Music and Society in Early Modern England

Music and Society in Early Modern England is the first comprehensive survey of English popular music during the early modern period to be published in over 150 years. Christopher Marsh offers a fascinating and broad-ranging account of musicians, the power of music, broadside ballads, dancing, psalm-singing and bell-ringing. Drawing on sources ranging from ballads, plays, musical manuscripts and diaries to wills, inventories, speeches and court records, he investigates the part played by music in the negotiation of social relations, revealing its capacity both to unify and to divide. The book is lavishly illustrated and is accompanied by a CD featuring forty-eight specially commissioned recordings by the critically acclaimed Dufay Collective. These include the first ever attempts to reconstruct the distinctive early modern sounds of ‘rough music’ and unaccompanied congregational psalm-singing.

Christopher Marsh is a Reader in Early Modern History at the Queen’s University of Belfast. His previous publications include The Family of Love in English Society (Cambridge, 1994) and Popular Religion in Sixteenth-century England (1998). He is also the author of the satirical novel A Year in the Province (2009).
Music and Society in Early Modern England

CHRISTOPHER MARSH
Contents

List of illustrations [page vi]
List of tables [ix]
List of music examples [ix]
Acknowledgements [x]
List of abbreviations [xiii]

Introduction: the ringing island [1]
1 The power of music [32]
2 Occupational musicians: denigration and defence [71]
3 Occupational musicians: employment prospects [107]
4 Recreational musicians [173]
5 Ballads and their audience [225]
6 Balladry and the meanings of melody [288]
7 ‘The skipping art’: dance and society [328]
8 Parish church music: the rise of ‘the singing psalms’ [391]
9 Parish church music: bells and their ringers [454]
   Conclusion: the musical milieux of Machyn and Pepys [505]

Appendix: notes on the recordings [526]
Select bibliography [556]
Index [591]
Illustrations

0.1. Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire, English Heritage, Heaven Room painting, 1619, detail. Photograph by Jonathan Marsh. [page 3]

0.2. Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire, English Heritage, Heaven Room painting, 1619, detail. Photograph by Jonathan Marsh. [4]

0.3. Hulton Archive/Getty Images, 51240969 (RM), schoolroom scene, 1592 (original source unknown). [8]


0.5. The British Library, William Barley, A New Booke of Tabliture (London, 1596), B1r. [16]


2.3. The British Library, C20F7–F10, Roxburghe ballads, vol. I, opening pages (‘You idle knave’). [87]


3.2. © Trustees of the British Museum, Prints and Drawings, 1884,1213.48, picture of musician from John Playford, Musick’s Delight on the Cithren (London, 1666). [137]
3.3. Trustees of the British Museum, Prints and Drawings, D2.2.600, trade card of William Bull (c. 1680–1720). [139]
3.6. The Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge, Pepys Ballads, A Mad Crue; or, That shall be Tryde (London, c. 1625), detail. [167]
4.2. Wallace Collection, London/Bridgeman Art Library, TWC 62159, Jan Steen, The Harpsichord Lesson (c. 1660–9). [200]
5.3. The British Library, C20 F7–F10, Roxburghe ballads, vol. I, opening pages (‘Who laugh to hear’). [249]
5.4. Trustees of the British Museum, Prints and Drawings, 1855, 0512.96, John Smith, Singers in a Window (London, c. 1706). [250]
5.5. The Pepys Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge, Pepys Ballads, Rocke the Babie Joane (London, 1632). [280]
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS


7.7. Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire, English Heritage, Heaven Room painting, 1619, detail. Photograph by Jonathan Marsh.  [366]

7.8. The Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge/Bridgeman Art Library, FIT65998, *The Thames at Richmond with the Old Royal Palace* (c. 1620).  [388]

8.1. © Martin Goetze and Dominic Gwynn Ltd, photograph of the restored organ at St Botolph without Aldgate, London.  [405]


Tables

Table 5.1 The top fifty ballad tunes [page 236]
Table 7.1 The top fifty dance tunes [342]
Table 8.1 The top thirty psalm melodies [413]

Music examples

Example 5.1 Chevy Chase [page 237]
Example 5.2 Fortune my foe [237]
Example 5.3 Packington's pound [239]
Example 8.1 Oxford psalm tune [416]
Example 8.2 Hereford psalm tune [417]
Example A.1 Troule the bowle to me [528]
Example A.2 The farther be in the welcomer [529]
Example A.3 Dulcina [530]
Example A.4 The blazing torch [532]
Example A.5 Sick, sick [533]
Example A.6 Under and over [534]
Example A.7 Welladay [536]
Example A.8 With a fadding (or An orange) [544]
Example A.9 The Winchester wedding [549]
Example A.10 York psalm tune [552]
Example A.11 Tune for Psalm 119 [553]
Example A.12 Low Dutch psalm tune [553]
Example A.13 Cambridge psalm tune [554]
Somehow, it has taken me almost two decades to write this book. When the idea first came to me, I was young and foolish and the Research Assessment Exercise was just a twinkle in some bureaucrat’s eye. The notion of devoting an extended period of time to a wide-ranging survey seemed an exciting one. Since then, English historiography has tended – with significant exceptions – to become more and more specialised as scholars have been forced to devise targets that are amusingly described as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-Bound). For reasons that now escape me, I decided to struggle on with a project that sometimes felt rather DIM (Doubtful, Ill-Judged, Monstrous). So, for better or worse, this book covers a wide range of musical practices and forms, several of which are now being tackled separately by other scholars. *Music and Society* aims to draw much of this work together, but it is also based on too many years of my own research and thus is not primarily a synthesis. Instead, it is first and foremost an attempt to extend and advance the debate while mapping out some new territory for future research. I have concentrated particularly on the decades between 1540 and 1670 but have also drawn regularly on material from beyond these limits.

