the community especially in our schools and among the younger generation is so important to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage.

I look forward to seeing the Harp being a visible part of our National identity in the globalization and social transformation we are processing at this time.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Lavelle Burke



Dooagh  
Achill  
Co. Mayo

6<sup>th</sup> March 2018

I think the harp should be on the UNESCO list because it's very important as the symbol of Ireland.

I love the harp because it has a beautiful sound and it looks very nice the way it is.

My mum made a harp at the Achill International Harp Festival and I love to play it. I think more people should have the chance to play the harp.

We should all try and make sure the harp stays special in Ireland.

From Muireann Lielty

Age 11

Aideen, Claire and Laoise McNamara  
4 Kildavnet  
Chongie Road  
Dooagh  
Achill  
Co Mayo

5<sup>th</sup> March, 2018

To Whom it Concerns,

We would like to submit our support for the consideration of the Irish Harp for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Ireland.

In Ireland, we live with the harp in many aspects of daily life – both visually, on our coins and paper money, not to mention branding of local and national companies and aurally through traditional music and modern music – and identify with the Harp as our national symbol.

We are very fortunate on Achill Island, Co Mayo, to have the fabulously talented Laoise Kelly living and playing amongst us, and tutoring locally with high attendances continually. Laoise is the creator and driving force for the Achill International Harp Festival which introduces and showcases all genres of Harp playing for one and all. This festival also gives participants a chance to build a Harp, under the guidance of local instrument makers, Graham Wright and Charles Perpoil, for personal use – making it possible to own your very-own-Harp!

We, in this house, love playing and listening to the Harp and feel it deserves this recognition.

Best wishes,

Aideen McNamara, Claire McNamara, Laoise McNamara

Aideen, Claire and Laoise McNamara

Riverside

Keel West

Dooagh

Achill

Co Mayo

5<sup>th</sup> March '18

To Whom It May Concern,

I wish to support the application to have the Irish Harp considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2013, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the intangible Cultural Heritage. The harp, as our national symbol, is so intrinsic to our Irish identity.

Having made my own harp during Achill International Harp Festival 2016, I am now taking part in classes with the renowned harpist Laoise Kelly.

It is essential to preserve its legacy and ensure its sustainability.

Kind regards,

Mary McNamara



**Dr Desmond Kelly  
Belclare Lodge  
Belclare  
Westport  
Co.Mayo.**

7<sup>th</sup> March 2018

To whom it concerns,

I strongly endorse the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, as the Irish harp has a long and varied history from references in our oldest annals through the middle ages into modern times. It is truly Ireland's and Europe's oldest musical instrument.

The ancient name for the harp was cruit. This was a smaller size than the clairseach that evolved from it. Cruit signifies a sharp high breast, such as in a goose, a heron or a curlew. The gaelic name of the curley is crottach, because of its high arched breast. A hump deformity of the upper spine, is called cruit in Gaelic. This came it from its broader sound box.

As a result of the Convention of Drumceat, at Roe Park near Limavady (Co. Derry), in 590, there were three great issues to be resolved. St Columcille, one the three greatest Irish saints of the early Irish church, came from Iona in Scotland where he had founded an Abbey, together with the Prince of the Scottish Dalriada, Aedan, to plead the cause of the Scottish colony with the Irish King.

The Irish Dalriada kingdom controlled the western half of Scotland.

There was three disputes to be resolved between the Irish High King and Aeden, leader of Dalriada -

- the independence of Dalriada and the paying of a tribute by this kingdom to the High King of Ireland
- the proposal to control the musicians, minstrels and harpers of Ireland, as their numbers were becoming a problem
- whether to depose or reinstate Scannalan, Prince of Ossory, as he was a prisoner of the King and had refused to pay a head rent to the King

So the debate about the cost of the Irish harpers and their harps were being resolved at the highest level in the 6<sup>th</sup> century.

The Annals of Ulster chronicle the death of Ailill the Harper, son of Aodh Slaine, who was killed in the year 634.

Saint Máedóc (558-626AD) (Áedan) was a saint in Irish tradition, founder and first bishop of Ferns, Co. Wexford, and a patron of many other churches. He is depicted playing a harp on a stone cross.

Saint Eunan 624-704 (Adamnan) refers to the cruit as follows “On an occasion where St. Columcille was seated with some disciples on the banks of Loch Ce, Co. Leitrim, a bard entered into conversation with the little band of monks.

When the poet –minstrel had departed, the disciples of St. Columcille asked : ‘Why did you not ask the bard Cronan to sing a song for us to the accompaniment of his cruit [harp], as poets are wont to do?’

This cruit playing was used to attract and help in getting converts to the church. The cruit which continued for hundreds of years. It evolved in the fourth quarter of the first millennium, into the clairseach (now the traditional harp) 29 to 33 inch harp. Both forms of the Irish harp continued. However on coinage, it was the cruit its earlier precursor that is depicted.

From the 8th century onwards the harp was depicted on stone monuments made by Irish monks in both Ireland and Scotland.

Harp playing was especially cherished by chieftains and Kings who considered it their preserve. The harper had a place of honour nearer the Irish King.

The cruit (harp), the earlier smaller harp played on the knee while sitting, is depicted in 1251, issued by King John and Edward I, coinage stamped in Dublin and repeated by King Henry the VIII.

Dante (1265-1321) Italian writes about the Irish Harp (clairseach) at the end of the 13th century, “this most ancient instrument was brought from Ireland where they are excellently made and great numbers of the inhabitants of that island, having practised it for many centuries. These harps these people use are considerably larger than ours, and the strings of brass, and a few of steel for the highest notes, as in the clavichord. The musicians who perform on it keep the nails of their fingers long, performing them with care in the shape of quills which strike the strings of the spinet”

Irish harpers accompanied Edward I on his expedition in 1301 and 1303. In 1384 harper Carrol O'Daly composed the beautiful love song "Eibhlin a Ruin" Eibhlin my Love.

In 1490 the King of Scotland employed two Irish Harpers and paid them 18 shillings.

Irish harper accompanied the Taoiseach of the O'Donnell Clan (Hugh Roe O'Donnell), when he visited the King of Scotland in 1495 and again a few years later.

The Welsh according to our annals in the years 950 to 1050 show many Irish harpers going to Wales. Griffith ap Cynan the great Welsh leader, had an Irish mother 1065. He brought harpers (among other instrumentalists) from Ireland back to Wales in 1137 to train the Welsh.

Geraldus Cambrensis, a Welsh man (never a friend of Ireland or never had anything good to say about it) was chosen to accompany one of the Henry II of England's son John in 1185, who went on his first expedition to Ireland noted that "Scotland and Wales seek with emulous endeavours to imitate Ireland in Music".

While Ireland has a long history with the harp instrument going back into the first millennium. We have stone monuments showing depictions of the early clairseach (traditional Irish Harp) in the later first Millennium.

In the late 16th century and early 17th century as the English gained control of Ireland, the Harp and their harper were seen to be symbolising the independence of the country. The English suppressed the harpers, arrested and banished or killed them. Harps were destroyed. It was seen as symbol of nationalism. This started the decline of the harp in Ireland.

Never the less the World's First Harp Competition was held in Granard Co Longford in 1781 sponsored by the Anglo Saxons. Seven harpers competed at Granard including a lady Rose Mooney.

The second competition was held in 1782. Nine competitors competed.

In 1783 a third harp competition was held in Granard where eleven competitors competed. This was followed by a fourth competition in 1784.

The last Granard competition of that period was held in 1785 attended by over a thousand persons. Very attractive financial prizes were on offer.

This led into the most famous of all harp competitions in 1792 in Belfast, where ten of the most famous harpers competed for four days. This competition and the music they played was recorded by Bunting for posterity. This competition



was sponsored by some of most renowned Presbyterians of the time. Their outlook though descendents of English stock, at that time was quite nationalist.

