



Report of the general meeting of the Irish Harp Society in Belfast, November 1808

Belfast News-Letter, Tuesday 1 November 1808, page 3 (also 28 October, page 3)



Belfast News-Letter, Friday 4 November 1808, page 2

IRISH HARP SOCIETY

A general meeting of the Subscribers to this Society was held pursuant to public notice, last Tuesday evening. After electing the Committee and Officers for the ensuing half year, and transacting further incidental business, an account of the affairs of the Society was laid before the meeting. From this it appears, that this attempt to revive and perpetuate the ancient national melodies on the favourite instrument of Ireland promises fair for success.

A school has been formed under the auspices of the Society, in which twelve blind children or a greater number when the funds permit, are to be instructed on the Harp, by the celebrated ARTHUR O'NEILL, one of the last of the Irish Bards. Some of his pupils appeared before the meeting, and their improvement during the short time they have received instructions was much admired, and reflected great credit on their aged teacher. It is a pleasing reflection to the friend of man, that the love of music and the national spirit should be thus rendered subservient to the finest feelings of humanity.

An asylum is here opened in which the declining years of a venerable son of harmony, whose strains have so often added a new zest to the banquet of conviviality, or soothed the swelling tide of sorrow, is sheltered from the cares and calamities too often attendant on superannuated genius; in which also a number of helpless children, whose existence would otherwise have been painful to themselves and burdensome to Society, find some consolation for the deprivation of one sense by a superior enjoyment of the pleasures of another.

It is sincerely to be hoped that the good will of the public may go along with the funds of this Society, both in discovering proper objects for its patronage, and in furthering it with means adequate to carry into complete effect the desirable ends of its formation.

Two harps, the workmanship of an ingenious mechanic in this town, were exhibited at the meeting; and we are informed that several more are now making by the artist who has built two organs in this town, and will be ready for exhibition at the next meeting.

We hail the day when the Irish harp will once more be the fashionable instrument in the hands of the Irish Ladies, and shall reflect, with mingled emotions of pride and pleasure, that this revival of the music of our forefathers emanated from the town of Belfast.