

GRANTLEY MCDONALD

UNIVERSITÄT WIEN

ORCID 0000-0001-6235-2392

HOW AND WHERE DID STUDENTS LEARN MUSIC IN THE LATE  
MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE?

**ABSTRACT** Musicologists have traditionally focused on mature musicians working in musical centres such as courts and cathedrals. However, archives also contain much information about music in places that were geographically or administratively less central. Such places often render valuable information about musical education. The chapters in the book reviewed here present case-studies in musical education from the late Middle Ages until the early modern period. Many focus on the city and province of Padua, while others examine music education in German universities, Parisian parish schools, and French riding academies.

**KEYWORDS** music education, Middle Ages, Renaissance, early modern period, Padua, history of education, history of collections, parish schools, academies

**ABSTRAKT** *Jak i gdzie uczniowie uczyli się muzyki w średniowieczu i renesansie?* Muzykolodzy tradycyjnie skupiają się na dojrzałych muzykach pracujących w takich ośrodkach muzycznych jak dwory i katedry. Jednak archiwa zawierają również wiele informacji o muzyce w miejscach, które pod względem geograficznym lub administracyjnym były mniej centralne. Z miejsc takich pochodzą często cenne informacje na temat edukacji muzycznej. Rozdziały w recenzowanej tutaj książce przedstawiają studia przypadków dotyczące nauczania muzyki od późnego średniowiecza do wczesnej nowożytności. Wiele z nich koncentruje się na mieście i prowincji Padwa, podczas gdy inne przedstawiają edukację muzyczną na niemieckich uniwersytetach, w paryskich szkołach parafialnych i francuskich akademiach jeździeckich.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE** edukacja muzyczna, średniowiecze, renesans, wczesna nowożytność, Padwa, historia edukacji, historia kolekcji, szkoły parafialne, akademie

The volume under review here<sup>1</sup> grew out of several interrelated projects at the University of Padua and the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance (University of Tours). One project at the University of Padua, directed by Antonio Lovato, 'Grammar and Singing Schools in the Padua area', completed in 2022, investigated musical education in and around Padua until the fall of the Republic of Venice in 1797. Another, directed by the editor of the volume, Paola Dessì, investigates what can be learned from the *libri amicorum* of early-modern students about their place of music (both vocal and instrumental) in their education, leisure and communication. These sources reveal many details of students' interactions with teachers of practical music and with instrument makers. Another project, at the Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance in Tours (2013–17), directed by the late Xavier Bisaro, investigated the place of singing in schools between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries, with particular attention to its religious background, its repertoires and pedagogical techniques.

There is still a lot of room for detailed studies of musical education in the late Middle Ages and early modern period. Cynthia Cyrus, Susan Forscher Weiss and Russell E. Murray Jr. made a significant start with their database *Musical Instruction and Musical Learning*, but this is complete only to 2006.<sup>2</sup> That project led to a significant essay collection in 2010, *Music Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*.<sup>3</sup> The present volume takes the field forward by another significant step. It is articulated into four sections: 'Studium', 'Magistri, alumni et scholares', 'Schola', and 'Workshops and Academies'. In other words, the book examines musical education in four distinct settings: in grammar schools, in private education, at universities, and finally in institutions for education in practical arts. The chapters cumulatively show that music was encountered often in the late medieval and early modern worlds, and played a significant part in the instruction of students. Musical knowledge, language, practices and metaphors were used frequently in many other fields, including medicine, astronomy, dance and even the equestrian arts.

One significant element of this volume is the focus on music-making in parish churches, especially in rural areas. Parishes and the music made in them have received proportionally much less attention than princely chapels or cathedrals. Such neglect has many causes. The archival documentation for rural churches is generally less plentiful than for princely chapels, cathedrals or collegiate churches. Rural churches

1 *Music in Schools from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age*, ed. Paola Dessì, Turnhout: Brepols, 2021 (= Collection 'Épitome musical'), pp. 336. ISBN-10: 2503598897, ISBN-13: 978-2503598895.

2 MIML: Musical Instruction and Musical Learning, eds. Cynthia J. Cyrus, with Susan Forscher Weiss and Russell E. Murray Jr., <http://miml.library.vanderbilt.edu>, accessed 9 May 2006.

3 *Music Education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. Russell E. Murray Jr., Susan Forscher Weiss, and Cynthia J. Cyrus, Bloomington 2010, [muse.jhu.edu/book/1693](http://muse.jhu.edu/book/1693).

are usually considered less culturally central than larger establishments, partly because they had less money or other incentives to attract prominent musicians, and thus tended to be net importers of written (usually printed) musical materials rather than producers of new material. Furthermore, smaller establishments tended to be musically less adventurous, or at least cultivated music that was less difficult (and thus less prestigious) than that created and performed in grand churches. Xavier Bisaro shows in his project that while Louis XIV was enjoying the *grands motets* of Du Mont and Robert, the music-making in many French parish churches was restricted to plainchant.<sup>4</sup> However, parish clergy were encouraged to make sure that the chant was done well, with due reverence, and even with an element of congregational participation.

