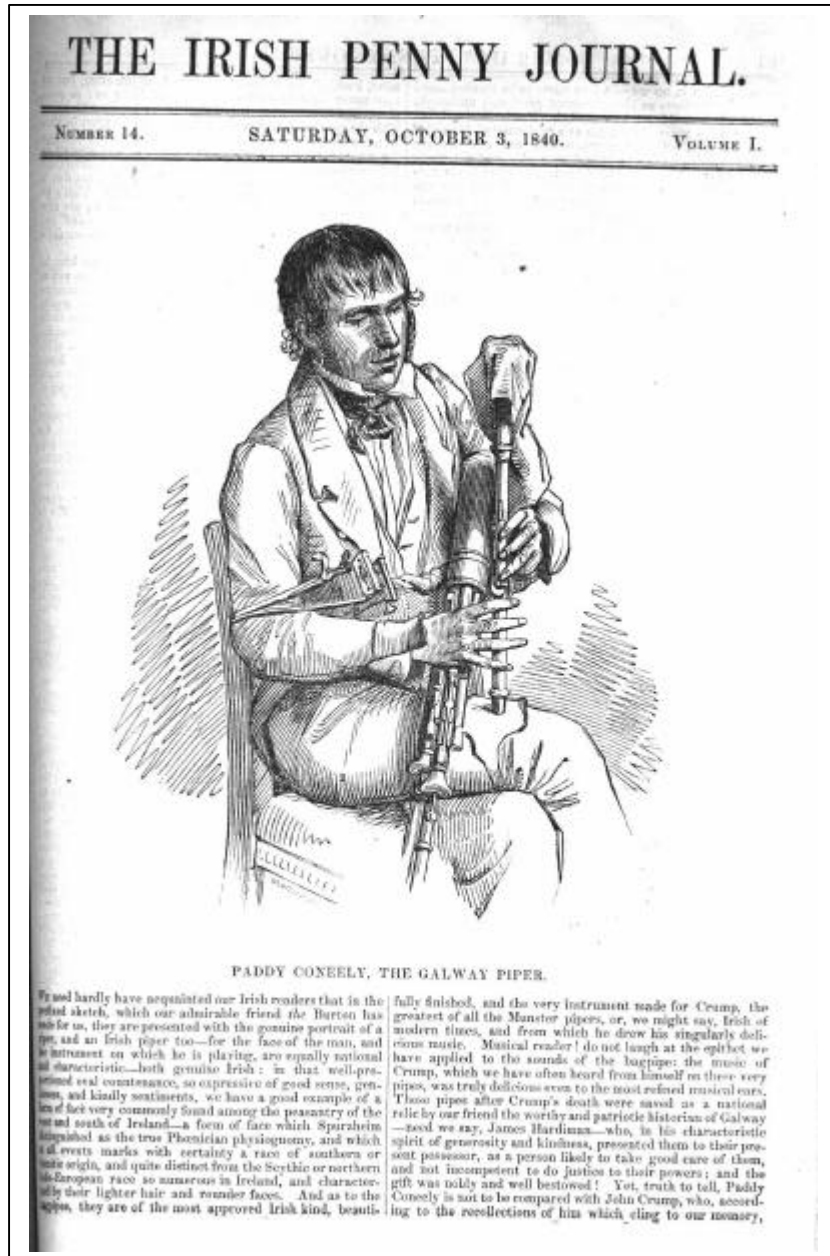


1.05 A brief look at the piping style of Paddy Conneely.

James O'Brien Moran.

The fact that the reader has picked up a journal with a title such as this journal carries suggests that the reader is familiar with at least some aspects of Union (or Uilleann) pipes and piping. This article is written for pipers, assuming some knowledge and experience



on their part in this field. Those wishing to read further or to research other pipers and their styles are recommended to consult *The Dance Music of Willie Clancy* (1976) by Pat Mitchell,¹ *The Piping of Patsy Touhey* (1986) by Pat Mitchell and Jackie Small² and *The Master's Touch* (1998), a tutor for the pipes written by Séamus Ennis and recently edited by Wilbert Garvin and Robbie Hannan.³

¹ Mercier Press, Dublin . 1976.