The most famous Irish harper of them all was the blind Turlough O'Carolan 1670-1738. In excess of 220 of his pieces survived and are now played all over the world.

In the late 19th century, traditional music in general declined, with the many famines before the great famine of the 1840's where over one million died. These famines and the destitute poverty that went with it decimated Irish music, and the harp in particular. Never the less there was mild revival in the early 20th century.

In modern times since the 1990's there has been a huge revival in harp making and playing. Hundreds of pupils are now learning the harp, probably more than any other period in Irish history.

Competitions are keenly competed for. Many harp craftsmen are busy creating harps in the traditional manner.

Ireland's harp, our oldest, and Europe's oldest instrument, has now truly recovered.

Its unique place in Irish history is safe once again.

It would be wonderful to have the Irish Harp's future further safe guarded by gaining UNESCO intangible cultural heritage status.

Is mise le meas,

Desmond Kelly.

'The Bothán'  
Keelwest,  
Dooagh,  
Achill,  
Co. Mayo.

6 March 2018

I am writing to give my support in the nomination of the Irish Harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Having been involved with the Achill International Harp Festival since its inaugural year, the harp has had a hugely positive influence on both myself and my family. My children have had the amazing opportunity to learn harp from Laoise Kelly, Grainne Hambly and Úna Ní Fhlannagáin not to mention a number of International harpers.

We, as a community in Achill, have had the privilege over the last number of years, of being exposed to the best of Irish and International harp music right here on our doorstep. The tradition of the harp has brought out a huge sense of local pride in our culture and has also brought the Achill community together. We have seen the best in people, be they volunteers, local businesses, course participants, committee members or school children. People of all ages and backgrounds have supported the harp festival and all things harp in a way that could never have been imagined.

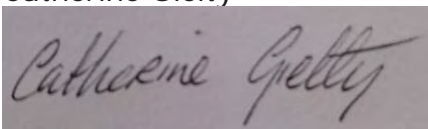
As a result of the inaugural Achill International Harp Festival, seven harps were made by people in the community, including myself. All of these individuals attend weekly harp classes with Laoise Kelly. The majority of these people would have had little or no previous musical background. In addition there are 10 Achill children playing harp at various levels between the ages of 8 and 18.

The harp is a huge part of our Irish identity and rich cultural heritage. As someone who has had a hugely positive experience of the harp I feel it is crucial that we do everything to preserve and protect the legacy of the Irish Harp for generations to come.

I wish you every success in your bid to gain UNESCO recognition of the harp as part of our Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Le meas,

Catherine Gielty

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads "Catherine Gielty".

Newtown,  
Keel  
Achill Island  
Co.Mayo.

6<sup>th</sup> March 2018

To whom it may concern,

I would like to voice my support for adding The Irish Harp to the list of 'Intangible Heritage traditions', of UNESCO world Heritage.

I have recently taken up playing the harp. Not alone am I learning about a very ancient tradition, I am meeting in houses and cultural venues with other interested players. This has enhanced the quality of the time I spend with friends at a local level.

I feel The Irish Harp tradition should be protected formally and encouraged at all levels. The Harp is a well known cultural icon in Ireland and abroad and is a symbol on our currency as far back as my memory takes me.

Regards,

Amanda Mac Mahon



26 Shrewsbury Road  
Ballsbridge  
Dublin 4  
Mobile: 086-2568871

12 March 2018

Ms Aibhlín McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Eireann, Harp Ireland  
Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2

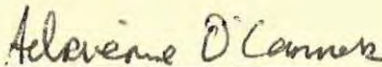
Dear Ms McCrann,

I support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

As Ireland's national symbol and with a history over 1000 years, I feel it is essential to preserve the legacy of the Irish harp and ensure its sustainability.

I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely,

  
Adrienne O'Connor

Ms Aibhlín McCrann

Chair, Cruit Eireann, Harp Ireland

26 Herbert Place, Dublin 2

Mobile: 086-2568871 | Email: aibhlin@harpireland.com



**Achill International Harp Festival**

Shore road

Dú Acha

Acaill

Co. Maigh Eo

[info@AchillHarpFestival.ie](mailto:info@AchillHarpFestival.ie)

+353 86 2603 405

[www.AchillHarpFestival.ie](http://www.AchillHarpFestival.ie)

6ú Márta 2018

To whom it may concern,

As an organization which celebrates the harp as an intrinsic part of our cultural heritage, Achill International Harp Festival strongly supports the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO, for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Ireland is unique in having a musical instrument, the Irish harp, as its national emblem. This indicates the primacy of the harp in Irish culture. The harping tradition predates Christianity in Ireland. Tara was the gathering place for thousands of harpers to 142 kings, and the harp was an integral part of the ancient Irish parliament at Tara. The harp has been used in the coat of arms of Ireland since 1270 and is the symbol of the Irish State today. It is found in the seals of the President, Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Government Ministers, on State currency and is the insignia of the Irish Law Courts.

Achill International Harp Festival (AIHF) aligns itself with these ancient harping traditions by gathering harpers at Samhain to reflect, explore, develop and promote this beautiful musical form. The festival promotes harp through performance of Irish and international harpers, through collaborations with other instruments and musical cultures, through harp discussions, harp classes and harp making workshops to introduce affordable harps and encourage greater participation among aspiring and emerging musicians. Through these activities, we pass on our rich tradition, encourage the making of Irish harps, encourage young players, develop audiences and bring our community together. The significant participation, engagement and full capacity of all activities in AIHF validates the harp's significance in Irish culture, but also proves the need to broaden awareness of, and respect for, our unique living culture, of which the harp is an intrinsic part.

We are keenly aware of the significance of the Irish harp to our cultural heritage and it is critical that we safeguard this. On behalf of Achill International Harp Festival, we would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Is mise le

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light brown rectangular background. The signature reads 'Laoise Kelly' in a cursive script.

meas,

Laoise Kelly

Director



6 Church Mews Malahide Co. Dublin K36 K524

27 February 2018

Ms Aibhlin McCrann  
Chair, Cruit Eireann  
c/o Communique International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2

Dear Ms McCrann,

I write to support the application by Cruit Eireann / Harp Ireland, for the formal recognition by UNESCO of the harp as an element of intangible cultural heritage.

The harp has been a symbol of Ireland, and all things Irish, for many generations. It is difficult to envisage any other national symbol which would be so instantly recognisable. Apart from its use as the formal symbol of the Irish state, designs based on the harp have had many adaptations such as that for your own organisation.

I wish you success in your application.

Yours sincerely,



Anne Leonard

"The Bungalow",  
Kilough,  
Cill Mhocheanóg,  
Co. Chill Mhantáin.  
19/3/2018

A Chara,

Is mise Aoife Ní Bhriain, táim ceithre bliana déag d'aois agus seinnim an chruit. Is cuid an-mhór de mo shaol í an chruit agus an ceol, agus ní féidir liom mo shaol a shamhlú gan iad. Is féidir liom mo chuid mothúcháin ar fad a léiriú i mo cheol nuair a bhíonn an chruit á sheinm agam; is féidir liom mé féin a chuir in iúl i mbealach nach féidir liom le focail. Nuair a bhím ag seinm na cruite, smaoiním ar an deacracht a bhíodh ann in aimsir na bPéindlithe ár gcultúr a chaomhnú agus táim buíoch de mo shinsir agus as ár gcultúr.

Tá an-mheas agus grá agam dár gcultúr gaelach, idir damhsa, ceol agus an Ghaeilge. Is dóigh liom gur chuid ollmhór dár gcultúr í an chruit agus gur chóir aitheantas ceart a thabhairt di, ar nós aitheantas UNESCO. Gach blian tosaíonn níos mó agus níos mó daoine ag seinm na cruite, rud atá go hiontach do chultúr ceoil na hÉireann.

