

**Music Network & the Irish Traditional Music Archive invite proposals for**

**The Bunting Harp Collection:**

**A Digital Commission**



## 1. Introduction

Music Network (MN) and The Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) are offering an opportunity for a professional sound or visual artist to create an installation work, using as its inspiration the historically significant harp tunes collected in 1792 by Edward Bunting.

Artists are invited to submit proposals outlining their creative response to a range of multimedia digital materials relating to the collection held by MN, ITMA, and Special Collections & Archives, Queen's University Belfast (QUB). Materials are comprised of digitised 18<sup>th</sup> century publication and manuscript sources, and 21<sup>st</sup> century audio-visual harp studio performances.

This is a unique opportunity for the recipient to create and present new work through the exploration, discovery and creative re-use of archival materials, and to bring this valuable collection to the attention of the wider public.

## 2. Key Information

- Issue date: Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019
- Briefing/open day: Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019 at The ITMA (see page 3 for details)
- Closing date: Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019, 4 p.m.
- Value: €10,000 (inclusive of VAT)
- Project timeframe: August 2019 – June 2020
- Contact for queries: [operations@musicnetwork.ie](mailto:operations@musicnetwork.ie)
- Submission format: electronic.

### **3. Background to commissioners**

Music Network is a national music touring and development organisation, passionate about making live music happen and supporting musicians. The organisation holds a unique position and is seen as a highly valuable resource for the nurture and presentation of quality live music in Ireland.

Our integrated programmes - from music education, residencies, commissioning, training & funding, to tours, concerts and learning and participation activities through our valued network of partners - deliver on our mission of providing access to exceptional live music for people across Ireland, and of supporting the professional development of musicians.

Further details on Music Network [here](#).

The Irish Traditional Music Archive holds the largest multimedia collection in existence dedicated to Irish traditional music. Our role is to collect, preserve, organise and make accessible the contemporary and historical materials of Irish traditional song, instrumental music and dance.

By providing free public access to materials at our premises and online, and through initiatives such as PORT, Duala: Creator-in-Residence Scheme, and the Bunting Collection Commission, we wish to provide artists with opportunities to develop innovative and creative programmes, projects and performances.

Further details on ITMA [here](#).

### **4. Background to the Bunting Collection and the project**

#### **Edward Bunting (1773–1843)**

In 1792 Armagh-born Edward Bunting was commissioned by the organisers of the Belfast Harp Festival to notate and preserve the music of the last of the professional Irish harpers. This task was to prompt a lifetime of collecting and publishing Irish traditional music. His first collection *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* [Volume 1] appeared in 1797 and its influence continues to be seen in live performance, print, recorded and online settings.

Further details on the Bunting Collection on ITMA website [here](#) and QUB [here](#).

In 2016, MN made audio-visual recordings in the ITMA studio of ten of Ireland's leading contemporary harpers giving solo performances of the 66 tunes from the first 1797 publication. This project acted as a catalyst for MN and ITMA to explore a new approach to the presentation of the broader range of existing digital source material relating to *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* [Volume 1].

## 5. The project brief

Sound/visual artists are invited to create new and original artwork in response to digital materials relating to Bunting held by MN, ITMA, and Special Collections & Archives, Queen's University Belfast. These source materials are as follows:

1. Video and audio recordings of ten contemporary harpers playing the 66 tunes from *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* [Volume 1]

Video sample 1 available [here](#)

The twisting of the rope played by Anne-Marie O'Farrell

Video sample 2 available [here](#)

Planxty Johnston played by Claire O'Donnell

Audio sample 1 available [here](#)

Molly St George played by Eilís Lavelle

Audio sample 2 available [here](#)

The lamentation of Owen O'Neil played by Triona Marshall

2. Digitised high resolution images of the 1797 publication *A General Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland* [Volume 1]

Publication image sample 1 available [here](#)

The twisting of the rope

Publication Image sample 2 available [here](#)

Planxty Johnston

3. Selected high resolution images of original 18<sup>th</sup> century Edward Bunting music manuscripts

Manuscript image sample 1 available [here](#)

Molly St George

Manuscript image sample 2 available [here](#)

The lamentation of Owen O'Neil

Artists should consider production and/or technical requirements to ensure that the work is portable and adaptable to a variety of settings, and reflect this in their proposal.

