



@RememberingBuntingFestival

www.rememberingbuntingfestival.com



Festival 2025

Remembering Bunting



27th February-
2nd March

Belfast

FREE

*Entertainment that
enlightens and
inspires...*



FREE
admission
to all events

Celebrating our rich musical and cultural heritage,
honouring the significant work of Edward Bunting.

About

In 2017, Dún Uladh Cultural Resource Centre hosted the first Remembering Bunting Festival with outstanding panel discussions, lectures, film screenings, workshops and performances centred around deepening the understanding of the life and work of Ireland's Edward Bunting.

The festival offers lessons and insights which can be drawn from his ubiquitous legacy with an aim to contribute to an inclusive, positive and peaceful future. A celebration that is built upon an underlying ethos of inclusion, it values, supports, encourages and promotes cultural activities as a unifier amongst diverse communities across the province of Ulster. It continues to do this by building, growing and maintaining like-minded partnerships with other musical traditions of the area.

The Festival enjoyed its inaugural celebration in 2018. Since then, it has gone from strength to strength building upon a growing comprehensive roster of stellar, world class musicians, guest scholars, film makers, authors and distinguished guest speakers both local and international.

Who is Edward Bunting?

Born in Armagh in 1773, Edward Bunting was a prolific collector of traditional songs and tunes. His three volumes of *The Ancient Music of Ireland*, were published in 1796, 1809 and 1840 respectively.

Edward began formal music studies at the young age of seven in Drogheda, county Louth. He showed such great promise that by age eleven, he was scouted and became apprentice to William Ware, organist of St. Anne's Parish. Later, he became the church organist at St. George's Parish Church, High Street Belfast before the last chapter of his professional and personal life took place in Dublin, where he is buried.

Edward Bunting was born to a Catholic mother and a Church of Ireland father. Whilst in Belfast, he resided at the home of the famous McCracken family and became somewhat of an "adopted" member of that Presbyterian family having stayed with them for thirty-five formative years! At age nineteen, with the shared interests and formidable support of the siblings, Mary Ann McCracken and Henry Joy McCracken, the classically trained and most competently skilled young Bunting was put to the task of transcribing the music presented at the Belfast Harpers' Gathering in 1792 for the purpose of preserving what was referred to as the "ancient melodies of Ireland".

His love and devotion to music found him living a rich life within the varying traditions, cultures and religions of the communities of Belfast city. By his own account, he developed a particularly strong, innate love of the old Irish melodies which he believed were unrivalled by any other country. Thus, his famous reputation was sown.

Lost for many years, Bunting's collective works contain invaluable clues and commentary that reveal both the practices and perceptions of his time, preserving both precious history and heritage. In 1916, Omagh musician, composer and music collector Charlotte Milligan Fox (1864-1916), Founder and Secretary of the London Irish Folk Song Society in 1904, bequeathed a vast proportion of his manuscripts to Queen's University, Belfast where they presently remain.

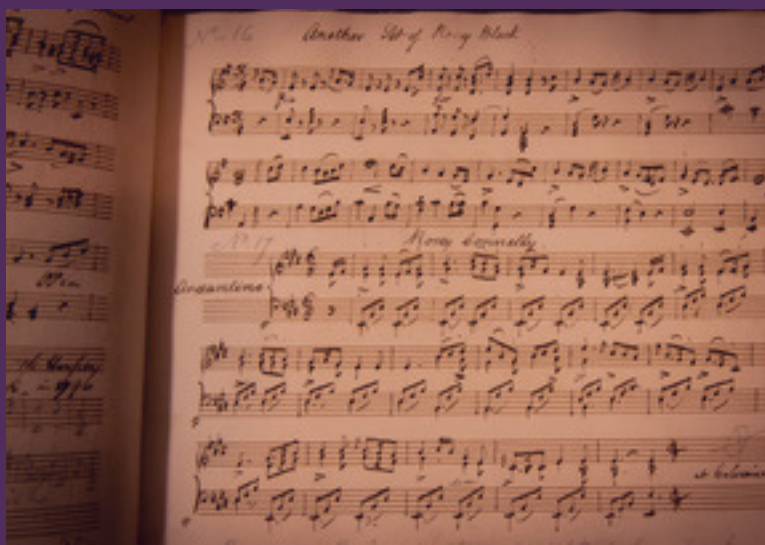
Edward Bunting's contribution to traditional music cannot be overstated and his story, our story, continues to live on through the music of today both knowingly and oft times, even unknowingly!

The CEOL Project

The Community Engagement, Outreach and Liaison Project (CEOL) was initiated by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann through its Regional Resource Centre, Dún Uladh in 2016. The CEOL Project values and promotes cultural activities as a unifier amongst diverse communities across Ulster which enable all communities to feel comfortable accessing the traditional music of Ireland.

Leading up to the Remembering Bunting Festival, a group of musicians are assembled to share, exchange and explore their musical heritages and traditions with one another through bespoke workshops and activities. Each year, under partnered mentorship of accomplished community music leaders, the group prepares and rehearses repertoire to perform for the public as part of the festival in celebration with a new, shared pride.