Dar liomsa, tá tábhacht na cruite i bhfad níos leithne ná díreach an ceol. Nuair a sheinnim píosaí ó shean-chruitirí ar nós Madam Cole le Carolan, smaoiním ar an nasc atá idir ceol na cruite, stair na hÉireann agus an saol sa lá atá inniu ann. Braithim go bhfuil sé de dhualgas orainn an nasc seo a chaomhnú.

Is siombail na hÉireann í an chruit agus caithfimid, mar phobal, iarracht a dhéanamh aire a thabhairt do chultúr na cruite agus aitheantas a thabhairt di.

Is mise le meas,  
Aoife Ní Bhriain

Le

2 0 AOUT 2018

A Chara,

Is mise Aoife Ní Bhriain, táim ceithre bliana déag d'aois agus seinnim an chruit. Is cuid an-mhór de mo shaol í an chruit agus an ceol, agus ní féidir liom mo shaol a shamhlú gan iad. Is féidir liom mo chuid mothúcháin ar fad a léiriú i mo cheol nuair a bhíonn an chruit á sheinm agam; is féidir liom mé féin a chuir in iúl i mbealach nach féidir liom le focail. Nuair a bhím ag seinm na cruite, smaoiním ar an deacracht a bhíodh ann in aimsir na bPéindlithe ár gcultúr a chaomhnú agus táim buíoch de mo shinsir agus as ár gcultúr.

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Is mise le meas,

Aoife Ní Bhriain

Dear friend,

My name is Aoife Ní Bhriain, I am 14 years old and I play the harp. The harp and its music are a huge part of my life, and I can't imagine my life without them. When I am playing the harp, I can communicate my feelings through my harp music, in a way that I can't when I talk about them in words. When I play the harp, I think back to the difficulties we had in Penal times to keep our culture alive, and I am grateful to my ancestors for succeeding in preserving our culture.

I have great respect and regard for our Irish culture; its dance tradition, its music and its language. I believe that Irish harping has a right to be recognised; it deserves UNESCO recognition. Every year, more and more people are beginning to learn how to play the harp, something that is fantastic for our culture.

I believe there is more to the harp than its music. When I play the ancient music of the harpers, pieces like Madam Cole, I think of the connection there is between our harp music, our Irish history and the world we live in today. I feel that we have an obligation to preserve this connection

The harp is the symbol of Ireland, and as a community, we have to safeguard our harping tradition and seek recognition for it.

Yours with respect,  
Aoife Ní Bhriain



23 Lindley St,  
York

YO24 4JG

6 March 2018

[catriona.cannon@exploreYork.org.uk](mailto:catriona.cannon@exploreYork.org.uk)

+44 7460233670

To Whom It May Concern,

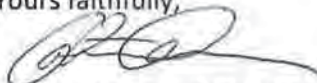
I am delighted to have this opportunity to write in support of Cruit Eireann/Harp Ireland's nomination of the Irish Harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

As a harpist and archivist I feel passionate about preserving this one thousand year history and ensuring its legacy continues to inform the playing of new generations of harpers. It is important that the tradition continues to thrive through innovation as well as a deep rooted awareness of all that has gone before. The harp is one of the most recognisable symbols in the world, synonymous with Irish culture and heritage with the earliest depictions of a triangular harp dating back as far as the 11<sup>th</sup> Century. It is our national symbol, featured on our coinage, passports and the official seals of Ireland.

The importance and sophistication of the musical tradition has been immortalised in the writings of Geraldus Cambrensis in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, and the music and literature of the intervening centuries. This tradition of harping is flourishing across the country with harpers young and old attending workshops and concerts at most of the major traditional festivals as well as many dedicated international harp festivals across the country. The value of this beautiful instrument, as a cultural ambassador, a national symbol and a carrier of an extremely rich and unique tradition cannot be overstated.

It is a tradition that needs to be preserved and nourished and Cruit Eireann, Harp Ireland is doing exceptional work to ensure that happens. I am delighted to support the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours faithfully,



Catriona Cannon | Civic Archivist (City of York)



Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Dear Aibhlin,

I am writing this letter to please have the Harp recognised under Intangible Cultural Heritage. The harp is our national symbol and has been played for more than 1000 Years all over Ireland. It has a special sound and its music has a captivating effect.

We really need to sustain it and save it for future generations.

I adore playing the harp and listening to its music.

Please have the harp recognised and save our heritage.

Thank you.

Yours Sincerely,

Caoimhe Kenny

Harp Player

26 Shrewsbury Road  
Ballsbridge  
Dublin 4  
Mobile: 086-2568871

12 March 2018

Ms Aibhlín McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Eireann, Harp Ireland  
Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2


Dear Ms McCrann,

I support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

As Ireland's national symbol and with a history over 1000 years, I feel it is essential to preserve the legacy of the Irish harp and ensure its sustainability.

I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely,



**David McCann**



# The Harp.

No wonder the harp was chosen as Ireland's National Emblem! No wonder it was held in the highest esteem in Gaelic chieftain society at a time in our history when Irish culture was at its height. It surpassed every other instrument with its beautiful tone and sound.

Wealthy patrons provided food and shelter for harpers who in return would perform for guests and extended family of kings and chieftains.

As Gaelic chieftain society weakened during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, so too did many aspects of their culture, one being harp playing!

There are still a few of these harps around today including the Trinity Harp which belonged to Brian Boru. Thankfully there has been a revival of our national instrument in recent decades and it is wonderful to be part of it.

During the recession some carpenters rejuvenated harp making as a means of making a living. My harp was handmade by Tim of 'Killarney Harps'.

I began harp lessons with my sister four years ago and being able to play it now at a reasonable level has provided me with amazing and wonderful opportunities. It has enabled me to make lots of friends and perform in groups, attend



harp festivals, compete in school and fleadh competitions and most of all to enjoy playing the harp by myself.

I play with my sister at family occasions which delights all my relatives especially my grandparents.

The Mayo Harp Ensemble has been the best experience for me to date. I have made lots of friends from all over my county. Sometimes we get invited to play at events even over a whole weekend. We have great fun travelling together and staying in accommodation together.

I play other instruments too but the harp is by far my favourite one. It relaxes me and I enjoy listening to my own performances.

My parents have sacrificed a lot for me to play the harp but we all agree that it's so worthwhile when the beautiful melodic music resonates through the house.

I am so lucky and grateful for being able to play the harp and we are so lucky to have it as our national emblem?

Gráinne Cogan



Knockrickard  
Claremorris  
County Mayo  
tel. 086 2932520  
grainnehambly@gmail.com

March 3, 2018

To whom it may concern,

I would like to offer my support to the application to UNESCO for intangible cultural heritage status for the Irish harping tradition. Historically the harp has huge significance in Ireland as our national instrument, first appearing in illustrated manuscripts back in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, carved on stone crosses from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards and appearing on our coins from the time of King Henry VIII. In Irish mythology the harp features prominently as an instrument with magical powers, which may be seen as a metaphor for the ability of the Irish harp to captivate audiences throughout the world in the present day.

For me personally, the harp has played a central role in my life. Ever since starting the harp at 15 years of age, at a summer festival organised by Janet Harbison, I became fascinated with the sound and story of the instrument. From knowing nothing about the harp and having no interest in it (I attended that festival only because my 7-year-old sister had seen a harp in a shop window and got a notion that she wanted to play it!), I went on to become a member of the Belfast Harp Orchestra in 1992, and toured with them for close to 10 years. Through my involvement with the orchestra I had my first contact with my peers from Northern Ireland, and made some lifelong friends from both sides of the border and cultural divide. The harp orchestra was very involved in promoting peace and reconciliation through music, and the fact that we incorporated music and instruments from both traditions in our performances was of great significance at that time. Partly as a result of these friendships and my experiences in Belfast, I ended up opting to study music at Queen's University Belfast. Getting to travel with the orchestra to Germany, France and the USA (including an unforgettable performance in Carnegie Hall NY with the Chieftains on St Patrick's Day 1993) gave me my first taste of touring and seeing the world, and largely inspired by these experiences, I have now been playing the Irish harp professionally for the past 18 years.

