

Hearing the City

in Early Modern Europe



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Contents

7	Foreword
17	List of figures
21	List of tables

Introduction

25	Tim CARTER Listening to Music in Early Modern Italy: Some Problems for the Urban Musicologist
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1 – Crossing Boundaries

53	Dinko FABRIS Urban Musicologies
69	David R. M. IRVING Hearing Other Cities: The Role of Seaborne Empires and Colonial Emporia in Early Global Music History
85	Juan José CARRERAS Topography, Sound and Music in Eighteenth-Century Madrid
101	Bruce R. SMITH Sounding Shakespeare's London: The Noisy Politics of Ceremonial Entries
117	Helen HILLS Veiling the Voice of Architecture

2 – Sounds in Contention: Musical Repertoires and Genres in Contested Urban Spaces

135	Jan-Friedrich MISSFELDER Sounds and Silences of Reformation: Zurich, 1524–71
145	Joachim KREMER Musical Experience in Urban Societies in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries: Communication, Moral Issues and Musical Townscape
155	Mélanie TRAVERSIER Music as Dangerous Urban Leisure: Safety in and around Public Theatres in Enlightenment Naples
165	Anna TEDESCO Shaping the Urban Soundscape in Spanish Palermo
177	Andrea BOMBI <i>Cantaron a no más</i> , or Musical Changes in Eighteenth-Century Spain as Constructed through Valencian <i>relaciones de fiestas</i>

3 – Soundsworlds and Spatial Strategies of the Social Elite

- 197 Ascensión MAZUELA-ANGUITA
The Contribution of the Requesens Noblewomen to the Soundscape of Sixteenth-Century Barcelona through the Palau de la Comtessa
- 219 Anne-Madeleine GOULET
Music in Late Seventeenth-Century Rome: The Palazzo Orsini as a Performance Space
- 229 Ferrán ESCRIVÀ-LLORCA
The Procession of the Relics of São Roque (Lisbon, 1588): A Royal Entry?
- 241 Javier MARÍN-LÓPEZ
Music Regulations and Sacred Repertories in a Ducal Town Without a Duke: Francisco de los Cobos and the Sacra Capilla of El Salvador in Sixteenth-Century Úbeda

4 – Case Studies in Urban Soundscapes

- 279 Reinhard STROHM
On the Soundscape of Fifteenth-Century Vienna
- 295 Tess KNIGHTON
Orality and Aurality: Contexts for the Unwritten Musics of Sixteenth-Century Barcelona
- 309 Ilaria GRIPPAUDO
Music, Religious Communities, and the Urban Dimension: Sound Experiences in Palermo in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries
- 329 María GEMBERO-USTÁRROZ
Re-mapping Urban Music in Spanish Regional Contexts: The Case of Navarre (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)
- 343 Peter HOLMAN
'A Vast Number of Voices and Instruments': The Performance of Large-Scale Church Music in Early Eighteenth-Century London

5 – Coda

- 355 Juan RUIZ JIMÉNEZ & Ignacio José LIZARÁN RUS
Historical Soundscapes (c.1200–c.1800): An On-Line Digital Platform
- 373 **Bibliography**
- 411 **Index**



Music Regulations and Sacred Repertories in a Ducal Town Without a Duke: Francisco de los Cobos and the Sacra Capilla of El Salvador in Sixteenth-Century Úbeda*

Javier MARÍN-LÓPEZ
Universidad de Jaén

The town of Úbeda is situated in the province of Jaén in the northeast of Andalusia; together with the neighbouring town of Baeza, it was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2003 for the quality and high degree of preservation of their architecture and unique urban configuration. The image of Úbeda has always been compared to that of a Renaissance ducal town, a reflection of the phenomenon of aristocratization and the symbolic appropriation of public space by the nobility as a way of establishing their power during the sixteenth century in a process contemporary with and analagous to the great city-states of northern Italy. Indeed, the urban planning and architectonic features of Úbeda display the defining characteristics of the ducal town, with privately-funded construction of palaces, convents, churches, hospices, pantheons and colleges that experiment with new types of buildings and innovative urban layouts that are juxtaposed with the medieval view of a town to create a sense of the public image of the duke's magnanimity, economic power, and prestige (Alegre Carvajal 2004: 23–48).

Although Úbeda never had a duke or a count, it did have a figure of enormous political power and influence in Francisco de los Cobos y Molina (c.1477–1547). Born in Úbeda, in 1516 Cobos became secretary to the Emperor Charles V and took responsibility for the imperial finances, positions which made him into one of the most powerful people in Spain despite his birth into the gentility in a small town far from court. During the Renaissance, which took

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