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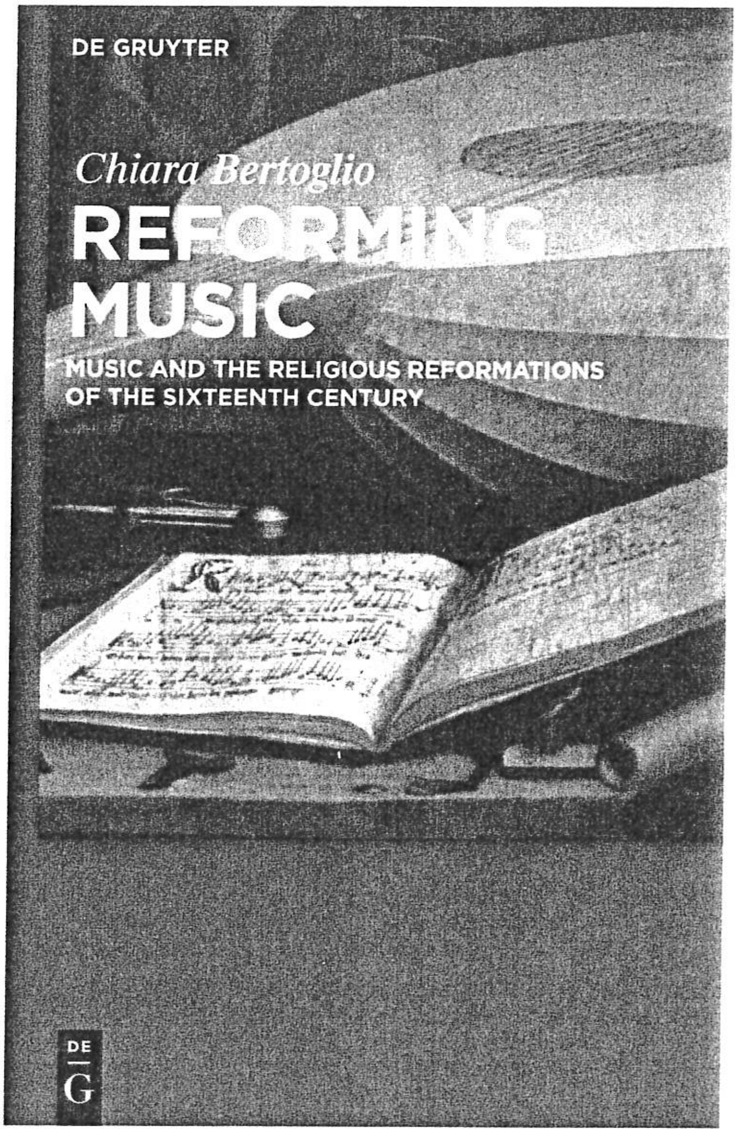
DE GRUYTER
Chiara Bertoglio
REFORMING MUSIC
MUSIC AND THE RELIGIOUS REFORMATIONS OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY
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1517 was the year the Augustinian monk Martin Luther supposedly nailed his 95 theses to the doorpost of the church in Wittenburg, a watershed moment in what would become a dramatic disruption of ecclesial communion. 400 years later, ecumenists are still discerning paths towards unity, a unity that must feature the precious gifts of the rich cultural treasures of the different communities (cf. Benedict XVI, *Anglicanorum coetibus*, III). Music, that universal language equally familiar with harmony and dissonance, has been one of the features of that history. And now thanks to Chiara Bertoglio's academic research turned descriptive outline, we have a marvellous exposition of the place of music during the first century of the Reformation when divisions became established and its role in culture and liturgy went through a significant period of reform, sometimes mirroring, other times leading the different cultural and ecclesiological priorities.

The volume opens with two prefaces from noted personalities: musicians Jeremy Begbie and James MacMillan who are both involved in the Church in different ways. This plurality of voices and perspectives, intertwining and enriching each other, characterises the entire volume.

