The Musical Sounds of Medieval French Cities

Drawing upon hundreds of newly uncovered archival records, Gretchen Peters reconstructs the music of everyday life in over twenty cities in late medieval France. Through the comparative study of these cities’ political and musical histories, the book establishes that the degree to which a city achieved civic authority and independence determined the nature and use of music within the urban setting. The world of urban minstrels beyond civic patronage is explored through the use of diverse records; their livelihood depended upon seeking out and securing a variety of engagements, from confraternities to bathhouses. Minstrels engaged in complex professional relationships on a broad level – as with guilds and minstrel schools – and on an individual level – as with partnerships and apprenticeships. The study investigates how minstrels fared economically and socially, recognizing the diversity within this body of musicians in the Middle Ages, from itinerant outcasts to wealthy and respected town musicians.

GRETCHEN PETERS is an associate professor of music at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, where she teaches in the Music and Theatre Arts Department, as well as in the American Indian Studies Program. She has published numerous articles on urban musical culture in late medieval France, and her research activities have included the traditional music of both the Hmong and Ojibwe cultures in Wisconsin, for which she has received multiple awards for her collaborative work with students.
The Musical Sounds of Medieval French Cities

Players, Patrons, and Politics

GRETCHEN PETERS
Contents

Maps [page vi]
Illustrations [vii]
Acknowledgments [viii]
Abbreviations [x]

Introduction [1]

1 Playing before the council: civic patronage in southern France [7]

2 In honor of nobility: civic patronage in central France [77]

3 For the honor and pleasure of the city: civic patronage in northern France [126]

4 From confraternal processions to weddings to bathhouses: freelancing in the urban environment [165]

5 Playing en couble: professional relationships among minstrels [190]

6 “A minister of Satan” and “an honor to the city”: conflicting images of the medieval minstrel [218]

Appendix: musical instruments in the archival records of the study [246]
Bibliography [259]
Index [277]
Index of musicians [285]
Maps

Map 1  Cities in France included in this study  [page 2]
Map 2  Procession for the annual celebration of the miracles of the Virgin Mary  [23]
Map 3  Procession for the annual consecration of the Chapel of the Consulate  [26]
Map 4  *Irlas* with musicians in the quarters of Saint Anne and Saint Paul, Montpellier  [241]
Illustrations

Figure 1   Account book of Montpellier dating from 1357–8 with payment to minstrels of the city council, by permission of the Archives municipales de Montpellier, Joffre 845, f. 103v (May 22, 1357) [page 14]

Figure 2   Notarial contract from Montpellier with transaction between woodworkers and minstrels, by permission of the Archives départementales de l'Hérault, 2E 95/547, f. 291 [16]

Figure 3   Will of Petrus Alaman, crier of Marseilles, by permission of the Archives départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône, 351 E/86, f. 41v [70]

Figure 4   Formal request for a trumpet by the city of Dijon, by permission of the Archives municipales de Dijon, B 154, f. 13 [112]
Acknowledgments

During the course of such a long project, I have benefited from the support and assistance of many people.

I extend my sincere appreciation to Victoria Cooper, a senior commissioning editor at Cambridge University Press, who has been encouraging of this project throughout the process. In addition, it was a pleasure to work with the editors, Rebecca Taylor and Fleur Jones, who were always helpful and prompt. I am also very thankful to the anonymous readers of the early drafts of this book, as they offered extensive criticism that resulted in significant alterations.

At key stages in this process, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire offered financial support. In addition to funding multiple trips to France for further research in the archives, the university also supported a year-long sabbatical during which a substantial amount of the work was completed.

This project is built upon extensive periods of research in departmental and communal archives throughout France, which was only possible because of the expert guidance I received from the archivists and librarians, including meticulous inventories which served as invaluable starting points. I also relied heavily upon the library staff at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire for the acquisition of essential materials. To all of the librarians, archivists, and scholars in these institutions who generously offered me advice and suggestions, I am very grateful.

Support from mentors and colleagues has been crucial. Larry Gushee and Keith Polk read portions of this work at early stages and generously offered their knowledge and expertise, including personal notes with transcriptions and translations of records. Other colleagues (and friends) who either read portions of the work or checked regularly on its progress include Gary Don, Ryan Jones, Barbara Young, and Charlotte Hubert.

Friends and family hold an important place in the completion of this project. Béatrice Courcier has been a warm and gracious friend and host with whom I looked forward to reconnecting on each trip to France. Friends Carol Lansing and Mary Jo Adler each accompanied me on a trip to France.
and listened to my research woes over wine at the end of the day. Laura Jensen read an early draft and offered to read more in spite of her busy schedule, offering insightful comments that made their way into the book. Finally, I would like to thank my family for living with this project for twenty years as well. I am grateful for my parents who have supported me in everything I have done. I thank my three children, Elek, Anna, and Mara, who grew up while I plodded along on the book, for their encouragement as well as their help with the title. My husband, Tim, has been an integral part of the process, from accompanying me into the first archive in Marseilles to watching our children when I was in France to reading final versions; his support and encouragement has been unwavering.
Abbreviations

ADB  Archives départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône
ADB, Aix  Archives départementales des Bouches-du-Rhône, Dépot annexe d'Aix-en-Provence
ADC  Archives départementales de la Côte-d'Or
ADH  Archives départementales de l'Hérault
ADSM  Archives départementales de Seine-Maritime
ADV  Archives départementales de Vaucluse
AMA  Archives municipales d'Avignon
AMAix  Archives municipales d'Aix-en-Provence
AMAi  Archives municipales d'Albi
AMAm  Archives municipales d'Amiens
AMAp  Archives municipales d'Apt
AMBe  Archives municipales de Beauvais
AMC  Archives municipales de Châlons-en-Champagne
AMD  Archives municipales de Dijon
AML  Archives municipales de Lyon
AMLi  Archives municipales de Lille
AMMa  Archives municipales de Marseille
AMMo  Archives municipales de Montpellier
AMN  Archives municipales de Narbonne
AMNi  Archives municipales de Nîmes
AMO  Archives municipales d'Orange
AMOr  Archives municipales d'Orléans
AMR  Archives municipales de Reims
AMRo  Archives municipales de Rouen
AMSO  Archives municipales de Saint-Omer
AMT  Archives municipales de Toulouse
AMTours  Archives municipales de Tours
AMTr  Archives municipales de Troyes
d.  deniers
f.  folio
l.  livre
s.  sou
t.  tournois
x  verso