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Early America and Cuba

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Early Music, Volume 32, Number 2, May 2004, pp. 328-333 (Review)

Published by Oxford University Press



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tion to the musical activities of convents, monasteries and the town's Scolopian college. He draws a picture of collaboration and mutual interdependency between institutions—close links that were fostered by the town's small size—rather than the total dependency on the cathedral *capilla de música* that has often been assumed. Confraternities, too, assume a prominent position in this account of urban music, with over 40 such corporations in a town of just over 3,000 inhabitants. Indeed, the author argues for a broader reconsideration of the contribution of confraternities to European musical life in the light of his findings. As well as promoting musical activities, these corporations also provided opportunities for members to forge personal contacts with musicians, which may have influenced recruitment procedures and allowed new or prospective musicians to integrate themselves with established members of the profession. A final institution that comes under scrutiny is the town's citadel, whose soldiers played a part in local musical life through performances in processions, and even occasionally occupied musical posts in the cathedral.

The picture that Marín paints is one of musical and social consensus within the town. Future research might focus on the kinds of sources that could provide a 'view from below', such as notarial documents and records of court cases, in order to test this consensual model and explore music's role as a focus for social tensions, rivalry and subversion. The 'local' is often a contested territory, the site of competing discourses; there may have been social fractures and contradictions that are largely silenced in the kinds of sources on which this study is based.

In turning his attention to the cathedral music archive, a collection which illustrates the musical life of the town as a whole, Marín focuses on processes of continuity and change in the local repertory. Local chapelmasters recopied the works of their predecessors for decades after their composition, creating a sense of local tradition and historical awareness, yet they also brought in new music and compositional styles from elsewhere. Thus the 'Italianization' of Spanish music in the 18th century, when viewed through the lens of Jaca, can be seen as a gradual process of adoption and adaptation rather than the swamping of local styles by foreign imports, as it has sometimes been characterized. By examining the reception of Corelli and of Italian opera arias, Marín illuminates the local incorporation of international repertory, revealing that Jaca's peripheral location and provincial status did not prevent local musicians from participating in the transnational circulation of music and styles. He also

explores the links between the music in the cathedral archive and a number of Jaca's churches and confraternities, illuminating the musical networks that connected these urban institutions. From the point of view of the present-day researcher, small-town archives can be particularly revealing, as the central role of the cathedral music chapel is reflected in heterogeneous archives which are quite different from those of city cathedrals, where secular repertory has often been lost.

Among the many strengths of this accessible book are the frequent references to other urban settings throughout Europe, putting Marín's findings into wider perspective. Another type of comparison that might prove fruitful in exploring the specific characteristics of urban music-making would be an examination of the non-urban, or rural, setting to which the urban is implicitly contrasted. Nevertheless, Marín's approach will appeal to anyone interested in music in towns; his sure handling of a wide range of documentary sources allows him to paint a fascinating and convincing portrait of the rich musical life of a small town on the geographical, if not cultural, margin.

David Irving

Early America and Cuba

Richard Cullen Rath, *How early America sounded* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), \$32.50/£19.50

Alejo Carpentier, *Music in Cuba*, ed. Timothy Brennan, trans. Alan West-Durán (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), £29

With the growing interest in early music beyond Europe, several fine studies have appeared of the musical history of European colonies, particularly those of the Americas. Many have focused on the transplantation of Old World musical traditions, their subsequent developments and the phenomenon of cultural reciprocity; others have examined music in cities and institutions, and the cultural interchange between immigrant and indigenous populations. The two books reviewed here explore British and Spanish colonies respectively, and also represent two contrasting approaches to scholarship. The first is a recent study by an American historian, and the second is a pioneering narrative originally published in 1946 by a Cuban polymath, now appearing for the first time in English.

There is much to praise in Richard Cullen Rath's book. The topic is well researched, the structure is solid and the writing engaging. The viewpoint, however, is that of an historian rather than a musicologist, and consequently there is more contextual information than analysis of sound itself. Rath is concerned with the overall soundscape of the land and its perceptions by differing cultures, as well as with singing, chanting and the playing of instruments. Much of this study also pays homage to the oral traditions of the indigenous inhabitants.

