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The sound of silence: models for an urban musicology

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ABSTRACT: This discussion seeks to provide a context for the emergence of so-called 'urban musicology', both within nineteenth-century antiquarian endeavour and in response to scholarly trends in the 1970s and 1980s. The strengths, weaknesses and possible future directions of 'urban musicology' are also identified.

A most solemn Mass was sung, and during the Gloria and Credo, Signor Claudio Monteverde, the *maestro di cappella* and glory of our age, had the singing unite with the *trombe squarciate* with exquisite and marvellous harmony.

On 21 November 1631, the Venetian government marked the cessation of plague in the city with a ceremonial procession to S. Maria della Salute. The church was then a building site: its foundation stone had been laid just a few months before as a votive offering for release from the catastrophe besetting the city. But S. Maria della Salute's imposing position at the mouth of the Grand Canal, opposite those other great Venetian landmarks, the Doge's palace and St Mark's Basilica, was deeply symbolic. So, too, was the procession after the celebration of Mass in St Mark's, with the city's civic and ecclesiastical dignitaries moving in a panoply of colour and sound, with fanfares of trumpets and beating of drums. And unusually – given that at least two commentators took pains to mention it – the trumpets also sounded during the Gloria and Credo of the Mass sung to the music of the *maestro di cappella* of the basilica, Claudio Monteverdi.[1]

The procession was a standard form of Venetian ceremonial, and music always played a central role therein. Indeed, the music that (we

* I have benefited from participants' responses at the conferences *Musik und Urbanität: Internationale Tagung der Fachgruppe für Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte der Musik* (Berlin-Schmökwitz, November 1999) and *Música y cultura urbana en la edad moderna* (University of Valencia, May 2000), from discussions with Annegret Fauser and Susan J. Smith, whose 'Beyond geography's visible worlds: a cultural politics of music', *Progress in Human Geography*, 21 (1997), 502–29, offers a wealth of interdisciplinary possibilities. Some of these ideas can be found in my 'From the outside looking in: musicology and the Renaissance', *Bulletin for the Society for Renaissance Studies*, 16, 2 (May 1999), 1–7, and in my review in *Italian Studies*, 43 (1988), 147–50.

[1] The celebration is discussed in J.H. Moore, '*Venezia favorita da Maria*: music for the Madonna Nicopeia and Santa Maria della Salute', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 37 (1984), 299–355.

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can plausibly assume) Monteverdi composed for this occasion was included some ten years later in his collection of sacred music, the *Selva morale e spirituale* (1640–41). Yet the Gloria and Credo published here do not include trumpet parts, there seems scant space for them within the musical texture, and indeed some doubts remain about what *trombe squarciate* in fact are. It is hard to imagine a more emblematic example of the tantalizing yet frustrating problems besetting musicologists seeking to explore the place of music and musicians in the urban environment. We have the documents that permit us at least to guess who might have performed Monteverdi's Mass, plus written accounts of the event, plus even the music that was done, and yet the full sound of that music remains beyond our grasp.

The field of what one might for convenience call 'urban musicology' has become something of a trend, whether for practitioners of the 'new musicology' or for those seeking to resist its pleasures and perils. It also has a distinguished history with roots in antiquarian and local history-based studies from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But its renaissance in Anglo-American scholarship on music of the early modern period – perforce, my own perspective – appears to date from the early 1980s, with a remarkable spate of publications concerning what might roughly be defined as 'music in . . .' a given place during the fifteenth, sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries: the most obvious examples are Anthony Newcomb's account of the madrigal at Ferrara from 1579 to 1597 (1980), Iain Fenlon's of music and patronage in sixteenth-century Mantua (1980, 1982), James Moore's of music at St Mark's, Venice (1981), Lewis Lockwood's of music in fifteenth-century Ferrara (1984), and Alan Atlas's of music at the Aragonese court in Naples (1985).[2] They were the fruit of, and also confirmed, a number of broader trends apparent in Anglo-American musicology of the preceding two decades: the English-speaking world's fascination, at times obsession, with Italy; the tendency for musicology to colonize the Renaissance as one main sphere of activity (in turn related to the burgeoning 'early-music' movement in these decades); and the increasing sense that the musicologist needed to contextualize musical objects in time and place, a task to be achieved largely by way of a close attention to archival and other documentary sources. Such contextualization, and the skills and graft required to achieve it, were in turn thought to set an uncertain, largely self-referential discipline on a secure enough footing to enable it to speak to the broader worlds of political, economic, social and cultural history. Art historians had already gone further down a similar path,

