



Domestic Music in Recusant Circles in Elizabethan and Jacobean Times

Abstracts

The Division Viol or Violin: The Interactions of the Viol and Violin in English Domestic Music-Making

Bianca Brahuja (York University)

The relationship between the viol and the violin in seventeenth-century England may be approached from the point of view of both social context and repertoire. Drawing on two publications, Simpson's *The Division Viol*, which constitutes in essence a tutor together with examples, and Playford's *The Division Violin*, a collection of pieces, this paper will examine these interactions and argue that it was specifically music-making in domestic circles that permitted such dealings to take place. The material for Simpson's work was originally intended for the family of his patron, Sir Robert Bolles, a baronet and MP for Lincoln, whose seat was in Scampton, Lincolnshire.

Despite being produced in the second half of the seventeenth century, these publications can be taken as the crowning of an already mature practice not only of division-playing, but also of transcribing and performing pieces originally intended for the other instrument. The instructions given in Simpson can be demonstrated to match at least one of the pieces in Playford and there is some correspondence in the individual pieces found in the two works. With respect to the repertoire, the division was a technique shared by the two instruments towards the end of this period. Given the apparent technical limitations to English violin performance before 1650 at least, a comparison of extant work for these instruments may indicate the interaction between the two, if not the strong influence of viol-playing on that of the violin.

The Braikenridge and Willmott Manuscripts

James Burke (Oxford University)

Despite the passing of the 1559 Act of Uniformity that prohibited the use of Latin-texted music except for in the Chapel Royal and the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, Latin-texted ritual and votive music continued to circulate. Testament to this is a small but significant corpus of partbook sets that appear to have been used in private houses rather than in churches, and which date between c.1559-1600.

Surviving partbooks sets of this sort are few, and the majority have been a primary focus of scholarly attention. However, some incomplete sets have been less fortunate and have remained somewhat neglected. The Braikenridge and Willmott manuscripts (Tenbury MS 1486, and in private hands respectively) and are the sole surviving volumes of a former five-part set that have not received significant discussion, yet offer an important glimpse into recusant music making. Dating from 1591, the manuscripts were copied by John Sadler and contain twenty-seven Latin-texted works (one hymn and twenty-six motets) by nine composers, the majority of whom are English. Apart from their musical content, the partbooks are exceptionally rich in illustrations and verbal inscriptions.

The proposed paper, *The Braikenridge and Willmott Manuscripts*, intends to reduce a considerable lacuna in our knowledge of domestic music manuscripts that were produced and presumably used by recusants in the reign of Elizabeth I. It will address the manuscripts' contents, discuss their physical attributes, and will seek to explain the meaning of the various illustrations that decorate the manuscripts as well as the verbal inscriptions.

The Music of Catholic Households and its Points of Contact with the Court

Katherine Butler (Oxford University)

This paper will examine two points of contact between the music of Catholic households and the court. Firstly it considers the loaning of musicians by Catholic and recusant households to Protestant courtiers or aristocrats hosting Queen Elizabeth I on her summer progresses. These musicians from Catholic households were at the forefront of musical innovation, presenting novel musical ensembles such as the mixed consort to the court, thereby demonstrating the prosperity and innovation of music in these aristocratic households.

Secondly I look at the music commissioned by prominent Catholic nobleman, Lord Montague, when the Queen chose to visit him at Cowdray in 1591. While not a recusant, Lord Montague was an outspoken Catholic who had voted against Elizabeth's religious settlement, and who sheltered many recusants and hid Catholic priests in his household. Lord Montague commissioned entertainments that aimed to persuade Elizabeth and her courtiers that Catholicism was not equivalent treason. In communicating his message of loyal Catholicism, it was the songs which conveyed the most daring criticisms of Elizabeth's attitude to Catholics. Songs offered a means of respectful criticism in which complaint could be contained within artistic forms in such a way that it was no direct threat to the monarch's authority.

Catholic households did not solely carry on their music-making in private and total separation from political life. Instead some Catholic households did use their music-making to participate in a wider musical culture that included the court, and even found music a means through which they could communicate their grievances to Elizabeth herself.

