



The Arts Past and Present: Mosaics

Do we use our buildings to declare who we are? How far does our heritage influence our collective identity? This insightful album reveals Ireland's shifting attitudes towards its cultural heritage. In 1922 when it broke free of British rule to become an independent nation state, the Irish nationalists abandoned high-profile buildings like Dublin Castle as it was symbolic of their British oppressors, and it fell into ruin. Yet they proudly restored older sites like Cashel and New Grange, which is even older than the pyramids, to emphasise an earlier romantic Irish past. In doing so they literally reconstructed their new identity through obliterating the memories they didn't want to keep and reinforcing those they did. Today, with the passing of time and after joining the EU, the neglected buildings no longer provoke associations with a painful colonial history. St Mary's Church is now appreciated as a bar as well as a work of art. Ireland has moved on, and now embraces all of its heritage. In the audio track, Anne Lawrence, a History Professor at the Open University, elaborates on the issues addressed in the album. This material is drawn from the Open University course AA100 The Arts Past & Present.