[2] A. Newcomb, *The Madrigal at Ferrara, 1579–1597*, 2 vols (Princeton, 1980); I. Fenlon, *Music and Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Mantua*, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1980, 1982); J.H. Moore, *Vespers at St. Mark's: Music of Alessandro Grandi, Giovanni Rovetta and Francesco Cavalli*, 2 vols (Ann Arbor, 1981); L. Lockwood, *Music in Renaissance Ferrara, 1400–1505: The Creation of a Musical Centre in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1984); A. Atlas, *Music at the Aragonese Court of Naples* (Cambridge, 1985).

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and, as has often been the case in the past century, art-historical models had a strong influence on developing musicological practice, for all the obvious differences between visual and aural phenomena.[3] The aim was to move music from the periphery towards the centre of historical enquiry.

It is no coincidence that the 'music in . . .' model became (and often still is) preferred for the design of the doctoral dissertations in musicology that were starting to emerge in large number in this period (Fenlon's, Moore's and Newcomb's studies were Ph.D. theses revised for publication). Limiting one's enquiry to a given time and place set useful boundaries upon an exercise designed to demonstrate scholarly skills as much as to make a significant and original contribution to knowledge. It also provided convenient ways of escaping 'great men' and notions of progress based upon them, and of avoiding the need to devote years of doctoral research to composers of increasingly lesser stature. But the shift exposed a number of neuroses still bedevilling our discipline. Many earlier British – in particular, Oxbridge – musicologists had been criticized for dilettantism, for being too wedded to the so-called 'organ loft' tradition, for their adherence to now outmoded notions of the 'great composer', and in the end, for a confused blurring of historicist and presentist approaches to musical works of art.[4] For them, however, the glorious sounds of the Renaissance masters still echoing through the rafters of their college chapels (and lest we forget, most English cathedrals) had a universal authenticity which transcended time and place – and also the need for historically authentic performance – offering tradition, continuity and, last but by no means least, the impressive if imperialist stamp of political and religious authority. The new historicists thus menaced much that was held dear: the thrust for contextualization threatened to devalue the currency, turning sound into silence.

In as late as 1979, Denis Arnold, Heather Professor of Music at Oxford, could still take a palpably 'great' composer as a talisman in his fine study of Giovanni Gabrieli and the music of the Venetian High Renaissance,[5] an individual standing for one Renaissance city's entire musical tradition. The lack of named composers in the headline titles of the monographs of the early 1980s mentioned above is striking: Moore focuses on a liturgy (Vespers), Newcomb on a genre (the madrigal), Atlas on an institution (the Aragonese court), and both Fenlon and Lockwood on dynasties of ducal patrons, the Gonzagas and the Estensi, although, and perhaps significantly, the titles of their books obscure the point. One

[3] It is emblematic that many of the most distinguished scholars in the field have had close connections with the Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, Villa I Tatti, Florence, a research institute with an art-historical focus but also with strong tendencies towards the interdisciplinary.

[4] For the broad issues, not without a degree of prejudice, see J. Kerman, *Musicology* (London, 1985).

[5] D. Arnold, *Giovanni Gabrieli and the Music of the Venetian High Renaissance* (London, 1979).

