

3 The Hungry Voice

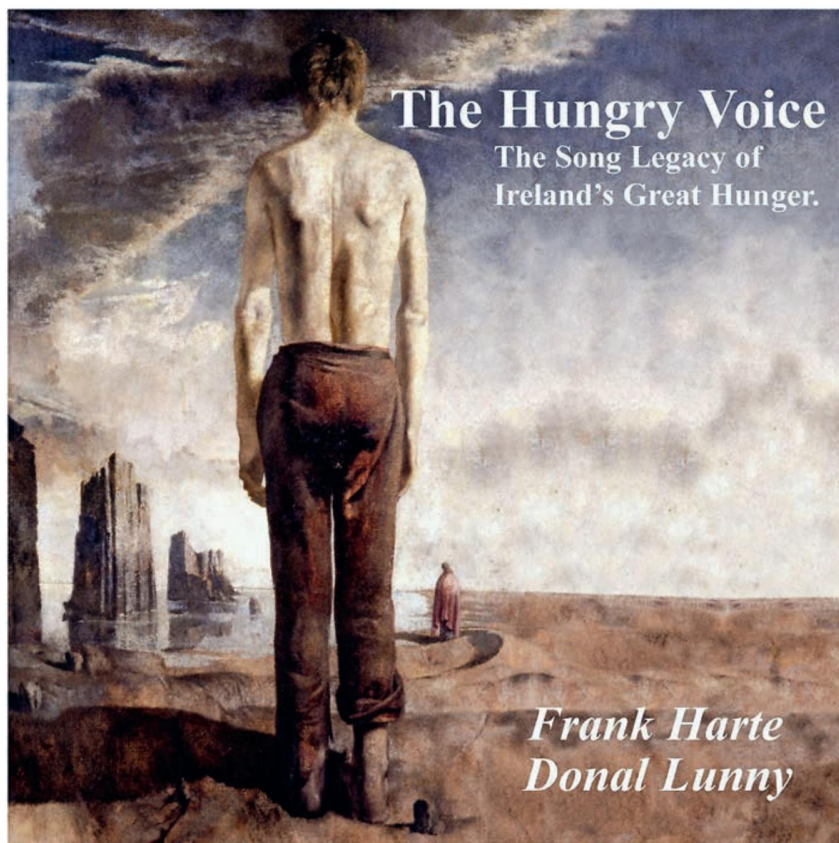
A. Observe the CD cover and describe it (title, colours, representation, message).

B. Read the text. Why did Declan O'Rourke record an album about famine?

Why do such songs have a "contemporary resonance" (l. 13)?

C. Go further. Say what Frank Harte means when he says "Those in power write the history, while those who suffer write the songs." (l. 6). Can you think of other examples that illustrate this quote?

D. At home. Go on the Internet and listen to *Along the Western Seaboard* by Declan O'Rourke. Share your impressions with the class. Can songs help to keep history alive?



HELP!

Nouns

- ballad = sentimental song
- lament: *complainte*
- silhouette
- desolation
- loneliness
- death
- shading off: *dégradé*

Adjectives

- melancholic
- depressed
- bare-chested: *torse nu*
- skeletal
- doomed: *condamné(e)*
- deserted /dɪ'zɜ:tɪd/

Verbs & expressions

- starve to death
- leave one's land
- emigrate

"There are very few songs about the famine¹ anyway. Musically, I think it was skipped over." [...]

O'Rourke just kept reading and reading. About 25 books.

And the more he read, the more he came to the understanding
5 that, as the late Dublin singer and song collector Frank Harte said: "Those in power write the history, while those who suffer write the songs."

"History books are full of academic renderings of the information and I wanted [my work] to be personal accounts," he says. "That's
10 the kind of thing I was searching for, and that was the stuff that there was the least amount of in the books I read."

One of the most striking aspects of listening to these deeply lyrical songs of loss, of longing and of forced exile is their contemporary resonance.

[...]

¹ The Irish Potato Famine (1845-1852): a fungus destroyed the plantations and caused numerous deaths due to starvation and disease (almost 2 million). The number of Irish who emigrated to the United States during the famine may have reached 2 million.

Siobhan Long, *The Irish Times*, 30 October 2017