Listening to Early Modern Catholicism

Perspectives from Musicology

Edited by
Daniele V. Filippi
Michael Noone

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Notes on the Editors

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Michael Noone

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Notes on the Contributors

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**Noel O'Regan**

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composers including Lasso, Palestrina, Marenzio, and Victoria, and is currently engaged in a study of the role of music in Roman confraternities in this period. In 1995 he was awarded the Premio Palestrina by the town of Palestrina in recognition of his work on that composer. He is a member of the editorial board of the New Palestrina Edition for which he has edited a volume of that composer’s triple-choir music.

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Introduction

Daniele V. Filippi and Michael Noone

Early Modern Catholicism—a term coined by historian John W. O’Malley in the 1990s—has proved to be a useful, if not uncontroversial, historiographical concept. Neutral yet inclusive, it offers a welcome alternative to—or, better still, integration of—such familiar labels as ‘Counter Reformation and Catholic Reform’ or ‘Confessional Catholicism’. As O’Malley himself states in the contribution that opens the present volume: ‘Early Modern Catholicism is a category not to replace the others but to relativize them by suggesting the greater breadth of the Catholic reality’. Early Modern Catholicism appropriately captures both the complexity and the ‘dynamic diversity’ of Catholic experience. In parallel with ‘early modern era’ (a concept that, in turn, has been questioned, and adopted herein divested of its teleological bias), the open arms of this category invite us to embrace a longue durée perspective.

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3 See also O’Malley, Trent and All That 140.
6 Without being chronologically indeterminate, Early Modern Catholicism leaves the chronological question open at both ends, reaching from roughly the fifteenth to the late eighteenth century. See O’Malley, Trent and All That 141.
While the term has inspired fruitful and lively conversation among historians and scholars of many disciplines, musicology has yet to fully exploit its potential. True, various developments in and around the discipline seem to have prepared the ground. To begin with, recent decades have witnessed a crisis in the conventional style-based periodization, derived from art history, that elevated the year 1600 to the status of a watershed neatly separating the Renaissance and the Baroque. This crisis was precipitated, in part, by the growing consideration, within musicology as a whole, of cultural and social contexts, and of the dynamics of reception, by which the traditional over-emphasis on works and style—an approach that made music history largely coincide with the history of innovation in composition—was substantially re-balanced. At the same time, responding to stimuli from both outside and inside the discipline (most notably the rise and growth of ‘sound studies’), historical musicologists have increasingly contemplated a range of phenomena that extends beyond the borders that defined ‘art music’. In considering neglected repertories and oral practices, and by including such factors as silence, noise, and non-musical sounds, musicologists have begun to investigate the role of a wide array of sonic phenomena in the life of past communities and to examine how these phenomena interacted with spaces, life rhythms, and mentalities. Thus, such recent studies as Robert Kendrick’s *The Sounds of Milan*, David R.M. Irving’s *Colonial Counterpoint*, and Andrew Dell’Antonio’s *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy* can be said to have explored a variety of individual Catholic soundscapes of the early modern era. Whereas, however, a

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7 The term has been criticized as a bland ‘identifier’ with no theoretical bedrock: ‘it imposes no artificial analytical divides because it attempts no analysis’ (Clossay, *Salvation and Globalisation in the Early Jesuit Missions* 248–249). O’Malley, however, while conceding the ‘blandness’ of the term, has emphasized its ‘scope and flexibility’ and its ready amenability to the results of ‘history from below’ (O’Malley, *Trent and All That* 141–143).

8 Haar J. (ed.), *European Music, 1520–1640* (Woodbridge – Rochester, NY: 2006) is probably the most organic attempt, to date, to explore an alternative periodization in studying the music from this period.

9 ‘Sound studies is a name for the interdisciplinary ferment in the human sciences that takes sound as its analytical point of departure or arrival’. Sterne J. “Sonic Imaginations”, in idem (ed.), *The Sound Studies Reader* (New York: 2012) 1–18, at 2.