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Songs of Famine and War: Irish Famine Memory in the Music of the US Civil War

Sarah Gerk
Binghamton University
srgmusic@gmail.com

This article illuminates ways in which memory of Ireland's Great Famine or 'an Gorta Mór' (1845–1852) shaped US music during the US Civil War (1861–1865). Among scholarship on Irish Americans in the Civil War, few sources substantively address lingering memories and trauma from the Great Famine. Yet, a significant amount of the estimated 1.6 million Irish immigrants living in the US in 1860, 170,000 of whom enlisted in the war, were famine survivors. Music's unique role in emotional life offers robust source material for understanding famine memory in this transnational context. Adopting a concept of 'private, secret, insidious trauma' from Laura Brown and Maria P.P. Root, as well as understanding Jeffrey Alexander's ideas about cultural trauma as a sociological process, the article highlights a some of the ways in which famine memories emerged in music-making during the war. Case studies include a survey of US sheet music, the transnational performance and reception history of the song 'Kathleen Mavourneen', and research on the life of the northern Union army's most successful bandleader, Patrick Gilmore, who left Athlone, in Ireland famine-ravaged West, as a teenager in the late 1840s. The approach is inherently transatlantic, accounting for histories that occurred in the United States, Ireland and the broader Atlantic world dominated by Britain. The essay illustrates how music can contribute to social history, ways in which the application of research on trauma can inform musicological work, and ways in which traumatic memories can emerge across time and distance, particularly in diasporic contexts.

During the US Civil War, Americans used music to encourage patriotic sentiment and to process the emotional toll of hostilities.[1] One very popular choice for coping was the 1837 sentimental song 'Kathleen Mavourneen', which was published across both the northern Union and the southern Confederacy, in addition to being included in innumerable theatrical entertainments.[2] For many reasons, 'Kathleen Mavourneen' is a curious song to have accrued such value in the US during the war. Originally published in London, the song conjures an Irish setting with the Hiberno-English terms 'Erin' ('Ireland') and 'Mavourneen', a term of endearment. 'Kathleen Mavourneen's text (below) addresses Irish diasporic

[1] See, for instance, James A. Davis, *Maryland, My Maryland: Music and Patriotism during the American Civil War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019); Bruce C. Kelly and Mark A. Snell, eds, *Bugle Resounding: Music and Musicians of the Civil War Era* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004); Christian McWhirter, *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); John Stauffer and Benjamin Soskis, *The Battle Hymn of the Republic: A Biography of the Song that Marches On* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[2] *Kathleen Mavourneen, or St. Patrick's Eve: A Domestic Irish Drama in Four Acts* (Clyde, OH: Ames' Publishing Co, [1867?]).

experience from the perspective of a man who is about to emigrate. The woman he loves, Kathleen, is sleeping and he laments that he cannot say farewell. However, as is typical of 1830s songs, which frequently invited multiple interpretations, the narrator might be untrustworthy.[3] Failure to wake someone who is ostensibly sleeping is a common literary trope signalling that the 'sleeping' character (frequently female) is dead, and the person attempting to wake them (frequently a male paramour) is out of touch with reality. Regardless of whether Kathleen rests temporarily or eternally, the immediate reasons for the narrator's heartbreaking departure are left to the imagination. The song, however, is unequivocally set in Ireland, and thus performers and listeners could easily connect the song's tragic scene to Ireland's many national disasters. The narrator's exile and Kathleen's possible demise might be the result of the many failed rebellions against British incursion, political oppression, economic struggle, sectional violence or multiple famines. He might be hallucinating from grief over her loss, a refugee's anxiety, the effects of starvation on his body or, more likely, a combination of the three. More abstractly, a symbolic or metaphoric message about Irish diaspora is encoded in this story of an loving couple – one remaining sleeping or dead in Ireland, and the other heading into exile, able to survive but traumatized. If the narrator is indeed delirious, his madness reflects the grief and survivor's guilt of members of the Irish diaspora, many of whom had left family members behind to face the repeated crises that befell Ireland.

Lyrics to 'Kathleen Mavourneen,' music by Frederick Nicolls Crouch and words by 'Mrs. Crouch,' published in 1837 in London by D'Almaine.

> Kathleen Mavourneen! The grey dawn is breaking,
> The horn of the hunter is heard on the hill.
> The lark from her light wing the bright dew is shaking
> Kathleen Mavourneen! What slumbering still?
>
> Oh has thou forgotten how soon we must sever?
> Oh hast thou forgotten this day we music part,
> It may be for years, and it may be forever,
> Oh why art thou silent though voice of my heart?
> It may be for years and it may be forever,
> Then why art thou silent Kathleen Mavourneen?
>
> Kathleen Mavourneen! Awake from thy slumbers,
> The blue mountains glow in the sun's golden light,
> Ah! Where is the spell that once hung on my numbers?
> Arise in thy beauty, thou star of my night.
>
> Mavourneen, Mavourneen, my sad tears are falling
> To think that from Erin and thee I must part,
> It may be for years and it may be forever,
> Oh why art thou silent, thou voice of my heart?

'Kathleen Mavourneen' is a particularly prominent example of ways in which memory of stressful or traumatic experiences in Ireland emerged in musical life

[3] For ambiguity or polysemy in art song around the period, see Deborah Stein and Robert Spillman, *Poetry into Song: The Performance and Analysis of Lieder* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010): 10–11; Kristina Muxfelt, 'Happy and Sad: Robert Schumann's Art of Ambiguity', in *Word, Image, and Song: Essays on Musical Voices*, ed. Rebecca Cypress, Beth Lise Glixon, and Nathan Link (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2013): vol. 2, 145–67.

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during the US Civil War. Within diasporic communities and among those without Irish origins, the memories of Irish trauma shaped US music making in the 1860s, partly because of the newly experienced stressors and traumatic situations the war produced. And in the 1860s, by far the most haunting of Ireland's innumerable cultural traumas was that of the Great Famine or 'an Gorta Mór' (1845–1852). Indeed, though on the surface 'Kathleen Mavourneen' may not seem to be connected to the famine, I will show through its performance and reception histories that the song became intimately bound to famine memorialization among immigrant communities in the US in the 1850s.

In this article, I draw on examples from US sheet music and research on musical life in the US to reveal that memory of the Irish famine played a role in shaping music of the US Civil War. The topic is inherently transatlantic; although much existing research on the Irish in the US addresses American histories such as the racial/ethnic prejudice, xenophobia, and anti-Catholicism that significantly disenfranchised Irish-American immigrants, examining famine trauma in the US requires an inherently more transnational perspective. I take stock of Irish history, US history and broader transnational networks in order to reveal that the memories of Irish famine that emerged in the musical life of the US Civil War evince deeply, sometimes unconsciously, experienced connections.

My concept of trauma is in line with that of scholars who work to expand early and overly myopic definitions of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder that were based on military veterans and assault victims.[4] Such conceptions narrowly defined trauma as a body's response to a singular event fixed at a particular time – one that includes immediate and observable physical harm. In recent decades, many scholars working on trauma have observed that such definitions ignore traumatic experiences that are more typical among the underprivileged and disempowered, including minorities and women. Feminist psychologist Laura S. Brown, for instance, observes that limiting definitions of trauma to those who experience a single event that causes obvious bodily harm in that moment is rooted in the more typical experiences of privileged communities. She writes that it best suits 'the range of what is normal and usual in the lives of men of the dominant class; white, young, able-bodied, educated, middle-class, Christian men'.[5] Along with her colleague Maria P.P. Root, Brown calls for more attention to a 'private, secret, insidious trauma' with a constant presence in the lives of the oppressed.[6] Furthermore, sociological work on cultural trauma provides tools to understand, as Jeffrey Alexander explains, a 'trauma process' that occurs amidst 'social suffering on a broad scale'.[7] He notes that cultural trauma 'leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness … changing their future identity in fundamental and

[4] Allan Young, *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), and Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). For assault victims, see Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

[5] Laura S. Brown, 'Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma', *American Imago* 48/1 (1991): 119–33; 121.

[6] Brown, 'Not Outside the Range', 122; Maria P.P. Root, 'Reconstructing the Impact of Trauma on Personality', in *Theories of Personality and Psychopathology: Feminist Reappraisals*, ed. Laura S. Brown and Mary Ballou (New York: Guilford Press, 1994): 229–65.

[7] Jeffrey C. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012): 2.

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irrevocable ways'.[8] Trauma is thus limited to neither the clinical disorders described in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, nor to those who have suffered grievous bodily harms associated with, in the case of my research, starvation during the Irish famine or combat during the US Civil War.

Following Brown and Alexander's models of trauma, I resist overly clinical limitations on the concept of trauma that limit our understanding to a condition that meets the criteria from PTSD – a specific and contemporary condition that cannot apply to my subjects. I seek instead to understand how various stressors related to the broadscale crises in Ireland and the US shaped behaviours, choices, and experiences of those who survived them. The phenomena I address are collective, and many famine scholars have applied the concepts of a collective, cultural trauma to the famine and its aftermath.[9] Both the Irish famine and the US Civil War occurred across numerous communities and mass commercial music networks, requiring an additional accounting of social context. Though each individual experiences and expresses trauma differently and independently, society-wide calamities mean that we also need to understand the insidious ubiquity of their emotional toll. Since at least Kirby Miller's *Emigrants and Exiles*, which explores the Irish in Ireland and in North America, historians have noted that Irish and Irish-American identities have often coalesced around shared cultural traumas.[10] As Miller writes, 'the famine itself became the ultimate symbol of British tyranny, while the mass flights of 1845–55 permanently enshrined the now-imperishable interpretation of emigration as exile forced by English oppression'.[11] This is especially true of the economically disenfranchised Catholic Irish and those from Ireland's more poverty-stricken west, both of which were affected by the famine and constituted the overwhelming bulk of famine immigration to the United States.

