

Gender and Song in Early Modern England. Leslie C. Dunn and Katherine Rebecca Larson, eds.

Women and Gender in the Early Modern World. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2014. xvi + 220 pp. \$104.95.

This interdisciplinary collection of essays brings together well-selected discussions of gender and music in English contexts. Taken as a whole, the volume provides a multifaceted view of these topics and the ways they intersect. Dunn and Larson make clear from the outset their recognition that gender is a broader topic than women, and that their intention is to build on scholarship on women and music making. The collection thus brings in considerations of music's inflection of masculinities and its role in homosociality for men and women — an important dimension of the social meanings of music. Dunn and Larson acknowledge that song is a “powerful and flexible gendered signifier” (14). Thus music's curious fluidity means that, paradoxically, it can be recruited to destabilize gendered identities and practices, as well as to denote and fix them.

The collection brings attention to the gendering of music in England (with an excursion into accounts of the New World), broadening the scope of this field beyond the well-trodden Italian material. Furthermore, an admirably wide range of genres is included, such as masque, ballad, psalm translation, and poetry, and scenarios such as theatrical performance, amateur music making, and the diegetic and nondiegetic music featured in film scores. The introduction is, understandably, keen to emphasize the synergies among the essays gathered here, but at times this feels rather contrived and, ultimately, unnecessary. Attitudes of the period toward music, its qualities and uses, are themselves contradictory, so there is no need to impose an artificial coherence. Indeed, heterogeneity is a desirable quality in an account of music's varied operations, reputations, and meanings in the early modern period. Thus the generic nature of the essay collection itself enables this volume to provide an appropriate range of objects of analysis while doing justice to the detail of the examples and aspects that it includes.

Consequently, the most convincing of the essays tend to be those that give a detailed exploration of a specific case. For instance, Corrigan's essay carefully establishes the way that Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* presents tyranny as necessitating a retreat from a masculinized public sphere in order to argue that the songs are a signifier of this refusal to engage, and a means to resist political oppression, for men at least. Read in this way,

the songs are no longer a puzzle, but of a piece with a consistently metaphorical invocation of rape in early modern culture. Another highlight is Heetderks's essay, which identifies an important lacuna in scholarship in her discussion of the links between intellectual difference and song in Shakespeare. Inevitably, an essay of this length can only begin to address the complexity of this issue. Nevertheless, it is a welcome start, and particularly useful is the recognition of the way that certain kinds of fooling (e.g., the witty and verbally dexterous fool) receive implicit or explicit critical approval.

Linda Phyllis Austern is, predictably, the most frequently cited scholar in the collection, and her contribution to the volume is one of the strongest. Her lucid and nuanced account of men's domestic part-singing draws out the valences of public and private, a pair of categories that "constituted as complex and flexible a conceptual axis as did manliness and effeminacy" (131). The final essay, by Kendra Preston Leonard, rounds out the collection well with an analysis of how film music shapes our own sense of the intersections between music and gender through the historical category of the early modern. The editors are to be commended for incorporating this presentist perspective. Elizabeth I is a particularly apt figure to choose to explore the "cinematographosphere" (170) of early modern film, not least because of the range of strategies used to represent her, both in gendered and musical terms. The essay also emphasizes Elizabeth's place as a well-known musician who may initially appear to be conventionally gendered, but whose specific identity invites scrutiny of those conventions. Leonard's analysis draws out the complexities of the way music is gendered, and, conversely, the way gender is musically figured.

Ultimately, the collection is a welcome contribution that extends the consideration of music and gender geographically and generically, and explores the plurality and fluidity of gender as it intersects with music.

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