

David Lindley. *Shakespeare and Music*. London:
Thomson, 2006.

Chapter One

MUSICAL THEORY

Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears – soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony:
Sit Jessica, – look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patens of bright gold,
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins:
Such harmony is in immortal souls,
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it:

[Enter Musicians]

Come ho! and wake Diana with a hymn,
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

[Music]

Lor. The reason is your spirits are attentive:

For do but note a wild and wanton herd
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood, –
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears.

You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
 Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze,
 By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet
 Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods,
 Since naught so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
 But music for the time doth change his nature, –
 The man that hath no music in himself,
 Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
 Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils,
 The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
 And his affections dark as Erebus:
 Let no such man be trusted. (MV, 5.1.55–88)

This is Shakespeare's best-known expression of his period's conventional theories about the nature and power of music. Familiar though it may be, the passage is worth quoting at length as the starting-point for this chapter because Lorenzo's exquisite amplification of the commonplaces of musical theory both locates the source of music's harmony in cosmic myth, and at the same time gestures towards an explanation of the capacity of music to affect human behaviour.¹ Arcane though the theories entertained about music in the Renaissance might seem to be, and distant though they appear to us from the realities of performed music, throughout their evolving history from classical Greece to the Renaissance these hypotheses represented a serious attempt to describe what music is, and to understand why it generates so powerful a human response.

Lorenzo's exposition begins with a version of the myth of the music of the spheres. Like all the ideas he articulates in this passage, this notion has its roots in Greek philosophy, in the thinking of Pythagoras, Plato, and their followers, mediated by late classical writers, especially Boethius and Macrobius, and given new impetus in the Renaissance by neoplatonic philosophers such as Marsilio Ficino, Pontus de Tyard, and many others. This history has been traced in detail by a number of scholars,² and the ensuing summary of some of its most important features necessarily simplifies the sequence in which concepts developed, and is highly selective in detailing the complexity of their elaboration. But then, there is little evi-

dence that Shakespeare was much interested in validating his deployment of musical conceits by anchoring them in precise scholarship – unlike his contemporary Ben Jonson, who encrusted some of his masque texts with learned marginalia. It is more important to have a general sense of the constellation of ideas and assumptions that Shakespeare drew upon than to trace each element accurately back to its source.

There are two fundamental concepts that underpin the first part of Lorenzo's speech. The first is the belief that the universe is essentially harmonious, and that the source of that concord lies in mathematical proportions which can be directly related to musical harmonies. Pythagoras, in an oft-repeated legend, was said to have meditated on the sound of smiths beating hammers upon anvils, and to have argued that a hammer half as heavy produced a note an octave above its full-sized fellow.³ More important were the experiments with a single string, or monochord, attributed to him by his successors. If a stretched string is divided exactly into two it produces a sound an octave higher than the fundamental pitch (the ratio 2:1), the intervals of the fourth and fifth can similarly be expressed as the ratios 4:3 and 3:2 respectively, and all other intervals can be described in mathematical terms.⁴ These numerical proportions were then extended to describe the relationships of the planetary spheres, both in their relative distance one from another, and in the speed of their movement. The ideas were given influential (if obscure) expression in Plato's *Timaeus*, and endlessly elaborated in succeeding centuries up to the Renaissance. One of the final manifestations of this understanding is provided in the illustration of cosmic harmony from Robert Fludd's *Utriusque cosmi... historia* 1 (1617; Figure 1). Even after the Copernican revolution displaced the earth from the centre of the cosmos – which might seem to have rendered such hypotheses untenable – Kepler's *Harmonices Mundi* (1619) attempted to map the new heavens using the same principles of mathematical harmony. (Indeed, although it lies outside the scope of this study, it is important to recognize how important the numerical basis of musical theory was to the development of the natural sciences, as Penelope Gouk amply demonstrates.)⁵

The other fundamental concept was also articulated by Plato, in the Myth of Er at the end of the *Republic*, as part of an account of the good

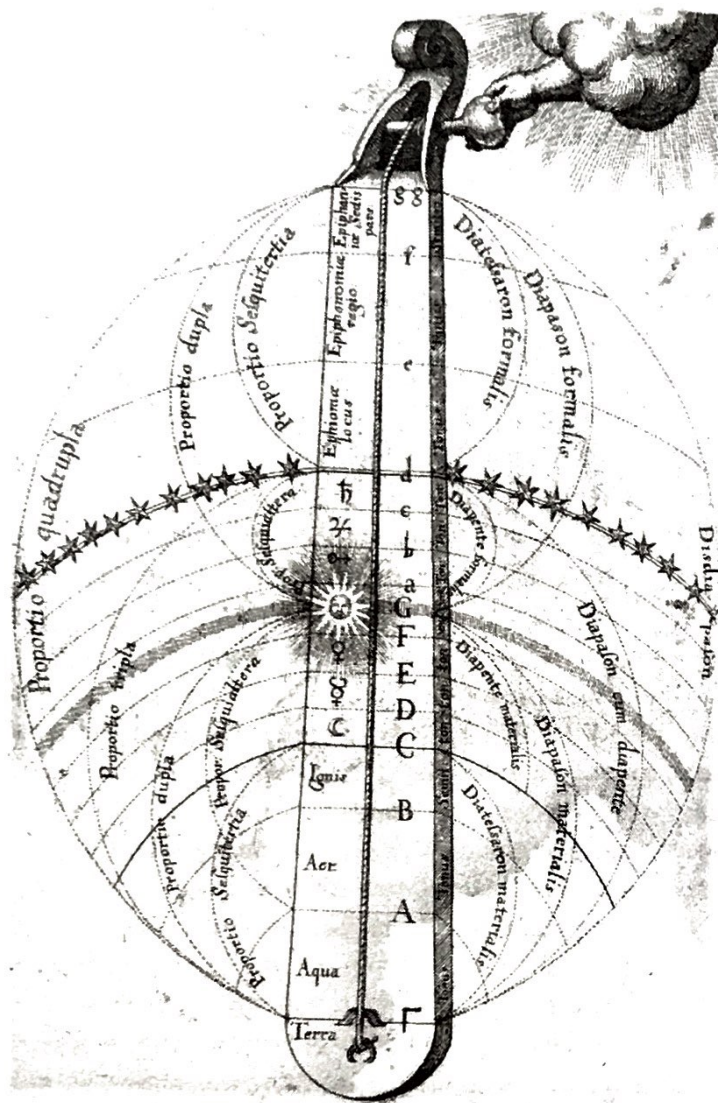


FIGURE 1 The divine monochord, from Robert Fludd, *Utriusque cosmi ... historia*, 1 (1617), p. 90. Earth is at the base of the scale which leads up from the four regions of earth, water, air and fire, through the spheres of the planets to the regions of the heavens, all described in terms of musical intervals.

man's reward in the life after death. Taken up into the heavens, Er sees the universe turning on a spindle fixed in the lap of Necessity, and on each of the spheres 'stands a siren, which is carried round with it and utters a note of constant pitch, and the eight notes together make up a single scale'.⁶ This myth (though challenged by Aristotle, who considered that the spheres moved in silence)⁷ was given further impetus by Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*, and, especially, by the fifth-century commentary on it by Macrobius, a work which had profound influence in transmitting Pythagorean and Platonic ideas through the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance.⁸ It became a poetical commonplace, and reference to the music of the spheres as an image of and for celestial harmony is pervasive in the poetry and drama of Shakespeare's period.

In fact Lorenzo's representation is less than rigorously scholarly. He is traditional enough in Christianizing the myth, for Plato's sirens were later identified with the Muses, and then became angels (as, for example, in the highly influential concluding cantos of Dante's *Paradiso*). But Shakespeare does not follow either the tradition that one of the nine orders of angels sat on each of the heavenly spheres, or alternatively, that all the angels gathered on the outermost crystalline sphere singing God's praises. By making the music of the heavens an explicit simile – the orbs sing *like* angels – he seems to be recalling the pictorial tradition of the representation of the angels which became increasingly independent of the doctrine of the harmony of the spheres during the later Middle Ages and Renaissance, rather than the versions offered in neoclassical treatments of heavenly music.⁹ Furthermore, the reason he gives for human inability to hear the celestial music is somewhat unconventional. 'Neither of the traditional reasons (acclimatization, or the physical thresholds of perception) is given. Instead the unheard music is related to immortality, and by extension to a prelapsarian condition.'¹⁰ Here it would seem that Shakespeare has deployed other central strands of neoplatonic thinking – that humankind's descent from the divine renders us incapable of perceiving absolute reality, but only its shadow, so that although human music gets its power through its reflection of celestial harmony, and we respond to it because of our faint memory of its original, we have no direct access to the heavenly music itself.¹¹ Milton, when he uses the same

reason for our inability to hear the music of the spheres in *Arcades*, 62–73 (perhaps influenced directly by *The Merchant of Venice*)¹² is, as one might expect, much more exact in his description of the Platonic universe. It would, however, not merely be pedantic, but positively wrongheaded to object to Shakespeare's somewhat cavalier way with his material – and it is important to stress this now.

One of the dangers of any study which attempts to locate Shakespeare's plays in their historical, literary, and cultural contexts – and a malady most incident to scholars and editors alike – is the tendency either to dissolve his text into the contexts of which it then becomes simply an exemplification, or, on the other hand, to claim that all variation from the sources is of itself intrinsically significant. To pursue the first line flattens the individuality of a text, while the danger of the second is to assume that an audience is capable of recognizing citation in the rapid movement of the theatrical action. What matters is the particular dramatic moment. Here Shakespeare creates an opportunity to move into a rhetorical set-piece, one which connects significantly with the play's wider dramatic and thematic concerns, especially the opposition of the mercantile world of Venice to the golden world of Belmont. Few, if any, of his audience could have noticed his eclectic and compressed way with neoplatonic material. Even if they did, they would not have objected to it precisely because the basic ideas he invokes were so familiar that they could be allusively and elliptically handled; instead, they would have admired the eloquence of this recasting of poetical and philosophical commonplaces. Because we are now unfamiliar with these conventional ideas our ears cannot fully hear what his contemporaries could, and we therefore have effortfully to reconstruct the frames of reference which they possessed, but always in order to try to respond more fully to what is actually there on the page or in the theatre.

And so, before turning to the second part of Lorenzo's speech, it is necessary briefly to explore further some of the ramifications of the theories of consonance between music and the structures of the universe which resonate in Shakespeare's work. One of the principal intermediaries between the classical authors and the Middle Ages and Renaissance was Boethius, whose *De Institutione Musica*, derived from a lost work by

Nichomachus, and written in the early part of the sixth century AD, became a standard textbook in universities and schools throughout the whole period.¹³ He included music with arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy in the 'quadrivium' of mathematical sciences which, together with the 'trivium' of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, made up the seven liberal arts of the university undergraduate curriculum. (These were the arts for which Prospero boasts that he had an unparalleled reputation in *Tempest*, 1.2.73–4.) Music was therefore firmly associated with mathematics – as is comically evidenced when Petruchio introduces the disguised Hortensio to Baptista as a potential tutor for his daughter Bianca: 'a man of mine / Cunning in music and the mathematics' (*TS*, 2.1.55–6). On a more elevated level, Dr John Bull, the first lecturer at Sir Thomas Gresham's college in 1596, was expected to give 'the solemn music lecture ... the theorique part for half an hour, or thereabouts; and the practique by concent of voice or instruments, for the rest of the hour'.¹⁴

The relationship between practical and theoretical music was established by Boethius in his division of the subject into three parts, *musica mundana*, *musica humana*, and *musica instrumentalis*. The first of these, 'the music of the universe', includes the mathematical harmony of the heavens and the music of the spheres which we have already discussed, but extends further. Boethius writes that it 'is especially to be studied in the combining of the elements and the variety of the seasons which are observed in the heavens', and continues:

Unless a certain harmony united the differences and contrary powers of the four elements, how could they form a single body and mechanism? But all this diversity produces the variety of seasons and fruits, yet thereby makes the year a unity.¹⁵

For Christian writers neoplatonic theory could easily be accommodated, since to uncover the harmonies of the universe was to demonstrate the truth of the Book of Wisdom's assertion that God 'ordered all things in measure and number and weight' (11.20). Thomas Campion spoke of God as 'Author of number that hath all the world in / Harmonie framed'.¹⁶ The French poet Du Bartas, in his enormously influential *Semaines*, translated into English by Joshua Sylvester as *The Divine Weeks and Works*

(1592–1608), described God's 'numbrie Law' and amplified Boethius' analogies to encompass humours, elements, seasons and the parts of a musical composition:

Even so th'all-quickning spirit of God above
The heav'ns harmonious whirling wheelles doth move,
So that, re-treading their eternall trace,
Th'one beares the Treble, th'other beares the Base.

But, brimmer farre then in the Heav'ns, heere
All these sweet-charming Counter-Tunes we heare:
For *Melancholie*, *Winter*, *Earth* below
Beare aye the *Base*; deepe, hollow, sad, and slow:
Pale Phlegme, moist *Autumne*, *Water* moistly-cold,
The *Plommet*-like-smooth-sliding *Tennor* hold:
Hot-humide *Blood*, the *Spring*, transparant *Aire*,
The *Maze*-like *Meane*, that turnes and wends so faire:
Curst Choler, *Sommer*, and hot-thirsty *Fire*,
Th'high-warbling *Treble*, loudest in the *Quire*.¹⁷

Such musical correspondences could be, and often were, extended with enthusiasm, especially in the works of those influenced by the occult philosophies of the period. One extension of particular importance is that which saw the ideal human society as hierarchically reproducing the harmony of the heavens. It receives its classic Shakespearean statement in the speech of Ulysses on degree in *Troilus and Cressida*, 1.3.75–137. There, after describing the order of 'The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre' (85) Ulysses turns to social organization, concluding:

Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark what discord follows. Each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy. (109–11)

Here, as in Lorenzo's speech, Shakespeare is articulating a commonplace. Thomas Elyot believed that instruction in music was valuable precisely because the tutor could:

commende the perfecte understandinge of musike, declaringe howe necessary it is for the better attaynyng the knowledge of a publike

weale: whiche, as I before have saide, is made of an ordre of astates [*estates*] and degrees, and, by reason thereof, conteineth in it a perfect harmony.¹⁸

It is, however, important to note that music here functions primarily as a persuasive analogy. Though Ulysses' invocation of the 'string' suggests the monochord which binds the universe together in Fludd's depiction of celestial harmony, the musical image is not essential to the validation of the comparison between orderly heavens and a hierarchical society. This is clear if one considers the passage from the *Exhortacion, concerning good order and obedience* often cited as a parallel to Ulysses' speech:

Almighty god hath created and appointed all thinges, in heaven, earth, and waters, in a most excellent and perfect ordre. In heaven, he hath appointed distinct or severall orders and states of Archangels and Angels. In earth he hath assigned and appoynted kinges, princes, with other governours under them, in all good and necessary order.¹⁹

Music is not here invoked, but the argument is similarly analogical, and to argue by such similitudes was endemic in the mental world of the time. The ideological force of images such as these should certainly not be underestimated, but in the last analysis they are doing something significantly different from the quasi-scientific pursuit of mathematical and musical correspondence as a means of describing the actual nature of the world. John Hollander's important study, *The Untuning of the Sky*, tracks the process by which scientific statements about music and world harmony turned ineluctably into metaphor during the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is often impossible to be certain when Shakespeare or his fellow poets and dramatists are invoking musical analogy as decorative image, when they expect an audience to treat such references as myth, or when they are to be accepted as a statement of fact. It is out of these uncertainties, indeed, that some of the subtlest of dramatic effects are generated.

But this is to jump ahead. For the moment it is enough to note that Boethius' *musica mundana*, both as belief and as image, has considerable

power and currency in the period. And the same is true for his second category of *musica humana*. He speaks of it in these terms:

What human music is, anyone may understand by examining his own nature. For what is that which unites the incorporeal activity of the reason with the body, unless it be a certain mutual adaptation and as it were a tempering of low and high sound into a single consonance? What else joins together the parts of the soul itself, which in the opinion of Aristotle is a union of the rational and the irrational? What causes the blending of the body's elements or holds its parts together in established adaptation?²⁰

Ornithoparchus, in his *Musice active micrologus* (1518), a work translated by the foremost English lutenist, John Dowland, in 1609, elaborated:

Humane Musick, is the Concordance of divers elements in one compound, by which the spirituall nature is joyned with the body, and the reasonable part is coupled in concord with the unreasonable, which proceeds from the uniting of the body and the soule. For that amitie, by which the body is joyned unto the soule, is not tyed with bodily bands, but virtuall, caused by the proportion of humors. For what (saith *Caelius*) makes the powers of the soul so sundry and disagreeing to conspire oftentimes each with other? who reconciles the Elements of the body? what other power doth solder [solder] and glue that spirituall strength, which is indued with an intellect to a mortall and earthly frame, than that Musicke which every man that descends into himselfe finds in himselfe? Hence is it, that we loath and abhorre discords, and are delighted when we heare harmoni-call concords, because we know there is in our selves the like concord.²¹

At the simplest level this is a variation on the commonplace that the individual human being reflects in miniature the whole universe – he or she is the 'microcosm' or 'little world' corresponding to the 'macrocosm' or 'greater world'. Combining all four elements, and at the same time poised between brute creation and the angels, endowed with soul as well as body, as Herbert put it:

Man is all symmetrie,
Full of proportions, one limbe to another,
And all to all the world besides:
Each part may call the furthest, brother:
For head with foot hath private amitie,
And both with moons and tides.

Nothing hath got so farre,
But Man hath caught and kept it, as his prey.
His eyes dismount the highest starre:
He is in little all the sphere.²²

Donne, in his *Holy Sonnets* (7.1) put it pithily: 'I am a little world made cunningly', and Du Bartas considered that:

Thear is no Theame more plentifull to scanne,
Then is the glorious goodly frame of MAN:
For in Man's self is Fire, Aire, Earth, and Sea,
Man's (in a word) the World's Epitome,
Or little Map.²³

Writers of all kinds enthusiastically accepted the invitation to 'scan' this little world, and to elaborate its analogical potential. As with the music of the spheres, the precise status of the image is often in doubt. Sir Thomas Browne interestingly recorded that 'to call ourselves a Microcosme, or little world, I thought it onely a pleasant trope of Rhetorick, till my nearer judgement and second thoughts told me there was a reall truth therein'.²⁴ Whether gesturally, as in Hamlet's outburst, 'What piece of work is a man' (2.2.305), explicitly in the Gentleman's description of Lear, who 'Strives in his little world of man to outscorn / The to and fro conflicting wind and rain' (3.1.10–11),²⁵ or comically in Toby Belch's dispute with Andrew Aguecheek about which astrological sign governs which bodily part (TN, 1.3.133–6), Shakespeare readily takes advantage of the belief to fashion his rhetorical tropes.

