1808 saw the publication of the first volume of Moore's Irish Melodies, a project which lasted until 1834 when the sixth volume appeared. The Melodies were hugely successful in Ireland, England, and the Continent and farther afield. The combination of Irish airs and the poetry of Moore's highly transcendental, cosmopolitan and national boundaries. The success of the Melodies and Moore's poetry publications earned him acclaim as Ireland's national poet. In commemorating Moore's contribution to music and literature, this exhibition seeks to explore his origins and the influence, both cultural and musical, and to reveal the man who was Thomas Moore.

Moore's rise to prominence is all the more remarkable considering his humble beginnings. He was born in Aughrim Street, Dublin, on 28 May 1779, the third son of John, a Kerryman, and Annastasia (née Codd), from Westford, in a small grocer's shop. As Catholics, the Moores were essentially second-class citizens while the Penal Laws were still in effect. But as Tens grew up, change was evident in the air with revolutionary ideals from America and France inspiring the United Irishmen to shake off English influence. Arguably as influential were Annastasia's efforts on behalf of her son's education. She was determined to give him the best possible start in life.

Tens attended the famous Classical English School in Aughrim where he studied at age six. He won a medal for reading history at a public examination. Annastasia then enrolled him at Trinity College, where he read classics. By the age of 21, he was hired as a scribe at Trinity College, where he mastered the art of calligraphy. He then moved to London and established himself as a literary figure. Moore's career took off when he published "TheIrish Melodies," which became an instant success. He was soon invited to London and became a prominent figure in Irish literature.

Moore's life was a mix of success and tragedy. He faced numerous challenges, including political and social unrest, which he often incorporated into his work. His poetry was characterized by its simplicity and beauty, and it continues to be celebrated to this day.

With his legal career in tatters, Moore's health began to deteriorate. He died on 20 January 1852, in London, leaving behind a legacy of love and passion for Ireland and its people.
Thomas Moore

LATER LIFE and WRITINGS

In 1814 Moore married Lucy Dyke, an aunt to his first wife, and by 1816 he had met at Kilkenny. At about the same time, he became a close friend to Lord Byron and for a time the two poets shared London's literary and social scene. Both were Whigs, supporting and regularly published satirical verses advancing the Whig cause. A favourite target was the Prince Regent – Moore's former dedicatee – who had since dropped his youthful radicalism in favour of the Tories, a betrayal which Moore could never forgive.

IN 1817 Moore published Lalla Rookh, a long, external poem whose combination of local customs, melodramatic plot and passion of sublimate notes made it an instant bestseller. In the English-speaking world, only Byron and Sir Walter Scott rivalled Moore for popularity and critical acclaim. Though perhaps difficult to read today, Lalla Rookh was widely translated in its time and its oriental scenes inspired artists and composers such as Turner and Schubart. However, Moore suffered setbacks too during the composition of Lalla Rookh when the infant daughter Olivia died and shortly thereafter, another daughter, Barbara, died following a fever. To add to his troubles, Moore learned that the charity he had left to the crippled had disappeared, leaving him responsible for a huge debt. Unable to pay, Moore fled to the Continent to avoid imprisonment. At first he travelled through France, Switzerland and Italy – in Venice, Byron made him a gift of his memorials to sell to raise funds.

Then the Moores settled in Paris where they remained for several years.

WHEN THE ADMIRALTY DEBT was resolved, the family returned to Shenstone Cottage in Wiltshire. Moore continued to produce songs and satires, but increasingly he turned to prose. His Memoirs of Gitanos, based on his experiences of the gypsies and written by Moore himself in 1827, has been a fascinating study of English gypsy life, and Irish melodist.

Moore's correspondence to Ireland is evident in his biographies of the politician and playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751) and the United Irish rebel, Lord Edward FitzGerald (1803). His other major work was a celebration of life of Lord Byron (1854–55) – conceived in part as recompense for allowing Byron's executors to destroy the latter's manuscripts. PRIVATE SADNESS continued to affect Moore's public attitudes. When Catholic Emancipation was granted in 1829 – the measure Moore had championed for so long – it extended with the last illness of his third daughter, Amaranth, “Could I ever have thought after the event would, under any circumstances, find me ill enough to die?” Moore reflected. “Yet such is the case at present.”

