

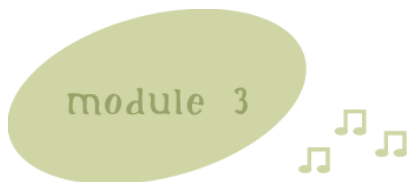


**Table of Contents**

1. Module 3 Description.....pg.2  
 2. Exercises 1 and 2 "Listening to a Story" .....pg.3  
 3. Exercise 3 'A Story Without Words'.....pg.4  
 4 Exercises 4, 5, 6: "Our Schools Musical Celebration.....pg.5

**Module Resources**

1. [Children of Lir on CD or Web audio](#).....(links to website)  
 2. [Children of Lir story text](#).....pg.7  
 3. [Children of Lir Writers biography Marilyn McLaughlin](#).....pg.11  
 4. [Children of Lir Poem](#).....pg.12  
 5. [Poet's biography](#).....pg.14  
 6. ['Ireland – A Cultural Journey Music Score'](#).....(links to website)  
 7. ['Ireland – A Cultural Journey Listener's Guide'](#).....pg.15  
 8. ['Ireland – A Cultural Journey' composer's biography: Edd Charmant](#).....pg.17  
 9. [Class Room Needs](#).....pg.18  
 10. [Sample Homework Exercises](#).....pg.19  
 10. [Sound Logging Chart](#).....pg.20  
 10. [Reporting Form](#).....(links to website)  
 11. [Your Recommended Sources](#).....(links to website)



### **Module 3:**

#### **Introduction**

In this module, the children develop a musical composition inspired by a story '[The Children of Lir](#)', an old Irish legend specially written and performed for the program by Northern Ireland writer and actress Marilyn McLaughlin.

The aim of this Module is to allow the children to:

- reinforce the creative process, musical expression, listening and response skills introduced in the previous modules
- explore and discover different ways of responding in music and sound to the story
- reinforce and further develop the collaborative skills introduced in the previous modules: group and class work and now working with 3 jurisdictions on a composition.
- develop enough aesthetic skill in a particular forms (sound animation/chant/music) in order to adapt the story into a group composition set to a common time signature

There are 6 exercises in this Module. Each exercise should be completed within the same session but it is up to the teacher to decide on the individual exercise duration.

In Exercises 1-3, the children will listen to the story to establish the emotions and feelings, events, places and characters. They will then interpret the verbal story as a musical composition. To facilitate this work the children will experience how a music composer interpreted a story in music 'Ireland –A Cultural Journey' by listening and reading his notes on the program web site

From Exercise 3 onwards, the children in each of the three jurisdictions will concentrate on one form for the final composition:

- Northern Ireland will concentrate on the music,
- Republic of Ireland on the sound animations
- USA schools on the chant.

A composition director (one of the teachers) will be nominated in each jurisdiction to arrange meetings between the schools, either via local video conferencing or meeting at a central location, to discuss and direct the composition's development. The time signature for the final composition will be set by the music conductor, Ronan Doherty from Northern Ireland, in consultation with all the schools.

There will be a [Video Conference](#) at the end of each stage of exercises 4-6 to discuss and establish the outcome from each jurisdiction.

A working score will be in circulation between the 3 composition directors via e-mail as the composition develops. On-going recordings of the 3 parts should be uploaded to this web site in the Music and Sound Exchange.

["The Children of Lir"](#) is a tale of magic, love, terror, jealousy, pain, sadness, friendship and freedom. Sam Burnside, Director of the [Verbal Arts Centre](#) in Derry in Northern Ireland, has also written a poem inspired by the story which he is making available to the program as a secondary inspiration for the teachers and children



## Exercises 1 and 2 "Listening to a Story"

### Introduction

In Exercises 1 and 2 "Listening to a Story", the children listen to the story and explore the events, characters, places, emotions and relationships. The children will

- individually develop a detailed understanding of the story so that they have enough information to develop ideas for the final composition in their class group.
- work as a class
- listen to the music composition 'Ireland -A Cultural Journey' and read the composers notes to identify with his interpretation of that story in music.

The teacher could use a mind map <http://www.buzan.co.uk/> for these two exercises to explore the story and at the same time demonstrate all the elements in the story. There could also be a mind map for the: characters, places, emotions, relationships etc.