The analogy between heavenly music and the concord of the human body is, then, a variation on, or a subset of, a familiar and pervasive theme. Robert Fludd elaborated the idea in an image where the human

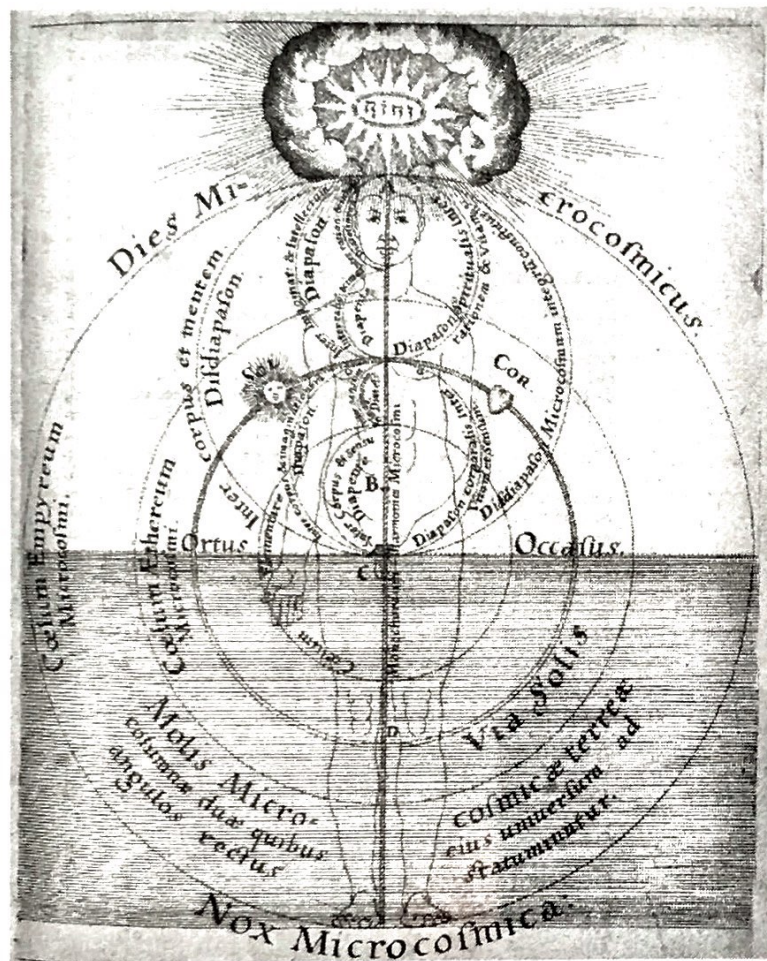


FIGURE 2 Man the microcosm, from Robert Fludd, *Utriusque cosmi ... historia*, 2 (1619), pp. 274–5. A string extends from God to Earth, and the three realms of the empyrean, ethereal, and elemental correspond respectively to the head, the thorax, and the abdomen.

body is divided into three regions, each manifesting the same harmonic relationships of fourth, fifth, and octave as was evidenced in the musical relationships of the heavens (Figure 2). Fludd was writing in the occult tradition where:

Together sympathy and antipathy ... sustained the magical cosmos. They constituted a world of likeness and its opposite that was differentiated but unified. They maintained the universe, thus, in the image of *discordia concors*, of harmony created from dissimilarity (or of dissimilarity in harmony). So it is no accident that Renaissance writers ... repeatedly framed this world in metaphors of harmony – metaphors that were not mere tropes of imagined relationships where none existed in reality ... but that instead discovered in their creation truths about the structure itself of the world.²⁶

For writers such as Marsilio Ficino or Cornelius Agrippa the analogy between the music of the cosmos, human music, and actual musical sounds was central to their magical philosophies. The most immediately significant consequence of such beliefs was that the understanding of human physiology in musical terms enabled connections to be drawn between the three Boethian divisions of music. Ficino's belief in the possibility of composing and performing music which had a magical power is significant precisely because he

is not content to point out possible analogies between macrocosm and microcosm, between musical and celestial harmonies, but gives practical, if somewhat vague, directions for making music which may usefully exploit these analogies.²⁷

This observation returns us to the text of Lorenzo's speech. After his invocation of the music of the spheres he calls for some actual, performed music, and then takes the opportunity to instruct Jessica in the standard notions of music's capability to affect mood and behaviour in the real world. Just as the mathematical harmonies of speculative music were founded in empirical observation of the properties of the monochord, so the discussion of music's effects also began with naturalistic consideration of the ways music functioned in the real world. St John Chrysostom, in the fourth century AD, for example, noted that:

To such an extent, indeed, is our nature delighted by chants and songs that even infants at the breast, if they be weeping or afflicted,

are by reason of it lulled to slumber. Nurses, carrying them in their arms, walking to and fro and singing certain childish songs to them, cause their eyelids to close in sleep. For this reason travelers also sing as they drive their yoked animals at midday, thus lightening the hardships of the journey by their chants. And not only travelers, but peasants are accustomed to sing as they tread the grapes in the winepress, gather the vintage, tend the vine, and perform their other tasks. Sailors do likewise, pulling at the oars. Women, too, weaving and parting the tangled threads with the shuttle, often sing a particular melody, sometimes individually and to themselves, sometimes all together in concert. This they do – the women, travelers, peasants, and sailors – striving to lighten with a chant the labor endured in working, for the mind suffers hardships and difficulties more easily when it hears songs and chants.²⁸

His examples were endlessly repeated and elaborated in succeeding centuries – finding an echo, for example, in Orsino's recommendation of 'the song we had last night' to Viola:

Mark it; Cesario, it is old and plain;
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones
Do use to chant it. (TN, 2.4.42–5)

To these examples of music's comforting presence in the ordinary working world were added many legends of music's power to alter human and non-human behaviour alike. Among the most frequently cited were those of Timotheus, who with his music at a banquet was able first to raise Alexander to martial fury, and then to calm his passions; Arion, who charmed dolphins in order to escape from his enemies; and Amphion, who summoned with his music the stones that built Thebes.²⁹ The most often invoked of the classical legends were those which surrounded the figure of Orpheus, who not only charmed the god of the underworld to release Eurydice, but, as Lorenzo remarks, was feigned to command all of nature with his lyre (MV, 5.1.79–81; see Figure 3).³⁰ The Biblical figures of David and Jubal were similarly celebrated as exponents of a wonder-working,



FIGURE 3 Orpheus charms the animals. This woodcut by Virgil Selis turns up in a number of different texts in the period, here taken from a German translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* of 1581, p. 128.

divinely inspired harmony. As we will see shortly, the resonance of the stories of music's power were important and influential in the changing musical practice of the later sixteenth century; but they raised the fundamental problem – which is still contentious in our contemporary musical aesthetics – of how to explain the simple and observable fact that music elicits a powerful emotional response.

Classical writers did develop theories to account for musical effect. Plato, in the *Republic* (398c–403c) considered that it derived from the proper combination of words, rhythm and musical mode, and influentially attributed a specific character to each of the modes, reserving only the Dorian and Phrygian as acceptable, the former as inspiring military bravery, the latter as appropriate to the 'ordinary voluntary occupations of peace-time', both of them expressing 'courage and moderation in good times and in bad'. The other modes were dismissed as provoking lust and effeminacy.³¹ Variations on Plato were replayed throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, but, as Tomlinson crucially observes, 'conceptions of musical

ethos and celestial harmony intersect ... rarely and inconsequentially in ancient writings'.³²

Renaissance writers, however, did begin to speculate rather more fully on the nature of that intersection. Thomas Wright in 1604 offered a fascinating meditation on precisely these problems, summing up his period's thinking on the subject. Music, he avers, is miraculous because:

it moveth a man to mirth and pleasure, and affecteth him with sorrow and sadness; it inciteth to devotion, and inciteth to dissolution: it stirreth up souldiers to warre, and allureth citizens to peace ... musicke in like maner elevateth the mind to devotion and pietie, and abaseth the soule with effusion and levity.³³

He instances many of the familiar classical and Biblical examples of music's power, but unlike many writers faces squarely

a question to be answered, as difficult as any whatsoever in all naturall or morall Phylosophy, viz. How musicke stirreth up these passions, and moveth so mightily these affections? What hath the shaking or artificiall crispling [sic] of the ayre (which is in effect the substance of musicke) to doe with rousing up choller, afflicting with melancholy, jubilating the heart with pleasure, elevating the soul with devotion, alluring to lust ...?³⁴

Tentatively, he offers four possible reasons: the first, following Ficino and the neoplatonists, suggests 'a certaine sympathie, correspondence, or proportion betwixt our soules and musick'. The second notes that some 'assigne and ascribe [it] to Gods general providence, who when these sounds affect the eare, produceth a certaine spiritual quality in the soule' (a notion reflected in many of the defences of music against Puritan attack). His third suggestion is that the musical disturbance of the air

passeth thorow the eares, and by them unto the heart, and there beateth and tickleth it in such sort, as it is moved with semblable passions ... musick in those cels plaieth with the vital and animate spirits, the only instruments and spurs of the passions.

This is the idea that Viola picks up when praising the music of 'Come away, death', that it 'gives a very echo to the seat / Where love is throned' (TN, 2.4.21-2).

His final explanation, his 'last and best', however, is one which decisively leaves behind the arguments by analogy, divine providence, or physiology, to suggest a much more relativist position:

as all other senses have an admirable multiplicity of objects which delight them, so hath the eare; and as it is impossible to expound the variety of delights, or disgusts, which we perceive by them, and receive in them ... so in musicke, divers consorts stirre up in the heart, divers sorts of joyes, and divers sorts of sadness or paine: the which as men are affected, may be diversely applyed: Let a good and a godly man heare musicke, and he will lift up his heart to heaven: let a bad man heare the same, and hee will convert it to lust ... True it is, that one kinde of musicke may be more apt to one passion then another ... Wherefore the naturall disposition of a man, his custome or exercise, his vertue or vice, for most part at these sounds diversificate passions: for I cannot imagine, that if a man never had heard a Trumpet or a Drum in his life, that he would at the first hearing bee moved to warres.³⁵

This final argument that it is the nature of the hearer, not the nature of the music, which is fundamental to the differentiation of music's effects is strongly articulated. Wright leaves it to the reader to choose between his alternatives, but his conspectus conveniently enables a fuller gloss of Lorenzo's speech.

In its first part, Lorenzo's suggestion that celestial harmony is 'in immortal souls' would accord with Wright's first explanation, and the analogy between *musica mundana* and *musica humana* that we have already discussed. Hooker, similarly, if tentatively, noted that music's force and effects were such, 'even in that verie parte of man which is most divine, that some have bene thereby induced to thinke that the soule itselfe by nature is, or hath in it harmonie'.³⁶ But in the second part of the speech, Lorenzo deploys a physiological account of music's power. Jessica is moved by music, he tells her, because her 'spirits' are attentive. 'Spirit' is a word

which sustained many meanings in the period, and is notoriously elusive of definition; but in this context, and in its plural form, it refers primarily to the three 'spirits' which, in Galenic physiology, mediated between the bodily humours and the reason or soul. As Burton explains:

Spirit is a most subtle vapour, which is expressed from the blood, and the instrument of the soul, to perform all his actions ... Of these spirits there be three kinds, according to the three principal parts, brain, heart, liver; natural, vital, animal. The natural are begotten in the liver, and thence dispersed through the veins, to perform those natural actions. The vital spirits are made in the heart of the natural, which by the arteries are transported to all the other parts ... The animal spirits, formed of the vital, brought up to the brain, and diffused by the nerves to the subordinate members, give sense and motion to them all.³⁷

The spirits were also, crucially in this context, the conduits which took sense impressions to the brain, where they were processed in the imagination. It is because of this mediating function that music can be said to 'pierce', as Lorenzo suggests it will; air moved by music penetrates the ear, and thence, through the spirits, the brain, and heart.³⁸ (It is the same physiological understanding which underlies the idea that love arises as a consequence of a 'piercing' through the eye by the beauty of the loved object.) Music then, as Wright suggests, animates the spirits, and through them affects both the higher faculties of the mind and soul and also the four humours whose balance was essential to bodily and mental harmony.

It is important here to note that Lorenzo's mention of the spirits comes in answer to Jessica's statement: 'I am never merry when I hear sweet music' (5.1.69). This is a line which has been taken, especially in some recent productions, to hint at Jessica's unhappiness or uncertainty in her marriage to Lorenzo.³⁹ But such a reading misconstrues – or at least perhaps reads too naturalistically – what she is saying. Lorenzo had earlier anticipated 'touches of sweet harmony', and he asks the musicians for a 'hymn' to Diana. The music, therefore, is solemn, 'still' music, and Jessica is responding appropriately to its affect. To feel 'merry' would be the proper response to something like a lively dance-tune, rather than to the

'sweet' music she actually hears. Part of the dramatic point of the opening of Act 5 is its rapid transitions of mood, which are here underlined.

Music can confirm a state of mind or modify it. But since, in Renaissance physiology, the mind and body were interconnected, music could be employed as a cure for disease, and especially for diseases of the mind. Timothy Bright, for example, specifies how music might cure melancholy when he writes:

So not onely cheerfull musicke in a generalitie, but such of that kinde as most rejoyseth, is to be sounded in melancholicke eares ... That contrarilie, which is solemne, and still: as dumpes, and fancies and sett musicke, are hurtfull in this case, and serve rather for a disordered rage, and intemperate mirth, to reclaime with mediocritie, then to allure the spirits, to stirre the blood, and to attenuate the humours, which is (if the harmonie be wisely applied) effectualle wrought by musicke.⁴⁰

The concept is one of rebalancing the humours, to arrive at the 'mediocrity' or temperance which is the state of health. It is the application of the appropriate kind of music that enables it to function in a context of healing. How often physicians actually employed musical therapy in their medical practice in the sixteenth century is open to debate, but its efficacy in harmonizing the disordered mind is a staple image in both poetry and drama.⁴¹

'Melancholy' is a general term covering a number of different mental ailments; but included in its compass was the specific disease of love melancholy, for which music was thought to be a particularly suitable remedy. Music's capacity to 'pierce' the mind, and to raise affections, meant that it could be employed as a means of inspiring love in another (the serenades of Proteus to Sylvia, in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and Cloten to Innogen⁴² in *Cymbeline*, are inspired by this hope, and will both be discussed more fully later). Equally, the 'moody food of us that trade in love' as Cleopatra calls it (AC, 2.5.1–2) could be applied to quieten the disordered mind of the unrequited lover. As Linda Austern observes: 'In matters of lovesickness, music was thus understood to be the flame to light the fire or to ignite the hope of reciprocal passion, as well as the cooling draught of purgation

and distraction.⁴³ At the opening of *Twelfth Night* Orsino seems to be rather unsure which of these effects he wishes to command:

If music be the food of love, play on,
Give me excess of it, that surfeiting,
The appetite may sicken, and so die. (1.1.1–3)

The failure of the remedy – as he commands the music to stop – might suggest both that his spirits are insufficiently attentive, and that he has not respected Bright's prescription that the harmony be wisely applied. Rather than soliciting the 'dying fall' of a doleful air, he should perhaps – if he really wanted to escape his enslavement to love – have called for something much more lively.⁴⁴ Music's effects on the lover, however, are not entirely predictable; as Burton notes, it might ease his melancholy, but equally it might be 'most pernicious, as a spur to a free horse, will make him runne himselfe blind, or break his winde ... for musicke enchants, as *Menander* holdes, it will make such melancholy persons mad'.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, the similarity of music and love – both of which work upon the passions by mysterious means, and both of which stimulate the spirits and therefore are capable of raising the mind to divine ecstasy or of abasing it to bestial disorder – will be a significant theme for later consideration.

Before leaving the question of 'spirits', it is appropriate briefly to consider the extension of Platonic and Plotinian notions in the work of Marsilio Ficino, who 'proffered an essentially new explanation for the affective powers of music which not only took into account the similarity between air moved by music and the motion of the human spirit, but also linked these to the *spiritus mundi* which served as a channel of influence between the heavenly bodies and the sublunary world'.⁴⁶ Ficino argued that 'between the tangible and partly transient body of the world and its very soul, whose nature is very far from its body, there exists everywhere a spirit, just as there is between the soul and body in us'; and he suggests that humankind is 'permitted to absorb [the world-] spirit. This is absorbed by man in particular through his own spirit which is by its own nature similar to it, especially if it is made more akin to it by art'.⁴⁷ Music, above all, was the art which put the human spirits in contact with the world-

spirit, and in Ficino's magical thinking this made it theoretically possible to use actual performed music to summon the celestial influences of the planets. It is impossible to convey in brief compass the complexity of Ficino's abstruse meditations; what is significant is the way in which they represent perhaps the most extreme attempt to bring together the three realms of Boethius's musical worlds, so that the analogical relationship of cosmos and human body could be mediated and exploited through *musica instrumentalis*. It must be extremely doubtful whether Shakespeare knew Ficino at first-hand – in asking the musicians to 'wake Diana with a hymn' Lorenzo was not requiring them to perform a Ficinian incantation – but Ficino's ideas were filtered and transmitted through a number of sources, so that, in attenuated form, they figured as part of the network of ideas about music on which Shakespeare drew.

In his account of music's effects in the second part of Lorenzo's speech, however, as in his description of the harmony of the spheres, Shakespeare does not take a straightforwardly conventional line. Having commended Jessica for her sensitivity to musical mood, Lorenzo continues, not by invoking examples of music's power over human spirits – and there were plenty of conventional examples he could have chosen – but by turning exclusively to equally familiar examples of music's power over animal and inanimate nature.⁴⁸ Just as the first part of his speech ended on the negative fact that we cannot hear the harmony of the spheres, the second is designed less to celebrate music's effects than to point up the limits of its command over any fundamentally inharmonious soul. In this respect the speech seems to anticipate the meditation on the limits of the powers of art, including music, in *The Tempest*, where, in 2.1, Antonio and Sebastian's irreducible villainy is symbolized by their total inability to hear the sounds of Prospero and Ariel's music. It would seem that, in certain respects at least, Shakespeare might have endorsed the last of Wright's explanations – that the nature of music's effects is ultimately dictated by the individual who listens, rather than by something instinct within the music itself. Indeed, as this scene proceeds beyond Lorenzo's formal praise of music there is a further undercutting of too mystical or magical a view of music's power, as the returning Portia, hearing the music from the house, comments:

The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
 When neither is attended; and I think
 The nightingale if she should sing by day
 When every goose is cackling, would be thought
 No better a musician than the wren!
 How many things by season, season'd are
 To their right praise, and true perfection! (5.1.102–108)

This provisional stance, and its questioning of the solidity of the philosophical concepts Lorenzo so eloquently utters, is characteristically Shakespearean.

There were many other artists in the period, however, who took the classical narratives of music's effects entirely seriously, and they must now be considered in order to provide a full sense of the contexts within which Shakespeare offered, and his audience might interpret, musical events. A classically inspired humanism led musicians and musical theorists, especially in France and Italy, to wonder why it was that the music of their own time failed to reproduce the startling transformations of mood that were reported in the oft-repeated classical myths. In both countries this perception fuelled attacks on current musical styles, and prompted efforts to recreate what they imagined was a version of the music of the Greeks and Romans.

Vincenzo Galilei (father of the astronomer), for example, ridiculed the imitation of individual words in madrigalian style, concluding:

And yet they wonder that the music of their times produces none of the notable effects that ancient music produced, when, quite the other way, they would have more cause for amazement if it were to produce any of them, seeing that their music is so remote from the ancient music and so unlike it as actually to be its contrary and its mortal enemy ... and seeing that it has no means enabling it even to think of producing such effects, let alone to obtain them. For its sole aim is to delight the ear, while that of ancient music is to induce in another the same passion that one feels oneself.⁴⁹

The problem, of course, was to identify precisely what qualities in ancient music had enabled these effects. Scholars considered arcane matters of

scales and tuning, and turned back to the idea of the moral characters of the modes as defined by Plato and his successors, but, as Frances Yates observes: 'In these attempts of which there were no examples and the theory of which it was not possible to reconstruct with certainty – even on this essential question of the modes – the humanist musicians were on shifting and unstable grounds.'⁵⁰

But on one thing the humanists of France and Italy were agreed – that it was necessary to revise the relationship between words and music. They felt that the music of the more recent past had privileged musical form over the words, and that classical effects would only be possible if the balance of power was reversed, so that the unstable signifiers of musical language could be commanded and directed by the rational sense of the words. Different routes were taken to achieve this control. In France, in Baïf's *Académie de poésie et de musique*, established by Charles IX in 1570, the effort focused first on recreating in poetry the metres of classical verse, and then in setting these words to rhythms that exactly imitated their metres (a style called *musique mesurée à l'antique*). These settings were usually in four vocal parts, where every part followed the same rhythm, enunciating the words at the same time, and ensuring therefore that they would be heard – an effect quite different from the polyphony of the madrigal, where overlapping musical lines frequently make it difficult to distinguish the text. They wished to re-establish a poetry and music in which 'number' and 'measure' were central, thus embodying in musical composition the numerical harmonies of *musica mundana*.

