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Review: Juan José Carreras and Iain Fenlon (eds.), *Polychoralities: Music, Identity and Power in Italy, Spain and the New World,* DeMusica (Kassel, Edition Reichenberger, 2013), vol. 19, xviii + 320 pp. ISBN: 978-3-937734-96-5

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THE TITLE AND SUBTITLE OF THIS BOOK OF ESSAYS—*Polychoralities: Music, Identity and Power in Italy, Spain and the New World*—at once highlights the ideology and potential of this particular compositional musical genre with its characteristically grandiose sonic associations, for its use as a political and social besides, in traditional religious contexts, high festal emblem. It therefore importantly goes beyond a mere historical account of the form and style of polychoral music from its supposed beginnings in Venice and the Veneto in largely religious or liturgical contextual origins, broadening the scope to take into account socio-historic milieux of its creation and use in both sacred and secular environments (and their different styles of ritual and ceremony) more globally. Whilst its Italian origins (embracing both Venetian and Roman) are acknowledged as the starting point, it was a genre that swiftly acquired different compositional procedures and types of performing contexts when it was recreated by composers working in Spain, to become one of the most significant contributions to music throughout the Iberian Peninsula and in the Hispanic New World during the late renaissance and early Baroque era.

This collection of essays originates in an international seminar hosted by the Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi in Venice in October 2005, as part of a series and rich programme of cultural activities centred on 'Early Music in Mediterranean Society' that has included not only biannual conferences and other academic presentations but also concerts and recordings. This particular seminar (the 34th in the series), 'The Polychoral Tradition in Italy, the Iberian Peninsula and the New World', was organised by the two editors of the book, Iain Fenlon (Cambridge) and Juan José Carreras (University of Zaragoza), and was probably the first of its kind to address the question of the creation,

dissemination and reception of this particular type of musical composition in the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America. On the whole, the papers by scholars from the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and Mexico were in fact balanced in favour of Spanish music from the time of Victoria onwards, apart from Italy, and this is reflected in this published book arising from the conference. (The contribution of Portugal to this musical genre did not feature especially in the discussions.) The book itself, consisting of ten chapters, is structured according to the three basic strands indicated in its title: first, polychoral music in Italy (Venice and Rome); second, its reception in Spain (especially at the Spanish Habsburg royal court and chapel during the first half of the seventeenth century); and, finally, 'polychorality' in the New World, with just two chapters specifically focused on Peru (Cuzco) and Mexico. The book is multilingual: in addition to the introductory pages in English, there are three chapters in English, four in Spanish, and the remaining three chapters are written in Italian.

In their introduction, the editors remind the reader that 'In the European imagination, polychoral music is firmly associated with Venice' and has been especially associated with musical practices of St Mark's Basilica (p. xv). In his own (opening) chapter, 'Polychorality: The Origins and Early Diffusion of an International Genre', Fenlon continues by saying that, beginning with the scholarship of Carl von Winterfeld (in 1834), there had previously been a persistent view in musicology long crediting Giovanni Gabrieli with the origins of this style of composition (p. 2). He then revisits the more rounded historical perspective by highlighting the important contribution of Giovanni D'Alessi (1952) who was the first to recognise the role of previous composers in other cities in the Veneto (especially Padua and Treviso) and of the Franco-Flemish composer Adriano Willaert at St Mark's, whose 'larger-scale pieces established a stylistic benchmark for the polychoral compositions of later composers'—even though music performed *alternatim* between groups of singers in the Basilica existed before his time there as chapelmaster (from 1527). Indeed, Fenlon investigates the question of polychoral music and musicians' positioning, or spatial arrangement, within the Basilica of St Marks at an early stage through a fascinating eyewitness account written by two Dutch visitors in as early as 1525, and includes details about the subsequent rebuilding of the space and the *pergoli* in the 1530s. In describing what were essentially the two main centres for polychoral music in sixteenth-seventeenth century Italy—Venice and, afterwards, Rome, from where the style radiated to the Iberian Peninsula and beyond—this chapter forms an essential introduction to the remainder of this book. Fenlon describes the role of Victoria and Palestrina (working in Rome), and also draws attention to the reception of copies of Venetian polychoral music printed in the early decades of the seventeenth century in a number of Spanish ecclesiastical institutions, including major cathedrals such as Jaca and Valladolid.

