

'It's always nice to head for home': Music-Making, Sense of Place, and Corkonian Identity in the Rory Gallagher *Irish Tour '74* Documentary

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For many musicians, sense of place is important. This is particularly the case for those who come from small towns or cities as their size creates a unique 'people-place bond' in terms of sense of community.¹ This social and emotional 'place attachment' is tied up deeply with discourses of identity, authenticity, and belonging which, in turn, have a strong impact on the practices, relationships, and values of musicians.² This strong interplay between music-making, sense of place, and identity is transmitted from generation to generation through cultural production, thereby sustaining across time the continuity of a symbolic community with a strong sense of 'otherness'. Central to this 'otherness' is a respect for normative expectations around shared values that are perceived as 'typical' of that place and a rejection of those seen as 'atypical'.³

The link between music-making and place attachment has been a central concern of both sociologists and musicologists for the past thirty years. However, most of this research has focused on major cities, such as Liverpool,⁴ Austin,⁵ Montreal,⁶ Lisbon,⁷

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- ¹ Eileen Hogan, 'Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene', in Áine Mangaoang, John O'Flynn & Lonán Ó Briain (eds), *Made in Ireland: Studies in Popular Music* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 185–94.
 - ² Eileen Hogan, 'Corkonian Exceptionalism: Identity, Authenticity and the Emotional Politics of Place in a Small City's Popular Music Scene', *Ethnomusicology Ireland*, 4 (2016): 1–26: 2.
 - ³ Michel Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society* (London: Sage, 1996), 16.
 - ⁴ Sara Cohen, *Rock Culture in Liverpool: Popular Music in the Making* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Sara Cohen, *Decline, Renewal and the City in Popular Music Culture: Beyond the Beatles* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).
 - ⁵ Barry Shank, *Dissonant Identities: The Rock 'n' Roll Scene in Austin, Texas* (London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994).
 - ⁶ Geoff Stahl, 'It's Like Canada Reduced: Setting the Scene in Montreal', in Andy Bennett & Keith Kahn-Harris (eds), *After Subculture: Critical Studies in Contemporary Youth Culture* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 51–64.
 - ⁷ Jorge de la Barre, 'Music, City, Ethnicity: Exploring Music Scenes in Lisbon', *Migrações Journal*, Special Issue Music and Migration, 7 (2010), 139–55.

and Dublin,⁸ with only a small number of studies on smaller urban contexts, such as Milton Keynes⁹ and Reykjavik.¹⁰ Despite this relatively large body of literature, most scholars—whether examining large or small cities and towns—continue to neglect the significance of musicians' emotional connectivity to place. One notable exception is Hogan, who has explored the Cork music scene and how musicians' activities are shaped by a sense of community, an ideology of belonging, and localized expressions of identity and forms of prestige—what she terms 'parochial capital'.¹¹

The current article aims to build upon the work of Hogan by casting a historical lens on the importance of emotional connectivity to place in Cork through a case study of the city's most famous musician: the blues/rock guitarist Rory Gallagher (1948–95). Specifically, I will investigate how sense of place and Corkonian values are narratively produced and depicted in the *Irish Tour '74* documentary, which covered Gallagher's tour of Ireland in January 1974 at the height of the Troubles when Irish people—both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic—were viewed across the world with suspicion.¹² I offer a multimodal perspective on the topic by focusing on the way in which the documentary cleverly weaves together concert and geographical footage, fly-on-the-wall clips, and backstage interviews to represent Gallagher's strong place attachment to Cork. I then ground these insights in evidence from archival interviews with Gallagher, his brother and manager Dónal, and his bandmates. I argue that *Irish Tour '74* constructs an image of County Cork as a deeply historical and quasi-mystical place with traditional values and a strong sense of community, while Gallagher is portrayed as the physical embodiment of these values. Additionally, I identify how specific scenes highlight the significance of localist expressions of identity and localized forms of prestige for Gallagher, while certain songs are re-narrativized to create new meanings that either accentuate his yearning for home or promote a form of 'hybridized parochialism' that centres on Belfast as his 'second home'. In offering this multimodal ethnohistorical perspective on a musician and city that are underrepresented in academic research, I hope to extend Hogan's arguments on parochialism and contribute new understandings on the importance of place for musicians from small towns or cities.

⁸ John O'Flynn & Áine Mangaoang, 'Sounding Dublin: Mapping Popular Music Experience in the City', *Journal of World Popular Music*, 6/1 (2019), 32–62.

⁹ Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-making in an English Town* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2007).

¹⁰ Nick Prior, "'It's A Social Thing, Not a Nature Thing": Popular Music Practices in Reykjavik, Iceland', *Cultural Sociology*, 9/1 (2015), 81–98.

¹¹ Hogan, 'Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene', 186; Hogan, 'Corkonian Exceptionalism'.

¹² Paddy Hillyard, *Suspect Community: People's Experiences of the Prevention of Terrorism Acts in Britain* (London: Pluto Press, 1993).

The ‘Rebel’ Spirit of Cork and Rory Gallagher

The city of Cork in the south-west of Ireland has a long-standing reputation as non-conformist and dissident, which gives it a distinct identity in relation to other geographical areas on the island. Located in the ‘Rebel County’ – a name that came from its rebellious nature under British colonial rule – Cork has always been a ‘bastion of left field thought’, with music playing an integral part in the Corkonian psyche.¹³ Cork was the site of the first municipal school of music in Ireland and Great Britain – the Cork School of Music – which was established in 1878. It was also the birthplace of composer Seán Ó Riada (1931–71); played a major role in the showband movement of the 1950s and 1960s thanks to the entrepreneurship of locals Peter Prendergast and brothers Jerry and Murt Lucey; and was the founding place of *Spotlight* music magazine, first published in 1963. Particularly since the post-punk era in the late 1970s, Cork has developed a reputation for producing ‘quirky’ or ‘mad’ music that challenges the mainstream and stands in stark contrast to the more ‘commercial’ Dublin music scene.¹⁴ However, perhaps Cork’s biggest musical claim to fame is that it was the hometown of the blues/rock guitarist Rory Gallagher.

Although born in Ballyshannon in County Donegal and having spent the early years of his life in Derry, Rory Gallagher always regarded himself as a proud Corkonian. He moved to Cork – his mother Monica’s birthplace – in 1956 at the age of eight following his parents’ separation.¹⁵ Gallagher’s maternal grandparents ran the Modern Bar (later renamed Roche’s Bar) at 28 MacCurtain Street in the city’s Victorian Quarter and it was above the bar that he lived with them, his mother, and younger brother, Dónal. The young Gallagher came face-to-face with music every day in the Modern Bar and even regularly bumped into Seán Ó Riada who was a patron there.¹⁶

From the age of six, Gallagher knew that his vocation was to be a musician. He had discovered blues music listening to the American Forces Network radio in Derry and had obtained his first musical instrument – a plastic ukulele – shortly after. On moving to Cork, his mother bought him an acoustic guitar and he rapidly taught himself how to play by borrowing books from the local library. He promptly acquired a repertoire of folk and rock ‘n’ roll tunes and began performing at local care homes, church halls, and

¹³ Mark McAvoy, *Cork Rock: From Rory Gallagher to the Sultans of Ping* (Cork: Southbank Press, 2009), 1.

¹⁴ Gerry Smyth, *Noisy Island: A Short History of Irish Popular Music* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2005), 63.

¹⁵ Julian Vignoles, *Rory Gallagher: The Man Behind the Guitar* (Wilton: Collins Press, 2018), 18.

¹⁶ McAvoy, *Cork Rock*, 7.

asylums around the city.¹⁷ In 1960, he won a local talent contest and had his picture on the front page of *The Cork Examiner*.

Keen to put his own band together but struggling to find a bassist, 15-year-old Gallagher responded to an advertisement from the Fontana Showband who were looking for a guitarist. Although he did not like the type of music that showbands performed, Gallagher wanted the opportunity to play before a live audience and recognized that showbands offered the best way to do so. Over the next two years, Gallagher toured all over Ireland as part of the Fontana (later the Impact). Around this time, he also traded in his Rosetti Solid 7 electric guitar and bought a 1961 Sunburst Fender Stratocaster from Crowley's Music Centre, which became his instrument of choice from this point onwards.