MOORE HAD BEGUN an ambitious multi-volume History of Ireland when he and Lucy suffered more heartbreak; their two sons, Russell and Tom, both soldiers, died young, in 1842 and 1846. These losses took their toll on Moore's health, and he died at home in Wiltshire in 1852. A high Catholic, slightly odd in this English landscape, Moore's family grave at Bruton, Wilts. On the base of the tomb are Byron's words: “The poet of all circles and the idol of his own soul, and on the fames are lines from one of the Melodies:

Dear Mary of my country! in darkness I found thee,
The wild blaze of thine island lamp thy song,
When proudly, my own island lamp I saw adored,
And gave all thy fires to light, freedom, and song.

Moore's Irish melodies, 1808–2008
Thomas Moore

THE MOORE LIBRARY at the ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

Moore was elected to honorary membership of the Royal Irish Academy in 1846, the year in which the fourth and final volume of his History of Ireland was published. His election citation refers to his "peculiar residence,

THE COMPLETION of the History proved immensely frustrating to Moore who was conscious of the fact that he was at a remove from the source materials (many of them in the Irish language), which he felt would be necessary to achieve a balanced, accurate and comprehensive work. The History was to be Moore's final work. Worn out by his endeavours, financial worries, and the deaths in 1840 of his

sister Ellen and the last of his children, Thomas Llewellyn, Thomas Moore died on 21 February 1852. His widow, Mary Moore, donated his library of books to the Academy in August 1855. His collection of autographed manuscript and correspondence was sold by his music publisher, Poole, and had been at auction in 1855.

My gentle harp: Moore's Irish melodies, 1808–2008

Llewellyn at Dumfries Park and Bowood respectively. He was a catholic, but he was an intellectualist; it is clear that this library, on which he spent a fortune, a Stuart and a host of the poor lie down, beside the Academy, a few years away from his birthplace.
Thomas Moore

MACHALE.
THE IRISH MELODIES.
RECEPTION AND LEGACY

In producing the Irish melodies, Moore blended life into Ireland's native music and portrayed powerful and evocative images of her past. The combination proved to be such a success that Moore's contemporary and posthumous reputation would be determined by the Irish melodies more than any of his other works.

IN THE PERIOD of their initial publication (1808-34), each volume was eagerly awaited and contemporary reviews denounced that they were largely well-received. Their popularity can be further indicated by the fact that many other versions appeared over the years. However, the Latin edition, \textit{Cymric Idoles}, published in 1825, The Archbishop of Tuam, John MacHale, produced an Introduction a few years later entitled \textit{A selection of the most successful and popular of Moore's Melodies} (1842 and 1849). The Irish trader, David Midale, published a lovely illustrated version in 1846. A selection of the melodies entitled \textit{Temperate melodies for the instruction of Ireland} (1843) was annotated by William MacNamara Evers as pairing songs for Father Mathew's popular Temperance Movement. In addition to the annotated editions, many individual melodies were produced between 1840 and 1870 as broadside ballads (with printed lyrics of popular songs sold on the streets), thereby demonstrating their widespread and cross-class appeal. From the outset, the political and nationalist nature of the melodies was immediately understood. The use of Ireland's native music combined with tales from the past during the beyond, evoking strong nationalistic feelings with which every part of the country, and province, sympathized for Ireland's cause.

The political associations of the songs travelled far beyond Ireland. In 1842, editors of \textit{The Nationalist}, Charles Granville wrote:

They not only have appeared in every European language, but they supplied the Poles with their most popular revolutionary songs during the last war.

