

## *ARCHIE'S ADVICE TO IRTRAD*

once upon a time  
there was a happy mailing list  
that talked about irish music  
where everyone loved each other  
or wait maybe that s too strong  
everyone respected one another  
or wait another minute that s not right either  
okay then how about this  
colon  
everyone put up with one another  
more or less  
and there were the occasional little disagreements  
carried out in a gentlemanly slash womanly way  
but the amount of acrimonious commentary  
was low  
and only one guy had the capability  
of p asterisk asterisk ing everybody off  
and i do mean everybody  
once in a while  
but he went somewhere else  
thanks be to god  
and we talked about tunes and modes and groups  
and cars and school and good things to eat  
oops sorry that s another list  
the britney spears fanclub list  
to which i also belong and no more need be said  
on that particular topic  
but getting back to the irish music list  
as i said it was mostly pretty cool  
but then something grotesque happened  
and the way i figure it our beloved planet  
must have passed through the tail of a comet  
and humanity breathed in a hell of a lot

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of noxious something or other  
undetectable by the usual instruments  
and stuff started falling apart  
and people didn't even pretend to like  
or respect each other  
and there were big wars  
and little wars  
and little little wars  
some of them were necessary  
i suppose  
but most were not  
a music mailing list isn't the place  
i humbly submit  
for even the tiniest war  
the vast booming sound we have heard  
all too often recently  
is the unhappy sound  
of inflated egos crashing  
off one another  
like beachballs of pride  
parenthesis  
if i may be permitted the use  
of a simile in this place and time  
close parenthesis  
the hissing noise that comes  
from your faithful computer  
is the serpentine sound of scorn  
and dislike  
and dare i say comma in some cases comma  
envy question mark  
discussion of the ornamentation  
on b c boxes  
for example  
need not be the occasion for

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vast expenditure of scornful wildean wit  
not to mention precious  
broadband  
a simple question  
about e period g period wexford trombone styles  
need not result  
in threats of banishment  
or serious bodily harm  
or innuendi about an individual s  
sanity or sexual proclivities  
not every exchange  
between rational individuals  
need degenerate into  
a three stooges cyber hyphen shtick  
if you will pardon  
the exotic reference  
maybe the old saw  
about not making ourselves look good  
when we make somebody else look silly  
is appropriate  
carriage return line feed  
so for heaven s sake  
let s lay off the  
posturing  
let s call a halt  
to the backbiting  
let s agree that we all make  
typographical errors  
and similar faulty judgements  
and move on with our lives  
as mehitabel the cat said to me the other night  
as she elegantly nibbled a fish head  
outside the local session pub  
where tunes were going hot and heavy

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archie i cannot for the life of me see  
what these eejits have to fight about  
even in my days as cleopatra  
there was never music like that  
when i was marie antoinette  
it was nothing but quadrilles  
and danses macabres  
whatever they were  
begod i d have given my emerald tiara  
of which i had several  
or a couple pounds of steak tartare  
from the famed kitchens of versailles  
for a ballyvourney jig set  
sigh  
what can there be  
for them to fight about  
question mark  
although mehitabel s moral code  
is comma to put it kindly comma  
flexible  
her assessment of the present situation  
is as usual correct  
and when i last saw her  
she was capering down the street  
in the cold moonlight  
trying to do a hornpipe step  
on her three and a half legs  
exclamation point  
although i am a cockroach  
i respectfully recommend  
that you irtrad types  
heed her words carefully  
or risk losing something  
that shouldn t be lost

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the choice is yours  
exclamation point  
carriage return line feed  
yours for more light comma less noise comma  
and occasional application  
of the golden rule  
archie

with apologies to don marquis