The other nine chapters of the book thus focus on Rome and the Roman tradition, and the diffusion of this style to Spain and to Latin America. In the second chapter ('From Rome to Madrid'), Noel O'Regan, who has contributed enormously to our knowledge and understanding of Victoria's

period in Rome, underlines the important role of this composer in the emerging polychoral style in the papal city, especially at the German College, prior to its transmission to Spain in the later sixteenth century. O'Regan sees the beginnings of this stylistic genre in Victoria's eight-voice *Ave Maria* that was included in his first publication, *Motecta 4-6, 8vv* (1572). He also posits that Animuccia's large-scale works (seen especially in his 1570 *Il secondo libro delle laudi*) as well as music by Francisco Guerrero were crucial influences on Victoria. O'Regan provides a checklist of Victoria's polychoral pieces included in his seven publications issued in Venice and Rome (1572-92) and Madrid (1600). Francesco Luisi's chapter on 'Polychorality in Rome', on the other hand, centres on a period well after Palestrina and Victoria, and has as its focus two sixteen-voice polychoral parody masses by Nicolò Stamigna (c. 1615-85) and Francesco Berretta (d. 1694) modelled on the *Messa l'homme armé a 12 voces* attributed to Giacomo Carissimi (now, incidentally, considered to be of uncertain authorship). He usefully reproduces part of the original scores of the former two masses preserved in the Cappella Giulia in Rome.

The next five chapters are entirely concerned with polychoral music in Spain during the seventeenth century, beginning with Juan José Carreras's illuminating excursion into the idea of polychorality as identifying ('como identidad') the Spanish musical Baroque. Carreras places this arena in a broad historiographical context, drawing attention to the way that the Baroque was perceived in the writing and scholarship of Spanish historians from the first half of the nineteenth century onwards, and to Miguel Querol's pioneering work and musical editions published in the series 'Música Barroca Española' (1970-88) when polychorality was at once perceived as an identifying expression of Spanish musical culture and indeed national identity. He nonetheless points out that this idea was already expressed in theoretical works of the late Renaissance and Baroque periods. He broaches the idea of the reception and further elaboration and transmission of this style of music in Europe—in Italy (Venice and Rome) and from there to Spain, Portugal and the New World—and how this all could have an affect on our understanding of the phenomenon of polychorality in these different places.

Alfonso de Vicente's contribution discusses the beginnings of polychoral music in the Iberian Peninsula during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century by focusing on music at the courts of the Habsburg monarchs, Philip III and Philip IV, and at royal foundations that include the Descalzas Real Convent and El Escorial. Particularly useful are the tables identifying sources and works for eight or more voices copied at the Spanish royal court itself as well as listed in the *Index* of King John IV of Portugal's music library in Lisbon (1649), which at least affords a little insight into the reception of this compositional genre in Portugal where it was to gain a marked popularity, particularly in churches and convents in and outside Lisbon. A large number of the works listed are by the Franco-Flemish composers active at the Madrid royal court such as Philippe Rogier, Géry de Ghersem and Mateo Romero, all of whom had an enormous impact on Iberian musical composition

at this time (the author does not, however, identify Romero as the Franco-Flemish composer Mathieu Rosmarin in his chapter). The theme of polychoral music at the Spanish royal court of the Habsburgs during the first half of the seventeenth century continues in Pablo Rodriguez's chapter. He considers the role of music as a symbol and expression of power, especially during the time of Philip IV (who was also an amateur composer and player). Of singular interest is his consideration of space and performance positions in the Escorial monastery—an account that is complemented by a reproduction of a rare surviving architectural plan dating from 1695 (Madrid National Library) of the interior of the chapel of the royal Alcazar that was destroyed by fire in the mid-eighteenth century. This plan shows precisely the positions of the singers and other musicians in relation to the chapelmaster, although it unfortunately does not provide any indication of the positioning or staging of musicians during the performance of polychoral music. Rodriguez exemplifies a villancico by Juan de Navas as illustration of the idiom in the Spanish royal court.