English Domestic Music and the Convents on the Continent: Networks and Nexuses

Andrew Cichy, Oxford University (Oxford University)

Attempts to uncover the nature of music in English Convents on the Continent during the seventeenth century have largely failed because of a lack of primary sources, which were mostly destroyed during the French Revolution. The Benedictine Monastery of Our Lady of the Assumption, established in Brussels by English nuns in 1598, was no exception, and little documentary evidence remains of the once great convent, which the nuns were forced to flee in 1794. Given the zeal with which these nuns observed and implemented the reforms of the Council of Trent, opportunities for musical training from external sources must have been very limited. The strict rules for the observance of monastic enclosure would have made it difficult for even the Monastery's trusted organists, John Bolt, and later Richard Dering, to teach the nuns, who played the organ from outside the nuns' choir. Modern research has yet to consider the impact of domestic music-making and music education - where it is most likely that the nuns originally acquired their skills - on the English Continental convents. Fortunately, primary sources on individual nuns and their families, which were kept in the relative safety of England, did not suffer the same fate as the majority of convent documents. This paper will show how this biographical information can be used to produce a survey of the cultural and educational background

of individual nuns, in ways that can shed further light on the musical capabilities of the convent as a whole.

Byrd, Patrons and Printed Music: Public Figures, Private Chambers

Pauline Graham (University College Dublin)

William Byrd (1540–1623), a Gentleman of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel Royal, was one of the earliest English composers to shape his public identity through the publication of his music. Although a recusant, Byrd enjoyed the Queen's favour, and chose to ally himself with influential patrons in each of his published collections. His first publication, the 'Cantiones . . . sacrae', issued jointly with Tallis, was dedicated to the Queen, and marked the start of their royal patent for music printing; subsequent dedicatees included the Lord Chancellor Sir Christopher Hatton, Henry Carey (Lord Chamberlain) and the Earl of Worcester, Edward Somerset. The second volume of Byrd's 'Gradualia' was dedicated to John, Lord Petre of Writtle, a recusant and local patron of Byrd's after his move to Stondon Massey, Essex. Byrd's three Masses may also have been dedicated to Lord Petre, but were printed without title-pages or dedications, due to their subversive nature.

This paper will examine the antithesis between the prominent public figures to whom Byrd's publications were dedicated and the domestic environment in which much of this music was performed, as the research of John Milsom and Roger Bowers has shown. Philip Brett has proposed that Byrd's published output as a whole represents his desire to fashion an authorial persona through the medium of print, and this paper aims to shed further light on the means by which Byrd did so, compensating for his status as a recusant and outsider by cultivating an inner circle of influential patrons.

Recusant Numerology in English Domestic Instruments?

Benjamin Hebbert (Oxford University)

In this paper I want to look at the geometrical schema of a viola da gamba probably made by John Rose in London in the second half of the sixteenth-century. Analysis of the design sequence unlocks a code which can be solidly related to a religious numerology, drawing comparisons to English catholic monuments of the period such as the Rushton Triangular Lodge. Of some further significance, by the end of the sixteenth-century makers appear to have adapted their design philosophy to reflect a Pythagorean rather than a divine set of numbers. If we accept that the philosophical discourse of instrument making formed a part of the prestige that makers transmitted to their clientele, it seems likely that the change of philosophy may reflect a consciousness about making things seem too 'popish'. This paper seeks to raise questions based on these observations, but provides few answers.

Recusant Music Revisited

Kerry McCarthy (Duke University)

A significant percentage of Elizabethan and Jacobean musicians were influenced in some way by the persistence of the Catholic faith in post-Reformation England. Some of these musicians were convinced Catholics who went into exile so they could practice their religion in peace, or stubborn recusants who lived out their lives in England with as little compromise as possible. Others shared

similar convictions but conformed to the state religion ‘for fashion’s sake’, to quote the advice of the Catholic patriarch and keen amateur musician Sir John Petre. (Many of the pillars of English recusant musical life were not really recusants at all.) Some musicians had mixed or variable loyalties, or took a distinctly opportunist view of the whole thing. A number of scribes, patrons, and performers admired the Catholic musical tradition for its aesthetic value but had little or nothing to do with the ideals of the English Counter-Reformation. A fresh look at a number of documentary sources — some familiar, others less so — casts some new light on the complicated realities of what we now consider recusant musical practice.

Heard but not Seen: Networks, Nuns and Exiles

Emilie Murphy (York University)

The careers of the Catholic musical contemporaries of William Byrd, Peter Leech recently complained, ‘have not yet been drawn together into a cohesive narrative presented from a recusant perspective’. This paper works towards filling this gap in scholarship by highlighting the life and career of John Bolt (c.1563-1640) - absent from the ODNB and accorded just two lines in Grove. Musicians such as Bolt, exiled for the faith, have also been exiled from modern scholarship; and yet Bolt made an important contribution to the musical culture of English recusants.