In the course of my travels with the harp, I have repeatedly noticed the effect that our national emblem and its music has on audiences, worldwide. I am passionate about passing on our music, and in particular teaching Irish music in the traditional style 'by ear' and regularly give workshops in the USA, where there is huge interest among harpers in Irish traditional music. This is not so surprising in



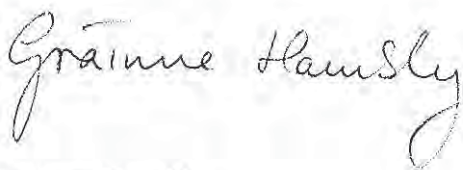
peoples' responses to the music which transcend language and cultural barriers. Just a few examples are: seeing people lining up outside a venue in Rio de Janeiro for 2 hours before a concert; playing in Colombia where people were willing to pay the equivalent of 1 months wage to purchase a CD at the end of the concert; seeing the audience in tears as they listened to some of our ancient airs at concerts in Japan. I believe it is the unique sound and music of the Irish harp which so captures peoples' hearts and imaginations.

As well as touring internationally, I also teach privately and at festivals around Ireland and I have been delighted to observe the resurgence in harp playing around the country over the past number of years. When I started playing in 1990 my parents had to bring me to Belfast, Dublin or Monaghan for monthly lessons with Janet Harbison as there was nobody teaching in Mayo. Now I have a full teaching schedule in Mayo, and there are so many young people playing all over the country that I feel like the harp is in safe hands moving into the future. Last September Music Generation Mayo established a harp ensemble in the county, of which myself and Scottish harper William Jackson are musical directors. We have 22 members and they gave their first public performance at the Harp and Pipes Tionol in Laois last November, followed by a performance in the Town Hall Theatre Westport for the first ever National Harp Day. It is wonderful to see how friendships are developing among the members, and I hope they will carry this experience with them into the future, as I did myself.

While I feel that the harp has become so much more prominent in Ireland now than it was when I started playing, we cannot afford to become complacent. I believe it is essential that we safeguard this cultural treasure so that the intangible magic of the harp and its music will be preserved for future generations. Organisations such as Cruit Éireann / Harp Ireland and Cairde na Cruite are doing great work in this regard, but I feel that this UNESCO bid would help to secure the national and international recognition that our instrument and its music deserves.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gráinne Hambly". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Gráinne Hambly

1/2.

Janet Harbinson  
24A Northland Rd.  
Derry  
BT48 7JD

21/02/18

Letter of support - Unesco intangible cultural  
Heritage status.

Dear Janet,

I hope you are well and I appreciate  
the opportunity to reflect on the many great memories  
growing up playing the Harp.

As a child growing up in the northwest of  
Ireland we had limited exposure to Irish  
cultural heritage never mind music - that was  
until I started playing the harp with my sisters.

At the start it was a bit of cratic and  
an opportunity to meet people locally but as  
we progressed under the tuition and leadership  
of Janet Harbinson, it gave us the opportunity  
to understand the cultural world around us from  
the history to how as a people the Harp



has been central to Irish life in all its forms for over 1000 years.

on our journey we met so many people of different ages and diverse backgrounds and the Harp helped me forge relationships with people playing the harp, but their families, fellow musicians and beyond. We had the privilege of meeting people from every county - north and south and also the ability to relate to harpers who joined us from other Celtic nations and beyond.

we learned about local legends such as Columcille + Denis Hampsey - the connections they had with the area I live in and also with our cultural heritage outside our locality.

once again in the last 30 years the harp has been a tool for crossing the divide and broadening horizons. I have taken up playing again in an effort to allow my children to see what I have seen, to learn of these rich cultural roots and how it may help them understand this Island as they grow up.

Yours sincerely  
TD McFinn's

## Notes



8 March 2018 21:03

8th March 2018

Dear Cruit Eirann,

I wish to join you in supporting the Irish harp being promoted as Ireland's national instrument and gaining recognition for its unique status.

The significance of the Irish harp is immeasurable to the cultural heritage of the whole island of Ireland. As our national symbol, the harp is intrinsic to our Irish identity and sense of ourselves too.

There is a need to build greater awareness of the importance of this, especially for future generations. I therefore fully endorse my support for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Ireland.

Best wishes,

Mrs Hazel Drummond (BEM)

Copenhagen

5th March 2018

To whom it may concern

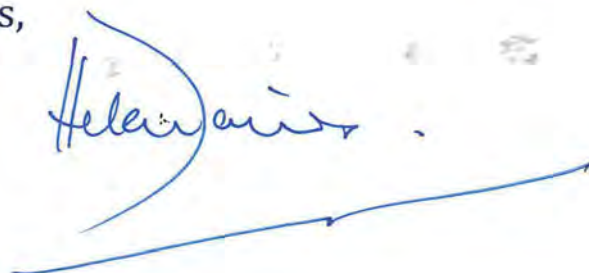
I am writing to add my support to the Irish Harp being considered under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage.

Just as in my native Wales – where the strings of the triple harp are said to "speak the language of the soul" - the harp has held an intrinsic part in the souls of the Irish for over a thousand years, and its voice is being increasingly heard in more and more countries.

As long-time secretary of Cairde na Cruite when I lived in Ireland, it was exciting to see the growth and development of the Irish harp and to be a part of that movement by the setting up of a diploma at the RIAM and being one of the initiators of An Chúirt Chruitireachta Annual International Harp Festival – which has grown from humble beginnings to being regarded as one of the "must attend" festivals in the harp world.

Here in Denmark, where I now live, there is an ever increasing interest in the Irish harp. Interestingly, the Granard Festivals of 1781 – 1785, (which led to the Belfast Harp Festival of 1792 and the annotation of the harpers' melodies by Edward Bunting) were financed by the wealthy business man James Dungan – a native of Granard who lived in Copenhagen and who wished to revive public interest in the Irish harp and its music. So the international links continue...

With best wishes,  
Helen Davies





Helen J. Gannon, T.C.R.G.,  
Director St. Louis Irish Arts  
Provincial Chair, CCE North America



7480 Whitehaven Dr.  
St. Louis, MO 63123-2038  
Phone & Fax: (314) 849-1662

*Aibhlin McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Éireann / Harp Ireland  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2  
Ireland*

*To whom it may Concern,*

*March 5th 2018*

*I emigrated to the United States with my Physician husband in 1967 to the middle of America . I am a member of the Ard Chomairle of Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann in Dublin and the current chair of the Meithal Program sponsored by the Department of Foreign Affairs. I chair the largest branch of Comhaltas in North America, and sit on the board of the North American Feis Commission. I am director of the School St. Louis Irish Arts which is host to the largest Harp school for Traditional Irish Music in North America . The art of traditional Irish Music on Harp was literally unknown here in Mid America prior to 1967. ( credit to Maire Ni Chathaisaigh).*

*It would be a tragedy if the Irish Harp was not inserted into UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Please consider this for those of us who recognize the Harp as our national symbol and work so hard to keep its magic prominent in every walk of life. St. Louis Irish Arts continues to promote and preserve the Music of Ireland on the Harp and provide continuity for generations to come.*

*On behalf of Comhaltas North America and St. Louis Irish Arts inc. I would like to endorse in the strongest terms the application for the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention. Thank you for accepting the voices of those of us who may not be living in Ireland but who care so much about this issue.*

*Helen J Gannon*  

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*Helen J Gannon TCRG*



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Web: [www.dkit.ie](http://www.dkit.ie)  
E-Mail: [reception@dkit.ie](mailto:reception@dkit.ie)  
E-Mail: [first.surname@dkit.ie](mailto:first.surname@dkit.ie)

**Letter of support: UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Ireland, The Irish Harp**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to give my full support to the Cruit Éireann application to include the Irish harp as part of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Ireland. I am course director for the MA in Traditional Music Studies at Dundalk Institute of Technology and convenor of the forthcoming World Harp Traditions Conference at the University of Limerick. My research has focused on the history and musical ethnography of the harp and includes two books, *Contemporary Irish Harping* (Four Courts Press, 2012) and an edited volume of essays by leading academics, Sandra Joyce & Helen Lawlor, *Harp Studies* (Four Courts Press, 2016). I have lectured on harping internationally including lectures at Harvard University and Boston college.