In Italy, in the Camerata of Giovanni de' Bardi, a rather more informal group established in Florence also in the 1570s, a similar effort was being made through rather different means. A letter written by Bardi's son Pietro in 1634 to the antiquarian Doni, looking back at his father's academy, described its ambitions:

besides restoring ancient music insofar as so obscure a subject permitted, one of the chief aims of the academy was to improve modern music and to raise it in some degree from the wretched state to which it had been reduced, chiefly by the Goths, after the loss of

the ancient music and the other liberal arts and sciences. Thus he [Galiliei] was the first to let us hear singing in *stilo rappresentativo*.⁵¹

As the name for this new music suggests, the emphasis was upon the forcible representation of the emotions of the words in solo song, or monody, accompanied by a relatively slow-moving bass line. In the sternest application of these theories the madrigalian habit of illustrating individual words was rejected absolutely; instead 'the business of making the music representational is left almost entirely to the executant, who is to give a vivid and dramatic impersonation of someone influenced by the passion or ethos with which it is desired to affect the listener'.⁵²

Underlying these developments was a long-standing belief that music could directly imitate feeling and emotion. Ficino wrote that 'song is a most powerful imitator of all things. It imitates the intentions and passions of the soul as well as words'.⁵³ Hooker articulates the same idea in accounting for music's force:

The reason hereof is an admirable facilitie which musique hath to expresse and represent to the minde more inwardlie then any other sensible meane the verie standinge risinge and fallinge, the verie steppes and inflections everie way, the turnes and varieties of all passions wherunto the minde is subject: yea so to imitate them that whether it resemble unto us the same state wherein our mindes alreadie are or a cleane contrarie, wee are not more contentedlie by the one confirmed then changed and led away by thother.⁵⁴

In fact the pure application of neoclassical theory, whether in the measured songs of the French or the recitative of the Italians, had but a brief life; composers were not about to surrender the musical expressiveness of polyphony, nor the representation of single words or ideas through harmonic or melodic illustration.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the self-conscious classicism of humanist scholars was an important ingredient in the transformation of musical styles in the late sixteenth century.

This brief and necessarily very over-simplified sketch of neoclassical humanism in practical music during the sixteenth century may seem to be taking us some considerable way from the subject of music in

Shakespeare. After all, and not for the last time, continental theory was slow to arrive in England, and never in the period, it would seem, was it taken up with the same purist and scholarly zeal. Though there had been a brief vogue for attempting to recreate classical quantitative metres in English poetry,⁵⁶ only Byrd in two settings, and Thomas Campion – who was influenced directly by the experiments of the French Académie – essayed a musical translation of the poetic metre. Declamatory song, deriving from Italian practice, was only beginning to have much impact in England at the very end of Shakespeare's career, and then principally in the world of the court masque rather than the popular theatre (though some of Robert Johnson's theatrical songs, including 'Care-charming sleep' from Beaumont and Fletcher's *Valentinian* (c. 1614), and 'Oh, let us howl' from Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* (c. 1613) are powerful theatrical examples of expressive declamatory style). The principal importance of humanist thinking in the context of this book is, however, the way it is symptomatic of a significant cultural transformation in the underlying premises for the explanation of music's power.

The emphasis on recreating the effects of ancient music shifts the focus from the cosmic harmony which human music dimly reflects, towards music as a species of rhetoric, a kind of persuasion. It is notable, for example, that when Henry Peacham writes of music in *The Complete Gentleman* he notes the 'sweet variety that the theoric of music exerciseth the mind withal' yet does not even allude to the music of the spheres or the cosmic harmony so central to earlier musical theory. Like Lorenzo, he is contemptuous of those who are 'of such disproportioned spirits that they avoid [Music's] company', averring that such men 'are by nature very ill-disposed and of such a brutish stupidity that scarce anything else that is good and favourable to virtue is to be found in them'. His knowledgeable survey of the contemporary musical scene, however, concludes with the assertion 'in my opinion, no rhetoric more persuadeth or hath greater power over the mind. Nay, hath not music her figures, the same which rhetoric? What is a revert but her antistrophe? her reports but sweet anaphoras? her counterchange of points, antimetaboles? her passionate airs but prosopopoeias?'⁵⁷ As Brian Vickers points out,⁵⁸ the theorists whom Peacham is following here (he had received some musical training

in Italy) were not original in identifying music's command over the passions as fundamentally rhetorical; they drew on a tradition extending back to Quintilian and beyond, and a terminology deployed throughout the sixteenth century. But the experiments in Paris and Florence with new musical styles, and their focus upon the effects of music, gave renewed emphasis to the old parallel; and its centrality to the evolving understanding of music's power usefully raises issues that are central to the exploration of the use of music in Shakespeare's drama.

In the first place – and obviously enough – to concentrate on music's effects requires a focus upon its relationship to an audience. The membership of Baïf's academy was made up of poets, musicians, and other practitioners of the liberal arts, on the one hand, and 'Auditeurs' on the other. (Indeed it was these listeners who were expected to provide the funds to enable the academy to function.) Its statutes required the regular performance of public concerts (and enforced on its audience properly attentive behaviour, with no talking during the music). Among its most significant contributions to the court life of France was the participation of its members in the composition of fêtes and masquerades, of which the *Balet comique de la reyne* of 1581 is the most fully recorded and best known, for it was precisely in such a public forum that the theoretical revival of classical musical effects could be put to the test. The Florentine, Giovanni de' Bardi, and members of his academy, were similarly involved in a number of court celebrations, and he supervised the most elaborate of all the *intermedi*, those of 1589 honouring the marriage of Ferdinando de' Medici and Christine of Lorraine. Music had, of course, always been part of State celebration, but what was new was the self-conscious application of neoplatonic programmes to the devices, and the centrality of music not merely as accompaniment of, but as agent in, and subject of, the fictions of these entertainments. The plot of the *Balet comique* concerned 'the establishment of the rule of reason, harmony, and of order in the soul, and the taming of the beasts of the passions', and built to a climax:

when the eye and the ear together might drink in the whole of the musical philosophy. The eye saw the moral and intellectual virtues
... The ear heard the chorus of poetry sung to the *musique mesurée*,

and the verses spoke of the world music of the elemental laws of Nature combined with the human music which, amidst the constant flux, strife, and tension to which man is subject through his association with the natural world yet strikes another, an eternal note.⁵⁹

The six 1589 *intermedi* 'were unified by the theme of the power of music to influence both the human soul and the gods ... Three of the series, nos. 1, 4, and 5, illustrated aspects of *musica mundana*. ... while the other three represented *musica humana*.'⁶⁰ Both French and Italian celebrations were crucial inspirations for the transformation of English court entertainment in the hands of Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, Thomas Campion, George Chapman, and their successors in the series of masques performed at the Stuart court from 1604 onwards.

In the Stuart masque, as in other European festivals, neoplatonic concepts were central to the uniting of music, design and words. The first of the Florentine *intermedi* depicted the Harmony of the Spheres, and included the Platonic figure of Necessity, together with the eight sirens who controlled the celestial spheres.⁶¹ In Jonson's *Masque of Beauty* (1608) the central device was a Throne of Beauty.

This *Throne*, (as the whole *Iland* mov'd forward, on the water,) had a circular motion of it owne, imitating that which wee call *Motum mundi* ['movement of the world'], from the *East* to the *West* ... The steps, whereon the *Cupids* sate, had a motion contrary, with *Analogy ad motum planetarum* ['to the movement of the planets'], from the *West* to the *East*; both which turned with their severall lights. And with these three varied *Motions* at once, the whole *Scene* shot it selfe to the land.⁶²

Presiding over this physical imitation of the movements of the heavens was the figure of Harmonia, summing up the correspondences between physical beauty, celestial harmony, and music. Three years earlier, the central scenic device of *Hymenaei* was a huge globe, described as a 'Microcosm', on which the countries of the world were depicted. This globe turned, and revealed within itself the eight masquers who represented the

Humours and Affections, presided over by Reason. This device dramatically figured the correspondence of the human body and the world. The initial threat the disordered masquers offered to the nuptial rites was dissipated by the 'sacred concords' of the music which surrounded the subsequent entrance of Juno, and harmony was restored in the dances which followed. In masques such as these, then, cosmic harmony and the relationships between the heavenly and the human were rendered in visual images, and the power of music to command disorderly faculties was dramatically enacted.

It is important to note that in the court masque dance itself was accorded many of the powers and properties that were associated with music. The patterns of dance steps were perceived as analogous to the cosmic dance of the heavens, as John Davies put it:

*Dauncing ... then began to be,
When the first seedes whereof the world did spring,
The Fire, Ayre, Earth, and Water did agree,
By Loves perswasion, Natures mighty King,
To leave their first disordred combating;
And in a daunce such measure to observe,
As all the world their motion should preserve.*⁶³

Thomas Elyot recommended dancing in the same way that he commended musical instruction, as honest recreation but, more important, as figuring social harmony, as in his most frequently quoted assertion that 'in every daunse, of a moste auncient custome, there daunseth together a man and a woman, holding eche other by the hande or the arme, whiche betokeneth concorde'.⁶⁴ He goes on to argue that dance may figure the virtue of prudence, and concludes that dance is 'as well a necessary studie as a noble and vertuose pastyme'.⁶⁵

For Elyot, the instruction that dance can offer is one which affects the beholder as well as the dancer, as he wrote:

Wherefore all they that have their courage stered [*steered*] towarde very honour or perfecte nobilitie, let them approche to this passe tyme, and either them selves prepare them to daunse, or els at the

leste way beholde with watching eien other that can daunse truly, kepyng juste measure and tyme.⁶⁶

It is precisely upon this foundation that masque writers claimed that dances, as spectacles of order and harmony, functioned to instruct and move the audience. In Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* (1618) the character of Daedalus introduced the 'curious knots' of the dances with the words:

Then, as all actions of mankind
are but a Laborinth, or maze,
so let your Daunces be entwined
yet not perplex men, unto gaze;
But measur'd, and so numerous too,
as men may read each act you doo.
And when they see the Graces meet,
admire the wisdom of your feet.
For Dauncing is an exercise
not only shews the movers wit
but maketh the beholder wise,
As he hath powre to rise to it.⁶⁷

The last three lines are crucial in declaring Jonson's belief that the harmonies of music and dance could directly affect the beholders – even if they also (and characteristically) suggest that not all the audience have the capacity fully to understand what they see and hear. Nonetheless, in this vision the power of music and dance is inherent within them, not conferred upon them by the auditor. And this is the underpinning of the claim that when Claude LeJeune's music for the celebrations of the marriage of the Duc de Joyeuse in 1581 was rehearsed at a private concert before the event, it

caused a gentleman who was present to put his hand to his arms, loudly swearing the while that he could not refrain himself from fighting someone, and that when they began to sing another air in the Sub-Phrygian mode he grew tranquil as before.⁶⁸

One might well doubt whether this story has any substance, so close is it to the legend of Timotheus and Alexander, but it cannot be denied that the court entertainments of Europe were founded on the belief that the harmony of music and dance, united with spectacle, and based, as Jonson puts it, on 'solid learnings', were capable of affecting the minds and hearts of those who watched them.⁶⁹

The preoccupation with these effects in the context of courtly entertainment has a further important consequence, since the deployment of music and spectacle was firmly tied to the good ordering of the state. The Letters Patent setting up Baif's academy note that it is

the opinion of many great personages, both ancient legislators and philosophers ... that it is of great importance for the morals of the citizens of a town that the music current and used in the country should be retained under certain laws, for the minds of most men are formed and their behaviour influenced by its character, so that where music is disordered, their morals are also depraved, and where it is well ordered, there men are well disciplined morally.

It is of no little significance that the academy was established by the sovereign, Charles IX, who 'is anxious to encourage the revival of "ancient" poetry and music because he desires to see in his kingdom the good moral effects which should flow from such a revival'.⁷⁰

The analogy of the cosmos and the State here takes on a rather more active force than in Ulysses' speech discussed earlier. Music becomes not merely an image of the hierarchically ordered State, but the persuasive agent which will sustain it. In all the European entertainments stage images were devised in significant part to celebrate the ruler under whose aegis they were composed, and in whose praise they were offered. One frequently therefore finds the analogical correspondence focused specifically on the ruler as a kind of divine musician. Three examples will serve for many that could be invoked. Campion's *The Lords' Masque* (1613) is built upon a very explicit neoplatonic programme, of the four 'furies',⁷¹ and includes the figure of Orpheus, who is called upon to curb the excesses of the frantics who make up the antimasque. They first enter to 'a strange music', and then 'by vertue of a new change in the musicke' fall

'into a madde measure', finally to be calmed by 'a very solemne ayre'. This exhibition of music's effects is entirely in line with those that the humanists wished to recreate. But before he begins, Orpheus says:

Jove into our musick will inspire
The power of passion, that their thoughts shall bend
To any forme or motion we intend.⁷²

In this masque Jove is a figure for James, and so Orpheus explicitly attributes the power of his music to the power of the monarch who commands him. In Jonson's *Pan's Anniversary* the audience is informed that the figure of James/Pan 'From his loud Musicke, all your manners wraught, / And made your Common-wealth a harmonie'.⁷³ Even more remarkably, the climax of *The Irish Masque* (1614) comes as the Irish bard is summoned to view the monarch sitting in the audience, and is told:

This is that IAMES of which long since thou sung'st
Should end our countreyes most unnaturall broyles;
And if her ear, then deafned with the drum,
Would stoupe but to the musique of his peace,
She need not with the speares change harmony.⁷⁴

Here the monarch's music is equivalent to, or even more powerful than, the harmony of the spheres themselves.⁷⁵ European court entertainments were directly engaged in yoking traditional understanding of musical harmony to the defence and promulgation of increasingly absolutist monarchy.

Since Shakespeare wrote no court entertainments, it might seem that these elite and learned celebrations have little direct relevance to his plays. The point, however, is precisely that the masque's dramatic vocabulary, and its intimate association with the machinery of the state, provided an image that playwrights could employ as a kind of synecdoche or shorthand to conjure up the world of the court, and one which could be ironically turned back upon it. Middleton, for example, ends both *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *Women Beware Women* with masques that are the cover for chaotic scenes of blood-letting, where 'Destruction plays her triumph, and great mischiefs / Mask in expected pleasures'.⁷⁶ Shakespeare deploys the

masque as an image of and for the court-world rather less extremely, but with considerable subtlety, throughout his career, from *Love's Labour's Lost* to the late romances. His most developed imitation of the genre occurs in the fourth act of *The Tempest*, where it contributes significantly to the play's testing of the conventional correspondence of the power of the monarch and the power of music. Shakespeare in this play exploits perhaps the most important single consequence of the rhetorical characterization of music's power to command human behaviour: that it opens the exercise of musical influence to the same radical uncertainty that always hovers about the use of rhetoric – it matters who is using it, and to what ends. Music is no longer the impersonal echo of a divine order, nor a repertory of modes whose effects are predictable because they are a consequence of qualities inherent in their musical character, but a mobile, unpredictable agent, vulnerable in its effects not only, as both Lorenzo and Portia recognize, to the nature of the listener, but also to the purposes of the person who commands or performs it.

It is not only the changing direction of music theory which accounts for its instability as a signifier in dramatic contexts. As we have seen, throughout history even the most celebratory invocations of music's harmonizing power have been haunted by the recognition that mere human music is capable of soliciting less desirable emotional responses. In the court masque this dangerous potential is articulated in the disordered figures of the antimasque, often accompanied with 'wild' music. There it is invoked in order that it can be contained, policed, and redirected by the celestial order of the masque itself. In the public playhouse such overt control is absent, and it was fear of the provocation music might supply to disorderly feeling that contributed significantly to anti-theatrical propaganda. Indeed, even an ardent defender of the art, the author of *The Praise of Musicke*, confessed that 'I dare not speake of dauncing or theatrall spectacles, least I pull whole swarmes of enemies upon me'.⁷⁷

If the capacity of Orpheus's music to charm brute creation is a symbol of its effective force, it is easily possible to turn the image on its head, and fear the brutishness of the human behaviour which music can also inspire. The sirens whom Plato fixes upon the whirling spheres have their malign double in the half-women, half-birds whose seductive song led sailors onto



FIGURE 4 The three sirens play and sing to lure the ship onto the rocks. Behind them lurk the harpies who prey on their victims. Cartari, *Le Imagine dei Dei degli Antichi* (1608 edition, p. 231)

the rocks (Figure 4). Plato's praise of the Dorian and Phrygian modes is framed by the rejection of Lydian, Ionian, and others which prompt to 'drunkenness, softness or idleness'.⁷⁸ The dangerous doubleness of music which Plato attempts to regulate is observed by the Duke in *Measure for Measure*: 'music oft hath such a charm / To make bad good, and good provoke to harm' (4.1.14–15).⁷⁹ These associations of music with idleness.

lust, and effeminacy rendered problematic any easy mapping of *musica instrumentalis* on to *musica mundana*.

St John Chrysostom follows his earlier-quoted account of music's place in everyday human existence with stern injunctions about the kind of music that might be permitted in religious service. This controversy was, throughout the sixteenth century, one of the fiercest arenas of debate about music and its effects. Many reformers, if they were prepared to allow music any place at all in worship, confined it to the simplest unison singing of the psalms, and saw Elizabeth's refusal to banish anthems and choral singing as a sign of the imperfection of the Anglican reformation. Hooker's comments on music are part of a defence of the Elizabethan settlement, and the author of *The Praise of Musick* devotes by far the longest part of his treatise to the defence of music in church services.⁸⁰ This debate does not figure directly in Shakespeare's plays, but the terms in which it was conducted are of considerable significance as indications of the ways in which 'good' music was divided from 'bad'. Curiously, the Puritan reformers objected to the traditional music of the church on grounds very similar to the objections raised by the humanists – that elaborate polyphony obscured the words, substituting the sensuous allure of sound for the rational delight of verbal meaning. William Prynne, for example, argued:

Modest and chaste harmonies are to be admitted by removing as far as may be all soft effeminate music from our strong and valiant cogitation, which using a dishonest art of warbling the voice, do lead to a delicate and slothful kind of life. Therefore, chromatical harmonies are to be left to impudent malapertness, to whorish music crowned with flowers.⁸¹

In characterizing elaborate singing as 'effeminate', Prynne echoed the way in which the opposition between masculine strength and feminine weakness lay at the centre of Plato's prescription of suitable and unsuitable modes, and this gendered distinction permeates early modern writing about music.

Lodowick Lloyd, for example, writes that:

Mars claymeth Musicke in the fiede, and Venus occupieth Musicke in chambers. That kind of gentle and soft Musick, the *Egyptians*

forbade the youth to be taught therein, least from men, they would become againe women.⁸²

On this theme many Puritan writers descanted throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Gosson, attacking music in the theatre, drew on classical authority, observing that:

Plutarch complayneth that ignorant men, not knowing the majestie of auncient musike, abuse both the eares of the people, and the arte it selfe, with bringing sweet comfortes in Theaters, which rather effeminate the minde as prickes unto vice, then procure amendement of maners as spurres to virtue.⁸³

Philip Stubbes similarly fulminated against the effect of music on both women and men, writing: 'And if you would have your daughter whoorish, bawdie, and uncleane, and a filthie speaker, and such like, bring her up in musicke and dauncing, and my life for yours, you have won the goale', and topping it with:

If you wold have your sonne softe, womanish, uncleane, smoth mouthed, affected to bawdrie, scurrilitie, filthie rimes, and unsemely talking, brifly, if you wold have him, as it weare, transnured into a woman, or worse, and inclyned to all kinds of whordome and abomination, set him to dauncing school, and to learn musicke, and than shall you not faile of your purpose.⁸⁴

The opposition between the manly world of war and the effeminized world of the court is not infrequently characterized in the drama as an opposition of musics. Benedick comments ironically on Claudio: 'I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife, and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe' (*MA*, 2.3.13–15). Melantius, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Maid's Tragedy*, distances himself from the courtly world of masques with the words:

These soft and silken wars are not for me:
The music must be shrill and all confused
That stirs my blood, and then I dance with arms.⁸⁵

The characterization of music as an effeminizing art has its roots in the way in which the attractions of feminine beauty and of music could readily be mapped one onto the other. As Linda Austern has persuasively argued, its basis lay in the fact that: 'like the love of a woman, the love of harmony and rhythm frequently led not to spiritual fulfillment but to the deceptive delights of the sensual world'.⁸⁶ The close correlation of the force of love to affect the passions and bypass rational control with music's direct effect on the spirits, and the projection of both on to the stimulus and lure of female beauty, is of considerable significance in the deployment of music in the plays.