Irish Famine Trauma in the US

The Great Famine, often described as the 'nadir' of Irish history, precipitated immense changes in both Ireland and the US.[12] Estimates of the famine's toll suggest that between 1847 and 1852, Ireland lost over a quarter of its population to emigration (about 15 per cent) and famine-related deaths (about 12 per cent). The event precipitated a far longer-lasting and profound exodus; Ireland's population kept falling until the middle of the twentieth century, when the island had

[8] Alexander, *Trauma*, 6.

[9] See for instance, Peter Gray, 'Memory and the Commemoration of the Great Irish Famine', in *The Memory of Catastrophe*, ed. Kendrick Oliver and Peter Gray (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004): 46–64; Oona Frawley, 'Introduction: Cruxes in Irish Cultural Memory: The Famine and the Troubles', in *Memory Ireland*, vol. 3: *The Famine and the Troubles*, ed. Oona Frawley (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014): 1–14; Melania Gallego, ed., *Trauma and Identity in Contemporary Irish Culture* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2020).

[10] Kirby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

[11] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 305.

[12] Irish historians who use the word 'nadir' to describe the famine: Thomas Gallagher, *Paddy's Lament, Ireland 1846–1847: Prelude to Hatred* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1982): xiv; Peter Gray, 'Irish Social Thought and the Relief of Poverty', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 20 (2010): 141; William Vincent Shannon, *The American Irish* (New York: Collier, 1974): 2.

half the population that it did in 1840.[13] Even today, Ireland's population remains well below its prefamine peak. Of all countries, the United States absorbed the most famine-era emigrants. To the US, the sheer numbers of new arrivals constituted the first of many great waves of immigration that characterized the years between the mid-nineteenth century and the beginning of the First World War. Irish immigration during this era had several lasting effects on the still-new country. Irish famine immigrants flooded northern cities in particular, filling New York, Chicago, and Boston with poor people looking for employment. The immense demographic, social and cultural shifts sparked innumerable changes to life in the US, ranging from the rise of xenophobic movements like the Know Nothings to the rapid industrialization that the country experienced at mid-century.

Though the Irish diaspora in the US has long been the subject of scholarly interest, very little literature addresses memories of the famine among the US-based Irish diaspora. The lacuna is not limited to Irish-American studies; historians have noted that in Ireland and Irish emigrant communities abroad, historical writings and public memorials of the famine were rare not only during the immediate aftermath, but also that the absence lasted for over a century.[14] For instance, few written histories of the Irish famine appeared before the mid-twentieth century, and the first monuments to the famine were built in the 1990s for the sesquicentennial remembrances.[15] A robust academic dialogue on the famine, memory and trauma also only developed in the 1990s.

The historiographical gap surrounding the famine can be explained by research on traumatic memory. Over the past few decades, conventional assertions that talking about a traumatic experience aids healing have given way to more nuanced approaches that acknowledge value in an absence of verbally described memory. Trauma scholars now consider multiple cognitive processes, many nonverbal, that can take place in the aftermath of trauma. Indeed, the coping mechanisms that a survivor adopts might preclude describing or verbally addressing what happened,

[13] For all population statistics see Timothy W. Guinnane, 'The Great Irish Famine and Population: The Long View', *The American Economic Review* 84/2 (1994): 303–6.

[14] I acknowledge others who have pushed back against the notion that no one discussed the famine during its aftermath. While their work clearly shows cultural practices that memorialize the famine among subsequent generations, such practices were also often limited in number and frequency. Overall, historians and popular culture alike omitted protracted contemplation of the famine for decades after the event. See for instance: Niall Ó Ciosáin, 'Was There "Silence" about the Famine?' *Irish Studies Review* 4/13 (1995): 7–10; Margaret Kelleher, *The Feminization of Famine: Expressions of the Inexpressible?* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1997); *Recollecting Hunger: Cultural Memories of the Great Famine in Irish and British Fiction, 1847–1920*, ed. Marguérite Corporaal, Christopher Cusack and Lindsay Janssen (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2012); Emily Mark-Fitzgerald, *Commemorating the Irish Famine: Memory and the Monument* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013): 13. Others have examined references to the famine in traditional balladry. See for instance Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, *Flowing Tides: History and Memory in an Irish Soundscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 66–70; Sally K. Sommers Smith considers broad musical responses to the famine's social and economic impact in 'The Origin of Style: The Famine and Irish Traditional Music', *Éire/Ireland* 32/1 (1997): 121–59.

[15] The first monograph-length study of the famine that relies on extensive archival research was Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845–1849* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962). The book broke new ground in exploring the exploitative political relationship between England and Ireland that greatly contributed to the death toll of the famine.

or even remembering the event. Judith Herman describes a 'familiar process of amnesia' in which forgetting or avoiding is a common experience in the aftermath of trauma.[16] Following Herman's logic, the pronounced lack of memorializing the Irish famine confirms the depths and ubiquity of traumatic experience, rather than negating it. As Meinhart and Rogers discuss in their introduction to this special issue, Dominick LaCapra also observes a propensity among survivors to share memories that contradict verifiable historical record.[17] LaCapra asserts that inaccurate memories of traumatic events can be useful, writing 'truth claims are necessary but not sufficient conditions of historiography'.[18] He advocates for a critical approach to historical texts that takes into account the vagaries of traumatic memory, asserting that the historical record is richer when memories are considered.[19] Bessel van der Kolk explains more about how people come to remember traumatic events differently than non-traumatic events. According to him, the brain processes traumatic memories dissimilarly to other kinds of memories, and because of the specific processes involved with traumatic memory, music is a more suitable medium for processing or coping with such memories.[20] He claims that traumatic memories are often more jumbled and nonlinear, and that they are particularly difficult to describe verbally.[21] Van der Kolk and Resmaa Menakem consider the body to be an important site for holding trauma; for them, bodily movement such as singing can be very effective in processing trauma.[22]

Regarding the Irish famine, the work of people like Herman, LaCapra, and Van der Kolk can explain the historiographical lacunas and absence of public memorials. Irish historians have considered the unique contexts of the famine that likely made silence a more suitable coping mechanism. For instance, Irish historian Diarmaid Ferriter attributes the lack of documentation and commemoration to survivor guilt. He posits that many famine survivors could remain in Ireland because they worked for or with the British government, benefitting from the complicated colonial situation – the very political relationship that disenfranchised other Irish. This might have engendered internal emotional conflicts. He writes: 'An entire class of Irish Catholics survived the famine; many, indeed, improved their prospects as a result of it, and this legacy may be more difficult for us to deal with in Ireland now than the legacy of those who died or emigrated'.[23] Cormac Ó Gráda has also remarked on the lack of direct memorialization of the famine and the inequalities of Irish society in the 1840s.[24] Maura Cronin, on the other hand, has

[16] Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 26.

[17] Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001): 87–8.

[18] LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 196.

[19] LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 205–6.

[20] Van der Kolk addresses music sporadically throughout his book, considering it in turns to be helpful as a method of connecting with community, of shifting attentions and of recall. Bessel A. Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin, 2014).

[21] Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, 414–23.

[22] Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*; Resmaa Menakem, *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies* (Las Vegas: Central Recovery Press, 2017).

[23] Colm Tóibín and Diarmad Ferriter, *The Irish Famine: A Documentary* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001): 6.

[24] Cormac Ó Gráda, 'Famine, Trauma, and Memory', *Béaloideas* 69 (2001):121–43.

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illuminated an abundant culture of oral famine histories, noting that many stories about the famine were inaccurate and tended to suggest that one's own family, community or region was spared from the famine while others, more distant, were the ones who suffered. She considers the 'porosity of memory' in oral accounts of the famine, asserting that the 'distance between event and narration has inevitably led to the obliteration of memories'. She adds, however, that 'porosity of memory may be due as much to people's *unwillingness* to remember as to their inability'.[25]

In 1860, over 1.6 million Irish immigrants, many of them famine survivors, resided in the US.[26] The Irish-born constituted about 5 per cent of the total population, and they overwhelmingly resided in the north, as recent arrivals could readily find employment in the north's urban, industrial centres.[27] The proportion of Irish-born in cities where immigrants concentrated beggars belief. In 1855, for instance, about a third of Boston had been born in Ireland.[28] In 1850, about a fifth of Chicago was Irish born, and by 1860, about a quarter of New York City was likewise Irish.[29] Indeed, historians suggest that the scale of Irish immigration, concentrated as it was in northern cities, contributed to the Union's advantages in the war, including its considerably larger military forces and its superior manufacturing infrastructure.[30] Moreover, the population of Irish-born Americans in the military mirrored their representation in the general population: about 5 per cent of the combined militaries of the North and South were Irish.[31] About 140,000

[25] Maura Cronin, 'Oral History, Oral Tradition, and the Great Famine', in *Holodomor and Gorta Mór: Histories, Memories, and Representations of Famine in Ukraine and Ireland*, ed. Christian Noack, Lindsay Janssen and Vincent Comerford (London: Anthem Press, 2012): 233.

[26] Joseph G.C. Kennedy, *Population of the US in 1860: Compiled from Original Returns of 8th Census, Under Direction of Secretary of Interior* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1864): xxviii.

[27] I deduced the population figure myself from census data, cited above.

[28] I tabulated these statistics myself using the 1855 Massachusetts State Census, cited in William E. Newman and Wilfred E. Holton, *Boston's Back Bay: The Story of America's Greatest Nineteenth-Century Landfill Project* (Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2006): 44.

[29] In 1850, the population of Chicago was 29,963, of which 6,093 had been born in Ireland. Irving Cutler, *Chicago: Metropolis of the Mid-Continent*, 4th edn (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, under the auspices of the Geographic Society of Chicago, 2006): 58. Regarding the population of New York City, one commonly cited US Census statistic from the time is around 200,000 Irish-born residents in Manhattan. See, for instance, Ira Rosenwaike, *Population History of New York City* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1972): 41. Census data also reports 813,669 residents of New York City (Manhattan) in 1860, meaning that the Irish-born constituted a quarter of the population. United States Census, www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab09.txt, accessed 24 June 2019. Tyler Anbinder reminds us that the German immigrant population was larger at the time, and that the Irish population of New York City was concentrated in several places. In 15 of the 22 wards, the Irish outnumbered the native-born. Tyler Anbinder, *City of Dreams: The 400-Year Epic History of Immigrant New York* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016): 149.