Throughout his years in the showband, Gallagher continued to attend school and successfully obtained his Leaving Certificate at aged seventeen. However, Gallagher's musical talents were not appreciated by his school, North Monastery Secondary School, which was run by the notoriously strict and often violent Christian Brothers. He was regularly beaten for playing what they considered to be 'the devil's music', with one particular incident resulting in his legs turning septic, following which he remained away from school for three weeks with distress.¹⁸ Even when Gallagher became famous, the school disapproved of his career choice, with one Brother publicly stating, 'Poor Rory, we obviously didn't hit him hard enough'.¹⁹

Despite the condemnation of his teachers, Gallagher was not disheartened; in fact, some could argue that it strengthened his 'rebel' spirit and willingness to defy the odds. In 1965, the Fontana were chosen to perform Buddy Holly's 'Valley of Tears' on RTÉ's *Pickin' the Pops*—a 'safe' ballad in keeping with the familiar showband sound that the programme's panel of guests were used to hearing. However, at the last minute, Gallagher burst into the up-tempo rock 'n' roll number 'Slow Down' by Larry Williams instead. This was one of the first times that rock 'n' roll was played on national television in Ireland and the provocative act did not go down well with the show's producers.²⁰ Gallagher had also created a ruckus because it was the first time that a showband musician with long hair had appeared on Irish television. According to his brother Dónal, after the performance, Gallagher was shouted and spat at in the street by members of the public angry at his appearance and song choice.

¹⁷ Vignoles, *Rory Gallagher*, 24.

¹⁸ Michael Ross, 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps', *The Sunday Times* (17 May 1998), <http://www.roryon.com/rorytimes.html>.

¹⁹ Vignoles, *Rory Gallagher*, 39.

²⁰ McAvoy, *Cork Rocks*, 22.

In 1966, Gallagher left the showband and formed his own three-piece, Taste (originally The Taste). Again, he quickly came up against the authorities. At the time, the Irish Federation of Musicians closely monitored music in Ireland and required seven or eight musicians as a minimum number in a band to protect showbands from the emerging beat groups. Whenever the Federation sent representatives to inspect Gallagher’s band, he would pass off friends as extra musicians to deter them. Once the Federation discovered his ruse, they tried to force him to audition for permission to play, but Gallagher refused, arguing that he had already proven himself through years of performing.²¹ With support from the venue’s management, the Federation had no choice but to back down, which brought about a major change in the way that they monitored bands from this point forward.

Gallagher moved to Belfast with Taste in 1967 to become part of the city’s thriving blues scene and promptly gained a residency at the Maritime club. Dónal notes that his brother deliberately circumvented Dublin because he felt that the city would not understand his music.²² Gallagher quickly earned the status of ‘local treasure’ amongst Belfastians—no mean feat given that he was a southern Irish Catholic—who were overawed by his live performances. Their high regard for him was also assisted by the fact that the second incarnation of his band featured popular local musicians Richard McCracken and John Wilson.²³ In summer 1968, the band relocated to London, where Gallagher would live for the rest of his life. Cork, however, remained extremely important to him and he often stated that he was living ‘in exile’ in England and had a strong desire to move back home.²⁴ Gallagher regularly acknowledged that his Cork upbringing had given him a strong foundation, which made it easy for him to remain level-headed and realistic when it came to success, and that he favoured the ‘uncomplicated way of living’ typical of Cork.²⁵ Furthermore, it was on visits back home to his mother in Cork that he did all his songwriting.²⁶ Gallagher continued to read the Irish papers every day to keep up with news on ‘the mainland’ and was also in support

²¹ Vincent Power, *Send ‘Em Home Sweating: Irish Showband Story* (Cork: Mercier Press, 1990), 368.

²² McAvoy, *Cork Rocks*, 35.

²³ Noel McLaughlin & Joanna Braniff, *How Belfast Got the Blues: A Cultural History of Popular Music in the 1960s* (Intellect: Bristol, 2020), 431.

²⁴ Michael Ross, ‘Praying at the Temple of the Blues’, *The Sunday Tribune* (16 August 1992), <http://www.roryon.com/praying.html>.

²⁵ Hermann von Haring, ‘Rory Gallagher: Our Fellow Worker from Cork’, *Deuce Quarterly* (March 1986), <http://www.roryon.com/fellow184.html>.

²⁶ ‘Rory Gallagher - ELF 1/2 - 1978 Documentary’, ScottishTeeVee (pseud.), uploaded 13 June 2021. Documentary made for German television about the 1978 Macroom Mountain Dew Festival, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGICX91VEj4&t=2099s>.

of a united Ireland, although he never expressed this publicly beyond his claim that he had 'strong emotional feelings' about his country.²⁷ Indeed, McLaughlin and Braniff claim that Gallagher avoided making specific comments in support of civil rights because this would have risked alienating swathes of his Northern Irish fans.²⁸

As argued by McAvoy,²⁹ although Gallagher's music does not fit comfortably under the term 'quirky' associated with Cork music, his own strong personal sense of identity made him 'quirky' in the music industry. Gallagher was not prepared to release singles, appear on *Top of the Pops*, change his appearance, employ elaborate stage shows at his concerts, or engage in self-publicity. Instead, he wanted his music to speak for itself and for his reputation to spread by word of mouth through his live shows, where he would often perform for more than three hours with a fully improvised set.³⁰ Equally, Gallagher's personality off stage defied the common perception of the rock star; he was quiet, shy, polite, and deeply religious, attending mass on a regular basis and using his free time to paint, read, and watch foreign films rather than to party, womanize, and take drugs. He lived in a modest studio flat, never learnt to drive, and had few friends and no romantic interests.³¹

As this article will demonstrate, Gallagher's affinity with his hometown of Cork and Corkonian values centred on a sense of community and localized expressions of identity and forms of prestige are clearly articulated through the *Irish Tour '74* documentary. However, before moving onto this area of focus, it is worth briefly discussing a previous documentary, released one year earlier, that covers similar themes. *Music Makers* was a thirty-minute documentary directed by Bill Keating for RTÉ and aimed to show a day in the life of Gallagher on his 1972 Irish Tour. The programme was the first to be broadcast in colour on Irish television and juxtaposed footage from Gallagher's concert at the Savoy Cinema in Limerick with interviews at famous spots around Cork. In the scenes, a fresh-faced Gallagher is shown outside Blackrock Castle Observatory, discussing his upbringing and music beliefs ('I'm just quite happy being a musician'),

²⁷ 'Rory Gallagher Ruisrock Festival 1975', Frankenhooker (pseud.), uploaded 18 July 1911. Interview with Rory Gallagher at Ruisrock Festival in Finland, 1975, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5L_OkRfHep4&t=4s.

²⁸ McLaughlin & Braniff, *How Belfast Got the Blues*, 432.

²⁹ McAvoy, *Cork Rock*, 5.

³⁰ Lauren Alex O'Hagan, 'Fashioning the People's Guitarist: The Mythologization of Rory Gallagher in the International Music Press', *Rock Music Studies* (online March 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/19401159.2022.2048988>.

³¹ Vignoles, *Rory Gallagher*, 154; Lauren Alex O'Hagan, "'Rory played the greens, not the blues": Expressions of Irishness on the Rory Gallagher YouTube Channel', *Irish Studies Review*, 29/3 (2021), 348–69.

as well as walking down St Patrick’s Hill, through Fitzgerald Park, and overlooking the city from Audley Place. Here, we see the Jekyll-Hyde personality that Gallagher mentions in the lyrics of the 1978 song ‘Shadow Play’, moving unconsciously between the confident and charismatic performer on stage to the timid and nervous young man off stage, embedding himself in the beautiful landscapes around Cork and, in doing so, demonstrating his emotional connectivity to the city. These themes also lie at the heart of *Irish Tour ’74*.

