Listening to Early Modern Catholicism

Perspectives from Musicology

Edited by

Daniele V. Filippi
Michael Noone

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Notes on the Editors

Daniele V. Filippi
is a Swiss National Science Foundation Research Fellow at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis (University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, Academy of Music, Basel, Switzerland). His scholarly interests include early modern music and spirituality, historical soundscapes, and intertextuality. Among his publications are a critical edition of Palestrina’s Motecta festorum totius anni (2003), the books Selva armonica: La musica spirituale a Roma tra Cinque e Seicento (2008) and Tomás Luis de Victoria (2008), and an edited special issue of the Journal of Jesuit Studies titled “Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth: Music and Sounds in the Ministries of Early Modern Jesuits” (2016). For more information, see http://www.selvarmonica.com/.

Michael Noone
is Professor and Chair of Music at Boston College. His research focuses on Spanish liturgical polyphony, especially at Toledo Cathedral and El Escorial. His publications include Music and Musicians in the Escorial Liturgy under the Habsburgs, 1563–1700 (1998) and Códice 25 de la catedral de Toledo: Polifonía de Morales, Guerrero, Ambiela, Boluda, Josquin, Lobo, Tejeda, Urrede y Anónimos (2003). Noone’s CDs of Renaissance music have been released on the Glossa and DGG Archiv labels. He is a member of the Real Academia de Bellas Artes y Ciencias Históricas de Toledo.
Notes on the Contributors

_Egberto Bermúdez_

is Full Professor at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá. Author of _Los instrumentos musicales en Colombia_ (1985), _La música en el arte colonial de Colombia_ (1994), and _Historia de la Música en Bogotá: 1538–1938_ (2000), he has published numerous articles and studies on organology and on colonial, traditional, and popular music in Colombia and Latin America. He is currently vice president of the International Musicological Society (IMS).

_Jane A. Bernstein_

Austin Fletcher Professor of Music Emerita at Tufts University, is the author of _Music Printing in Renaissance Venice: The Scotto Press (1539–1572)_ , winner of the 1999 Otto Kinkeldey Award from the American Musicological Society. She is currently working on a book on music print culture in sixteenth-century Rome.

_Xavier Bisaro_

is Professor of Musicology at the Université François Rabelais, Tours, and Researcher at the Centre d’Études Supérieures de la Renaissance (CESR, UMR 7323). His main publications are focused on the musicological history of divine worship ( _Chanter toujours: Plain-chant et religion villageoise dans la France moderne, 2010; Le Passé présent, 2012_ ) and on liturgical erudition in modern France ( _Labbé Lebeuf, prêtre de l'histoire, 2011_ ). He also manages the project ‘Cantus Scholarum’ devoted to school singing in modern Europe (see https://www.cantus-scholarum.univ-tours.fr).

_Andrew Cichy_

is the Director of Music at the Cathedral of St. Stephen in Brisbane, Australia. A performer-scholar, his research interests include English Catholic music after the Reformation (on which topic he completed his doctoral thesis at Merton College, Oxford in 2014) and Polish repertoires before 1750. His research has been published by Ashgate, _Early Music, Music and Letters_ , and Oxford University Press.

_Alexander J. Fisher_

is Professor of Music at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, where he teaches courses in music history from the Medieval through

**Marco Gozzi**

is Associate Professor of Musicology and Music History at the Università di Trento. His recent publications include *Il canto fratto: l’altro gregoriano* (2005, co-edited with Francesco Luisi); *Cantus fractus italiano: un’antologia* (2012); *Sequenze* (2012); *Il Graduale Giunta, Venezia 1572* (2013); the facsimile of the Cortona Laudario (2015), and the on-line database dedicated to the seven Trent Codices (https://www.cultura.trentino.it/portal/server.pt/community/manoscritti_musicali_trentini_del_%27400). He is the general editor of the series *Codici Musicali Trentini del Quattrocento, Monumenta Liturgiae et Cantus* (with Giulia Gabrielli), and ‘Veni e Laudate: Studi e Facsimili sulla Lauda Italiana’ (with Francesco Zimei). Since 1985 Gozzi has been a member of the vocal ensemble Il Virtuoso Ritrovo, and maintains an active concert schedule, both in Italy and abroad. In 2000 he founded the Laurence Feininger Ensemble, specializing in chant and *cantus fractus*. Further information at http://hostingwin.unitn.it/gozzi/.