[30] See, for instance, Niall O'Dowd, *Lincoln and the Irish: The Untold Story of How the Irish Helped Abraham Lincoln Save the Union* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018); Susannah J. Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861–1865* (New York: New York University Press, 2006).

[31] For the Union statistic, see Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle*, 232; for the Confederacy, see David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013): 60.

Irish-born Americans fought for the Union, and some 20,000 joined the Confederate forces.

In secondary literature on Irish Americans in the war, passing references suggest that memories of adversity in Ireland played a role in wartime experiences of the Irish-born. The experiences or memories of Irish famine, however, remain a lacuna, with a few notable exceptions. Christian Samito suggests that some Irish immigrants, particularly those residing in the North, enlisted in a bid to legitimize themselves in their 'adopted country' after having fled the famine and while facing xenophobia.[32] According to Samito, fighting in the military appealed to immigrants because it allowed those born abroad to claim American identity more strongly.[33] Susannah J. Ural briefly mulls how famine immigration shaped the Civil War's outcome in her book on Irish-American men who served in the war.[34] Indeed, less than a decade separated the 1852 end of the famine and the 1861 outbreak of war.[35] Of the great numbers of Irish immigrants who had arrived since 1846, a great many had witnessed or experienced large-scale famine.

For Irish famine survivors in the United States, the Civil War might have reminded them of the stressors they faced in the famine, or it might have precipitated unbidden memories or other coping processes. Present-day psychologists have investigated how newly introduced stressors can be shaped by the memories of earlier trauma. Melanie Duckworth and Victoria Folette, for instance, delineate a process of 'traumatic stress reactions, responses, and symptoms that occur consequent to multiple exposures to traumatic events' as 'retraumatization'.[36] They suggest that retraumatization can occur 'in the context of repeated multiple exposures within one category of events (e.g., sexual assaults) or multiple exposures across different categories of events (e.g., childhood physical abuse and involvement in a serious motor vehicle collision during adulthood)'.[37] In this formulation, then, the memories of famine-era trauma had the ability to shape the losses (or fear of losses) that Irish immigrants experienced in the Civil War. The innumerable differences in context and typical experiences of famine survivors, as opposed to civil war survivors, do not necessarily impede the process of retraumatization.

Especially among Catholic Irish, one commonly asserted narrative reveals the emergence of famine memory during the Civil War. Famine had sparked a catastrophic breakdown of Irish society and immigrants made immense sacrifices to build new lives in the US. The war, however, threatened the promises of the New World, including economic comfort, class mobility and political peace.

[32] Christian Samito, *Becoming American under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009): 172.

[33] Others note that, as the war dragged on, resentment of continued nativism and the draft system that conscripted disproportionate numbers of Irish Americans diminished support for the war among Irish-American communities. Patrick Steward and Bryan P. McGovern, *The Fenians: Irish Rebellion in the North Atlantic World, 1858–1876* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2013): 49–51.

[34] Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle*, 15.

[35] When the famine ended is up for debate. Scholars differ on whether to mark the end of the agricultural blight, the end of mass starvation, regional differences, and many other factors. Cormac Ó Gráda, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000): 41–3.

[36] Melanie P. Duckworth and Victoria M. Follette, *Retraumatization: Assessment, Treatment, and Prevention* (New York: Routledge, 2012): 2.

[37] Duckworth and Follette, *Retraumatization*, 2.

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Irish Americans feared that the US would face societal collapse on the scale that they had witnessed back home. If the war failed, the very possibility of financial stability and a peaceful, democratic society anywhere went with it.

Notable Irish-American wartime personalities professed this logic. Union military hero Michael Corcoran, for instance, called on Irish Americans to enlist in order to preserve the Union, specifically because it had provided refuge to famine survivors, including himself.[38] His well-documented biography provides a rare glimpse into the youthful experiences of famine immigrants. Corcoran was born in 1827 in southern County Sligo, an area that was hit particularly hard by the potato blight. During the second year of the famine, in 1846, when Corcoran was 19 years old, his father died. To support himself and his mother, Corcoran took the work that was available: as a member of the Revenue Police who worked to undermine illegal distilleries. This profession, however, troubled him because he felt that he was sabotaging a system of support for the most vulnerable in the famine. By 1848, he had decided to resist the British occupation by joining the Ribbonmen, a secret society of working-class agitators. Unfortunately, he quickly became compromised, and he fled to New York by August 1848. In the US, Corcoran joined the military, becoming an early Union hero after surviving Confederate capture at Bull Run. During his incarceration, Corcoran published memoirs in which he tied traumatic memories of famine to his patriotism for the US. He describes leaving his 'native isle in sorrow', with 'sad, sad … feelings in my breast'. After expressing grief for Ireland, he prays for protection of the US, particularly because of its reputation as a haven for refugees, writing: 'God Bless America, and ever preserve her the asylum of all the oppressed on the earth, is the sincere prayer of my heart.'[39] This quotation provides one overt example of how memory of the Irish famine came to shape experiences of the US Civil War, especially among Irish Americans.

Corcoran wasn't the only Irish-American military hero whose writings support a link between famine memory and Civil War. Thomas F. Meagher and Patrick Cleburne also addressed the memory of famine when talking about the Civil War.[40] Such sources illuminate famine memories in a Civil War context, but they are insufficient for understanding feelings of connection between the famine and the war as a larger, sociological phenomenon and the result of successive cultural traumas. We also might not trust their writings as emotional expositions; Meagher and Corcoran were military officers with mandates to recruit Irish Americans in the Union, and Cleburne was a Confederate hero. They presented carefully crafted identities that may or may not have represented their own experience. Also, the lives of these men do not necessarily represent typical Irish-American experiences. Corcoran, Meagher and Cleburne were more privileged than many famine immigrants in that, as writers like Cormac Ó Gráda remind us, they at least had the resources to flee Ireland.[41]

[38] For more on Corcoran's work in the US, see Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle.*

[39] Michael Corcoran, *The Captivity of General Corcoran* (Philadelphia: Barclay, 1862): 22.

[40] For Meagher, see Timothy Egan, *The Immortal Irishman: The Irish Revolutionary Who Became an American Hero* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016): 500; for Cleburne, see Craig L. Symonds, *Stonewall of the West: Patrick Cleburne and the Civil War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997): 22–4.

[41] Cormac Ó Gráda, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000): 115.

Music utilizes different neuropathways in the brain than verbal communication, and it can be practiced nonverbally or only partially verbally. For these reasons, music is a valuable tool for both studying and coping with trauma. As a corporeal practice that can influence bodily systems like circulation and respiration, music can also play a crucial role in ways that the body processes trauma. As an expressive practice that was transmitted across the Atlantic, musical practices that emerged in response to the emotional toll of the famine became important to US Americans in the 1850s. In the following pages, I will explore two distinct ways that we might consider how famine memory shaped musical life of the Civil War. In the first, I consider music-making as an expressive practice, rather than focusing on a particular musical example or body of work. I contextualize bandleader Patrick Gilmore's US-based work within the context of his history as a famine immigrant, and suggest that his overt displays of patriotism for the Union might have been engendered by his experiences in Ireland. I then turn to music, with a survey of sheet music sources that reveal how Americans remembered the famine as they faced the Civil War. In the second case study, I return to the song 'Kathleen Mavourneen', considering both the music itself and its performance and reception history in the US to show how it became associated with memories of the famine and how it retained popularity during the war. Together, the two case studies illuminate the multifaceted, deep, insidious, and often unverbalized ways that decades-old trauma from across an ocean shaped the music of the Civil War.

Silence, Music and Famine: Patrick Gilmore

In the US, Patrick Gilmore was an icon of patriotic music and the North's most popular military bandleader (Fig. 1). He wrote several wartime songs, including 'God Save the Union', which he advocated to become the US national anthem. As the war ended, he became known for staging elaborate entertainments known as 'mammoth concerts' that celebrated peace with massive performing forces. The first occurred in 1864 in New Orleans, after the Northern army had taken the city.[42] The event included 500 band members, over 6,000 singers, 50 cannons and 40 soldiers striking anvils and, in the grand finale, all of the church bells in New Orleans ringing simultaneously. After that, Gilmore mounted two increasingly outsized concerts with the stated aim of celebrating and fostering peace. The National Peace Jubilee of 1869 included 11,000 instrumentalists and singers, while the World Peace Jubilee of 1872 included over 20,000 performers, featuring Johann Strauss and his orchestra, the English Grenadier Guards band, the Garde Républicaine of France, the Prussian band of Kaiser Franz Grenadiers and the United States Marine Band. The event thus brought together military musicians from historic enemies – France, Germany, England, the United States – with the stated ambition that such participation could cement and foster peace.

No records show that bandleader Patrick Gilmore ever publicly discussed his experiences during the Irish famine, and yet he emigrated after surviving some of the worst-hit areas.[43] He was born in 1829 in Ballygar, County Galway, in

[42] Frank J. Cipolla, 'Patrick S. Gilmore: The Boston Years', *American Music* 6/3 (1988): 281–92.