The Making of *Irish Tour ’74*

Irish Tour ’74 documents Rory Gallagher’s tour of Ireland in January 1974. Directed by Tony Palmer, it weaves together live footage from Gallagher’s concerts at Cork City Hall, Dublin Carlton Cinema, and Belfast Ulster Hall with shots of the geographical landscape of County Cork, as well as fly-on-the-wall clips and backstage interviews with Gallagher. Interviewed by *Louder Sound* in 2016, Palmer stated that his aim with the film was to show the two sides of Gallagher: what a phenomenally gifted and charismatic musician he was on stage and what a lone, meditative, and extremely ‘self-deprecating, diffident and self-effacing’ person he was off stage.³²

Palmer had first seen Gallagher perform with Taste in 1968 when they supported Cream at their farewell concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London. Although Palmer was at the concert to film Cream, he was so impressed with Gallagher that he asked Cream’s manager Robert Stigwood if he could include him in the film, but Stigwood refused. Nonetheless, Palmer’s curiosity was piqued, and he introduced himself to Gallagher backstage, finding him to be ‘very nice and very polite’.³³ Some five years later, with Gallagher now at the height of his popularity, his brother Dónal suggested that it might be a good idea to make a film. Remembering Palmer, Dónal got in touch and asked whether he would be interested in filming his brother’s forthcoming tour of Ireland. Palmer immediately agreed, thinking that it was a ‘very interesting proposition’, given that the Troubles were at their peak and yet Gallagher would be playing Belfast.³⁴

Upon meeting Palmer, Gallagher explained that he wanted a film that captured the live experience of his band, but that would somehow be different from previous music films. He also made it clear that he did not want to use the film to make any overt

³² Gavin Martin, ‘The Making of *Irish Tour ’74*’, *Louder Sound* (31 July 2016), <https://www.loudersound.com/features/rory-gallagher-the-making-of-irish-tour-74>.

³³ As note 32.

³⁴ Dan Muiise, *Gallagher, Marriott, Derringer & Trower: Their Lives and Music* (New York: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2002), 32.

political statements, although Palmer felt that it would be self-evident through his inclusion of Northern Ireland at a time when no other musician was playing there. Dónal notes that, at first, Palmer 'despaired' because Gallagher refused to do certain things in the film that he felt were gimmicky or inauthentic, such as knocking on people's doors or organizing an end-of-tour party (something he had never done before in real life). Although Gallagher eventually agreed to the latter, Dónal took a long time to persuade him to attend, knowing that he far preferred his own company after a concert.³⁵ Once these initial boundaries were established, Palmer set to work, while Gallagher—in his characteristic modest style—played down the project, telling fellow bandmates that they 'might bring a couple of cameras along' on their forthcoming tour.³⁶

Unlike other music films of the era (*200 Motels*, *All My Loving*, *Cream Farewell Tour*), Palmer, in fact, only used one camera for the concert scenes in *Irish Tour '74*, favouring long takes with few cuts and no swooping views over the audience. This preference for close-range shots perfectly recreated the atmosphere of a live show, giving the impression that viewers were at the concert and up-close and personal with Gallagher and his band. The same song was recorded at four different venues (meaning Gallagher had to wear the same clothes every night) and then Palmer blended the clips together to obtain the optimal live experience.

Honouring Gallagher's vision of authenticity, Palmer ensured that the geographical scenes that were juxtaposed with the live concert footage were unplanned. Gallagher had a keen interest in history and would spend his days off going for long walks on his own and sight-seeing in the local area. Palmer would ask Gallagher what he was planning to do the next day and then tagged along with his camera and a picnic lunch.³⁷ The result is unscripted, authentic footage of Gallagher ambling around Cork, Cobh, Blarney, and Kinsale, talking to locals, reading information plaques, or simply staring at the sea.

Equally, the scenes in the dressing room are unrehearsed, with the cameramen 'barging their way in'.³⁸ Palmer notes that Gallagher was particularly anxious about recording backstage because, in his words, 'nothing ever happens',³⁹ but Palmer explained that this was exactly what he wanted to capture in the film: that people expected Gallagher to be leading a crazy rock 'n' roll lifestyle given his energized performances on stage, yet the reality was that he just sat quietly cleaning his guitars

³⁵ As note 34.

³⁶ Martin, 'The Making of *Irish Tour '74*'.

³⁷ Steve Clarke, 'Irish Tour', *New Musical Express* (22 June 1974), <http://www.roryon.com/NME74.html>.

³⁸ As note 37.

³⁹ Martin, 'The Making of *Irish Tour '74*'.

and drinking Guinness with no drugs or women in sight.⁴⁰ Ever the pragmatist, Gallagher could not really ‘see the point’ of the fly-on-the-wall footage, but when the film was finished, he admitted that he was ‘pretty satisfied’ with the image of the practical, working musician that it portrayed.⁴¹ ‘A practical working musician, yes ... only he could play the guitar off the fucking planet’, added Palmer.⁴²

Overall, *Irish Tour ’74* succeeds in its ability to use organic motifs to steep Gallagher in a historically oriented version of Irish culture—something particularly important at a time of great conflict on the island. Yet, at the same time, it showcases how his music brings a new dimension and cultural experience to the Irish listening public, temporarily uniting divided communities.⁴³ Furthermore, it foregrounds Gallagher’s own community values and love for his hometown of Cork, as well as his strong dislike for the excesses of international rock musicianship and its associated star culture.⁴⁴ Finally, as Palmer summarizes, it emphasizes Gallagher as ‘a shy man who was cast into a spotlight he didn’t exactly feel comfortable with’ and found extremely hard to accept, yet knew that ultimately it was his ‘destiny’.⁴⁵

Establishing Corkonian Values: The Opening Scene of *Irish Tour ’74*

According to Frith, the cultural values of music can only be understood by looking at the social and historical context from which they emerge.⁴⁶ This point is shared by Wall, who argues that music is part of a wider sociocultural practice and transmits discourses of knowledge that shape not only our understanding of the world around us, but also of the musician(s) themselves.⁴⁷ A musician’s identity is tied up with many factors, from the genre of music or instrument they play and their physical appearance or clothing choices to their nationality and sense of place: the focus of this article. The strong link between music-making and place attachment is exemplified by established music subgenres that developed from particular urban areas, such as Chicago blues, California surf, ‘Madchester’ indie-dance, and the grungy Seattle sound, as well as particular musicians who are synonymous with a certain city (for example, The Beatles and

⁴⁰ As note 39.

⁴¹ Muise, *Gallagher, Marriott, Derringer & Trower*, 32.

⁴² Martin, ‘The Making of *Irish Tour ’74*’.

⁴³ Matteo Cullen, *Vagabonds of the Western World(s): Continuities, Tensions and the Development of Irish Rock Music, 1968–78* (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Limerick, 2012), 246.

⁴⁴ As note 43.

⁴⁵ Martin, ‘The Making of *Irish Tour ’74*’.

⁴⁶ Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1996), chapter 1.

⁴⁷ Tim Wall, *Studying Popular Music* (London: Hodder Education, 2003), xi.

Liverpool, Elvis Presley and Memphis, Amy Winehouse and London). Scholars have found that an emotional connectivity to place is particularly significant for musicians from small countries or towns and cities and that they tend to replicate many of the place's values in their music and own psyche.⁴⁸

In her study of the contemporary Cork music scene, Hogan⁴⁹ found that Corkonians were particularly aware of the deeply rooted values, tastes, attitudes, and behaviours of their city and reflected them in their music-making practices. Many felt that the natural landscape of Cork (located on an island in a valley positioned between two channels of the River Lee) shaped its social identity and that this spilt over into the city's music. As one interviewee explained, Corkonians are warm and have a strong sense of community but can also run the risk of appearing insular. When making *Irish Tour '74*, this is something that director Tony Palmer recognized in Gallagher and made a conscious effort to portray through the juxtaposition of dramatic landscapes around County Cork with concert footage, thereby framing Gallagher as the personification of traditional Corkonian values.

