Thousands of teenagers angered by recent allegations that drugs were being passed in Beat clubs paraded through Dublin on Saturday afternoon in protest. Led by a convoy of motor cycles and a horse drawn milk dray, they carried banners and placards emblazoned: "We are not drug addicts", "We do not drink"; "Don't crush the clubs: Leave the kids alone" and "It's a Mod world."

THE IRISH INDEPENDENT, MONDAY 17 OCTOBER, 1966.

The teenagers of 1960s Limerick were most conscious of a generational discrepancy between their own and their fathers' time. Such a changing of the guard is a natural process but in the early sixties the intense cultural gap it brought with it felt more acute. In the early sixties a young Limerick man, James Haran, registered this lack as something to be acted upon. As neutral Ireland's isolationism changed to meet modern necessities, a generation specific to that time arrived seeking their own space with a realisation that it may have to be constructed anew. The platform for this was the Irish beat scene.

As situations of resistance based around the Limerick beat scene progressed to include revolutionary activity and random, public expressions of the zeitgeist by youth gangs in the seventies. Overlaping agendas were reflected in disparate intersections that included industrial protests emanating from the Shannon industrial zone, soccer gangs, and even the beat groups themselves who were sometimes set against each other by venue owners.

Any music-based activity that sets itself against a church sanctioned and rural leaning dancehall culture could not help but draw rebellious support in urban areas and achieve a righteous identity in the process. The beat venue club a Go-Go is seminal for Limerick in this respect; a self-regulated territory for teenagers who saw themselves as teenagers first. This was a community who looked outside parental-set identities and who refused to adhere to the nationalist social boundaries sound tracked by 'native,' that is, traditional Irish reels or the sanctioned populism of the variety show type showband scene.

In 1965, James Haran was one of the founder members of the Limerick beat band The Intentions who eventually became known as Granny's Intentions. The recorded legacy of the band is in four singles and one LP of original material recorded for Deram Records in London (1967–1968). A fuller legacy of the band takes is embedded in their role as the organised teenagers who led Limerick's Mod movement before going professional as a beat band. This was a significant achievement by a group of teenagers as the concept of 'working' as a beat musician was exotic had no Irish precedent and did not register as a trade.

The beat scene was conservatively received as a populist strand of the standard voice-guitar-drums musical package that musicians dabbled with, but it was the genesis for radical directions. Not only did Haran and his peers sign up for this future, they insisted on promoting it within Limerick.

As the pace of social interaction in the sixties remained mediated by Church-regulated authority through the moral administration of youth clubs and adult

Figure 15
Granny's Intentions, 1967.
Left to right: Johnny Hockedy, Jack Costelloe, Guido de Vito, John Ryan, James 'Cha' Haran, Johnny Duhan. Photograph by Deke O Brien.

dancehalls, Haran and his peers focused on this space to resist the Catholic hegemony. This was a revolutionary act in directing a social environment in Establishment-vetted social spaces via the countercultural English stance of the Mod or beat follower in an Irish context. The Irish term 'beat,' as in 'beat group,' was adopted to channel both the influence of the Beatles, who visited Ireland in 1963 and the American beat movement. Historically, Irish 'beats' are unique and not specifically tied to any fifties beat philosophy, but the term functioned as a countercultural shorthand long after falling out of favour elsewhere and it continues to hold significance.

An interaction with the politics of place held in social space was necessary not least as the evolution of the commercial dancehall was tied to the social narrative of a post-war environment. There were no commercial dancehalls before the ratification of the treaty and those that existed in this respect did so under the auspices of local committees. The old *Limerick Journal* of 1985 (Vol 8) underlines that 'these were the urban counterparts of the rural crossroad platforms' (Author, 1985 p.), De Valera's famous (year) phrase of responsible 'maidens dancing at the crossroads' epitomised how 'native Irish' social gathering were to be structured throughout the sixties.
The dominance of Church-regulated social activities was not only uninviting but the Irish clergy's moral supervision of the dancehall appeared inappropriate for a period of international change that had brought the challenges of the counterculture to Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council.

The Irish Mod style was without the transitional history and reference points of its English counterpart and it is this that registers it as unique to Limerick. Being a Mod in Limerick confirmed what Stuart Hall described as the 'double articulation of youth' (year p.), a reference to British teenagers who participated both in their parent's and the dominant culture.

Figure 16
Image of John Lennon and George Harrison in Dromoland Castle, Limerick. Easter, 1964.
Source: Rare Irish stuff.

Ireland did not have the class template for an equivalent appreciation of the urban English 'Revolt into Style.' Yet a rudimentary acquaintance with the attitude embodied in imported rock and roll culture was enough to allow a template for music-led rebellion to encourage Irish youth (who would not be regarded as teenagers in the international sense until the late 1970s) to seek out city space for authentic expression. In promoting a youthful manifesto for this ideal they insisted it was sound tracked by the noise of American soul music, as this put revolutionary space between them and the conservative dancehall. McLaughlin and McLoone (2012) identify that the patterns of resistance adopted by those who created the Irish beat scene were sourced from soul music from Black America

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> The beat scene was viewed at the time as a 'minor rebellion' against conservative Ireland and attracted the scruffy non-conformists to their tight and smoky venues. The historical significance of that scene is that it was the first subculture to be centred on specifically popular musical identification, structured around sounds styles and attitude. (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2012 p.27).

When translated in an uncompromised fashion for an Irish context, the otherness of Black American soul music felt transgressive, particularly as it was not mediated fully through national media channels but mainly through pirate channels. It could even be described as in terms set out by Paul Nettl, a bohemian musicologist, who described

dance music as *'Gebrauchsmusik'* or 'utility music,' sound that spoke for a function in a language still under construction from the youth (Nettl, 1921 p.).