A first chapter then sets the scene by framing the sixteenth century. It is not a glib prelude, but a vast introduction overviewing the cultural situation with a musician's lucidity. It treats the theological and doctrinal concerns around salvation, justification, and the sacraments. It recalls the humanist movement looking back *ad fontes*, and the philosophers, scientists, and those in the visual arts trusting in their human wisdom. It describes the music with the perennial issue of intelligibility at the fore being fostered by rhythm and metrics, word-painting, and rhetorical monody. Printing techniques allowed scores with musical ideas and forms to travel widely with some composers even becoming famous. At the same time, different genres had developed in various cultures with French *chansons*, German *tenorlied* and Italian *frottola*, then madrigals and *villancico* in Spain, often related to poetry, leading to the re-appearance of opera, particularly in Monteverdi. Bertoglio synthesises the political situation, including the population boom and the repressive measures to counter widespread poverty, and the spread of literacy in the towns and illiteracy in the country. She describes the effects of economic inflation and, of course, the violence and wars as the seeds of what were to become the nation states were sown. And finally, she describes the rifts in the Church in just 20 pages giving a concise history of ecclesial life and politics at the time of the Reformation as she narrates Luther through Calvin, Zwingli through Melancthon, Philip of Spain through Mary Queen of Scots, the Knights Revolt through Lepanto and the Wars of Religion.

A second chapter dwells more closely on how music was thought, practised and lived, with particular attention to the experience of the sacred. Using an historical approach representing a plurality of viewpoints, rather than repeating the old formulas of cause and effect for certain well-known cultural and musical transformations of the period, she offers a wider perspective, proper to a phenomenon aptly captured in musicologist Rebecca Wagner Oettinger's line "songs were the mass media of oral culture." With sixteenth-century humanism, music encountered a social accent on reason and so music's intelligibility was often considered together with appeals to music's powers in the affects, feelings, or emotions. These were not necessarily as binary opposites as occurs today. The humanist tradition appealed to the restoration of ancient glories after the desolation of the middle ages. Intelligibility and affectivity were sought by developing musical styles accentuating words, e.g. the technique of popular homophony. Meanwhile appeals were made to the ancient authorities typified by Plato who had wanted the Ionian and Lydian modes banned for moral reasons, considering instead the Dorian and Phrygian as wholesome. Even if the Greek modes were not co-identical with the Ecclesiastical modes, they were looked to for that ersatz of authority, especially when aesthetic considerations were being made on the value of music to educate in virtue.

Theological themes of nature and grace, predestination (to good and/or to evil), sin and pleasure undergirded different approaches to the language of music, which could be considered at once human and in some way divine. Symbols (words, images, icons) unified us to the transcendent higher reality by signifying them. Modernity would damage that union by "the separation of reason from intuition, of understanding from contemplation, of meditation from mysticism" (pp. 79-80). Augustine himself had theorised wordless singing (*jubilus* or *jubilatio*) as the highpoint of mystical exultation in God while also accenting catechetic and pedagogic purposes via verbal understanding and repetition. Erasmus' memorable criticism of the "ornamental neighing and agile throats" in the English musical tradition underlined his virtue-promoting and intelligibility-centred approach to music that nonetheless recognised music as a dominant feature of ordinariness. Azpilcueta also prioritised clear and direct, rhetorical communication, while others allowed communication by symbol, which would explain the widespread use of polyphony, especially for feasts, even before Palestrina.

A third chapter looks directly at the sacrality of music, with a focus on liturgy, devotion and ethics, without forgoing the aesthetic element. If plainchant was the musical form of daily bread, the variations along local and national lines were many, but in the new humanist age, the accent was more on education than on mystagogy. St. Jerome's admonition is recalled that "properly educated Christian girls should ignore what musical instruments are," and the "lasciviousness" of music is a recurring theme as is its depiction as a feminine activity; in the Aristotelian-Augustinian sense, it could be considered unmanly or weak even before the reformation debates were developing about which type of composition and performance style should be used and the role of the choir and professional musicians. Also, the different compositional styles are introduced and Bertoglio describes the three polyphonic genres based on the cantus-firmus, the paraphrase Mass, and what Ongaro calls the "imitation Mass." In this context Bernardino Cirillo's letter, which is often seen as an attack on polyphony *tout court*, can in fact be read as an appeal for a reform that will allow polyphony to once again "move to devotion and compunction," arousing and exciting religious feelings rather than lasciviousness. This is an act of trust in the musician for as Ponzio wrote "the practiced composer can make his music sad or happy as he wishes in any mode, using slow or quick rhythms." There is, then, a balance between the desire for understanding and comprehension with the art of moving emotions.