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might argue that making a fetish of a genre or an institution (or even a city or a state) is little different from doing the same to a composer. Similarly, both Fenlon and Lockwood variously adopt a trend long common in Renaissance studies, that of turning 'great' patrons into 'great' artists.[6] Certainly, for Fenlon and Lockwood, as for Jacob Burckhardt over a century before, the arts served political expediency and despotic self-interest, but lying behind the politics of spectacle (and the spectacle of politics) are vestiges of a Romantic ideal, the patron as enlightened connoisseur facilitating the production and preservation of magnificent art-works that both can stand as emblems of their time and can speak to the modern world.

To focus on a genre, institution or patron helps solve a problem facing Renaissance musicologists: the lack for this period of a definitive canon of composers and works (which is not to say that notions of canonicity did not, and do not, exist). We might all agree on the artistic merits of a Dufay, Josquin, Palestrina or Monteverdi, but we are less clear on those of their contemporaries, or even on the criteria according to which these merits might be judged. What such focusing does not do, however, is offer what is claimed explicitly or implicitly on the title-pages of these books, that is, the possibility of an account of the music permeating a given urban environment in all its variety and richness. For example, and for all the breadth implied in their titles, both Fenlon (*Music and Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Mantua*) and Lockwood (*Music in Renaissance Ferrara*) focus chiefly on the early modern court (itself less a space than a concept). Yet as Lockwood notes by way of his brief discussion of music at Ferrara cathedral, the court did not mark the be-all and end-all of music-making in that or any other city, and in the case of Mantua, music was presumably heard in spaces other than the ducal palace and its satellite institutions.[7] What this music might have been, however, remains unstated.

It is no doubt significant that the possibility of another view was offered by a scholar from a different (German) tradition working on a different (North European) urban environment. Reinhard Strohm's study of music in late medieval Bruges, published in 1985, sought to

[6] This is one of the simpler of the points that Claudio Annibaldi has been developing in his theoretical deliberations on music and patronage in the Renaissance and early Baroque periods, starting from his important preface to *La musica e il mondo: mecenatismo e committenza musicale in Italia tra Quattro e Seicento* (Bologna, 1993), 9–42; see most recently idem, 'Towards a theory of musical patronage in the Renaissance and Baroque: the perspective from anthropology and semiotics', *Recercare*, 10 (1998), 173–82.

[7] The issue has become a matter of particular debate for Florence, in large part in response (critical or otherwise) to W. Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians in Florence during the Principate of the Medici, with a Reconstruction of the Artistic Establishment*, 'Historiae musicae cultores' biblioteca, 61 (Florence, 1993); see the comments in my 'Crossing the boundaries: sacred, civic and ceremonial space in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Florence', in P. Gargiulo *et al*. (eds), *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi '"Cantate domino": musica nei secoli per il Duomo di Firenze' (Firenze, 23–25 maggio 1997)* (Florence, 2001, 139–46.)

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offer a more holistic view of a city's musical life than had hitherto been achieved for Italy.[8] Its preface makes interesting reading. Strohm had originally intended to write a monograph on a musical source from Bruges, the so-called Lucca Choirbook, but he was encouraged by his editors at the Clarendon Press to broaden his focus: 'As this meant studying people rather than manuscripts, I have never regretted the decision' (p. vi). Strohm also explains his use of the term 'late medieval' (in fact, he covers much the same period as Lockwood for Ferrara) as an attempt to avoid the loaded term 'Renaissance',[9] although there are also clear, if not necessarily intentional, resonances of Johan Huizinga's 'waning' Middle Ages. But it was Strohm's first chapter, 'Townscape – soundscape', that rang through the discipline like the pealing bells that he so strongly identifies as the chief 'musical' sound heard in a fifteenth-century city. Strohm invokes the outdoor and indoor sounds and silences that marked the space, time and rhythm of urban life: bells and carillons, street cries, city waits and minstrels, sacred and civic processions and tableaux, liturgical chant and polyphony, and music within the civic and domestic chamber. It is no doubt the different political organization of Bruges compared with most Italian city-states – with its stronger civic government and administration owing fealty to a peripatetic and sometimes distant Duke (of Burgundy) and his entourage – that permits Strohm's emphasis on the city as a whole. But he offers an enticing vision of a world filled with sounds that somehow define both urban space and even urban identity.

