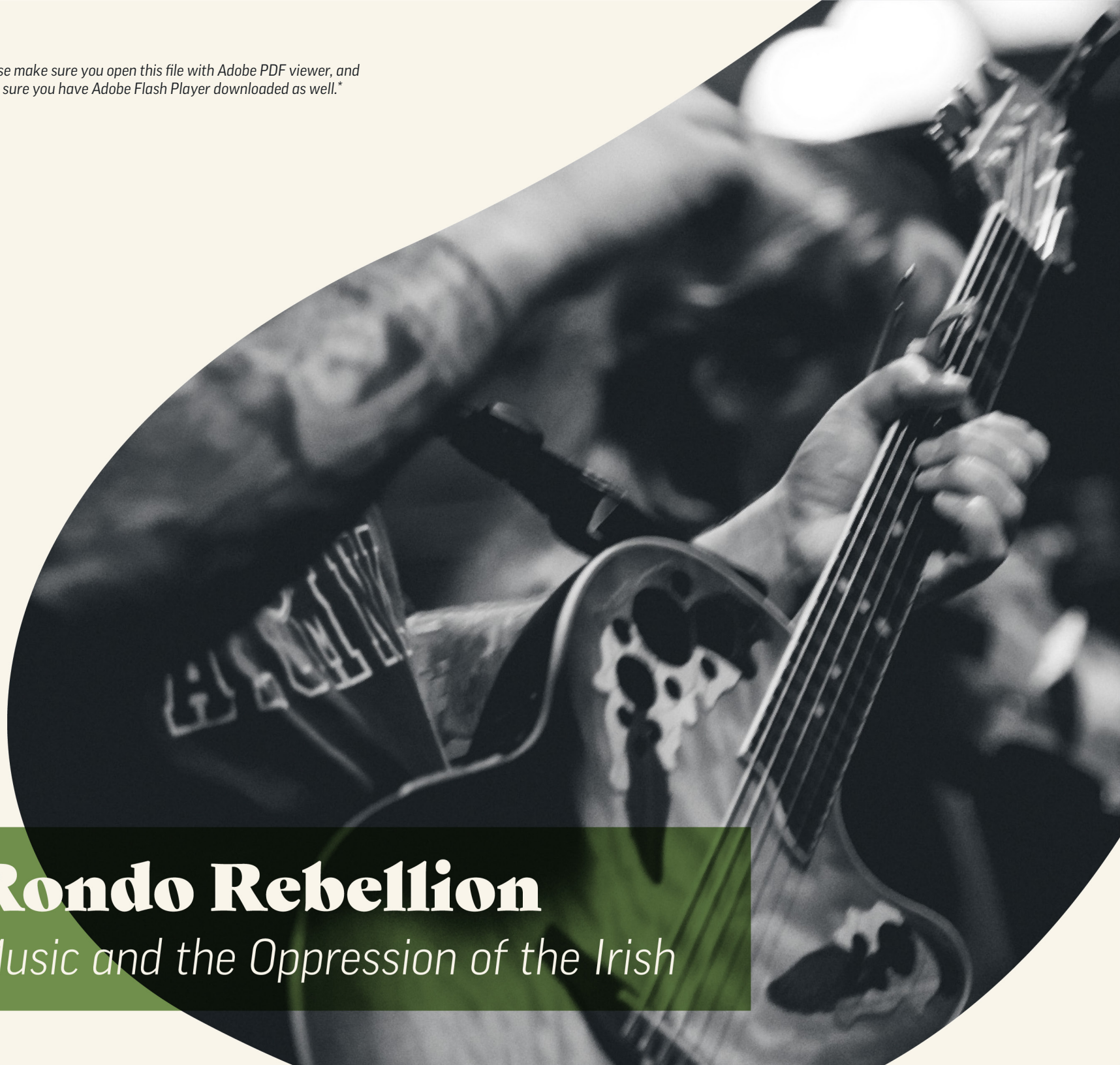


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# **Rondo Rebellion**

*Music and the Oppression of the Irish*





## rondo

/răn,dō/

noun

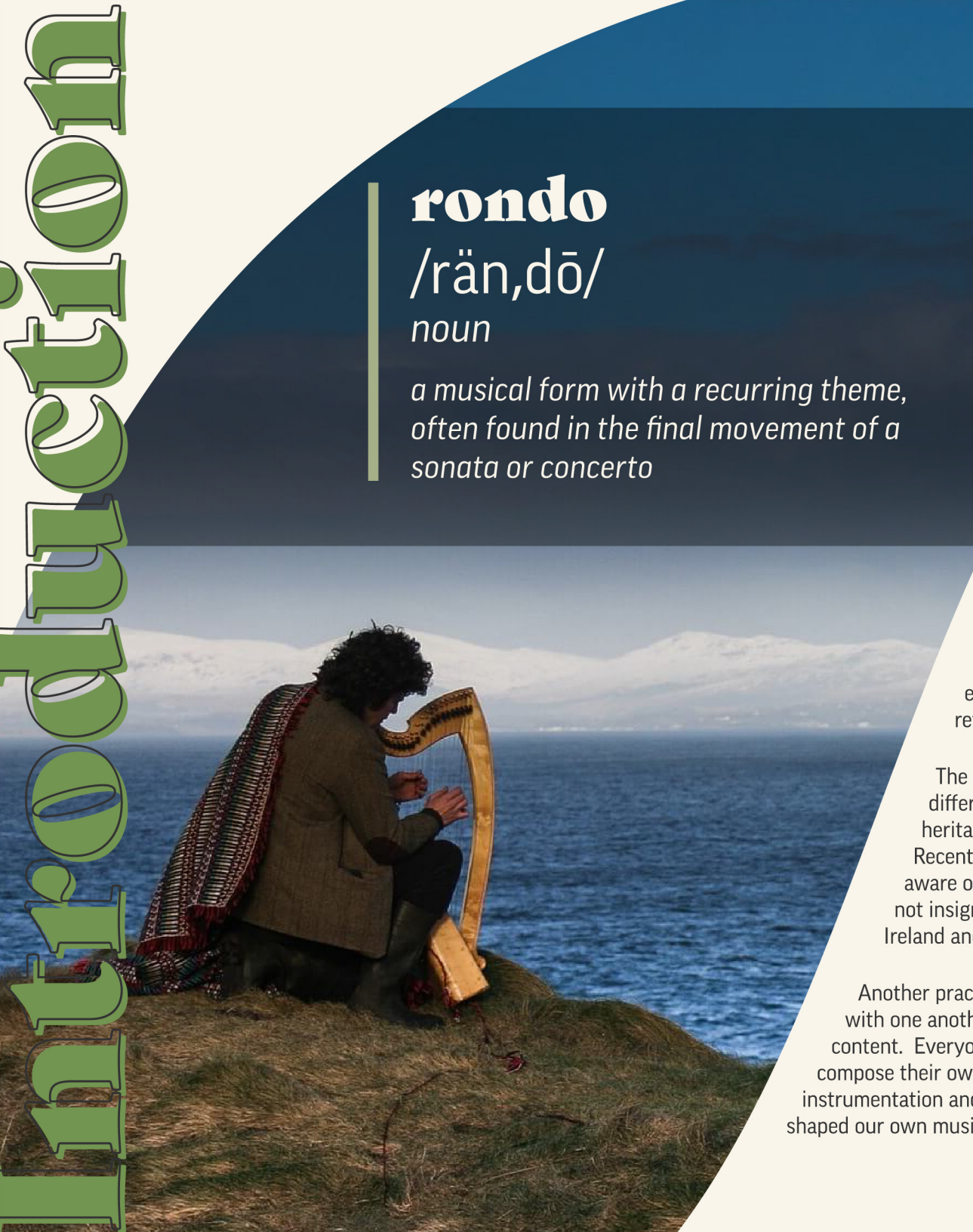
*a musical form with a recurring theme,  
often found in the final movement of a  
sonata or concerto*

Culture is a funny agreement between people – a group of people gather, decide which practices, attitudes, and values to stand behind, and continue expressing and practicing those ideas. Ultimately culture is a malleable concept that can be altered and adapted based off crucial ideas or events that curb what the values of that group of people reinforce. If a certain condition is evident and affects a group of people, the culture begins to reflect that.

