

## Dublin "City Music" from 1456 to 1786

W. H. Grattan Flood  
(Enniscorlhy.)

{This is an interesting insight into the history of the Dublin City Musicians. Flood has for the most part restrained himself from making any assumptions on the data that he has researched here. It is interesting to note that, apart from four instances, in 1457, 1466 1636 and 1669, The Waits are not mentioned. In the first two instances there is no mention of music and in the fourth they seem to be a separate group who were *accompanied by* the City Musicians. It appears to me that in Dublin, the name "Waits" always meant solely watchmen, with no musical connections. Chris Gutteridge. }

For the vast majority of details of the present paper I must express my indebtedness to the *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin*, of which fourteen volumes have been issued at intervals from 1889 to 1909. Unfortunately, there is no index as yet, and hence it required no small amount of research to wade through the thousands of entries in these fourteen volumes, in order to cull out those relating to the City Music, or Corporation Band. I have also been given permission to publish the extracts here printed from the Corporation Records. Other details have been taken from various files of Dublin newspapers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

I take the year 1458 as my starting point, for at that date the "Waits" are alluded to, though they probably had been in the service of the city fathers for some years previously. The first detailed order respecting them was in October, 1457, when eight Waits were chosen "to perambulate the city nightly from curfew to five in the morning" - receiving as gratuities "four pence of every hall and three pence of every shop within the city bounds" - also receiving a livery from each. {This sounds to me like policing, without any suggestion of anything musical. }

Some difference arose a few years later respecting the bounds to be perambulated, and accordingly in October 1406 these bounds of the Waits were strictly defined.

Under date of April 1469 there is a record of Richard Bennett, "piper", and John Talbot, "piper", having been admitted to the city franchise. Some years later the City Music took part in the grand pageants on Corpus Christi, of which a detailed account is given in 1498. In 1528, and again in 1541, reference is made to music as an accessory at the theatrical performances given by the city. In June 1561, at the conclusion of the mayoral banquet of Thomas Fitzsimon, in honour of Lord Deputy Sussex, we read that "the mayor and his brethren, *with the City Music*, attended the Lord Lieutenant and Council to Thomas's Court by torchlight." {These were clearly Civic Musical Waits as we would understand them.} In January 1567 it was agreed by the Corporation "that the musicians of this city shall have an officer to levy the arrears of their stipend, and to call in the same henceforth from time to time, or to take pledges for it". On May 6 1569 it was agreed at a meeting of the Corporation, "that the musicians of this city shall have their livery coats yearly, with the cognisance of this city upon every coat, at the charge of the treasurer of this city; in consideration whereof and of their salary appointed, the same musicians shall three several days or nights every week, as time of year shall require, serve in and throughout the city and suburbs, as the like musicians do in the cities of England, and at the like hours; and that allowance shall be made for their liveries given before this time".

From the death of Queen Mary in 1558 to the year 1579 music was utterly neglected at both the Dublin Cathedrals, and no salaried lay organist was appointed until the close of the century. One of the Vicars Choral, Rev. Walter Kennedy, acted as Organist and Master of the choristers of Christ Church Cathedral from 1582 to 1595. There is an interesting reference to this clerical organist in the Corporation Records, in January 1583-4, as follows:

"Walter Kennedy, clerk, Vicar choral of Christ Church, was admitted to the franchise by special grace, with condition that he shall attend with his boys upon the Mayor, and sing on station days and other times when he shall be called upon during his life."

We can thus infer that at this period the choristers of Christ Church sang at the mayoral banquets and civic festivals, accompanied by the City Music. {I'm not convinced that we can infer any such thing. They may have been unaccompanied, or accompanied by someone else. }