We see this immediately in the opening scene of the documentary, which shows a clear blue sky cut across by a seagull in mid-flight (Illustration 1a). As the seagull flaps its wings, the noise of the sea is introduced quietly in the background and the name 'Rory Gallagher' appears in the sky in a black, Celtic font, its position embedding him figuratively into the landscape.⁵⁰ The scene then shifts to a very choppy Celtic Sea and the sound of the waves intensify; the camera swiftly pans out, bringing the Old Head of Kinsale and its nineteenth-century lighthouse into view (1b). As a wave crashes noisily over the rocks on the beach, Gallagher's Fender Stratocaster starts up. For twelve seconds, the guitar and the crashing waves can be heard together, the camera moving rapidly between the sea, the rocks, and the lighthouse, building tension in time with the music. Gradually, the natural sounds of the sea are overpowered by the manmade wails of Gallagher's guitar, which increase in volume until replacing the waves altogether. Here, the music changes our experience of the scene, acting as an 'extension of meaning'⁵¹ that communicates a new mood and, in turn, provides enhancement for the meaning of Gallagher. In other words, aurally placing Gallagher as part of the natural landscape sets him out as just as representative of County Cork as the Old Head of

⁴⁸ Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians*; Prior, "'It's A Social Thing, Not a Nature Thing'"; Hogan, 'Corkonian Exceptionalism'; Hogan, 'Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene'; O'Hagan, "'Rory played the greens, not the blues'".

⁴⁹ Hogan, 'Corkonian Exceptionalism'.

⁵⁰ Per Ledin & David Machin, *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis* (London: Sage, 2020), 182.

⁵¹ David Machin, *Analysing Popular Music: Image, Sound and Text* (London: Sage, 2010), 200.

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Kinsale and its famous lighthouse; to think of Cork is to think of Gallagher and to think of Gallagher is to think of Cork.



Illustration 1: Opening Scene of *Irish Tour '74*

The camera now swoops in closer and closer to the vista, catching elaborate details like the crevices on the rock faces and the foam of the sea (1c), while droplets of water splash onto the camera’s lens, producing a highly sensorial rather than purely visual experience.⁵² Viewers feel like they are diving directly into the sea, only to be immediately pulled out again and set down in the next scene right before Gallagher, who is on stage playing the solo of ‘Walk on Hot Coals’. From our first view of Gallagher, with his eyes closed, smile on face, dripping with sweat, and dressed in his

⁵² Steen Ledet Christiansen, ‘Unruly Vision, Synesthetic Space: Drone Music Videos’, *The Senses and Society*, 15/3 (2020): 286–98.

iconic check shirt, Palmer masterfully captures what he terms Gallagher's 'no bullshit attitude' (1d). As he elaborated in a 2016 interview with *Louder Sound*:

Rory wasn't there to talk to the audience. You didn't want to hear, and you didn't get, funny stories from him or the history of the universe or the meaning of life. [...] His personality was something the audience responded to in quite a loving and open way. They thought he was on their side. They just knew he was one of them.⁵³

When interviewing key figures in the Cork music scene, Hogan⁵⁴ found that they highly valued having a good reputation. While musicianship is central to this 'good' reputation, equally important is the ability to be liked by others. Interviewees frequently argued that Corkonians were automatically conditioned against being conceited and were expected to perform with a sense of humility. Furthermore, they should be 'sincere' in their commitment to music-making for the sake of the music, the community, and the city. Gallagher stated similar views in a 1973 interview with *New Spotlight*, arguing that Corkonians were 'extremely perceptive' and 'droll' with a clear sense of what they wanted and, therefore, could not be 'hyped' by inauthentic music.⁵⁵ These values are strongly captured throughout the whole *Irish Tour '74* documentary, but are particularly foregrounded in the concert footage of 'Walk on Hot Coals', which focuses purely on Gallagher playing guitar and shows his lack of airs and graces, despite his undoubtable talent. The feeling that Gallagher is just 'one of us' is further emphasized as the concert footage fades into a scene of him in the passenger seat of his brother Dónal's Ford Zephyr, with Dónal at the wheel and the two engaged in conversation (1e). The camera angle places us as a backseat passenger, creating a feeling of intimacy as we are eavesdropping on a private moment between the two brothers. Through this short clip, Palmer accentuates the importance of family ties to Gallagher and subtly credits Dónal's behind-the-scenes work in supporting his brother's success. The next clip flashes forward to the brothers arriving at the concert venue and Gallagher carrying, unloading, and cleaning his own instruments (1f). The absence of an entourage and the brothers' hard graft serves to create a positive image of them and, by token, of Cork, with them taking the unofficial role of ambassadors for the city when watched by an international audience.⁵⁶ The scene ends back in the concert hall with the audience rising to their feet and applauding loudly.

⁵³ Martin, 'The Making of *Irish Tour '74*'.

⁵⁴ Hogan, 'Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene'.

⁵⁵ Anon. 'On the Gallagher Trail', *New Spotlight* (February 8, 1973), <http://www.roryon.com/trial423.html>.

⁵⁶ Áine Mangaoang, *Dangerous Mediations: Pop Music in a Philippine Prison Video* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2019).

Sense of Community and Localist Expressions of Identity: 11 Sidney Park, Crowley’s Music Centre, ‘A Million Miles Away’, and ‘As the Crow Flies’.

In her study of the contemporary Cork music scene, Hogan found that a recurring topic amongst interviewees was the small size of the city and how it fostered a sense of community derived from the feeling that everybody knows everybody else.⁵⁷ She argued that this ‘close-knit nature’ reinforced solidaristic bonds and gave Corkonians a deep sense of pride in being ‘of’ Cork. Although predating Hogan’s research by some forty years, Gallagher makes the same observations in *Irish Tour ’74*. Exactly thirty minutes into the film, we see a scene of Gallagher and his brother Dónal leaving their mother’s house at 11 Sidney Park in Cork and placing their bags and guitar in the boot of Dónal’s car before driving off (Illustration 2). Accompanying the scene is the following voiceover by Gallagher:

I was born in Donegal. That’s up in the northwest of Ireland. Now I live in Cork. That’s down on the south coast. It’s the kind of place where everybody nearly knows everybody else. If you wanna meet someone, you more or less know where to find them and if you don’t want to meet someone, you can more or less go where you won’t meet them, which is kind of nice.



Illustration 2: Rory and Dónal Gallagher outside their mother’s house at 11 Sidney Park, Cork

Through Gallagher’s words, Cork is portrayed as a city with a town or village feel, made up of friendly ‘tribes’ and ‘networks of kinship and comradeship’ – something

⁵⁷ Hogan, ‘Corkonian Exceptionalism’; Hogan, ‘Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene’.

also emphasized by Hogan and the participants in her study.⁵⁸ However, this close-knittedness can sometimes sit at odds with the insular and private nature of many Corkonians; Gallagher, for example, was extremely concerned about showing his mother's house in *Irish Tour '74*, worrying that Cork was so small that its location would be recognized by those watching the film.⁵⁹ In the scene, Gallagher is dressed just as he dresses on stage: check shirt, blue jeans, and boots. According to journalists, this 'nondescript', 'plain', and 'anonymous looking' clothing meant that Gallagher could walk down the street or sit in a pub inconspicuously without attracting 'one iota of curiosity'.⁶⁰ Gallagher was always keen to stress that he had never tried to cultivate an image and that he simply would not feel comfortable wearing anything else.⁶¹ Nonetheless, the clothes fit perfectly with his own Corkonian values of staying grounded, maintaining authenticity, and shunning the trappings of fame and success.⁶²

Perhaps the most overt expression of Gallagher's Corkonian level-headedness can be seen in the clip of him visiting Crowley's Music Centre—the shop where he bought his Fender Stratocaster in 1963. The camera follows Gallagher as he enters the shop, looks around, samples some of the instruments, and talks to the owner Michael Crowley (Illustration 3). In a 2019 interview at Cork Library, Dónal Gallagher and Crowley's daughter Sheila recalled how Rory would always visit Michael on his trips home to Cork and that the two of them would spend hours talking about music with one another.⁶³ The naturalness of their quasi father-son relationship is captured in *Irish Tour '74*, with Gallagher asking Crowley how business is going and enthusiastically telling him about his latest bottleneck (used for slide guitar) to which Crowley responds encouragingly. The conversation is typical of the type of conversation to be found in any music store between a customer and shopkeeper and there is little to suggest that Gallagher is, in fact, a famous musician. As Hogan notes, most Corkonians feel a deep sense of responsibility to their hometown and enjoy revisiting the city to maintain social

⁵⁸ As note 57.