The influence of non-national radio and British publications cannot be stressed enough, as access to the culture of a virtual peer group was through the commercial medium- and long-wave broadcasts of Radio Luxembourg (1933–1992) and Radio Caroline (1964–1969) were essential. Radio Caroline in particular had the desired *frisson* due its 'pirate' image and the fact that its owner, Ronan O'Rahilly, was Irish. O'Rahilly once told the International Times that the ability for pirate radio to unite the youth was the equivalent of a 'human-be-in' (year, p.).

After 1962, both Irish and British state radio observed that an American dominated era of swing and rock and roll had been superseded by a pop cultural scene that was London centric and more participatory. The trajectory of change and the reception for a youth-orientated product that was music-based was unlike anything experienced before and the official channels were reticent to acknowledge this. Change, as reflected in the marketplace where music featured, was been acknowledged but state radio in Ireland held its stake in the chaste music of the fifties well into the seventies playing, as the musician Paul Brady once described as, 'music from the other side of the fence' (year p.).

Rebel radio in Limerick had precedent. In 1930, the audacious illegal radio transmissions of two Limerick teenagers calling themselves Billy Dynamite and Al Dubbin were briefly broadcast citywide. It was well received in the city pubs that put it on each evening for their customers. The youth played the underground sound of their day: jazz. Until they were caught they broadcasted using the title of the 'City Broadcasting Service' (Author, year p.).[42]

Magazines such as the *New Musical Express* and *Fabulous* covered the social movements that were constantly dealing with the dynamic of international pop cultural movements. These magazines were essential style guides for kids who wanted to be different. Fabulous cost the most at a shilling but was the most desired in Limerick as its coverage and content was designed to, as Jon Savage commented, 'introduce a more direct rapport between the stars and their keenly attuned audience' (*The Guardian*, 2009 p.). Youth was, in the whole press of the period, a powerful but concealed metaphor for social change; the compressed image of a society which had crucially changed in terms of basic lifestyles and values changed, in ways calculated to upset the official framework, but in ways not yet calculable in traditional political terms (Hall and Jefferson, 1993). *Fabulous* ran theme issues such as an edition called 'Gets the Vote', which looked at pop stars and politics (in regards to the October 1964, UK general election). This referencing of the wider society amongst the magazines flexed boundaries by introducing 'news' items tailored for a teenage audience. In the Irish media such boundaries remained fixed. Politics were an adult concern and the Irish teen was regarded as a powerless transitional being, a 'young adult.' In transmitting a tone of urgency, coverage in the UK teen press communicated the power of tribal behaviour representing a vital urban-based demand that constantly verged on the self-sufficient. The teenage movement (and its spending power) appeared to shape an environment to

42 Conversation with Shane Curtin Limerick 2014. Until the 1980s the idea of developing platforms in the media and national broadcasting to operate as outlets for youth-based culture were not a priority. TV and radio existed primarily for news and entertainment and was regarded officially as separate and conventional for an adult audience. Previous to the establishment of the youth-orientated radio station RTE 2 in 1979, there was an average of only three to four hours of youth-orientated music a week, none of which could be described as representative of the international youth. Instead this lack of state recognition regarding contemporary sound was dealt with in the social space of the dancehall. The role the dancehall offered was a place for people to hear contemporary sounds translated note by note or sanitised by showbands.

the extent that teens became additions to but not full stakeholders in the economy.

Environments were shaped by the use of outside locations for photoshoots in the magazines (particularly *RAVE* magazine) with the design of this act serving to put the location itself of on par with an event. As the locations became iconic as a consequence of this design the process does register as place-making. Locations such as Portobello Road or Covent Garden had never featured in the context of fashion or style before, now they became youth designated backgrounds hosted in the images by models their own age. The pose of this generation pointed at the redundancy of the traditional fashion pose where aspirational glamor was regulated by class and came at a price. The new attitude foregrounded youth style that was immediate and even disposable. The location was part of this attitude. English television shows also drew heavily on the aesthetic of what was being internationally received as the pop art movement. The sets on the Mod show Ready Steady Go referenced the changing art styled windows of London boutiques leading the consumption of style to appear participatory. The windows of Carnaby Street appeared anointed by the television as the youth sought out the styles previously broadcast.[43] In a generational context, the association of location as a signifier implied contested territory. A quote from a 1966 article on pop culture in art and artists proclaims that, 'The corridors of power are no longer in Westminster but in Carnaby Street' (Wolfram, 1996 p.31).

UK magazines were essential documents for the Irish scene to the extent that they replicated their mission in their small ads where other magazines and event descriptions were to be found. This contrasted with insular social material delivered in the equivalent Irish publication *Spotlight* (1963–1979), a popular publication that averaged weekly sales in Ireland of 50,000. Though not totally averse to covering the radical beat scene, *Spotlight* proudly advertised itself as 'The Showband Magazine' whose regular readers prioritised a rural-based culture over the potential possibilities of an urban outlook. By promoting certain social gatherings *Spotlight* regulated a measured pace for its readership. Its coverage recognised the dominance of a church-supervised rural-based version of social progress and adjusted its social content accordingly. *Spotlight's* contribution to the moral authority was most evident in the chaste advice and warnings that it gave to the young women who wrote into its problem pages.