The Praise of Musicke confronted the issue directly:

those which are glad to take any occasion to speak against musicke, will ... affirme that it maketh men effeminate, and too much subject unto pleasure. But whom, I prairie you, doth it make effeminate? Surely none but such as without it would bee wanton: ... the same musicke which mollifieth some men, moveth some other nothing at all: so that the fault is not in musicke, which of it selfe is good: but in the corrupt nature, and evill disposition of light persons, which of themselves are prone to wantonnes.⁸⁷

His rebuttal of the charge turns, as did Thomas Wright's final account of music's power, on the centrality of the listener's moral qualities to music's effect. Thus, from a different direction, we have ended at the point that concludes Lorenzo's speech. In returning for the last time to the text which opened this chapter, it may be recognized that all too often critical commentary on it as an invocation of the divine power of music occludes the ways in which it also reflects some of the tensions that inhere in the commonplaces it so eloquently articulates.

The problematic relationship between speculative and practical music is actually embodied in the abrupt transition in Lorenzo's speech between the music of the spheres, and the effects of music on human ears. Cornelius Agrippa ridiculed those who attempted to link the two:

The Musicians take occasion to extol themselves far above the Rhetoricians, for that their Art has a greater power to move the

passions and affections: and to such height of madness they are carry'd as to affirm that the Heavens themselves do sing; not that they were ever heard to do so, but only as their drunken Dreams and Imaginations prompt them to believe.⁸⁸

Lorenzo does not go as far as this, though he actually offers no link between the two parts of his speech and the two musics he invokes – except the mournful recognition that we cannot hear one, and may not respond to the other.

It is possible, then, to see this speech as actually marking the retreat of *musica mundana* into metaphor; still potent, but increasingly detached from the workings of music in the real human world. Stephen Gosson directed his readers:

If you will bee good scholars, and profite well in the arte of musike, shut your fidels in their cases and looke uppe to Heaven: the order of the spheres, the unfallible motion of the planets, the juste course of the yeere, the varietie of the seasons, the concorde of the elementes and their qualities, fyre, water, ayre, earth, heate, colde, moisture and drought concurring together to the constitution of earthly bodies, and sustenance of every creature. The politike lawes in wel governed common wealthes that treade downe the proude and upholde the meeke; the love of the kinge and his subiectes, the father and his chylde ... are excellent maisters to shew you that this is right musicke, this perfecte harmony.⁸⁹

The familiar analogies are paraded, but as rhetorical weapons to diminish and belabour the music and musicians of his own time.

Shakespeare's preoccupation, however, is precisely with the diversity and complexity of performed music's effects in the human narratives he constructs in his plays. It is the possibility of testing the speculative against the practical, the ideal against the humanly actual, that continuously excites him. In properly refusing Gosson's invitation to turn one's attention only to celestial harmonies, the dramatist focuses upon the dynamic relationship of listener and performer. And it is to the performers and listeners in Shakespeare's playhouses that we now turn.

MUSIC IN PRACTICE

PETER Musicians, O musicians, 'Heart's ease', 'Heart's ease'! O, and you will have me live, play 'Heart's ease'.

1 MUSICIAN Why 'Heart's ease'?

PETER O musicians, because my heart itself plays 'My heart is full'.

O play me some merry dump to comfort me.

1 MUSICIAN Not a dump, we! 'Tis no time to play now.

PETER You will not then?

1 MUSICIAN No.

PETER I will then give it you soundly.

1 MUSICIAN What will you give us?

PETER No money, on my faith, but the gleek! I will give you the minstrel. (*RJ*, 4.5.100–112)

In this passage from *Romeo and Juliet* the three musicians summoned to perform at the anticipated wedding of Juliet and Paris pack up their instruments and prepare to go after Juliet's death is revealed. They exchange some comic banter with the Capulet's serving-man, Peter (probably played at the first performances by the company's clown, Will Kemp), and emerge from the anonymity which shrouds most Shakespearean instrumentalists as Simon Catling, Hugh Rebec, and James Soundpost, soubriquets obviously alluding to their trade – suggesting that they were players of stringed instruments (see Figure 5). Their appearance raises some of the questions central to this chapter. We want to know how typical they are of the instrumental ensembles that Shakespeare's audience might have encountered in the world outside the theatre. We need to ask whether



FIGURE 5 A duet team playing outside a tavern, in a woodcut used in a number of English seventeenth-century broadside ballads.

the actors who appear and speak are those who played off-stage in the previous scene (and accompanied the dances in 1.4). The tunes Peter asks for are popular dances, and again, one wants to know how characteristic a repertoire this might be. To these questions we will return.

The nature of the band and their repertory might tell us something of the Capulets who hire them, and there are certainly questions to ask about the curious dramatic effect of this comic scene coming hard upon the tragic discovery. But what makes this moment particularly useful as a starting-point for consideration of the kinds of public music-making in Shakespeare's society is Peter's final comment in this extract. The 'gleek', or gibe, he threatens is to insult them by calling them 'minstrel'. The question why this label might be construed as a demeaning one opens up the larger issue of the place of musicians in early modern England.

'Minstrel' was originally the term used without disapprobation to describe any wandering musician, who might also be an actor, acrobat, or juggler; and it was, indeed, the nomenclature deployed in court contexts for servants retained by the Crown,¹ but it had by the end of the sixteenth century become contaminated by its association with vagabondage and vagrancy. The masterless man was particularly an object

of concern in the period, and legislation in 1572, tightened up further in 1597, placed severe curbs on unattached travellers of all kinds, with the threat of whipping, branding, and even the death penalty for persistent offenders.² The insult Peter threatens, therefore, is one aimed as much at the social status of the three-man band as it is addressed to their musical competence.³

A revealing gloss on the attitudes that underlie Peter's gibe is offered in the autobiography of the composer Thomas Whythorne (1528–86). He notes that 'Ever since that music came to any perfection and was accounted one of the seven liberal sciences ... there have been degrees thereof, as there be of divines, lawyers and physicians.' At the top of his hierarchy he places composers, and then continues:

Then is there organists in churches; then be there teachers of music, and also to sing pricksong [*i.e. to sing from musical notation*] and to sound on musical instruments, which be named schoolmasters; then there be singers in churches, of the which there be of children or boys, as well as of men; then out of the Church there be that do teach and serve privately, as some in noblemen's houses and men of worship's houses, and some in their own houses.

Lastly there be those do use to go with their instruments about the countries to cities, towns, and villages, where also they do go to private houses, to such as will hear them, either publicly or privately; or else to markets, fairs, marriages, assemblies, taverns, alehouses and suchlike places and there, to those that will hear them, they will sell the sounds of their voices and instruments ... These in ancient time were named minstrels; and as the foresaid *Marcus Aurelius* did banish this sort of people for their misused life, so have they been of late in this our realm restrained somewhat from their vagabond life, which some of them used.

He later calls those at the bottom of the hierarchy 'the rascal and off-scum of that profession who be, or ought to be, called minstrels (although nowadays many do name them musicians)'.⁴ Whythorne's contempt explains and underscores the forcefulness of the gibe that Peter threatens to throw at the musicians in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Whythorne's list, however, simplifies a complicated picture. As Walter Woodfill notes:

The independent minstrels and musicians of the provinces formed a homogenous group only by definition: all lacked permanent municipal or private patrons and all resorted to music for at least part of their livelihood. Some were skilled and respected freemen of their town, others vagabonds using music as a cloak for lives of petty crime and idleness. No sharp line divided the men of these extremes.⁵

The problem was not simply that minstrels/musicians ran foul of the increasingly severe laws against vagrancy, nor, necessarily, that they were incompetent performers. More generally, musicians struggled to find a place within the regulatory systems of their society. There were attempts in a number of places to establish minstrel fraternities which might protect their interests, by regulating the number of apprentices, setting minimum requirements for the size of bands recruited to play for weddings and feasts, attempting to bar outsiders from musical employment, and so on; but the York company 'was probably unsuccessful', and in London the competition from royal musicians, musicians attendant on noble visitors, as well as the continuous press of incomers living outside the city's jurisdiction, rendered the company 'one of the city's smallest and poorest'.⁶

Nonetheless:

London had no rival as the focus of musical life in Britain. The city afforded the richest opportunities to hear music in all its varieties. For those who practised the art London offered the best, the most lucrative and the greatest number of positions. The city remained the centre of the music business, the site of the music-printing trade – such as it was – and a home to most foreign musicians, music teachers and instrument makers. Most important, London was the seat of the court and the monarch, whose essential role in the patronage of music can scarcely be overstressed ... A place in the musical institutions of the royal household remained the ultimate goal, however remote, of any aspiring musician.⁷

Craig Monson rightly places the royal court and chapel at the top of the pyramid, but does not here mention the group of players who occupied the premier position amongst the freemen of the company of musicians – the city waits. Originally a domestic wait was a watchman, and his instrument the loud and piercing shawm (Figure 6).⁸ The town waits,

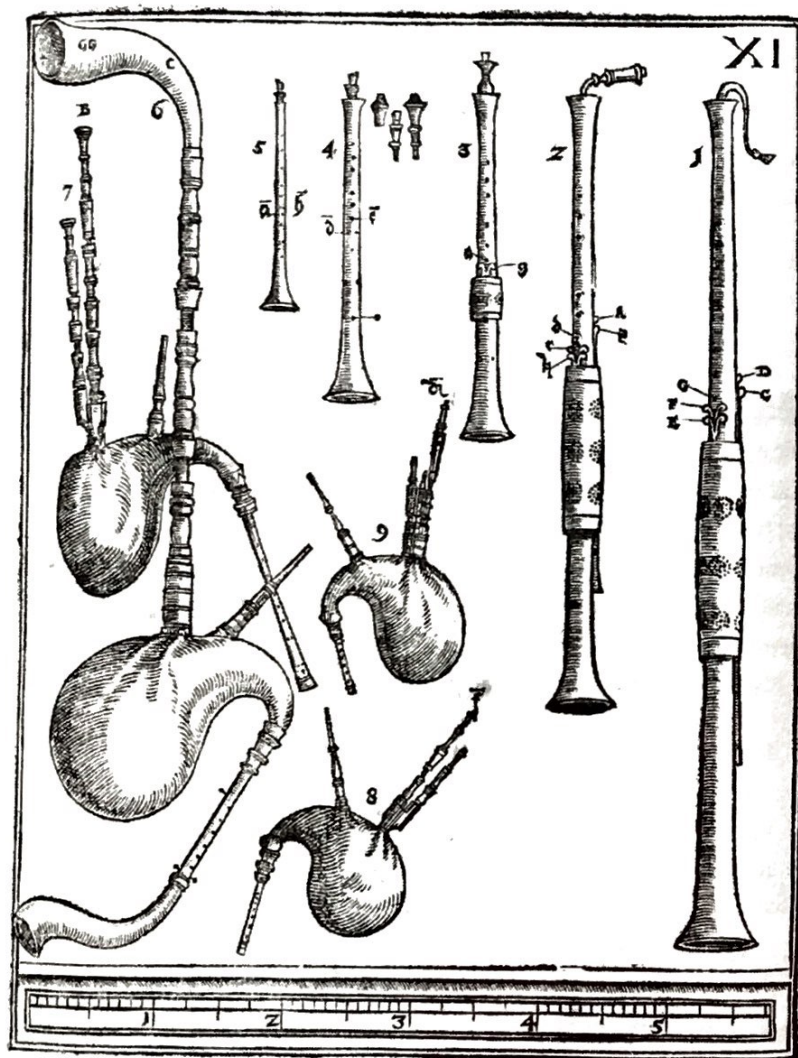


FIGURE 6 Praetorius (*De Organographia*, 1618); the family of shawms, from the bass 'bombard' to the higher shawms (1–5), together with bagpipes.

however, were never watchmen, and their marching round the town at night between Michaelmas and Epiphany was not, as is often supposed, a remnant of this security function.⁹ During the second half of the sixteenth century, if not before, the waits' function expanded to be the providers of music for the city on all kinds of ceremonial and festival occasions.¹⁰ During this period the London waits increased in number (from about six plus one apprentice each in 1475 to about eleven men and twenty apprentices in 1620); and they added to their original consort of shawms and sackbuts a set of viols in 1561, recorders and cornetts in 1568, together with other unspecified instruments, and, later, singers. Though they retained their practice of marching round the city at night for three months of the year, their ceremonial functions at civic occasions such as the annual lord mayor's pageants, the requirement that they played at festivals before the mayor and sheriffs' houses, and, from 1571, their regular public performances on Sundays at the Royal Exchange (perhaps the first public concerts in England, but also paralleled in a number of other cities) became much more important. The waits, unlike their fellow company members, received a guaranteed annual salary and livery, and their privileged position and musical expertise meant that they were best placed to be recruited for private functions, and by the theatres – for all of which they would get extra reward.

Their non-civic opportunities, and the expectation that, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, waits will provide music to accompany marriage feasts, are represented dramatically in many plays. In Robert Armin's *The Two Maids of More-Clacke* (1609), for example, it is the waits of London who are said to perform at the ill-fated marriage with which the play opens; and in Shirley's *The Wittie Faire One* (1633), 4.1, the foolish Sir Nicholas plans that for his wedding in Croydon 'we'll ha' the City Waits down with us'. In the first scene of Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness* Sir Francis somewhat contemptuously characterizes the wedding celebrations for Anne and Frankford in these terms:

the town musicians

Finger their frets within, and the mad lads
And country lasses, every mother's child

With nosegays and bride-laces in their hats
Dance all their country measures, rounds and jigs.¹¹

In the following scene we see the servants and 'country wenches' arguing over the tunes that the 'two or three musicians' are to play – finally settling on Sellenger's Round.

The musical excellence of the London waits was explicitly recognized in the dedication of Thomas Morley's *The First Booke of Consort Lessons* (1599) to the mayor and aldermen of the city, in which he comments:

But as the ancient custome is of this most honorable and renowned Cittie hath been ever, to retaine and maintane excellent and expert Musitians, to adorne your Honors favors, Feasts and solemne meetings: to those your Lordships Waits, after the commending these my labors to your Honorable patronage: I recommend the same to your servants carefull and skilfull handling ... purposing hereafter to give them more testimonie of my love towards them.¹²

This tribute, from one of the most important of Elizabethan composers, himself a member of the Chapel Royal, is much more than conventional hyperbole. This publication was for the standard mixed consort of three plucked stringed instruments, the lute, bandora, and cittern, two bowed instruments, the treble and bass viol, together with the flute, depicted in the famous picture of Sir Henry Unton, and closely paralleled in an illustration by Simon van der Passe (Figure 7). Its instrumental variety indicates clearly how far the waits had developed their musical expertise during the later sixteenth century. Membership of the waits was eagerly sought after, and amongst their company were distinguished musicians, including composers, some of whom later went on to obtain positions in the royal music.

The London waits was the foremost ensemble of its kind in the country, but most towns and cities appointed waits. Some places probably had no more than one or two instrumentalists, but many employed three to five musicians, plus apprentices.¹³ As with the London waits, there is some evidence in the larger towns, such as Norwich, Chester, Oxford, or York,



FIGURE 7 This engraving of 1612 by Simon van de Passe, entitled 'Musical Company', depicts a consort, from the left, of cittern, violin, bandora, and viol. The man entering at the back carries what might be a flute or a recorder. There is no lute – which would have completed the typical English 'mixed consort'.

that the range of the waits' musical expertise increased over time, even though the shawm continued to be indelibly associated with them as their primary instrument (as it is by the Citizen in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, who evinces his lack of familiarity with the musical sophistication of the indoor Blackfriars theatre by offering two shillings to bring over the waits of Southwark to play the shawms he deems necessary for Rafe's 'stately part').¹⁴ Many of the provincial waits, protected by their civic livery, still travelled widely across the country, securing occasional employment in towns and in noble households. The earls of Cumberland, for example, employed at least nineteen different bands of waits in the period 1595–1613, on over seventy different occasions (sometimes for periods of several weeks) – and they came to the earl's Londesborough estate from up to 140 miles away.¹⁵ Though the vagrancy laws probably made musicians who were unprotected by either civic

licence or noble patronage less likely to travel far from home, nonetheless in some larger towns, and in London, small bands of unattached musicians could still make a living performing at weddings and other feasts, for special occasions at a noble or gentleman's residence, or in taverns and ale-houses.

Whether we are to imagine the Verona musicians as 'waits' or simply as an independent band, Capulet's employment of them to celebrate his daughter's marriage is entirely typical of upper-class patronage in the period. The Skipton waits, for example, were hired for no less than twelve weeks by the fourth Earl of Cumberland to celebrate the visit and wedding of Viscount Dungarvon.¹⁶ The frostiness of the Veronese musicians' response to Peter's insult is a mark of the fact that they, like musicians in England, aspired to musical expertise, and to the respectability and status to which they felt it should entitle them. For many of Shakespeare's audience it was these civic musicians, the waits and other independent members of the company of musicians, who provided one major part of their experience of public music. They would have been heard in musical activity ranging from ceremonial fanfares and flourishes to the mixed repertory of dance tunes, some traditional, some newly composed, that Peter assumes the Verona musicians will be able to play on demand.

Direct experience of the most prestigious musical provision in London, that of the royal court, must, for most, have been a rather less frequent occurrence. They would, however, have been familiar with the trumpets that heralded state occasions and royal progresses (see Figure 8), and with the other music that might accompany them. Shakespeare may have been versifying North's Plutarch when Enobarbus says of Cleopatra's barge that 'the oars were silver, / Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke' (AC, 2.2.204-5), but Londoners might themselves have seen their queen making her progress up the Thames in a barge 'towed by a long galley rowed by 40 men in their shirts, with a band of music, as usual when the Queen goes by water'.¹⁷ The more privileged, of course, might have attended at court, where music of all kinds punctuated the day, preceding the queen, accompanying meals, and supporting the dancing which was the queen's favourite activity and a virtually daily practice. As Peter Holman records:

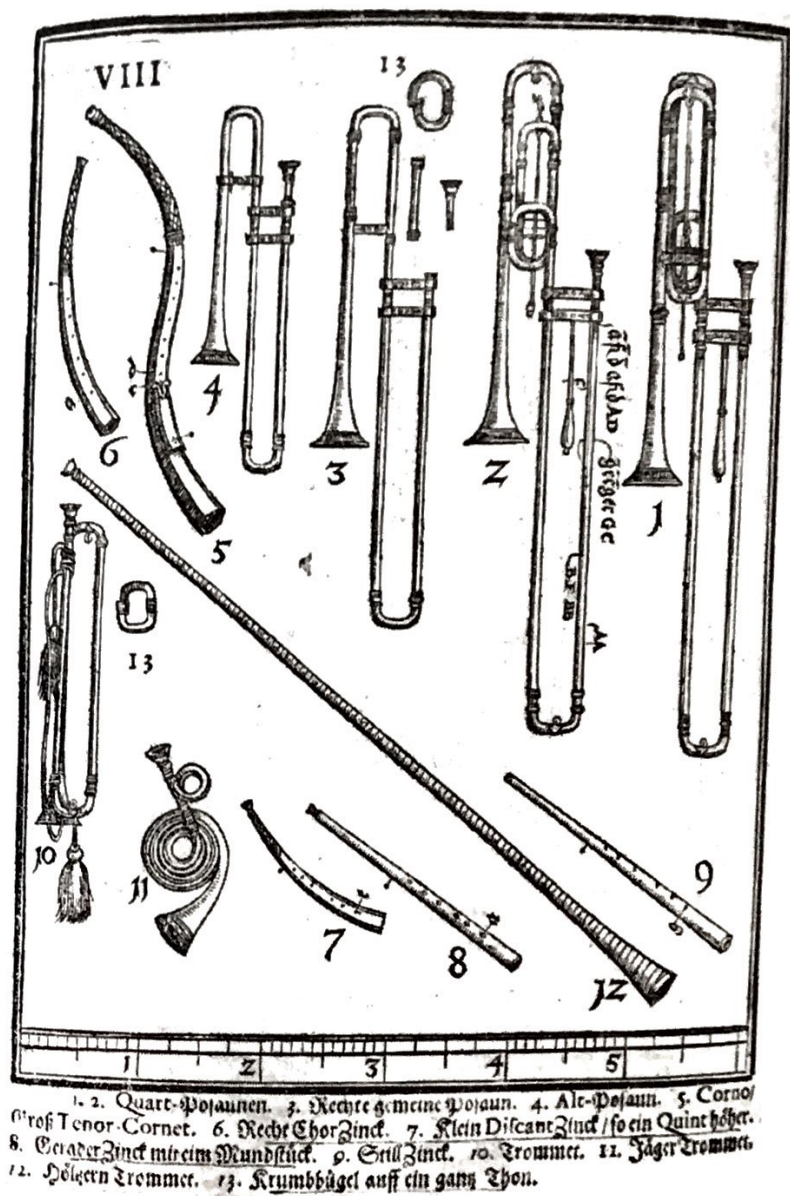


FIGURE 8 Praetorius (*De Organographia*, 1618) depicts the family of sackbuts (nos. 1-4) various sizes and styles of cornett (5-9), trumpet (10) and hunting horn (11).