### Instruction

#### EXPLORE:

In Exercise 1 play the story CD "The Children of Lir" for the children. Each class explores the story as a single group: what it is about? who are the characters? where are the story settings and what are the feelings it evokes? They explore the atmosphere, feeling, colour and rhythm in the story. The teacher should use sensory language to develop the children's awareness of all aspects of the story: what were the swans like to touch? what sounds did they make as children? what did they eat, what smell does a swan have? can you imagine what it is like to be in the body of a swan? In exercise 2 they listen to the music score and composers notes from 'Ireland -A Cultural Journey'. They explore the way the composer interpreted his brief.

#### ARTICULATE:

The class articulates their understanding of the story. The session is recorded. This articulation could be the children's verbal telling of the story. They articulate their understanding of how the composer of 'Ireland -A Cultural Journey' interpreted the story as a musical composition.

#### EXPRESS:

The children express as a class using a mind map what they will interpret from the 5 parts in the story. This will be their selection of events, the emotions and characters in these events etc. It is the mapping/blocking out of what they will interpret for the composition.

**Exercise 3 'A Story Without Words'****Introduction**

In Exercise 3 'A Story Without Words', the teacher introduces the children to chant, sound animation and formal music development – the three forms which will be used in creating the final composition. The children will

- gain an understanding of the three forms: chant, sound animation and music.
- interpret the story in the three forms.

**Instruction****EXPLORE:**

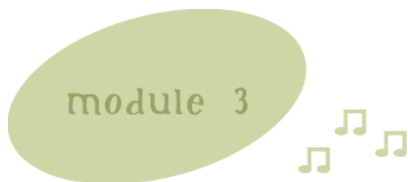
An exploration of various interpretations of the story using chant, sound animation (sound effects) and music. Each school will develop a repertoire of possible sounds, music and rhythms for the composition in the three forms. The teacher could choose to divide the class in three parts assigning them one of the forms: chant, sound animation and music.

**ARTICULATE:**

The children will articulate the story in the three forms. Each of the three groups will create a score for each of the forms they wish to express. They will then see where there is a common rhythm and story. They will develop one common score for the overall interpretation of the story.

**EXPRESS:**

The three groups play in sync. in their final expression of their interpretation of the story.



### **Exercises 4, 5, 6: "Our Schools Musical Celebration"**

#### **Introduction**

In the next three exercises, each jurisdiction concentrates on their form over the three stages of the CREATIVE PEDAGOGY.

- Northern Ireland will concentrate on the music,
- Republic of Ireland on the sound animations
- USA schools on the chant.

Exercise 4: concentrates on Exploration

Exercise 5: concentrates on Articulation

Exercise 6: concentrates on Expression

As in Exercise 3 they will express their final composition as one performance, but this time as one composition from 3 jurisdiction.

A composition director is appointed in each jurisdiction. We should eventually have 4/5 schools in each jurisdiction, concentrating on their assigned forms for the final composition which is intended to be web/broadcast.

#### **Exercise 4:**

##### **Instruction**

##### **EXPLORE:**

Each jurisdiction explores separately their form and uploads their ideas and recordings to the project web site. Their music director will assess the exploration and make suggestions for the articulation session.

#### **Exercise 5:**

##### **Instruction**

##### **ARTICULATE:**

The composition directors articulate the score "The Children of Lir" for the final composition by video conference. This is distributed to each jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction rehearses their form. When they are prepared and working from the one score they will rehearse and record with their schools and upload the recording to the program web site. The music directors via video conference will discuss the recordings and make notes for the expression stages.

#### **Exercise 6:**

##### **Instruction**

##### **EXPRESS:**

All the schools will come to a common venue in their own jurisdiction. Through video conference they will perform their compositions as they are conducted by Ronan Doherty in Northern Ireland. A recording will be made and uploaded to the program web site. It will be played back to the group so that they can assess the overall composition. The composition directors make any changes and they perform it once more during the video conference. It is recorded and uploaded to the program web site and plans for the web/broadcast are made.

The web/broadcast will be scheduled for the public performance.

#### **Video Conferences**

Module 3 will hold 3 video conferences.

##### **No1:**

At the end of Module 3, Exercise 3.

The schools explore the final compositions they developed in exercise 3. They confirm their parts in the final composition , USA: chants, Northern Ireland: music, the Republic of Ireland: sound-animation.

##### **No 2.**

At the end of Exercise 4.



The teachers discuss their parts in the final composition and decide on a signature time and the number of movements for the final composition. They plan their strategy for the co-ordination of the production and set their schedules.

