

COMMERCIAL DISCOURSE, IRTRAD STYLE

Folks who are interested in Irish traditional music are fortunate to have a mailing list called IRTRAD to exchange information, opinions, insults, and other verbalizations. The exchanges can get a little heated at times. I wrote this little piece in 2001 after someone had posted a notice of an instrument for sale and all hell broke loose! (Each paragraph represents a separate post to the list. No real names or instruments have been used for fear of unpleasant legal consequences.)

> I have a thirteen-rowed Sopraducci claviola for sale. A few buttons are missing and there are a couple of bent keys, but otherwise it's in good shape and it sounds OK. Price is \$600 firm. Contact me off-list if interested.

>> Are you sure it's thirteen rows? I thought Sopraducci only made twelve-row claviolas. What makes you so sure it's a Sopraducci?

> It says in big shiny tasteless letters across the front: Sopraducci. By the way, I counted the rows again, twice - yep, thirteen.

>> Sounds fishy to me. Any chance it's a counterfeit? Where was it made?

> I pried off the front panel and there's a label that says "Veramente Fatto in Genoa per Guido Sopraducci e Figli". My wife's godmother says that means "Truly made in Genoa by Guido Sopraducci and Sons." By the way I needed a ball-peen hammer to get the label back on - I hope you're satisfied.

>> Whoa! Sopraducci the claviola maker was ALFREDO, not Guido. Guido ran a fruit and vegetable business in Livorno. Never made an claviola in his life and in fact said a number of very uncharitable things about them. What the hell kind of scam are you trying to pull on us anyway?

> It isn't a scam. This is a genuine Sopraducci - I don't care who made it. Hey, listen - if you're interested, contact me. If you just want to show off your extensive knowledge of claviolas, you're wasting everyone's time.

>> What do you mean "everyone"? What are you, Mr. List Spokesperson? Funny though - when I get close to the issue of whether this is a genuine Sopraducci claviola, you get really defensive...guilty conscience at work?

> Guilty conscience? Hey, it wasn't ME who informed the List about three weeks ago that Michael Coleman was still alive and living in Las Vegas. It

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wasn't ME trying to put a tour together to visit him. I know at least 23 people who sent you money and are STILL waiting for their refunds.

>> All right, so I made a mistake. Who are you, Mr. Perfect? Stealing valuable bandwidth trying to hawk your bogus instrument for a ridiculous price - people like you literally make me sick.

> You'll be really sick when I stick a baseball bat down your throat, you pompous cretin. If I knew what smelly vermin-infested burrow you lived in, I'd flood it with cheap gasoline and toss in a match.

>> You and what division of the Taliban, creep? I ask you a few honest questions about this piece of bat excrement you're trying to sell and next thing you know, unwarranted personal threats!

> I can't deal with this. Good-bye, List.

>> Good riddance to you, you thieving son of an owl-stuffing lesbian. I'm quitting the List too and I hope I'm off it before you are.

Then the bystanders get involved, with varying degrees of relevance to the original discussion, and you see posts like these:

- Take this off list or I'm gonna quit too and my whole family and maybe even a few of my close friends. We're all real close to nervous breakdowns.

- Selling, buying ... all bourgeois capitalist constructs. I say we should just give everything to each other without involving money.

- IMHO they're both right. IMHO everyone is right and no one is wrong, about anything. Simplistic, yes, but no one gets hurt.

- I think it was maybe Gandhi who said "Sticks and stones may break my bones but names can never hurt me." Or maybe it was Charles Manson. Anyway why all this bad feeling? Why can't we all just get along and talk about tunes 'n' stuff?

- I just saw a Sopraducci claviola on E-bay for \$500. Just goes to show you, doesn't it?

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- Anbody on the list have the music for "Who Threw the Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder?" Our band has been asked to play it at a funeral Mass.
- Just what do you think might be wrong with owl-stuffing lesbians?
- The KeltiCuties All-Girl Ceili Band are planning an appearance in Casper, Wyoming, sometime soon. Our claviola player Eunice is pregnant and due to give birth any day now, so date is still uncertain. Session and elk-hunt to follow the gig (weather permitting). Watch this space for details.