As bonus, an understanding of the \textit{Melodies} as vehicles for inspiring political change continued to be promoted by James Burke, who wrote in his biography of Moore (1852), that the \textit{Melodies} would always be regarded Moore's greatest work. He added that politicians Richard Lalor Sheil and Daniel O'Connell (founders of the Catholic Association which campaigned for religious and political equality for Catholics) had quoted lines from the \textit{Melodies} in their speeches. Burke and others argued that Moore's music was equally as important as O'Connell in the campaigns for Catholic Emancipation. Furthermore, it was argued that his music had brought the reality of Ireland's past to the tents of the country, and provided sympathy for Ireland's cause.

Moore's Irish melodies, 1808–2008
IN THE YEARS following his death, the Muldoon dominated commemorations of his birth. Two concerts in Dublin with audiences of 3,000 sparsely marked his Centenary Commemoration at the Exhibition Palace (now the National Concert Hall) in 1879. Fears were soon receded throughout the century and further afield in England, America and Australia. Commemoration was the central theme and the Muldoon commemorated in Ireland's national culture and Moore's position as a great national figure. However, towards the end of the twentieth century Moore's place in Ireland's cultural landscape was diminishing and he was all but lost as a feature of the national consciousness until the 1990s when the revival took hold and Ireland Moore's posterity met the same fate as the rest of the great figures of the Irish Revival. More than a century earlier, Thomas Russell, could lament:

"The growing indifference to Moore seems the darkest thing in the present aspect of Irish Nationalistic literature. Instead of a debt of gratitude to Moore greater than any other nation owes to any other poet, yet many of the present generation of Irishmen, even those among them who claim to be Nationalists, seem not to appreciate either his genius or his contributions.

From 1916 onwards, while Moore's position as the "Rabel of Erin" had been thoroughly discredited, the Muldoon did not make a noteworthy return to the national consciousness. In 1916, the British composer, Benjamin Britten selected a number of the Muldoon for the fourth volume of his Folk Song Arrangements [Muldoon Irish melodies]. In addition to the published versions, the choral arrangements of "The Meeting of the Waters" and "The Minstrel Boy" and "Ye Olden Days" and "Ye Olde Days" were made by..."
Thomas Moore

Hunt, the Irish Melodies and their Musical Influence

Thomas Moore’s love of poetry is clear as a poet
seeks the Irish melodies, ten immensely
popular collections of songs, published
between 1808 and 1836, by James
and William Power in London and
Dublin. Among the most popular are
"The Last Rose of Summer", "The
Meeting of the Waters", "Believe Me
if all those Endearing Young Charms", "The
Missouri Bay" and "When the
Musician's Day Di" and the accompaniments
for the first three volumes
were provided by Moore's friend,
Sir John Stevenson (1781-1833) and for
the final three by Sir Henry Rowley
Bolton (1786-1855).

The Irish Melodies were such a runaway
success that Moore was offered a contract of
£500 a year for a further series, providing him
with his first regular income.

For Moore, poetry was often inspired by
and linked to music; indeed, it was to be many
years before he would allow the words of the
Melodies to be published separately from the airs.
The unique effect of the Melodies and Moore's poetic genius can be appreciated in part, to the
music he chose. The airs were drawn largely from
anthologies of ancient harp music, particularly
the collection of Edward Bunting,
first published in the Belfast Harp
Feis in 1792. Moore came into
contact with Bunting's collections
while a student at Trinity College
Dublin. Eight of the twelve airs
in Moore's first volume (1808)
came from Bunting's collections.

Through these songs, the harp
airs took on a new life and a
symbolic meaning, bringing the
ancient music of Ireland before a
global audience for the very first time. While Moore
recognized their unique
beauty, he also perceived their
symbolic significance.

The Melodies were written
through the dark period
following the 1798 Rebellion
and the Act of Union in
1801. Moore's songs
frequently took on present
politic meaning with a range of themes from
emigration and national identity, to social
commentary and revolutionary ideals. His
parodic songs were heard round the world and
later became a symbol of national pride in
America, Russia and Cuba. But the long-standing
issue at the centre of the Melodies was not
due to parodic sentiments alone. To many of his songs, Moore applied a
depth of personal perspective on themes of
romantic love, the beauty of nature, the
saga of battle, the warmth of friendship, and
the sorrow of parting, and old age. Through the
immediate appeal of his opening lines
and his simple and direct style, he
achieved a wide range of content and
expression in the poetic language of his entire collection.