Under date of 7 July 1591 Edward Gore and his associate-musicians were admitted as "Masters for this cittie, to use their instruments of howboys and other instruments of musycke as occasion shall serve". At the same assembly it was unanimously agreed "that every alderman shall pay eighteen pence yearly; every of the number of XLVIII shall pay twelve pence yearly; and every of the four score and sixteen shall pay ninepence yearly; and every house in the city other than the houses of the said persons shall pay four pence yearly; the same to be paid every half year during our good liking of the said musicians". By the terms of this agreement the musicians were bound to be present "on all festival and station days" in attendance upon the Mayor, but it is quaintly added: "And, as for those of Her Majesty's Privy Council, and others, gentlemen of good account, dwelling in this city, and all others repairing to this city, we refer to their own getting". In October of same year, this stipend, "in order to provoke them to use their diligence", was increased to 36 pence, 24 pence, and 16 pence yearly, but it was stipulated that they should go about the city thrice weekly, morning and evening. They were also given power "to keep out all other musicians and ministralls". Edward Gore was succeeded as Master of the City Music by William Huggard in 1598. In the following year the allowances fixed in 1591 were confirmed. In order to encourage the musicians it was agreed "that they shall have of this city's charge twelve yards of cloth every year for livery cloaks, the cloth to be blue or wachett colour, with the city cognisance, which allowance they shall have during good behaviour and diligent attendance".

In April 1600 John Bergin "musycion" was admitted to the franchise, "as apprentice to Henry Nugent, and as husband of Amy Archbold, freewoman".

After the accession of King James I, in 1603, William Huggard was admitted to the franchise, and his fine of twenty shillings was remitted. He was confirmed in his office of Master of the City Music, and in 1604, an order was made for the usual payment to said Huggard and his fellow waits, "provided that they have a full consort of good musicians". In July 1607 Nicholas Ennis, *musician*, was admitted to the franchise, also John Huggard, *musician*, son of William Huggard. Three years later (April 20, 1610) John Gore, *musician*, was admitted. On September 12, 1612, the grand civic ceremony known as "riding the franchises" was carried out, attended by the city musicians'. Not long afterwards a steady influx of "foreign" musicians seems to have set in; and hence the city music petitioned to have their former powers confirmed. As a result an order was made by the City Fathers on July 17, 1618, empowering the company of musicians "to arrest and sue all strange musicians, not being freemen, that they shall find henceforward to intrude on them within this city and franchise thereof" – a provision being added that the City Music should henceforth play thrice every week, on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. A further order was made respecting their livery in January 1619-20, when, in addition to the customary twelve yards of broad cloth, they were given "three yards of broadcloth at thirteen shillings and four pence Irish, per Yard", but it was insisted that they "should always maintain a god singing boy". {This is not something I've come across before. }

In January 1621, Nicholas Huggard, musician, son of William Huggard, was admitted to the franchise, on payment of a fine of fifteen shillings. Exactly three years later William Barlow, musician was admitted by special grace "on fine of one pair of gloves to the Mayor's wife"; and in January 1627 Walter Fleming, musician was declared free "as child of a freeman".

William Huggard after 34 years' service died in 1632, and was succeeded as Master of the City Music by his eldest son John, at a fee of £10 per annum, As a mark of favour to this John Huggard, the Corporation agreed in

October 1636, "that the yearly stipend of ten pounds, Irish, be augmented to ten pounds sterling, English money", on condition that the city musicians keep their constant *waits* three times a week, from Michaelmas to Shrovetide yearly", {**Note they keep their waits. Waits being duties, rather than people?**} and also that they keep "a good singing boy". Evidently John Huggard must have been in comfortable circumstances, because in April 1640 his son William, who is described as a *goldsmith*, was admitted to the franchise. In May 1641 Stephen Holt musician died, and his son and namesake, also a city musician, was admitted to the franchise in July 1643.

Notwithstanding the inharmonious state of civic government during the "great Rebellion" of 1641-1651, an order of July 1645 confirms to John Huggard and his fellow musicians the same fees and perquisites as had formerly been granted to Edward Gore and his band of music. I may add that the Franchises were ridden in September 1649, and again in September 1653.

On April 26th 1650 James Clayton "musician" was admitted to the franchise - a privilege which was also granted to David Flower in July 1653.

John Huggard, Master of the City Music, died in June 1654. Thus father and son had held the post from 1598 to 1654, a period of 56 years. On July 7th 1654 James Clayton was appointed by the Corporation as Master, "with the fees, wages, and perquisites thereunto belonging, during the pleasure of the city". His tenure of office was twelve years and a half, and we read in the Register of St. John's Church, Dublin, that James Clayton "musician" was buried on January 29th 1666-7.