Such interest in the music made in institutions lower in the ecclesiastical food-chain than those customarily studied by musicologists was stimulated by the publication of Nicholas Temperley's *The Music of the English Parish Church* (1983).<sup>5</sup> It is possible that this shift of focus was encouraged by the rise of 'history from below', as represented in the Anglosphere by works such as E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963),<sup>6</sup> or in Italy and France by the rise of microhistories of individual rural communities, such as Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms* (1976) or Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Carnival in Romans* (1979).<sup>7</sup> Over the last couple of decades, ecclesiastical historians have become increasingly interested in parishes, as witnessed for example by *The Parish in Late Medieval England*, edited by Clive Burgess and Eamon Duffy, which includes an important chapter by Magnus Williamson;<sup>8</sup> or, from the German side, *Die Pfarrei im Späten Mittelalter*, edited by Enno Bünz and Gerhard Fouquet, and Enno Bünz, *Die mittelalterliche Pfarrei*.<sup>9</sup> The studies in the volume reviewed here successfully complement such work by historians, who often neglect to include music as an important element of ecclesiastical foundations. For example, the volume edited by Bünz and Fouquet, for all its other strengths, says virtually nothing at all about music.

Of the thirteen contributions in the present volume (including the editorial introduction), eight are in English, and five in Italian. The book is produced handsomely in large trade paperback, on high-quality paper suitable for the many colour illustra-

4 See Xavier Bisaro, 'Canto piano e strategie pedagogiche in Adrien Bourdoise', in: *Music in Schools*, pp. 195–208.

5 Nicholas Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church*, vol. 1, Cambridge 1983.

6 Edward Palmer Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, London 1963.

7 Carlo Ginzburg, *Il formaggio e i vermi. Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500*, Torino 1976; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Le carnaval de Romans. De la Chandeleur au Mercredi des cendres 1579–1580*, Paris 1979.

8 Magnus Williamson, 'Liturgical Music in the Late Medieval English Parish: Organs and Voices, Ways and Means', in: *The Parish in Late Medieval England*, eds. Clive Burgess and Eamon Duffy, Donington 2006, pp. 177–242.

9 *Die Pfarrei im Späten Mittelalter*, eds. Enno Bünz and Gerhard Fouquet, Ostfildern 2013; Enno Bünz, *Die mittelalterliche Pfarrei. Ausgewählte Schriften zum 13.–16. Jahrhundert*, Tübingen 2017.

tions. It has indices of persons, places and manuscripts. The copy-editing could have been more careful; some pages had more than one typographical error. Nevertheless, the book is a valuable collection of very original chapters that illuminate music education in many important ways.

Paola Dessì's introduction ('*Docere and discere: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Music in Schools*', pp. 9–19) places the history of musical education into the history of education more broadly. Here Dessì presents one of the guiding notions of the collection: that education – including musical education – is a dialectical process of give and take between teacher and student. The dialectical nature of education was enshrined in the structure of medieval universities, where students were expected to react to propositions proposed by the teacher, in active communion with a written text from an authority, either ancient or modern, in exercises such as *quaestiones* and disputations.

Following the introduction, the volume proper begins with brief chapter by F. Alberto Gallo ('At School for Governance: Paolino da Venezia and Music', pp. 21–23) about *De regimine rectoris*, a treatise on government by the Franciscan Paolino da Venezia, a contemporary of Marchetto da Padova, written in 1313–15. In Paolino's opinion, music was an important element in the training of leaders, and he devoted an entire chapter of his treatise to it.

Paolo Rosso's chapter ('La musica nel *curriculum* delle *artes* delle università italiane nel Quattrocento: fra teoria e prassi', pp. 28–58) examines the place of music in the faculties of arts and medicine at universities in the northern half of Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Unfortunately, official records of the teaching of music at late-medieval universities is quite sparse. The musical literature produced in the faculties presupposes that students had already received some kind of training before coming to universities, or perhaps continued to do so in contexts outside formal lectures, such as in *bursae* (colleges). At this time, theorists tended to treat music either in terms of harmonics (in the tradition of Boethius), or in terms of its emotional aspect, which led to natural links with humanistic poetic theory. Of course, these elements were not mutually exclusive. Rosso notes that there was a transformation of the arts curriculum in Italian universities in the thirteenth century, including disciplines such as astronomy and music, which led to the absorption of the arts curriculum into the medical faculty. (I wonder if this development may have even longer roots in the growing importance of astronomy/astrology in the work of scholars associated with the medical school of Salerno, such as Urso of Calabria.) In late fourteenth-century Paris, the teaching of music was often assigned to one of the singers from the university, even if they did not hold the title of magister, normally required for such a task. Musical skill rather than formal qualifications also seemed to be the deciding feature for music professors in Italy. The formal reorganisation of the University of Bologna in 1450 included the provision of one chair of music, but