Haran describes the necessity of the practice of following the progress of the Mod scene in UK magazines in tandem with the 'international listening' of pirate radio as 'essential' (year p.). Channelling the foreign sounds of soul in the bands they created for themselves and their peers saw them create confrontational agency in a common symbolic space inspired by a London vanguard. It is no coincidence that Haran and his band originally called themselves 'The Intentions.' The band understood that any Irish translation of this futurism must respect progress. Haran knew that a cover of 'Not Fade Away' undertaken by the showbands would have rendered it, in the format of American-tinged light entertainment, as unthreatening. It would exist as a safe translation just to confirm its position in the UK's hit parade with none of the aesthetics of confrontation suggested by a rawer version by The Rolling Stones. Haran mentions recognising how versions of the same song could serve different agendas as formative. In his preferred

43 For examples see. Pop as Mod by Eddie Wolfram. Art and Artists Vol 1 issue 1 April 1966 p3o.

interpretation, The Intentions were committed to communicating the Mod urgency they had divined in The Rolling Stones version, highlighting the cultural currency held in the amalgamation of sound and vision provided by the Stones; it was new and it should be heard live. A young Haran thought, 'Why not a Limerick interpretation? Why should a Limerick audience not engage with what the Stones offered without having to dismantle the generational gatekeeping of the showbands each time?' By 1966 The Intentions focused on the look and sound of UK bands (working class) The Kinks and (middle class) The Rolling Stones and The Who, whose agenda was predicated as much by how they looked as how they sounded (Haran, year p.).[44]

A type of translation that illustrates the complexity then involved in positioning material in an Irish context was mirrored in an example by renowned Irish folk singer Luke Kelly. In 1966, Kelly (described by fellow Dublin singer Brush Shields as a 'communist singer' (2014)) subscribed to an influential New York folk magazine called Sing Out, a magazine then publishing the poems and lyrics of a young Bob Dylan. However without the transcription of music to guide him, Kelly adapted Dylan's words instead to Irish airs. Only later did he find out that Dylan himself had used the same Irish airs after being exposed to the singing of the famous Clancy Brothers who successfully brought their version of Irishness to New York (Fallon, 1996 p.89).

These links come to be mentioned as asides when the wider narrative of the social impact of popular music (particularly the history of modern folk music) is discussed. Yet, for a consideration of how countercultural elements were translated in the Irish process of re-imagination, recognition of the dynamics involved in subcultural overlapping that interrogated what was held as traditional is significant.

In 2014, the renowned English folk singer Martin McCarthy recalled that a visit by Dylan to England in 1962 saw him perform his anti-war classic 'A Hard Rains Gonna Fall.' On hearing it McCarthy was struck by the familiarity of the first line,

'Where have you been, my blue-eyed son? / Where have you been, my handsome young one?' He recognised it as being taken from the well-known British border ballad 'Lord Randall' which was a staple in British folk circles. However, Dylan just sung that line and then carried on with his own lyrics. According to McCarthy 'that line was where the similarity to 'Lord Randall' ended. He just took off on this great song, 'Hard Rain'. And in 1962 that song was revolutionary' (year p.). Dylan himself speaks on the depth of emotion held in the transposed Irish ballads that he had heard the Clancy Brothers sing in White Horse Tavern in Hudson Street, New York, 'The rebellion songs were a really serious thing. They weren't protest songs though they were rebel ballads. Even in a simple melodic wooing ballad there'd be rebellion waiting round the corner' (2012 p.83).[45]

Kelly and Haran were committed to an authentic representation of the rebellious ethos of an alternative modernism they saw being processed by Dylan and The Rolling Stones who adapted the noise of protest they heard in American roots music. If their translations interacted with or questioned elements of the 'modern' Irishness that was being shaped by the Establishment, then their acts cannot to be said be said to fit in with the international alternative mission. Haran's act is two-fold as he had to both

44 In 1964 the first American styled Jukeboxes arrived in Limerick facilitating a soundtrack that focused on the upbeat and foreign for the beat youth who congregated in the likes of the aptly named Continental Café in Patrick Street.

45 NB: By 1966 Dylan's agenda was received as agitational folk linked to a universal cause. It became more than popular music. Transgressing race for a militant mission The Black Panther leaders Huey Newton and Bobby Seale used 'brother Bobby's' music as essential listening as they prepared the first edition of the Black Panther newspaper.

translate the sound of 'Not Fade Away' and perform in the sense of an avant-garde. By being so engaged in the responsibility of this task he acknowledged and questioned the spectacle at the same time. In the sixties the safe Irish image of the Clancy Brothers for example was much celebrated as an uncomplicated presentable voice for a suitable modernity. The Irish package embodied in seeing the Clancy's as ambassadors suited the national projected image of the national programme in the mid-sixties. Before the War in the North and the oil crisis of 1973, the Irish Establishment was selling an unspoilt uncomplicated environment rich in folklore but ripe for industrial development. So successful was the package of the Clancy's representing a safe version of Irishness through song circa 1969–1973 that they institutionalised the format.[46]

Figure 17
St. Patrick's day, Limerick, 1964.

> The KRUPS workers made the everyday: domestic appliances such as mixers, food processors and weighing scales. The mother in the home became the worker in the factory producing these convenient, automatic machines representing consumption and modernization. They replaced the time-consuming traditional processes such as mixing and weighing for baking bread. These appliances are the processors of redefinition from the traditional era to the modern era. (Text from Limerick Civic Trust display panel, 2014).

As the congregated space of the church was represented in the structure of the dancehall, some rituals there were deemed obsolete by Haran's generation, particularly the design of chaste music for courting embodied in the 'slow dances,' where couples were encouraged to 'leave space between each other of the Holy Ghost' (author, year p.). This signified a desire by the Establishment to maintain a staid, safely managed, traditionalism for a generation groomed to reap the benefits of a modern state.

46 So much so that it was easier to promote the few progressive Irish rock bands that toured North America as acts that represented the UK rock scene. American-Irish audiences as a whole were comfortable with an uncomplicated version of home (Conversation with Brush Shields regarding his 1969 tour of America. 2015).

This overstatement may seem excessive, but the moral self-regulation of the dancehall was an entrenched social fact ever since the instigation of the 1935 Dancehall Act. This act, a version of which remains currently in force today, initially castigated types of dance music, particularly jazz as being detrimentally 'foreign' (Author, 1935 p.). The act was intended to reserve cultural space for traditional Irish music and dance while acknowledging space for contemporary socialising. The desired balance involved managing the act through the monitored social space of the dancehall. A self-regulated code enforced itself. This became recognised, promoted, and managed by the suited performers of the showbands. Early versions of this scene were advertised as 'Band Shows,' the title alone suggesting boundaries were in place for regulated and socially acceptable entertainment.