The minutes of the City Council under date of the second Friday after Easter, 1667, approved of the appointment of John Evans, as "Master of the Musick to the City" in succession to James Clayton deceased; further, the place of Deputy Master was given to Patrick Jones, "and the rest of the musicians to continue in their several stations as now they are".

In October 1669 the City Music was reorganised, and it was ordered that the number of the band be fixed at ten, with a salary of forty shillings each. {**Ten! This is the largest Waits band I know of - or is it? How many uncounted apprentices performed in other bands of Waits?**}

It was further ordered, that instead of livery cloaks the musicians were to be provided with badges at a cost not exceeding £30. The members of the band at this date were: - John Evans, Patrick Jones, Thomas Ray, Francis Smith, Thomas Tollit, Peter le Fleur, Thomas Bulmer, Richard Holt, John Tollit and George Tollit. Security was to be provided for the due re-delivery of these badges to the city, and the musicians were bound "to go in and through the city and suburbs *with the city waits* every usual night, from the fifth of October to the fifth day of February yearly". {**with the waits - were the waits the City Guard?**} Between the years 1672 and 1677 grave abuses are reported in connection with the company of musicians, namely "disorderly conduct", "quarrelling amongst themselves", "neglecting their duties", etc., and in consequence in 1678 the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs were deputed to select a fit band of music. As a result of much deliberation the following ten musicians were reported as suitable: - John Evans, Patrick Jones, John Tollett, Thomas Tollet, Charles Tollet, Edward Pennington, Nicholas Roche, Walter Trotter, Roger Taylor and John Lewis - the first four being conjointly made "Masters of the City Music", three to form a quorum to govern said company. It was also agreed that these ten musicians "do wear their liveries according to former act of assembly". Matters appear to have gone on smoothly from 1678 to 1688; and the only entry on the civic roll has reference to the appointment on April 11th 1684 of Edward James and William Trendar, as "two of the musicians of this city", instead of Walter Trotter and Edward Pennington.

Naturally the events of 1688 did not make for harmony in any sense, and hence we are not surprised at finding a petition from the City Music for payment of the arrears of their salary. Accordingly On April 27, 1688 it was ordered "that the treasurer of the city do pay the City Musicians the sum of twenty pounds sterling, in lieu of their salary due at Christmas last, *as soon as money comes into his hands*". This last clause is very suggestive, and amply proves that the Dublin City Music had reason to complain, though evidently their position was not as

bad at that of the King's Band of Music, many of whom were ten years in arrears of their salary. The names of the City Music at this date were: - Patrick Jones, John Tollet, Thomas Tollet, Charles Tollet, Nicholas Roche, Roger Taylor, John Lewis, Charles Brickenden, Edward Shuttleworth and Richard Holt.

At least one of these musicians - Thomas Tollet - had a reputation as a flautist and composer. He went to London in 1690, and we find one or his songs introduced into *Marriage Hater Matched*, by Tom D'Urfey, produced at Drury Lane in January 1692. He also published a Flageolet Tutor (1693), and, with John Lenton, *A Consort of Musick in three parts* (1694), also *Tollet's Grounde* (1720). From 1695 to 1709 he was one of the King's Band of Music.

During the mayoralty of Sir Michael Mitchell (1691-2) the City Music was re-organised, with Patrick Jones as Master. In answer to the petition of the band, it was resolved, on April 19, 1692: - "Whereas, Patrick Jones and the rest of the City Music preferred their petition to the said assembly showing that several persons in about this city, under the name of the petitioners, go about publicly in companies to persons of quality and others to play, and receive money from them in the petitioners' name, and there-by deprive them of their livelihood, and intrude on the privilege allowed them, to the lessening of the grandeur of this city, and contrary to the practice of other Corporations in England. . . . It is therefore ordered and agreed that justice be done to the petitioners, and that such persons as shall presume to play upon instruments of music for lucre or gain, not licensed by the City or the Government, be punished according to law in such cases provided."