many of the terms of the reorganisation were disregarded. Around 1482, Bartolomeus Ramis de Pareia famously lectured on music at Bologna, though our information about this comes from Ramis' own writings; there is no trace of his teaching in the surviving records of the faculties of arts or medicine. The 1409 statutes at Pavia prescribed lectures on Boethius' *De musica*. The Pavia statutes were taken as the model for those at Parma (1415) and Turin (1448), though a later revision of those at Turin removed the lectureship in music, perhaps because it had proven difficult to guarantee that it could be filled. Rosso notes that the records from Pavia make it difficult to know if the university ever awarded degrees in music. In contrast with these rather indecisive data, Rosso moves on to discuss the place of music in academic orations from the fifteenth century, a topic previously addressed in an article from 1989 by F. Alberto Gallo. Orations by scholars such as Lapo da Castiglionchio, Filippo Beroaldo, Giovanni Garzoni and Antonio Codro Urceo mention music in different contexts. Garzoni mentions the emotional aspects of music, while Codro recommends the study of Greek as a means to understand musical terminology better. Piero Cara (1475) recommends music (like poetry and rhetoric) as a means to influence the emotions, and for that reason cautions against the kind of music that encourages base passions. Baldassare Rasini of Pavia still treats music as part of the quadrivium. Rosso then moves on to discuss the porous borders between the practical instruction in music at cathedrals and the teaching offered at universities. Prosdocimus recalls that he studied many music treatises with Luca da Lendinara, cantor at the cathedral of Padua. Lendinara was succeeded at the cathedral by Ciconia, likewise the author of musical treatises. Many other authors of treatises worked in major churches, such as Ugolino da Orvieto, Giovanni Spataro and Franchino Gaffuri. Gaffuri's primary position was as choirmaster at the cathedral of Milan. He was appointed professor of music at Pavia – a task he actually carried out at Milan – as one of his emoluments as choirmaster at the cathedral of Milan. However, because Gaffuri did not hold the degree of doctor, his integration into the university structure was limited. Although the university remained the only institution that had the right to confer degrees, it was not really even necessary to attain a university degree in music to pursue a career as a musician. Rosso's general findings about the limited place of music in Italian universities are consistent with those presented independently by David A. Lines.<sup>10</sup>

Inga Mai Groote ('Transmission and Adaption of Musical Knowledge in 16th-Century German Universities: Professors, Students, and their Books', pp. 59–79) examines the ways in which musical knowledge were adapted and transmitted at German and Swiss universities in the sixteenth century. Given that the official notices of music are relatively uninformative, Groote looks at other sources, such as

10 David A. Lines, *The Dynamics of Learning in Early Modern Italy: Arts and Medicine at the University of Bologna*, Cambridge (MA) 2023.

the musical texts, both theoretical and practical, owned by students and professors, and manuscript annotations in these books, where these survive. Since most university students came through the Latin schools, many will have already received some training in singing, to provide music for the liturgy in the churches to which such schools usually belonged. Until well into the sixteenth century, university instruction was still based ultimately on Boethius and his medieval commentators, such as Johannes de Muris. Besides this tradition, there was also a practical tradition based on the study of plainsong, mensural notation and counterpoint. In some places, scholars held extra-curricular classes on music, sometimes in their own private houses. According to Groote, such contexts were probably the kinds of places where Reisch's *Margarita philosophica*, Freigius' *Paedagogus*, or Glareanus' *Dodecachordon* were used. Given the overlap of material between school and university, it is sometimes difficult to determine the exact context in which a given book might have been used. As Groote notes, it is still hard to know exactly what students at German schools or universities learned, and how this related to their own music-making. To get behind this, she looks for traces of musical material or instruments in several places. First are the inventories of students of professors, which usually only become visible to us at the owner's death, in post-mortem lists, which indicate that individuals often retained the music books they had used as students. Groote also looks at annotations in surviving books, the process of collecting works into collector's volumes (*Sammelbänder*), and – where possible – lecture notes, such as those from the classes of Glareanus. Groote points out that the catalogues of contemporary university libraries usually contain surprisingly few books on music. The private libraries of Lutheran pastors, who sometimes rose from the ranks of schoolmasters or cantors, often contained a couple of musical texts. Groote begins with extant catalogues of sixteenth-century libraries to assess the identity of music books owned by collectors and to assess the proportion of musical texts in the overall collection. (This was often surprisingly low – Erasmus Schreckenfuchs was a notable exception.) Another way to approach the question would be to start from the traces of ownership in extant copies, for which the online database *Catalogue of Early German Printed Music* would be a good springboard.<sup>11</sup> Groote also uses annotations in books as a way to understand student's reaction to what they were reading or hearing from their teachers. The Ratsschulbibliothek in Zwickau possesses the books of Stephan and Laurentius Roth, a significant sixteenth-century collection that reveals much about the practice of music at the University of Leipzig. The surviving books of Henricus Glareanus provide perhaps a unique example of what can be learned from annotations in extant books.