[43] I have not encountered any scholars of Gilmore who ponder the famine. One source suggests it arose in preliminary research, but that the famine history was not eventually

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Fig. 1 Patrick Gilmore 1889? Courtesy of Boston College, John J. Burns Library

included in published work. In correspondence between Jon Nicholson, who wrote a dissertation on Gilmore's Peace Jubilees in Boston, and Michael Cummings, a prominent Irish American who himself had immigrated from Ballygar and who championed Patrick Gilmore, Cummings responded to a question about the famine in Gilmore's life. Cummings expressed doubts because he did not believe the famine affected Gilmore's area much, writing: 'despite the many thousands who died at this time there were very few deaths due to malnutrition in and around Athlone or Ballygar and the high point of the famine (1847) had passed when Gilmore decided to emigrate'. Cummings's response reflects some historical misconceptions about the famine: 1) it was common for people to believe that their own personal area was spared the worst of the famine when in fact a significant portion of the local population was affected; and 2) some have misunderstood how famine-related emigration and mortality rates lasted for years after the potato blight subsided. For the Cummings letter see Michael Cummings, letter to Jon Nicholson, 29 January 1971, Michael Cummings Collection of P.S. Gilmore Materials 1850–2004, Irish Music Center, John J. Burns Library, Boston College, Box 1, Folder 17. For work on inaccuracies about death tolls in one's own area Ó Gráda, *Black '47 and Beyond*, 203; Carmel Quinlan, '"A Punishment from God": The Famine in the Centenary Folklore Questionnaire', *The Irish Review* 19 (1996): 68–86, here 81–3. For work on misunderstandings of the drawn-out, lingering impact of the famine on public health and mortality rates in Ireland, see Cormac Ó Gráda, *Ireland Before and After the Famine: Explorations in Economic*

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Ireland's west, where much of the population relied almost completely on the Irish lumper potatoes. Gilmore was 15 when in 1845 the blight first hit Ireland's potato crops. Ballygar was ravaged by the famine. Records indicate that many in the town starved, and that famine-related diseases further besieged the population. In 1847, a Ballygar doctor pleaded for assistance when an epidemic of scurvy had infected the whole town. We now know scurvy to be a disease of starvation and not communicable, but the doctor seems not to have understood that.[44] The town was also stricken by typhus in 1846, a different fever in 1847, and typhus again in 1848.[45] Another doctor reported 'fever, dysentery and scurvy', as well as 'pulmonary disease and dropsy' in 1847.[46]

By then, however, Gilmore had left and joined an amateur band 26 miles away in the bigger town of Athlone. Athlone is also infamous because it hosted a large and notorious workhouse during the famine.[47] The British government had been sponsoring workhouses in Ireland since the eighteenth century, ostensibly for poor relief, though residents of workhouses suffered unimaginable abuses. Called 'inmates', workhouse residents historically included many of the most destitute or disadvantaged, including the poor, disabled and orphaned. Workhouses provided meagre food rations and minimal additional support. The Athlone workhouse was built to hold about 900 residents, but in 1851 the Irish census recorded 1,766 living there, which was about 20 per cent of the town's total population.[48] Residence at the workhouse was contingent on following strict rules, including separation of genders regardless of family bonds and silence for the vast majority of the day. Families were split to inhabit different parts of the complex, and inmates worked from 7am until 6pm without permission to speak.[49] In a parallel to the concentration camps that Erin Johnson-Williams discusses in her article in this special issue, the overcrowding and extremely poor physical condition of most residents made workhouses dangerous breeding grounds for famine-related diseases like cholera, typhus and smallpox, and indeed mortality

History, 1800–1925 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 107–8. See also Niall Ó Ciosáin, 'Approaching a Folklore Archive: The Irish Folklore Commission and the Memory of the Great Famine', *Folklore* 115/2 (2004): 222–32.

[44] Dr French, quoted in 'Report on the Epidemic Fever in Ireland', *Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science* 7 (1847): 386.

[45] J.N. Hays, *Epidemics and Pandemics: Their Impacts on Human History* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005): 240.

[46] Leslie Clarkson and E. Margaret Crawford, eds, *Famine and Disease in Ireland*, vol. 1 (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2005): 297.

[47] Just when Gilmore moved to Athlone is unclear. His obituary in the *New York Times* reports that at 13 he apprenticed at a 'counting room of a mercantile house' in Athlone. That would suggest he left Ballygar around 1842, before the famine. However, few records have emerged to confirm the precise timeline. 'A Noted Bandmaster Gone: Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore Dies in St. Louis', *New York Times*, 25 September 1892, 1. Brendan O'Brien, *Athlone Workhouse and the Famine*, ed. Gearoid O'Brien (Athlone: Old Athlone Society, 1995).

[48] For the workhouse statistic see Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons and Command*, vol. 58 (London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1854): 75. 6,852 people lived in Athlone, not counting workhouse inmates. See *The Census of Ireland for the Year 1851, Part 1, County of Westmeath* (Dublin: Alexander Thom, 1852): 285.

[49] John O'Connor, *The Workhouses of Ireland: The Fate of Ireland's Poor* (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1995): 81–4.

rates were very high.[50] Given Gilmore's residency in Athlone, and the broader catastrophe, we can reasonably assume that Gilmore witnessed horrors associated with prolonged famine.

After Gilmore emigrated and rose to substantial prominence, he had little to say about his Irish youth.[51] Indeed, he seems to have actively sought to erase the memory of Ireland. He had a habit of burning extraneous papers, leaving few material connections with the Old World. He rarely spoke of the famine or of his life in Ireland, even in his autobiography, leaving historians to parse the details of his life in public documents like ships' logs. Moreover, he actively denied feeling strong connections with his own Irish history. A St. Louis newspaper reported asking Gilmore if he was really born in Ireland, given his public displays of patriotism for the US. Gilmore answered: 'No, I was born in Boston at the age of eighteen.'[52]

Taking into account Herman's descriptions of trauma processing, Gilmore's reluctance or inability to discuss his origins is not unusual among trauma survivors. His bombastic displays of patriotism during and after the war also reflect Christian Samito's assertion that Irish Americans embraced the war effort in order to stake a stronger claim to American identity. Indeed, scholars of Irish Americans have long connected intense expressions of nationalism for the US to Irish-American memories of Ireland.[53] This is further explained with trauma theory; scholars have described a process of overcompensation, defined by Kirk Schneider as a 'fearful, escapist counteraction of trauma'.[54] Perhaps Gilmore's bombast was in part overcompensation related to famine memories. Whether or not this was the case, the fact that Gilmore's public image – of an Irish immigrant who embraced nationalistic fervour for the US – was so culturally valuable for so many during the war exemplifies the large-scale social processes by which Irish memory and the Civil War intersected within social and musical life.

Irish Famine in Civil War Music

Nineteenth-century US sheet music sources provide evidence of broader, collective trends that elucidate US cultural consciousness and traumatic cultural memories. As commercial products that were intended for popular appeal, sheet music represented attempts to encapsulate and shape public sentiments. Sheet music also appealed to more diverse demographics than the military-aged men to whom

[50] Ó Gráda estimates that about 200,000 of the 1,000,000 people who died during the Irish famine perished in workhouses. Ó Gráda, 'Mortality and the Great Famine', in *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine, 1845–52*, ed. John Crowley, William J. Smyth and Mike Murphy (Cork: Cork University Press, 2012): 170–79. For a more detailed account of disease, starvation, and mortality in workhouses, see Jonny Geber, *Victims of Ireland's Great Famine: The Bioarchaeology of Mass Burials at Kilkenny Union Workhouse* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015): 115–78.

[51] Despite refusing to discuss his youth in Ireland at length, Gilmore's Irish heritage was a celebrated part of his public identity.

[52] *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 14 September 1890.

[53] See, for instance, Timothy J. Meagher, *Inventing Irish America: Generation, Class, and Ethnic Identity in a New England City, 1880–1928* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001): 323–6; Ural, *The Harp and the Eagle*; David A. Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

[54] Kirk Schneider, *The Paradoxical Self: Toward an Understanding of Our Contradictory Nature* (New York: Insight Books, 1990): 78.

Corcoran and others spoke. As historian Jill DeTemple writes, 'musical performance allowed for the expression of deeply held popular sentiments, giving them space and legitimacy in a public setting'.[55] Moreover, sentimental song's explicit emotional prerogatives enabled exploration of context-specific grieving and healing processes that shed light on intimate experiences, such as coping with trauma.

Some sentimental songs on Irish themes performed or published in the US during the war referenced Irish hunger, demonstrating that the memory of famine lingered in the consciousness of US Americans. As the Great Famine was only one of many famines in a country plagued by chronic food shortages, the references might not have directly implied the Great Famine, though the watershed moment must have stood out. 'Lament of the Irish Emigrant', like 'Kathleen Mavourneen', was written and published outside of Ireland before the famine. The lament was first published in 1840, with music by Scottish immigrant to the US, William R. Dempster, and a borrowed text by the English poet Lady Dufferin.[56] Boston-based publisher George Reed produced numerous editions of the song, and the Reed editions make up the bulk of nineteenth-century American specimens in US libraries.[57] These were likely sold during the 1840s and early 1850s; the editions carry a copyright stamp of 1843 and Reed sold his business in 1853.[58] Another publisher, Henry Tolman, printed the song in Boston in 1863, suggesting that it was particularly useful for Boston sheet music markets during the war.[59] 'Lament of the Irish Emigrant' recounted the inner emotional experiences of a young man who buried his wife, Mary, and their child in Ireland before emigrating. In the sixth verse, the man directly names starvation as the cause of Mary's demise:

> I thank you for that patient smile,
> When your heart was fit to break,
> When the hunger pain was gnawing there,
> And you hid it for my sake,
> I bless you for the pleasant word,
> When your heart was sad and sore,
> Oh I'm thankful you are gone, Mary,
> Where grief can't reach you more.

In addition to sheet music, publishers often produced cheaply printed, widely circulated contrafacta – music with newly written lyrics.[60] Instead of including

[55] Jill DeTemple, 'Singing the Maine: The Popular Image of Cuba in Sheet Music of the Spanish–American War', *The Historian* 63/4 (2001): 715–29, here 718.

[56] William R. Dempster, music, and Lady Dufferin, words, 'Lament of the Irish Emigrant' (Boston: William H. Oakes, 1840).

[57] William R. Dempster, music, and poetry by Mrs. Price Blackwood (Lady Dufferin), 'Lament of the Irish Emigrant' (Boston: George P. Reed, 1843). The Lester Levy Collection at Johns Hopkins University owns a sixth edition.

[58] Russell Sanjek claims that Reed owned a music store in the 1840s, and he expanded to a printing business until 1850. Many of his editions, however, bear stamps from the 1840s. Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and its Business: The First Four Hundred Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988): 119.

[59] William R. Dempster, music, and poetry by Mrs. Price Blackwood (Lady Dufferin), 'Lament of the Irish Emigrant' (Boston: Henry Tolman, 1863).