The culture of my own family, one peppered with a multitude of differing ideas and opinions, holds certain ideas as important: our heritage, our traditions, and how we connect with one another.

Recently, after receiving DNA results from Ancestry.com, I was made aware of how Celtic our family roots were; more specifically we had a not insignificant portion – almost half – of our ancestors coming from Ireland and Scotland.

Another practice of our family culture is music. Music is how we connect with one another, sharing new music, old music, techniques, and lyrical content. Everyone in our family can play at least one instrument, and a few compose their own songs. The language we share is one laden with instrumentation and metaphors, praising the creative genius of artists who shaped our own musical preferences.





What would warrant a trip to Ireland to experience their musical culture when a plethora of musical platforms are available via the internet?

In July of 2019, I was invited to attend a peace and nonviolence training camp in Chicago. Growing up stories of murder and violence filled the news regarding America's "murder capital", and formed a dark narrative around a city wracked with corruption and assault. As someone who identifies as white and being raised in a predominantly white town, I thought I understood the breadth of racism and violence upon learning about it and hearing stories from a safe distance. However being plunged into that culture, hearing the stories from non-profits and peace building organizations, as well as former gang-bosses-turned-peace-advocates, and seeing firsthand how the impact of racism and division harmed people, that was ultimately the greatest teacher: experience.

Research can provide facts and cold evidence, but unless that knowledge is paired with the experience of seeing and hearing it in the real world, watching it played out over time, shaping and altering the culture of those who live within that reality, then no real growth or change can occur. The story becomes real and breathes when we see it firsthand.

I want to go to Ireland so I can learn about how the instruments and story-based songwriting of Irish music gives a voice to their emotions, ideas, and history in order to further understand how it is being used then and now. Music has been used in the past as a social commentary on the condition of a group of people, a critique of occupying powers, and a way to create cohesion and identity for a group of people – I want to see how music has been shaped by colonization in the past and how it is currently shaping music.





# 4 Pillars of Oppression

At the peace camp in Chicago, our schedules were packed with both seminars and meetings with non-profits. We also had sessions and were given assignments that challenged us as participants in the program.

One session highlighted how injustice and oppression occur in the world consistently throughout time through four main methods:

1

## White Supremacy

*As seen in terrorist groups such as the KKK, the Nazi party, and the mistreatment of BIPOC. White supremacy implies ethnicities not based in a western European display are lesser than, and have historically been reinforced by the science of the time and religions in place.*

2

## Patriarchy

*As seen in how women are treated in every culture around the world, showing up in the wage gap, female circumcision, the marrying off of young women, sex trafficking, female genocides in cultures such as China and India, and more currently the sexual assault cases in the #MeToo movement. Patriarchy enforces that non-men, whether women or otherwise, are lesser than men and have fewer rights.*

3

## Capitalism

*As seen in the unequal exchange of goods and services between corporations and the individuals used to create the products in factories. For example the suicides of workers in Apple factories in China, as reported in 2017. Exploitation is an invisible byproduct of convenience and material comfort, and efforts such as the Fair Trade initiative are attempting to combat the inequalities present in our economic exchanges.*