11 vdm Verzeichnis deutscher Musikfrühdrucke / Catalogue of Early German Printed Music, <https://vdm-sbg.eu/>, accessed 19 April 2024.

Paola Dessi's chapter ('The Musical Training of University Students in the 16th Century and the *libri amicorum*', pp. 81–102) examines the musical training of university students, drawing information on their *libri amicorum*, friendship albums whose inscription was a ritual gesture of intimacy. These yield the data that permit the creation of a prosopography of music teachers and students. *Libri amicorum* can provide all kinds of information relevant to music, such as items of musical iconography, or the identities of members of the owner's networks. The *libri amicorum* of students and teachers differ in that the former are generally mobile while the others are usually fixed in one location. Teachers often entered a snippet of music into the student's book, such as a canon to be resolved. Assuming that teachers pitched these at a level appropriate to the student, these can be considered as some evidence of the level of proficiency reached. As a case study, Dessi examines the inscriptions in the album of Veit Seytz, in which she finds both evidence of the Rabelaisian taste of student literature at this time, and of Seytz's growing proficiency in music.

Letterio Mauro's chapter ('Music between *scientia* and *ars* in Giacomo Zabarella', pp. 105–111) examines the musical writings of Giacomo Zabarella, professor of logic and natural philosophy at Padua from 1564 until 1589. Zabarella's commentary on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (1582) contains extensive comments on music, which have not yet been studied by musicologists. Zabarella distinguishes four different kinds of music from the theoretical and mathematical to the entirely practical, devoid of any abstruse learning. Zabarella discussions of music are submitted to a strictly Aristotelian method that seems rather relentless. Mauro's dense chapter requires attentive reading.

Padua was one of the most popular destinations for wealthy students from around Europe, who wished not simply to learn a profession, but to absorb the rich cultural life of the city, including education in music. Elda Martellozzo Forin ('Musica tra le pareti domestiche a Padova nei secoli XV e XVI: dagli *ensemble* di docenti universitari ai singoli strumenti di studenti e commercianti', pp. 113–142) examines the archival traces of musical materials (instruments and notation) supplied for wealthy students at Padua between about 1450 and 1600 by makers such as the Tieffenbrucker, illustrious family of luthiers, and the harpsichord maker Antonio Borghesan. Musical experiences at Padua could be had in houses, palaces and monasteries. Music teachers followed the example of grammar teachers in opening their own organised music schools. Students were both local and foreign. Martellozzo Forin also reveals the enormous enthusiasm for music documented amongst members of the professional class and other social elites of Padua in the sixteenth century, as revealed by lists of the instruments and printed music they owned. The lawyer Marco Mantova Benavides owned an organ, several lutes, twelve viols, two harpsichords, seven trombones (or perhaps dulcians), fifteen flutes and drums. The philosopher Marcantonio Passeri Genova had eleven lutes, seven viols, a lira da braccio, an organ, and a spinet. Leone

