

2014 Q5 (B) (iv) Write a concise account of either the fiddle or uilleann pipes. | A1 Sample Answer

The Uilleann Pipes became popular in the 18th century, as the harping tradition was going into decline. They were revived again in the 1950s as a result of the founding of the Dublin Piper's club, and the Uilleann Pipes were later included in the lineup of the 1960's Ceoltoirí Chualann and later the Chieftains. Recently organizations like Píobairí Uilleann have ensured the survival of the Uilleann Piping tradition in Ireland.

The Uilleann Pipes have a sweet, mellow tone and are quieter than Scottish bagpipes and can be used for performing indoors. They are made up of the bellows, bag, chanter, drones and regulator. The bellows are held under the right arm and are connected to the bag. The bag is made of leather and held under the left arm. The player pumps air into them by pressing down on the bellows, which fill up the bag. The chanter rests on the player's knee and is a pipe through which air travels, and is where the piper plays the tune. The three drones sound continuously and are turned off with a drone key. The tenor, baritone and bass drone are tuned to the bottom note of the chanter, each an octave below the other. The regulators provide chordal accompaniment, played with wrist movement.

Well known players of the uilleann pipes are Liam O'Flynn, who was a founding member of Planxty and Paddy Moloney of The Chieftains. Liam O'Flynn was born in 1945 in Kildare. His musical influences are Leo Rowsome, Séamus Ennis and Willie Clancy. He featured on the recording of Shaun Davey's Brendan Voyage for uilleann pipes. Liam O'Flynn was commissioned by Mary Mc Aleese to compose a piece of music, "An Droichead" for her inauguration. This was the theme she chose for her presidency.

Another prominent figure in the piping tradition is the Dublin piper Séamus Ennis. He played both the tin whistle and the uilleann pipes, as well as being a broadcaster on RTÉ. He also worked for the Irish Folklore Commission and was also a collector of tunes. He died in the Naul, Dublin, where there is a Séamus Ennis Cultural Centre dedicated to him. His albums include "The Return From Fingal" and "The Best of Irish Piping."

Many techniques are used in order to implement ornamentation on the uilleann pipes, including crans, triplets and popping. A cran is a staccato effect created on the low D on the chanter. A triplet is when three notes are played in the time of two notes of the same value. They are added in as

three consecutive notes which are either ascending, descending or repeating. Popping is a technique used by the piper where they accentuate the note by lifting the chanter off the knee.

It is in this way that the uilleann piping tradition has developed and changes over the years.