Strohm's starting point is clear: 'Late medieval Bruges is known to us through the stillness of pictures. Motion and sound are contained in them, but in a frozen form: reduced to an infinitely small fraction of time. Given time, the pictures would start to move, and the music would be heard.'[10] Strohm plays eloquently and elegantly with the traditional view of art as 'frozen' music to suggest that the musicological imagination can, indeed must, bring these paintings to life rather like the *tableaux vivants* that marked sacred and civic festivals on the streets of Bruges. Given time, hard work, fantasy and a bit of luck in the archives, Strohm seems to suggest, one can generate a real sense of the musical horizons of expectation of an urban population, demonstrating how the sounds of music penetrated all aspects of city life, and more important still, what those sounds might have meant to those who heard them.

[8] R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985, rev. 1990).

[9] Perhaps Strohm was heeding Nino Pirrotta's admonitions against the indiscriminate application of the term to music of this period; see in particular Pirrotta's 'Music and cultural tendencies in fifteenth-century Italy' (originally published in 1966), and 'Novelty and renewal in Italy, 1300–1600' (1973), now in idem, *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque: A Collection of Essays* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 80–112, 159–74.

[10] Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, 1. Compare *ibid*., 8–9: 'The very precision of the great Flemish paintings has made us forget that they are longing for completion in life, motion and sound. They are silent mirrors of music.'

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Strohm's counterpoint of 'townscape' and 'soundscape' invokes the work of those social, economic and cultural historians – and human and cultural geographers – for whom the city maps out, symbolizes and enshrines the various interstices of political and social interactions within and across class and other boundaries in a given city-space. The Renaissance city – its squares, public buildings, palaces and churches – becomes a physical representation of an ideal and idealized body-politic, both enabling and epitomizing the power-relations that exist between church and state, public and private, and civic and domestic in the well-ordered Republic. But the urban townscape does more than define the boundaries of city life; it also becomes a matter of civic identity, and an example of conspicuous consumption on the part of rulers, government and citizens alike as a means to both public and private ends in this world or the next. Similarly, the art-work – be it architecture, sculpture, painting, literature or even music – becomes a commodity bolstered by the 'new' wealth attained by private individuals in the flourishing economy of the Renaissance, one to be acquired and traded according to the requirements of a consumer-led exchange determined by perceived utility (which may include luxurious *non*-utility).[11] In this context, the value of the art-work normally extends beyond its form and content, and beyond the work that has gone into its making, by virtue of its iconic and symbolic force to signify something beyond itself.

Yet Strohm's coupling of townscape with soundscape also challenges the ideology of the visual that dominates post-Enlightenment scholarly endeavour. Despite the common tendency in historical enquiry to privilege sight over sound, there is every reason to sensitize our historical imaginations to the soundscapes – or the other sensory experiences (smell, touch . . .) – that defined the early modern world.[12] A Renaissance city was noisy and no doubt noisome, but at least some early modern city-dwellers must have been receptive to music in its various manifestations, whether church bells ringing the hours, street-cries of pedlars and merchants, snatches of popular tunes heard through open doors and windows, or a church choir celebrating the liturgy, the town band playing in the square, and carnival masquerades passing along the streets. We also now treat as a commonplace music's utility in terms of its potential to manifest civic, courtly or sacramental splendour as required by the ceremonies that punctuated the secular and sacred calendars of urban life. Music thus marks the significant rites of passage of both individual and state, while preserving continuities and traditions to grant an illusion of permanence in the face of the political, social and even personal uncertainties of a difficult world. Certainly, music could

[11] The issues are discussed in R. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy 1300–1600* (Baltimore and London, 1993).

[12] Simon Schama makes the point most recently in *Rembrandt's Eyes* (London, 1999); his chapter 7, 'Amsterdam anatomized', includes a section on 'The city in five senses'.