² Na Próbaire Uilleann 1986.

³ Na Próbaire Uilleann 1998.

The collecting of folk music as a hobby among the wealthy urban class gained popularity during the first half of the 19th century. The sharing of collected material was quite a common practice and so it is possible to find the same tunes (and occasional copying errors or edits) in several manuscript collections that have survived to the present day. At least five collectors went to Paddy Conneely to transcribe his music and singing. They include Henry Robert Westenra (1792-1860), otherwise Lord Rossmore, George Petrie (1789-1866), William Elliot Hudson (1795-1850), Henry Hudson (1798-1889) and William Forde (1795-1850). Rossmore's music manuscripts were apparently consumed in a house fire following an arson attack on the family home in Monaghan in 1981,⁴ however he gave a number of tunes to George Petrie which the latter inserted in his large collection.⁵ Unfortunately these do not show much in the way of ornamentation or piping detail. The whereabouts of the bulk of William Elliot Hudson's manuscripts is unknown but approximately 92 of his Conneely transcriptions appear in the collection of John Edward Pigot⁶ copied from William's manuscripts during or before 1853.

Paddy Conneely (d1851) achieved national fame briefly during his lifetime and was probably the most celebrated piper in his day. Although his date of birth has not yet come to light he seems to have been in his late 30s or early 40s when his watercolour portrait was painted around 1840. He received his pipes, apparently a sweet instrument with two regulators that had formally belonged to the piper Crump, otherwise John Crampton (d1811), from James Hardiman (1782-1855), "the historian of Galway."⁷

Aside from his piping skill the reason for his fame rests mainly with George Petrie and Frederic William Burton. Petrie had "kidnapped" Conneely during a visit to Galway in 1839 and had met him again in 1840. On one of these occasions Burton (1816-1900) painted a wonderful portrait of Conneely.⁸ Petrie, during the year 1840 had undertaken the editorship of *The Irish Penny Journal* for which he was in constant search of interesting material. On Saturday, October 3rd., 1840, the leader article had the title "Paddy Coneely, The Galway Piper" and was decorated with the, by now, famous engraving of Burton's water-colour. In this article Petrie concerns himself mainly with "a few traits in the character of an individual of the species of pipers, and these after all are more relating to the man than the musician." This seems to have launched Conneely into fame unprecedented for a traditional musician. However, even before this he had enjoyed the patronage of the wealthy, travelling as far as Dublin for engagements.

Petrie enthused about Conneely as a man of kindness and good temper, moderate in his habits and possessing a gift for both judging the quality of animals and accurately forecasting the weather. He seemed to have developed a spatial awareness for the topography of any area he visited and Petrie describes his application to acquire this knowledge. Petrie's only disappointment with the man was his lack of skill, in comparison with Crump, at performing airs on the pipes. "He plays them not as they are sung, but like a piper."

" Yet we do not think this want of power attributable to any deficiency of feeling or genius in Paddy - far indeed from it:- but he has had no opportunities of hearing any great performer, like that one to whom we

⁴ Personal correspondence with the present Lord Rossmore.

⁵ *The Petrie Collection*, National Library of Ireland, MS 9278-80

⁶ *The Forde / Pigot Collection*, Vol. 1, MS. 24.o.19, pp.138 and 171 Royal Irish Academy.

⁷ *Irish Penny Journal*, October 3, 1840.

⁸ National Gallery of Ireland, Catalogue No. 6036.

have alluded, the best of his predecessors whom he has heard he can imitate and rival successfully."

Petrie goes on to describe him as "the piper of Galway par excellence." During his two visits Petrie transcribed quite a number of tunes from Conneely. Only about 45 pieces of music are attributed to Conneely in the Stanford edition of *The Complete Collection of Irish Music* (1902-1905), however, the manuscript collection credits him with more. There are perhaps as many as 50 more tunes the settings of which are virtually identical to versions collected by others from him. The proportion of dance tunes is relatively small. The reason for this is, no doubt, Petrie's preference for song. It is curious then that he complains how Paddy Conneely "instead of firing away with some lively reel, or still more animated Irish jig, he has pestered us, in spite of our nationality, with a set of quadrilles or a galloppe." No sets of quadrilles or galloppes appear in the collection.