The 1935 Dancehall Act was one of the first pieces of social legislation passed by Fianna Fáil after they took power in 1932. On its enactment it reflected the dominant thinking by Church-led authorities on the alien threat of amorality smuggled in through the format of mass entertainment. Its remit, as practiced by the authorities, included the breaking up of dances at crossroads and houses. As early as 1922, a statement speculating on the threat of the foreign appeared in the *Freeman's Journal.* It explicitly calls for 'broadminded sensible men of different ages, women also, and some of the clergy who understood the atmosphere of the cinema and the theatre "to be the Catholic guardians of public space."' The report states that 'everything contrary to Christian purity and modesty should be banned mercilessly' (Author, year p.). Ominously, it states that 'the personnel of the censorship was an important matter.' By 1925 statements from the Catholic hierarchy castigating the dancehall were common and this message was reinforced and spread by the conservative media. If left unsupervised these places could be the 'most dangerous source of corruption in the country' (Gibbons, 1996 p.).

Before the introduction of the Act, a cohort of hard-line 'Gaels' firmly held the attitude that the influence of detrimental foreign culture epitomised by 'jazz' should be held at bay and it was the responsibility of those of Fianna Fáil to enforce the policing of these boundaries. A letter to the *Anglo-Celt* newspaper by such a Gael warns of lax policing in this regard. He lists the increase of 'jazz affairs' in Catholic College reunions, diocesan dances, and dances in connection with business houses (*Anglo-Celt,* 1982 p.).

Lamenting that it seems that 'a Gael cannot go to any entertainment that is not all jazz' while fuming at the accusations of narrow-mindedness and bigotry, he is confronted with enduring the encroachment of dances other than Irish at Irish classes. His exasperation reaches a peak when he realises that a jazz event is to take place in Dublin under the auspices of Fianna Fáil on 'of all days in the year on the National Festival.' Of this final straw he asks, 'Is the encouragement of jazz dancing not against the constitution of Fianna Fail?' (*Anglo-Celt,* 1928 p.).

A report on a Ceilidh Mor in the *Donegal News* in 1944 further illustrates the threat of the outside embodied in foreign sounds and how this was managed by a reliance on Gaels in repelling the threat. The MC or 'Fear an Tioghe,' a Mr. Gallaher, paid tribute to the Gaels of Mount Charles who were available to be called upon 'when danger

threatened.' The paper reports applause at the end of the tribute where it was said that, 'The days of the negro jazz are practically numbered in this district, and the time is not too distant when "Jazz" and all the other denationalising and demoralising influences will be swept from our land' (*Donegal News*, 1944).

By the sixties, to form a group inspired by the likes of the anti-Establishment image of The Rolling Stones was to be aware that the territory of the traditional dancehall was firmly Establishment territory. New arenas representative of modern youth in the Free State would be required.[47] (The pop-cultural gap of the late 40s and early 50s between Donegal and its close (English) neighbour Derry was significantly wide. While Donegal held chaste dances, the Derry youth were able to access what was to be rock and roll through the conduit of Derry port. As a UK military port the American sailors contributed to a juke box culture held by local youth (McCafferty, 1996 p.178).

Haran was conscious of the lack of contemporary material representing his agenda on Irish radio. The impact of record singles in the sixties was a vital one. They were two and a half minute manifestos of style and attitude that could only be sourced on foreign airwaves and mail order. Although domestic record sales were healthy, the bulk of the product for an Irish audience would have supplied an alternative manifesto of conservatism in songs that merged Irish airs with the reassurance of conservative American country stylings.

The inherent parochialism in the domestic market was compounded by the long-standing trend and popularity of the place song. This was instigated by the singer Larry Cunningham whose song 'Lovely Leitrim' became a template for showband 'slow sets.' Domestic sales of ballads referencing townlands could often reach tens of thousands. These record singles were often available on the ticket desk of the dancehall appearing to be sold by the very singer on stage that night. Meanwhile in Limerick, domestic reel to reel tape recorders were used to record music from the pirate stations to learn the chords for when a constant wait for the record itself would prove too long.

By 1966 Haran was confident enough to begin to style the group himself to reflect the Mod ethos of claiming outside sources to contest conservatism in the social arena. In a calculated act of rebuke to the 'shiny suited' showbands, he dressed the band in the twenties style of American gangsters using pinstriped suits and hats sourced from Limerick's Army Surplus store. The coded message was understood by the youth who saw it as confrontation, but also appreciated it as Mod style. This sourcing of new uniforms from old was an established youth practice of dress for the English scene initiated mainly by the Teddy Boys who re-tailored Edwardian dress as gang style. This type of 'bricolage' or appropriation specific to this time is a recognised socio-political act by the way one form of commodities is subverted by symbolically placing them in a different context and stripping them of their designated 'straight' purpose.

In choosing this flamboyant apparel, Haran also played with the potent Irish image of the 'returned yank.' This celebrated figure usually embodied the returned emigrant and symbolised an entrenched romantic notion of making it abroad but never at home. Haran, dressed as half gangster and half Tammany Hall Irishman, was constructing a parody of this worn yet potent narrative.

47 Quote: The Freemans Journal February 6 1922. From storify.com/ Limerick 1914/Ireland-s-attitude-to unmarried-mothers. Published 18 June 2014.
Gibbons, L. (1996) Transformations in Irish culture. Notre Dame, Ind.:Univ. of Notre Dame Press. Quoted in Class Conflict in South Leitrim Stephen Ryan P 22. Also (Clergy and a Hall, 1928).

Figure 18
Cha Haran. Limerick, 1965.
Cha Haran archive.