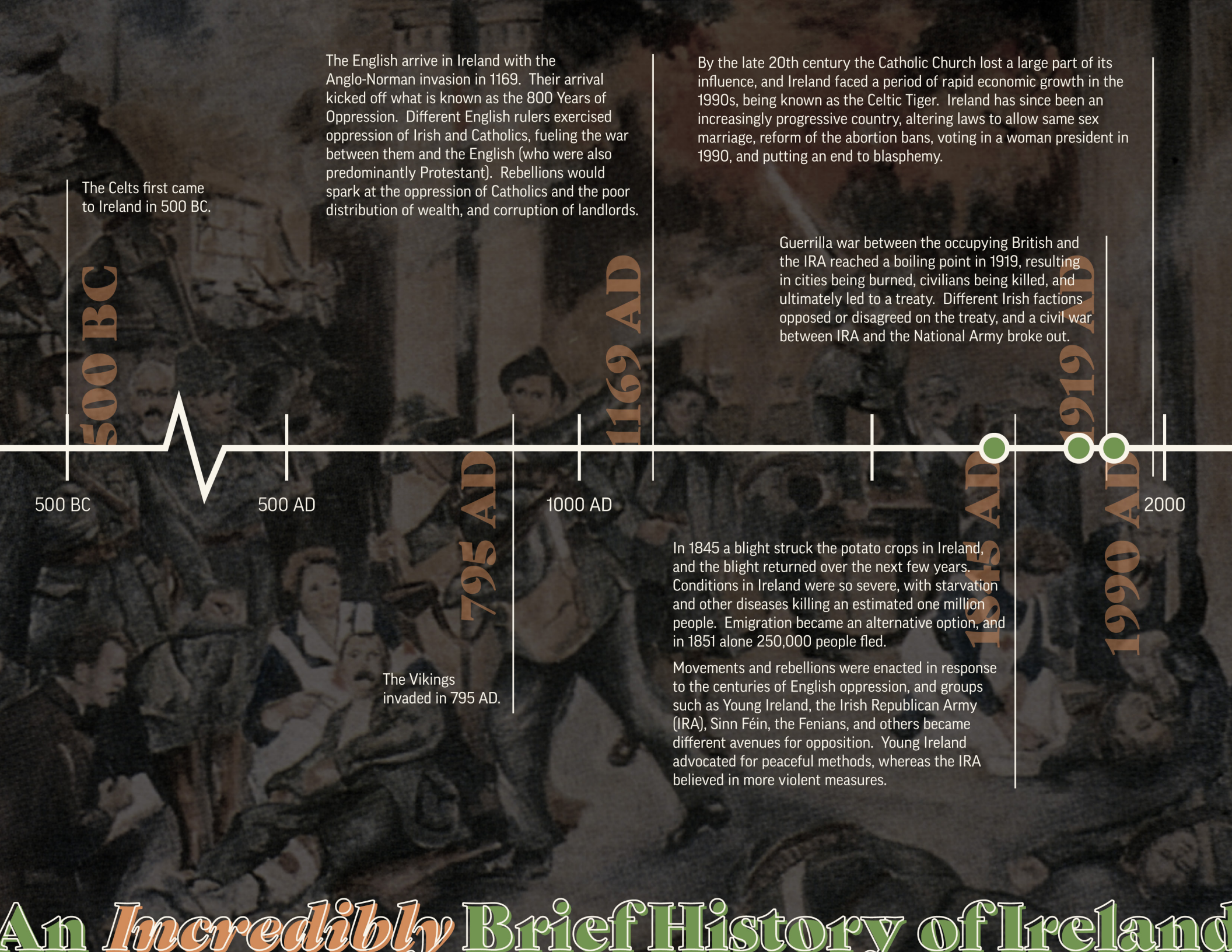
4

## Colonization

*English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and so on spread disease and pushed back indigenous people upon settling in the north and south American continents. For another example, the continent of Africa was and still is preyed upon by colonial forces seeking resources and land. Languages and cultures have been altered by the colonization of an outside force, i.e. the Spanish language being prevalent throughout Mexico, or the spread of European holidays such as Christmas throughout the globe.*

*\*\*I will be focusing on the fourth pillar, colonization, throughout the rest of this presentation. However the four pillars are not isolated and can compound in a multitude of ways.\*\**





The Celts first came to Ireland in 500 BC.