The following year (1841) Henry Hudson (1798-1889) began editing and presenting "The Native Music of Ireland" in *The Citizen or Dublin Monthly Magazine*, which ran until 1843. Hudson visited Conneely and transcribed some 138 songs, airs and tunes from his playing and singing.⁹ Several of these subsequently appeared in the magazine most of which were accompanied by enthusiastic remarks and interesting details about the man and his piping. All in all, a surprising number of anecdotes and references to Conneely have surfaced which indicate that he was a popular musician. Petrie said "he is a favourite with us", as he was apparently with many.

Hudson called him "our own dear, blind, sad, cheerful friend Paddy Coneely [sic]."¹⁰ Conneely died on September 11th 1851 and his obituary appeared in *The Galway Vindicator and Connaught Advertiser*, Saturday, September 13, and *The Freeman's Journal*, September 15, 1851.

When dealing with field transcriptions one must bear in mind the fact that the collector did not always transcribe everything he heard. Unlike this century, there was hardly a collector of the 1800s that played Irish folk music in a traditional manner. All of those who transcribed Conneely's music, with one notable exception, came to the music from a classical background. The exception is, of course, Lord Rossmore who played the pipes but whose manuscripts, as mentioned already, we do not have. A certain lack of familiarity with traditional practices is obvious in many of the transcriptions. This can be seen particularly in the notation of ornaments.

It is a difficult task to analyse a piping style based on sound recordings and transcriptions of those recordings as it is important to be aurally familiar with the music of the chosen piper. To produce a similar type of analysis working only from manuscript material alone is virtually impossible. What I have endeavoured to do here is to look at all the transcriptions of the piping of Paddy Conneely, and of his dance music in particular, with a view to identifying all those elements which are part of piping today; techniques such as rolls, grace-notes, crans, triplets and so on, and then to look for recurring passages or motifs which might suggest other techniques that have not been passed on in the tradition but which might make up an important part of Conneely's style.

Just as the flute is articulated with the tongue or the fiddle with a change of direction of the bow, each time the same note is repeated on a chanter something must be done to

⁹ National Library of Ireland, MS 649, 4718, 7255-60. Boston Public Library, M. 374.

¹⁰*The Citizen*, January 1843.

differentiate between the two notes, either by the momentary silencing of the chanter or by the use of a cut or grace note above or below the note.

This is not always indicated and one is left to wonder if it was played staccato or if a grace note was used. The appearance of some grace notes in the transcriptions confirms that they were played and gives an occasional example of where they were used. This does not mean that the placing of them was always correct. Frequently an ornament will appear in one part of the tune and when this section is repeated the ornament is missing even though it should logically be repeated too. The identification of grace notes can present difficulty when listening to a recording at half speed or even slower. To pick out the ornamentation at normal speed is largely guesswork, therefore, one cannot place too much importance on the actual detail of such transcriptions although obviously some ornaments were used. Having said that, we cling carefully to what has been transcribed as it was the only method of recording what was being played and gives us a certain amount information of the music at that time.

With regard to keys a certain consistency can be found in the collections of the Hudson brothers. Their placing of the majority of tunes from the pipes within the key signatures of C and F is compatible with the idea that Paddy Conneely's pipes were pitched in C (implying that the tunes were transcribed in actual pitch). The obituary of W. E. Hudson¹¹ suggests the same as we are told that he had perfect pitch. There is a comment in the margin of the Pigot copy of W. E. Hudson's collection above one tune. Ambiguously placed over the B and C it says "C natural on the pipes." As it is the first appearance of the note B in the tune this might suggest that B flat is the intended note. Also the tune, which has no sharps or flats in the key signature, ends on F, which again supports the idea of a B flat. This would imply that perhaps the collector asked the piper to identify the note, which would be called "C natural on the pipes" irrespective of actual pitch.