The English critic and style historian, Peter York, states that the significance of bricolage is embedded in resistance, 'if all that you owned was your threads and your music then you could "work with that" (year, p.). York is referring here to an outsider as a public image not tied by conventional uniform to an institution. In post-war fifties London the very act of walking in full Teddy boy dress alongside a group of tradesmen or bankers was fraught with contention. The Teddy boy dress was the complete repudiation of this. Patrolling the urban public area with a non-conformist agenda held its impact in its original London setting until the concept was commodified in the late sixties and became a British export in music and cinema.

York makes the distinction between the fashion statements of the working class and the choices made by the rebel fashions of the middle class. This reclamation differs from Limerick examples that would be referencing a version of youth rebellion that was not class-based. Yet a version of the Teddy boy patrolled Limerick in the sixties and inevitably this Irish Ted took an instant dislike to the Irish Mod.

Haran confirms this was part of the then rites of change. As well as a generational reaction by one tribe to another, it also involved a clash of identity and territory in regards to the general environment of Limerick. Street uniforms that signified allegiance to the specifics of change became necessary. The mods, as ever, were the most attuned outfitters.

To understand the complexity of this coding one had to be young and involved in generating variants of the style for yourself and the group. One example would be the English mods' adoption of the army surplus fishtailed parka. This distinctive cloak was a visual acknowledgment of the continuing American military presence in England as their cultural resource for imported music and style. Combining the parka with a sharp Italian

suit simply communicated the mods' respect for a combination of Black American soul and European modernism.

In Ireland, the few Army surplus stores did not register as a vital resource for 'gear' but their existence as a go-to spot for the times were essential all the same. In the mid-sixties the rural youth who frequented the dancehall would not have seen the surplus store as a place to visit to dress for the weekend. Their dress code held a respect for the embedded courting rituals signified in the 'Sunday suit' for the men and the 'best dress' for the women. The staged rigidity of posed women in features titled 'Beauties from the Ballrooms' was a typical feature in the Irish issue of Woman's Way.

Freelance photographers worked the city dancehalls at the weekends as it was expected that a record of the night would 'make a good picture' and there would be a demand for this. The conservative poses in these images legitimised one's participation in the night as being respectable. The social gap contrast between these 'classy' poses and the snapshots taken by Haran's peers in the Go-Go Club is wide. The former hold

Figure 19
Club A-Go-Go, 1966.

CLUB A-GO-GO UPSTAIRS1966 KEVIN FLANNAGAN,DAVE BROWNE,JOHN O'MAHONY[TULLA]

the appearance of social aspiration, while the latter document the social species of a time and place. The appearance of couples or 'young adults' in the classy images remained unchanged from the late forties to the late sixties until acceptable versions of the Mod look (the mini skirt for example) finally relegated the increasingly staged look as arch conservative.

As he developed a public persona on stage, Haran understood that the simplest visual redirection had impact and each performance was an opportunity for cultural commentary. As a modernist he confronted the codes that sought to extend the conservatism of the post-war social arena for another generation. He constantly sought to challenge the psychology of the conservative shrine embodied in the dancehall to

the extent that he designed confrontation as performance. Haran was instinctively aware of the nature of his art and how it could only be formed in a dialogue with an audience. Marshall McLuchan outlined this activity as an essential journey for identity, 'The quest for identity goes along with this bumping into people to find out "who am I?" "How much identity can I discover I possess by simply banging into other people?" It's a series of adventures and encounters that create all sorts of disturbances' (McLuchan, year p.). A musician, according to McLuchan 'sets a trap for your attention. That is the nature of art. Dialogue is an encounter with people and situations' (McLuchan, 1979).

On stage with his band Granny's Intentions in Cork circa 1966, on an early support slot for a showband, Haran chose to wear a Californian styled 'Hippy' poncho. This would have been a familiar counterculture reference for the bands' street followers, but alien to those night's showband audience who would have possible associated it with the image of a Native American. As such, Haran was playing the fixed image of the safe

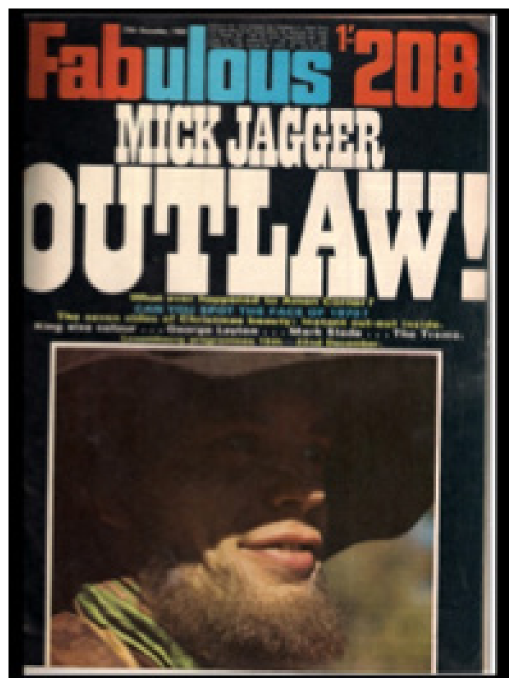

Figure 20
FAB 208 December 1970. *Mick Jagger in character in the film Ned Kelly of that year. One scene features a homecoming to "a wild Irish reel." Kelly was Irish-Australian.*

Hollywood cowboy (the showband star) the dangerous 'Red Indian' (the rebel Mod.) Attired as such, he vividly remembers the confusion created on the mixed crowd of young and old. Playing on this incongruity, The Grannies struck up the intro to a country and western Larry Cunningham anthem. This accentuated the confusion before the band sacrilegiously segued into a raucous English beat number such as The Kinks, *You Really Got Me* (Haran, 2014).