⁵⁹ Marcus Connaughton, *Rory Gallagher: His Life and Times* (Wilton: Collins Press, 2014), 94.

⁶⁰ Mike Flood Page, 'Rory's Story', *Sounds* (14 December 1974), <http://www.roryon.com/sounds121474-434.html>; Peter Dowling, 'Rappin' with Rory', *Beat Instrumental* (November 1975), <http://www.roryon.com/rappin281.html>; Richard Gold, 'Rory Gallagher: Irish Flannel and a '63 Fender', *Circus* (March 1976), <http://www.roryon.com/upstarts.html>; Jim Kozlowski, 'Pure and Simple', *Rock Around the World* (October 1976), <http://www.roryon.com/pure346.html>.

⁶¹ Cameron Crowe, 'Against the Grain with Rory Gallagher', *San Diego Union* (March 7, 1976), <http://www.roryon.com/crowe151.html>.

⁶² Hogan, 'Corkonian Exceptionalism'.

⁶³ 'Donal Gallagher Interviewed for Live at Cork City Libraries', Hot Press (pseud.), uploaded 14 June 2020. An interview with Rory Gallagher's brother conducted in 2019 in Cork City Library, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9D42OSXUeM&t=3393s>.

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relations with the music scene and the people who have been rooting for them from the beginning.⁶⁴ This is apparent in the scene between Gallagher and Crowley, the elder man seeming genuinely proud of all Gallagher has achieved. ‘I would not trade Cork for any place in the world’, Gallagher often stated when asked, emphasizing that he loved returning home to ‘see the people’ there again.⁶⁵ Hogan also argues that the success of Corkonian musicians is integral to the ‘reputational capital’ of the city.⁶⁶ This is reflected in the fact that Gallagher’s frequent reference to Crowley’s Music Centre in interviews, in turn, increased the reputation of the shop and aided its business. Up until Crowley’s death in 2010, customers still regularly visited the shop to hear the story behind Gallagher’s Strat directly from him.⁶⁷ Thus, Gallagher’s visibility in Crowley’s shows his strong commitment to the local and, therefore, a form of parochial capital as a performance of embodied cultural capital (that is, knowledge that is consciously acquired and passively inherited through socialization).⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Hogan, ‘Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene’.

⁶⁵ von Haring, ‘Rory Gallagher: Our Fellow Worker from Cork’, <http://www.roryon.com/fellow184.html>.

⁶⁶ Hogan, ‘Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene’, 3.

⁶⁷ ‘Donal Gallagher Interviewed for Live at Cork City Libraries’.

⁶⁸ Hogan, ‘Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene’.



Illustration 3: Rory Gallagher in Crowley's Music Centre, Cork

Gallagher's sound engineer, Joe O'Herlihy describes Cork as a 'great leveler [*sic*]', arguing that if you get 'too big for your boots', you will be quickly put back on the ground.⁶⁹ This is something that Hogan also recognized in her study, whereby successful Corkonians returning home were required to follow local intersubjective expectations about how they should interact with others.⁷⁰ Gallagher always saw himself first and foremost as a *musician* rather than a *star* and put this down to his Corkonian identity, which made him 'cynical about gimmicks' and uncomfortable with the 'Colonel Tom Parker-type thing, where the artist is hid from humanity'.⁷¹ This is strongly exemplified in the voiceover from Gallagher that accompanies the scene in Crowley's:

I just want to continue playing. I want to be able to walk into a shop, buy a bar of chocolate or go into a bar and have a pint without being besieged all the time. I just want to live an ordinary walk down the street without being recognized sort of life. Of course, if somebody comes over and says, 'How you doing, Rory?' that's fine, but I don't want to get into the Rolls Royce and the mansion and the cloak and dagger style of living. Obviously, you don't mind enjoying your success to some extent, but I don't think you have to change your whole lifestyle and your whole way of thinking

⁶⁹ Muise, *Gallagher, Marriott, Derringer & Trower*, 8.

⁷⁰ Hogan, 'Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene'.

⁷¹ Michael Watts, 'The Homespun Hero', *Melody Maker* (25 November 1972), <http://www.roryon.com/homespun.html>; Harry Doherty, 'Rory of the Crowd', *Melody Maker* (16 October 1976), <http://www.roryon.com/crowd.html>.

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to suit success. I just enjoy rambling around the street. I don’t go out just to get recognized. There’s no point in that.⁷²

Here, Gallagher’s musical philosophy is very much steeped in parochialism. For him, it is ultimately playing music that comes first and he has no interest in the lifestyle associated with it. He reluctantly accepts that fame is the price he must pay to continue performing, but he is not comfortable with it and wants to maintain a ‘simple’ standard of living.

Gallagher’s strong sense of community and localist expressions of identity are also emphasized by Palmer through the way that concert footage is blended with scenery of County Cork, as in the opening scene of the film. Another notable example is during the ballad ‘A Million Miles Away’. As the weeping opening riff of the song begins, the scene shows the two Gallagher brothers travelling in the Ford Zephyr, with the viewer placed as a backseat passenger once again. The camera then fades into a close-up of the water in Cork Harbour, before slowly moving up to capture the vast array of boats that are docked there (Illustration 4a). Accompanying the images is the sound of Gallagher emotively bending the strings of his guitar and adding some pinch harmonics, which infuses the scene with a sense of wistfulness and nostalgia. As Gallagher breaks into the first line of the song, the scene returns to the rooftops of Cork city, taking in Gurrabraher, St Patrick’s Quay, St Mary’s Dominican Church, Shandon Bells, St Fin Barre’s Cathedral, and the River Lee (4b), before moving to Cobh and St Colman’s Cathedral. Here, the camera guides the mobility of the viewer’s gaze in the style of nineteenth-century dioramas or phantom rides, creating a ‘scripting of performance’⁷³ as they interpret what they see in line with Gallagher’s contemplative lyrics and improvised triplets between utterances. ‘A Million Miles Away’ was an autobiographical song written about Gallagher’s struggles with depression and anxiety, but it gains additional meaning here when framed in the context of his hometown. Gallagher often stated that he felt much happier in Cork and that, one day, he hoped to move back there.⁷⁴ By combining the wailing guitar and lyrics about loneliness and isolation with scenes of County Cork, his yearning for home is accentuated; at the same time, the landscape is re-narrativized by the lyrics, which enable Gallagher to enter a ‘dreamlike’ world and travel home in his head whenever he is ‘a million miles away’, literally and figuratively.

⁷² Tony Palmer (Director), *Irish Tour ’74* [Film] (Eagle Vision, 1974).

⁷³ Nanna Verhoeff, *Mobile Screens: The Visual Regime of Navigation* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), 42.

⁷⁴ Shay Healy, ‘I’m not afraid of failure here’, *New Spotlight* (21 September 1972), <http://www.roryon.com/spotlight419.html>.



Illustration 4: 'A Million Miles Away' (Cork and Cobh)

As the song reaches a crescendo with its impassioned guitar solo, the camera passes across Daly’s Bridge and Fitzgerald Park in Cork. However, the scene now includes Gallagher, rather than just his voice, as a lone figure lost in thought looking out across the river (4c). This is somewhat reminiscent of how ‘A Million Miles Away’ was created: Gallagher was inspired when out walking with his brother on Ballycotton Cliffs and, subsequently, ‘disappeared’ to write the song, leading an anxious Dónal to think that he had fallen off the cliffs.⁷⁵ After this melancholic moment, the scene shifts back to the city centre, where a slightly embarrassed Gallagher can be seen walking over St Patrick’s Bridge (4d), with views of the Ford factory and power station in the background at the industrial port (4e). At this point, Gallagher deftly uses his guitar’s volume controls to create near silence, adding to the pensiveness of the scene, before erupting into a howling note as he sings the poignant ‘Why ask how I feel? How does it look to you?’ Shortly after, the camera cuts to shots of a series of bars around the city that the brothers often frequented (including Heaphy’s and Swan and Cygnet), panning in on their Guinness and Paddy’s Whiskey signs (4f) as Gallagher sings the closing verse, intertwined with Celtic-style licks. Read together, both music and image act as outward manifestations of Irishness, encouraging a form of ‘playful cartography’,⁷⁶ which makes viewers perform a connection to the city through their own pride in Gallagher and momentarily feel as if they too are ‘of’ Cork.