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also be a noble pastime for those of breeding and taste, and access or not to a given type of music could serve as an instrument and emblem of social and political control. But music's penetrative power is further assumed, not necessarily Romantically, to have a democratizing tendency: even when deprived of the sight of sound (as happened, say, in most churches), one could still enjoy its aural pleasures.

Strohm does not consider the problematic distinctions between music and noise, or between hearing and listening (there is a difference). But there is considerable attraction in his notion that music can attain symbolic and symbolizing power beyond itself through its ability to mark out functional and conceptual space in a variety of ways: sound, as much as sight, can serve to define precisely what a given space might be. As other scholars have begun to explore, music can also act as a social and cultural locator, with particular styles, media and performance practices appropriated and/or somehow set apart to articulate notions of civic identity; the 'myth' of polychoral music at St Mark's, Venice, or Adriano Willaert's taming of the *villanesca alla napolitana* are both cases in point.[13] Yet this power was mitigated, first, by music's relatively weak ability to signify – music rarely communicates precise meanings – and second, by its essential transience; music's capacity to delimit space, time and identity was bounded by the end of one performance and the start of the next. For the rest, all that remained were pale echoes of those performances in the 'frozen' paintings – and for that matter, the 'frozen' musical manuscripts and prints – that fixed an aural phenomenon within an alien and alienating visual medium.[14] Buildings stand, paintings hang, but music dies away. Thus the (f)act of performance can signify more than what is actually performed, and the musician may have greater value than the music. This dilemma poses both a risk and an opportunity for the musicologist. It threatens the decentring of a discipline supposedly devoted to the sympathetic elucidation of musical works of art; it is no coincidence that many scholars working in this field would prefer to see themselves as social historians rather than

[13] For St Mark's, see D. Bryant, 'The "cori spezzati" of St Mark's: myth and reality', *Early Music History*, 1 (1981), 165–86; J.H. Moore, 'The *Vespero delli Cinque Laudate* and the role of *salmi spezzati* at St. Mark's', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 34 (1981), 249–78. The *villanesca alla napolitana* was one of a number of 'popular' dialect types (in both textual and musical terms) identified by language, scoring (normally for three voices), texture (homophony) and extreme musical solecism (consecutive fifths). Willaert, *maestro di cappella* at St Mark's, produced four-voice versions of greater musical sophistication; see N. Pirrotta, 'Willaert and the *Canzone villanesca*', in idem, *Music and Culture in Italy from the Middle Ages to the Baroque*, 175–97. Martha Feldman discusses the repertory briefly in her *City Culture and the Madrigal at Venice* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1995), 96–102, although (and *pace* the title of her book) she is concerned less with 'city culture' than with a kind of Venetian civic humanism (curiously, on the fifteenth-century Florentine model) represented in the far more serious Petrarchist madrigal of the time.

[14] See the comments in my 'Printing the "new music"', in K. van Orden (ed.), *Music and the Cultures of Print* (New York and London, 2000), 3–37.

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musicologists. But it has the advantage of avoiding the need for any messy engagement with the music itself, whose forms and contents always tend to slip beyond the grasp.

Howard Mayer Brown's question of 1987 – in effect, how might Renaissance patronage have influenced the content, rather than just the circumstance, of Renaissance music?[15] – has yet to receive an adequate answer at a sufficiently broad level of theory. Most musicologists – save the most hardened Marxists, who for obvious reasons are few and far between in Anglo-American musicology – would limit to some degree the extent to which one can read into musical works or even their reception the political, economic and other structures of the societies that produced them. And even the most enthusiastic historian of musical patronage would set constraints on the power of the patron (whether an individual, an institution, a city or a state) to intervene in the intrinsic, rather than extrinsic, features of the music created under a given set of influences. Environment, resource and function are undoubtedly determining factors in creating the conditions for a given musical work – composers do not work in a vacuum – and the fact that so much Renaissance music is vocal, and thus sets words, helps to displace an acute critical difficulty: verbal texts are more easily related to context (however defined) than music. But a composer's response to all these factors is widely presumed to be at least in part a matter of individual artistic choice often in response to musical, rather than extra-musical, stimuli. There may be a vestige here of the Romantic ideal of the independent art-work untrammelled by time and place. Or perhaps we are not yet sufficiently attuned to the operation of subtly distinctive codes within musical styles that, in the Renaissance at least, appear to be relatively characterless save at the crudest levels of genre. Certainly, there remains a burning need for an appropriate reception-theory of this music, perhaps drawing upon anthropological and semiotic models.[16] But for the moment, and as the above suggests, such a reception-theory would likely focus not so much on the musical text as on its enactment, perhaps taking as a working hypothesis that this (all?) music is essentially under- rather than overdetermined so as to create a space for performance and interpretation to make their mark.