Sonically, the Irish modernism of The Grannies speaks volumes. In the cut of that short transitional performance the band presented an antagonistic and deliberate act

of confrontation. It brought to the fore the compliance of an unquestioning community trapped as such in the then culture of the Catholic dancehall. This was their intention and they repeated that provocation many times. Their 'bit of country' statement then existed to call out the prescribed nature of the country dancehall. The 'bit of country' routine was also a rebuke by the band to the practice of having to operate within the early 'scrap' slots tossed to the beat groups by the showbands. The evident dominance of the showbands within the entertainment business was manifest in the power to delegate rankings. The showbands and their managers had little interest in any revolutionary or overt social agenda hinted at by the beat bands. Music was a commodity that supported the social structure of the halls and this was a model that did not invite complexity. Showbands were content to own the national circuit and operate in partnership with the owners of the halls and recognise any church involvement if it came to the fore. Beat music fans regarded this conservatism as reductive and biased, if not somewhat corrupt. As underdogs, the beat audience supported any music-based broadsides against the Establishment as legitimate, and in regards to the status of the Catholic ethos embodied in the commercial dancehall, it became necessary to address the role of the showband personality, as demonstrated by The Grannies, even if it had to be parody.

By 1967 a surface reading of the new age by the showbands simplified the new age and commercialised it for audiences. In his biography, Derek Dean of The Freshmen showband reflects on a particular desire for the new age in the context of the ballroom:

> We looked across the Atlantic in awe as our American leaders spoke of the new dispensation of free love, the blossom bonanza – peace man, not war – and made beautiful music, all at the same time. What a winning combo. People were experimenting with altered states of the mind and new gurus arrived on the scene to preach and spread the gospel of love. Every town in Ireland vied with the Golden Gate city to host the love-fest, and in ballrooms all over the land, singers, including myself, were encouraging the wearing of hair flowers and as little else as possible (Dean, 2007 p. 186-187).

Dean's rudimentary assessment of a new era here was obviously not as politically determined as Haran's. It was a new age of simplistic opportunity packaged as fashion.

> It was the in thing to profess this new dogma, this cool theology of the hip. We didn't need governments of greedy politicians to steer the planet to survival: it would be done with a good mix of blow, speed, beer, melody, sex and liberation. This was all the healing you would ever need (Dean, 2007 p. 186-187).

The singer who most represented acceptable Establishment ideals is the renowned 'country and Irish' singer Larry Cunningham. This singer, from County Leitrim, more than any other showband figure represented the conservatism of the previous generation. Due to his immense popularity with a rural audience and the influence of his reductive

sound on the landscape he was a profile target for the beat agenda. He personified the cultural compromise and compliance of the audience within the dancehall. Cunningham's success as a performer lay in his transposition of the sound of romantic longing sourced from American country and western music. His sentimental rendering of the American cowboy ballad came to be internationally recognised as the sound of country and Irish. Updated versions of 'honky tonk' Americanisms continue to mutate but the core association of country and Irish with an unchanging rural conservatism remains.

In October 2012, at the time of Cunningham's death, a Limerick blogger called Bock the Robber contemplated his legacy. Bock pointed to the adoption of the commodity of the Irish-American translation of the sentimental ballad. 'It had a profound effect on the Irish,' he says, 'this attempt to render a nation childlike, pliable and unquestioning, and it had a side effect. It gave our grandfathers a deep affinity for the myth of the Old West that was under construction at the same time and for the same purpose: to hide the truth' (Bock the Robber, year).

In Ireland's case, the unwelcome truth was that adult, mature ideas existed in the wide world beyond our sainted borders, while in the American case, the truth was that the heroic Old West was built on genocide. Both truths needed to be obliterated" Cunningham had found the template for a sound that resonated with an Irish audience at home and abroad. He sourced Reeves's unknown 'cowboy songs' from scarce records and reduced their simplicity even further for a rural audience. The 'homestead referencing' low sung ballad was to have a huge consequence for post 50s Irish storytelling. On a visit to Limerick in 1964, Reeves was not billed in the Limerick press as a country and western singer, but simply as a 'western' singer.

These melodic reassurances became a trademark for the main performers such as Cunningham. In celebrating those who had seen off both the 60s and the declining classic showband era, audiences venerated Cunningham in the 1980s as a force of reassurance. His gentle songs, often referencing specific townlands, became reassuring anthems that functioned as a rural standard. These songs operated as type of social metronome that transcended the threat of change. His performance for the Irish diaspora in England was hugely popular in no small way to his repertoire of place songs (Gilmore, 2009).

A musical artefact that illustrates the desire for a never changing cultural landscape resides in the 1971 release of a cover of the 'traditional' song, *O Holy Night*, by noted Limerick showband singer Tommy Drennan. Drennan sings on the first verse as a boy soprano originally recorded in 1953 in Mount St. Alphonsus Church in Limerick, during Christmas carols. The second verse was recorded when Drennan was a dancehall star singing with a Limerick showband called The Monarchs. *O Holy Night* was the 1971 Christmas number one with its success wrapped in a very Irish type of commercial Christian symbolism. The unusual and perhaps unique nature of the recording functioned as a type of historical shorthand. The song evokes time standing still in its combination of a religious subject matter that is facilitated by a contained cultural package. It references the type of limbo that existed between the 1950s and the 1970s;

a pop-cultural stasis whose reassurance for traditionalists was welcomed on each hearing.