William Forde on the other hand places the tunes in a variety of keys, the most frequent of which are the key signatures of C, F and G. This is difficult to explain considering that he copied many Conneely tunes from the collections of both Henry and more particularly, W. E. Hudson.

Rossmore's contribution only amounts to about six Conneely tunes but of these, three are in one sharp (G), two in two flats (B flat) and one the key signature of C. George Petrie's collection is confusing in that, aside from the variety of keys, one finds the same tunes written out several times in different parts of his collection (which spans several volumes) and occasionally in different keys. Nor are they always cross-referenced. Petrie seems to have had a preference for tunes in one flat and three flats. Four tunes occur in four flats and even one in five flats. To balance this, quite a number of Conneely tunes have a key signature of one sharp. For someone who abhorred the liberties that pipers, and instrumentalists in general, took with song airs, Petrie seems to have had little respect for the original key settings of the tunes. This is clearly illustrated in the Stanford edition of his collection where the margin commentary of the manuscript is quoted for tune No. 1225. The tune is in two sharps and Petrie's comment says "Transpose this into D minor two notes higher." The same tune in Henry Hudson is, in fact, in D minor.

The tunes are sometimes placed in keys different to current use. In some cases this is an error on the part of the collector, which is obvious from the fact that the tune plays

¹¹ *Transactions of the Ossianic Society*, Vol. V, 1856.

outside the range of the instrument. On the other hand sometimes the unusual key placing is deliberate which is supported by the fact that the tune uses the full range of the notes of the chanter and such a range would not be possible in any other key. An example of this is 'Drops of Brandy' frequently called '*Cuma liom.*' Most musicians today play this tune in G. Conneely sets the tune in D and then plays a variation, which puts the tune into the second octave and uses the full range of the chanter up to the third D.

It is interesting that, as pointed out by Henry Hudson in *The Citizen*, Conneely had a very definite notion of the correctness of his tune settings.

"He has struck off some excellent jigs and reels altogether his own -- exclusively of the infinite variations to airs, which he has the power of giving, all in the most thoroughly Irish manner; and it is remarkable, that whilst he possesses the power of varying to a remarkable degree, he is one of the most faithful preservers of the original text of our airs; and, indeed, he is a stickler for every note and point of an air which he has once thoroughly fixed to his satisfaction, far beyond anybody we have yet had the fortune to meet with." [April 1842]

He was conscious too of the fact that the tunes were being transcribed and therefore he probably played in a restrained manner. So we are most likely looking at a subdued Paddy Conneely mindful of the exactness of the tune and of the needs of the collector.

Style is a "many-splendoured thing" including process as well as product, as the current *cliché* runs. It is as much about what is played as how it is played. In piping terms style should incorporate repertoire, instrumental technique, ornamentation, articulation, phrasing, rhythm, speed and variation among other things. Many of these aspects are not noted in the collected repertoire of Paddy Conneely and, if they were, such indication might only make the notation unreadable. What we have is a limited choice of his repertoire, an inconsistent and inadequate representation of his instrumental technique and of his ornamentation, a basic indication of his rhythm and an occasional example of his variation. What we have, too, is an interpretation of his piping by at least four collectors, which we can use for comparison where the same tunes were transcribed by more than one collector. This can show as much about the interpreter as it can about the musician but also serves to highlight the subjectivity or inadequacy of such transcriptions.

Going through the collections of Petrie, W. E. Hudson (in Pigot), Henry Hudson and Forde I noted the occurrence of ornamental devices, motifs and generally anything that could be categorised as pertaining to the performance aspects of style. Where the item occurred more than once on the same notes in a tune it was only noted once except in certain cases when was noted at each occurrence on a different pitch. For example, a trill occurring in two different parts of a tune on different notes were recorded to identify the pitches which were thus ornamented. An ordinary "cut" or grace note, on the other hand, is interesting because it was used but where it occurs is not of major significance, especially in the light of possible inaccuracies by the collector.

