Marnie Hay, *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish Revolution, 1909-1923: Scouting for Rebels*

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Édition électronique

URL : <https://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/8714>
DOI : 10.4000/etudesirlandaises.8714
ISSN : 2259-8863

Éditeur

Presses universitaires de Caen

Édition imprimée

Date de publication : 31 décembre 2019
Pagination : 165-167
ISBN : 978-2-84133-964-8
ISSN : 0183-973X

Référence électronique

Sylvie Kleinman, « Marnie Hay, *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish Revolution, 1909-1923: Scouting for Rebels* », *Études irlandaises* [En ligne], 44-2 | 2019, mis en ligne le 06 mai 2020, consulté le 21 novembre 2022. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/etudesirlandaises/8714> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesirlandaises.8714>

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John O’Keeffe, the author of the book, is Director of Sacred Music at the Department of Theology, St. Patrick’s College, Maynooth, and Director of Choral Groups. In the seven chapters of the work, he proposes a very technical and thorough study of the three masses in Irish with many score extracts giving detailed and sometimes lengthy musical examples, accompanied by their lyrics. The book also includes an audio CD with complete recordings of the masses, as well as an impressive bibliography and a general index.

The musical environment where Seán Ó Riada’s masses were composed, in Coolea, County Cork, constitutes the first approach of the volume, while the second chapter describes the intimate relationship between music and lyrics, in a historical context as well as in the geographical context of South West Ireland. The following two chapters analyse respectively Seán Ó Riada’s first mass – and the first ever in Irish Gaelic – *Ceol an Aifrinn* [*Music for mass*], as well as his second opus, *Aifreann 2* [*Mass 2*], both composed for the Benedictines at Glenstal Abbey, County Limerick, while chapters 5 and 6 examine in detail Peadar Ó Riada’s own composition *Aifreann Eoin na Croise* [*Mass for St. John of the Cross*], composed for the Carmelite community of Dublin.

One of the most important features of this book, apart from the fact that no lengthy study of these musical opuses had previously been published, resides in the way it convincingly demonstrates a strong link between the composers and their environment, be it linguistic, musical or historical. Obviously, previous knowledge of the Catholic liturgy, as well as solid musical theory knowledge, will be necessary to fully appreciate the extent of the author’s demonstration, but most chapters can be approached candidly and will display what the author probably had in mind when writing them: to testify to the huge musical legacy of the Ó Riadas, as well as their indisputable attachment to their country and its Catholic background.

Erick FALC’HER-POYROUX

Marnie Hay, *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish Revolution, 1909-1923: Scouting for Rebels*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2019, 288 p.

By the late 19th century, the Gaelic Cultural Revival had popularised early Irish myths and the heroic tales of Fionn Mac Cumhaill, the boy hero and his band of young warriors, the Fianna. “Fenians”, an anglicised version, had become an umbrella term for an international network of Irish militant separatists, but they evidently live on (in both guises?) in Ireland’s national anthem, *Amhrán na bhFiann*. When Constance Markievicz and Bulmer Hobson founded a nationalist uniformed youth group in Dublin in 1909, firmly intended to counteract the pro-British Baden Powell Boy Scouts, they logically named it Na Fianna Éireann. It was to be the nucleus of a future Irish army. Training in military drill commenced immediately, and Con Colbert (one of the sixteen executed in 1916, aged twenty-eight) was their first

instructor in elementary formations. Classes instructed recruits on Irish history and languages; to be fit citizens of a free nation, it was essential to train body *and* mind, and learn of historic role models to emulate, and one's national culture.