In the 60s Irish showbands staked a sole ownership of the dancehall heartland in uniformed 'Irish Palaces' built just for them. A sense of entitlement prevailed to the extent that the bond between the event, community and landscape allowed the practitioners to believe that their reductionism represented a type of authorised 'Irish music.' The noted participation of local councillors and public representatives who had a commercial stake in the dancehall trade encouraged reductionism for management purposes. A collective consensus was formed, 'a rural cocoon' according to Limerick-born broadcaster Terry Wogan. In a 1964 book on the Royal Showband, *The Brendan Bowyer Saga* by Gus Smith, Wogan states that, 'The truth of the matter is that the showbands are sensitive to criticism, mainly because they have grown up in what I like to describe as a protective laudatory cocoon and look perhaps upon those who criticise bands as 'knockers' and maybe worse, as anti-Irish' (1964 p.). The showband supporters are recorded addressing the issue of what constitutes contemporary music as evidenced in this excerpt from a 1968 letter to the RTÉ Guide, the house magazine of the national broadcaster.;

> I have never written to a newspaper before, and didn't think anything would ever move me to write. I regret that it should be in annoyance and not satisfaction that motivates me. Last week's television programme, 20 Minutes With Granny's Intentions, was disgraceful. I am as partial as the next (I am only twenty) to pop music, but I would emphasise the word "music" which is I presume what Granny's Intentions thought they were making in this programme. In last week's programme I could hear neither words nor music. The songs took second place to the gyrations of the lead singer in the intrusive, eccentric lighting of the set. Mind you, I am prepared to believe that the lighting man (or director) realised that Granny's Intentions were so bad they couldn't carry on the programme without gimmicks. What a pity (O' Halloran, 2006 p.168).

In 1964 a clash of cultures did occur between the old and the new. The ground was the influential *Late Late Show* in 1964 and the topic was the reputed drug culture being fostered in venues that hosted the new Irish beat bands. On this particular show a member of the GreenBeats, a popular beat group, accompanied by a beat club manager was pitted against representatives of the Irish Ballroom Owners Association. The format was the Establishment versus the hipsters with the ballroom owner's righteousness being the dominant tone. The imported beat clubs were drug dens and cleansing was needed. After a period of subjection, singer Jimmy Dunne of the Greenbelts turned to the host Gay Byrne saying 'You've just been subjected to a load of lies and rubbish that the public of Ireland are expected to swallow' (year).

A measure of Byrne's stewardship is not recorded but his choice in inviting the ballroom owners as the voice of authority suggests certain sympathies and awareness of his rural dancehall audience. An account of this incident is taken from Darragh

O'Halloran's comprehensive history of the Irish beat scene *The Green Beat.* The segment ends with Dunne's summary of the event 'drugs were non-existent (then). It was the ballroom manager's effort to kill off this rising thing' (year p.).

In 1969, the Cork band Dr Strangely Strange embedded a beat/psychedelic communiqué in their song *Donnybrook Fair.* Lamenting a platform for disenfranchised freethinking Irish youth, it appropriated some blame to a fictional showband called "The Mighty Cretin Showband". They sung of 'the pike men being led from the rear, while nobody notices the unicorn quietly standing there' (author, year). This was a pointed reference to Cunningham's 1969 band called The Mighty Avon's. Another beat broadside came from the Dublin beat psychedelic group Skid Row whose Irish album Skid (1970) contains the track, *Un Co Op Showband Blues.* In the song, the singer and writer Brush Shields equates participation within the confines of a showband as a type of slavery (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2012).[48]

The modernism inherent of the 60s Irish beat scene formed cultural lines that pitted the Establishment against a seemingly degenerate strain of anti-authority that it appeared to suggest. Gerry L'Estrange TD (representing Westmeath, the country and Irish music heartland) spoke in the Dáil castigating the nascent beat scene from a 'moral and health' point of view.

Contemporary commentary on the beat scene frequently positions its cultural importance and anti-Establishment artistry as socially significant. The singer Paul Brady, on the occasion of a commemorative portrait exhibition, 20 Men Who Brought Rock to Ireland, told *The Sunday Times* in 2009 that 'because we were on the fringes of society, both stylistically and musically, a lot of what went on was poorly documented, as if the mainstream media didn't pay it a lot of attention' (*The Sunday Times,* 2009 p.). In 2012 one of the original Irish punk bands, The Radiators, deemed it necessary to record an album of Irish beat songs due to their relative obscurity. In a supportive review, the writer Declan Lynch referred to the original impact of the Irish beat movement, 'Naturally, because the beat scene was good, official Ireland tried to destroy it' (Lynch, year p.).

By 1965, Haran was committed to the potential of what it meant to be an Irish Mod. He organised and played in Limerick beat bands and became ambassador for the Limerick scene. He played regularly in Dublin and Cork before moving with Granny's Intentions to Dublin. A turning point for Granny's Intentions was their support slot to a highly regarded Dublin Mod band called the Chosen Few in the Caroline Club in Glasthule, Dun Laoghaire. This a nightclub owned by Ronan O'Rahilly, the then young Irish owner of Radio Caroline. The significance of Radio Caroline and its reputation as a resource for Irish and British youth remained consistently high until its demise. O'Rahilly's club was one of approximately twelve clubs that comprised the city's beat circuit (this was the legacy of the 1963 Dublin visit by the Beatles.) These clubs had a privileged façade as they were hosted by suburban rugby or tennis organisations and contrasted with the grittier commercial city centre venues.

The Intentions, now Granny's Intentions, were regarded as serious contenders and ambassadors for the Irish Mod scene within with the community that followed the circuit. A description of them by a regular at the club has them confidently attired in

48 The 1971 footage of Brush Shields playing Un Co Op Showband Blues)https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNyurzLGXU8 Accessed June 2014

'floral waistcoats and granny specs' channelling the prime English look as held by Mod royalty such as The Small Faces. In 1967 the band moved to London and gigged in the transitioning post Mod circles. There they embraced the dominant strand of Mod movement, which by now, and with American influences, had transitioned into what was recognised as the psychedelic movement (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2012 p.55).[49]

These socio- cultural consequences of the transition from Mod to psychedelic involved the negotiation of both a combination of consumerism and the introduction of more overt political themes. The American youth's transition from beat follower to 'hippie' impacted on the London scene as definitions of the politic of the self interacted with the internationalism of the civil rights movement.