While the Melodies were extremely
popular, they were not received
without controversy from contemporary critics. Although the poetry is
considered superior by the nineteenth
century music journal Quarterly
Music Magazine and Reviews, the
reviewer also suggests that several of
the songs have a tendency to
reiterate political ideas. At ten
measurable objectives is aimed against the
inclusion of sheet and three and four-part
works. A new collection, A selection of popular national airs
began issuing in 1818, offering fresh lyrics
in some of Moore's best and most
moving love songs. The first volume contains
such enduring favorites as "Of the
Sile's Night" and "My Gentle Harp: Moore's Irish
Melodies, 1808-2008"
IN HIS INTRODUCTION, Moore had written that he wished to reach the "pianoforte of the rich and educated" as in further Ireland's cause. In the end he reached people of many nationalities, from the gentry down to the most humble. "The Last Rose of Summer" sold no fewer than one and a half million copies in the US alone and was among the most popular songs of the nineteenth century. Friedrich von Flotow used the air in his opera Idomenea. Furthermore, in translations frequently highlighted the most popular vocal music of the day, countless pianists-composers and other instrumentalists used the air in their fantasias and variations.

BERLIOZ AND SCHUMANN both employed Moore's melodies in their works: Schumann in his opera 'Der Paradies und Die Pest', taken from the second part of the oriental poem 'Lalla Rookh', and Berlioz used nine of Moore's songs under the title 'Idylli'. The Mélodies enjoyed considerable popularity in Parisian cultured life in the early part of the nineteenth century, bolstered by his interest in the Irish actress Harriet Smithson, whom he married.

SCHUMANN'S ADAPTATION of Lord Byron's 'Paradise and the Peri', was given its first performance in Dublin in 1854 at the Ancient Concert Rooms, Marlborough Street, by the Royal Choral Institute, conducted by John William Gloster. Following Moore's death, Gloster held a commemorative concert and produced a new edition of the Mélodies in 1879. Perhaps the most illustrious presentation of the work was given on 23 June 1856 by the Philharmonic Society in London, with the Swedish Nightingale, Jenny Lind, singing the part of the Peri, and the English composer, William Sterndale Bennett, conducting.

My gentle harp: Moore's Irish Melodies, 1808–2008
Thomas Moore’s Harp

The Royal Portable Harp of John Egan

as an emblem of both the country and its
Arcadia, the harp figures prominently in
Thomas Moore’s, Irish poet (1779-1852). In
1821, Moore was presented with a beautiful
green Irish harp destined with gold trebles,
a ‘Royal Portable Harp’ made by John Egan,
Dublin’s leading harp maker.

John Egan had harp workshops in Dublin
from c.1804 to 1841. However, Egan is best
known for his Royal Portable Harps: small Irish
harp, about three feet in height, decorated
with gold shamrock. Egan was granted the
royal warrant from King George IV (Kew, ‘Royal
Portable’). Brass plates on these harps are
carved with the coat of arms, a royal warrant,
and Egan’s address. The inscription on Thomas
Moore’s Harp is: J. Egan’s Harp, 30 Dawson St.,
Dublin / Harp Maker by Special Appointment to
His Most Gracious Majesty George IV to the Royal
Family / No. 1458.

John Egan’s Royal Portable Harps are
twelve-key harps, combining elements of the
ancient Irish harp shape with modern harp
design to create a new Irish harp.

The harp has been played in Ireland for over
a thousand years, however, by the late 1700s,
only a few harpers remained, and the tradition
of harp playing was in danger of disappearing.
Efforts were made to revive interest in the harp
with the Belfast Harp Festival of 1792. Edward
Burney, a young organist, was hired to act as
singer, providing the harp toms as he was
played, to promote the harp for prosperity.
These collections of tunes were later published in
to three volumes. Burney’s Antrim Irish music,
and Thomas Moore used many cases from these
collections in his Meditations.