One former colleague, on hearing of my intentions, said, ‘So you’re going to produce a hearing aid for historians?’ It was a succinct description. I hope, of course, that this book will also stimulate musicologists, practising musicians, literary specialists, folklorists and general readers, but I have indeed written it with social and cultural historians at the forefront of my mind. Many of them are a little wary of music for reasons that are discussed in the introduction, but I hope that a combination of written words and recorded sounds will persuade them to overcome their anxieties (there is a CD inside the back cover).

I have been very fortunate in receiving grants from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Nuffield Foundation, the Leverhulme Trust, the British Academy and the Queen’s University of Belfast. I have also enjoyed several research-packed visits to Clare Hall, Cambridge. I am immensely grateful to all of these institutions for their assistance and I apologise if I ever deployed an idiosyncratic definition of the term ‘fruition’.
For various forms of academic sustenance and stimulation, my thanks also go to Ian Archer, Alastair Bellany, Peter Boardman, Roger Bowers, Mark Burnett, Bernard Capp, Marie Coleman, Trevor Cooper, John Craig, James Davis, Scott Dixon, Eamon Duffy, Andrew Elkerton, Richard English, Adam Fox, Malcolm Gaskill, Ian Green, David Hayton, Steve Hindle, Andrew Holmes, Martin Ingram, Fiona Kisby, Beat Kümin, Diarmaid MacCulloch, Dolly MacKinnon, Judith Maltby, David Mateer, John Millsom, Rosemary O’Day, Celia Parker, Bill Shells, Bill Sherman, Roz Southey, Peter Spufford, John Walter, Helen Weinstein, Helen Wilcox, Jonathan Willis, Thomas Woodcock and Robert Yorke. I would like to make particular mention of Margaret Aston, Patrick Collinson, Margaret Spufford and Keith Wrightson, all of whom have kindly written references for me at one time or another.

I have tried out some of what follows in seminars and conferences held in Belfast, Durham, Exeter, Warwick and York. I am grateful to all who have invited me to speak and to all who have been prepared to listen. A more comprehensive review of the manuscript was provided by the publisher’s anonymous reader and I wish to thank him or her for a positive response and a wealth of helpful comments and suggestions.

The entire text was also studied heroically by two other scholars, both of whom made a number of extremely shrewd remarks. It accompanied Peter Marshall on holiday, and I feel fairly sure that he could have had at least as much fun without it. My other counsellor was the musicologist Ian Woodfield, who – by a minor miracle – happens to live next door to me in south Belfast. Over the years, I have appeared on the doorstep of number 26 at all times of the day and night with technical questions about clefs, viols and rebecs, and Ian has hardly flinched.

Here at Queen’s, I have also relied upon the advice and assistance of Frances Mercer and Angela Anderson, both of whom understand the financial workings of the university far better than I. The team at Cambridge University Press has been exemplary in all regards, and I have been especially grateful for the blend of cool professionalism and warm humanity that has been displayed by Michael Watson, Helen Waterhouse Joanna Garbutt, Liz Davey and Liz Friend-Smith. I am particularly indebted to Fiona Little for the extraordinary patience with which she has guided me through the copy-editing process.

Over the years, I have also worked in dozens of record offices and libraries, some of which are listed in the bibliography. I have always found the staff of these institutions friendly, helpful and efficient, and it would have taken me even longer to write the book if they had been any
Acknowledgements

less so. Searching for references to music in manuscript sources requires a good deal of patience, and I thank those who have helped me to find one or two of the needles in their haystacks. I would also like to pay tribute to all who have been involved in the publication of the Records of Early English Drama series. These volumes – haystacks with indexes – are an exceptionally valuable resource.

The musical recordings that accompany this book were made by members of the Dufay Collective and invited guests. The CD is an integral component of the publication and should be studied in conjunction with the text. The musicians have extended their normal repertoire by producing perhaps the first ever recordings of early modern ‘rough music’ and congregational psalm-singing, and I thank them all for rising so splendidly to the challenge: Romee Day, Vivien Ellis, Simon Grant, Jacob Heringman, Christine Stratford, Pauline Dingley, James Ingham, Glenn Keiles, Bill Lyons, Paul Norman, Nicholas Perry, John Potter, Fernando Rosende, Clare Salaman, Clara Sanabrais, Peter Skuce and Pilar Subirà. I have found the process of research and collaboration extremely rewarding, and would like to make special mention of Bill Lyons and Peter Skuce for all their creative and technical assistance.

On a more personal note, I wish to acknowledge the extracurricular support I have received from an assortment of friends and relatives: Janice Carruthers, John Curran, the Goedkoops (Gail, Pippa and both Pieters), Jonathan and Lucy Kelly, the Marshes (Judith, Simon and Jonathan, the last of whom kindly took several photographs for me), Linda and Michael Montgomery, Micheál Ó Mainnín, Nini Rodgers and, of course, Jesús Sánchez Ventura. Most importantly of all, I am grateful for the love and laughter of my daughters, Amanda, Emily and Caitriona, and my wife, Katie. Without them, I would have had to rely exclusively on Usain Bolt and Freddie Flintoff to keep my spirits up during the so-called summer of 2009.
Abbreviations

BL British Library
CSPD Calendar of State Papers Domestic (see listing of volumes in bibliography)
ChRO Cheshire Record Office
CUL Cambridge University Library
DRO Derbyshire Record Office
ERO Essex Record Office
HL Hallward Library (University of Nottingham)
HRO Hampshire Record Office
LA Lincolnshire Archives
NA National Archives
NRO Norfolk Record Office
REED Records of Early English Drama (see listing of volumes in bibliography)
SHC Surrey History Centre
WSRO West Sussex Record Office