The completed installation will need to be production ready with set-up information/requirements detailed accordingly.

We anticipate the installation will be presented at Kilkenny Arts Festival and Belfast International Arts Festival in 2020, and potentially at other festivals and galleries within Ireland and internationally from 2021 onwards.

It is also our intention that a performance by harpers who contributed to the archival recordings, produced and presented by MN and ITMA, will open both 2020 events. ITMA will host an online archive of the original materials to accompany the installation.

The work will provide a platform for 21<sup>st</sup> century harp practice in Ireland and breathe new life into the tradition, challenging preconceptions around archives and traditional music and engaging new audiences. It is also hoped that it will encourage artists from other genres and art forms to consider using traditional music materials in more diverse ways in the future.

The Commission provides:

- Guided access to Bunting Collection source and reference materials held by ITMA, MN and Special Collections & Archives, Queen's University Belfast
- Dedicated research work space in ITMA, if required
- Access to ITMA's sound recording studio, if required
- €10,000 for artist fees, expenses and all commission development expenses (maximum available budget). N.B. limited additional budget will be made available in 2020 to cover presentation costs.

Further details, including terms and conditions, payment schedules etc., will be agreed in consultation with MN and ITMA. The Commission will be developed over a non-consecutive period of dates from August 2019, and will require meetings with MN/ITMA in Dublin, dates and times to be agreed.

### **Briefing/open day:**

The open day will take place on **Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019** at ITMA, 73 Merrion Square, Dublin 2. Additional materials (including recordings, images and background information on Bunting etc.) will be available to access from 10:00am to 1:00pm. Representatives from Music Network and ITMA will be available to answer questions/provide project background information from 12.00pm – 1.00pm.

### **Who can apply?**

- Professional sound or visual artists, as recognised by their peers, resident in the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland
- Partnerships of up to 2 artists
- Artists aged over 18 only.

MN/ITMA are committed to equity and inclusion, and welcome applications from individuals within culturally diverse communities and from people with disabilities.

Applications in Irish are welcome.

**Application procedure:**

Applicants must submit their application to Music Network by **email to Andreas Ziemons (operations@musicnetwork.ie)** with the title *Bunting Commission* in the subject line.

Hard copy applications will not be accepted. Late applications will not be accepted.

Closing date for applications is **4.00 p.m. on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2019.**

All queries relating to the Commission should be submitted by **EMAIL ONLY to operations@musicnetwork.ie**.

Please note that personal information included in applications will be treated as privileged and confidential and will only be shared with MN/ITMA staff and panel members to facilitate the assessment process.

To be eligible for consideration, please email **ALL** of the following:

- Project proposal, including how the work will be presented (maximum 2 A4 pages)
- Links to 3 samples of existing work or attachments (total file size not to exceed 5MB)
- Current CV of artist(s) (maximum 3 A4 pages)
- Proposed budget (please note the maximum award is €10,000 inclusive of VAT for artist fees and expenses, and all project expenses)
- Proposed timeline.

**Assessment Procedure:**

A panel will consider all proposals received based on the selection criteria outlined below. Shortlisting may apply in selecting candidates for interview.

Selection criteria:

- originality, artistic quality and coherence of proposal
- feasibility of proposal
- demonstrated ability in all aspects of project planning, management and delivery
- track record of applicant.

**Notification of award decisions:**

MN/ITMA aim to inform applicants about decisions on **31<sup>st</sup> July 2019**. All notifications will be sent by email. Please note that MN/ITMA reserve the right not to award the commission if

none of the applications received are deemed suitable. In this instance MN/ITMA reserve the right to pursue a different selection process.

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