[60] David Atkinson and Steve Roud, eds, *Street Ballads in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Ireland, and North America: The Interface between Print and Oral Traditions* (New York:

musical notation, the publisher or composer suggested the title of a pre-existing tune that might suit the words. Transmitting music in this way was both cheaper, because it required less paper, and more accessible, as it obviated the need for music notation literacy. Sometimes, though not always, the chosen borrowed tune also carried semiotic significance for the new song. This was likely the case for 'The Soldier's Sister', a contrafact on 'Lament of the Irish Emigrant' that was published twice in Philadelphia (1862 and 1864) and in Nashville (n.d., Fig. 2).[61] Like 'Lament of the Irish Emigrant', the protagonist of 'The Soldier's Sister' addresses a remote female relative, in this case a sister at home. He describes his emotional challenges in the aftermath of the war's horrors, his own fears of not returning home, and offers a final proclamation that the Union's cause is worth his life. The new song's story of a relative, from whom the protagonist is separated and who he may never see again, resonates with the parting words of the emigrant in the earlier song. The author of the contrafact likely selected 'Lament of the Irish Emigrant' because, in popular consciousness, the tune already evoked themes of familial loss and geographic distance.

The publication of 'The Soldier's Sister' reveals that at least some people in the United States relied on personal Irish memories or public memorializations of famine and emigration when creating music for the Civil War. A few sentimental songs of this period address the link between famine and war by describing the United States as a safe haven from famine that was worth protecting, a sentiment that resonates with those published by public military figures like Corcoran. One straightforward example is 'The Irish-American's Song', from a songster titled *Songs of the Soldiers*.[62] In this song, a soldier pledges loyalty to the US by connecting American patriotic sentiments with gratitude to his adopted country for providing asylum during the famine.

> Whose aid to cheer us came, Flag of the Free,
> When to proud England's shame, Flag of the Free,
> Famine swept o'er our land,
> Death ravaged ev'ry band,
> And loosed the tyrant's hand, Flag of the Free

'The Irish-American's Song' adopts an idealized view of the US and the immigrant's loyalty. It is set to the Irish traditional song 'Robin Adair', a song that expresses sadness because of a missing love object, a topic that resonates with experiences of homesickness.

The number of songs printed in the US that addressed famine or hunger at all is small in comparison to the 10,000 pieces of sheet music produced in the North, for which we have records, and the 1,000 different songs for which copyright was filed in the South during the war.[63] A lack of direct allusion to famine might indicate that

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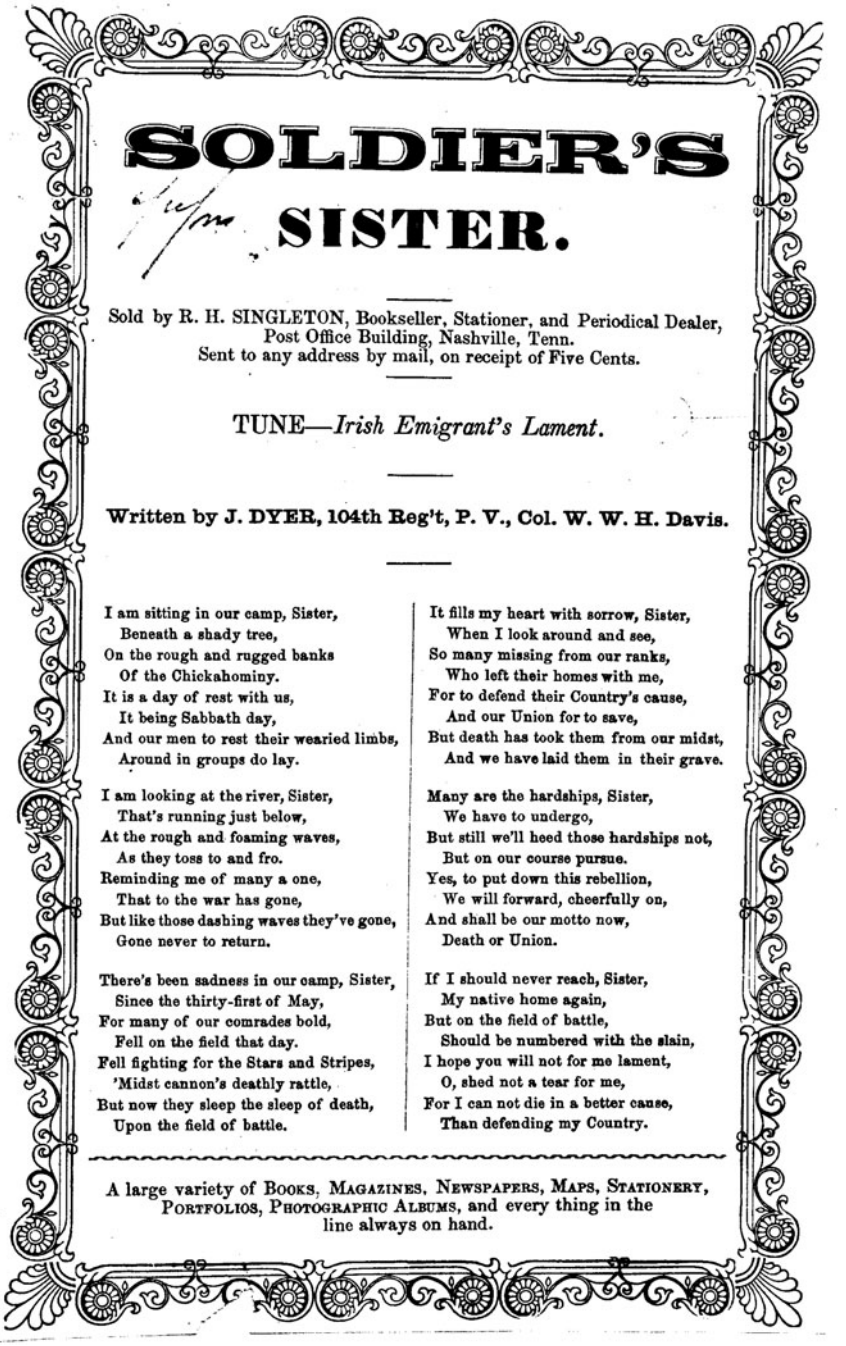
Routledge, 2016); Paul Watt, Derek B. Scott and Patrick Spedding, eds, *Cheap Print and Popular Song in the Nineteenth Century: A Cultural History of the Songster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[61] John Dyer, 'Soldier's Sister' (Philadelphia: J.H. Johnson's Card and Job Printing Office, 1862); John Dyer, 'To the Soldier's Sister' (Philadelphia: A.W. Auner, 1864); John Dyer, 'Soldier's Sister' (Nashville: R.H. Singleton, n.d.).

[62] Frank Moore, arr. and ed. *Songs of the Soldiers* (New York: George P. Putnam, 1864): 90.

[63] Frank W. Hoogerwerf, *Confederate Sheet-Music Imprints* (Brooklyn: Institute for Studies in American Music, 1984); Russell Sanjek, *American Popular Music and its Business: The First Four Hundred Years* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988): 225.



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TUNE—*Irish Emigrant's Lament.*

Written by J. DYER, 104th Reg't, P. V., Col. W. W. H. Davis.

I am sitting in our camp, Sister,
Beneath a shady tree,
On the rough and rugged banks
Of the Chickahominy.
It is a day of rest with us,
It being Sabbath day,
And our men to rest their wearied limbs,
Around in groups do lay.

I am looking at the river, Sister,
That's running just below,
At the rough and foaming waves,
As they toss to and fro.
Reminding me of many a one,
That to the war has gone,
But like those dashing waves they've gone,
Gone never to return.

There's been sadness in our camp, Sister,
Since the thirty-first of May,
For many of our comrades bold,
Fell on the field that day.
Fell fighting for the Stars and Stripes,
'Midst cannon's deathly rattle,
But now they sleep the sleep of death,
Upon the field of battle.

It fills my heart with sorrow, Sister,
When I look around and see,
So many missing from our ranks,
Who left their homes with me,
For to defend their Country's cause,
And our Union for to save,
But death has took them from our midst,
And we have laid them in their grave.

Many are the hardships, Sister,
We have to undergo,
But still we'll heed those hardships not,
But on our course pursue.
Yes, to put down this rebellion,
We will forward, cheerfully on,
And shall be our motto now,
Death or Union.

If I should never reach, Sister,
My native home again,
But on the field of battle,
Should be numbered with the slain,
I hope you will not for me lament,
O, shed not a tear for me,
For I can not die in a better cause,
Than defending my Country.

Fig. 2 'Soldier's Sister', n.d. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

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the famine did not, in fact, significantly shape the experiences of residents in the north and south during the Civil War. Indeed, such verbal silence is likely the reason that so few scholars have written about famine memory during the war. Nonverbal, indirect, or partially verbal sources might have abounded, however. In the next section, I explain how 'Katheen Mavourneen', which does not name the famine directly, came to memorialize it for Irish Americans, making its popularity during the Civil War all the more revealing.

Kathleen Mavourneen and Famine Memory in the US

'Kathleen Mavourneen' was originally published in London in 1837, in a collection of Irish songs from the publisher D'Almaine.[64] Composer Frederick Crouch credited a 'Mrs. Crawford' with the text.[65] The lyricist's identity is unclear; many have assumed this referred to Julia Crawford, an Irish poet who was married to Crouch, but some scholars have questioned the veracity of sources on the subject.[66] The collection reflected a Romantic-era enthusiasm for musical and visual representations of agrarian or peasant cultures. Though 'Kathleen Mavourneen' was written before the famine, its text indirectly addressed uniquely Irish food insecurities that were longstanding.