In June 1559 a Venetian diplomat wrote that 'the Queen's daily arrangements are musical performances and other entertainments (*feste*), and she takes marvellous pleasure in seeing people dance; in 1589 it was said that 'VI or VII gallyards in a mornynge, besydes musycke & syngynge, is her ordynary exercyse' ... In 1599 a diplomat reported in disgust to the Spanish court that 'on the day of Epiphany the Queen held a great feast, in which the head of the Church of England and Ireland was to be seen in her old age dancing three or four galliards'.¹⁸

Robert Sidney describes the queen's presence almost every night over the Christmas holiday season of 1599/1600 'to see the ladies dawnce the old and new cowuntry dances with the taber and pipe'.¹⁹ This comment makes it clear that court dancing might be accompanied exactly as the most rural of festivities were by the humblest of instrumental combinations of three-hole pipe and drum (see Figure 9). It is one of many instances which demonstrate that the gap between the 'courtly' and the 'popular' musics was neither as wide, nor as readily perceived, as a modern readership might anticipate.

A detailed account of the royal music lies outside the scope of this study, but a few observations may be made of matters which will intersect with the later discussion of Shakespeare's plays. First, the organization of the musicians was into distinct consorts – of strings (viols and violins), plucked instruments, flutes and recorders, shawms and sackbuts, trumpets and drums, together with keyboard players, and, at times, harpists.²⁰ (The dependent households of Queen Anne, Prince Henry, and then Prince Charles, however, were, it seems less rigidly organized, more readily espousing the music of mixed consorts.) It is noteworthy that throughout most of the Tudor and Stuart periods the number of trumpeters always exceeded that of any other group – reflecting the centrality of the instrument to the announcement of the royal presence, indoors as well as out.²¹ The various consorts were expected to be in daily attendance on the monarch, to provide music to accompany meals, for dancing, and for the sovereign's private recreation. The royal musicians were the best rewarded in the land, and had ample opportunity to supplement their income through other gifts and benefits of place not necessarily connected



FIGURE 9 Jost Amman 'Outdoor amusements'. The courtly dancing couples are accompanied by a violin and a pipe and tabor; a bass viol leans against a tree in the background.

to music. But they might also 'moonlight' as advisers, teachers, and musicians for noble families, or be recruited by them for their own entertaining. Robert Johnson, although a court lutenist and musician to Prince Henry, was also closely connected with the theatre, composing some of the finest of surviving theatrical songs.

One of the most visible traces of the royal musicians at work, however, is to be found in the published texts of the court masques of the Jacobean and Caroline court – though even here detail is often deficient.²² The full resources of the royal music, including singers from the Chapel Royal, might be called upon to accompany the various stages of the entertainment. Trumpeters or shawms announced the arrival of the monarch; the

grotesque or comic dances of the antimasque, part of the fixed form of the genre after 1609, might be accompanied by various and strange instruments (often called the 'wild music'); songs were sung to lutes and cornetts; and the dances with which the entertainment ended were sustained by the strings. In Campion's *Lord Hay's Masque* of 1607 three consorts of musicians were arranged around the masquing stage, two of mixed strings and plucked instruments, the third of six cornetts and six 'chapel voices'; some of the characters in the masque also played lutes to which others sang, and at the masque's climax the chorus in praise of the King 'was in manner of an Echo seconded by the Cornetts, then by the consort of ten, then by the consort of twelve, and by a double Chorus of voices ... bearing five voices a peece'.²³ It is perhaps not surprising that Campion, himself a musician, should have left such a detailed record of the musical arrangements; which in their mixing of different consorts may not have been entirely typical of normal practice, but which clearly made a major contribution to the work's effect, to its symbolic structure, and to its demonstration of the magnificence of the royal court.

Jonson, who provided the majority of the masques in James's reign, was much more reticent about musical detail; but the records of payments for *Love Freed from Ignorance and Folly* are unusually complete,²⁴ and, in addition to recording the rewards of the writer, designer, dancing masters and composers, list payments to twelve 'lutes that supplied and with fluits', a total of fourteen violins, thirteen 'hoboyes and sackbutts', twelve 'Musitions that were preestes that songe and played' (perhaps they might have been divided as in Campion's masque into six voices and six cornetts), and then, gnominically, '15 Musitions that played to the Pages and fooles'. This amounts to some sixty-three musicians in all, very nearly exhausting the instrumental resources of the royal music. We do not know, of course, whether some musicians were 'bought in' for this specific occasion; and, crucially, we are left in the dark about what instruments played to accompany the antimasque dance of fools. But it would seem that, unlike the mixing of consorts in Campion's masque, here each was separate; emphasizing that 'the modeyn practice of using large numbers of all types of instruments together in one orchestra had not yet developed: the King's Musick was not one band, not a symphony orchestra'.²⁵

Not many of the public theatre audience could have witnessed court masques themselves, or experienced their musical richness directly, but the genre was sufficiently identifiable (and identified with the court environment) for it to be imitated in the drama of the period, whether in the celebratory masque of *The Tempest*, or in its bitterly ironic perversion in Middleton's *Women Beware Women*. On the public stage it is very unlikely that any attempt could be made to imitate the musical richness of the court original; although the indoor hall theatres, as we shall see later, might have been able more closely to approximate to the variety of the masque's musics.

If the full magnificence of the court's music was not part of the experience of the majority of the Globe's audience, all of them would have encountered public music in the church. But where the story of the secular musicians is one of widening musical horizons, the history of the music of the Church after the Reformation was, in many ways, one of contraction. As Whythorne lamented:

In time past music was chiefly maintained by cathedral churches, abbeys, colleges, parish churches, chauntries, guilds, fraternities, etc. But when the abbeys and colleges without the universities, with guilds and fraternities, etc., were suppressed, then went music to decay.²⁶

The decline was a consequence of a number of different pressures. The Reformation engendered a loss both of liturgical occasion for, and of the endowments to support, choral provision, and it was combined with a doctrinal mistrust of chant and elaborate polyphonic music, regarded as relics of popery, to result in the stripping out of organs and the disappearance of choirs from most, if not all, parish churches.²⁷ That music did not disappear even more completely from the Church was, in part at least, due to the personal convictions and tastes of Queen Elizabeth. In the Injunctions of 1559 a long clause was inserted allowing the continued performance of 'an Hymn or such like song ... in the best sort of melody and music that may be conveniently devised'.²⁸ Her predilections certainly helped to ensure the continuance of the choir of the Chapel Royal, together with choirs at St Paul's, Westminster Abbey, and St George's

Chapel, Windsor, as centres of highly wrought music, to which most of the distinguished church musicians of the period were attached, and where the music of Tallis, Byrd, Gibbons, and many other composers, whose work still forms part of the choral and cathedral repertoire, could be heard. Distinguished foreign visitors were taken to hear services, on which they commented with approval – and some surprise. Thomas Platter, for example, went to the chapel at Windsor, where: ‘we heard some glorious music in the church at English vespers, choir with organ, cornett and lute accompaniment, for as stated above, in outward ceremonies they much resemble the papists’.²⁹

Cathedrals outside London and a very few parish churches maintained their choirs – though there is conflicting evidence as to their success in preserving standards of performance.³⁰ Certainly the funds were no longer available in many places to pay the singers at a rate which would maintain a decent standard of living, and the pattern was established which still obtains in Anglican cathedrals, of lay clerks for whom church employment was but an adjunct to other activity, ranging from teaching music to pursuing a trade.³¹ By the side of Platter’s compliments needs to be set Morley’s complaint that:

the matter is now come to that state that though a song be never so well made and never so aptly applied to the words yet shall you hardly find singers to express it as it ought to be, for most of our churchmen, so they can cry louder in their choir than their fellows, care for no more, whereas by the contrary they ought to study how to vowel and sing clean, expressing their words with devotion and passion whereby to draw the hearer, as it were, in chains of gold by the ears to the consideration of holy things.³²

Nonetheless, it was from the choirs of the Chapel Royal and of St Paul’s Cathedral that there emerged during Elizabeth’s reign the choirboys’ companies which developed their traditional roles of presenting entertainments before the monarch into the creation of full-blown theatrical troupes which for a time were sufficiently threatening to the dominance of the adult companies to lead to the so-called ‘War of the Theatres’ in 1601, and for them to be famously put down by Shakespeare himself in the

passage about the ‘little eyases’ in the Folio text of *Hamlet* (2.2.335–58).³³ Their story becomes significant for our purposes when we turn later to consider the musical resources of the playhouses.

Some of Shakespeare’s audience might have attended choral services at St Paul’s – indeed Robert Greene suggests that pickpockets found that ‘their chiefest time is at divine service, when men devoutly given do go up to hear either a sermon, or else the harmony of the choir and the organs’.³⁴ But the majority were perhaps less familiar with the elaborate polyphony accompanied by organs, and sometimes by cornetts and sackbuts, which they might have heard at St Paul’s, than with the metrical psalms that were sung at their local parish churches, since all but the most determined of Puritan ministers admitted the possibility of (unaccompanied) congregational singing of psalm texts as part of the service.

The Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, first issued in complete form in 1562 and running through countless editions over the next two hundred years, offered metrical versions of all the psalms, together with a few other scriptural and non-scriptural hymns. It was provided with a selection of tunes, most of which in the original publication are curiously aimless and musically unshapely. It would seem that the majority of these tunes were quickly abandoned, and new ones were provided in a succession of publications during the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Nicholas Temperley traces the evolution of the psalm-tunes in fascinating detail, and concludes that:

The psalms were at first probably sung to well-known popular tunes in which all could join. The Puritan leaders then tried to introduce the tunes that had been used by the exiles on the Continent, and which had originated probably in accompanied songs known only to a small circle. They printed them in the psalm books, but were only partially successful in spreading a knowledge of them over the country. The main reason, no doubt, was that these tunes, deprived of instrumental accompaniment, were not very suitable for popular singing ... the better-known kind of tune, also originating in court or theatre songs but simpler, more up to date in style, more obviously rhythmical, and shorter by half, overtook most of

the official tunes in popularity, and gradually found its way into the psalm books.³⁵

This account has interesting implications for the nature of 'popular' music, to which we will return shortly. But it certainly helps to explain why the singing of psalms was enthusiastically adopted. In an often-quoted letter to Peter Martyr, Bishop John Jewel claimed as early as 1560 that:

Religion is somewhat more established now than it was. The people are everywhere exceedingly inclined to the better part. Church music for the people has very much conduced to this. For as soon as they had once commenced singing publicly in only one little church in London, immediately not only the churches in the neighbourhood, but even distant towns, began to vie with each other in the same practice. You may now sometimes see at Paul's Cross, after the service, six thousand persons, old and young, of both sexes, all singing together and praising God.³⁶

Psalm-singing was not only a matter of public religious rites. Many of the publications of metrical psalms anticipated domestic use, and there is plenty of evidence that pious households sang psalms as part of their domestic religious observance, or for private recreation. Margaret Hoby, for example, in her diary, mentions that she 'talked and song psalmes with divers that was with me', and 'sung a psalme with some of the sarvants'.³⁷ Lady Grace Mildmay was instructed in her youth in the singing of psalms to the lute, and later, during her husband's absences, 'practised [her] voyce in the singing of psalms'.³⁸ In the 1563 edition of *The Whole Booke of Psalms*, which contained an introduction to elementary musical theory, a man is pictured teaching the singing of psalms to his family (Figure 10). The importance of the revolution in parish church music to popular musical activity and awareness should not be understated. Kümin is surely right to assert that:

the Reformation brought enormous losses in terms of intercessory endowments and qualified performers, but its overall effect was not so much a complete breakdown of parochial music as a notable shift



FIGURE 10 A father teaches his family to sing the psalms, indicating the pitches by pointing to his hand (the 'Guidonian hand'). From *The Whole Booke of Psalms* (1563).

of emphasis. Within the churches, parishioners moved from being patrons and consumers to performers of music.³⁹

If the religiously minded were happy to encourage the singing of psalms, their attitude to public music of other kinds was much more less positive. Puritans⁴⁰ were not, as they insistently declared, antagonistic to music itself, when used for the praise of God or for recreation in a strictly domestic environment. Stubbes, for example, wrote: 'I graunt Musicke is a good gift of God, and that it delighteth both man and beast, reviveth the spirits, comforteth the hart and maketh it apter to serve God ... and being used to that end, for mans private recreation, Musicke is very laudable'.⁴¹ The highly religiously observant Margaret Hoby records that on at least one occasion 'to refreshe my selfe being dull, I plaid and sunge to the Alpherion [orpharion]',⁴² and Percy Scholes has demonstrated the widespread use of music in such households.⁴³ The sting comes in Stubbes' continuation:

But being used in publike assemblies, and privat conventicles, as a Directorie to filthy dauncing, through the sweet harmony and

smooth melody thereof, it estrangeth the minde, stirreth up filthy lust, wommanisheth the mind, ravisheth the heart, inflameth concupiscence, and bringeth in uncleannes. But if Musick were used openly (as I have said) to the praise and glory of God ... it would comfort man woonderfully ... but being used as it is, it corrupteth good minds, maketh them wommanish, and inclined to all kinds of whordome and uncleannes.⁴⁴

Public music is indelibly associated in his fevered mind with dancing, and on that subject he, and many others, become incandescent with rage:

For what clipping, what culling, what kissing and bussing, what smouching and slabbering one of another: what filthy groping and unclean handling is not practised every where in these dauncings? Yea the very deed and action it selfe, which I will not name for offending chaste eares, shall bee purtrayed and shadowed foorth in their bawdy gestures of one to another.⁴⁵

A significant additional spur to Stubbes' objection was that such dancing frequently took place on Sundays. Thomas Lovell fulminated that 'wheras many Minstrels live idlye moste parte of the week when they should woork, doo not they by wicked abuse of their instruments provoke the people to unhallow the Lords holy day, by develish dauncing the Nurce of much naughtiness'.⁴⁶ Worse still, much popular festivity was sponsored by the Church itself. 'Church-ales' were a significant source of revenue; beer was brewed and sold, and dancing sponsored specifically for Church funds.

In the minds of men such as these it was the association of music and musicians with dance in particular which rendered them suspect; yet it was precisely upon popular festivity and dancing that musicians relied for their income, and the decline in the traditional occasions for such musical provision must have hurt many a local and itinerant musician in the pocket as well as reputation.⁴⁷ The contest rumbled on throughout the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and in due course James I became directly involved when, in 1618, he issued the declaration known as the *Book of Sports*, saying:

And as for Our good peoples lawfull Recreation, Our pleasure likewise is, That after the end of Divine Service, Our good people be not disturbed, letted, or discouraged from any lawfull recreation, Such as dancing, either men or women ... nor from having of May-Games, Whitson Ales, and Morris-dances, and the setting up of Maypoles & other sports therewith used, so as the same be had in due & convenient time, without impediment or neglect of divine service.⁴⁸

He had been prompted initially to issue the declaration in Lancashire in 1617, where the forbidding of popular festivity was seen as playing into the hands of the significant number of Roman Catholics in the county who thereby could 'breed a great discontentment in our peoples hearts' and prevent their conversion. This political and religious motivation takes precedence in the declaration over what might seem the simple and humane question 'when shall the common people have leave to exercise, if not upon the Sundayes & holydaies, seeing they must apply their labour, & win their living in all working daies?'⁴⁹ Nonetheless, the battle continued, the *Book of Sports* being reissued by Charles I in 1633 only to face in 1643 'An ordinance for burning a book of sports by the hand of the common hangman'. This is sign enough that the contest over feasts and dancing was highly politicized, and, of course, the theatres were implicated in the same struggle.

Stubbes and his like wanted to banish 'all leud, wanton and lascivious dauncing in publique assemblies and conventicles without respect, either of sex, kind, time, place, person, or anything else'.⁵⁰ Malvolio echoes his phraseology when accusing Sir Toby and his fellows: 'Is there no respect of place, persons, nor time in you' (TN, 2.3.90-91), but their misdemeanour is not that they dance, but that they 'make an alehouse of my lady's house'. Travelling minstrels had long plied their trade in the tavern – the fourteenth-century poet Langland mentions labourers sitting and singing in the alehouse⁵¹ – and it is equally part of the standard characterization especially of the lower class of musicians that they are likely to be 'drunken sockets'.⁵² The anonymous author of *Pasquils Palinodia* makes the same assertion, though rather more benignly:

Musitions,

And red-faced *Trumpetters*, with many others
Which haue with Crochets stuff their *pericranions*,
Are still reputed to be good Companions,
And for this reason which is here presented,
My Muse to see the Taverne was contented.⁵³

In John Earle's *Micro-cosmographie* 'A Trumpeter' is similarly described: 'The Sea of Drinke, and much wind make a storme perpetually in his Cheeks'.⁵⁴ The 'common singing men' are also characterized as 'a company of good Fellowes, that roare deepe in the Quire, deeper in the Tauerne [...] Their pastime or recreation is praiers, their exercise drinking'.⁵⁵ In *The Puritan* Master Edmond is asked to 'liquor' the arriving musicians, and promises that he will 'make ech of them as drunck as a common fiddler',⁵⁶ conforming to Earle's representation of the 'poor Fiddler' as a drunkard who 'hates naturally the Puritan, as an enemie to this mirth'.⁵⁷

Whether or not musicians entirely deserved this alcoholic reputation, the alehouse was another significant arena where music might be performed. Drinking establishments in the period were hierarchically characterized as inns, taverns, and alehouses, and Malvolio's complaint is intensified by associating the knights, Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, with the lowest category.⁵⁸ As Peter Clark comments: 'there is plentiful evidence to suggest that in the aftermath of the attack on church-oriented games, rituals and the like, the alehouse progressively developed as a rival centre for communal and neighbourhood activities'.⁵⁹ He also notes that 'Just as games and entertainments took on new shapes and guises in their translation to the alehouse, so communal music may also have experienced some reorientation in that different environment ... Minstrels may have lost ground to ballad-singers'.⁶⁰

'Ballads' are of central importance to the music of the theatre, as we will see, and formed a significant part of the musical experience of the period for a wide range of people. The label, however, includes such diversity of material that some categorization needs to be attempted. The ballad as genre includes the orally transmitted traditional narrative, which Puttenham describes rather contemptuously as:

stories of old time, as the tale of Sir *Topas*, the reportes of *Bevis* of *Southampton*, *Guy of Warwicke* ... and such other old Romances or historicall rimes, made purposely for recreation of the common people at Christmasse diners and brideales, and in tavernes and alehouses and such other places of base resort.⁶¹

Such stories, however, might move even the highly sophisticated Sir Philip Sidney, as he reported in *The Defence of Poesy*:

Certainly, I must confess my own barbarousness. I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet is it sung but by some blind crowder [*harpist*], with no rougher voice than rude style.⁶²

The genre might include, too, traditional seasonal or work-songs. The singing of songs to lighten tedious labour is, as we have seen, a commonplace in defences of music's utility. *The Praise of Musick* suggests:

And hence it is, that manual labourers, and Mechanicall artificers of all sorts, keepe such a chaunting and singing in their shoppes, the Tailor on his bulk, the Shomaker at his last, the Mason at his wal, the shipboy at his oare, the Tinker at his pan, and the Tylor on the house top. And therefore wel saith *Quintilian*, that every troublesom and laborious occupation, useth Musick for a solace and a recreation.⁶³

It is precisely in this way that Thomas Deloney chooses to characterize Jack of Newbury's workers. His weavers and spinners sing ballads as they labour, when they are presented to the visiting King and Queen.⁶⁴ The second of their songs, a narrative ballad sung by the women, beginning 'It was a knight in Scotland born', whether it began with Deloney or not, survived in oral tradition.⁶⁵

Miles Coverdale, however, in printing the first English metrical version of some of the psalms with music, his *Goostly psalmes and spirituall songes* (?1539), hoped that it might mean that 'our mynstrels had none other thyng to playe upon, neither oure carters and plowmen other thyng to whistle upon, save Psalmes, hymnes, and soch godly songes as David is

occupied withal'.⁶⁶ It was, similarly, the aspiration of Day's psalter of 1563 to supplant 'vayne and trifling ballads'⁶⁷ with psalms. That they might have met with occasional success is suggested by the difficulty of the Clown in *The Winter's Tale* in finding performers for his three-man song, for there is 'one puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms to hornpipes' (WT, 4.3.43-4).