But if the performance act is stronger than the musical text as a cultural identifier, and thus if what matters most in this music is more what is not in the 'notes' than what is, then the musicologist is left with the problem of what kinds of sources can illuminate these absent presences; it is hardly likely to be musical scores themselves. And just how might these performance acts articulate the urban space? The

[15] H.M. Brown, 'Recent research in the Renaissance: criticism and patronage', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 40 (1987), 1–10.

[16] Again, a direction being taken by Claudio Annibaldi; see in particular his 'Towards a theory of musical patronage in the Renaissance and Baroque'.

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example set by Strohm is revealing: for all his initial holistic vision of a harmonious city – and for all his preference for 'people rather than manuscripts' – his subsequent chapters take essentially an institution-by-institution approach to build up a picture of music-making in Bruges that is in effect the sum of its institutional parts. This tack – now standard for almost all 'music in . . .' studies[17] – is in large part determined by the nature of the archival sources that have been studied, and also, one assumes, the many more that have not. Most archives are essentially records of institutions rather than individuals, and the information they provide about institutional practices tends to be governed by the formal requirements of the records being kept; financial and other payments, minutes of meetings and matters of information or (more often) conflict. Aside from mundane administrative matters and routine correspondence, the process of creating a document that will enter an archive often tends only to grind into motion when things are going wrong, rather than right; failure to appreciate the point can lead the archivist seriously astray by assuming the abnormal to be normal. Also, and obviously, the content of any document is determined by the skills, knowledge and interests of its compiler. Some record-keepers were able and willing to give quite detailed accounts of the music they heard. Few, however, had the needs of twentieth-century musicologists at the forefront of their minds: for them music, if mentioned at all, was just 'beautiful', 'sweet', 'splendid' or 'loud' – or even 'exquisite and marvellous', to return to Monteverdi's 1631 Mass – drawing upon a conventional rhetoric of description whose purpose is less to convey information than to conform to (an often classicizing) type.[18] Almost all record-keepers had a vested interest in emphasizing tradition over change – forms of words have a surprisingly long-lasting currency – fostering senses of continuity that create both the impetus for and the illusions of Annales-based historical notions of the *longue durée*. Almost none gives us a full sense of what this music was really like.

There are other approaches to the study of music in the urban environment moving beyond the transcription and analysis of institutional payment records or ceremonial prescriptions and descriptions, for all that these approaches might remain constrained by the nature of archival sources. One is a census-style method that focuses on the musicians making this urban harmony rather than the institutions that

[17] For example, see F.A. d'Accone, *The Civic Muse: Music and Musicians in Siena during the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Chicago and London, 1997).

[18] As Anne MacNeil notes in her 'Weeping at the water's edge', *Early Music*, 27 (1999), 407–17. Contemporary published descriptions of, say, court or civic festivities often conformed to classical archetypes (for example, narrations of Roman triumphs) and tropes of *ekphrasis*. They were also written as often before the fact as after. Moreover, it is becoming increasingly apparent (but not yet fully enough explored) that some of these descriptions were written as instructions for composers rather than as accounts of what they had achieved; if one reads them literally, it is at one's peril.