**No. 3:**

At the end of Exercise 6

This is the final rehearsal before the web cast of the production. This will be with the 3 teacher directors appointed in each jurisdiction as facilitators of the conference. Final planning for the web cast.

**REFLECTION:**

The children and their teachers reflect on their experience and discuss their likes and dislikes. The teacher as a final rap may ask the children to write their individual experiences about the overall program.

**CHILDREN OF LIR**

*Adaptation by Marilyn Mc Loughlin*

King Lir had four beautiful children. They were Finola and Aedh, Conn and Fiacra. Their mother was dead, but he loved them enough for fifty mothers, and they loved him back with all their hearts.

Dearg, the High King, sent Aoife, his daughter and the children's aunt, to be Lir's second wife. At first she loved the children dearly. How could she not? But she grew jealous, as sometimes happens. She wanted to be Lir's only love, and that could never be, not as long as Finola and Aedh, Conn and Fiacra were there. Every day Aoife grew more jealous. She grew sick with jealousy. She grew mad and bad with jealousy. A truly terrible thought came to her. She told the children that next day she would take them to visit Dearg, their grandfather.

That night Finola dreamt a terrible dream. She woke with a scream and her brothers came running to her side. 'I dreamt that Aoife threw us away, like feathers on the wind. She wants to harm us. We mustn't go with her tomorrow.'

'Go back to sleep,' Conn said, 'Aoife loves us. Your dream has some other meaning.'

In the morning the children climbed into Aoife's chariot but Finola was scared and afraid. She had good reason, for Aoife had a dreadful plan.

Aoife stopped the chariot beside Lough Davra. She said, 'Let us rest here.'

The children ran to play in the cool clear water. They didn't see Aoife reach for the Druid's wand hidden in the chariot. They didn't see her creep up behind them and raise the wand. Then swish. She brought it down on Finola's shoulders and then swish swish on Conn and Aedh, and then on Fiacra, swish. She cast a spell so strong that no Druid in the whole of Erin could break it.

'You will be swans,' she cried.

The children screamed and frightened all the birds from the trees.

'I've got feathers on me! Get them off!'

>'My tummy's in the water.'

'It hurts. My elbows are in the wrong place.'

They tried to catch hold of each other, but they had no hands. They looked around for each other, but they saw only swan faces. They tried to run away, but their webbed feet trod frantically in the water and they crashed into each other. Their wings tangled.

Aoife said, 'You must stay on Lough Davra for 300 years, and then on the sea of Moyle for 300 years more, and then on the western sea for another 300 years. You will be swans, until you find a stronger magic than mine.'

They looked so afraid, that even Aoife felt sorry. She made another spell.

'You will keep your human voices and understanding, and you will have the gift to make magic music. It will bring peace and healing to all who hear it.'

Aoife jumped into her chariot, and got ready to go.

'Take us with you,' the children shouted.

'If you leave Lough Davra before 300 years, you will die,' Aoife said.

'I don't care. I won't stay here' Aedh yelled, and he tried to run out of the water and follow her, but, because his swan shape was still new to him, he tripped over his own feet and fell helpless on the shore. Aoife's chariot disappeared into the trees. The drumming of the horse's feet and the rattle of the harness and great wheels vanished into silence. 'Aedh' Finola called out in a frightened whisper. 'There are foxes around, or wild dogs, or even wolves. Come back on the water.'

Aedh came back, slowly, miserably.

'I want to go home.'

'Father will find us'

'How will he know where to look?'



Only the foxes that shrieked along the shore, only the cold white stars that began to shine in the darkening sky knew where they were. They sobbed and the lapping lake water seemed to sob too. They wound their long necks together, and floated, side to feathered side, through the whole of that terrible first night on Lough Davra.

When Dearg and Lir found out what had happened to the children, they was so angry with Aoife that she was changed into a Demon of the Air. She whirled, screaming, up into the sky, up among the black storm clouds and the hurricanes, and she is still up there, and will be forever.

King Lir found the four swans at Lough Davra. They rushed out of the water towards him and he sat down amongst them. He stroked their heads. He wiped away their tears. He hugged them as best you can hug a swan.

'I will bring you home,' Lir said. 'We will be together . . .'

'We can't leave Lough Davra', Finola said.

'Then I will make my home here,' said Lir, and he came to live beside the lake. The swans were happy there with their father. They warmed themselves by the camp fires, they had the tastiest food from the table, they had the softest beds. They heard the best stories and jokes and all the news of the wide world.