We see a similar blending of themes later in the film during ‘As the Crow Flies’, the camera shifting between Gallagher’s performance and scenes of him walking around Blarney Castle and talking to a local tour guide. The song begins with Gallagher on stage, unaccompanied, singing and playing slide on his 1932 National Triolian guitar. As the tempo of the song increases and Gallagher repeats the opening verse (‘As the crow flies, babe; well, I ain’t so far from you’), the scene turns to Blarney Castle. Here, the camera takes Gallagher’s viewpoint, moving upwards as his own gaze rises (Illustration 5a), capturing the sheer height and power of the castle and working in line with the lyric’s themes of flight and travel.⁷⁷ Embedding Gallagher within arguably the most famous site in County Cork puts them on a level footing, suggesting their parity in significance on the global stage. Like ‘A Million Miles Away’, the lyrics that play in time with the scene address feelings of homesickness (‘but since I don’t have wings, I can’t get home as fast as I want to’), thereby emphasizing the importance of Cork to Gallagher and his desire to remain grounded in the parochial no matter where he

⁷⁵ Niall Murray, ‘Rory Gallagher amp raises funds for lifeboat’, *Irish Examiner* (29 May 2014), <https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-20270251.html>.

⁷⁶ Nanna Verhoeff, ‘Urban Interfaces: The Cartographies of Screen-Based Installations’, *Television & New Media*, 18/4 (2016), 305–19: 307.

⁷⁷ Ledin & Machin, *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis*, 83.

travels. The frequent shots of Gallagher seemingly unaware of the camera and listening intently to the tour guide play in time with lyrics about dreams and omens, thereby accentuating the mythology and prophetic significance around Blarney. It also displays Gallagher's 'selfless' interest in others rather than himself—something frequently commented on by his peers and seen as typical of Corkonians.⁷⁸ This is further accentuated by the camera angle, which captures both men in casual dress standing side by side and leaning on the castle railings, and serves to frame Gallagher as an 'ordinary' Corkman with no airs or graces.⁷⁹ This scene is accompanied by Gallagher's harmonica solo, the long slow wails sounding quasi-mystical and adding to the sense of folklore around Blarney.



Illustration 5: 'As the Crow Flies' (Blarney Castle)

⁷⁸ Gary Moore, 'Gary Moore Remembers Rory Gallagher', *Hot Press* (June 19, 1995); Mark Feltham, 'Mark Feltham: Maestro on Harmonica', *Stagestruck* 5 (1998).

⁷⁹ Ledin & Machin, *Introduction to Multimodal Analysis*, 84.

Localized Forms of Prestige and Rewards Shaped by Parochialism: Meeting Fans and End-of-Tour Party

For musicians, their intangible assets (for example, musical skill) and networks of relationships are extremely important, what Bourdieu terms cultural and social capital, respectively.⁸⁰ Hogan argues that in small urban contexts, such as Cork, these networks of relationships rely far more on word-of-mouth than media-generated prestige, thus emphasizing the important role of musicians as members of the community and creating a new type of symbolic social capital in which social and emotional relationships are valued over renown or stardom.⁸¹ Central to this symbolic social capital is the recognition that what a musician is doing is ‘good’ both in terms of contributing to the intrinsic value of music and supporting the reputation of the city. Hogan cites such examples in her study as passers-by nodding at musicians in the street or musicians relating to local audiences through banter at their concerts. Both acts reinforce positive social relationships on the local music scene as they involve a mutual exchange of values and recognition between the two parties centred on ‘doing good’ for Cork.

The importance of this localized form of prestige is apparent in various clips throughout *Irish Tour ’74* that capture moments when Gallagher is recognized by fans in the street. In the first scene (Illustration 6a), we see a teenage boy stop Gallagher as he walks through the city centre and extend his arm to be signed. With a shy smile on his face, Gallagher obliges, before self-consciously continuing on his way with his hands in his pockets. Similarly, in the second scene (6b), Gallagher is approached by another teenage boy who asks him if he is, in fact, Rory Gallagher. They exchange a few words and Gallagher keeps on walking, passing by a group of smiling boys who also recognize him and nod. In the final scene (6c), another teenage boy places his denim jacket on a car bonnet and asks Gallagher to sign it. All three scenes emphasize Gallagher’s parochialist sensibilities as somebody not grounded in self-interest, but rather in an ideology of belonging. The act is one of localized reciprocity: the boys meet their hero and obtain an autograph, while Gallagher receives word-of-mouth recognition of his importance to Corkonians. Speaking of Cork in a 1986 interview, Gallagher stated that he only hoped that the inhabitants respected him ‘as someone from their own town’ and did not want to be put into a ‘golden cage’.⁸² These views are supported by Dónal

⁸⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, ‘The Forms of Capital’, in Wesley Longhofer & Daniel Winchester (eds), *Social Theory Re-Wired: New Connections to Classical and Contemporary Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2012): 168–81.

⁸¹ Hogan, ‘Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene’, 190.

⁸² von Haring, ‘Rory Gallagher: Our Fellow Worker from Cork’, <http://www.roryon.com/fellow184.html>.

Gallagher,⁸³ who notes that his brother had no interest in money or acclaim and was almost embarrassed by his fame; his sole motivation was to play music and please his fans, as is apparent from these scenes in *Irish Tour '74*.



Illustration 6: Gallagher meeting fans in Cork city centre

Another scene that strongly captures Gallagher's preference for rewards shaped by sense of place and sense of community rather than money or fame can be seen in the end-of-tour party at Cork Boat Club. Gallagher always had an 'open-door' policy after concerts and enjoyed speaking to fans and obtaining feedback on his shows directly from them. Consequently, at the party, we see fans mixed with road crew, Palmer's camera team, and Gallagher's band, drinking Guinness, clapping, and huddled together singing traditional Irish songs accompanied by acoustic guitars, a tin whistle, mandolin, and banjo (Illustration 7a, 7b). A tipsy Gallagher is seen bantering and laughing with his long-term friend and roadie Tom O'Driscoll (7c), his brother Dónal at his side (7d), demonstrating their close familial ties central to Corkonian identity. The scene is reminiscent of any scene that might be found in a pub across Ireland and breaks down boundaries between Gallagher and his audience, framing him as 'one of the lads' and asserting the general lack of egoistic behaviour amongst Corkonian music producers

⁸³ Mark McClelland, 'Why We won't let Rory be Forgotten', *Evening Echo* (13 June 2000).

and consumers.⁸⁴ Gallagher often stated that he hated the ‘circus-type theatrics’ expected when playing on stadium tours and that he far preferred sweaty clubs where he could stare into the ‘whites of people’s eyes’.⁸⁵ Thus, in Cork Boat Club, Gallagher is in his element as he performs to and with fans and even takes part in an impromptu jam session later in the evening with Mick Daly of the Lee Valley String Band (7e). Hogan notes that collaborations between local musicians is a characteristic aspect of the Cork music scene.⁸⁶ Here, the jam between Gallagher and Daly reinforces the close-knit, community feel of the party, while also demonstrating the proficiency of both musicians to perform without rehearsing. Thus, overall, this scene emphasizes the significance of parochialism to the Cork music scene generally and Gallagher specifically, illustrating him as a man who has stayed true to his roots. Writing in *Melody Maker* in 1972, Michael Watts claimed that ‘Rory, the musician, is inseparable from Rory, the man, and the man represents those qualities of honesty and straightforwardness, with which showbusiness has never particularly wished to associate itself’.⁸⁷ Within the context of *Irish Tour ’74* and Hogan’s own work,⁸⁸ these qualities are seen as distinctly Corkonian.