The English arrive in Ireland with the Anglo-Norman invasion in 1169. Their arrival kicked off what is known as the 800 Years of Oppression. Different English rulers exercised oppression of Irish and Catholics, fueling the war between them and the English (who were also predominantly Protestant). Rebellions would spark at the oppression of Catholics and the poor distribution of wealth, and corruption of landlords.

By the late 20th century the Catholic Church lost a large part of its influence, and Ireland faced a period of rapid economic growth in the 1990s, being known as the Celtic Tiger. Ireland has since been an increasingly progressive country, altering laws to allow same sex marriage, reform of the abortion bans, voting in a woman president in 1990, and putting an end to blasphemy.

Guerrilla war between the occupying British and the IRA reached a boiling point in 1919, resulting in cities being burned, civilians being killed, and ultimately led to a treaty. Different Irish factions opposed or disagreed on the treaty, and a civil war between IRA and the National Army broke out.

In 1845 a blight struck the potato crops in Ireland, and the blight returned over the next few years. Conditions in Ireland were so severe, with starvation and other diseases killing an estimated one million people. Emigration became an alternative option, and in 1851 alone 250,000 people fled.

Movements and rebellions were enacted in response to the centuries of English oppression, and groups such as Young Ireland, the Irish Republican Army (IRA), Sinn Féin, the Fenians, and others became different avenues for opposition. Young Ireland advocated for peaceful methods, whereas the IRA believed in more violent measures.

# An *Incredibly* Brief History of Ireland



# Events that Sparked a Song

## The 1798 Rising

The 1798 Rising was a rebellion against British rule in Ireland. Inspired by the American and French revolutions, the United Irishmen, a revolutionary group, organized a force of Presbyterians and Catholics who were denied rights and power by the Anglican establishment. Ultimately the uprising was suppressed by the British powers and resulted in a number of deaths between 10,000 and 30,000.

*Growing up my dad would (and still does) pull his guitar out and play music for hours on end, including the song "Molly Malone" – a melancholic Irish ballad of a fishmonger woman who eventually died of a fever, written around the time of the 1798 Rising.*

## ***"The Minstrel Boy"***

A folk song written by Thomas Moore, and made popular during the American Civil War.

## ***"Boolarogue"***

A ballad honoring the campaign of Father John Murphy and his army in County Wexford during the rebellion.

## ***"The Croppy Boy"***

'Croppy' was a term for a rebel, and the tune depicts the despair of a young doomed croppy.

## ***"Dunlavin Green"***

A song referring to the Dunlavin Green executions by the British of suspected Irish rebels.

## ***"The Wearing of the Green"***

A ballad of lament at the repression of the supporters of the rebellion, who wore green as a symbol for their revolt.



**Press to listen to  
"The Croppy Boy" by The Dubliners**



## ***“Down by the Glenside” (The Bold Fenian Men)***

Written around the time of the 1916 Rising, the song refers to the Fenian Rising of 1867, and serves as a call to arms for Irishmen used to political nationalism.

## ***“The Dying Rebel”***

A rebel song about a man finding a dying Irish rebel, reflecting upon the costs of war rather than the glories of battle and martyrdom.

## ***“Foggy Dew”***

A lament encouraging Irishmen to fight for Ireland against the British, instead of for the British in World War I.

## **The Easter Rising**

The Easter Rising (a.k.a. the Easter Rebellion, or the 1916 Rising) was launched by armed Irish republicans against British rule, with the goal to establish an independent republic in Ireland. It was the most significant revolt since the rebellion in 1798, and lasted 6 days. The British Army deployed thousands of reinforcements as well as armed boats and artillery, and suppressed the rebellion.