When Lir was sad and lonely, the swans sang their beautiful magic songs and all sadness disappeared, all hurts healed. Maybe the last few faint notes of their singing even reached far up into the sky and were heard by Aoife as she whirled forever alone through cloud and black storm.

One day, after many years had passed, a thing like a black raven, suddenly plummeted down from above the clouds, so swiftly that it seemed its feathers unravelled behind it.

It spun around the swans like a whirlwind, screeching and shrieking with Aoife's voice.

'Leave Lough Davra, 300 years are gone.

300 more you must spend on the sea of Moyle,  
alone, all alone . . .'

Then the thing that was nearly like a bird shot back up into the sky, straight up like a rocket, screaming as it went.

'I will come with you to the sea of Moyle,' Lir said.

'You can't,' Finola said. She was as pale and frightened as a swan can be. 'You heard what she said. We must go alone.'

'But when will I see you again?' Lir said.

Then they all started to cry because they realised just how long their separation would be.

Lir said, 'Never forget, Finola, and Aedh, Conn and Fiacra, our love will bring us together again'

The children gathered about Lir. They opened their wings around him, closed him gently in a circle of feathers, nuzzled their cheeks against his.

'Sing before you go,' Lir said.

They sang their beautiful music. Lir's grief eased. Even the children stopped crying as their song got stronger. They flew away, still singing, their great wings beating, swoosh, swoosh, steady and strong. As their music faded into the distance, King Lir called out that there would be a new law in Erin. No-one, ever, would kill a swan again.

The sea of Moyle was wide, dark and deep. The four swans landed in rough water and the cold wind blew them hither and thither.

'It's too big. Where's the edges?' Conn cried.

'What will we eat, what will we drink?' Aedh said.

'Sing to me,' Finola said, 'My heart is so heavy I just want to sink.'

They took turns to sing to each other. They sang about their loneliness, their lost home, their love for their father, and their music made them brave, calm. Maybe Aoife, high in the stormy air over the Sea of Moyle, heard their songs, and her jealous heart curdled with spite. No-one sang for her.

She sent a deadly storm. Black waves rose around them. Black clouds stretched over the sea.

Finola said, 'If we are separated, meet again at the Rock of Seals.'

Howling winds pounced on the four swans, and drove them apart. They were battered, each alone, by the crashing waves and lashing foam. All night long the Demon storm raged, slashed at their white feathers, drenched them,



dashed them down the steep faces of huge clashing waves. Hailstones gnashed them, thunder smashed the skies above them and great flashes of lightning gashed the darkness.

In the morning, at last, the frowning clouds cleared. The wind screeched itself to a hoarse dying whisper and the waves rested among the rocks. Finola reached the rock of Seals. No body else was there.

'Please, please, please let my brothers be alive,' she said. 'I cannot bear to be all alone.'

She waited and waited. 'They must come, they must come, they must come.' She waited.

And they came! First Aedh and then Conn and then at long last, Fiacra.

'Where have you been? I thought I would die waiting.'

'I have been in a whirlwind that spat me out,' said Aedh.

'I have been mashed by the sea and put back together,' said Conn.

'I have been to the bottom of the ocean, holding my breath until I burst,' said Fiacra.

They were exhausted, bruised, feathers torn and broken. They huddled close together and shared each other's heart beat, each other's warm breath. How wonderful to be still alive, to be still together.

The lonely days of the three hundred years on the Sea of Moyle passed slowly, but no storm tried to destroy them again.

One day, Conn shouted, 'What is that?'

A black thing dropped from the sky and hissed over the water towards them. It was Aoife. She skirled and swirled around the four swans so wildly that she twirled up a whirlpool. All the while she was screaming,

'Three hundred years on the northern sea of Moyle are ended.

Your doom takes you now to the Western sea, for three hundred years more,' and then she swooped up crookedly, back up beyond the sky.

'What is in the west?' Fiacra asked.

'The edge of the world,' Conn said.

'Great sea monsters that swallow ships whole,' Aedh whispered.

The swans shivered with fear.