The community feel of the party is further strengthened by the accompanying voiceover from Gallagher, who talks about what home means to him. He explains that his experience, birthplace, and surroundings have a big effect on his music and links this to his love for the blues and the fact that ‘you can almost tell where [a blues artist] comes from’ when you listen to their records. He goes on to state that he has travelled all over the world, but that ‘it’s always nice to head for home’ and that it is in Cork where he writes all his songs. Gallagher explains that being on stage is the most important moment of the day for him, but that it ‘doesn’t start here and end there’; music-making is an integral part of his identity that is with him all the time and heavily bound up with his sense of place and attachment to Cork. According to Gallagher, music should ‘never be so serious that you can’t also have fun’. However, with typical Cork realism, he adds ‘as long as you don’t get carried away on stage and start taking off your clothes and forgetting what you were doing originally’. Here, Gallagher draws heavily on the discourses of authenticity and inauthentic posturing, demonstrating his

⁸⁴ Hogan, ‘Corkonian Exceptionalism’.

⁸⁵ Shiv Cariappa, ‘Conversation with Rory Gallagher’, *Christian Science Monitor* (29 June 1991), <http://www.roryon.com/conversation1.html>.

⁸⁶ Hogan, ‘Corkonian Exceptionalism’.

⁸⁷ Watts, ‘The Homespun Hero’, <http://www.roryon.com/homespun.html>.

⁸⁸ Hogan, ‘Corkonian Exceptionalism’; Hogan, ‘Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene’.

understanding of the local doxa in Cork whereby certain ways of speaking or acting are not acceptable.⁸⁹



Illustration 7: End-of-tour party at Cork Boat House

Hybridized Parochialism: 'Goin' to My Hometown'

Up until now, this article has considered the way in which sense of place and Corkonian values are narratively produced and depicted in *Irish Tour '74*. While this is undoubtedly the film's main purpose, there is one noteworthy scene involving Belfast that illustrates what I term a form of 'hybridized parochialism'. According to McLaughlin and McLoone, most Irish musicians have a 'hybrid' form of identity that operates in tensions

⁸⁹ As note 88.

with, and can even be critical of, dominant notions of Irishness.⁹⁰ Using the examples of Van Morrison, Horslips, The Pogues, and Sinéad O’Connor, they define hybridity as the way in which spaces between Irishness and the global culture of rock music are inhabited, with recognisably Irish idioms and styles mobilized yet combined with a more mainstream global rock sound. O’Flynn has developed this point further, arguing for the need to pay more attention to the values and belief systems with which individual musicians identify or negate in order to better understand the insider/outsider dialectics of Irish identity.⁹¹ While these authors were referring largely to how identity is articulated through *music* rather than through *musicians* themselves, as this article has demonstrated, a focus on place attachment can offer an important way to investigate musicians’ discourses of identity, authenticity, and belonging. However, place attachment can become complicated when Irish musicians are associated with multiple geographical locations and make a claim for them as ‘their own’. With this in mind, I therefore consider hybridized parochialism to be the way in which a musician moves between local identities, blending together distinctly localized traits from different geographical areas of the same country, whether in terms of musical styles or personal characteristics.

As previously asserted, Gallagher was born in Donegal and lived for a short period in Derry, but strongly identified as Corkonian. However, having moved to Belfast at the age of nineteen, he often described the city as his ‘second home’.⁹² As Dónal Gallagher explains, his brother ‘was looking for a place where he felt he was at one with the music and Belfast offered that’,⁹³ having a thriving blues scene in the 1960s. Gallagher quickly became an ‘unofficial adopted son of the city’, Belfastians forming an immediate connection with Taste’s raw energy and experimental blues. Because of his close connection with the city, even when the Troubles broke out in 1968, Gallagher was adamant that Belfast should remain part of his Irish Tour, arguing that the people there should not be deprived of hearing live music.⁹⁴ Throughout the 1970s as the Troubles worsened, Gallagher was one of only a few artists to continue playing Belfast and, although he repeatedly played down the significance of his act (‘it’s the same as playing

⁹⁰ Noel McLaughlin & Martin McLoone, ‘Hybridity and National Musics: The Case of Irish Rock Music’, *Popular Music*, 19/2 (2000): 191.

⁹¹ John O’Flynn, *The Irishness of Irish Music* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

⁹² Vignoles, *Rory Gallagher*, 62.

⁹³ BBC, ‘Rory Gallagher: Belfast Statue of Rock Legend gets Approval’ (19 October 2016), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-37699194>.

⁹⁴ Roy Hollingworth, ‘Music for Belfast’, *Melody Maker* (8 January 1972), <http://www.roryon.com/Belfast.html>.

anywhere else, except for the odd explosion⁹⁵), it was truly a bold move. As bassist Gerry McAvoy recalls, eleven bombs went off around the city during their 1971 concert—some even shaking the Ulster Hall—yet Gallagher played on undeterred, feeling relatively safe in the knowledge that his shows provided a liminal space that temporarily unified Protestants and Catholics, unionists and republicans.⁹⁶ The significance of Gallagher's act can still be clearly felt today, with YouTube videos full of comments from Belfastians praising his ability to provide temporary relief from the fears and divisions that tore their city apart.⁹⁷ Today, a plaque on Ulster Hall marks Gallagher's many performances there, while a statue of him is set to be unveiled outside the venue in the near future. Although Gallagher was a devout Catholic and privately supported a united Ireland, he did not air these views publicly or write religious or political lyrics. As McLaughlin and Braniff rightly point out, it would have been both politically and physically dangerous for him to do so and still play Belfast.⁹⁸ Gallagher himself stated that he preferred to do things that helped 'the peaceful element in the Irish state' and that playing concerts where others would not is one such example. Nonetheless, he was keen to stress that this was an 'anti-political move' rather than a political one.⁹⁹ Despite Gallagher's emphasis that he did not want *Irish Tour '74* to portray him playing Belfast as a political statement, Palmer was keen to capture its importance and did so through a clever scene that was not overtly political yet spoke for itself.

The scene opens with Gallagher on stage playing the introduction to 'Goin' to my Hometown' on a mandolin—an instrument embedded deeply in traditional Irish music (Illustration 8a). This song was written about Cork city and makes reference to the Ford factory and Gallagher's excitement of returning home after being away for so long.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Don Waller, 'Ireland's Powerhouse Blues Man', *happytimes* (1 December 1976), <http://www.roryon.com/powerhouse394.html>.

⁹⁶ Muise, *Gallagher, Marriott, Derringer & Trower*, 231; O'Hagan, "'Rory played the greens, not the blues'". Likewise, Gallagher's band also crossed geographical and political and religious divides, its members at the time of *Irish Tour '74* included Belfastians Gerry McAvoy and Lou Martin.

⁹⁷ O'Hagan, "'Rory played the greens, not the blues'".

⁹⁸ McLaughlin & Braniff, *How Belfast Got the Blues*, 432.

⁹⁹ Waller, 'Ireland's Powerhouse Blues Man'.

¹⁰⁰ Throughout his career, Gallagher wrote several other songs inspired by Cork: 'Back on My Stompin' Ground' (also about the joy of returning home after being away), 'Tattoo'd Lady' (about the fairground that Gallagher and his brother frequently visited as children when it came to Mardyke, Crosshaven, or Youghal in Cork), 'Blister on the Moon' (about Gallagher's experiences at North Monastery Christian Brothers School), and 'Souped-Up Ford' (about the night when the two brothers drove back from Belfast to Cork after a gig and were followed by members of the Ulster Defence Association posing as policemen).

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However, here, the introduction is accompanied by a voiceover from Gallagher who states:

In an Irish Tour, I always try and include Belfast and the north of Ireland. After all, I lived there for a while and I learned a lot playing in the clubs there, so I have a certain home feeling for it. It’s always a great audience there. Pretty much almost no one else goes to play there.

As he breaks into the line ‘I’m goin’ to my hometown’, the footage immediately shifts to Belfast city centre, showing a procession of armoured cars with British soldiers holding assault rifles inside (8b). From this scene, not only does it become immediately clear that the hometown that Gallagher is singing about is recontextualized here as Belfast, but also that the landscape is very different to that of the historical castles and beautiful, tranquil coast around County Cork. As keyboardist Lou Martin begins his solo, the camera pans along the city, showing bullet holes and blown-out windows in the buildings on North Street, piles of rubble and houses destroyed by bomb damage on Dock Street, as well as the barbed wire and ‘peace walls’ separating Catholic and Protestant communities (8c, 8d). Embedded within this bleak scene, however, are the two Gallagher brothers, shown walking down the street and talking animatedly to one another (8e). As the scene continues, Gallagher’s mandolin solo plays and the crowds in Ulster Hall clap and stamp their feet in time with the music. The song culminates with Gallagher repeatedly shouting the line ‘Do you wanna go?’ and the crowd screaming ‘Yeah!’ in unison.