The music of 'Kathleen Mavourneen' reflects the style and aesthetics of 1830s European art music, particularly songs designed for domestic performance. The song begins with a piano introduction that emphasizes a repeated melodic gesture of a pickup that rises a major sixth to a long downbeat, followed by descending quavers (Figure 3). In line with early nineteenth-century style, much of the song develops via transformations of this initial gesture. Charles Hamm and I have both examined Irish and Irish-themed music that was popular in the United States, and we have both noted that this particular 'sentimental longing motive' prevails among a great swath of sentimental music on Irish themes during the nineteenth century.[67] The vocal part begins with a 16-bar period that is rife with

[64] I have not found any original editions from 1837, but for a later edition of the collection by D'Almaine see Frederick Nicolls Crouch, music, and Mrs. Crawford, words, *Echoes of the Lakes*, 20th edn (London: D'Almaine, 1840).

[65] Crouch himself moved to the US in 1849, likely because he struggled financially in England. Songwriters at the time were paid a set amount per song, forgoing royalties. Though 'Kathleen Mavourneen' made him famous, the song was likely originally published not so much for the purpose of generating money for him, but more because it made money for the publisher, and it was a way of advertising his theatrical shows about Irish legends and songs, which he offered both in England and later the US. Stateside, Crouch also served as a Confederate trumpeter in the war, based in Virginia. At the end of his life, he settled in Maryland, working as a conductor.

[66] Michael R. Turner and Antony Miall, *Just a Song at Twilight: The Second Parlour Song Book* (London: M. Joseph, 1975): 202; discussed in Derek B. Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois: Songs of the Victorian Drawing Room and Parlour*, 2nd edn (Milton Park: Routledge, 2017): 100; William H.A. Williams, *'Twas Only an Irishman's Dream: The Image of Ireland and the Irish in American Popular Song Lyrics, 1800–1920* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996): 41.

[67] Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), 42–61; Sarah Gerk, 'Away o'er the Ocean Go Journeymen, Cowboys, and Fiddlers: The Irish in Nineteenth-Century American Music' (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2014); Sarah Gerk, '"Higher Universal Language of the Heart": The Reputations of Moore's *Irish*

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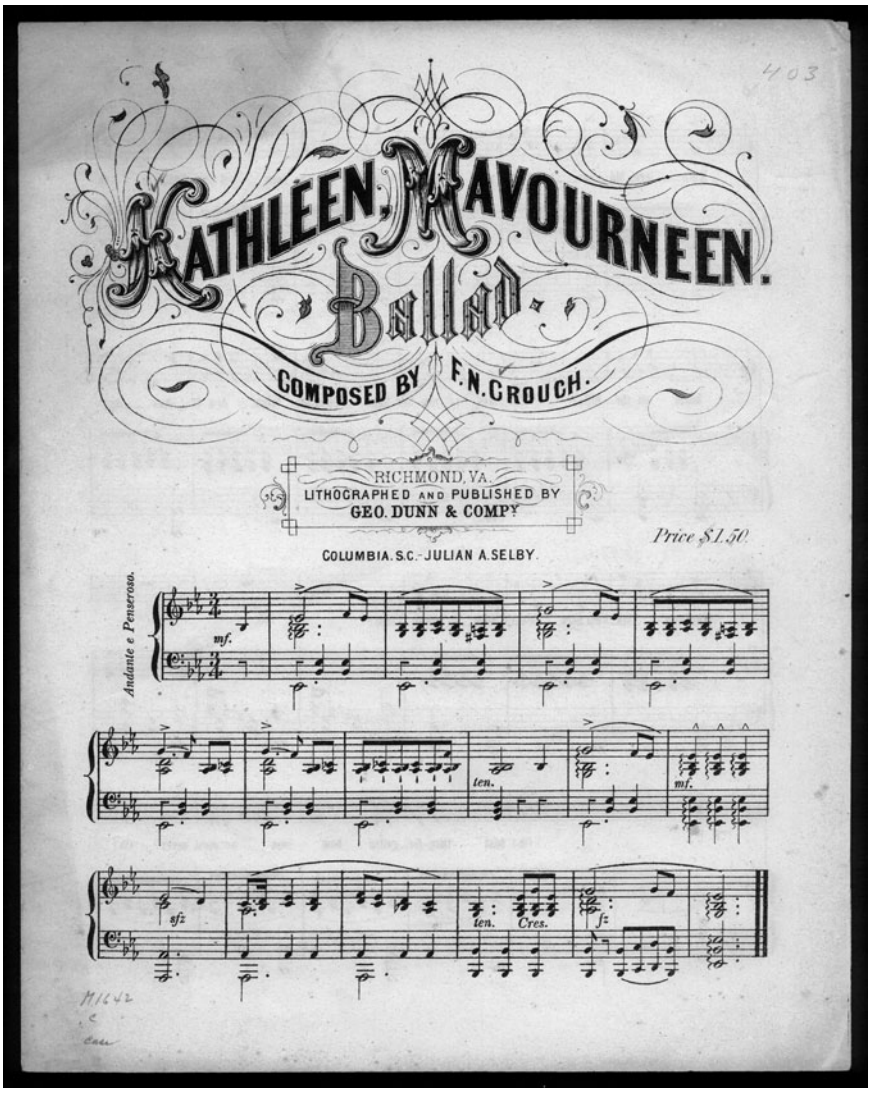

Fig. 3 Frederick Crouch, music, and Mrs. Crawford, words, 'Kathleen Mavourneen', published by George Dunn and Company in Richmond, Virginia, in 1861

variations on the initial gesture. After a short piano interlude, the vocal line moves through the secondary dominant of the relative minor key (C minor) and the diminished seventh of the dominant. Such harmonies were unusual among songs that attained popularity in the mid-century US. The melody continues to

Melodies in the United States', in *The Reputations of Thomas Moore: Poetry, Music, and Politics*, ed. Sarah McCleave and Tríona O'Hanlon (New York: Routledge, 2019): 142–66. See also Jon W. Finson, *The Voices that are Gone: Themes in Nineteenth-Century American Popular Song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994): 270–78.

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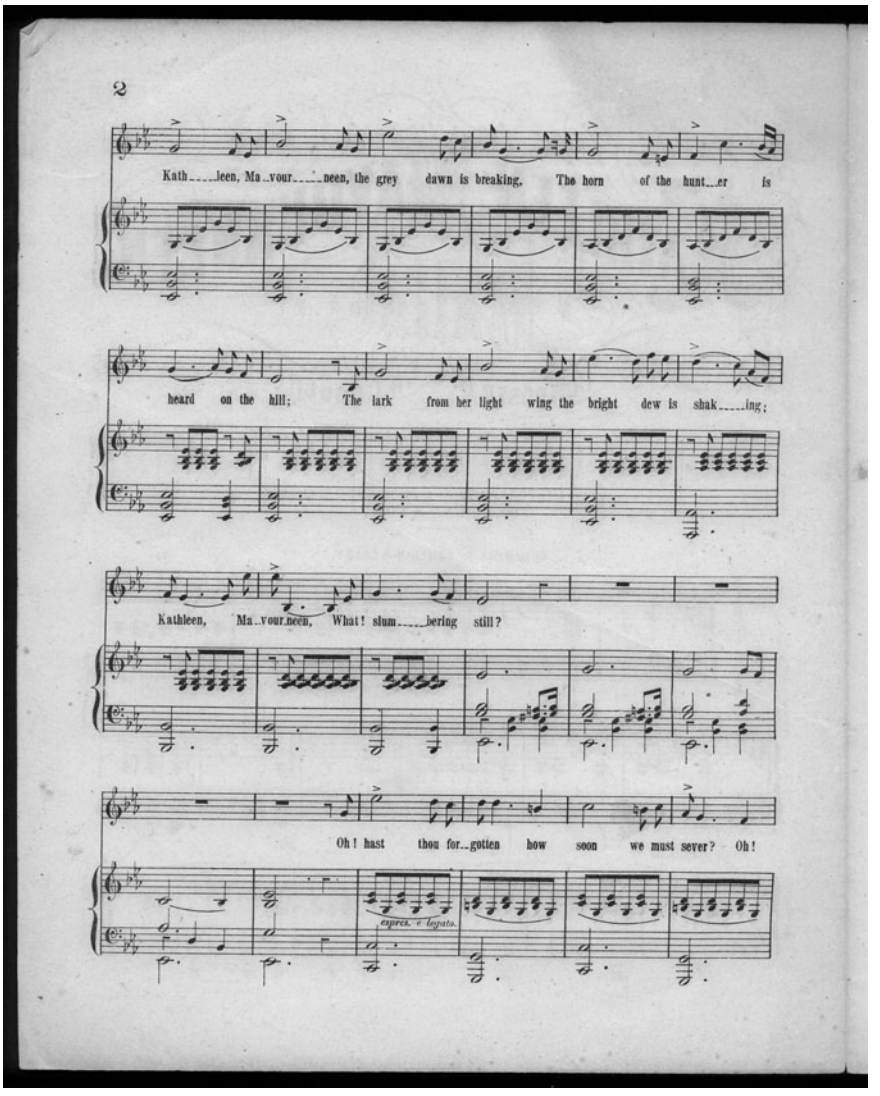

Fig. 3b Cont

feature transformations of the initial gesture, set in a higher tessitura. The unusual harmonic dimensions and higher pitches work together with the text to increase the expression of anxiety, before a closing, extended phrase grounds the music again in E-flat major. A second verse repeats with new words, evoking Irish balladry.