In 1695 the City Music procured from England a new set of wind instruments at a cost of £20 sterling, and performed at the Tholsel on October 8 of that year, "on the day of thanksgiving for the preservation of His Majesty's person, and the taking of Namur. Naturally the musicians expected to be recognised for this outlay but, under date of July 17, 1696, the city treasurer could only see his way to pay the petitioners £5 sterling "towards the expenses they have been at in providing their present wind instruments". At the inauguration of the statue of King William, on July 1st, 1701, and again at the banquet given to the Duke of Ormonde on 12 August 1703, the City Music played. Between the years 1693 and 1703 the names of John Walter Beck, Richard Roberts, John Crackenthorpe, Henry Etherington, Thomas Johnson, James Johnson, and Stephen Bannister appear as members of the City Music, with Patrick Jones as leader. In July 1704, John Stephenson "musician" was admitted vice Etherington deceased; on April 5th 1704 Nathan Ellison succeeded Stephen Bannister; and in July 1708 Ralph Marsden was given the place vacant by the death of Richard Roberts. In May 1715 Roger Taylor, Edward Thisleton, James Johnson, and Thomas Johnson, "under suspension for their misbehaviour to the present Lord Mayor and Sheriffs", were re-admitted to the City Music. On the same day Richard Hart, John Johnson, George Wangle, William Hodgkinson, Robert Rackett, Francis Dowdall, and George Whiteman were admitted, "during the City's pleasure". Between the years 1715 and 1719 we find William Clegg, Edward Crackenthorpe, William Taylor, Garret Comerford, and Peter Fitzgerald appointed to vacancies.

On 22 July 1720 Lewis Layfield, an English actor, was admitted to a vacancy in the City Music. Three years later (April 9th 1723), a Corporation Committee reported that Francis Dowdall, William Clegg 1, and William Taylor were to be dismissed, and their places given to George Wade, Hugh Read, and Jeremiah MacCarthy. It was further ordered: "That Mr. Lewis Layfield be appointed overseer of the City Music by the name of Major Hautboy". Another order was made "that the said music [sic] for the future to wear blue coats and laced hats, to be provided by them severally at their own expense". This report was confirmed by the city assembly in May following. Lewis Layfield, "major hautboy", though not a clever musician, proved an able "overseer", and he certainly effected some reforms in the City Music. {There is no evidence here that he was "not a clever musician" - just because he was an actor doesn't mean he couldn't play!}

He got the allowances of the bandsmen increased from forty shillings to £4 per annum each. Another musician connected with the Dublin theatre was Callaghan MacCarthy, who was admitted in October 1725, vice Hugh Read deceased. Lewis Layfield acted continuously in Dublin from 1723 to 1733, and he was one of the three managers of Smock Alley Theatre. On December 16th 1729 he was appointed State Kettle-drummer for Ireland,

and in 1733 interested himself in the building of a new theatre. With so many irons in the fire it is evident that he could not efficiently discharge his duty to the City Band, and hence April 6th 1733 we read that Lewis Layfield was dismissed for neglect of duty. He was succeeded on July 20 by Rice MacCarthy. There is one event in Layfield's overseership that must not be forgotten, namely the starting of promenade concerts in the Green. The inaugural concert was given on Thursday, June 25th 1730, and a large and fashionable audience thronged St. Stephen's Green to hear the City Music. Callaghan MacCarthy continued leader of the Theatre Royal orchestra from 1735 to 1741, and had an annual benefit 2).

Apparently the Corporation were determined not to have unqualified musicians in their band, for under date May 3rd 1728 we read that William Meakins, who had been appointed to a vacancy vice Fitzgerald deceased, was removed "being in no sort qualified", and was replaced by William Jackson. However Meakins evidently must have had a love for music, because he studied for three years, became a freeman of the City, and was re-admitted to the City Music on April 18th 1735, vice Robert Hackett deceased. In 1738 and 1741 Benjamin Johnson and William Jackson the younger were given vacancies in the City band, vice Garret Comerford and George Nangle deceased.