In 1807, the Belfast Harp Society was formed
and the society sponsored a boarding school for
blind boys, to encourage harp playing. There was
a tradition of blind harpists in Ireland. Arthur O’Neill,
the blind harper from the Belfast Festival, was engaged as
the harp teacher.

The programme collapsed in 1818 due to lack of funds,
but a second Belfast Harp Society was revived in
1819 and lasted until 1821. John Egan made all
the harps for the school. Dublin also had a Harp
Society, from 1809 to 1812, and members
included Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Moore.
The Ancient Irish Harp, the smallest
that was played at the Belfast Festival, was
strung, tuned in octaves, and the soundbox was
made from a single hollowed-out log of wood.
Egan’s twelve-key harps for the Belfast school had
a similar high-beaded shape, but were constructed
with round pieces of wood. The harps had wooden
bodice, like the pedal harp of Seán Ruadh
Maguire, whose design was used by most harp makers.

Most of Egan’s Harps were designed
with deeper stringing mechanisms for playing in
different keys, well suited to the popular art music
of the day. Some portable harps were fitted with
brass rings to fix, in chorus, such stringing,
raising the pitch a semitone. For the Royal
Portable Harps, Egan invented a new system
using the flourishes, or ‘roll’ action of the pedal
harps, but incorporating levers instead of
pulleys. These were hand levers or dials, were
placed on the inner side of the harp’s column.
The Irish harpists made these cameras, which
mechancially determine the note, without the
singing of the strings. For example, when the F
diatl is engaged in a
shaded position, the corresponding dials for all
the F strings were turned, and create F-sharp.
Pedal harps were tuned in E-flat major, the pedal
harps, and one could play in different keys by
presenting the dials, or play an accidental written
a piece. Dials had been used on harps and
similar hybrid instruments made in the
nineteenth century by Richard Leigh in London.

Thus, the Royal Portable Harp-designed
combined the three concepts: the shape of the ancient Irish
harp, the construction and mechanism of pedal
harps, and dials similar to those
on popular harp-horns.

My Gentle Harp:
Moore’s Irish Melodies, 1808–2008
EGAN——proud of his new invention, and eager to promote it, wrote to Thomas Moore in August, 1820, in The Journal of Thomas Moore, the poet

"Received a letter from Egan, the harp-maker in Dublin, very well & fluently indeed, telling me of the perfection to which he had at last brought the Irish Harp, & begging me to allow him to present me one of his boxes, as a mark of admiration —"

ROYAL PORTABLE HARPS were available in black, blue or green, and all were ornamented with hand-painted clasps of gold chains.

THE ROYAL PORTABLE HARPS with dials eventually fell out of fashion. They were heavier and more cumbersome than harps made with levers or blades, which eventually became the choice of players. Upon Egan’s death, his nephew, Francis Henry, continued the business. These are possibly lower than fifty Egan harps still exist today in museums and private collections.

ON THE 23RD OF OCTOBER, 1821, Thomas Moore’s Egan harp arrived. Moore writes:

Egan, the Harp-maker, most anxious that I should judge the power of his improved Irish Harps, sent his son with me — the Chaise at the door at 7½ past three, and some beautiful Irish airs played to me during my last moments. Had I time to fill bumper to the Irish Harp & our next happy meeting.

Thomas Moore played his harp to accompany his singing, and Egan harps were popular in the society drawing rooms of Dublin and London. Sidney Smith, (Lady Legge Morgan), wrote in May 1805, "...the first purchase she made for herself out of her literary earnings was an Irish harp, from Egan, and a black Moore cloak!"

In 1825, Charles Egan published The Royal Harp Alcove: a method book with harp arrangements and a dissertation of the harps invented by John Egan. Charles Egan states that John Egan invented the Irish harp in its former glory, as its place in the "Palace of Kings."