However, 'Kathleen Mavourneen' deviates from other Irish-themed songs popular in the US around mid-century in ways that might have increased the song's value as a mechanism for coping with trauma. More typical popular Irish characteristic songs were those by Samuel Lover, Thomas Moore and John Stevenson among many others. Their songs more closely adopt characteristics of Irish

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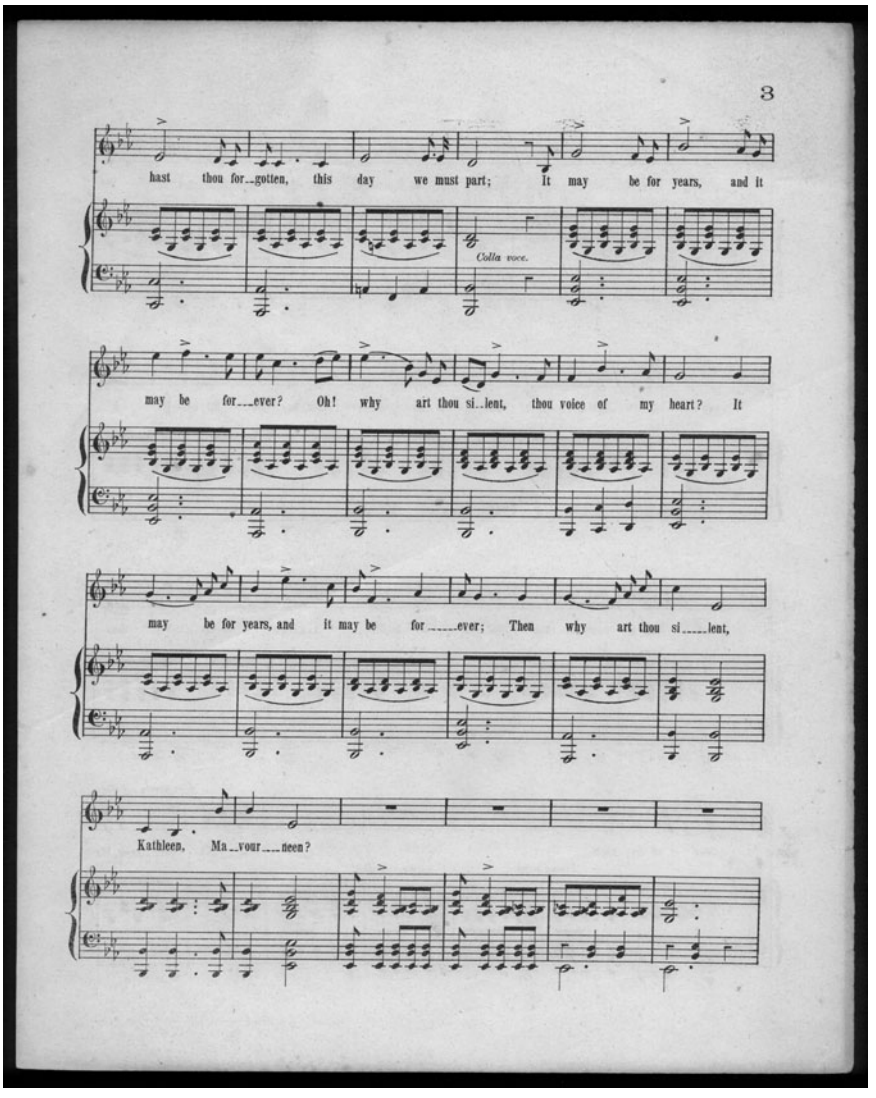

Fig. 3c Cont

traditional music: conventional strophic forms, simple harmonies and direct narration. By contrast, in the text of 'Kathleen Mavourneen', ambiguity, experiential description and capacity for multiple interpretations reflect Romantic-era interests in telling stories through explorations of emotional processes, rather than through more direct narration (see text above). The inner emotional experience described in the song also echoes current understandings of traumatic processing. The disclosed thoughts of the protagonist that suggest inaccurate memory – for instance, forgetting that Kathleen has died – allow for a more direct exploration of internal experience. The song also lacks a narrative or blow-by-blow summary of events that is more typical of traditional balladry. Additionally, the repeated sentimental

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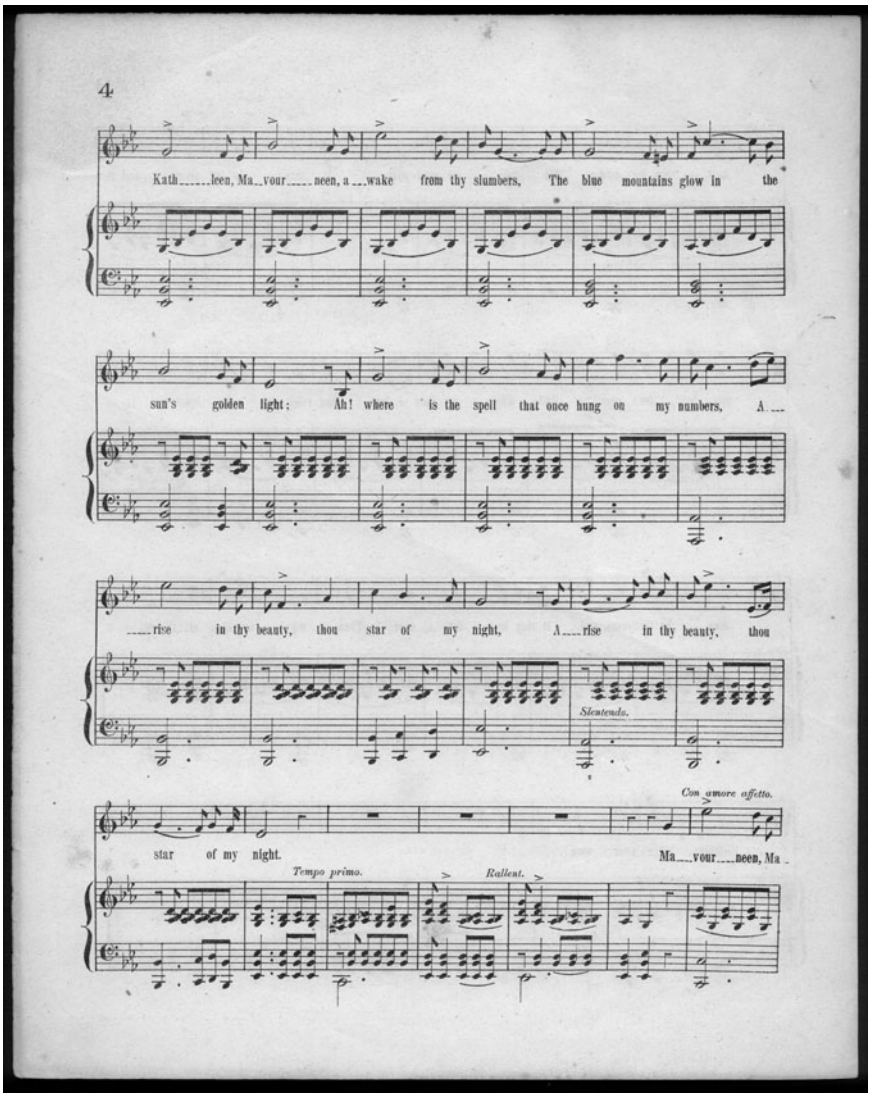

Fig. 3d Cont

longing motive resembles other nineteenth-century repetitive musical motifs, such as Hector Berlioz's *idée fixe* in *Symphonie fantastique* (1830) and the piano part in Franz Schubert's 'Gretchen am Spinnrade', which both signify obsessions or intrusive thoughts that resonate with theories about intrusive memory.[68]

[68] Lawrence Kramer, 'On Deconstructive Text–Music Relationships', in *Music, Culture and Society: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000): 173–9; Stephen Rodgers, 'Mental Illness and Musical Metaphor in the First Movement of Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*', in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*, ed. Neil Lerner and Joseph N. Straus (New York: Routledge, 2006): 235–56.

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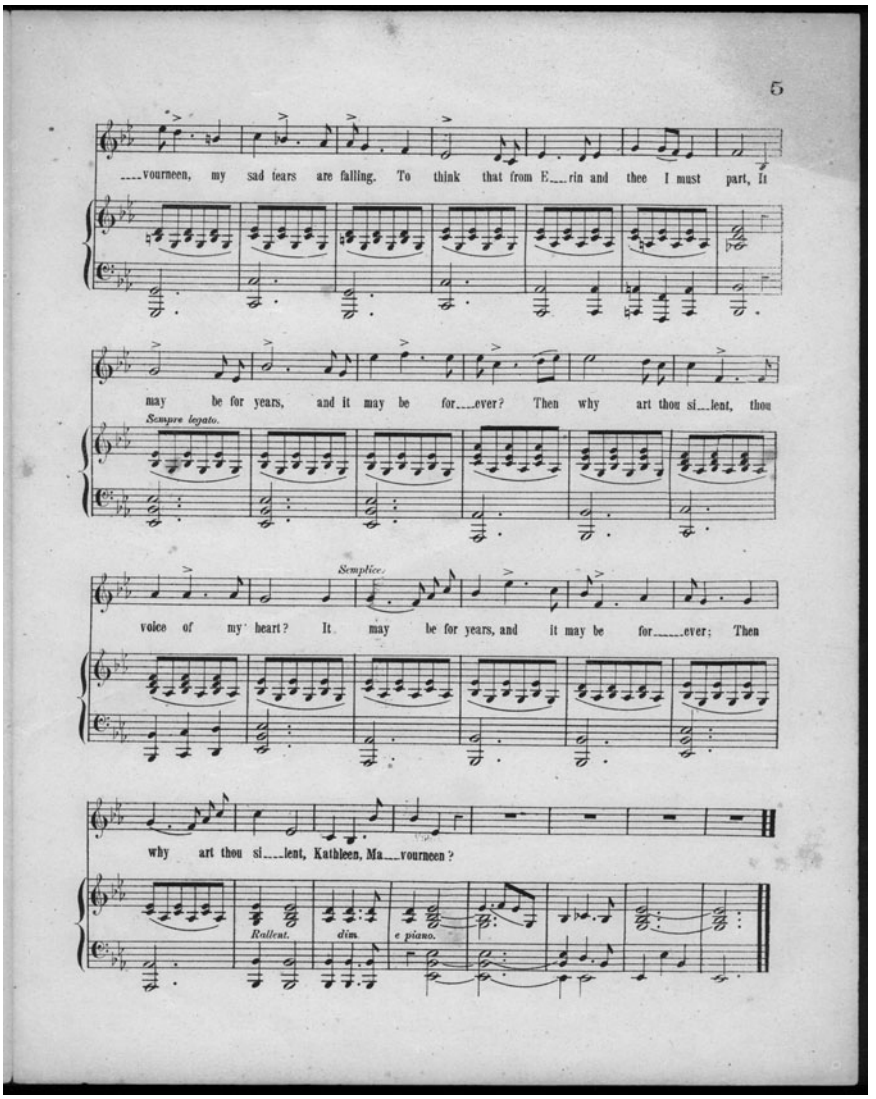

Fig. 3e Cont

'Kathleen Mavourneen' was well received at the time of its initial publication in the late 1830s, but it did not become a popular culture phenomenon until a decade later, during the famine. In 1849, Irish soprano Catherine Hayes began performing the song on her widely publicized tour of England – performances which historians and musicologists often credit with popularizing 'Kathleen Mavourneen'.[69] One particular anecdote emerges time and again. As it goes, Hayes received an invitation to sing in Buckingham Palace for Queen Victoria and obliged with

[69] For more on Hayes, see Basil Walsh, *Catherine Hayes, 1818–1861: The Hibernian Prima Donna* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000).