They flew west and settled by Inish Glora, keeping close to the coast. But it wasn't sea monsters they needed to fear. Aoife sent a Demon wind from the North, filled with the breath of icebergs. The sea froze solid and was silenced as if dead. The swans froze to the rocks they sheltered on. The cold ice bit into them as if it had teeth. They fought against it, struggled and pulled so hard to escape, that they left behind, caught in the ice, feathers torn from their wings and skin from their feet. They plunged into the open sea. The salt burned their wounds. They screamed, but could do nothing. They must swim. If they stayed on the ice the frost would slide its long cold fingers under their feathers, along their shivering bones, right into their hearts, and squeeze. They would grow numb and still. Snow would cover them. Ice would close their eyes.

'It's too cold. I'm sinking,' Conn moaned, his breath like mist around him.

Snow drifted against them, lay on their backs. Thin needles of ice grew on their wet feathers. Their breath came weakly. Finola began to sing. She sang of the warm current of sea water from the south that would reach under the ice and crack it open, of the melting away of the ice, and the melting away of all their sorrows. Her singing warmed her, and her brothers joined the song and the magic of their music called out the sun from behind the clouds and brought a whisper of springtime on the softening wind. Time must pass. Time must bring changes.

There were no more evil winds. The swans journeyed all along the western coast, and met the Lonely Crane of Inishkea.

'What sort of birds are you,' he said, 'talking with human voices?'

They told him the long sad story of their enchantment and exile.

'I hate being a bird,' Fiacra said. 'We should be at home, grown -up, with our father.'

'Learning to drive a chariot!' said Conn.

'Winning all the prizes at the games,' said Aedh.

'Walking with our father in his fields, naming the wild flowers and herbs,' said Finola.

'Don't say anymore,' said Fiacra. 'It makes me homesick.'

For the last time Aoife swooped down out of her lonely place in the sky.



She swirled and skirled and screamed around the swans.

'Fly where you will. Your exile is ended.'

'Must we stay swans?'

'Until you find a stronger magic . . . '

The swans flew straight home. They were excited, singing and calling as they went. They watched their reflections skim across the calm waters of Davra, watched their shadows speed along the road to King Lir's dun.

But they landed among grassy ruins, where the wind whistled over broken walls, and weeds grew high.

'He didn't wait for us.'

'Over here, look! His name, cut in stone, and ours.'

'Look what it says: Here lies King Lir, the father of Finola and Aedh, Conn and Fiacra. Where ever they are his heart is also.'

The swans stood around the huge boulder that marked their father's grave.

'We have no father, no home. I hate that Aoife.'

They looked up up up. If they'd had fists they would have shook them.

'I'm going to fly up there and yank her out of the sky,' yelled Aedh.

'Drown her at the bottom of the sea,' shouted Conn.

'Mash her to bits on the sharp rocks of Moyle.'

'Boil her, bash her.'

Then a quiet voice spoke out among them. It was their father's voice. It came from the air all around them.

'Aoife is already punished. She is alone for ever. Only spite and hatred fly with her. We have each other, and the whole wide world to be our home. My spirit has been waiting for you.'

The children of Lir flew off into the whole wide world and their father's spirit flew with them. Nobody knows where they went. Nobody knows if Aoife's spell is broken yet. Maybe they changed back into children, long ago; maybe not. If you meet four swans someday, greet them. They might answer you . . . and maybe, although you don't know it, you might have the stronger magic . . . . .

**Children of Lir - Writers biography - Marilyn McLaughlin**

Marilyn McLaughlin graduated from Trinity College Dublin in mid seventies with a degree in English and German. She subsequently studied Fairy Tales at Phillips Universtät in Germany and taught English Language, literature and German in Derry.

Won the Brian Moore Short Story Award in 1996.

Published a collection of stories for adults "A Dream Woke Me" (Blackstaff) 1999

And "Fierce Milly" (Mammoth) 1999 (short stories for 6 – 8 year olds)

"Fierce Milly" won a Bisto Award and The Eilish Dillon Award for best first book for children, June 2000.

"Fierce Milly and her Amazing Dog" will be published in 2001.

She has contributed short stories to Mammoth's anthologies for older children and is presently writing a novel for older children and working on more short stories for adults as well as Fierce Milly No3.

**Children of Lir Poem****The Children of Lir****by Sam Burnside**

Wild things are out there, riding the dark waves  
 They dress the black rock of Carricknarone  
 Their shadows confound the stronghold of the White Field  
 An still, neither bell nor call to marriage breaks the silence

Aed

“After the change, for many days and many nights,  
 “the sea bubbled and boiled beneath my chest  
 “the air was afire with tongues of scarlet and yellow  
 “and breath came shallow and fast and score to me.”