A further sequence of chapters prepares us for the diversity of the reformer's approaches to music, which largely followed their theological trajectories while allowing for their individual musicianship to shape their praxis. As said, the issue of intelligibility was ongoing before the Reformation began, and in the different reformation communities this would lead to various techniques: unaccompanied singing, syllabic monody, homophonic, simpler imitative and textual techniques within polyphony, use of the vernacular. The syllabic style followed the humanist odes and while some (e.g. in Lutheranism) allowed a certain amount of elaboration, syllabic simplicity was preferred elsewhere: this can be seen in Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* and others in the humanist reforms of plainchant. It is interesting to note here that Luther encouraged only the *possibility* for laypersons to participate by singing in a language they could understand, without making it *compulsory*, as Karlstadt would. Popular history has it that thanks to the Reformation organs were destroyed, pipes melted, scores burnt, musicians lost their living, and the choral traditions in Cathedrals and Monasteries were wiped out across Europe. Yet Luther, the man blamed for starting it all, maintained, "Music is the greatest treasure on earth, after God's Word." Certainly, there were other viewpoints, such as the privacy of the Zwinglian act of prayerful worship that had no need for music with all its capabilities to distract and disrupt. Zwingli himself was known to reprove musicians by appealing to scripture, particularly Ephesians 5:9, which commands you "to sing with your heart" (not your voice!) In between, we have Bucer who allowed the use of hymns as well as biblical texts, while Calvin would restrict singing to psalms alone. Bertoglio describes in depth the situation on the Continent through the figures of these and other charismatic leaders.

The chapter on Luther brings out the desire to recover and develop what was there before (Sequences originating in Germany), accentuating the vernacular (with new songs / lieder / cantata and the chorale movement), and his pragmatic re-elaboration of funeral Responsories, some of whose "texts are now considered unsuitable but with tunes judged too beautiful to be forgotten" (p.250). He resorts to the technique of speech accentuation and a focus on melodic lines making them attractive and memorable. Luther's chorale melodies had the melody in the tenor, as tenorlied, but this developed to be given to the highest voice (soprano or descant) following the German translations of the Calvinist Psalter. Osiander's hymnal (1586), which presented the clear form of the cantionale with a simple and clear descant melody for the amateur people to read, completed the transformation. Musicologists have catalogued around 2000 hymns for sixteenth-century Germany, of which 10-15 percent were Catholic. Nevertheless, printed hymns and hymnals were mainly used for private, family devotions and piety, not in a congregational setting where singing would be from memory. Congregational singing in Bucer's Strasburg community was such that they had no need for choirs.

In England, it is a story of paradox where often "love for music by religious leaders overcame all theological argument." The alternating monarchies, authorities and institutions are the vector for presenting the musical situation, and the accent is on music's role in education of the youth and for the edification of the community. Besides Cranmer, there were few dominant personalities, but the history of psalmody under Henry VIII is typical: while seeing himself as a prophet-king, like David, he actually had the Coverdale collections of psalms burned as "heretical." In Knoxian and Calvin-influenced Scotland, it was an ecclesiastical institution, namely the General Assembly of the Kirk that actually took the authoritative step of obliging church institutions and families to acquire one determined musical publication (Lepreuik's 1564 *Forme of Prayers*), thus creating a cohesive national repertoire. Later, William Byrd and Thomas Tallis, loyal servants working in the protestant Queen Elizabeth's Chapel, but maintaining a Catholic identity, would publish Latin-texted music including polyphony, Mass Ordinary, Proper settings including for Marian Feasts and saints days, most famously leading to Byrd's *Gradualia* (1605).