There are inherent ambiguities in the title of this book: how early is 'early', and what exactly is the definition of 'America'? Presumably no English-speaking reader will have difficulty in deducing these historical and geographical designations, but one might object to one country's acquisition of an entire continental identity, not to mention the apparent assumption that New World history begins with European settlement. To be fair, 'early' doubtless refers as much to the early modern period as to the early colonial period. But the choice of title also raises the niggling issue of intended readership. While it is assumed that this book will be circulated internationally, Rath opens the preface by stating that 'sound was more important to early Americans than it is to you' (p.ix). This comparison would have been considered perfectly natural by the universal reader, had not the author then proceeded in the first chapter to discuss 'how the early modern English soundscape is foreign to *ours*' (p.13, emphasis mine). A certain nostalgic reverence for United States history also prevails, revealing a definite leaning towards the readership of Rath's compatriots. All the same, he is careful not to refer to modern-day borders, and he includes some of the land now constituting Canada in his geographical points of reference.

Such questioning of the title aside, its indistinct nature is actually quite shrewd, for not only does this study cover how America sounded to the people of the time, but also the sounds brought forth by the land itself, as well as those imported to the continent through immigration and the slave trade. While the topics closest to the realm of conventional historical musicology would be the chapters concerning instruments, songsters and the acoustic design of religious meeting-houses, Rath also explores areas of sonic history that would not traditionally be considered as musicology *per se*, but which contribute to the emerging field of studying overall soundscapes, both urban and rural. In discussing the sound worlds of both literate and oral traditions, however, there is perhaps an over-abundance of ethnographic detail in regard to the aural experi-

ence of indigenous inhabitants. The long explication of differing mythologies of thunder among First Nations tribes, while interesting and well researched, seems to digress from the main thrust of the book. All the same, his study of Native American, European-American, and African-American perceptions of thunder in this chapter does indeed highlight the universal 'connection between animacy and sound' (p.22).

Chapter 2, 'From the sounds of things', is of great relevance to the ethno- and historical musicologist alike, examining the use of ritual, ceremonial, military and recreational sounds to bind communities together. The 'things' in question include church bells, drums, conchshells, African instruments, and European stringed and wind instruments. It seems that bells are gradually appealing more and more as objects of study. Alain Corbin's recent book *Village bells: the culture of the senses in the 19th-century French countryside* (Columbia University Press, 1998) is a case in point, and Rath makes an important contribution to this field by discussing these instruments as bases of social order. Of course, the significance of missionaries gathering native populations 'bajo las campanas' (with the sound of the bells) in the Spanish Empire has long been recognized by musicologists.

Rath also discusses the transcriptions made by a visiting French musician of three African songs performed at a festivity in Jamaica. These were published in 1707 as part of an account of a voyage. Irrespective of their accuracy, these transcriptions provide a snapshot of the cultural crucible that brought together 'participants ranging from slaves to gentry, with connections to three continents, all thrown together for a moment in time' (p.70). The transcriptions also spur some useful commentary on the cultural and linguistic paradigms of 'pidginization and creolization'. Unfortunately, Rath's conclusions about the significance of this printed music are misleading. He points out the inconsistencies between the 17th-century classification of the music and its proper origins, comparing the Caribbean versions with their sources in Africa. Noting an incongruous eight-note scale used in one transcription, Rath jumps to the conclusion that the French musician 'did not know how to deal with microtones and rendered some of them as one note and some as another' (p.69). However, this may read too much into a transcription made 'as best as he could' on one hearing and in dim light. Even if the Frenchman had been troubled by the tuning of the African voices and instruments, he probably would have attributed their characteristics to a particular temperament.

Chapter 3 examines the acoustic properties of North American houses of worship, and includes some wonderful iconography. Comparisons are made with European church acoustics of the time, and Rath makes astute observations about the hexagonal and octagonal shapes for Quaker meeting-houses, some of which 'acoustically instituted Quaker notions of egalitarianism' (p.114). This chapter would be indispensable for those researching the music of the Quakers and the Puritans in the 17th and 18th centuries (that is, the little that was allowed). Chapters 4 and 5, concerning 'ranting' (preaching) and howling in the wilderness, are more relevant to the sociologist than the musicologist, but still provide interesting sonic context.