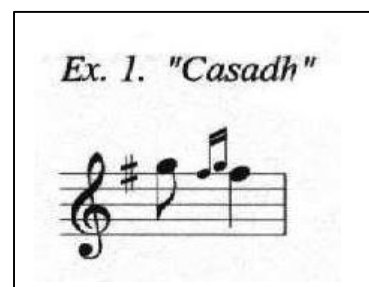
Looking at the results one of the most noticeable recurring features is the triplet. The so-called triplet in Irish music is often two semiquavers (16^{ths}) and a quaver (8th) or even half that value. They are called triplets because of the grouping of three notes rather than the fact that they are played within the rhythmic space of two notes. In most styles the most common triplets used by pipers today would include GF#E, AC#A, BC#D, F#GF# and F#GA. The triplets used by Conneely in order of frequency include DEF#, ABC,

DBA, EF#G, BC#D and a number of others (21) less often used. There is little indication as to whether any of these were played staccato or legato. The use of staccato marks is rare in these collections. However, the margin commentary on one tune reads "Little notes a-top one another like a shower of hailstones" suggesting staccato sounds. The repertoire examined in this study included airs as well as dance tunes giving a good overall impression of his technique. It may, however, distort the view of his dance music technique.

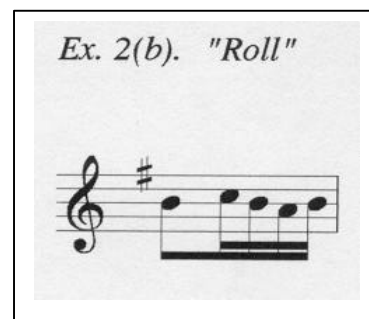
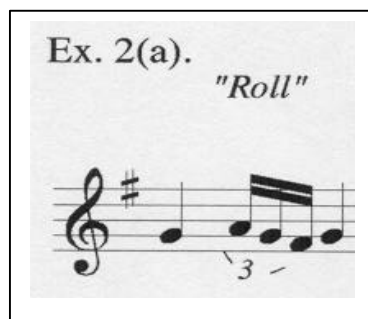
One recurring trait is the use of semiquavers (16th notes) in the upbeat to a bar where two quavers (8th notes) would be more usual. A look at non-Conneely tunes in the collections shows a variety of both quavers and semiquavers for the upbeats suggesting that it was not just a general approach on the collector's part.

A frequent ornament is the grace note, which is the same pitch as the previous note. If this is what Conneely was doing it required the momentary silencing of the chanter to differentiate between the two notes and therefore indicates another tight aspect to his playing. This technique is common enough today and has been noted in the playing of Willie Clancy, Séamus Ennis and Patsy Touhey to name but a few.

A few other indications of Conneely's tight piping are suggested by the occasional presence of a rest and by the frequency of repeated notes. The cut or upper grace note is present in abundance too. The tip or lower grace note is less common but still well represented. The "*casadh*," a cut that is preceded by the note to be ornamented (see Example 1) is also noted several times.



What appears to be the indication of a roll occurring a number of times although not always where it might be expected (see Example 2a & 2b). This is also suggested by the mordant symbol, which is used on a number of occasions.



The use of the trill is interesting as it was given by O'Farrell in the tutor part of his publication. This is not to suggest that Conneely had consulted O'Farrell's book, Conneely was blind, rather that the trill was more often used than it is today. It occurs most frequently on the notes A, G, B, E and F#, but also on F natural and once on D. On two occasions it is written out fully (see Example 3).



Conneely's use of upward leaps and downward jumps of intervals is often surprising. Not all of the leaps indicated are difficult to achieve especially within the first octave.