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supported them – where did they live, how were they trained, how did the city enable them to form professional (or not) networks, how flexibly could they move through musical and other spaces, what did they perform when, where, how and why? Another is literally to map the urban strata which these institutions (and musicians) occupied, to identify their proximities and distances, and also to see their interactions with other kinds of civic activity. A third is to move in the direction of micro-history, with its thicker than thick readings of specific events and their broader ramifications. But any such approach will need to recognize the limitations of archives and their *de facto* exclusion of the marginalized ('popular' musicians) and the disenfranchised (women). It will also need to take greater account of audience and, again, reception than has hitherto been the case – who heard this music and who listened to it; what kinds of judgements were they capable of making on the performance and on the work; and how mobile were they within the urban environment?

These questions in turn prompt a level of theorizing somewhat alien to the Anglo-American – or at least, British – musicological tradition, plus a closer scrutiny of terms that have for too long remained loosely defined. One is 'patronage', which simply will no longer suffice to account for the complex mechanisms of production and consumption of music (and indeed, the arts in general) in the urban environment. Others are 'production' and 'consumption' themselves, those ubiquitous mainstays of scholarly titles: just what is being produced, what consumed, and by whom? The notion of the composer as producer and the listener (or reader) as consumer adopts a work-centred notion of the market that certainly is an issue in the print cultures of the later Renaissance and early Baroque periods but which misses the point of the intensely performative nature of musical activity at this time, a question that impinges not just upon improvised or semi-improvised forms of music-making but also upon the notion that the chief 'consumers' of musical works are in fact performing musicians,[19] while institutions, patrons and listeners often 'consume' not so much the music itself as its contingent effects: splendour, prestige, devotion, pleasure, or even tradition and continuity.

This further explains the alienation of the music 'itself' from the ambit of the urban musicologist: most of us end up concerned more with production than with product. Yet there remain fundamental questions concerning the terms of exchange represented within production and product and transacted between the musical producer (whether the composer or the performer) and the musical consumer (whether the

[19] So my colleague Andrew Wathey pointed out in his contribution to the conference *Produzione, circolazione e consumo: per una mappa della musica sacra dal tardo Medioevo al primo Seicento*, Fondazione Ugo e Olga Levi, Venice, 28–30 Oct. 1999; see my report in *Early Music*, 28 (2000), 313–14.

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performer or the listener). The effects of musical consumption being largely incidental to the music itself may make these effects more amenable to notions of a *longue durée*. Yet how might the avowed contextualist thereby account for style-change in music? Also, to what extent might music shape, rather than be shaped by, its environment, creating and defining spaces in alternative ways? For most scholars of Renaissance music, this music tends to reflect, rather than determine, its context; however great the sense we all might have of music's power for change, in the final analysis Renaissance musicians, it appears, submitted to, rather than challenged, the political, social, economic and cultural worlds in which they worked. Yet one should not dismiss the ability of music to demarcate space differently, or perhaps better, the ability of the visual and the sonic both separately and together to invoke complex webs of spaces that move beyond just the merely physical or the merely acoustic into more conceptual planes of (self-)definition, rather as a Venetian *campo* or a Florentine *piazza* could be transformed by the sounds variously heard within it at different points in the city's civic and social calendar. The result need not necessarily be a harmonious unity; indeed, the spice of dissonance, like the play of difference, may assume a functional, perhaps even liberating, role. Precisely where all this leaves music in the broader field of cultural anthropology must come high on any agenda for future enquiry.

All these questions may in the end seem conventional enough, but they prompt a somewhat different orientation to studies of music in the urban context than has been achieved by the largely positivist, chronicle-based approaches adopted to date. They place the musical art-work at the interface between the individual and the environment, they prompt a more subtle articulation of causes and effects, and they also hint at music's potential to challenge – rather than just conform to – contemporary and modern perceptions of its place in the world. They require an imaginative use of archival and musical sources, and a mixing of the quantitative and the qualitative with a strong measure of theoretical reflection. Only then will we be able to rescue from silence the sounds of dim and distant pasts and to evoke remote urban soundscapes for modern ears.

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