The Irish harp has occupied a place in the Irish psyche for centuries both musically and ideologically. An identifiably Irish instrument, its repertoire and style has provenance in Ireland to at least the ninth century AD, thus bolstering its import in terms of cultural and ideological associations. It is the national symbol of Ireland and throughout its long history has been a musical voice, visual symbol and inspiration for Irish culture, society and identity.

The twentieth-century revival led to widespread growth in harping in Ireland and abroad, particularly over the past twenty years. Today there are more harpers than any time in the past two hundred years active as performers, teachers and students (Arts Council Report, 2016).

Harping as a cultural activity gives a musical sounding to not only our contemporary arts practice scene but to the generations of musicians and composers who have gone before. Despite the existence of notated manuscripts, the essential core of the harping tradition is in its renewed expression and performance by each generation, each lending their own interpretation of this



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E-Mail: [first.surname@dkit.ie](mailto:first.surname@dkit.ie)

historic music. This is a tradition that must be protected to allow its continued growth.

The processes of globalization and social transformation are evident in the use of the harp as a musical symbol of Ireland by performers internationally. Harpist Mary O'Hara, for example, was one of the leading figures in folk and popular music performance during the twentieth century. Historically, we can look to the use of the harp symbol in temperance rallies in 19<sup>th</sup> century USA to depict Irishness and indeed its use by many political organisations in Ireland including the United Irishmen and the revolutionaries of 1916.

My research in Irish harping (2012, 2016) has shown that the music of the harp in the twentieth century was shaped and promoted by indigenous communities and individuals who dedicated their life to the promotion of this instrument, including harpers such as Gráinne Yeats, Róisín Ní Shé and others. It is essential that their contribution is celebrated, not forgotten and it is my opinion that the UNESCO convention will provide for this.

The Irish harp as a vehicle for music making consistently provides the opportunity for human interaction and cultural exchange. There exists an infrastructure of festivals, summer schools, competitions and teaching activities to bring harp practitioners together to develop creative practice. Given recent developments, such as the foundation of Cruit Éireann and the proliferation of contexts for performance this application is timely and will give further international profile and support to this tradition.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Helen Lawlor

Programme Director, MA Traditional Music Studies

Dundalk Institute of Technology



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# Comhairle Contae Chorcaí Cork County Council

Oifig Ealaíon,  
Foirgneamh Leabharlann an Chontae,  
Bóthar Charraig Ruacháin, Corcaigh.



Arts Office,  
County Library Building,  
Carrigrohane Road, Cork.  
Fón/Tel: (021) 4346210  
R-phost/Email: arts@corkcoco.ie  
Suíomh Gréasáin/Web: www.corkcoco.ie

Aibhlín McCrann,  
Chair  
Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland  
c/o Communiqué International,  
26 Herbert Place,  
Dublin 2

Wednesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> 2018

Dear Aibhlín,

I am writing in support of the bid by Crúit Ireland for the formal recognition of the Irish Harp under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Irish Harp is Ireland's national symbol and its use can be traced back to medieval iconographic and literary sources. Records from the 11<sup>th</sup> century onwards make reference to the particular importance of the harp in cultural and ceremonial life throughout Ireland. This significance is also reflected in the many references to the important position given to harpists in social ranking.

While harp music was transmitted over many generations in oral form, we are fortunate that music from ancient traditions has survived, primarily as result of the work of early collectors such as Edward Bunting, George Petrie and others. This has formed the basis for the continuation of its musical tradition and, along with exemplars of surviving instruments, for the evolution of the modern Irish harp

Contemporary Irish Harp playing is a living, evolving tradition that has specific, idiomatic techniques and repertoire that set it apart from other ethnic forms of harping and from the harp techniques of Western classical music. The strength of this tradition today is shown by its important living exponents such as Laoise Kelly, Maire Ni Chathasaigh, Grainne Hambly, Cormac de Barra and many others who have achieved international recognition for their work.

The placing of the Irish Harp on the UNESCO register of Intangible Cultural Heritage will provide International recognition for the instrument's importance in Irish Culture. It will also fulfil the UNESCO goal of "Recognizing that communities, in particular indigenous communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity".

In my capacity as Arts Officer for Cork County Council, I am in a position to observe at first hand the necessity to both preserve and nurture indigenous art forms. If successful, this UNESCO designation will greatly enhance awareness of the importance and value of this unique instrument in Irish culture.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian McDonagh'.

Ian McDonagh  
Arts Officer



March 5<sup>th</sup> 2018

To Whom it Concerns,

The **Irish Chamber Orchestra** wishes to extend its support to the case for the nomination of the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The Irish harp is a national symbol of pride, which is widely recognized as the official emblem of Ireland. This status dates back several centuries with the instrument's history telling much about the history of our country. Less than a dozen Celtic harps survive from the pre-1700 period. The oldest is, the one on which the 'official' national emblem of Ireland is based, the Trinity College Harp. This magnificent 15th century Irish harp can be seen in Trinity College, Dublin.

The harp symbol is deeply rooted in our heritage - a representation of the traditional harp is evident on the Presidential Seal. It appears on many official documents, on passports, on the Leinster flag, the Irish euro coin and as a logo for a number of prominent state-supported organisations such as the National University of Ireland.

The **Irish Chamber Orchestra** has worked with Irish harpists to perform with the orchestra as our repertoire demands. The Irish harp, played by the brilliant Laoise Kelly, took centre stage in our 1916 commemoration concerts. The programme featured traditional and classical music side by side and the impact of the Irish Harp on the orchestra was profound as it clearly showed the links between the learned and oral tradition. Whilst we are very used to the concert harp, the Irish harp always has a huge impact as the music played is inherently of our culture and takes everyone on a whole new and unique musical journey. In Ireland, we promote the harp as a national instrument and take great pride in its teaching – it is a tradition that has traversed the centuries.

The resurgence of interest in harp playing has led to an unprecedented demand for Irish-made harps, which are made, from locally sourced timber, by master-craftsmen. It is critical that we safeguard all aspects of the harp, from its creation, to its playing.

On behalf of the **Irish Chamber Orchestra**, I strongly endorse the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Culture Heritage.

Yours sincerely,



**Gerard Keenan**  
CEO, Irish Chamber Orchestra



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V94 P048

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UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK  
LIMERICK, IRELAND

REGISTERED CHARITY  
NUMBER 20022006  
CHARITY NUMBER 8789

VAT NUMBER 4618650U



11 March 2018

To whom it concerns,

I wish to add my voice to the nomination of the Irish Harp for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The harp occupies the prestigious position of the national emblem of Ireland. Its historic significance is paramount to our journey as a nation and it continues to be critically integral to our identity as Irish people.

For centuries, harping has been a key conduit of cultural expression in Ireland. The harping tradition is being kept alive both in Ireland and way beyond its shores, by leading performers, teachers, makers and organizations, who champion, celebrate and transfer this critical element of our cultural heritage.