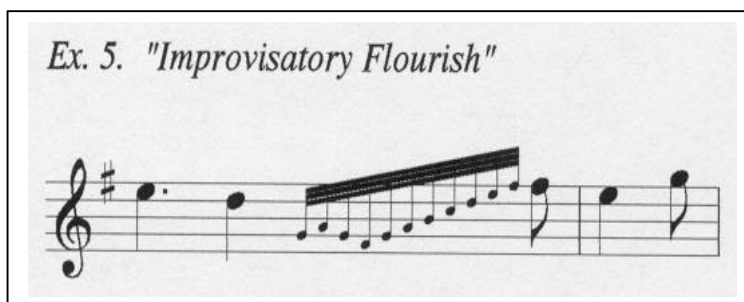
Some, however, are particularly awkward. Leaps of a sixth are the most common, followed by leaps of an octave and, next in order, leaps of a seventh. One occasion of a ninth leap was noted. Jumps of large intervals are less difficult to manipulate but require a certain skill none-the-less. Jumps of a sixth are commonly found as well as sevenths and octaves. One leap of an eleventh was noted. These leaps and jumps indicate the level of control that Conneely had in his chanter playing.

Possibly the most peculiar ornament noted by both Henry Hudson and William Forde is a leaping grace note. This is occasionally the same note as the previous one necessitating the tight articulation mentioned above but it often leaps to the ornamented note over an interval of as much as a fourth. While the leaping grace note might serve to announce a particular note a tone or semitone above it, the function of the larger intervallic ornament I have not been able to discover (see Example 4).



The use of accidentals (notes not within the scale indicated by the key signature) is noticeably frequent. The incessant combination of C natural and C# suggests an awareness of melodic minor possibilities although not used to any classical rules. The G# note appears surprisingly often. The F natural also appears with regularity. There are several examples of E flat /D# and a number of B flats as well. It seems likely then that Conneely had several note keys on his chanter as the F natural can be problematical in certain melodic passages but the G# and B flat almost impossible.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable facets of Conneely's style is his use of improvisatory flourishes. He seems to have been very fond of turning parts of the tune into runs of semiquavers (16th notes) or even faster. While these occur frequently in airs they are not absent from dance tunes (see Example 5).



A nice surprise in the manuscripts of Henry Hudson is the appearance of (what looks like) transcribed regulator playing. It doesn't amount to much but may be the earliest example of such. It only occurs in three tunes, two of which are songs, 'An Clar Bog Deal' and 'I'd cross the world over with you, Johnny Doyle' and the third a march-like tune composed by Paddy Conneely himself called 'O'Connell's Welcome to Clare.' The regulator accompaniment (if it is such) is very simple and in the case of the jig follows every note at one point. The regulators are noticeably absent for a bar and a half in the first part and for all the second part with the exception of one bar in the middle and the last two bars. I considered that it might have been a preliminary piano arrangement because in one case a three-note chord is indicated and Conneely's set only had two regulators. However, the absence of chords in the second part and the un-pianolike setting supports the notion that it is indeed the regulators (the original version is not

included here but the example taken from *The Citizen* is in fact a piano arrangement which borrows from the style of the regulator accompaniment).

The frequent use of dotted rhythm in the transcriptions suggests that Conneely played with a certain amount of swing which is a normal part of piping rhythm today.

Because of the attitude of some collectors at the time, of asking for specific types of tunes, the collected repertoire of Paddy Conneely cannot be taken as representative. However, it does give some idea of the types of tunes he played. Those tunes that recur in the different collections probably delineate his "play list" of the time since most of the transcriptions were done between 1839 and 1842. From a comprehensive listing of 196 melodies I have classified only 83 as dance tunes, the remainder being songs and airs. The breakdown of time signatures is as follows

Tunes in 6/8: 31, Tunes in 12/8: 6, Tunes in 9/8: 8
 Tunes in 3/8: 2, Reels: 13, Marches: 6, Hornpipes: 3
 Polkas: 3, Descriptive piece: 1
 Lullaby: 1, Slide: 1, Jig-songs: 6, Others: 2


Of those tunes written in 12/8 many might have been written in 6/8 and indeed some appear in both time signatures in the Petrie collection. The terms polka, slide, hornpipe, jig-song and descriptive piece are not used in any of the collections. Henry Hudson uses the term Kerry quickstep to describe a tune in 4/4, which seems to fall into the category of hornpipe. The same quoted description is in Forde but seems to have been copied possibly from W. E. Hudson. Other tunes 'Sarsfield's Quickstep' (6/8) and 'The Hurler's March' (6/8) are also described as quicksteps. Therefore the term was obviously used arbitrarily by Henry Hudson. Conneely was regarded as a good singer and quite a number of songs appear in the collections. Several tunes are described as comic songs and those that are suitable to the pipes have been included since it is not clear whether they were played or sung.