Fiacra

“We are no wild things; we are  
 Finola and Aed, Fiacra and Conn. Yet it is known  
 “We have travelled long on salt weighted wings;  
 “We have long dined off sea salt and tear salt.”

Finola

“I find the world careless of its treasures  
 “it leaves behind in pool and in cove  
 “Coverlets of foamy lace. Under a full moon,  
 “When fish lie deep, I dream, bedecked in finery, I dance.”

Conn

“Always, at day’s break I draw near the smell of loam and leaf;  
 “the smell of damp grass draws me.  
 “Always at day’s end I am drawn to the sea’s land-march;  
 “the scent of cut grass and crushed wild parsley is dear to me.”

***A note to The Children of Lir***

by Sam Burnside

The story goes that when Bow the Red was made King, Lir grew angry. To placate him Bow offered him the hand of one of his daughters, Eve, Eva or Aluna.. Lir chose and married Eve who bore him two sets of twins, Finola and Aed and Fiacra and Conn. During a journey from their father’s palace as Shee Finnehy, (the Stronghold of the White Field near Annagh) to their granfather’s palace on the banks of the Shannon, and as result of an intra family dispute, Lir’s children were turned into swans. Although they were allowed to retain their human feelings, and the power of human speech, and in addition were endowed with the gift of making sweet, plaintive music, the terms of the spell condemned them to endless wandering on the loneliest of waters: three hundred years, in turn, on the waters of Lake



module 3



Derravaragh, then on the Sea of Moyle and finally, on the waters about the rocks of Inish Glora on the Western Sea.

The spell could be broken only if one of two conditions was met: if they heard the voice of a Christian bell bringing the light of the new faith to the island of Ireland; or, if a prince of the North were to unite in marriage with a princess of the South.



**Children of Lir Poem**  
**Poet's Biography**  
**Sam Burnside**

Sam Burnside was born in Co Antrim and now lives and works in Derry. He is the author of *The Cathedral* (1989) a long poem which won the Sunday Tribune/Hennessy Literary Award for Poetry in that year. His work has attracted a number of literary prizes, including an Allingham Poetry Prize, the University of Ulster's, McCrea Award for Literature and a Bass Ireland Award. His poetry has been published and broadcast widely. He has also published *Walking the Marches* (Salmon, 1990) and *Horses* (1993) a handmade book published in a limited edition by Ballagh Studios and with woodcuts by the Canadian artist Tim Stampton. His latest publication is *Faham Mura* (1995) with an introduction by the Donegal poet Frank Harvey. He is represented in *The Great Book of Ireland* in *The Crazy Knot* (1996) a collaboration between Ulster writers and artists. He is the author of *Writer to Writer* (1990), a discussion of community-based creative writing initiatives; he has edited *Ourselves and Others* (1988) a gathering of children's poems and *The Glow Upon the Fringe* (1994) a collection of essays that celebrate the literary heritage of the North West of Ireland; he was guest editor of Issue 99 of the *Honest Ulsterman*. His long poem *The Grey Eye* formed part of a collaboration with artist Leslie Nicholl and sculptor Colin Corkey and the resulting exhibition was presented by the Orchard Gallery, Londonderry (March 1966) and the Old Museum Arts Centre (Belfast April, 1966).

Sam is the founder and director of [The Verbal Arts](#) Centre in Derry (currently heading a £1.7m capital development programme in establishing the first venue devoted to written and oral literature. He is a former Board Member of the Western Education and Library Board, immediate past-Chair and Vice-Chairman of the Western Education and Library Board, Library Committee, a past chairman of the NI Adult Education Association and is a Trustee of Derry City Theatre (a £14.5m cultural development project in the city centre); he was a Board Member of the Northern Ireland Arts Council 1995-1999 and a Board Member (and Chairman of the Ireland Group) of the Voluntary Arts Network, a body devoted to promoting amateur arts in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. He was a founding member and Associate Director. John Hewitt International Summer School-first 7 years. He is a member of the joint European Centre for Culture and the European Cultural Foundation's Geneva workshop on *The Role of Culture in Conflict and its Alleviation*.



## 'Ireland – A Cultural Journey'

### Listener's Guide

#### *Orchestration and Instrumentation: Electronic*

What images do you have in your mind when you hear a story? Do you feel anything? Cold, hot, sad, angry or do you see scenes of the places, dominated by colours\_ like a warm sunset, candle light glow etc.? Do you imagine sounds? Do you hear music; sometimes large orchestrated symphonic pieces to go with these feelings?

