

RECENSÕES BIBLIOGRÁFICAS

Owen Rees, *Polyphony in Portugal c.1530-c.1620: sources from the Monastery of Santa Cruz, Coimbra*, Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities, New York & London, Garland Publishing, 1995

This book is a fundamental contribution to the understanding of Portuguese music. It covers, by means of a detailed discussion of a series of twenty or so manuscripts which emanated from the scriptorium of Santa Cruz between roughly 1530 and 1620, discussion which is founded on a monumental quantity not only of archival research but of working transcriptions of the repertoire, a large amount of music whose implications, historical, cultural and musical, spread far beyond the city of Coimbra: Rees draws the conclusions and makes clear a number of significant connections between Coimbra and the rest of Portugal, and between Portugal and Spain, Italy and the Netherlands.

There are two parts to the book, the first entitled "The Repertoires in their context", and the second a detailed description of the manuscripts, followed by four appendices. This is preceded by an introduction which sets the scene, and summarizes the state of research hitherto. While agreeing with Rees's remarks in this introduction concerning the "distorted view" of the cultivation of polyphony in sixteenth century Portugal, I feel that it must in fairness be said that the concentration by scholars on printed sources of which he speaks — and consequently upon the works of Lobo, Magalhães and Cardoso in particular — was inevitable, and

paralleled, for example, by the course of musicology in Spain, though at different times and speeds: with musicological research in such an inchoate state, the lack of accurate information and the unexplored state of the archives, there would seem to have been little choice in the matter. In addition, the view he mentions seems to me to be one held by non-Portuguese scholars (Rees indeed cites the opinion of Stevenson in his article on Portugal in *New Grove*, that "the true flowering of Portuguese polyphony began with the publication at Lisbon of a volume of *Magnificat* (1613) ... by Manuel Cardoso".) Looking over the range of publications by Santiago Kastner, Mário de Sampaio Ribeiro and Manuel Joaquim (to all three of whose work Rees, of course, makes constant reference in the book), I find it very difficult to believe that they would ever have subscribed to such a view.

The first chapter gives an excellent survey of the historical and cultural background to the subject (this would make splendid teaching material), and immediately brings in a musical point with the mention of the anonymous motet *Si pie Domine* (this kind of placing of the music in context, incidentally, in combination with its detective work, makes the book highly readable). Rees says of this work: "There is at present little identifiable Portuguese music of similar date with which to compare this piece; however, in its rhetorical power and contrapuntal suavity it certainly contrasts strikingly with the work of ... Vasco Pirez." (p. 22) A more obvious comparison would be with Escobar, whose music certainly does have such rhetorical power and contrapuntal suavity and which

he discusses later on. What is valuable here is the suggestion of transformation of Portuguese music paralleling that of the plastic arts, then in transition from Gothic to something more genuinely of the Renaissance. Similarly, Rees argues convincingly that Portugal was far from being culturally isolated at this period, painting a picture of Coimbra which emphasizes its cosmopolitan outlook and – securely based on archival documentation – later in the book is made concrete with the discussion of the purchasing and importing of music and the consequences of this for the Coimbra repertory.

One aspect of this is the dissemination of the “Spanish court repertory” which is discussed in Chapter 2, and which relates specifically to BGUC MM 12 and MM 32. Rees here begins to unravel the complicated relationships between Portuguese and Spanish music at this time, and then offers a detailed analysis of the anonymous motet *Fatigatus Iesus* and its relationship to Escobar’s *Clamabat autem mulier*, both of which, it so happens, stand out stylistically from the other works in the manuscript.¹ He then returns to a more general discussion of style, and in relation to the anonyma, comments on “the impossibility of distinguishing on stylistic grounds between Spanish and Portuguese works” (p. 77). More generally, the third chapter deals with Portugal’s links with Italy and the Netherlands by examining manuscript concordances. Rees’s detailed investigations into the manner of scribal copying of printed exemplars provides evidence of those books which must have been in the Monastery’s possession.