The compositions of Paddy Conneely comprise about four pieces in the collection including a march and a jig; 'O'Connell's Welcome to Clare' and 'The Humours of Maam,' an air; 'The Love Letter' and a reel; 'The Sunny Hills of Spiddal.' The tunes are not exactly inspired but do show a full understanding of the music. 'O'Connell's Welcome to Clare' is quite a difficult piece of piping.


The descriptive piece, '*Sean Duine Crom*,' suggests the marriage of an old man to a young girl. While the piece doesn't appear to be very complex it does show another side to Conneely's repertoire.

A number of tunes are given here as examples of the piping of Paddy Conneely. The tune "O'Connell's Welcome to Clare" is taken from *The Citizen*, May 1842. The other tunes include a jig '*Scornach na Wallaige*', a polka 'All the way to Galway', and an air '*Eamon an Cnoic*' all of which illustrate facets of Conneely's style.

Scornach na Wallaige W. Forde p. 138
H. Hudson No. 377
W. E. Hudson in Pigot p. 678




All the way to Galway W. Forde p. 371
H. Hudson No. 405



The image shows two musical pieces. The first, 'Scornach na Wallaige', is in 6/8 time and consists of three staves of music. The second, 'All the way to Galway', is in 2/4 time and consists of two staves of music. Both pieces are in the key of D major.

Eamon an Cnoic H. Hudson No. 494



The image shows the musical score for 'Eamon an Cnoic', which is in 3/4 time and consists of five staves of music. The piece is in the key of D minor and features several technical markings: a sixteenth-note triplet (6), a triplet (3), an eleven-note slur (11), and two ten-note slurs (10). A trill (tr) is also indicated in the final staff.

To sum up then the piping style of Paddy Conneely is quite a complex one. He frequently used the full two-octave range of the chanter including the notes F natural, G#, E flat and B flat. His technique used the usual grace notes and other ornaments not found today such as the rising grace note. His use of trills was more frequent than is used today and he was fond of groups of semi - (16th) or demisemiquavers (32nd). He had an array of triplets some of which he would play staccato. He had ornamentation similar to the roll and the cran and could play "infinite variations." He played the regulators, could compose tunes and had an extensive repertoire.

"of course, you know how a genuine Irish piper will play a jig or a reel - over and over again - a thousand times of a night - and yet, at every new repeat, introduce some variety in his mode of playing, whether by the chanter [sic], or regulators, or drone, or by some trick or whim of the moment....." [The Citizen, March 1842]

642

O'Connell's Welcome to Clare.

Mastel's Metron. $J = 84$ 13. Paddy Conneely.

Allegretto.

Piano-Forte.

m. f.

Long life to O'CONNELL, Long life to O'CONNELL!
 Suc - cess to Hur - ra for Hur - ra for

Long
 Suc -
 Hur -

Life to
 cess to
 ra for O'CONNELL, the Member for Clare.

m. f. *f.*

Long life to
 Suc - cess to
 Hur - ra for O'CONNELL, the Member for Clare.

Hosers, Abbey-street, Dublin. April, 1842.

Acknowledgements.

The tunes '*Scornach na Wallaige*' and 'All the way to Galway' pp 138 and 371 respectively, in the Forde collection, are published by kind permission of the officers of the Royal Irish Academy. The air '*Eamon an Cnoic*' No. 494 in the Hudson Collection, is published by courtesy of the trustees of the Boston Public Library. I would also like to thank Nicholas Carolan, director of the Irish Traditional Music Archive, and Seán Donnelly for help on various points.

End.