Lion (d. 1558) had two lutes, seven flutes, four cornetti, a lira and five songbooks. Pagano da Rio had a separate music room in his house, which contained a spinet, ten viols, ten rebecs, four 'fiffari', six bass flutes (large recorders?), four tenor flutes, three soprano flutes, three cornemuses, two 'cornemutti', a harpsichord, a set of seven lutes of different sizes, and an enormous music library that included ostensibly sacred music, such as masses, secular genres such as chansons, as well as specifically instrumental music, such as Valentin Bakfark's *Harmoniarum musicarum in usum testitudinis factarum* (1565). It would have been useful if Martellozzo Forin had engaged with terminological issues. She does not explain what the term 'fiffari' might mean (shawms or transverse flutes?). She does not go into the puzzling references to 'sette tromboni sive fagotti' or the 'subiotti seu flauti' in the list of Mantova, even though she could have referred to the discussions of Gerhard Stradner.<sup>12</sup> I am still not sure if the 'cornemutti' are *cornetti muti* or some kind of cornemuse, but some comment on this ambiguity would have been warranted. We can be grateful that Martellozzo Forin transcribes the list of printed music books (and one manuscript) owned by Pagano Da Rio (d. 1583). However, she does not make any attempt to square this list against editions or manuscripts that have survived. Such a list (complete with RISM numbers) might help us to identify where the printed editions came from, and their chronological spread. (For example, the collection included books as old as Petrucci's *Canti C* of 1504.) Most appear to be Italian editions, but at least one, Bakfark's tablature, was printed in Kraków. Does the list contain any editions that have not survived? Such a list might even lead us to identify surviving copies with those owned by Da Rio. If so, traces of use might give us some insight into how, and how intensively, Da Rio used these sources. The presence or absence of traces of use might reveal the extent to which these substantial collections were actually used, or whether they were simply status symbols. Furthermore, it would help us to know what to make of these enormous collections if we knew how many children these collectors had – a set of seven lutes or ten viols might make sense in a large family, but would require further explanation in the house of a childless couple – or whether these collectors were members of any learned or cultural societies that might have gathered to play music together. In her next section, Martellozzo Forin notes that it is more difficult to find traces of musical activity in bourgeois families than in very wealthy ones. She notes that many fifteenth-century inventories of the middling sort list many precious items but lack any reference to instruments, though some note the presence of old or broken instruments. Martellozzo Forin also investigates the presence of players and teachers of singing, instruments and dance at Padua. Information on musical interest or ability can leave traces in post-mortem inventories. When the

12 Gerhard Stradner, 'Musical Instruments in an Inventory by Andrea Mantova Benavides, Padua 1696', *The Galpin Society Journal* 55 (2002), pp. 62–103.



doctor in arts Gregorio Aurelio de Trebis died at Padua in 1473, he left a *viola* and a harp. In 1488, Vincenzo Mastellari owned a small organ, perhaps distinct from the one he gave to the convent of S. Maria in Monteortone. Martellozzo Forin provides many more scattered references to individuals who owned instruments, most often lutes, harpsichords, virginals, clavichords, viols or flutes/recorders. These snippets of information prove difficult to thread into an overarching narrative, but together add up to provide a rich picture of the keen interest in music-making amongst the middling sort in Padua. The information presented here represents a wonderfully rich harvest of archival work that will serve as a valuable source for future research on the ownership of musical instruments, and complements that recently published by Bláithín Hurley.<sup>13</sup>

Donatella Restani ('Ascolti comparati tra l'*Alexandreis* di Quilichino e la *Trecentesca Istoria di Alessandro Magno* di Domenico Scolari', pp. 143–168) sifts evidence from two poems in the late medieval Italian tradition of the Alexander romance: the Latin *Alexandreis* by Quilichino da Spoleto, and the Italian *Trecentesca Istoria* by Domenico Scolari. These poems provide information of the meanings attributed to various sounds at this time. Descriptions of sound are ever-present in the Alexander legend, from his own education in music to the performances of musicians in the narrative, the sound of weapons in battle, the shrilling of trumpets, the cries of prisoners, the sounds of religious rites. These two reworkings of the Alexander legend include their own sonic elements. For example, Scolari's work contains references to sounds that are intended to express the strangeness of the setting of certain episodes, such as the description of the song of mechanical birds in the palace of King Porus, or the sound of the basilisk. There is also some evidence of the creative use (or perhaps misuse) of technical terms, such as the translation of 'iocundissimae cantilena' as 'porretti', that is, 'porrectus', a kind of neume. The chapter includes a seven-page appendix with the relevant passages from Quilichino and Scolari in parallel columns.

Alessandra Ignesti ('Music Teaching in Montagnana: Organization, Methods, and Repertories', pp. 171–194) investigates a grammar and singing school at Montagnana, near Padua, towards the end of the sixteenth century, run by the Magnifica Comunità, which provided free instruction to all children from the area. Even though we lack specific documentation about what was taught for the preceding period – the church's archive was destroyed by fire in 1593, and notable gaps are present even later – we can presume that it was based on the long tradition of the teaching and learning of chant and techniques of polyphonic improvisation. Inferences can also be made through comparison with other institutions in the area, which generally based their practice on that of the cathedral in Padua, as well as from printed

13 Bláithín Hurley, 'Musical Instruments in the Venetian Home: Contextualizing Marietta Robusti's Self-portrait', *Early Music* 51 (2023) no. 1, pp. 109–115.