A very important historical perspective is provided by Luis Robledo Estaire's chapter, which includes a fascinating survey of information about this genre in the works of theorists spanning a period of 100 years between Cerone's *El melopeo y maestro* (1613) and Pablo Nassarre's *Escuela musica, segun la practica moderna* (1723/4). He provides tables showing the typologies of polychoral music according to the theorists that specify the numbers of voices involved in types of compositions and the grouping of voices into different musical (mostly choral) forces, as well as, in a few cases, indications of which instruments might have been used. In addition, he reproduces choices of texts for some of these works, and includes a textual comparison of Zarlino and Cerone in their respective discussions of polychoral music, which shows how Cerone expands on Zarlino (1589). Robledo indicates that the aim in his chapter is to provide a basis for future investigation into this area (that is, what the theorists say and the surviving evidence for this style of composition), and concludes with a few questions and lines of investigation that could usefully be explored further.

Andrea Bombi's chapter is principally concerned with polychorality and the baroque villancico in the Crown of Aragon between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, focusing on the composition and analysis of just three works by Juan Bautista Comes, Joseph Ruiz Samaniego and Antonio Teodoro Ortelles. His chapter has two equal sections—historical text and (the second) appendices, which provide the texts of the respective works, musical examples, and tabular analyses of compositional structures.

Just two chapters at the end of the book are concerned principally with music and musical traditions in the New World—Geoffrey Baker on music in seventeenth-century Cuzco, Peru, and Raimundo Miranda on music in Mexico City. Baker's chapter, 'Polychorality, Ethnicity and Status in Colonial Peru', traces the use of polychoral music both in the cathedral and in seminaries and convents in the city of Peru, and how this style of music or musical composition became a standard for cultural identity, power and indeed status. This complements his path-breaking article published

in 2003 as well as his important monograph on music in Cuzco (2008).[1] Ricardo Miranda's chapter, on the other hand, draws attention to the interesting idea that in Latin America the overriding aesthetic behind musical endeavour was towards the higher purpose of testifying to the strength of the Catholic faith through appropriate means and expression. He describes how this attitude was seemingly in contrast to the culture of the 'Old Spain' ('Vieja España'), where music (especially grand polychoral music) was used as a demonstration even of secular power, prestige and aggrandisement. In discussing the idea of how music could reflect the idea of 'celestial light' and indeed purity of expression, he takes Gutiérrez Padilla's eight-voice *Mirabilia testimonia tua* as a case study.

Edition Reichenberger in its series DeMusica consistently excels in its publication of important and path-breaking studies on different aspects of Iberian historical musical culture in the early modern period, and great attention is paid to details of presentation. Nonetheless, it is unfortunate in this case that there are no lists of the primary source works (theoretical and musical) mentioned or used in the main texts provided, nor lists of individual musical works cited and discussed in the main body of the book—the appendices in the book are comprised only of a bibliography of secondary sources and an index of names cited in the text. One further omission in my view is that neither is there (in the front of the book) a list of musical examples, figures, plates and tables featuring in the individual chapters. Notwithstanding, this book, with its illumination of and focus on polychoral music and its transmission from Italy and reception both in the Iberian Peninsula and in the New World, clearly provides an essential point of departure and reference for further investigation into this area of music compositional history that went further than an immediate context of religious-sacred or temporal functionality to one embracing both political and social ideologies and, indeed, more especially in seventeenth-century Habsburg Baroque Spain and (though perhaps to a lesser extent) in the New World, the concept of power and national identity.

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[1] Geoffrey BAKER, 'Music in the Convents and Monasteries of Colonial Cuzco', *Latin American Review*, 24/1 (2003), pp. 1-41; and Geoffrey BAKER, *Imposing Harmony: Music and Society in Colonial Cuzco* (Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 2008).