Perhaps the most significant argument in this study is that aural perceptions of the world were far more important in a pre-industrial age than now. Today, asserts Rath, bright and loud technology has accentuated our visual perceptions of the world; the noises of appliances and electronic devices often escape our hearing unless they are brought to our attention, and we might turn on a radio or a television to drown out traffic noise (p.ix). There are some lovely turns of phrase describing the aural worlds of different cultures—Rath speaks of 'soundscapes' and 'soundways', although he never fully defines these terms—and many enjoyable anecdotes. The book makes a significant contribution to the study of sound itself, whether natural, produced or induced. The historical and ethnographic sources open a valuable window into the perception of sound by people of the 17th and 18th centuries, while also providing contextual detail for those engaged in ethnomusicology or in the study of colonial history. The growing field of urban musicology will also welcome this book devoted to sounds from outside the traditional bounds of music-making.

Coming from an entirely different perspective, *Music in Cuba* is a seminal work of Latin American musicology. This English translation serves to highlight the continuing interest in the music of Cuba and the burgeoning of Hispanic musicology in the English-speaking world. Originally written in the space of 11 months, with the author working from dawn to dusk traipsing the island in search of primary materials, it is a chronological history of music on the island from the Spanish conquest to the early 20th century, in charmingly purple prose. Of particular interest are the chapters on the coming of the Spaniards and the beginnings of colonial music culture in the 16th and 17th centuries. There are also discussions of salon, theatre and dance music; a section on the cultural contribution of

'Blacks in Cuba'; and a panegyric to the composer Esteban Salas y Castro (1725–1803).

Written with all the creativity of an adventurer, this book has made a valuable contribution to musical historiography within the Hispanic field, very much along the lines of the classic account of *The music and theater of the Pilipino people* by Raymundo Bañas (1924) or Alain Pacquier's work on *Les chemins du baroque dans le nouveau monde* (1996). Although these writers were not formally trained as musicologists, it was precisely their pioneering spirit that inspired a flurry of critical research by subsequent generations. Writers such as Carpentier paved the way for the study of fascinating topics not traditionally considered worthy of attention.

Unfortunately, the almost complete absence of references in the main body of Carpentier's text detracts from its otherwise erudite appearance, although an extensive list of sources is included at the end. The translation reads well, apart from the occasional missing pronoun. The present tense, often used in romance languages to describe historical events, has been retained in the translation, but this is a minor concern and adds to the character of the work itself. There is also an extensive introduction by Timothy Brennan, who gives a thorough biographical study of Carpentier. Many of the 'problems of theory' raised by Brennan refer to the folkloric theories of Carpentier and his assumptions concerning a Cuban national identity in music. Brennan also introduces an interesting slant on the work of this author: 'Carpentier has often been baited as being a Francophile aesthete slumming in the New World' (p.39). Such charges, however, do not alter Carpentier's legendary status as a pioneer in researching the musical history of Cuba.

I will not elaborate on the contents of the book, however, for this study should be an essential addition to any academic music library. Musicologists across the board will also find it useful in its focus on historical, ethnic and popular music themes. The chapters on the 16th and 17th centuries dispel some prevalent myths, and are particularly useful for anyone wishing to understand post-conquest musical activity in the Spanish colonies. For instance, Carpentier notes that 'the first choirmaster in the recorded history of the cathedral of Santiago, exactly half a century after the Discovery, was Cuban, son of an Indian woman and a Castilian father' (p.71). He also makes the point that previous historians sought to downplay the importance of African traditions in Cuban music and culture.