***Press to listen to  
“Foggy Dew”***

# Events that Sparked a Song



# Events that Sparked a Song

## **The Irish War of Independence**

*1919 - 1921*

The Irish War of Independence (or Anglo-Irish War) was fought between the IRA and the occupying British Army and the Royal Irish Constabulary. Tensions of the revolutionary period escalated into this guerrilla war. Conflicts that occurred between the two sides escalated, including Bloody Sunday in which the RIC opened fire on a crowd at a Gaelic football match. In 1921 Ireland was partitioned under British law, creating Northern Ireland. By 1922 the Irish Free State was established, and violence broke out over the treaty, leading to an eleven month Civil War.

## ***“The Broad Black Brimmer”***

A black brimmer is a hat that was worn by the IRA guerrillas in the War of Independence. The song tells of a boy whose father died fighting in the IRA.

## ***“Come Out, Ye Blacks and Tans”***

“Blacks and Tans” is a nickname given to ‘special reserve constables’ in the RIC. The song conveys concerns around political divisions in Dublin.

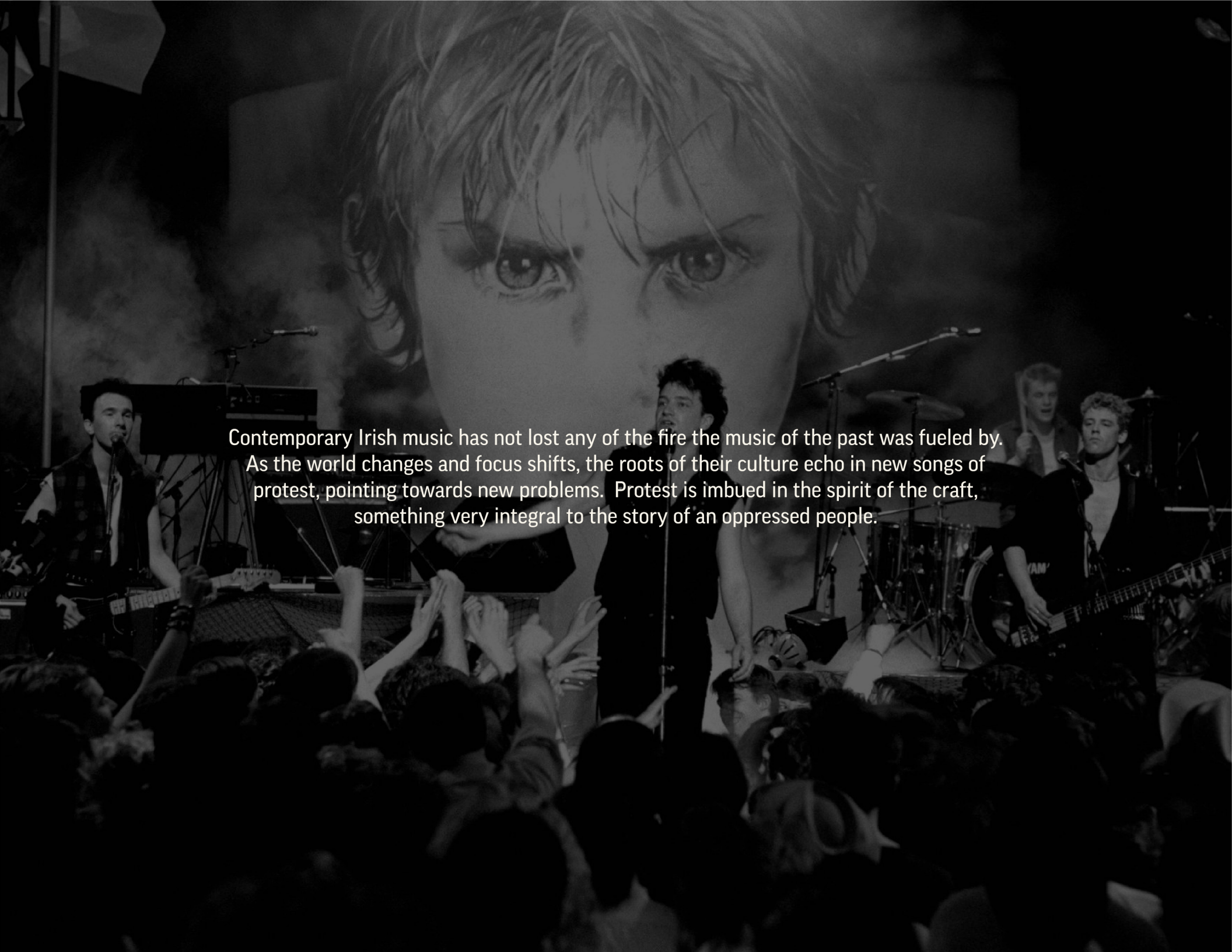
## ***“Kevin Barry”***

Recounting the death of a member of the IRA who was hanged at 18, this popular rebel song regards one of the IRA members executed known as The Forgotten Ten.



***Press to listen to  
“Come Out, Ye Blacks and Tans” by The Wolf Tones***





Contemporary Irish music has not lost any of the fire the music of the past was fueled by. As the world changes and focus shifts, the roots of their culture echo in new songs of protest, pointing towards new problems. Protest is imbued in the spirit of the craft, something very integral to the story of an oppressed people.



# Contemporary Music



***Press to listen to  
“Zombie” by The Cranberries***



## **“Sunday Bloody Sunday” *U2 (1983)***

Referring to British Army firing on civilians protesting against the division of Ireland on Sunday the 30th, January 1972 in Derry. 13 people died, and Bono, the front-man of U2, said it is not a protest song, but a plea against killing and violence.

## **“Alternative Ulster” *Stiff Little Fingers (1979)***

The song is a punk perspective on the division, violence, terrorism, and military presence in Ireland. The song hopes for a better future in a time called The Troubles, which was an ethno-nationalist conflict in Northern Ireland.