**Robert L. Kendrick**


**Tessa Knighton**

is since 2011 an ICREA Research Professor affiliated to the Institució de Milà i Fontanals (CSIC) in Barcelona. In 2012 she received a four-year grant from the Marie Curie Foundation to research ‘Musics and Musical Practices in Sixteenth-Century Europe’ (URBANMUSICS CIG-2012 n0.321876). She is currently Secretary to the Editorial Board of the Monumentos de la Música Española (CSIC), and one of the editors (with Helen Deeming) of the series Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Music for The Boydell Press. She has published widely on various aspects of Iberian music, and has recently edited the *Brill Companion to Music in the Age of the Catholic Monarchs* (2017).
Ignaziot Macchiarella
is Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology at the Department of History, Cultural and Territorial Heritage, Università degli Studi di Cagliari. He is vice-chairman of the ICTM (International Council for Traditional Music) Study Group on Multipart Music. His main interests are: multipart music as mode of musical thinking, expressive behavior, and sound; music / ritual / religion; analysis of oral music patterns; and music and identity construction. He is a frequent presenter at conferences, including the meetings of the most important world ethnomusicological societies (SEM, ICTM, ESEM). He has published more than a hundred works, including six books and five edited books; his essays in specialized journals have appeared in Italian, English, French, Spanish, and German (see http://people.unica.it/ignaziotomacchiarella/).

Margaret Murata
is Professor Emerita in the Music Department of the University of California, Irvine. She has served as president of the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music and vice-president of the American Musicological Society. She has written numerous articles on opera, oratorio, and cantata in Rome during the seventeenth century and their legacy in modern singers’ repertoires of arie antiche. Her publications include Operas for the Papal Court, 1631-1668 (1981); Passaggio in Italia: Music on the Grand Tour in the Seventeenth Century, co-edited with Dinko Fabris (2015); a Thematic Catalogue of Chamber Cantatas by Marc’Antonio Pasqualini, vol. 3 of the Journal of Seventeenth-Century Music Instrumenta (2016); and a forthcoming catalogue of The Barberini Manuscripts of Music. She received the 2017 Premio Galileo Galilei in the field of the History of Italian Music, given by the Rotary Clubs of Italy.

John W. O’Malley, S.J.
is University Professor in the Theology Department of Georgetown University. He is a specialist in the religious culture of modern Europe. His latest book is The Jesuits and the Popes (2016), and he is currently finishing a manuscript on Vatican Council I. In 2016 he received the Centennial Medal for distinguished scholarship from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Harvard University, ‘the school’s highest honor’.

Noel O’Regan
is a Reader in Music at the University of Edinburgh. He is the author of a Royal Musical Association monograph, Institutional Patronage in Post-Tridentine Rome, as well as numerous articles on Roman sacred music in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. He has also published papers on Rome-based
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.

Anne Piéjus
is a musicologist and Director of Research at the National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) in Paris. She specializes in seventeenth-century French music and theater and in early modern Italian spiritual music. She published Le Théâtre des Demoiselles (2000), edited Racine's Esther (2003) and Athalie (2005) with their original musical intermèdes, co-edited Figures de la Passion (2001) and Molière’s comédies-ballets (2010), edited Plaire et instruire (2007) and Archéologie d'un spectacle jésuite (2008). She is responsible for the 'Mercure galant' research program, and edits online critical editions and databases, and conferences proceedings. Her research about Italian music focuses on music and spirituality, collective singing, heterodoxies, censorship, and spiritual re-writings. She has recently published two monographs: Musique et dévotion à Rome à la fin de la Renaissance (2013) and Musique, censure et création (2017).

Colleen Reardon
is Professor of Music at the University of California, Irvine. Her research focuses on musical culture in Siena during the early modern period. She is the author of Agostino Agazzari and Music at Siena Cathedral, 1597–1641 (1993), Holy Concord within Sacred Walls: Nuns and Music in Siena, 1575–1700 (2002), and A Sociable Moment: Opera and Festive Culture in Baroque Siena (2016).
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,\textsuperscript{7} 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.\textsuperscript{8} 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'),\textsuperscript{9} 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.\textsuperscript{10} Whereas, however, a

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{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' (Clossey, *Salvation and Globalization 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).

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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. "Sonics Imaginations", in idem (ed.), *The Sound Studies Reader* (New York: 2012) 1–18, at 2.