manuals of plainsong, such as the widely reprinted anonymous *Compendium musices*, issued with the approval of Leo X, and the *Breviloquium musicale* by the Franciscan Bonaventura da Brescia (later retitled *Regula musicae planae*), which continue the tradition of Marchettus of Padua. The *Compendium* in particular is conservative, demanding that clerics should perform plainsong in a way that is not 'relaxed, or broken, or dissolute, but honest and dignified, and humble overall'. Nevertheless, such injunctions do not exclude the possibility of simple improvised counterpoint. Indeed, the fact that even the canons of the cathedral of Modena spontaneously sang simple counterpoint against the plainchant shows how deeply ingrained this practice was in musical education. One of the few written records we still have from Montagnana is a teaching notebook by Giulio Belli, a choirmaster there in the late sixteenth century, which draws in part on Zarlino's rules for counterpoint, including rules of voice leading, successions of melodic intervals, and simple two-voice counterpoint. Two pages from the notebook are reproduced in colour. Ignesti also gives interesting information about the processes of hiring the staff of the school, the choirmaster and the organist. Even if relatively unimportant towns like Montagnana were not the most appealing places for ambitious musicians or educators to work, and could not necessarily offer competitive salaries, the process of vetting candidates remained quite stringent. Nevertheless, several of the first documented choirmasters departed before their three-year terms were up, some to enter the service of bishops or cardinals. The article also deals with the ways in which the town council tried to deal with unforeseen changes of staff; the sudden departure of a schoolmaster could have disastrous consequences on discipline that extended even beyond the school. Ignesti's chapter also gives insights into performance practice, adducing evidence that written polyphony was usually sung at Montagnana with one singer to a part. Moreover, given the difficulty of finding good boy sopranos, it was preferable to have falsettists on the top line. However, she also provides evidence that boys were used when no good adult sopranos could be found. Finally, Ignesti draws on the evidence of a surviving inventory from 1658 to show that the singers at Montagnana performed polyphony in up to eight voices by a range of (exclusively Italian) composers, published between 1557 and 1653.

Xavier Bisaro's compact chapter ('Canto piano e strategie pedagogiche in Adrien Bourdoise', pp. 195–208) deals with manuals for the learning of plainsong in seventeenth-century Paris, many written by the parish priests on whom responsibility for the parish schools lay. He focuses on the work of Adrien Bourdoise, who was involved in the foundation of a seminary for secular priests at Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet, inspired by the spirit of Trent. In the absence of a modern critical biography, Bisaro was constrained to work with a hagiographical account of Bourdoise's life, published in 1714, which has to be treated with requisite caution. Bourdoise's interest in chant began in childhood and was encouraged when he encountered the Order of the

Foglianti, whose well-ordered liturgy he admired. His experience in music provided him with the expertise to teach and offer guidance in liturgical music. Music played an important role at Saint-Nicholas-du-Chardonnet: the seminarians had lessons in plainsong for an hour each afternoon, sang in the daily services, and had extra rehearsals in the evenings. In 1654, one of the priests associated with Bourdoise's seminary, Jacques de Batencour, published a manual on education, *L'Escole paroissiale*, which emphasises the place of singing – particularly plainchant – in the school curriculum. In 1669, Batencour issued a substantially revised edition, which reflected a reform of music teaching at the seminary of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet: henceforth, the hexachord system was to be replaced with the 'methode du Si', a seven-degree scale that dispensed with pesky mutations, in the hope that even the laity might learn to sing plainsong, which would draw them closer into the bosom of the church and ennobled their condition. One element that bubbles in the background of Bisaro's chapter, but which is never quite spoken aloud, is the constant tension between what the clergy wanted and the unruly forces of the laity (often in the form of naughty choirboys) that constantly threatened to wreck their plans. Bantencour suggested that the choirboys should be penned off in a side chapel or some other place where they would not disturb the liturgy. Alternatively, where the boys were only few in number, such as in villages, they could be placed in the choir, where the combined authority of the parish priest, the choirmaster and the respect for the sacrament would keep them in order and might even turn them into good Christians. This latter suggestion, however appealing, was potentially problematic, since some stricter clergy of the new style (read: those from Saint-Nicholas-du-Chardonnet) objected to the presence of the laity in the choir, even choirboys. Such tensions are also apparent in the choice of literary form of many of the treatises Bisaro discusses: dialogue and catechism. Dialogue tries to convince through literary attractiveness, while catechism is by its nature a more coercive form. The alternation between wheedling and compulsion on the part of the clergy is even present in the title of some of the textbooks discussed by Bisaro, such as the *Methode facile et assurée pour apprendre le plein-chant* (1670), whose name embodies the clergy's attempts to convince the laity of the ease and the benefits of learning the ancient music of the church. Bisaro's chapter also reminds us that plainchant remained a vital backbone of musical practice in French parish churches, even the most ecclesiologically progressive ones.