## **“Zombie” *The Cranberries (1993)***

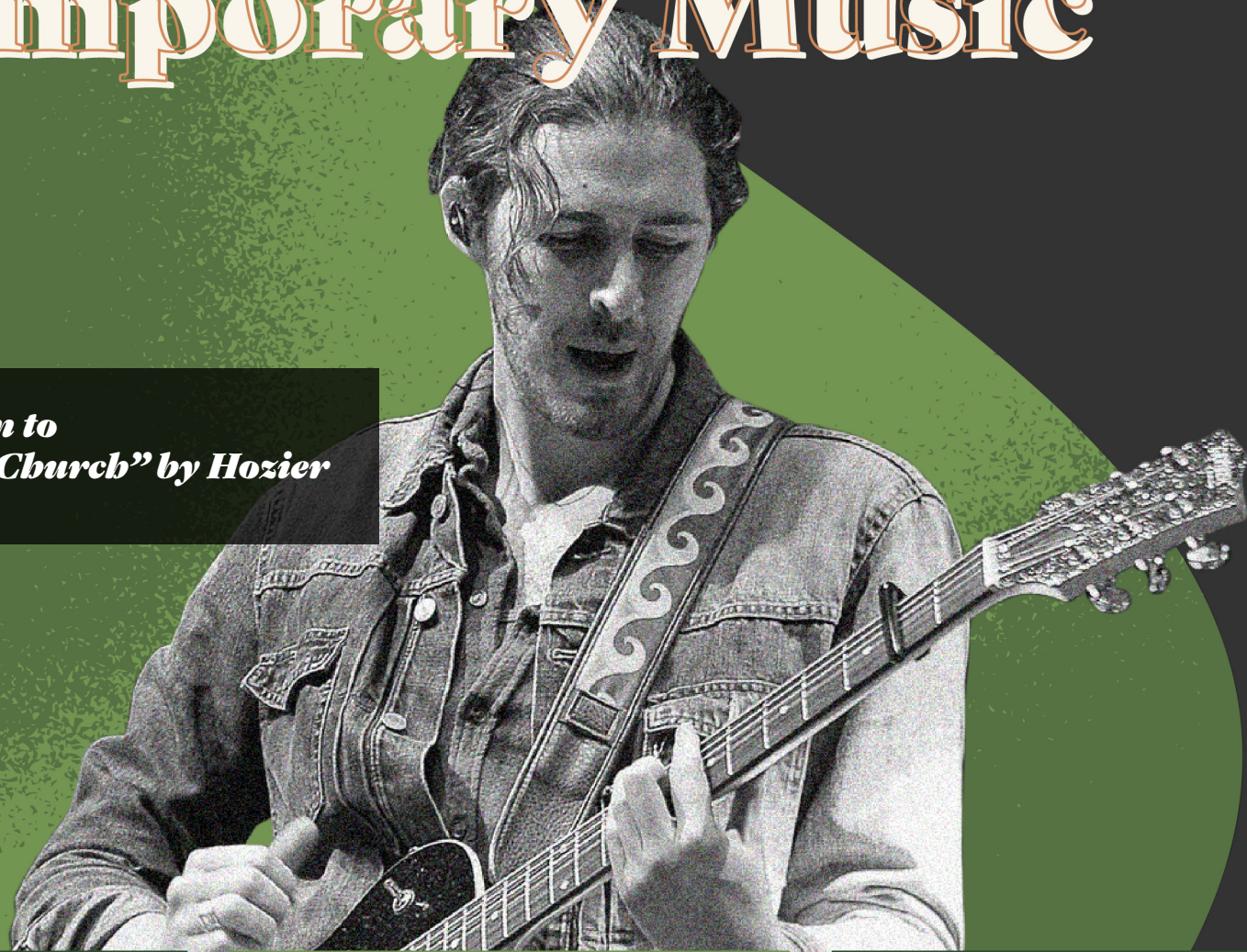
The song was written in response to the IRA bombing of Warrington town center in 1993, which killed two children. The violence spurred was a product of The Troubles, marring Ireland with bloodshed and further conflicts.



# Contemporary Music



***Press to listen to  
"Take Me to Church" by Hozier***



## **"Celtic Tiger"** ***Damien Dempsey (2013)***

After an economic boom in Ireland birthing the term 'Celtic Tiger', Dempsey, raised in that boom, criticizes and vocalizes anger at the ugliness and overconsumption that came along with the material gain.

## **"Take Me to Church"** ***Hozier (2013)***

The song serves as a protest against the church's abuse of power when it comes to sexuality. The song and imagery was created following a news report of LGBTQ+ folks in Russian being hunted down and killed for their sexuality.

## **"Ninety Miles to Dublin Town"** ***Christy Moore (1978)***

This ballad was written in support of the people held in Armagh and Long Kesh H-Block prisons, and condemns the suppression of the rights political prisoners have to a fair trial by jury.



## ***The Big Plan***

One of Ireland's biggest cultural music festivals is the Fleadh Cheoil, the world's largest celebration of music, dance, song, and language. The plan would be to attend the festival for a few days, and attend other main locations of music culture on the other days – those locations include Dublin, Galway, and Cork.

## ***The Takeaway***

Capturing an experience is a tricky notion – however I plan on tackling that with photography, videography, and collecting artifacts along the journey. What I intend to bring back to Ruhnau Clarke Architects are those artifacts of the journey as well as the music and experiences.

I intend to create a work of art based off of the stories and experiences from the trip and to give that work of art to Ruhnau Clarke.

My hope for this journey is to open a door for folks to realize that our history has a way of impacting our present, and problems that aren't resolved have a way of resurfacing, with music as an indicator both in the past and in the present of those problems. That perhaps by learning about someone else's history we can better understand our own, and what is happening within our own society.



Documentation





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IRISH  
MUSIC