



‘Cold reception of his last beautiful work’

This is from a review of a lecture by William Forde (c.1795-1850) given on the very day of Bunting’s death. Forde was a Cork-born musician who put together a large collection of traditional melodies which survives as the Forde-Pigot Collection of Irish Music in the Royal Irish Academy Dublin. This is the relevant Bunting reference from that newspaper review.

From the *Cork Examiner*, Friday 29 December 1843, page 2 (paragraphs are editorial!):

THE MUSIC OF IRELAND

A man to whom Ireland is much indebted died last week in Dublin. Mr. BUNTING was the first who drew the Irish Melodies from obscurity and neglect, and placed them in the rank they ought to hold as works of art, reflecting honour on the country which produced them.

Assisted by some eminent poets he published a volume of Irish music united with English words. [THOMAS] CAMPBELL, WALTER SCOTT, JOANNA BAILLIE [a mistake for Miss Balfour!], and others contributed to the work. It was the success of this publication which suggested the great national monument of Irish musical genius which Moore has built in materials more durable than stone or brass.

Mr. BUNTING’s advanced age, and the cold reception of his last beautiful work on Irish Music, gave reason to fear that the Melodies of our country must soon lose their ardent reviver, and that with him would expire the hope that able musicians would be induced to give attention to the subject.

But a successor has been found, in every way competent to continue in the course opened by the lamented BUNTING. By a remarkable coincidence that Mr. FORDE’s first lecture was delivered on the very day of his predecessor’s death. His views of the nature and history of Irish Music are much more extensive than any before offered to the public. The method of practical illustration which he has adopted, rendered his lecture a complete and most interesting performance, if considered merely with regard to Music. At the same time he entered into a wide field of history and probable conjecture in confirmation of opinions marked with novelty and interest. ...

Transcribed by David Byers, 1 May 2018, Belfast.