Dilva Princivalli's chapter ('Don Paolo Galliero e la scuola di grammatica e musica di Tribano (Padova)', pp. 209–227) examines the work of Paolo Galliero (1550–1627), the archpriest of San Martino in Tribano (Padua), who founded a free school in 1618 through a testamentary bequest, inspired by the reforms of Trent and the example of Carlo Borromeo. Galliero had lived in Borromeo's household at Milan and received priestly ordination at his hands. The school's curriculum was based on that of the Jesuits, and leaned heavily on Vergil, Cicero and the Roman Catechism, remarkable

provisions in this very poor area of the countryside, where illiteracy was widespread. The school also offered instruction in singing and organ playing. To support the teaching at the school, Galliero founded a chaplaincy at the altar of St Charles in the parish church to fund the teaching of grammar and music. The incumbents received accommodation and emoluments in money and kind. The foundation charter specifies the skills that the organist was supposed to possess. The detail that he should be able to ‘cantare e sonare bene ogni cantillena et rispondere in tutto al choro’ refers to the ability to improvise versets on the chant, in alternation with the schola. Galliero also suggested that the organist should teach his students to play ‘la corrente francese’, which Princivalli associates with Banchieri’s suggestion that organ students should imitate *canzoni alla francesca*. There is written evidence from 1677/78 that the teachers were diligent in teaching students to play the spinet and in ‘cantar la parte’ (sight reading?). In order to be considered for the positions of grammar teacher or organist, candidates had to submit to an examination by the masters of seminary and *Scuola Maggiore* of Padua, while potential organists were to submit to examination by the organist of the cathedral of Padua. The organists were expected to be able to intone a chant, whether singing or accompanying themselves on the organ; to improvise a polyphonic version of the chant; to accompany the choir; and to respond to it. In each case, the candidates were expected to pay 1 *scudo* to each of their examiners. Such regulations reflect the post-Tridentine insistence that those holding such positions should be properly qualified. To encourage the integration of teacher and organist into the community, Galliero suggested that it was preferable to employ local candidates wherever possible. This foundation survived until the fall of the Republic of Venice. During the Napoleonic period, it was renamed the Congregation of Charity, and it suffered further restructuring under the subsequent regimes. The school was finally closed in 1926, though Galliero’s memory as patron of education remains alive in the town.

Although Leon Battista Alberti and Lorenzo Ghiberti wished that painters should learn all the liberal arts, they failed to mention music amongst them. Likewise, depictions of the artistic Academy of Baccio Bandinelli lack references to music. However, skill in music was clearly a desirable social skill, as we learn from Castiglione and Bembo. Accordingly, Alessandra Pattanaro (‘*Si diletto in giovinezza della scherma e di sonare il liuto*. Painters-Musicians in Giorgio Vasari’s *Lives*’, pp. 231–256) investigates whether artists learned anything of music within or outside the studio; and if so, whether they drew on their knowledge of music when depicting musicians or instruments in paintings or drawings, especially when these were commissioned by clients or patrons with a particular interest in music. She finds that artists (such as Raphael) who worked at courts had to acquire the skills prized there, namely eloquence and erudition. Pattanaro uses several approaches in her investigation. She examines sketches of musicians, especially the stance and hands of instrumentalists,

often made in preparation for finished works. Examples of these are extant from Dürer and Raphael. Pattanaro also examines the transformation of such elements in the progress from study to finished work. Further evidence for the musical education of individual artists is supplied by literary works such as Vasari's *Lives*. Vasari's own comments on depictions of musicians, such as his description of Fra Bartolomeo's *Mystic Marriage of St Catherine*, reveal a considerable knowledge of (or at least a sensitivity to) music. Vasari's biographies also contain evidence of competing priorities: for example, the painter Girolamo da Carpi was prevented from realising his potential as a painter by his excessive love of lute playing.

Gavina Cherchi ('*La musica è diletta al cavallo*. Musical Paradigms in Equestrian Academies of the Renaissance', pp. 257–305) investigates the place of music within riding schools in the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. The study of horsemanship had begun as a practical skill, mastered by breeders, riders and blacksmiths. By the mid sixteenth century, equestrian training was not simply a pragmatic preparation for war or hunting. Riding schools also embraced instruction in fencing, martial arts, also philosophy, astronomy, dialectic, rhetoric, history, foreign languages, arithmetic and music. Theorists invested riding with a philosophical overlay: the unity of the horse and rider was described in terms of Pythagorean harmony, and riders were supposed to learn music to help them apprehend harmony, goodness and beauty. Riding also functioned as political training: learning to control a horse prepared a young ruler to control those he governed. The four legs of the horse were compared to the four strings of an instrument, which the player must learn to master. However, one important question that Cherchi avoids is how much such studies were pursued as ends in themselves (why would someone go to a riding school to learn astronomy after all?), and how much they were simply intended to add to the superficial polish of the education of the gentleman or aristocrat (the kinds of people who could afford to ride and maintain a horse), training him in the social skills that would help him make a good impression at court? How much was this about real erudition, and how much about the display of elegance, a metastasis of Castiglione's courtly manners? What do the references to antiquity in hippological literature actually bring to the discussion? To what extent are they just typical Renaissance/Baroque window dressing? Do they reflect the anxiety of practitioners of the 'mechanical arts' that they would not be taken seriously unless they could show some classical polish? Some engagement with Pierre Bourdieu's ideas of cultural capital and habitus could have brought this argument further.