CEOL has enabled Comhaltas in Ulster to develop links with similar organizations within the Scottish pipe band sector, such as our project colleagues the Northern Ireland Piping and Drumming School and the Music Service for Pipes and Drums. This continues to facilitate exciting new relationships and musical collaborations that explore, showcase and celebrate our shared musical heritage.





THURSDAY 27TH FEBRUARY

Belfast Cathedral


3PM

*Official Festival Opening
with
Dr. Colette Moloney*

Voices Preserved: Song texts in the Edward Bunting Manuscripts

While there are only a few original English-language songs preserved in the Bunting manuscripts, the c.500 Irish texts (excluding duplicates) included constitute a large and important collection of eighteenth century and earlier Irish song. Bunting knew little or no Irish, but instead Irish-language scholars, primarily Patrick Lynch (Pádraig Ó Loingsigh) and James Cody (Séamus Mhac Óda), were employed to collect Irish song from performers at the turn of the nineteenth century when Irish was still the majority language in the country.

The presentation will consider the significance of the Bunting manuscripts as a repository of song texts of the era and the contribution of commissioned scribes and correspondents to their collection.



FRIDAY 28TH FEBRUARY

Linen Hall Library

11am



*The Science, Craft and Skill
of Harp Making*

Brian Waugh, Owner of Turmennan Harps Lisburn Co. Antrim, delivers rare insights, explanation and education on just what it takes to craft a quality harp. He will also provide invaluable information on how to best to keep a harp in good health. For appreciation and improved performance, this event provides a deeper understanding of the instrument.

Featuring Katy Bustard founder of Causeway Harp school performing on the Turmennan harps.

FRIDAY 28TH FEBRUARY

Queens Univeristy Library

2.30pm

*Bunting's Original Manuscript
Presentation and Viewing*

Exhibition of Edward Bunting Manuscripts Special Collections & Archives at Queen's University Belfast has held the Edward Bunting Collection since it was bequeathed in 1916. The earliest manuscript dates from the Belfast Harp Festival of 1792. A number of Bunting's unique manuscripts along with original accession letters will be on display in the Special Collections Reading Room.

Special Collections Librarian, Louisa Costelloe, will introduce and present these manuscripts and attendees will then be invited to peruse those on display.



***Pre-booking essential as
places are limited to 25
Please email
specialcollections@qub.acuk
if you would like to attend.***

FRIDAY 28TH FEBRUARY

St George's Church

7.30pm

*Edward Bunting, Church Organist
An Evening Back in Time*

Celebrate the launch of a permanent instalment of a Bunting Display at St. George's Church, Belfast where Edward Bunting was the first organist.

Enjoy a rich journey into Bunting's musical life with **Music Director, David Falconer** and the Choirs of St. George's followed by traditional music performed by the festival Ceol band. Music that is lifted, inspired and interpreted from the **Bunting Manuscripts** 250 years after the first collection publication.



SATURDAY 1st MARCH

2 Royal Avenue

11am

*Master of the State Music:
Bunting's Links to Earlier Collections*

**Dr. Estelle Murphy, Interim Co-Head
Department of Music, Maynooth University**

Many of the tunes in Bunting's collection have links to earlier collections and publications.

In particular, Dr. Murphy shares her research into Matthew Dubourg (1703 – 67) Master of the State Music in Ireland, and virtuoso violinist, and his form of collecting Irish music in early, and mid-eighteenth century in Dublin.



SATURDAY 1st MARCH

2 Royal Avenue

2.30pm

*Traditional Dance Showcase
with Ceilidh*



Highland dancers and Irish dancers will wow the audience with their respective skills performed in traditional and exciting new ways.

Georgina Kee – McCarter, Sollus Highland Dance Tutor offers interesting historical information on the various dances, their choreographies and evolvment. Enjoy a grand finale of the two traditions coming together in unique, shared choreography followed by an open Ceilidh!



SATURDAY 1st MARCH

2 Royal Avenue

7.30pm

*Music in the Glen with the
Festival CEOL Band*

Music in the Glen delivers the infectious rhythms that reach the very soul of traditional music. The group is an exciting trio forged from the relationships of playing music together for over twenty years.

Irish traditional, and Pipe Band musicians form the **Festival CEOL Band**, they will open the evening and later join the headline trio for a grand finale celebration.

SUNDAY 2nd MARCH

Crescent Arts Centre

2.30pm

*Edward Bunting
Purveyor of Harmonic Crudities
Guilty as charged?*

David Byers

**composer, musicologist, producer,
author of Gatherings Of Irish Harpers 1780-1840**

After his death, Bunting was accused of gross deception and being a purveyor of 'harmonic crudities', too influenced by the classical genre.

Should he be guilty as charged?

David Byers explores and discusses.

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outreach@dunuladh.ie 028 8224 2777