Haran left Granny's Intentions and moved back to a relatively unchanged Limerick in 1968. With his wife operating as a clothes designer he opened one of Ireland's only clothes shop/boutique that was based on the contemporary London model. The shop was called The Little Ellen Boutique and was situated in Ellen Street in Limerick's city centre. The stock referenced the hybrid countercultural fashions of California via Carnaby Street, particularly the famed London boutiques Granny Takes a Trip and Biba of South Kensington Street. Some stock came from London but some items were bespoke Limerick created by Haran's wife Maureen who was inspired by the continuing conduit provided by the counterculture and documented in the magazines.

The Little Ellen quickly became a hub for an alternative street scene. The boutique was the first retail premises to include in-store music with a selection of contemporary sounds (a mixture of American and British psychedelic, music) being played on a record player that featured as part of the décor. The design of the space featured other deliberately conceptual touches, notably a minimal window installation commissioned from a Limerick artist Mick O'Sullivan who painted a ten inch by eight inches window white with blue light as an edging to give the impression of a huge television screen. A spectacular façade for such a premises was key and Haran referenced the ever changing dramatic London facades created by Nigel Waymouth circa 1966 for Granny Takes a Trip (Green, 1998 p.220). As it looked like no other retail space, its presence functioned as a beacon and a repository for the still evolving desire of the classic imported countercultural model. The look sold by the shop also accommodated the American rebel style that dominated in the seventies. This was a look familiar from record covers and TV as the longhaired fringed jacketed outsider had currency as a trope in the narratives of imported American police dramas. In the seventies, popular TV shows such as *Cannon* and *Kojak* often portrayed the outsider as countercultural detritus, anti-social characters. These TV shows perpetrated the workings of foreign systems of authority dealing with the outsider just as the previous cowboy shows did for Irish TV audiences of the early sixties. For the seventies, the binary systems of justice and power played out in these police dramas were simply transcribed Establishment territory to urban areas.[50]

Haran extended the shop's ethos further by staging an event associated with the shop in a traditional Limerick City centre theatre. For the event, he featured possibly the only psychedelic lightshow, along the lines of the ones done by the famed Boyle Family

49 The Chosen Few also made the journey to London. They changed their name to Eire Apparent and ended up being mentored by the psychedelic figurehead Jimi Hendrix.

in Notting Hill, ever seen in Limerick. The significance of this must include the fact that this projection was brought to Limerick for the night by two of the primary movers of Dublin's beat and rock scene: Phil Lynott of Thin Lizzy and Skid Row's Brush Shields. Regarded in English terms, a lightshow production at this level signified a 'hippy' led contemporary space such as Notting Hill. Haran wanted the physicality of the imagined meeting places one had read about in the magazines since the sixties for the event. With these tropes, his show was intended to suggest the ideal of countercultural space. Also Limerick, being a sole outpost for the counterculture at the edge of Europe, was physically the last such spot before America.

The unusual presence of Miss Ellen would have also registered in conventional civic conversation. This was an immediately successful retail space that functioned on a foreign ethos and was run by a returned emigrant who represented a full engagement with the countercultur. That in itself was both uncommon and unusual as it broke with the contemporary convention of the returnee of the time. As the 1955 Commission on Emigration stated, post-war emigration had become 'a part of the generally accepted pattern of life' (reference for Commission). This pattern is often described in reductive terms where the returned youth merges back into the landscape and continues as before. In returning as a practicing modernist, Haran reacted to the set role of the emigrant and the enforced concept of exile, 'this significant ingredient of Irish consciousness' familiar to his generation.

Figure 21
Pink Floyd and Granny's Intentions circa 1968.

Haran continue to play to this day in Limerick (2016) and occasionally seeks to reopen the original club spaces created by his generation to reintroduce the attitude of community inherent in those times for a present generation of youth. He also maintains a network of contacts with other members of the original scene for occasional collaborations. As a youth-centred modernist he recognised a system of international references for application for Limerick space and in the application of these references he transcended the spatial and temporal boundaries of his influences. In that sense the cut that Haran and others made with post-war Ireland was not wholly generational in

50 One of the most popular US serials actually depicted the adventures of a Texas Marshall, on horseback, solving crime in New York. The actor Dennis Weaver played Marshall Sam McCloud from 1970-1977.

that his template as inspiration remains for contemporary Limerick Youth.

The activity of 1968–1973, disparate as it seems in conventional retrospect, drew on the open-ended nature of an international counterculture to exercise agency for creative communication. In the Limerick of that era it can be said that such activity exercises what the political theorist Chantal Mouffe described as a condition of 'agonism' (as distinct from antagonism) where 'adversaries may share common symbolic space, within which conflict can take place' (2006 p.151-171 and De Certeau, 2001).

In contemporary terms, social acts of resistance that contest dominant ideologies are a form of social practice in which creative intervention shapes and affirms specific communities. Creative responses are therefore political documents validated by the response of the citizen.

Looking at the space of Limerick as key, the case should be made that the resonance from this era's activity is a distinct part of the city's cultural identity. Limerick in 1968–1973 is not a stop on a road where the retrospective fashionable re-shaping of psychedelia is positioned as a colourful backdrop for utopian wishing associated with understanding that era. Psychedelia and beat related activity were tools for Limerick Youth to make the cut, not only with their previous generation's social habits, but also with the promise of a specific future.

Registering all of this invites a re-visiting of an amount of under-represented activity that is focused through the lens of 1968–1973. Material gleaned from such representation can be directed towards the creation of new archives, as well as re-animating contemporary discussions on the weight and forms of resistance that reference an underground perspective specific to Limerick space.

In April 2014 at a Making the Cut workshop, veterans of the Limerick 1968–1973 scene spoke to a group of contemporary youth on how the styles of non-conformity may change but the ethos of non-conformity will always transcend style. Greg O'Shaughnessy reminded the youth that 'this conversation is not about how one generation reacted to Limerick back then versus how today's teenagers react to Limerick now. It's not a generational thing at all it's about a universal process of identity that must always question what is in front of you and do you want it to be there' (year p.).

Figure 22
Student Protest,
Limerick, 1968.
Limerick Leader archive.