In Chapter 4, “Choros pera tragedias: Music for the Jesuit Neo-Latin Theatre”, new territory is broached. These are uncharted waters, and, as the author points out, given that a mere three pieces from Jesuit plays performed in Germany in the 16th century have survived to give an indication of what music might have been used by the Society of Jesus for its moralizing plays, the fragmentary survivals of choruses at Coimbra assume considerable significance. What is particularly interesting here is the way in which the choruses by Dom Francisco de Santa Maria adopted a declamatory style which completely eschewed the contrapuntal elaboration, melodic richness and textural repetition of his surviving sacred works (the transcription of the *cantus* part of *Divinis habeas* makes this abundantly clear) and the subsequent influence which this appears to have had on the – sacred – music of Dom Francisco’s successor as mestre de capela, Dom Pedro de Cristo: a fascinatingly specific example of humanistic thinking and the way in which it could affect compositional technique.

Part II is a detailed discussion of manuscripts BGUC MM 12, 6, 32, 9, 7, 48, 242, 230/231/161, 70, 25, 3, 31, 34, 36, 33, 44, 53, 217, 26, 18, and 8. Here is a distillation of the real work which has formed the basis for Rees’s work: the minute examination of this series of manuscripts and their music and the drawing of conclusions therefrom. At the very least, this means that the book is invaluable as an accurate catalogue of these sources (something otherwise unobtainable). Rees provides thorough discussion of style and attributions, describes scribal idiosyncracies, places foreign pieces in

¹ I have suggested elsewhere a possible connection between these two motets and *villancico* style, and also technical features which they have in common with certain works of Brumel: see “¿Una obra desconocida de Escobar? Algunas observaciones sobre el motete *Fatigatus Iesus* en el Manuscrito Musical n.º 12 de la Biblioteca General de la Universidad de Coimbra” *Anuario Musical*, 49, Barcelona, 1994, pp. 37-45.

context, and takes a huge leap forward in the identification of the works of Dom Francisco de Santa Maria and Dom Pedro de Cristo. In his discussion of MM 9, for example, he challenges previously unquestioned views; he notes, for instance, that the Mass attributed to Verdelot and entitled *Missa Philomena* by Joaquim, is not that work, but another, anonymous, based on the same model by Richafort. Similarly, convincing is the suggestion that the Mass which has the title “De Leirea” was related to the dedication of the Cathedral at Leiria in 1545, and that “Buxel” might mean “Bruxelas” (Brussels) rather than indicate the name of a composer. Here as elsewhere, one can but sympathize with Rees’s courteous but barely suppressed impatience when he notes that the rebinding which took place in the late 1930s of so many books – folios being trimmed, bound in the order in which they were found, and/or being bound so tightly that the original signatures are not discernible – makes it impossible to determine the original structure of the manuscripts.

Particularly valuable new light (not just for Portuguese music, but because they form part of a much wider context) is shed on MM 48 and MM 242, which are better known than other sources from Santa Cruz because of Santiago Kastner’s published inventory and description.² Rees posits the idea that these manuscripts in score were not, as Kastner suggested, keyboard sources, but study scores, which coincides with Lowinsky’s discoveries in this field elsewhere, and explains the very awkward way in which a great many of the works in these manuscripts sit on the keyboard. This view of things increases rather than decreases the value of the sources (as well as providing fascinating discussion based on

examples from the manuscript of the possible use to which such an anthology might have been put by someone studying composition), and, as Rees points out, there is much further research to be done, including the identification of the vocal models for the substantial number of unknown works contained therein.

Appendix 1 contains an indispensable basis for much future work: a listing and discussion of the paper types and watermarks. Such arduous, thorough basic research is what forms the backbone of this book and could quite well alter the future course of musicology in Portugal if its clues are taken up and others investigate in the same way. The other three appendices are further observations related to the repertory under discussion: a survey of the readings of the “Spanish court repertory” in Portuguese sources, and inventories and descriptions of two sources held in Lisbon, one related to the above-mentioned repertory (*Ln* CIC 60) and the other as a Pedro de Cristo source (*Ln* LC 57).

A magnificent achievement, and one to be emulated.

IVAN MOODY

Louise Stein, “The Iberian peninsula and its New World colonies: the Spanish and Portuguese heritage” in *Companion to Baroque Music*, ed. Julie Anne Sadie, London, J. M. Dent & Sons, 1990, pp. 327-350

Anyone coming to this book for the first time would be well advised to take on board its aims and scope from a global perspective. The editor writes that the *Companion to*

² “Los manuscritos musicales n.º 48 y 242 de la Biblioteca General de la Universidad de Coimbra” *Anuario Musical*, 5, Barcelona, 1950, pp. 78-96.