But the most frequent target of Puritan objection was the circulation of ballads in printed form – the 'broadside' ballads issued in huge quantity in the latter half of the sixteenth century.⁶⁸ Tessa Watt has calculated that at least 3000 were published in this period, so that between 600,000 and three million copies may have been in circulation.⁶⁹ Nicholas Bownd in 1595 lamented that the psalms were being pushed to one side, even in the houses of great persons, by what he saw as a new spate of ballads, and complained:

For as when the light of the Gospell came first in, the singing of ballades (that was rife in Poperie) began to cease, and in time was cleane banished away in many places: so now the sudden renewing of them, and hastie receiving of them every where, maketh me to suspect, least they should *drive away the singing of Psalmes againe*.⁷⁰

The content of this published repertoire was enormously varied, including love-songs of varying degrees of ribaldry, versified historical narrative, 'news' and current events (including very popular accounts of the confessions and execution of criminals, which Quicksilver imitates in *Eastward Ho* as a device to persuade others of his repentance),⁷¹ versions of the plots of successful plays,⁷² satires, and, in the earlier part of the period especially, 'godly ballads' aimed at reinforcing Protestant belief.

Though these are printed texts, they occupied a liminal space between oral and print culture. The ballad of 'Chevy Chase', for example, which so moved Sidney, probably started life as a manuscript poem in the fifteenth century, before moving into oral culture. It seems then to have returned to print in a now lost edition, from which it was retranscribed, in 1557 and 1565, finally to be entered into the Stationers' Register in 1624.⁷³ Throughout the period printed texts might simply set down pre-existing

oral material, or they might adapt and transform traditional 'originals' into new versions which then took on an independent life in oral culture. As Bruce Smith remarks: 'The movement of ballads into and out of print in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries stands as a signal illustration of Michel de Certeau's point that orality and literacy, far from being polar opposites, exist only in terms of each other – and in terms that are constantly changing.'⁷⁴

The same mobility characterizes the music. It was seldom printed with the text of a broadside ballad, which characteristically indicated that it should be sung 'to the tune of ...'. Something like 1000 tunes are referred to (of which about 400 survive),⁷⁵ but, far from being the timeless music of the folk, many clearly derive from 'art-music', both from that of the earlier court of Henry VIII, and from contemporary musical publication. In turn, many popular tunes were taken up by composers as the subjects for sets of variations or published later as gentrified dance tunes.⁷⁶ Indeed it is precisely from these 'high-art' versions, in print or in manuscript, that Simpson derived the tunes for the sixteenth-century ballads he exhaustively surveys, and from which, as we shall see, the possible tune for Shakespeare's 'O mistress mine' has been extrapolated. An example of the mobility of ballad and tune is that:

the Nottingham version of 'Bonny Nell' for example, was hammered out in the streets to the rough music of candlesticks, tongs, and basins, but was also played in taverns by professional pipers, and 'prickt in 4 parts to the vyalls' in gentlemen's houses, demonstrating the way in which such material could simultaneously circulate in many forms and operate on many social levels.⁷⁷

The traditional, oral ballad and the printed broadside do not exhaust the possibilities of the genre, for new ballads might originate from specific local circumstances, particularly in satirizing or libelling individuals. Some of them might be written and pinned up in the locality; some of them were never written down at all, and survive only through their being mentioned in court records. Such extempore ballads were no doubt fitted to a known tune, and on occasion musicians would be hired to perform and circulate them, as in the case of George Thomson, Vicar of Aberford, who 'made

use of various minstrels, "profesing of pipeinge and fidling, running and ranging upp and downe the countrie from place to place ..." to perform the many songs he had conceived in derogation of Thomas Shillito, the high constable of Barkston'.⁷⁸

Audiences in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, then, might have come into contact with many kinds of 'ballad' in many different contexts, and would have experienced many kinds of performance of them. The printed broadside was distributed by travelling salesmen (or 'chapmen') who moved up and down the country offering ballads as part of their stock-in-trade – a profession represented on the Jacobean stage most memorably by Nightingale in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* and Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*, and depicted in Inigo Jones's costume design for *Britannia Triumphans* (1633, Figure 11).⁷⁹ Such chapmen were not necessarily particularly musical, using their 'vocal performance primarily as a sales pitch for the printed text'.⁸⁰ This is endorsed by the representation of Simplicity, a ballad-seller in Robert Wilson's *The pleasant and stately morall, of the three lordes and three ladies of London*, who offers his wares to three pages, Wit, Wealth, and Will, and bursts into a rendition of 'Peggy and Willy' which prompts Wit to respond 'It is a dolefull discourse, and sung as dolefully'.⁸¹

Simplicity is of mature years, but ballad-sellers were stigmatized by Henry Chettle in *Kind-hart's Dreame* as youngsters:

I am given to understand, that there be a company of idle youths, loathing honest labour and dispising lawfull trades, betake them to a vagrant and vicious life, in every corner of Cities and market Townes of the Realme singing and selling of ballads and pamphletes full of ribaudrie, and all scurrilous vanity, to the prophanation of Gods name, and with-drawing people from christian exercises, especially at faires markets and such publike meetings.⁸²

Despite such disapproval, their wares, according to frequent testimony, were bought and put up in people's homes and in public places, becoming 'lasting-pasted monuments upon the insides of Country Ale-houses'.⁸³ Cokes, in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, asks his sister 'doe you remember the ballads over the Nursery-chimney at home o'my owne pasting up?'

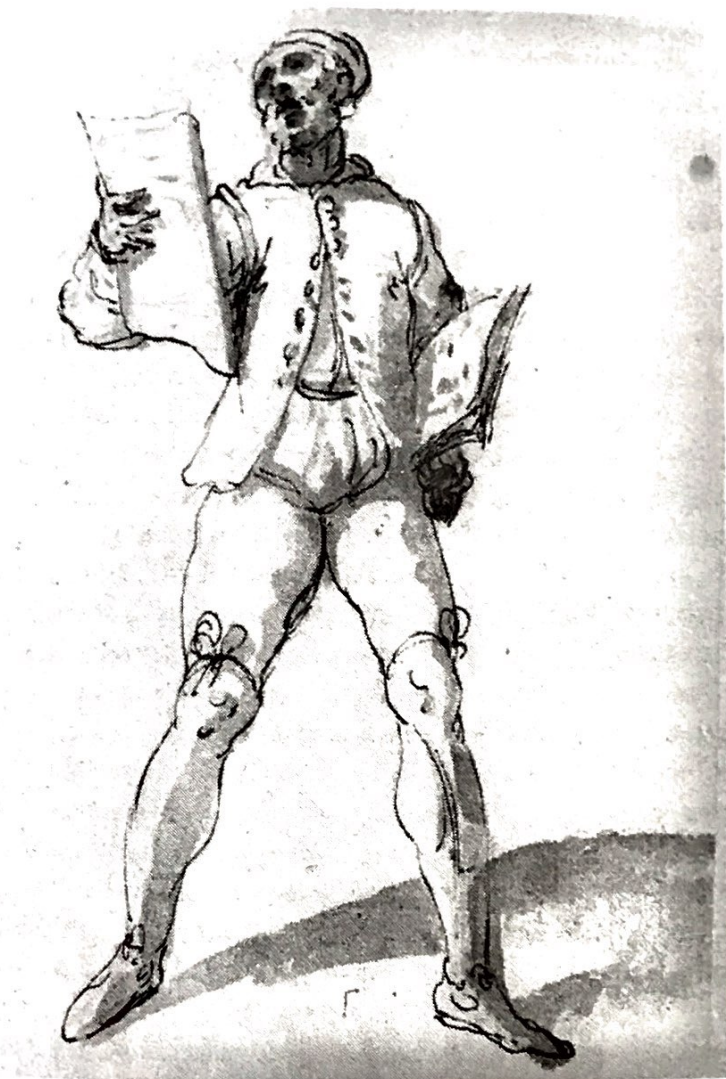


FIGURE 11 Inigo Jones's costume design for a ballad singer in an antimasque entry in *Britannia Triumphans* (1637).

(3.5.49–50).⁸⁴ Wye Salstonstall's characterization of 'A Petty Countrey Faire' asserts of a ballad-singer that: 'If his Ballet bee of love, the countrey wenches buy it, to get by heart at home, and after sing it over their milkepayles'.⁸⁵

It is important to stress the way this last comment indicates that ballads impressed themselves upon the folk memory. Evanescent though they may seem to us, and fragmentary though their survival has been, it is precisely their common currency which enables them to form a very significant part of the musical fabric of the drama of the period. But yet, despite Sidney's approval, and their evidently widespread popularity, it was not only Puritans who disapproved of them. The objection was, no doubt, partly occasioned by the ribaldry or the satire to which they gave voice (a reason, perhaps, why the music, freed from its contaminating text, could move more readily across social strata than the words) but disapproval also stemmed from contempt for the artistic standards of their composition (and most are indeed woeful verse), from class-conscious condemnation of those who wrote and performed them, from condescension towards the alehouses in which they circulated, and from the frequent association in the literature of roguery between the ballad-seller and crime. Brathwaite, for example, asserts that 'ballad monger' 'is the ignominious *nickname* of a penurious poet of whom he partakes in nothing but in pover-tie. His straine (in my opinion) would sort best with a funerall Elegie, for hee writes most pitifully.' He continues: 'the Quintessence of his Genius [is] extracted from the muddie spirit of Bottle-Ale and froth'.⁸⁶ The pick-pocketing of Autolycus dramatizes the association of ballad-seller and petty criminal which is elaborated in *Bartholomew Fair* 3.5 as Nightingale, with comic irony, sings a ballad warning against cutpurses while his associate Edgeworth picks the pocket of the complacent Cokes.

Thus far we have surveyed the various kinds of music and the different sorts of performers who might have been part of communal musical experience – from the itinerant ballad-seller, through the bands of musicians who entertained at feasts, in alehouses and taverns, or the waits who walked the streets of larger towns and performed on civic occasions, to the elite of the royal music. But, of course, as Whythorne's catalogue of musicians makes clear, there was music and employment for musicians in more domestic environments.

The anonymous author of a plaintive treatise on the decay of church music argues:

But objection will be made that musick is in as great request and as much esteemed as ever it was, which objection may be answered, that it is true indeed for noble men and Gentlemens private service and delight in their houses, that such either men or children are esteemed which have any extraordinarye skill upon instruments, together with their singinge, who have had the same instruction in the Kinges Chappelle, or in *Paules* or *Westminster*; which objection is so true, as thereby those which have any skill or government of their voices are, as it were, pluckt away violently from those Churches, which in their youth were bred Choristers.⁸⁷

The writer has an axe to grind (his treatise is, in effect, an extended and learned pay-claim), but there is no doubt that throughout the period some household musicians had previously been cathedral choristers.⁸⁸ So too, the research of scholars such as Woodfill, Price, Wainwright,⁸⁹ and Hulse have demonstrated the considerable extent of the patronage of musicians by gentry and noble families. Patronage, of course, may imply many different relationships ranging from occasional reward to full-time employment, but it is clear that musicians, like writers, depended upon the support of the well-off. There is no reason to doubt that many dedications of published work paying tribute to a patron are indications of more than perfunctory help. When John Daniel (or Danyel) told Mrs Anne Grene of Milton that his songs were 'onely privately compos'd / For your delight',⁹⁰ or Thomas Campion spoke to Thomas Monson of 'These youth-borne Ayres, then, prison'd in this Booke, / Which in your Bowres much of their beeing tooke',⁹¹ or Orlando Gibbons dedicated his *First set of madrigals and motets* to Sir Christopher Hatton, claiming that they were 'most of them composed in your own house'⁹² they were recording significant debts. The three composers were of different backgrounds: Daniel, the brother of the poet Samuel Daniel, worked as a tutor in various households, acquired a position amongst the royal musicians, and was later connected with dramatic activity in Bristol and at the Blackfriars; he published, however, only one collection of songs. Gibbons, the son of a Cambridge town wait, and chorister at King's College, rose to be one of the most eminent of royal musicians, holding appointments in the Chapel

Royal and as court virginalist, and associated with the company of musicians created for Prince Charles. By contrast, where both of these composers took music degrees, Campion was an amateur; though he published five books of songs (an output only exceeded by John Dowland and Robert Jones) he made his living as a doctor. For many musicians, however, for some of their career at least, domestic service in a noble household may have been their principal source of income. Lynn Hulse has questioned Woodfill's oft-quoted assertion that 'of well-known composers John Wilbye (1574–1638) is perhaps the only one who was without question a professional musician and in domestic service most of his life',⁹³ arguing that about 50 per cent of the servants she identifies in noble households as contributing to musical activities were employed primarily in a musical capacity.⁹⁴

For present purposes, however, it is more important to enquire how far the patronage of musicians extended to the maintenance on a more or less permanent basis of instrumentalists and singers who might function as a slimmed-down version of the royal establishment. Here the evidence is much less easy to gather and interpret. Some lords gave their names and liveries to bands of itinerant musicians, in the same way as they might to groups of strolling players, helping them thereby to avoid the charge of vagrancy but requiring in return no more than the occasional visit and performance. Many more, especially during the sixteenth century, might accept and reward visits from such itinerant bands or from the local waits to entertain them on specific occasions. But it is clear that some, even if not many, households went much further in maintaining musicians on a permanent or semi-permanent basis, whose role might involve teaching the family or taking on the training of young servants in music, and might extend to the provision of musical entertainment for (and with) the family itself. The Earl of Salisbury, for example, maintained a group of two boys and three to five men, and retained others, including members of the royal music, on a part-time or occasional basis. The Earl of Dorset was even more expansive, maintaining eleven musicians.⁹⁵ Such men sustained precisely the kind of ensemble that we are to imagine provides the music for Duke Orsino's entertainment at the opening of *Twelfth Night*. They were perhaps exceptional, though 'a number of patrons could assemble a

consort of singers and/or instrumentalists, but some of its members were either competent amateurs gathered from within the household or professional musicians borrowed temporarily from relatives and friends or from the court'.⁹⁶ More widespread was the appointment of a music teacher for the family's children. This is how Thomas Whythorne made his living for most of his career – and his autobiography shows how chancy such employment might be, his contracts at various times being terminated because of lack of funds, or because of undue amatory entanglement with either his pupil or the mistress of the household. (Shakespeare's portrait of Hortensio posing as a music teacher to gain access to Bianca is perhaps rather more realistically founded than one might expect.) If Whythorne's career is the best documented, it is certainly not untypical.

At this point we turn from considering the nature and organization of the musical profession, and discussion of the kinds of music that Shakespeare's audience might have experienced, to the related but rather different question of the extent of the musical expertise and knowledge that his audience might themselves have brought to the performances they witnessed. The channels by which many professional musicians learned their craft, through apprenticeship, training at choir schools, or simply by being born into a family of musicians, are obvious enough. But the later sixteenth century also saw, under the influence of humanist educational ideals and courtly aspiration, the beginnings of the requirement that any child of a gentry family should acquire some musical proficiency. The careers of Whythorne and his fellows testify to the emergence of that social pressure which still today sees middle-class parents send their children off to lessons on the piano, flute, or clarinet, determined to see them achieve at least a modest grade in Associated Board examinations.

The place of music as a courtierly accomplishment stretches back into the Middle Ages, when 'Music had an undisputed, though lowly, place in courtly and chivalric theory', and 'the sixteenth-century idea of a courtier – or rather the confused and contradictory bundle of ideas – is directly descended from [the] medieval idea of a perfect knight'.⁹⁷ Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, first published in 1528, and translated into English by Thomas Hoby in 1561, influentially transmitted the idea of music as a necessary part of the training of the ideal courtier. The Count remarks:

I am not pleased with the Courtier, if he be not also a Musition, and beside his understanding and cunning upon the booke, have skil in like manner on sundry instruments. For if wee weigh it well, ther is no ease of the labors, and medicines of feeble mindes to be found more honest and more praise worthie in time of leisure than it. And principally in Courtes, where (beside the refreshing of vexations that musike bringeth unto eche man) many things are taken in hand to please women withall, whose tender and soft breastes are soone pierced with melodie, and filled with sweetnesse.⁹⁸

A century after Castiglione's work was first published in Italy, the English gentleman is urged by Henry Peacham to acquire musical ability because 'the physicians will tell you that the exercise of music is a great lengthener of the life by stirring and reviving of the spirits, holding a secret sympathy with them. Besides, the exercise of singing openeth the breast and pipes. It is an enemy to melancholy and dejection of the mind.'⁹⁹ This utilitarian recommendation of music is repeatedly to be found. William Byrd dedicated his *Psalmes, Sonets, and songs of sadnes and pietie* (1599) to Sir Christopher Hatton hoping that 'these poore songs of mine might happily yeeld some sweetnesse, repose, and recreation unto your Lordships mind, after your dayly paines and care taken in the high affaires of the Comon Wealth', but among the eight 'reasons ... to perswade every one to learne to sing' several are much more functional:

2. The exercise of singing is delightfull to Nature, and good to preserve the health of Man.
3. It doth strengthen all parts of the brest, and doth open the pipes.
4. It is a singular good remedie for a stuttering and stamering in the speech.
5. It is the best meanes to procure a perfect pronounciation, and to make a good Orator. (sig. A3v)

The invocation of such practical motivations for learning to sing suggests a society – not unlike our own – where utility was a measure of the value of acquiring accomplishments (or 'skills'). But to it was added a social pressure that is evidenced in an often-quoted passage in Morley's

A Plaine and Easie Introduction, where the character Philomathes is represented as seeking out a teacher in music because, he reports, he had been at a banquet where 'all the propose [*subject*] which then was discoursed upon was music'. He confesses that he could not participate in abstract conversation about music, and worse, 'supper being ended and music books (according to the custom) being brought to the table, the mistress of the house presented me with a part earnestly requesting me to sing; but when, after many excuses, I protested unfeignedly that I could not, every one began to wonder: yea, some whispered to others demanding how I was brought up'.¹⁰⁰ How realistic a picture of middle-class social life Morley presents is precisely the question we must address; but the important point for the moment is the obvious way in which his sales pitch incites the kind of social anxiety that motivated parents to ensure that their offspring had some kind of musical education.

How might they have acquired their musical expertise? One route remained the choir school; another, as we have seen, would have been the hiring of a private tutor. In addition to Whythorne's autobiography, the evidence from the accounts of many noble households recognizes the presence of a music teacher. The Cavendishes of Chatsworth and Hardwick, for example, paid one Thomas Baines, probably a local musician, for eight years from 1598 to 1606 to teach both of the children of William, first Earl of Devonshire, to sing.¹⁰¹ Rather earlier, in 1560, Sir William Petre paid 10s 'to Persey for teaching the gentlewoman to play on the virginals' (she was the family's senior female servant).¹⁰² Indeed, for girls, domestic teaching was the only route by which they could learn music. But for those boys who went to grammar school an opportunity to learn music might, if they were lucky, be provided. The evidence for music in the school curriculum is patchy. It was, for example, on the curriculum of Bedford School,¹⁰³ at Winchester, and for a time at Christ's Hospital,¹⁰⁴ but the testimony of one of the most important of writers on education in the period, Richard Mulcaster, whose *Positions*, and *The First Part of the Elementarie* enthusiastically espouse the benefits of teaching music, needs to be set beside other leading educationists – Kempe and Brinsley, for example – who mention it not at all.¹⁰⁵ No doubt, then as now, the possibility of music forming a significant element in a school depended on the

availability of a teacher competent to deliver instruction, and on the pressures of a curriculum which had other principal preoccupations.