If there is no one single protestant musical style at this time, the Catholic world was equally pluralist: 18 popes sat on St. Peter's throne in the sixteenth century and the different local traditions were uncountable. At the Council of Trent (1545-1563), music was discussed within the context of the moral issues surrounding the clergy's behaviour and so a matter for renewal. Music "was examined within liturgy (thus omitting a discussion on its overall significance, value, meaning and theological shape) and as concerned liturgical abuses (so without analysing what positive contribution music could give to worship, or how it theologically related with it)" (p. 389-390). Nevertheless, even if it did not offer specific instructions on music but preferred to allow local churches to deal with the *what* and *how*, Trent did shape the *wherefore* of music in the counter-reformation. "The post-Tridentine artistic, religious and moral ideals were at first oriented towards sobriety instead of opulence, simplicity instead of splendour, interior life instead of outward appearance, and towards asceticism and austerity instead of magnificence" (p. 389). The process by which the decrees were drafted does help understand their meaning (in particular she refers to the *Decretrum de reformatione*, session xxiv, canon xii) but it would be the decision to defer to local authorities the process of reception and actualisation that would shape Catholic Church music for posterity.

Bertoglio does criticise some popular historical narratives, calling them musicological mythology, such as that Trent wanted homorhythmic intelligibility, banned cantus-firmus polyphony, and simply wanted a reform of plainchant. With historical and musicological argument, she also takes to task the legend that Palestrina saved polyphony for posterity by composing his intelligible *Missa Papae Marcelli*. Trent's major impact, rather, was in the creation of seminaries and in the encouragement of the threefold areas of intelligibility, aesthetics and morality. In this area of ministerial duty, clear delivery is accented, more one suspects for the edification of the clerical singer than the hearer. Awareness of a concern for the hearers of music was only officially expressed with the Synod of Toledo (1565-6).

After Trent, Catholic liturgy evolved with local actions not universal commands. The following chapters look among others at the 1565 Cardinals' Commission, at Palestrina, and at plainchant, or plainsong, as it became Gregorian Chant in light of Pope Gregory's reforms. Some of the quirks of the process are well addressed, such as the desire for *aequalitas*, as a symbol for a-temporality, which actually led to the words being subjected to homogenised rhythms and thereby rhetorically weaker. Meanwhile, polychorality spread and loudness or full sonority, rather than good diction, established themselves as the ideals of late-sixteenth-century choral singing, which shows that in reception the aesthetic path was dominant. The rituality of music would retain its emphasis, including through the development of the contested *Editio medicaea* of Gregorian Chant. Writing about polyphony, one of the *Editio medicaea's* authors, Palestrina, would teach that adornments or embellishments should not distract hearers from the text's meaning, but he certainly did not downplay the mystical dimension.

The story of Confessionalisation is also told through music with the raising of identity, boundaries, and opposition between different communities. This would become a time of martyrdom in which music was fully entangled. Those being slain sang their trust in God and those telling and remembering the events also used musical idiom. There were political songs mixing with songs of religious groups, the battle hymns and songs of sarcasm, parody and scorn. No simplistic binary vision of vernacular-loving protestants against Latin-leaning Catholics can stand against one of the earliest narrations: the absurd act of the singing of the *Te Deum*, in Latin, on December 10, 1520 by the Lutherans after the burning of a papal bull and the *Corpus iuris canonici*.

The tome is replete with a good scientific apparatus including a useful glossary, bibliography of primary and secondary sources, and indices of names and subjects. This reviewer did not however find a word on the popular issue of castrati (despite their featuring in Orlando di Lasso's Bavarian choir at this time). Instead, she provides a good chapter on women, a much more populous factor in sixteenth-century music. There are, of course, references to the popular vision of the weaker sex, segregation in the convents, negative criticisms of styles of music as *mollis* (think of the b-flat representing the shape of femininity), the various patronesses in the courts, and the objectivising attitudes where women are described as muses or seductive sirens. She flutes over patronesses, polyphony in the convents, women as catechists and in schooling, and the comforting of homely hymn singing. Some names of women are brought forth: those composing hymns such as Mary Sidney Herbert, Magdalena Heymair, Elisabeth Cruciger, Duchess Elisabeth of Braunschweig, and the Anabaptist Soetjen Gerrits, while Katharina Zell's work in publishing and distributing is recalled. On the Catholic side too, the chapter references a number of women, Sr. Raffaella Aleotti, the first woman to have published polyphonic sacred music, the singer Sr. Claudia Sessa, poetesses Anna Bijns and Katharina Boudewijns. The author recognises that these are only the tip of the iceberg, and we await her further explorations and explanations.

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