When scoring for any project, the film composer, Edd Charmant usually goes through this process often unconsciously before any real music is composed.

The themes from 'Ireland\_ A Cultural Journey' were composed to represent the history of a 'people' by capturing and enhancing general feelings got from the visuals and the dialogue. The overall sensation was one of great sadness and struggle against raiders and invaders. There was also a sense of persistence and perseverance to hold onto their ways and identity wherever they went.

From these feelings the main theme was born. The first music composed was the Famine theme. I sensed that this period has had an enormous impact on the Irish people. The theme's melody I decided then was going to be the starting point for the project's score. Rich slow string movements with a few wind instruments to add colour. This main melody was then used as a template for almost the entire score.

Various ethnic sounds and instruments (xylophones, marimbas, sticks, wooden blocks and hide drums), were used for a lot of the score to represent the raw natural sounds that might have been dominant in their music.

The themes have been rearranged into 1 minute to 3-minute pieces. 3 versions of each theme is given (with the exception of 'through the clouds' arrangements)\_the full orchestrated piece and 2 edited samples. These edited sample tracks have the main instruments used in them listed as well.

#### Track 1: Birth of Our Planet

A short version of the main theme music to capture the sense of struggle, sadness, creativity and identity.

#### Track 2: Humanity

Influenced by the orchestrations, arrangements and the sense of mystery from Rachmaninov's composition 'Prince Rostislav, Symphonic Poem' and Gustav Holst's composition 'The Planets'.

#### Track 3: Cultures

World rhythms, instrument sounds and melodies drawn from over the world were arranged into this piece.

#### Track 4: Ireland the Island

The main theme is orchestrated for this 3 minutes theme. The images conveyed to me a 'bird in flight' sensation. The beginning sequence feeling almost like a dream, hence the 'magical and mystery like' introduction.

#### Track 5: Mesolithic Ireland

Neolithic period conjured images of large dark and forbidden forests, wild animals and frozen mountain passes. Also a deep respect of the environment. There must have been lots of surprising discoveries and fascinating sites, but life must have been pretty hard as well with very few or no luxuries at all. The music tried to capture most of these feelings.

#### Track 6: Neolithic Ireland

Like the Neolithic period before, there must have been lost of mystery in the lives of the people. Religious practices and their gods, the druids, the art form with symbolic decorative patterns. Interesting!

**Track 7: Celtic Ireland**

Raiders and invaders bring more struggle and uncertainty. Battles, destruction and rebuilding with new alien influences. It must have felt confusing at times. The music tries to convey this feeling uncertainty with a hint of positive change since the Vikings after all did establish towns and brought with them some good ideas.

**Track 8: Christian Ireland**

Christianity and new foreign influences threaten the old ways. The music tries to convey this feeling of strong religious practice, an influx of new ideas from one of the centres of civilisation, Rome. However, there must have been a sense of loss as many of the old beliefs would have been deemed as superstitious nonsense and thus discarded.

**Track 9: Viking Ireland**

Normans' arrival always struck as a time of strong social laws and order. The influences in the architecture and art must have been at times overwhelming.

**Track 10: Norman Ireland**

New settlers and new ideas and beliefs must have brought about friction.

**Track 11: Changing Ireland**

The Famine was a time of great struggle and incredible sorrow. It would have been unbearable for the poor ordinary folk. The impact of this time is evident to this day. It felt right to compose for this period in time first then adapt the theme to the entire project, even the past because this period I felt changed the way people saw their past. The Famine piece (main theme) is given several times grouped into the various basic instruments used in the composition. In these separate groups/ files, you can listen to the slow strings alone playing the main melody, or the 2<sup>nd</sup> string section playing harmonies together with the wood section (also isolated onto separate track). The solo oboe moves between the main melody at the intro. to create a new melody and then second harmony. Because the instrumentation, orchestration and performance of the entire score were done electronically, there is always the possibility of losing a lot of the emotional content. It is also known that music that is electronically performed can often sound lifeless and detached. The Famine piece needed raw unrestrained emotion. The various parts of the Famine theme therefore had very little editing after its performance was recorded. Timing tools like 'quantising' were avoided leaving the piece's performance with an almost uncertain, hesitant and pensive feel. The reason for this approach was to convey a sense of falling apart without knowing why or how. Where are we going and what can we do? Try listening to the separate instrument sections provided to get an idea of this uncertain and hesitant feeling in the performance then listen to the whole piece again. The feeling is still there but each section is pulling the other along.