Though ostensibly boys of all political persuasions were welcome, Hobson intended the Fianna to foster republicans, and in 1912 created a Fianna circle of the underground Irish Republican Brotherhood, elegantly masking as the John Mitchel Literary and Debating Society; both Colbert and Seán Heuston (also executed after the Easter Rising, aged twenty-five) joined it. Hay credibly demonstrates how the Fianna were "the military trailblazers" of Irish nationalism: rising through the ranks and into adulthood, within a few years their officers were training and / or transferring to other adult paramilitary groups, namely the Irish Citizen Army and the Volunteers after 1913. Their existence is well engrained in nationalist memory, and serving and former Fianna participated in every conflict of the revolutionary decade from the 1913 Lockout to the Civil War (on the anti-Treaty side), the timeframe of this study. Yet, though Markievicz romanticised their role in 1924, and wrote of Colbert and Heuston winning martyr's crowns in 1916, it is only relatively recently that they have become the subject of dedicated studies. Scholarly yet very accessible thanks to its clear and fluid prose, this book accounts for the organisation's early history and its actual military contribution to the Irish Revolution, and flows naturally out of Hay's published doctoral thesis on Hobson¹. Her further research focused on childhood and youth in Ireland, a long neglected strand overshadowed by adult actors of history. Thus this book rescues from oblivion many obscure but dynamic members and organisers. The movement's broader Irish and international contexts, development and membership, its range of activities, and its role in generating and disseminating print propaganda are discussed in thematic chapters. The Fianna experience itself is discussed in terms of their military training, scouting skills, historical and patriotic instruction-cum-indoctrination, and social and nationalist networking. For example, they provided parading and piping displays at major national events. Though discipline and order were fundamental, the author does not neglect episodes of adolescent mayhem. Initially aimed at boys eight to eighteen, some older officers remained into their twenties, and some girls joined in Belfast and Waterford, but only for short stints. By 1922, entry was set at boys only, aged twelve minimum. Due to its gender bar, the movement was never truly national, but rituals and rhetoric embraced a secular ethos. Knowledge of squad, company and ambulance drill, and understanding commands in Irish were essential. Then came full scouting skills, route marches and camping trips. The cover illustration of the first *Fianna Handbook* (1914) was an unsophisticated yet evocative scene of a Celtic warrior in a barren landscape with a slain victim at his feet; yet inside were drill diagrams borrowed from British army manuals. The Fianna's performance is

1. Marnie Hay, *Bulmer Hobson and the Nationalist Movement in Twentieth-Century Ireland*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2009.

identified, its value assessed, and official recognition by the Irish state is considered. Hay concludes with an analysis of the state's awarding of service pensions and/or medals to former members, and provision of financial compensation to dependants of fallen members, the ultimate recognition.

In her prior groundbreaking research, Hay had underlined how "adolescence" had been discovered during this transformative epoch, and demonstrated how the Fianna were expected to promote Irish culture in language, sport, theatre and music. But they were equally imbued with the propaganda of the age which highlighted a moral dichotomy between Ireland and degenerate and debased British people. Fianna print propaganda promoted an idealised image of Irish nationalist youth, stressing patriotism combined with morality. Revolutions are won by feats of arms, but fuelled by ideology. Beyond this lofty concept, which in established nations also sent millions of young men to early graves, many Fianna dutifully smuggled weapons, served as dispatch carriers and orderlies, gathered intelligence, but also built barricades, commandeered bikes, raided shops and vans in the light of day, obstructed communications, and were willing perpetrators of political violence. Overall the book provides a robust and comprehensive history of a movement whose activities encompassed both friends and families, touched by tragedy, or proudly watching bayonet fighting at an *aeraíochtaí* (outdoor festival). Students, and an international audience, will welcome the constant contextualisation within the bigger historical picture. The perspective is balanced, and foibles are documented. *Na Fianna Éireann and the Irish Revolution* fills a major gap in conventional Irish history, and will facilitate adaptations for secondary schools, allowing adolescents of the future to engage with a far more relevant strand of history than high politics.

Sylvie KLEINMAN

Breandán Mac Suibhne, *The End of Outrage: Post-Famine Adjustment in Rural Ireland*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, 319 p.

This is a rare publication in that it is both a thoroughly-researched scholarly text and an invitation to the reader to take an imaginative leap. Through a detailed account of an incident that took place in West Donegal in the mid-1850s, we learn about a key transitional period in Irish history. But the book is much more than an analysis of a historical moment; rather it encourages us to cross a chasm of understanding and worldviews so that, even if only tentatively and momentarily, we see through the eyes of the people who populate its pages. That said, the depth of that chasm is never elided. One of the many strengths of *The End of Outrage* is that it demonstrates the profound differences between our way of thinking and being and that of some of those whose lives it so eloquently describes while also asking us to place a creepie (bogwood stool) in front of the fire so that we can sit for a while in their company.