Newly formed Cruit Éireann has galvanized harping communities both nationally and internationally by providing a forum for all to come together in the shared purpose of celebrating and promoting the Irish harp and ensuring its sustainability. Recent Cruit Éireann events, such as Lá na Cruite, revealed a huge level of engagement in harp playing and making, by people of all ages the length and breadth of the country. It is vital that this distinctively Irish aspect of our cultural expression is nurtured and sustained.

The time is now right to recognize the critical status of the harp in Ireland and I strongly endorse that it be included on the UNESCO Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Yours sincerely  
Imelda Dervin  
Arts Consultant, Ireland





Jim O'Callaghan TD  
DUBLIN BAY SOUTH



To Whom It Concerns

15 March 2018

The Irish Harp has been a musical instrument played in Ireland for over a thousand years. Such is its significance that it has become a national emblem. It is also the country's national instrument. The cultural and musical heritage created by the Irish Harp is immense and I believe it should have intangible cultural heritage status.

I believe the Irish Harp deserves UNESCO status and I believe the status will provide deserved protection and recognition for this unique symbol of Irish cultural, musical and national identity.

Yours sincerely,

  
Jim O'Callaghan TD

Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street, Dublin 2.  
☎ 01 618 3134

Constituency Office:  
37 South Richmond Street,  
Portobello, Dublin 2.  
☎ 01 475 8943

✉ jim@jimocallaghan.com  
🌐 www.jimocallaghan.com  
📧 @OCallaghanJim  
📺 Jim O'Callaghan TD





# Somerset Folk Harp Festival

July 19-22, 2018 Parsippany, NJ

**Kathy DeAngelo**  
kathy@harpagency.com  
11 Country Lane  
Voorhees, NJ 08043  
Tel & Fax: 856-795-7637

## LETTER OF SUPPORT

### UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Somerset Folk Harp Festival is keenly aware of the significance of the Irish harp to Ireland's cultural heritage and is in full support of Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland's, effort to gain recognition for its unique status from UNESCO. In light of the position UNESCO plays in building awareness of the importance of cultural identity and diversity amidst the forces of mass culture and globalization, I add my voice to the chorus of support from organizations like mine who consider the Irish harp the historic progenitor of Irish culture and now the living embodiment of that culture that brings people together across the world to celebrate its music.

The Irish harp was so revered in ancient times that it became synonymous with Ireland itself. When the conquest by Great Britain became a fait accompli the subjugation of Ireland and its culture was signaled by putting a crown atop the Irish harp and placing it on the flag of the conqueror. The playing of the Irish harp became muted but its music never died out during Ireland's troubled political history. No wonder that the creation of the Irish Free State quickly uncrowned the Irish harp and made it the national symbol. The revival of the making and playing the Irish harp has been on an upward trajectory ever since. Especially in the past 50 years, there has been a concerted effort to promote the traditional music of Ireland across many communities as a way to solidify and safeguard their rich cultural heritage. The Irish harp has been one of the most visible and recognizable cultural ambassadors for Ireland.

There are now players of Ireland's national instrument all over the world. Organizations like mine delight in bringing together people to celebrate not only the historical aspects of the instrument but the artistry in renewing the old music and creating new work that will keep it alive. Its promotion among the next generation is assured by groups like Harp Ireland, Comhaltas Ceoltoirí Éireann and in the US by Somerset and others like the International Society of Folk Harpers and Craftsmen. The Irish harp is silent no more!

Please recognize the cultural significance of the Irish harp in your upcoming deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy DeAngelo". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Kathy DeAngelo

Director

THE VETERINARY HOSPITAL

Arden Road  
Garry  
Ex. Woodford

1001 Taylor St. S. 2nd Fl. Corvallis, OR 97331	Telephone (503) 462-0200
2000 W. Center St. S.	Mobile (503) 461-1778
5000 S. 2nd St. S. 4th Fl.	Fax (503) 462-0200
5000 S. 2nd St. S.	
5000 S. 2nd St. S.	

6/3/18

Dear Abhinav

As the parent of two horses, I would like to offer the company a recognition of the work by UNUSUALLY ARTISAN I have recently looked through the prints of immediate players as I struggled to find the right way who can best I can identify you. Just my daughter, her friend, and I have to present to you. Please note that my and having included in a letter and a letter to you. I am sure that the attention to detail of the immediate. Please recognize of it. I have learned to love the experience. The immediate investment in you for my own personal growth. But I believe you should to me. The investment is truly a source of joy to them. As you can see, the work of the company is a truly a source of joy. Please be very generous to have come in contact with us. We will continue to support the investment you are making. We will be happy to be involved if more people would like to be involved in the joy of this wonderful investment.

Kind Regards,  
Zay Chohan.



Reçu CLT / CIH / ITH

Le

20 AOUT 2018

N°

0398

The Veterinary Hospital  
Arklow Road  
Gorey  
Co. Wexford

Tel: 0539421151 Email: vethospitalgorey@gmail.com

Lindy Vaughan MVB, PhD, DBR, CertVRep, GCertSAM, DECAR, MRCVS.  
Shane McGuckin MVB.  
Margaret Murphy MVB.  
Brendan Barrett MVB.  
Michael O'Toole MVB.

05/03/2018

Dear Aibhlin,

As the parent of two harpists, I would like to support the campaign for recognition of the harp by UNESCO. Although I have frequently looked enviously at the parents of tin whistle players as I struggled to load the harp into my car boot, I can honestly say that my daughters have derived hours of pleasure from playing the harp and being involved in school and Comhaltas groups, bands and orchestras. Under the dedicated tutelage of the indomitable Aileen Kennedy, my girls have learned to love and appreciate this beautiful instrument. They play not only traditional music, but anything from classical to pop: the instrument is truly a source of joy to them. Apart from the hard work they put in learning and practicing tunes, they actually enjoy playing the harp to relax and unwind. I consider them to be very fortunate to have come in contact with harping in such a supportive environment and I am sure they will continue to derive benefit throughout their lives. I think it would be brilliant if more people (young and old) were introduced to playing and listening to this wonderful instrument.

Kind Regards,

Lindy Vaughan



UNIVERSITY  
ST. THOMAS

*Educating Leaders of Faith and Character*

## **William J. Flynn Center for Irish Studies**

5 March 2018

Aibhlín McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Éireann / Harp Ireland  
c/o Communiqué International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2  
Ireland

Dear Aibhlín:

As director of the William J. Flynn Center for Irish Studies and a professor of Irish Studies at the University of St. Thomas in Houston, Texas, since January 2003, I am writing to support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO for inscription on the Representatives List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The Irish harp is my personal favorite among musical instruments. We host 6 or more cultural outreach events a year open to the university community and the public. We feature the harp in at least one event per year and often more.

We have proudly featured harpists from Ireland on Irish harps and other harpists from across the United States in concerts and dramatic performances. For example, we hosted Máire Ni Chathasaigh from Ireland three times: 2005, 2007 and 2012.

We also engage harpists to perform at our annual Irish Gala (which raises scholarships for students to study in Ireland and Northern Ireland), our St. Patrick's Day Mass and Brunch and private dinners and brunches.

Like many others, we recognize the Irish harp as the symbol of Ireland—in fact, part of the inherent identity of Ireland. We love harp music and believe its legacy should be sustained and preserved. With the Irish harp having over 1,000 years of history, it is very important to continue to teach the harp and to pass on the tradition and appreciation of the harp within the Irish culture as well as around the world.

We whole-heartedly support the application for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. If you need further information, please contact me at [irishstudies@stthom.edu](mailto:irishstudies@stthom.edu) or 713-525-3592.

Very truly yours,

Lori Meghan Gallagher



28 February 2018

**RE: SUPPORT FOR UNESCO CRUIT EIREANN INCLUSION**

*To whom it concerns,*

I would like, on behalf of Galway Chamber, to express our support for the proposal by Cruit Eireann, Harp Ireland, to include Cruit Eireann or the Irish Harp on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2018.