Stressing the importance of Bolt’s career, this paper argues that music was inextricable from the social and cultural identities of English Catholics surrounding the convents in Brussels and Louvain. It is my contention that relationships between English exiles were sustained through music. Interactions were aural – the nuns were only ever “heard”, not seen; invisible to the local community at the weekly masses in the convent chapels. Occasionally grand celebrations held at the cloisters involved a wider audience and attracted the convents’ patrons. Flourishing under Archduke Albert and Archduchess Isabella were several notable English musicians and also the convents which employed Bolt. I will analyse these musical networks by drawing upon the new databases and resources currently being compiled by the “Who Were the Nuns” project at Queen Mary. Such an analysis, I will argue, allows us to appreciate the fundamental role that music played within the exiled English Catholic community – a role crucial for sustaining recusants’ links with their homeland.

Music for all: the evidence for music-making in Catholic and Protestant homes c.1600

Tessa Murray (Independent scholar)

The reign of Elizabeth I saw both the establishment of a Protestant state religion and a significant growth in literacy, particularly in urban centres. The political requirement to attend church, together with the Protestant emphasis on reading the scriptures and congregational participation in worship, led to the large-scale printing of material for worship and devotion. Psalters with music –tunes and later harmonised versions as well – were produced in vast numbers, providing many people with their first experience of musical notation. The aristocracy and gentry found it hard to justify employing a choir for their private chapels, with the reduced role for elaborate music in the Protestant liturgy and the requirement for even the highest in the land to be seen in church occasionally. Musicians were still employed by such households, but increasingly to teach and lead recreational music-making as well as performing.

Contemporary sources provide hints and glimpses of the music-making in a range of households, from those of the aristocracy and gentry to the more modest homes of urban traders. The resources and continuity of the great families mean that there is more surviving evidence for their activities, but

probate inventories for the ‘middling sort of people’ demonstrate that recreational music-making was not the preserve of the upper classes. Records suggest that music featured equally in Puritan, mainstream Protestant and Catholic households. Religious allegiances were reflected more in the types of text selected than in strongly polarised preferences for different musical styles or instrumentation.

Byrd’s “Why Do I Use” in Context

Jeremy L. Smith (University of Colorado)

Byrd’s “Why do I use my paper, ink, and pen” is one of the best-known of his many English-texted songs. As it includes the first stanza of a tribute to the Jesuit Edmund Campion, who had been famously executed as a traitor in 1581, it is also arguably the most overtly controversial of all the texts Byrd put into print, even if Campion’s name was never mentioned therein. However puzzling it is that Byrd chose to publish this song, there has been little in the way of historical inquiry into its contexts, at least among musicologists. Instead, it has been greeted rather unsympathetically by various modern listeners, as “boring,” ineffective, “amiable[,] nonsense.”

“Why do I use” existed within a religious polemic and within Byrd’s printed edition of “Psalmes, Sonets and songs.” The extent of the polemic, which included a poetic rebuttal that has thus far escaped notice, suggests Byrd did not try to disguise his pro-Catholic intentions, as he surely knew they would have been obvious. Less obvious was his purpose in evoking Campion along with other martyrs on both sides of the confessional divide. I will argue here that it was for the sake of an on-going Catholic cause that Byrd did so; and that this purpose offers a new explanation for those compositional choices of Byrd’s that have inspired so much critical disparagement.

Provincial pastoralism: assessing the cultural context of the Paston manuscript collection

Philip Taylor (Harlaxton College)

The circumstances surrounding the music manuscripts compiled for the household of Edward Paston (1550-1630) form an intriguing aspect of provincial domestic musical life in the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean period. In addition to problematic questions of performance practice and textual provenance, the lack of biographical evidence concerning Edward Paston himself presents a challenge for efforts to understand the ways in which the surviving sources might reflect the interests and identity of this gentleman amateur musician. The aim of this paper is to consider the available evidence of Edward Paston’s cultural and creative interests, and the relationship between his social status and musical reputation in Norfolk, alongside his activities as music collector. The focus will be on assessing how Paston’s putative involvement in translation of the Spanish pastoral romance *Diana*, by Jorge de Montemayor, might be manifested in the English replacement lyrics found in the partbooks British Library Egerton MSS 2009-12. As well as holding significance for Paston’s connection with William Byrd, this practice of text replacement also raises broader questions for the domestic use of secular vocal music in England around the turn of the seventeenth century.