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Italian arias. At the end of the evening, the Queen requested an encore. Hayes responded somewhat bravely with 'Kathleen Mavourneen', which could be understood as a politically motivated choice for the purpose of raising awareness of the famine.[70] Whether or not this happened, stories of Hayes's rendition for the Queen have circulated ever since, reflecting the international interest in Hayes as well as the importance of 'Kathleen Mavourneen' to the singer's public image. As the only extant accounts of the event appear in newspapers printed some time after the event, I am unsure of the historical accuracy of this anecdote, but for my purposes, the story's wide circulation reveals how 'Kathleen Mavourneen' became intertwined with famine in popular consciousness, and more specifically, to function as a famine memorial.

'Kathleen Mavourneen' became Hayes's signature number, and she brought it to North America on an extensive tour from 1851 to 1853. There, she performed in 45 cities, including New York, Boston, Toronto, New Orleans and San Francisco before embarking from the west coast for South America and then Australia. The US trip was initially sponsored by the legendary showman PT Barnum who, a year earlier, had also organized the Swedish soprano Jenny Lind's tour of the US. As Barnum established with Lind, Hayes's promoters worked to foment a popular culture craze around Hayes's tour. Barnum also submitted favourable reviews from Europe to local US papers in advance of her performances, emphasizing her renown in the West's cultural centres. These reviews also foregrounded her Irish origins, positioning her nationality centrally within her public persona.[71] The image of Hayes presented to the public represented idealized gender and national stereotypes. She was often marketed as the 'Swan of Erin', or the 'Hibernian Prima Donna', monikers that targeted the support of Irish-American audiences. In a process that theatre historian Joseph Roach describes as an 'instance of how the unspeakable literally found a voice', Hayes's public image turned on the cultural traumas of her homeland.[72]

Hayes's performances, and the song she made her signature, theatricalized Irish diasporic experience and national traumatic memory. Reviews confirm that grief over recent Irish history played a role in her reception. For example, one 1852

[70] Significantly, I have found no primary sources documenting a performance of 'Kathleen Mavourneen' at the 2 June 1849 concert at Buckingham Palace. Hayes's own account of the evening in her autobiography fails to mention 'Kathleen Mavourneen'. Catherine Hayes and a Contributor to the Dublin University Magazine, *Memoir of Miss Catherine Hayes, the 'Swan of Erin'* (London: Cramer and Co., n.d.): 15. Additional relatively contemporaneous sources that omit mention of 'Kathleen Mavourneen' include *Tallis' Dramatic Magazine, and General Theatrical and Musical Review* (London: John Tallis and Company, 1850): 33–35. In newspaper accounts of the evening, Catherine Hayes is usually listed after Giulia Grisi, who was also singing that evening; see 'Grand Concert at Buckingham Palace', *Bell's New Weekly Messenger* (3 June 1849): 4. For a programme of the evening see 'Her Majesty's Concert', *Evening Mail* [London], 4 June 1849, 3.

[71] For instance, before Hayes's appearances in Washington, DC, in 1852, the DC-based paper *The Republic* began reporting her plans for a US tour in May 1851. They announced that they had received lithographed portraits of her from her 'avant couriers'. 'Correspondence of the Republic', *The Republic* [Washington, DC], 24 May 1851, 3. One month later, the same paper quoted a favourable London review that praised her successes both in London and in Italy. They reported again that the review had been submitted to them. 'Miss Catherine Hayes', *The Republic*, 26 June 1851, 2.

[72] Joseph Roach, 'Barnumizing Diaspora: The "Irish Skylark" Does New Orleans', *Theatre Journal* 50/1 (1998): 39–51, here 39.

review printed in the *Mississippi Free Trader* and the *Daily Orlinean* opined that Hayes's beauty obscured the nationalized, Irish anguish: 'curls down her neck hardly able to conceal the darkness of her Celtic sorrow'. Later in the article, the author imagined Hayes's Irish youth in Limerick, describing it as 'happy', and also noted that such scenes were now relegated to memory – the Ireland of her youth gone: 'the little child whose heart was full of happiness and who danced along like the sunshine on the black moor, blessed by the passing peasants, has … embalmed in memory the land of Carolan, Grattan and Moore'.[73]

'Kathleen Mavourneen' retained popularity across the North and South during the 1860s. In the Confederacy, the song was published in New Orleans, Richmond and Charleston.[74] In the North, few publishers dated their versions of 'Kathleen Mavourneen' in a bid to avoid copyright problems, but many editions likely come from that period. The song was also performed on stages: the database 'Music in Gotham' documents 20 performances of the ballad on New York stages between 1862 and the end of the war.[75] A critic at a January 1865 performance by the Wood's Minstrels reported hearing the song often.[76] The song was also heard in military camps: along the Rapidan River, during the 1863–64 winter encampment of the Union army, drummer Delavan Miller reported that the ballad was among the most popular in the camp.[77] 'Kathleen Mavourneen' also inspired a full-length melodramatic entertainment of the same name.[78] The play indulged in sentimentalism and had little to do with either famine or war, but it is telling of the song's popularity that it was introduced during the early 1860s. But the immense relevancy of this song speaks to underlying famine trauma, still lingering in Irish consciousness, that shaped musical life during the Civil War.

Conclusion

The traumatic memories of Irish famine that shaped experiences of the US Civil War have required me to deploy unconventional, interdisciplinary approaches to understand them. Scholars of US history have overlooked this topic, in part because the methods for expressing Irish cultural trauma emerge mostly indirectly. Additional research from the broadly transdisciplinary area of trauma studies reveals how we might consider shared, insidious and cultural traumas that affect an entire community or nation.

My approach has been inherently transatlantic, a frame that has enabled the research on several levels. Of course, understanding memory of Irish famine in the US has required research into history of both countries. Although much

[73] *Mississippi Free Trader*, cited in *Daily Orlinean*, 25 February 1852.

[74] F.N. Crouch, 'Kathleen Mavourneen' (Columbia, SC: Julian A. Selby, c. 1863); F.N. Crouch, 'Kathleen Mavourneen' (Richmond, VA: George Dunn and Company, c. 1864); Mrs. Crawford, words, and F.N. Crouch, music, 'Kathleen Mavourneen' (New Orleans: P. P. Werlein, n.d.).

[75] John Graziano, dir., *Music in Gotham: The New York Scene 1862–75*, https://www.musicingotham.org/, accessed 1 August 2019.

[76] 'We have often heard this ballad sung, but never before with so much sweetness as it was by Mr. Henry', *New York Clipper*, 4 February 1865, 342.

[77] Delavan S. Miller, *Drum Taps in Dixie: Memories of a Drummer Boy, 1861–1865* (Watertown: Hungerford-Holbrook, 1905): 71.

[78] *Kathleen Mavourneen, or St. Patrick's Eve: A Domestic Irish Drama in Four Acts* (Clyde, OH: Ames' Publishing Co, [1867?]).

existing research on the Irish in the US addresses the prejudice, xenophobia, and anti-Catholicism that significantly disenfranchised Irish immigrants, my work illustrates new possibilities for understanding Irish Americans when we take Irish history into fuller account, unspoken as that history may have been. Additionally, the impact of the events of the 1840s in Ireland did not just shape the lives of Irish Americans during the Civil War. Instead, I have shown that Americans across wide spectrums of location, national origin, and religious belief used the cultural legacy of the Great Famine during the 1860s.

My essay, however, takes into account an even wider transatlantic world in which commercial, shipping and immigration networks operated in a simultaneously colonial and postcolonial world dominated by Britain. Sheet music and theatrical practices emanated from London, shaping stereotypes about the Irish in the US via stage entertainments and printed material. Two of the most popular songs I addressed in this essay, 'Kathleen Mavourneen' and 'Lament of the Irish Immigrant', originated in Britain, though they have both gained popularity in Ireland via their popularity in the US.

Music is a particularly useful tool for understanding such a broad cultural phenomenon as transnational famine memory. Music's value as a potent aid for emotional expression, which was an explicated function of sentimental song in the nineteenth century, can help to understand famine trauma and its resonances during the US Civil War. My close readings of sentimental song lyrics and Patrick Gilmore's immigrant experiences suggest certain avenues for a broad-based picture of the topic, but I have returned several times to the popularity of 'Kathleen Mavourneen' during the Civil War as a touchstone example. This song – with its indirect methods of expression, its overtly Irish setting and its exploration of traumatic experience – rose to popularity in the US as an expression of famine-related grief during Catherine Hayes's tour. During the Civil War, 'Kathleen Mavourneen's continued usefulness as a tool for emotional processing was inexorably tied to the famine.

While this essay illustrates how music can contribute to social history, I have also illustrated several unusual ways that application of research on trauma can inform musicological work. The interdisciplinary field of trauma studies provides a framework for understanding how past trauma might return, unbidden, to shape the processing of newly introduced stressors. Music is often inherently tied to the moment of its creation and also performed later, sometimes with renewed relevancy or changing meaning. The discipline of trauma studies also encourages music scholars consider all possible ways in which trauma emerges: among individuals and across entire nations, and as the result of war, starvation, colonial brutality, social disenfranchisement and political disempowerment. As we continue to face new and old challenges involving traumatic experiences and global migrations, it is vitally important that we understand the ways that famine trauma deeply shaped musical practices of the US Civil War.