We would like to support the case for the Irish harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO 2003, UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Ireland signed this in December 2015; and it seeks to raise awareness of, and respect for our unique living culture. Na Píobairí Uilleann achieved this momentous status in December 2017.

Cruit Éireann, Harp Ireland, which was established in 2016 with the support of An Chomhairle Ealaíon, the Arts Council is a collective of harp players from all over Ireland working together to promote our national instrument, gain recognition for its unique status and secure its sustainability. Our membership reflects all styles of harp performance on all types of harps, from the earliest known harp to the instrument commonly performed in 21<sup>st</sup> century Ireland. Galway Chamber is keenly aware of the significance of the Irish harp to our cultural heritage.

The Irish Harp fulfils the UNESCO definition of intangible cultural heritage as the representation of living forms of heritage that cannot be touched – unlike, for example, the built heritage. It refers to the practices, representations and expressions that are central to the lives and identities of our communities, groups and individuals.

As our national symbol, the harp is intrinsic to our Irish identity and to our sense of ourselves. Consequently, we wish to support the application to UNESCO by Harp Ireland and look forward to welcoming its inclusion on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2018.

**GALWAY CHAMBER**

Yours sincerely,

**Maeye Joyce Crehan**  
General Manager

[www.galwaychamber.com](http://www.galwaychamber.com)



7, Crestifield Heights, Hazelwood, Glanmire, County Cork

Aibhlín McCrann

Chair

Cruit Éireann / Harp Ireland

c/o Communiqué International

26 Herbert Place

Dublin 2.

8<sup>th</sup> March, 2018

A chara,

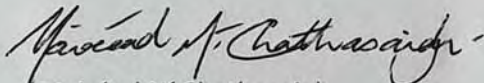
The Irish harp is the official emblem of Ireland. From antiquity to its decline in the early nineteenth century the harp was at the social centre of Ireland.

Owing to the work of a small number of individuals and organisations such as Cáirde na Cruite in cultivating the teaching and performance of Irish harp music during the twentieth century, the harp tradition survived.

The Society of United Irishmen was instrumental in the development of the harp as a national symbol in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Society's seal shows a harp with two mottoes " It is new strung and shall be heard" and "Equality". As a player and teacher of this beautiful instrument, these words resonate today. The sound of the Irish harp is unique and special and its music is original and distinctive . The tradition was almost lost and the granting of special status by UNESCO in order to save it and sustain it for future generations is of immense importance.

I fully support the application of Harp Ireland for UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Status.

le dea mhéin,



Mairéad Ní Chathasaigh

125 Newtownpark Avenue,  
Blackrock,  
Co. Dublin

27<sup>th</sup> February, 2018

Aibhlinn McCann,  
Chear Cruic Eireann,  
Harp Ireland,  
c/o Communiqué International,  
26 Herbert Place,  
Dublin 2.

Dear Aibhlinn McCann,

I wholeheartedly support the case for the Irish Harp to be considered for Ratification under the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Ireland.

The harp is intrinsic to Ireland's cultural heritage and is linked to the country's identity for over a thousand years. Our national symbol, it appears on all Government stationery, Garda caps and currency (coin). Ancient Irish harp music is famous across the globe.

We fear that the forces of globalisation will adversely impinge on this vital and irreplaceable part of our national soul, with loss not just to the heritage of Ireland, but to the intangible cultural heritage of the world.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Hederman

(B.A., H. Dip. Ed., B.L.L. Solicitor)



Glenaheny,  
Corktown,  
Co. Cork.

07.03.2018

To whom it may concern.

The harp has been an important instrument in Ireland with at least one thousand years. It is important that we recognise this in how we choose to acknowledge the role of the harp going forward into the second millennium.

In early Gaelic civilisation many chieftains had an entourage which included a poet to write positive things about his master & generally 'sing his praises'. These poems were recited while being accompanied by harp music. The harper was very well thought of at that time. It often took the harpist up to twenty years to study his trade and this was reflected in the respect shown to him in society then.

The oldest harp that is known in Ireland is commonly referred to as the Brian Boru harp that is stored in Trinity College. This is thought to be from either the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century and by then Brian Boru was long gone.

The harp is an official symbol of Ireland with years. During the reign of Henry VIII Irish coinage was minted in England. It had a harp surrounded by a crown, indicating that the Irish people were subject to British colonial rule. In 1603 James I's coat of arms incorporated a gold harp on a blue background. A symbol of the harp is used to this day in the British royal standard.

During the course of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Irish culture and society was transformed and as a consequence harping and where it fit into Irish life also changed. Some harpists travelled with their masters to the continent while others stayed in Ireland and tried to survive as best they could in the absence of the financial support of their past chieftains who had either been defeated at home or fled the country. Either way life for the harper from then on was not the same as it had been.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century it was the Protestant ascendancy that had become the powerful force within Irish life and society. It was with this group that the harpers



found patrons. Turlough O'Carolan who is probably the best known harper composer from this era made a very good living travelling to the houses of such well-off people.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the harp evolved to become a very important symbol of Irish identity. It was popular to play at the time but it was also widely referred to in poetry & song. The harp was often used as a symbol of different political groups during this time of unrest. In Thomas Moore's songs and poetry he uses the images of the harp while seeking to relive the great days of times gone by.

In my young days it was to the sound of Mary O'Hara's harp playing that I sat mesmerised watching. She was part of the re-popularisation of harp playing in Ireland and on the world stage.

Above I have outlined briefly some events of the past which have helped shape the fact that today the harp is known worldwide as Ireland's national symbol. The instrument along with its image is part and parcel of our Irish identity. It is of the utmost importance that we acknowledge its place in Irish cultural life, preserve its legacy while all the time ensuring the sustainability of its unique music into the future.

As a harp player and her mother we feel privileged to be part of this rich tradition where the skill of harp playing is passed on from one generation to the next, enjoyed by audiences both at home and abroad thereby facilitating the promotion of our national instrument. It is critical that it is safeguarded for the future. We wholly support the nomination of the Irish harp to UNESCO, for inscription on the representatives list of the intangible cultural heritage.

Yours sincerely



Maura O'Donovan



Eibhlín Kiely



## **Glucksman Ireland House**

New York University  
One Washington Mews  
New York, NY 10003  
(212) 998-3950 phone  
(212) 995-4373 fax  
[mick.moloney@nyu.edu](mailto:mick.moloney@nyu.edu)

Maych 17 2018

TO: Whom it May Concern

I am a global distinguished professor in the Irish Studies and Music Department at New York University. I have made and produced over 70 CD's and in 1999 was presented by Hilary Clinton with the National Heritage Award – the highest honor that the US Government gives to traditional artists. In 2014 I received the Presidential Award for Distinguished Services from Michael D Higgins, the President of Ireland.

I write in most enthusiastic and unreserved approval of the application for the Irish Harp to be considered for ratification under the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the World. Since the 1790's this extraordinary instrument has been accepted multiculturally in an often stridently divided island as the symbol of a shared cultural heritage. Indeed we are one of only two multicultural countries in the world (Myanmar is other) where this musical instrument functions in such a potentially unifying fashion.

Additionally in the realm of gender politics this instrument currently functions in a most inclusive manner. Up to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century it was an exclusively male domain but is now played freely by both genders. Indeed over the past few decades some of the most extraordinary performers in Celtic music have been women. The standards of performances have become positively virtuosic – the equal of any instrumentalists globally.

For all these reasons it is long overdue that this wonderful instrument should belong most emphatically in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the World.

Sincerely

Michael (Mick) Moloney  
Global Distinguished Professor.



# The Harp

The harp is Ireland's National Symbol. It can be found on official documents, Irish passports, euro coins and on the Presidential seal.