The two books reviewed here illustrate the global nature

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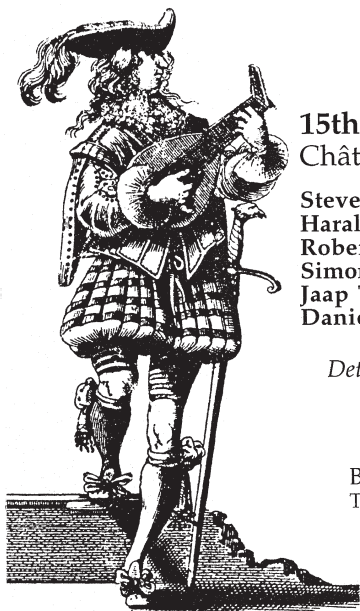
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of early music scholarship and the expansion of interest to 'sonic realms' beyond notated music. Whether the line must be drawn somewhere—or the discipline become increasingly ethereal—is a matter for each reader to consider. The dissemination of European music and culture around the globe since the Age of Discovery, however, is a field that must be brought to the fore if we are to understand the current ways of the world and indeed our own cultural predilections. How else can we learn to appreciate our *sarabandas* and *chaconas*?

Michael Latham

Balancing a catalogue

Mimi S. Waitzman, *The Benton Fletcher collection at Fenton House: early keyboard instruments* (London: The National Trust, 2003), £24.99

At the outset of her new catalogue Mimi Waitzman writes: 'This book has been written primarily for visitors to Fenton House and for non-specialists as an introduction to the history and context of the Benton Fletcher Collection of Early Keyboard Instruments.' The introductory section of the book, which describes George Henry Benton Fletcher (1866–1944) and the history of his collection, now in Fenton House, London, also includes a short history of the harpsichord, the clavichord and the piano, all of which are represented in this compact collection of 19 instruments. But it is the series of entries for the instruments that forms the essential part of the book. Appended at the end is a list of the restorers and repairers of the instruments in the collection, as well as a list of the previous keepers. These lists are followed by a transcript of a letter from Benton Fletcher to the Friends of Music Society that makes evident his main aim: to promote performance on period instruments. The book itself concludes with a glossary of technical terms, a bibliography and an index. Finally, a CD tucked into the back cover gives the reader the chance to hear 14 of the instruments played by Terence Charleston.

The 19 entries are each divided into two sections, the first of which is anecdotal in character but with an informative content varying from one instrument to the next; details about the makers' lives and some salient features of the instruments provide historical and musical information useful to both the lay person and the specialist. The second section of each entry is a standardized technical specification of the instrument under discussion. The case

materials and dimensions, the compass, the three-octave span, the disposition, the lengths of the strings and, where present, the string gauges marked, are all given in an ordered checklist. A good balance is thus achieved between inviting and accessible descriptions on the one hand, and enough technical details for the performer and the specialist on the other. No catalogue, however extended, can ever supply all the information that players and specialists will want; their needs can be satisfied only through the direct study of the instruments. The entries in this catalogue offer more than enough to allow anyone to decide whether such study would be worth while. Each entry is supported by at least one photograph, and the CD gives well-played and unpretentious demonstrations of the instruments. It is particularly interesting to hear the sounds of the different combinations of harpsichord stops, especially when these are subtly altered during the performance.

It becomes clear in the introduction that Benton Fletcher's desire to provide period instruments for the performance of early music is still the aim of the museum. Nonetheless, a careful reading of the catalogue as a whole reveals that, where this aim would seriously compromise the preservation of the instruments, they are maintained in a quiescent state. This applies to few of the instruments, however, and both performers and curators will be happy to find that a balance appears to have been found between maintaining most of the instruments in playing order while keeping a minority only as organological documents. It is then not surprising, but nonetheless satisfying, to read that the physical conditions under which all the instruments are conserved are carefully maintained, and that the response of the instruments to these conditions and any wear and tear caused by playing and studying are monitored.

The self-sufficiency of the 19 entries, together with the general historical description of the collection given in the introduction make the two short essays entitled 'Action types' and '18th-century English and French harpsichords contrasted' largely superfluous. What is more, although 'Action types' offers excellent and highly detailed line drawings of the workings of the actions of the harpsichord, the clavichord and three types of piano, these drawings, together with their accompanying texts, go far beyond the stated aim of the introduction, namely to offer 'a certain amount of musical background and specialist technical knowledge' to help the 'visitors to Fenton House' as well as the 'non-specialist'. At the same time, the description of the workings of the clavichord, while clear to any player of that instrument, fails to mention explicitly two essential