Mulcaster's defence of music is couched as a response to those who 'thinke it to be too too sweete, and that it may be ... quite forborne', and though he calls upon the traditional accounts of music's power to affect the mind and spirits, his justification for including it in the elementary curriculum is that 'Musick will proue a double principle both for the soule, by the name of learning, and for the body, by the waye of exercise'.¹⁰⁶ Mulcaster was headmaster first of the Merchant Taylors' School, and then St Paul's, and one of his pupils, Sir James Whitlocke, testified that 'His care was my skill in musique in which I was brought up by daily exercise in it, as in singing and playing upon instruments'.¹⁰⁷ How typical his experience was of the average schoolboy in the period must be doubted, but if he went on to the universities or Inns of Court, then there would have been considerable opportunity to acquire or to improve his practical expertise.

Lord Edward Herbert rather primly recorded in his autobiography that during his time at Oxford:

I attained also to sing my part at first sight in music, and to play on the lute with very little or almost no teaching ... and my learning of music was for this end, that I might entertain myself at home, and together refresh my mind after my studies, to which I was exceedingly inclined, and that I might not need the company of young men, in whom I obserbed [*sic*] in those times much ill example and debauchery.¹⁰⁸

Perhaps he used for his own self-instruction in singing William Bathe's *A briefe introduction to the skill of song*, which boasted that 'by these rules, a good skill may be had in a moneth: and the wayes learned in four or five dayes: none commeth too late to learne',¹⁰⁹ or else Morley's treatise, published the following year. He might have turned for his lute-playing to one of two translations of Adrien Le Roy's instruction book,¹¹⁰ or to William Barley's *A new Booke of Tabliture*, which was specifically designed to meet the needs of those who did not live near London 'where expert Tutors are to be had', and promised, like Bathe, that by observing his rules 'thou maist in a short time learne by thy selfe with very small help of a teacher'.¹¹¹

Although the instructions translated by Robert Dowland as a preface to his *Varietie of lute-lessons* state that they are not 'set forth to the end to draw thee away from the lively teaching of thy Maister (whose speach doth farre exceede all writing)', he offers his work 'to young beginners, and such as oftentimes want a Teacher'.¹¹² The very existence of books of instruction of this kind testifies to some serious interest in acquiring musical skills amongst those with time and income to spare.

Not all students were autodidacts as Herbert claimed to be. Others, like Whythorne's pupil, the son of a merchant, took their music tutor with them to university, where many of the college fellows were also capable musicians who might offer instruction.¹¹³ Hulse gives a number of instances of members of the nobility, from the Earl of Northampton to Robert Sidney, who were taught music outside the formal curriculum.¹¹⁴ The presence in college statutes throughout the sixteenth century of prohibitions against music being played at times of study or rest is evidence that even in an age before electronic amplification, students were habitually capable of disturbing the peace of others. And not only students, for the Caius College *Articles against the Master* of 1581 complained that Dr Caius 'hath used continuall and expressive loud singings and noyse of organs, to the great disturbance of our studyes'.¹¹⁵ Students at the universities and the Inns had ample opportunity for participating in musical and dramatic activity, and although the students in the *Parnassus Plays* who actually take up employment as musicians do so only as a desperate last resort,¹¹⁶ these opportunities for social musical activity must have been significant for the development of a musical interest and some real proficiency across a fairly wide social range.

In teaching himself to sing and to play the lute Herbert was following the dominant practice of musical instruction in the period. Children would normally be instructed on the lute, or else on the keyboard instrument, the virginals. They might also, from later in the sixteenth century at least, have learnt to play viols, but, as Hulse notes, 'perhaps of all musical accomplishments singing was the most attractive to the nobility, principally because it was possible to sing in consort from an early age and with little training'.¹¹⁷ The repertoire they played and sang is rather more difficult to determine. Much music must have been composed or transcribed by the

music teachers themselves, and, in the nature of things, a very high percentage of this music is now lost. (As a result of the discovery of a single set of partbooks in Kassel 'the known repertory [of ensemble music] increased by over 5 per cent, but that of known polyphonic dance music expanded by over 25 per cent'.)¹¹⁸ Diana Poulton comments that 'owing to the scarcity of texts both MS and printed, the character and extent of the repertoire of early songs with lute accompaniment remain uncertain'.¹¹⁹ Music publishing began later, and was more fitful, in England than on the Continent. Nonetheless, the success of John Dowland's *The First Booke of Songs or Ayres*, published in 1597, and reprinted five times up to 1613, is testimony to a significant appetite for musical scores.¹²⁰ It is important, too, that the format of the publication itself suggests that it was designed for domestic use.

Downland used a single folio book intended to be placed flat on a small table, to be read by the performers grouped around it. The table layout brilliantly solved the problems of combining lute tablature with staff notation in a printed collection, and allowed for many different types of domestic performance: all the songs in *The First Booke* can be performed by a single person singing the cantus part and playing the underlaid tablature on the left-hand page. Alternatively, they can be sung as partsongs using some or all the lower parts on the right-hand page, or with viols replacing or doubling some or all of the voices [see Figure 12].¹²¹

It was precisely this environment which Morley imagines in his exactly contemporaneous treatise, and that Nicholas Yonge recorded almost a decade earlier in the dedication of his publication of madrigals, *Musica Transalpina*:

since I first began to keepe house in this Citie, it hath been no small comfort unto mee that a great number of Gentlemen and Merchants of good accompt (as well of this realme as of forreine nations) have taken in good part such entertainment of pleasure, as my poore abilitie was able to afford them, both by the exercise of Musicke daily used in my house, and by furnishing them with Bookes of that kinde yearly sent me out of Italy and other places ...¹²²

1 Come you pretty fall-cry'd was-ton,
 Leave your craft, ry smiling:
 Think you to escape me now,
 With flip-ty words beguiling?
 No, you mocke me th' other day,
 When you got loose you fled away:
 But since I have caught you now, the clip your wings for flying:
 Smothering kides fall the heape, and keepe you so from crying.

2 Sooner may you count the flames
 And number hayle down pouring
 Tell the Oars on the Trower,
 Or Good-wins Sands demouring:
 Then the thicke-thraver'd kides here,

Which now thy crystal flies shall beare:
 Such a hurst and toll of pleasure,
 But 'tis spent as smoke as teares,
 No moulder is lewes creature.

3 Would it were doob midnight now,
 When all the world were sleeping,
 Would this place fount of tears be,
 Which we men have in this weeping:
 My desire should then be false,
 And when you cry'd then would I laugh,
 But if ought might breed offences,
 Lomcondry should be blamed:
 I would live you knowe kides,
 And you my Sam weaned.

M. 3.

FIGURE 12 A song from Thomas Campion's *Second Booke of Ayres* (c. 1613). The melody with lute accompaniment is at the bottom of the page; above it the optional bass and alto parts are arranged so that all can be read simultaneously from the single copy by singers standing round a table.

Yonge himself was a singing man at St Paul's, but those who shared his 'pleasure' were not, it seems, professional musicians. What is particularly important about this preface, and his collection of 57 pieces, however, is that it indicates that the deficiencies of native printing of music were being rectified by the importation of foreign scores. Yonge published a second set of madrigals in 1597, and that his enthusiasm for Italian music was shared is evidenced by the fact that both his books were purchased early in 1599 by the Cavendish family.¹²³ In the music library of Sir Charles Somerset, by 1622, Yonge's two books were accompanied with an impressive range of madrigals by native English composers, together with the work of many Italians, including Marenzio and Monteverdi.¹²⁴ There were a significant number of noble collectors of music, and by the early seventeenth century even 'patrons living in the more remote parts of England had little difficulty in obtaining recent publications from home and abroad'.¹²⁵ If the fashion once was to exaggerate the general musical literacy of Elizabethan and Jacobean society, the mid-twentieth-century reaction against that view may itself have been somewhat overstated.

Henry Peacham addressed his 'complete gentleman' with the words 'I desire no more in you than to sing your part sure and at the first sight withal to play the same upon your viol or the exercise of the lute, privately, to yourself'.¹²⁶ It might be that 'Peacham's fondness, perhaps immoderate, for music, shown by the chapter itself, makes it somewhat suspect as a mirror for the effective standards of the day',¹²⁷ yet Edward Herbert put himself to learn exactly these skills, and the evidence must surely suggest that a significant part of the upper social levels of the Globe or Blackfriars audience were not unknowledgeable of, or even unskilled in the performance of music of some considerable sophistication.

There are, however, important caveats. The first is suggested by the final clause of the quotation from Peacham. He, like Castiglione, thinks of the performance of music as, for a gentleman, a private activity. And this is the anxiety registered by the characters of Amiens in *As You Like It*, and Balthazar in *Much Ado About Nothing*. The former self-deprecatingly responds to Jaques's request to sing again with the remark: 'My voice is ragged, I know I cannot please you', and continues reluctantly, 'More at

your request than to please myself' (AYL, 2.5.14, 21). The latter answers Don Pedro's request for a song with the response 'O good my lord, tax not so bad a voice / To slander music any more than once' (MA, 2.3.43-4).¹²⁸ In both cases these characters are men of some social standing, rather than menial servants, and they are modest about the abilities they are called upon to display. Or perhaps one should say that we know they aspire to some social status precisely because they are reluctant to sing.

There is another shadow which perhaps inhibits Amiens and Balthazar. Castiglione argued that the courtier's musical talents were especially 'meete to be practised in the presence of women, because those sights sweeten the mindes of the hearers, and make them the more apt to be pierced with the pleasantnesse of musicke'.¹²⁹ But the Lord Gasper tartly comments: 'I believe musick ... together with many other vanities is meet for women, and peradventure for some also that have the likenesse of men, but not for them that be men in deede: who ought not with such delicacies to womannish their mindes'.¹³⁰ The eccentric Tobias Hume began his address to the reader which prefaces *Captaine Humes Poeticall Musick* (1607): 'My Profession beeing, as my Education hath beene, Armes, the onely effeminate part of mee, hath beene Musicke; which in mee hath beene alwaies Generous ['noble'], because never Mercenarie'.¹³¹ He diverts the charge of effeminacy not only by his past history as a soldier, but also by his amateur status. As we have seen, the association of music with lovesickness, was a powerful one in the period, and Burton argued that an 'amorous fellow ... must learne to sing and dance, play upon some instrument or other, as without all doubt he will, if he be truly touched with this Loadstone of Love'.¹³² Conversely, for a gentlewoman to be able to play or sing was also beginning to be a mark of her social status.

Queen Elizabeth herself was exceptionally well-educated, and was no doubt influenced by the talents of her father – a composer as well as enthusiastic performer – to develop her musical abilities, but her competence must have been a model for aspirant noble women. Of course, as for the male courtier, these abilities were not for public display. Famously, Elizabeth was overheard playing upon the virginals by Lord Hunsdon and Sir James Melville, although, as the latter reported, 'she left off immediately, so soon as she turned her about and saw me'.¹³³ There is a portrait

of her playing the lute,¹³⁴ and there can be no doubt about her interest in and patronage of music. Many noble ladies must similarly have acquired a musical education, and by the next century, as Burton somewhat ironically suggests, a talent for music was becoming one of the means of a girl's rendering herself attractive to a suitor:

our young women and wives, they that being maids tooke so much paines to sing, play, and dance, with such cost and charge to their parents, to get those gracefull qualities, now being married will scarce touch an instrument, they care not for it.¹³⁵

Even for the most assiduous female musician, however, the opportunity to perform did not extend beyond this domestic environment. While, as we have seen, a musical female servant might instruct the children of a family such as the Petres, there were few, if any, arenas where women might perform in public. There were, of course, no female actors, with one or two particular brief exceptions,¹³⁶ and there was no parallel in England for the employment of female musicians at the Italian courts of Ferrara and Florence. No woman musician appears in the court records or as a singer upon the stage of the court masque until the reign of Charles I. His French queen, Henrietta Maria, herself a keen participant in theatrical activity, numbered among her servants the two women, Mistress Shepherd and Madame Coniack who, in Townshend's *Tempe Restored* (1632), became the first known female performers in a (semi-) public entertainment in England. Neither, however, was retained primarily as a musician.¹³⁷ Women, though they might be instructed in music, and be important patrons and sponsors of musicians, were doubly debarred from public performance, first by the general prohibition on courtiers, male or female, exhibiting their skills in any but a private environment, and then, second, by the pervasive association of music with dangerous feminine allure.

Lynn Hulse concludes her survey of music in noble households with the enthusiastic assertion that 'during the late Elizabethan and early Stuart periods music flowered on a scale and with a quality rarely equalled before or after'.¹³⁸ This may be overstated: no doubt many of those put to their expensive music lessons were, as Burton implies (and is still the

case today) less than enthusiastic in later life; many others of the middling sort would have had little opportunity to acquire musical skills; outside relatively privileged households sophisticated madrigals or consort music for viols must simply have been unknown; a high percentage of the population would never have heard the anthems of Gibbons and his fellows. Nonetheless, the evidence presented in this chapter does suggest that in communal activity at all levels of society the population at large was exposed to a varied diet of musics which might lighten their working lives; be a recreation after work was done, whether in the alehouse or at home; and have been regularly encountered in feasts and celebrations. The evidence suggests, too, that though exposure to the latest fashions in musical styles must have been confined to relatively few, yet the lines of demarcation between 'popular' and 'high-brow' music were always permeable.

The soundscape of this music, however, was distinctly unlike that of more recent times. The instruments were different: some, such as lute, virginals and viol, disappeared almost entirely during the seventeenth century until their revival by the twentieth-century early music movement,¹³⁹ and others which do have modern equivalents, such as the trumpet or trombone, were lighter and brighter in their sound than their successors. Above all, perhaps, the volume of the musical sounds with which Shakespeare's contemporaries were familiar was, by modern standards, very modest. Even the mightiest of instruments, the church organ (where it was still to be found) was tiny by comparison with the German organ of the later seventeenth century.¹⁴⁰ Ensembles were small, and even at court, where twenty lutes might be assembled at one time in the court masque, these 'thousand twangling instruments' (*Tem*, 3.2.138) would seem restrained to a modern audience. Above all, of course, there was no amplification, and, as Bruce Smith observes: 'Two inventions – electricity and the internal combustion engine – make it difficult for us even to imagine what life in early modern England would have sounded like'.¹⁴¹ His fascinating, exploratory mapping of the sound-world of early modern England attempts to recover the auditory environment of which music formed a part. London was noisy – but, apart perhaps from the firing of cannon or the ringing of church bells, the sounds of workmen or the rattle of carts, it had a human scale. The only musical instruments that could

begin to dominate the aural environment were trumpet and drum. It is no coincidence that they were the instruments which announced noble or royal presence, nor that it was the sound of trumpet-blasts that signalled the start of performances at Shakespeare's Globe.

And, conveniently, that brings us to the last part of this chapter, to the music that might have been heard on the Shakespearean stage. Trumpets were used by travelling players as a sign of their approach – as is the case in *Hamlet*, 2.2.369, and the Induction of *The Taming of the Shrew*, where the Lord first assumes they are a sign of 'some noble gentleman' (1.74), only to be corrected a couple of lines later. So too, in Theseus's court, in the last act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, trumpets are the prelude to the mechanicals' play.¹⁴² In the permanent theatres trumpets conventionally signalled that a performance was about to begin, sounding three times. Dekker, in *The Gull's Hornbook*, satirically advises the fashionable playgoer: 'present not yourself' on the stage, especially at a new play, until the quaking Prologue hath by rubbing got colour into his cheeks and is ready to give the trumpets their cue that he's upon point to enter'.¹⁴³ In three comedies, *Every Man Out*, *Cynthia's Revels*, and *Poetaster*, Jonson presents his audience with an Induction which begins after the 'second sounding', and only after the 'third sounding' does the Prologue enter and the play proper begin. The first of these plays was performed by the Lord Chamberlain's men at the Globe, the other two by the Children of the Chapel at Blackfriars; Dekker's satire has his gallant go either to the public or to the private playhouse.¹⁴⁴ This suggests that both kinds of theatre observed this convention. But it is essential, before turning to discussion of the music that Shakespeare's audiences might have heard, to recognize that the musical provision in the outdoor amphitheatres and the indoor hall theatres was in many respects fundamentally different.

In the first place, musicians were differently disposed in the theatre. The De Witt drawing of the Swan theatre (Figure 13) shows a trumpeter perched on high in a turret at the side of the stage. This may or may not be an accurate representation of the position taken for sounding the opening blasts signalling that the performance was about to commence. More contentious is the gathering of people in the gallery over the stage. At one time it was suggested that some of these might have been musicians, and

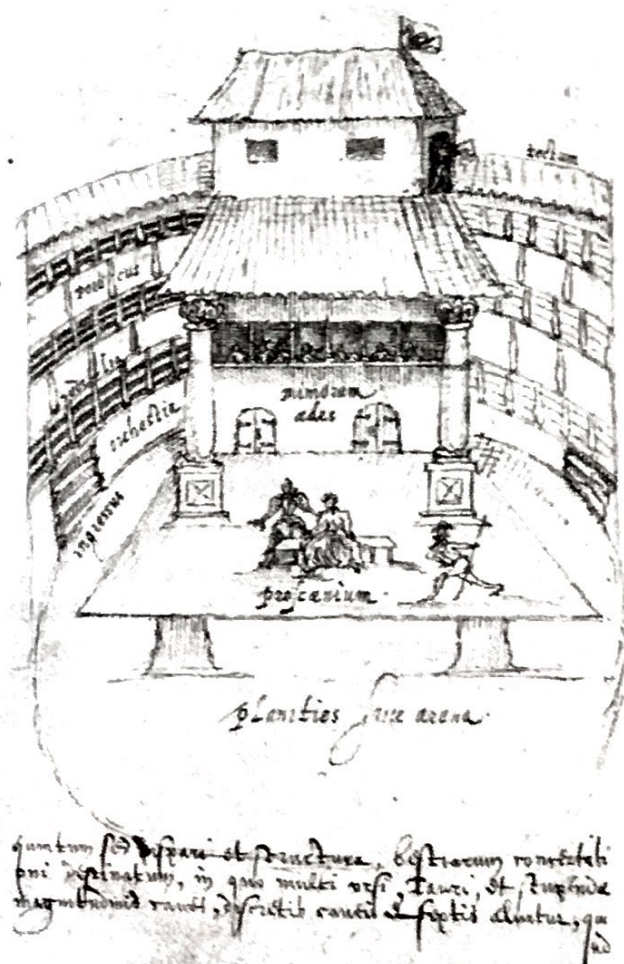


FIGURE 13 Johannes de Witt's sketch of the Swan theatre. A trumpeter is shown on the right at the upper level. The figures over the stage are probably spectators, rather than musicians.

it was generally assumed that this was the normal place occupied by a theatre band throughout the period. But Richard Hosley, analysing stage directions for public theatre plays in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, found no reference to musicians 'above', which might be expected if this was indeed their normal place. Instead, there is repeated

reference to music 'within', implying that they played behind the *frons scenae* at stage level.¹⁴⁵ It is only in later plays that we begin to find reference to music 'above' – as, for example, in *The Tempest*, where Ferdinand hears the music 'now above me' (1.2.408), or in Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, performed at the Swan theatre in 1613, which calls for 'a sad Song in the Musicke-roome'.¹⁴⁶ The scholarly consensus now is that the use of the central space in the gallery over the stage as a music-room (when required) was probably imported into the open-air theatres some time after about 1608, in imitation of the practice at the indoor theatres, where the evidence for musicians 'above' is earlier and clearer. It also, and importantly, suggests that it was only after this date that there might be a fixed band of musicians needing separate accommodation.