**Track 12**

Our Ireland Struggle and perseverance. Emigration to a new land. A sense of adventure and new dreams.

**Track 13**

Building new roots in a new land. There would have been lots of hardship and struggle to start up decent lives.

**Track 14**

Our Ireland The 20<sup>th</sup> century (and beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century) was a time of great discovery, large-scale destruction and rebuilding. A time of great advance and communication. The music was never used in the original project. It is a simple techno dance piece, which uses sections of the main theme's melody. The use of more obvious synthetic sounds in the orchestration is to convey technological progress, the beginning of cosmopolitan societies and the virtual world becoming a reality.

**'Ireland – A Cultural Journey'****Music composer's biography: Edd Charmant**

Edd Charmant was born in Ghana, West Africa from a Ghanaian mother and a part Irish/Hungarian father. He grew up in Ghana and had the opportunity to travel to many countries around the world from a very early age. He has always been interested in music and film but did not pursue a film music career until after completing degrees in economics and archaeology at University College Galway, Ireland. He worked in business in Africa after university but left after a year to return to Ireland where he completed a diploma in computer animation graphics and multimedia applications at Ballyfermot Art College, Dublin.

It was during his time in Art College that he decided to seriously pursue a film music composition career. He started scoring original music to student animation projects and at the same time begun self-teaching himself film music composition, orchestration and arrangement. He attended seminars, entered competitions and invested in any written material on the subject of composition he could get. He scored film student demo reels for experience. His first commercial engagements however were scoring multimedia projects where he gained valuable experience in scoring to all sorts of visuals, sound design and sound production.

During his secondary and third level educational years, Edd played keyboards in several student jazz and pop/ rock bands mainly to improve his performance 'chops'. In those days, a career in film music was very far out of reach.

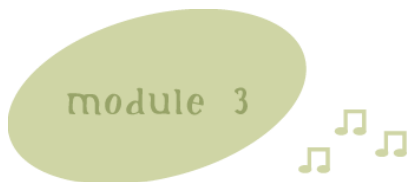
As a self-taught composer, Edd's development in film music composition has been greatly influenced by his multicultural background, life experiences and many countries he has travelled.

"I hear music in my head during my waking hours and often I have dreamt beautiful melodies in my sleep. I have always been inspired by the musical talents of all good composers and musicians especially Ennio Morriconi and Rachmaninov. For me, music when well composed can express what words and visuals often fail to do...there is real magic in good music"



**Class Room Needs**

- 1 Children's score materials - black sugar paper and coloured chalks
- 2 Children's Journal (special copy book for the program)
- 3 Media Workstation
- 4 Mini Disc recorder and discs
- 5 Sound Logging Chart
- 6 Reporting Form
- 7 Sample Homework Exercises
- 9 Your Recommended Sources Forms



### **Sample Homework Exercises**

MODULE 3: "Our Musical Schools"

Exercise 1: "Listening to a Story" (Sample Instruction)

Write your own version of the story "The Children of Lir".

Your description can take the shape of a poem, lyric, prose or just a bunch of words.

Record it in school and give it a title.

Exercise 2: "Listening to a Story" (Sample Instruction)

Describe in words the colours and feelings in the story you wrote.

Your description can take the shape of a poem, lyric, prose or just a bunch of words.

Record it in school and give it a title.

Exercise 3: "A Story without Words – Feelings and Sounds"

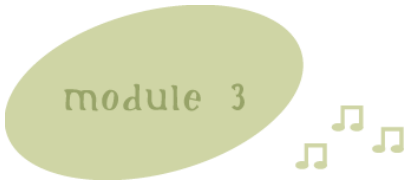
Select another student's story in your class, bring it home and compare your story to his/hers, especially the feelings and sounds you experience.

Keep notes.

Exercise 4/5/6: Our Schools Musical Celebration

Keep a diary in your journal of what happens during the last 3 exercises – what you hear, what you like and dislike etc.

From the outcomes of homework exercises the teachers may make selections, which can be uploaded to Sound and Music Archive



**Sound Logging Chart:**

Module No: .....

Exercise No: .....

Disc No: .....

Disc Title:

School Name:

Track No:	Track Description:	Take	In	Out