The book thus has much to offer. Its broad chronological canvas will make it appealing to a range of readers. However, I would have liked to see more sustained attention to the nuts-and-bolts technique of teaching music to children and youths from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century, and how this might resemble or differ from our own practices. Did teachers demonstrate a vocal or instrumental

technique and then have the students repeat it until they got it right? What technical exercises did students have to master? Which textbooks could teachers and students consult to find such exercises, and where could they buy them, especially outside large cities? Did the burgeoning literature of instructional manuals make individual study possible in a way that would have been unthinkable before the sixteenth century, or were such books used in the context of traditional lessons, with a teacher and a student in the same room? Were singing and instrumental lessons conducted one-on-one, or in groups? What was the place of solo vs. ensemble instruction? Did the students work on pieces of graded levels of difficulty to master technique and expression? Were their abilities tested at regular intervals? What was the role of sight-reading, memory and improvisation? Could students who could not afford to buy instruments hire or borrow them? Where from? How much did students rehearse? Some of these issues, so basic to what we consider self-explanatory elements in the teaching and learning of music, are touched upon briefly in some of the chapters. Of course, this is in part a function of the surviving material, and the questions pursued by the individual authors of the chapters in this book. Yet it still remains for future researchers to investigate such questions in a persistent way.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bünz, Enno and Gerhard Fouquet, eds. *Die Pfarrei im Späten Mittelalter*. Ostfildern: Thorbecke, 2013.
- Bünz, Enno. *Die mittelalterliche Pfarrei. Ausgewählte Schriften zum 13.–16. Jahrhundert*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017.
- Dessi, Paola, ed. *Music in Schools from the Middle Ages to the Modern Age*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2021.
- Ginzburg, Carlo. *Il formaggio e i vermi. Il cosmo di un mugnaio del '500*. Torino: Einaudi, 1976.
- Hurley, Bláithín. 'Musical Instruments in the Venetian Home: Contextualizing Marietta Robusti's Self-portrait'. *Early Music* 51, no. 1 (2023): 109–115.
- Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel. *Le carnaval de Romans. De la Chandeleur au Mercredi des cendres 1579–1580*. Paris: Gallimard, 1979.
- Lines, David A. *The Dynamics of Learning in Early Modern Italy: Arts and Medicine at the University of Bologna*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2023.
- MIML: Musical Instruction and Musical Learning, eds. Cynthia J. Cyrus, with Susan Forscher Weiss and Russell E. Murray Jr., <http://miml.library.vanderbilt.edu>, accessed 9 May 2006.
- Murray Jr., Russell E., Susan Forscher Weiss, and Cynthia J. Cyrus, eds. *Music Education in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. [muse.jhu.edu/book/1693](http://muse.jhu.edu/book/1693).
- Stradner, Gerhard. 'Musical Instruments in an Inventory by Andrea Mantova Benavides, Padua 1696'. *The Galpin Society Journal* 55 (2002): 62–103.
- Temperley, Nicholas. *The Music of the English Parish Church*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

- Thompson, Edward Palmer. *The Making of the English Working Class*. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1963.
- vdm Verzeichnis deutscher Musikfrühdrucke / Catalogue of Early German Printed Music, <https://vdm-sbg.eu/>, accessed 19 April 2024.
- Williamson, Magnus. 'Liturgical Music in the Late Medieval English Parish: Organs and Voices, Ways and Means'. In: *The Parish in Late Medieval England*, eds. Clive Burgess and Eamon Duffy, 177–242. Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006.

---

**Grantley McDonald** is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Vienna, where he works on music at the court of Maximilian I Habsburg. His research focuses on learned culture in the Renaissance, especially the links between musical thought, theology, philosophy and medicine. His PhD dissertation in musicology (University of Melbourne) focused on the German reception of the musical thought of Marsilio Ficino. His PhD dissertation in history (Leiden) was a study of the political and cultural implications of the New Testament edition of Erasmus of Rotterdam. He has been one of the editors of Verzeichnis deutscher Musikfrühdrucke ([www.vdm16.sbg.ac.at](http://www.vdm16.sbg.ac.at)) since its inception in 2012.  
[grantleymcdonald@hotmail.com](mailto:grantleymcdonald@hotmail.com)

---