This strange juxtaposition of footage of the war-torn, sectarian communities of Belfast with the jubilant scenes in Ulster Hall and images of the Gallagher brothers, as well as the up-tempo, feel-good song and the traditional Irish mandolin has several functions. First, it shows that there is more than one way to tell the story of Belfast; at a time of extreme divisions, Gallagher subtly indicates how music can create ‘amicable cross-community interactions’.¹⁰¹ This is emphasized by the strong contrast between the hard-hitting realism of these Belfast scenes and the more romanticized Cork scenes, serving to educate viewers and make them aware of the complexities of life in Northern Ireland at that time. Second, it demonstrates that, even when outside of Cork, Gallagher’s Corkonian values remain and that these values merge with Belfast values to encourage a form of hybridized parochialism. Here, the sense of community seen as characteristic of Cork’s small size is transferred to a Belfastian context and given new meaning in its ability to bridge the sectarian divide within Ulster Hall.

¹⁰¹ Timothy A. Heron, ‘Alternative Ulster’: The First Wave of Punk in Northern Ireland (1976–1983), in Áine Mangaoang, John O’Flynn, & Lonán Ó Briain (eds), *Made in Ireland: Studies in Popular Music* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 79.



Illustration 8: 'Goin' to My Hometown' (Belfast)

Furthermore, seeing the Gallagher brothers—two Catholics—walking through Protestant communities also plays down the danger of the Troubles, which Gallagher often argued was far more multi-layered than news agencies cared to depict.¹⁰² Through this footage, we also gain a clear sense of Gallagher's pride in Belfast, as well as his strong propensity to non-conformity, not only by choosing to play there, but also by walking around the city. Finally, we see how for him, music is not about fame or money,

¹⁰² 'RORY GALLAGHER - 1978/08/18 - "Ohne Maulkorb" Austrian TV Documentary', Matt's Bootlegs (pseud.), uploaded 28 December 2021. 1978 interview and concert footage of Rory Gallagher from Austrian television, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fe5M2asWkEQ>.

but doing what he thinks is morally right for his fans and the Belfast community, resulting in similar localized forms of prestige and expressions of identity to those in Cork.¹⁰³ Overall, then, Belfast is established in *Irish Tour ’74* as another home to Gallagher on a par with Cork and to which he extends his place attachment and parochial capital.

Conclusion

This article has explored the link between music-making, sense of place, and identity in Rory Gallagher’s *Irish Tour ’74* documentary. In doing so, it has sought to build upon the work of Hogan on sense of community in the Cork music scene by applying her arguments to a historical and multimodal context and assessing their validity.¹⁰⁴ The study has found that *Irish Tour ’74* uses a clever combination of concert and geographical footage, fly-on-the-wall clips, and backstage interviews to portray County Cork as a close-knit place with a deep sense of community and Gallagher as the physical representation of these values.

Through the documentary, Gallagher comes across as a humble, sincere, and extremely likeable person who has pride in his hometown, is nonconformist in his attitude to music and the rock ‘n’ roll lifestyle, and is resistant to hype. Furthermore, he is shown as a private and insular person with no interest in fame or money, living only to play music and ‘do good’ for his city, hoping for his reputation to spread by word of mouth. We see this particularly in such scenes as his visit to Crowley’s Music Centre, where he tests instruments and talks enthusiastically to owner Michael Crowley; his trip to Blarney Castle, where he walks around the site with a local tour guide; the end-of-tour party at Cork Boat Club, where he sings with fans and jams with other local musicians; or his encounters with fans around Cork city, where he engages in conversations and signs autographs. Similar values are all identified by Hogan in her study of the contemporary Cork music scene and highlight the significance of localist expressions of identity and localized forms of prestige for Corkonian musicians.¹⁰⁵

Another important aspect of *Irish Tour ’74* is the way that songs are re-narrativized when juxtaposed with Palmer’s footage. In ‘A Million Miles Away’ and ‘As the Crow Flies’, for example, the imagery of historical sites around Cork, Cobh, Blarney, and Kinsale accentuate Gallagher’s melancholic guitar tones and lyrics about loneliness and isolation, linking them directly to his yearning for home. This embeds the songs within a broader canon of Irish emigrant songs about nostalgia and idealized visions of Ireland

¹⁰³ Hogan, ‘Corkonian Exceptionalism’; Hogan, ‘Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene’.

¹⁰⁴ As note 103.

¹⁰⁵ As note 103.

that neglect the realities of life there, such as unemployment and poverty.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, 'Goin' to My Hometown' – a song with mandolin originally about Cork city – is played over footage of Belfast that alternates between images of soldiers, bomb damage, and separation barriers and images of Catholic and Protestant teenagers in the Ulster Hall singing together, clapping, and stamping their feet. Through this scene, a form of hybridized parochialism emerges that extends Gallagher's Corkonian values, place attachment, and parochial capital to the city he called his 'second home', thereby emphasizing his strong emotional connectivity to Belfast and providing an alternative reading of the city that challenges dominant views in the media at that time.

In focusing on the importance of place attachment for musicians, through a case study of Rory Gallagher and Cork, this study offers a novel contribution to a rapidly growing area of research. As most scholars to date have explored contemporary contexts using ethnographic research, this study's historical, multimodal perspective offers a new angle from which to explore the topic and offers much potential for future research within the field of Irish musicology. The findings of this study could also be extended beyond the local to explore other music scenes across the world or musicians with a particularly strong place attachment, as well as more generally to investigate how people live locally. Just as Hogan suggested,¹⁰⁷ highlighting the significance of the local for understanding community can help reclaim parochialism as a progressive ideology, showcasing its ability to shape social relations, social practice, and communal values in positive ways.

When *Irish Tour '74* premiered at the Cork Film Festival on 11 June 1974, Gallagher, accompanied by his mother, simply told journalists that he hoped 'the music came through'.¹⁰⁸ While Tony Palmer undoubtedly achieved this, the documentary also fulfilled an important secondary role in situating Gallagher as an unofficial ambassador for the city of Cork, and more broadly, as an unofficial ambassador for the island of Ireland as a whole. Following its release, the music press immediately recognized this ambassadorial function, stating that the film showed that Gallagher was clearly an 'extraordinary guitarist and performer', but above all, it demonstrated that he was an 'unpretentious', 'polite', and 'hardworking blues man', the 'People's Guitarist' who

¹⁰⁶ Síle Denvir, 'Communal Voices: The Songs of Tom a' tSeoighe and Ciarán Ó Fátharta', in Áine Mangaoang, John O'Flynn & Lonán Ó Briain (eds), *Made in Ireland: Studies in Popular Music* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 121.

¹⁰⁷ Hogan, 'Parochial Capital and the Cork Music Scene'.

¹⁰⁸ Clarke, 'Irish Tour'.

“It’s always nice to head for home”: Music-Making, Sense of Place, and Corkonian Identity in the Rory Gallagher *Irish Tour ’74* Documentary

‘does not live the life the public would expect of a successful rock musician’.¹⁰⁹ In typical Gallagher style, he brushed off these journalistic remarks, taking Palmer by the wrist and addressing him with four simple words: ‘You kept your promise’.¹¹⁰ These four words were his way of thanking the director for staying true to his artistic vision, but also for demonstrating the importance of his pragmatic Corkonian values to the way he chose to live and work. These values are the ultimate legacy of *Irish Tour ’74* and of Rory Gallagher himself.

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¹⁰⁹ As note 108; Dick Hogan, ‘Rory Gallagher – live and on film’, *Melody Maker* (22 June 1974), <http://www.roryon.com/livefilm236.html>; Henry Keiluhn, ‘Irish Tour ’74’, *The Scene* (22–28 August 1974), <http://www.roryon.com/it304.html>.

¹¹⁰ Connaughton, *Rory Gallagher*, 94.