To this question we will return, but the difference in placing of the musicians is one symptom of the fundamental differences between the musical arrangements in the two types of playhouse. The children's companies, from their earliest appearances in plays before the sovereign in the mid-sixteenth century, and throughout their later sporadic emergence into semi-permanent troupes, always had music and musical provision as a key ingredient in their work. It is not simply that on average the children's plays call for more songs in the course of the action, for the preponderance of comedies in the children's repertoire accounts significantly for their higher frequency,¹⁴⁷ but the children's performances were surrounded with more music than the adult companies aspired to. In an often-quoted remark, Frederic Gershow, a German in the train of the Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, described his visit to the Blackfriars in 1602:

For an entire hour before [a play] one hears an exquisite instrumental concert of organs, lutes, pandoras, mandoras, bowed strings, and woodwind, such as this time when a boy sang so beautifully in a warbling voice to a bass viol, that unless the nuns in Milan may have outdone him, we did not hear the like on our travels.¹⁴⁸

The practical necessity in the hall theatres of trimming the candles between the acts was also covered by music, known simply as 'The Act' – and in plays such as Marston's *Sophonisba* the movement into and out

of the music was integrated into the action of the play itself. The instrumental resources of the children's companies were more extensive than those of the adults, but the confined indoor space meant that trumpets, in particular, were rarely used, and the shawm/hautboy or the softer and more versatile cornett were substituted. (A variant between the Quarto and Folio printings of *Titus Andronicus*, where the stage direction at 5.3.25, originally 'Trumpets sounding' became in the later edition 'Hoboyes', may reflect precisely the musical practice of the two types of theatre.) Unambiguous, and again often-quoted, testimony to the difference of musical practice comes in Marston's play, *The Malcontent*, originally a choirboys' play which the adults also acquired. The new Induction (possibly by Webster) speaks of additions made to the play 'Sooth not greatly needefull, only as your sallet [*salad*] to your great feast, to entertaine a little more time, and to abridge the not received custome of musicke in our Theater'.¹⁴⁹ Only after 1608 did the custom become 'received' by the King's Men, and

the new music consort brought the largest single alteration to the King's Men's practices when they took over the Blackfriars playhouse. The housekeepers immediately altered the Globe's stage-balcony to make a curtained music-room over its stage so the musicians could play there as well as at the Blackfriars ... In the next few years, stage-music and song was what differentiated the King's Men at the Globe from the other amphitheatre companies.¹⁵⁰

It is important to recognize that for most of his career Shakespeare was operating within the resources and practices of the public theatres. Many of the existing studies of theatrical music in the period, and in Shakespeare in particular, conflate amphitheatre and hall theatre customs and conventions, too confidently assuming that evidence derived from one can simply be translated to the other.

In attempting to clarify what the musical practices of the amphitheatres were, some important caveats need to be entered about the nature of the evidence which can be drawn upon. In the first place, the surviving play scripts are customarily laconic in their description of the music. Where, in examples as diverse as *Gorboduc*, performed in 1561 by the Gentlemen

of the Inner Temple, or Marston's *Sophonisba*, a choirboy play of 1606, the instrumentation of required music is often precisely specified, the same is not true for the majority of amphitheatre plays. Furthermore, when a play's publication significantly postdates the original production, stage directions may well reflect later performance practice. So, for example, it is an open question whether the cornetts which herald the entrance of the King of France in the opening stage direction of *All's Well*, 1.2, were the instruments that were heard at its first performance, since it is the only public theatre play written before 1609 which calls for them.¹⁵¹ Although this play is usually assumed to have been set in the Folio from Shakespeare's foul papers, the form of the stage direction suggests a later book-keeper's annotation of that manuscript.¹⁵² And finally, it may well be that music was played at points not indicated by any stage direction. The text of the opening scene of *Twelfth Night*, for example, demands that music play, yet there is no accompanying stage direction or specification of the instruments that 'play that strain again' for Duke Orsino. In 2.4 we do have the direction '*Music plays*' as Orsino requests instrumentalists to play the tune of 'Come away death'. In the intervening scene at Orsino's court, 1.4, there is no obvious call for music in the text, and no direction for it to be played – but Peter Thompson suggests that music 'is one of the things that distinguishes Orsino's court from the other "places" of the play. It is quite likely, despite the absence of a confirming stage direction, that there was music behind the remaining scene set there.'¹⁵³ When even necessary exits and entrances are quite frequently omitted from play texts, it is entirely likely that conventional fanfares and flourishes might equally remain unregistered in the stage directions.

The major absentee from the surviving texts' musical indications is, however, any mention of the 'jig' which customarily in the 1580s and 90s was offered as an afterpiece, which might be sung and danced. Thomas Platter's oft-cited account of a performance of *Julius Caesar* on 21 September 1599, where, at the play's end the actors 'danced together admirably and exceedingly gracefully, according to their custom'¹⁵⁴ does not, however, suggest the often bawdy or satirical content of the afterpieces, to which there is plentiful testimony elsewhere.¹⁵⁵ Perhaps some performances were followed with dances that were not necessarily 'jigs'.

The jig was closely connected with popular ballad and dance forms, and identified particularly with the two great clowns of the later sixteenth century, Richard Tarlton (Figure 14) and Will Kempe. It would seem that after Kempe's departure from Shakespeare's company in 1599 stage jigs became increasingly identified with the bottom end of the theatrical market – hence Hamlet's insult to Polonius when he objects to the length of the Player's speech: 'He's for a jig or a tale of bawdry, or else he sleeps' (*Ham*, 2.2.501). Very few texts survive, and the jigs fall outside the compass of this study, except insofar as some of the song and dance endings of Shakespearean texts might be seen as a mutation of a traditional practice;



FIGURE 14 A portrait of the clown, Richard Tarlton (who died in 1588), in rustic clothes, playing the pipe and tabor.

yet their existence is a useful reminder that the texts we now study may often give a very incomplete picture of the theatrical experience of their original audiences – including the music they heard in the course of their afternoon's entertainment.

But despite all these uncertainties, there are some things we do know about the instrumental resources of the amphitheatres during Shakespeare's career. Henslowe in 1599 paid 22 shillings for two trumpets, and had a few months before laid out 40 shillings for a sackbut.¹⁵⁶ There are, indeed, many plays for which no more music than brass flourishes of various kinds were required. But Henslowe also bought 'a basse viall & other enstrementes for the company' in December 1598 for 40 shillings, and expended a further 30 shillings for 'enstrumentes for the company' in July 1599.¹⁵⁷ The 1598 inventory of the Admiral's Men, listed 'iij trumpettes and a drum, and a trebel viall, a basse viall, a bandore, a sytteren [*cittern*]' and later 'j sack-bute'.¹⁵⁸ The will of Augustine Phillips, sharer in the King's Men, bequeathed to his apprentice a cittern, a bandora and a lute, and to his 'late apprentice' a bass viol.¹⁵⁹

Brief consideration of the music cues that survive in the plays provides evidence for the use of these and other instruments. The importance of the trumpets is clearly apparent. They not only signalled the start of a play, but were frequently and conventionally employed, with or without the accompaniment of drums, in their dual functions of signalling the entry of kings, emperors, and others of high status, and imitating the sounds of war. Drums alone might sometimes be employed in these contexts, and they were also used for the sound effect of thunder. Equally, drums might be used with the 'fife', a small transverse flute, as emblems of war (Figure 15) – as in Marlowe's *Edward II*, 3.2, and *Timon*, 4.3 where Alcibiades enters 'with drum and fife in warlike manner'. (Falstaff parodies their use when he meets Prince Hal in *2 Henry IV* 'playing upon his truncheon like a fife' (3.3.87 SD.2).) Although they are not mentioned in the lists of instruments, it is possible that the public theatres also used shawms (or 'hoboes'), which might substitute for or accompany trumpets as the sign of a royal entry, as at the opening of *2 Henry VI*, or in Heywood's *If you know not me, part 2* (1606) where Sir Thomas calls out:



FIGURE 15 A fife and drummers in a procession during the wedding celebrations for Duke Johann Friedrich von Württemberg, Stuttgart, 7 November 1609.

The Queene hath din'd, the trumpets sound already,
And give note of her comming. Bid the waits
And Hoboyes to be ready at an instant.¹⁶⁰

Shawms might also be conventionally associated with feasting, as for example, in *Timon of Athens* where 1.2 opens: '*Hautboys playing loud music. A great banquet serv'd in*'.¹⁶¹ They are nominated for a particularly striking effect in *Antony and Cleopatra* 4.3.8, where '*Music of the hautboys is under the stage*' signalling that 'the god Hercules, whom Antony loved, / Now leaves him'. It should be noted, however, that in *Hamlet*, 3.2.133 SD, the Quarto prefaces the dumb-show preceding the Mousetrap with the direction '*The trumpets sound*', where the Folio reads '*Hoboyes play*'.¹⁶² Almost all references to hoboyes derive from the private theatres, or from texts printed later than 1608/9, and so, like the cornett, it may have been an instrument originally more characteristic of the hall theatres. But the amphitheatres certainly used another instrument of limited capability not

listed in the inventories – the horn ('a harsh, stubby little thing like Robin Hood's bugle'),¹⁶³ associated either with hunting, or else the arrival of a post.

But, obviously enough, the theatres must have had, in addition to the brass, instruments capable of accompanying dances and songs, and of providing music appropriate to the ducal interior of Orsino's house. Dancing might have been accompanied with the fiddle – presumably the appearance of string players on stage in *Romeo and Juliet* corresponds to the off-stage music that was heard a little earlier in the play – though, again, as Dessen and Thomson note, in their dictionary entry on 'fiddle': 'fiddlers and their music are more common in later plays'.¹⁶⁴ The pipe and tabor, indelibly associated with the clowns Tarlton and Kempe, but, as we have seen, a standard accompaniment for dancing both in court and country, are called for to assist the morris dancers in Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday*, scene 11.51, and in Marston's choirboy play, *Jack Drum's Entertainment*. The pipe and tabor are memorably employed by Ariel as he leads Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban to the stinking pond in which they lose their bottles (*Tempest*, 3.2).

Of the plucked strings mentioned in Phillips's will it is the lute that appears most frequently, usually to accompany songs, though it is only in the so called 'bad' Quarto of *Hamlet* that we find the explicit instruction 'Enter Ophelia playing on a lute and singing', which is omitted in the Second Quarto and the Folio. But there is no ambiguity about Bellafront's singing to the lute in Dekker's *The Honest Whore*, scene 9, nor Francischina's performance in Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan*. The fact that these last two lute-players are prostitutes suggests the association of music with siren lust to which we have already alluded, an association continued in Dol Common's playing of the cittern – a flat-backed, wire-strung instrument played with a plectrum – in *The Alchemist*, and possibly invoked in the Amazons who dance and play lutes in Timon's masque (*Tim*, 1.2.131 SD).¹⁶⁵ (We will return later to the importance of this association for the understanding of Ophelia's singing.) There are plenty of other lutenists, boys and men, however, scattered through the drama of the period; as we have seen, the lute was the instrument above all that amateurs learnt, and presumably, therefore, an accomplishment many actors acquired. It is

often not specified whether or not a singer accompanied himself – if he did, it was likely to be the lute on which he played.

Songs might, however, be accompanied on the bass viol (as was the singing of the anonymous boy at the Blackfriars mentioned by Gershow). Towards the end of the sixteenth century it became fashionable to play solos on the viol, tuned in order to make the playing of chords easier in a manner known as 'lyra-way'. Actors in both arenas appear with a viol. The boy-actor who played Crispinus in Jonson's *Poetaster* accompanies his song on the viol, and the viol-playing Fastidious Brisk appeared in his earlier *Every Man Out of His Humour*, performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Although a distinct and serious repertoire of music was composed for the instrument during the seventeenth century 'every bass viol soloist on the stage – and this implies lyra viol every time – is an affected ass'.¹⁶⁶ The instrument could also, of course, be part of a consort of viols, but, though such a consort is called for in a number of Marston's plays for the choirboy companies, there is no clear evidence that it was ever required in the public theatres. Its sound, indeed, may have been rather too muted to have much effect in an open-air theatre.

A similar difficulty attends the recorder – it could be played on its own, or function as part of a consort. Shakespeare's company certainly possessed at least one, since it is requested by Hamlet as a stage-prop in his taunting of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (*Ham*, 3.2.324). Earlier in the scene (3.2.275) he had called for 'the recorders' to play some music, which might imply a consort, but, interestingly, where the Folio stage direction reads 'Enter one with a recorder', the Quarto reads 'Enter the players with recorders'. Was there one, or many? Did Hamlet himself demonstrate how easy it was to play the instrument? Did they play at any point in the scene? In choirboy plays, and in public theatre plays after about 1610, recorder consorts are specifically mentioned, usually to accompany actions of solemnity, including funeral processions, or to suggest the otherworldly; but I can find no record of their being demanded in earlier amphitheatre plays. Again, their relatively quiet sound, especially that of the lower instruments in the ensemble, might simply have been difficult to hear in the outdoor theatres. Later, in 1611, the King's Men play, *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, ends with the ambivalent instruction 'recorders or

other solempne music', suggesting that their presence could not be guaranteed.¹⁶⁷

A single recorder might, however, have been one of the instruments of the mixed consort for which, as we have seen, Thomas Morley composed his *Consort Lessons*. It was long assumed that this was the standard theatre band, which would have supplied most of the instrumental cues that the plays call for. But while most of the required instruments are listed in the inventories quoted above, this view has been challenged. Ian Harwood, for example, finds the evidence for consistent use of the mixed consort in the theatre less than compelling,¹⁶⁸ noting that almost all of the evidence for its employment comes from choirboy plays, or from later printed texts of early plays. There is, in the end, no way of knowing exactly what instruments were employed at every point in the history of Shakespeare's company, and only very intermittent evidence of any kind for instrumental scoring in any of the plays except, significantly, for the plays written after the acquisition of the Blackfriars. Even then, it is entirely probable that the instrumentation would be modified as the company moved between its two homes.

Who actually played these instruments? We tend, perhaps, to assume that Shakespeare's company, like the contemporary RSC (or, indeed, the reconstructed Globe theatre) employed a permanent musical ensemble. The children's companies certainly did. They had the resources to provide extra musicians from amongst the trained choirboys, and since they performed only once a week for the greater part of their history, they were allowed plenty of time for rehearsal and preparation, so that it is possible, even probable, that music might have been composed specifically for individual plays. The adult companies, however, operated an unbelievably punishing schedule, with a different play every afternoon, and they usually repeated a play only at substantial intervals.¹⁶⁹ Since many plays have minimal musical requirements, and since there was no musical performance before the show, or act music during it – which would provide a guaranteed daily need for musicians – it would seem inherently unlikely that the adult theatrical companies would keep a permanent band on call.

Certainly many, if not most, actors would traditionally have acquired some musical expertise, and, as Phillips's will suggests, would have trained

their apprentices to play on a variety of instruments. Whether or not Burbage, the King's Men's leading actor, actually demonstrated how easy it is to play the recorder in *Hamlet*, Edward Alleyn, the leading actor at the Rose, and a man who 'first entered the records as a "musician" before he achieved fame as an actor',¹⁷⁰ is very likely to have played the lute when appearing as Barabbas in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*. It is not clear how far he ever gets beyond attempting to tune the instrument (and the lute was notoriously difficult to keep in tune), since Pilia Borza's comment 'Methinks he fingers very well' (4.4.50) might only allude to the speed with which he pockets his reward, but his comment 'How swift he runs' (4.4.52) does suggest at least a dextrous demonstration of a rapid scale. Many, if not most, of the actors lower down the pecking order must also have been able to perform – and the presence of characters who speak little but do sing or play suggests that some actors were hired in part for their musical competence. As we have seen, actors were likely to accompany their own singing, and individuals might appear playing the pipe and tabor or the fiddle, but this gets us no nearer being certain whether the three actors who appear as musicians in *Romeo and Juliet* were the same people who actually played the music, or whether the (presumably on-stage) musicians of Orsino's court were acting members of the company. Interesting work has been done on the casting of plays in the period,¹⁷¹ but anonymous musicians are ignored in these accounts, and one would need to include them in order to estimate whether the surviving musical cues could actually be accommodated by the normal-sized acting company.

Though Henslowe bought instruments for the company, there are no payments to musicians recorded in his so-called *Diary*. This absence in itself is not necessarily very significant, since 'it seems clear that it formed only part of Henslowe's accounting records';¹⁷² but it does perhaps suggest that at this time musicians did not feature as a separate category of employed personnel, as they were to do by 1624 where the number of "musitions and other necessarie attendants" required by the King's Men was twenty-one'.¹⁷³ Indeed, if professional musicians had been part of Henslowe's company, they would have possessed their own instruments. Furthermore, his expenditure on this varied collection of instruments suggests that they were in regular use, since they would deteriorate if not

played and maintained – strings break, reeds dry out, mouthpieces crack.¹⁷⁴ It is, of course, perfectly possible that a theatrical company might hire musicians for particular performances, and important to remember that Shakespeare's company performed in a number of different arenas beyond the Globe and Blackfriars. On their occasional tours, keeping the company to a minimum size would have been prudent, and this might explain why the Queen's Men, touring in the sixteenth century, apparently paid musicians at Nottingham in 1587, and Canterbury in 1592.¹⁷⁵ Similarly, a court performance might have permitted an expansion of the musical provision, perhaps calling on some of the resources of the royal music. In 1613 the city aldermen complained that they could not get hold of the waits because they were 'then employed at play houses';¹⁷⁶ but how frequent such employment might have been – and whether it was customary earlier in the period – must remain a matter of conjecture. We cannot know whether the 'waits' we have seen called for in Heywood's play were actors or 'real' city waits. We cannot be sure that when Greene's *Alphonsus of Aragon* (1599) calls for a pageant of the nine muses at the beginning and end of the play, all playing upon instruments, it is a demonstration of the musical versatility of the acting company (perhaps the Queen's Men), or whether the four speaking actors were supplemented by musicians bought in for the play. We also do not know whether the trumpets Henslowe provided, and which are so frequently called for in the dramatic literature, were played by actors or by specialists. There is one reference in the accounts of the Queen's Men of payments to trumpeters, but nowhere else are they mentioned. In the royal music trumpeters were men apart, and there is some dispute as to the level of their musical proficiency. It might be that they 'were attendants rather than musicians: they played simple monophonic music and did not belong to the section of musical society that was literate and cultivated polyphonic music'.¹⁷⁷ Christopher Wilson and Michela Calore, however, draw attention to the rising complexity of music for trumpets, and suggest that those who played the highest parts (the *clarini*) must have been considerable technicians.¹⁷⁸ Yet to play basic fanfares and signals on the unvalved trumpet of the period (as on the bugle of more recent marching bands) was not a particularly difficult task, and there is no inherent reason why actors should not have

been able to cope with its demands; the only problem is envisaging the practicalities of organizing their presence when the entries and battle scenes they frequently accompanied also required a number of actors on stage to be physically engaged in fighting.

There are, then, as we turn to consider the music in Shakespeare's plays more closely, many uncertainties. But a few generalizations might tentatively be offered. First, and perhaps most important, a clear distinction must be made between the plays written before and after 1608, and some care must be taken to consider the possibility that the texts in the form we now have them represent later rather than earlier practice. But it is obvious that the late romances and the two collaborative works that ended Shakespeare's career not only call for a significant quantity of music, but provide far more specific and varied prescriptions for its scoring than the earlier comedies in which music is required. Second, it seems safest to assume that for the greater part of Shakespeare's career music was provided by the actors themselves, and that, given the lack of back-stage space, ensembles required to play off-stage must have been small. The actors – boys and men – probably had considerable versatility, able, like the city waits, to play a range of wind and stringed instruments. But, equally, there were instruments common in the private theatres that were not employed by the adult companies, and the very absence of particularity in the calls for music suggests that it would be played by whatever and whomever was available at the time. Much has been made of the symbolism of individual instruments and ensembles, but it is perhaps unwise to believe that, before 1608, the King's Men necessarily had the resources to effect such symbolic colouring. Nevertheless, Shakespeare used the resources at his disposal with consummate skill. In doing so he drew on the wide range of associations that music carried in his culture, and on the varied sounds that his audience heard and understood in the world outside the theatre that it has been the business of these first two chapters to sketch.