The Emblem is based on the famous Trinity Harp. It dates back as far as the 15<sup>th</sup> century and is displayed in The Long Room in Trinity College, Dublin.

Harp music was very popular in Gaelic medieval Ireland. Wealthy chieftains had a resident harper who would accompany bardic poetry recitals in the great houses. As Gaelic chieftains lost their power, harpers and bards also lost their status and livelihoods. They became itinerant musicians. Turlough O'Carolan was one of these travelling musicians, and one of the last bards of the era.

Turlough O'Carolan is considered one of Ireland's National Composers, and I personally love playing his tunes. Well known pieces which I play regularly are 'Planxty Dermott Grogan', 'Lord Mayo', 'Eleanor Plunkett', 'Sí Beag Sí Mór' and 'Captain O' Kane'.

A friend at school played the harp, and I was so inspired by the sound of it. Having rented a harp from the local library for 2 years, my parents bought a harp for myself and my sister. We also contributed some of our savings towards it. My harp sits at the end of my bed, and the first thing I do in the morning, is play a tune!

I find it relaxing and it makes me feel happy from the inside to out. Practice isn't a chore, it's more of a hobby for me. The harp has provided me with numerous social opportunities.

I play it in a band group in the local Church. I played the harp for the bishop on my confirmation. I sometimes play <sup>at</sup> family gatherings. The music teacher in my school got all the harp players together and we performed a <sup>'Winter Song'</sup> piece, accompanying the Gospel choir at the Christmas Carol Service.



Every year, I attend the Achill International harp festival and scail Acla. And not to forget playing with the Mayo Music Generation Harp Ensemble is a really enjoyable experience

I have made lots of new friends through playing the harp. We meet with the ensemble twice a month for two hours. We play together and the sound and harmonies are amazing. We've travelled to Loois by bus for a weekend and it was one of the best experiences

Muireann Cogan

Nancy Joroff  
Spanish Peaks Harp Retreat  
343 Hemlock Circle  
Lincoln, MA 01773  
USA

Aibhlin McCrann  
Chair  
Cruit Eireann/ Harp Ireland  
c/o Communique International  
26 Herbert Place  
Dublin 2, Ireland

Dear Ms. McCrann,

I am writing to express my support for including the Irish harp on UNESCO's Representative Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage. As the founder and president of a Celtic Harp Retreat in the United States, I clearly see the role that the Irish harp plays as a gateway into the broader Irish culture and history, including the long tradition of harp as a means of communication, starting with the bards of old, and community building, including via storytelling and group playing. As a Celtic harpist myself, playing traditional tunes has led me to learn more about Irish mythology, religion and culture.

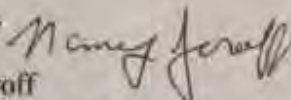
Although the United States is known for having a large population with Irish heritage, the Irish culture and traditions are not as widely known or accessibly outside of certain major cities, such as Boston, New York or Chicago. When I started the Spanish Peaks Celtic Harp Retreat in a relatively rural part of Colorado, there was little awareness of or focus on Irish music, culture or history in the region. Over a decade later, both attendees and area residents now have a deeper understanding of the harp as part of Ireland's heritage that has evolved over more than 1,000 years. We use the Irish harp and the legacy that it represents to address modern issues such as providing care and comfort to hospice patients, dementia sufferers, and others that can benefit from the combination of modern science and the lessons from cultures such as Ireland's.

The Irish harp is, to many, a symbol of Ireland and linked to its identity, traditions and culture. Maintaining the Irish harp, and its unique sound and role, helps preserve links to the past that inform and enhance our world today.

I strongly support any efforts to preserve the Irish harp, including recognizing the critical role it plays in Ireland's heritage.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Nancy Joroff  
Director, Spanish Peaks Celtic Harp Retreat (Colorado, U.S.A.)



Dear Janet,

I hope you're keeping well.

Please find enclosed my letter of support for the campaign to have UNESCO grant intangible cultural heritage status for the harp - it was written in 30 mins during my lunch break so apologies if it's not up to scratch.

I'm sorry I haven't been able to get to any of your recent events but when I'm not working I care for a family member and it doesn't leave much free time. I will definitely give you a shout though the next time I'm up in the Maiden City.

Hopefully chat soon.

Roisin Bonner

February 22, 2018

Roisin Bonner  
40 Deramore Avenue  
Belfast  
Bt7 3er

Dear Janet.

I would like to take this opportunity to describe the transformative effect the harp has had on my life.

I first started playing the instrument when I was 11 years old and joined the Belfast Harp Orchestra at age 14, in 1997. I continued my involvement with the harp orchestra until the age of 21 and continue to play the harp for personal enjoyment and musical expression. Having grown up in an area of Derry city which at the time was more than 90% Catholic and nationalist or Republican, and having only been educated in Catholic schools and socialised with those from the same background, the Belfast Harp Orchestra provided my first opportunity to associate with people from the Protestant, Presbyterian and unionist communities.

I believe that being introduced to these people, some of whom became life-long friends, at a young age gave me greater understanding and tolerance of those from other backgrounds and who have different beliefs to my own – qualities often in short supply in troubled Northern Ireland and that have proved invaluable in my adult life and eventual career in the media. Without the harp and the Belfast Harp Orchestra I would simply not have had this kind of cross-community opportunity in my life.

I also believe that discovering and playing music from the unionist/protestant/Orange culture provided a unique learning opportunity.

Growing up I had only experienced traditional Irish music and the rebel songs of the Republican movement. However, learning the history of songs such as The Boyne Water, The Sash and many more, opened my eyes and ears to a wealth of culture of which I was previously unaware, as well as how the music from all traditions on the island could exist, and be played in harmony. It brought me to the realisation that, If the music could exist in harmony, then so could the people.

Hearing a lambeg drum - traditionally associated with the unionist culture - at the opening of Belfast's Waterfront Hall in 1997 was one particularly memorable example of an instrument I was unlikely to have experienced if it wasn't for the harp and my involvement in the cross-community orchestra.

This new-found appreciation of the musical heritage of other cultures on the island of Ireland, and particularly in Northern Ireland, also enhanced my own cultural identity. Through the music of the harp, from old Irish airs, jigs and reels, Edward Bunting's recording of the music from the 1792 Belfast Harp Festival, the melodies of Thomas Moore and the music of wars and rebellions, a full history of the country of Ireland and its various cultures and divisions were revealed to me.

The harp and its music can tell the human story of the country in a way books and television programmes are unable to.

The harp also provided me with social opportunities I would not otherwise have enjoyed. As well as new friendships with young people from other cultures, the instrument provided constant opportunities for travel. My first ever plane journey was for a trip to Munich with the orchestra, which was followed by an extended European tour. There were also weekends away across Ireland as well as to Scotland and Brittany in France - invaluable experiences for a young girl from Derry.

In addition, it has proved a wonderful source of self expression, whether through the music of

others or my own compositions. Having the benefit of being able to play a melody and accompaniment simultaneously allows a more fulsome form of story-telling and expression which I have thoroughly enjoyed over the years.

So, to conclude, I believe the harp to have been a precious addition to my life and I fully credit it and the skills and lessons I learnt through it with my successes.

It has been a teacher, a tool for self-expression, a travel companion and a friend and has led to experiences and friendships I would never have enjoyed if I hadn't plucked that first string at the age of 11.

The instrument's place in Irish history is undeniable, however, less recognised is its continued importance in today's Ireland.

As well as the general benefits of music and music therapy, it is an essential tool for reconciliation, in terms of cross-community music groups and its ability to tell the stories of the different cultures on the island.

I fully and wholeheartedly support the campaign to grant the Irish harp UNESCO grant intangible cultural heritage status.

Yours,

Roisin Bonner.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Roisin Bonner', with a horizontal line underneath.