Rice MacCarthy, who replaced Lewis Layfield, began to neglect his duties in 1737, and we read under date of January 1741-2, that he had been absent from station duty for several years. Consequently, on the petition of Philip Caffrey musician, MacCarthy was dismissed. He was replaced by the said Caffrey, who describes himself as having been for four years a trumpeter in Lord Cathcart's regiment of horse. In April 1745, Samuel Lee, "music master", was given the vacancy in the City Music vacant by the death of Thomas Johnson. This distinguished Dublin musician had been a pupil of Dubourg, and kept a music shop on the Little Green. Handel often visited Lee, and employed him as copyist in 1742. Between the years 1745 and 1750 he effected quite a reformation in the Corporation Band, and in 1751 got together a new set of musicians, whose names are as follows: - Samuel Lee, William Jackson, John Clarke, James Forster, Roland Jacob, Frederick Seaforth, George Fitzgerald, Thomas Kelly, Callaghan MacCarthy, and George Wade. Four of these were members of the Dublin theatre band, and were noted players. In July 1751 Lee was one of the partners who leased the Crow Street Music Hall – the other three being Stephen Storace (father of Stephen and Nancy Storace), Signor Marella and Daniel Sullivan.

The newly organised band was formally approved of by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs, and the sum of £40 a year was voted for the City Music, in addition to £5.2.6 for a Drum Major. So satisfactory did they prove that on July 20th 1753 the amount of their salary was raised to £60 a year - such increase to date from Christmas 1752. However it was reported at the close of the year 1753 that some of the band had neglected their duties, and hence certain deductions were made. Sam Lee was leader of the orchestra at Marlborough Green from 1752 to 1756, and was in much request at oratorios and concerts. He also published much music. In 1758 on the opening of Crow Street Theatre he was appointed Musical Director, and held the position for ten years. With the permission of the City Fathers he engaged John Clarke as Deputy Master of the City Music in 1761. So successful did his music selling business prove, that in 1763 he removed to Jownes's Street, whence in 1768 he opened larger premises at No. 2 Dame Street. His death occurred on February 21st 1776.

In April 1765 Henry Mountain, another famous Dublin violinist and music seller, was appointed Master of the City Music; who on April 11th 1766 was ordered to be paid £40 for the band of music, "for eight months' attendance to Christmas last". The City Band took part in the grand ceremony of the riding of the franchises on Tuesday August 4th 1767, and they discoursed sweet music under Mountain's leadership at the head of the 25 corporate guilds. Mountain (who married Miss Pidgeon on September 7th 1753) did a large business at his music shop, no. 20 Whitefriar Street, whence in 1789 he removed to no. 44 Grafton Street.

Almost the last entry in the *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin* relating to the City Music is under date of January 22nd 1779, wherein it was agreed to pay Henry Mountain £60 for the previous year's salary. It was however ordered that the City Music "be continued in office for one year ending next Ochristmas assembly 1780, at an allowance of £30 sterling for said year, if they shall think proper to accept of such sum,

and, if not, that the chief magistrate be empowered to employ others in their stead at said allowance". On April 20th 1780 a committee of the Corporation considered the petition of Henry Mountain, and agreed that he should be paid "£22 10 8 due to the City Music at Michaelmas 1779, and also a sum of £15 for a quarter's salary due Christmas 1780, making together the sum of £37 10 5, in full of all demands to 25 December 1780".

It is quite evident that the petition of Henry Mountain 3) had the desired effect, for the Corporation consented to pay the City Music at the old rate of £60 per annum, and not at half that amount, as agreed to in 1779. Accordingly we find that Mountain was paid £45 for three quarters' salary up to 29th day of September 1781. Subsequently we find the sum of £60 paid as the yearly stipend in 1782, 1783 and 1784, after which all payments ceased, and the City Music disappeared as an ancient institution.

No doubt the old order of things could scarcely continue after the drafting of the bill for the Dublin City Police - replacing the watchmen or waits. The finale came on September 29th 1786, when the new Police Commissioners entered on possession of their house in William Street. {At first reading, it might appear that the police took over the City Musicians' house, but it may just mean that the police commissioners took possession of a house which thus became "theirs".}

So passed away the City Waits and the City Music of Dublin.

1) William. Clegg on father of the celebrated John Clegg.

2) It is of interest to note that Domenico Scarlatti the great Italian composer, had a benefit in Dublin, on February 7th, 1740-1.

3) Mountain died in 1796. His son Joseph succeeded Baumgarten as leader of the orchestra at Covent Garden Theatre, London, in September, 1794.