

Downey, Jean 1997, 'Traditional Irish Music in the Irish Secondary School'

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

This dissertation undertakes a review of traditional Irish music in the Irish Secondary School. An outline is given of the historical background of traditional Irish music from the earliest times to the present day. The differences between 'folk' and 'traditional' music are established and the characteristics of traditional Irish music are highlighted. References are made to early Irish music and also to the work of the Great Collectors. The connection between traditional Irish music and the Irish language is examined and their development is placed in a political context. The response of the Irish Education System before and after 1923 to the development of traditional Irish music is outlined. The assessment policies from the 1960s to the present day are indicated. The role played by the Gaelic League and other organisations in furthering the cause of traditional Irish music is established. The tensions which exist between European 'art' music and traditional Irish music are explored.

The results of a survey undertaken in 1994 on the knowledge and practice of traditional Irish music among Secondary School students are briefly outlined. A more detailed analysis is made of a survey, undertaken in 1996, of teachers on the teaching of traditional Irish music in the Irish Secondary School.

A review is undertaken of the courses provided in traditional Irish music by the Third Level Colleges / Schools of Music and the Universities. The amount of lecture time provided for undergraduate students in the history of Irish music, in the area of its transmission and in practical music making is established. The degree of commitment to the teaching of traditional Irish music in initial teacher training is examined. Finally, the findings in this dissertation point the way forward to further study and research.