

**Tess Knighton, ed.**

*Companion to Music in the Age of the Catholic Monarchs.* Leiden: Brill, 2017. Pp. 744. Hb, €229.

The Age of the Catholic Monarchs, opening in 1469 with the marriage of Isabella and Ferdinand, heirs respectively to the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon, and closing with Ferdinand's death in 1516, was momentous by any measure. This dynastic and territorial union gave birth to a unified Spanish nation; the Inquisition—established in 1478—helped impose the illusion of unity through its systematic persecution of Jews, Muslims, *conversos*, and heretics; Columbus's voyages led to the opening of previously unimaginable cultural, scientific, and geographical horizons; the conquering of the Moorish kingdom of Granada in 1492 signaled a triumphant symbolic completion of the Christian project of reconquest; and in the same year Jews and Moors were officially expelled from Spanish territory.

The study of music during this period was first undertaken by the Catalan priest Higiní Anglés (1888–1969) who, in the period 1947–65 published the results of his extensive archival work in a series of volumes that focused on music manuscripts preserving both sacred and secular music associated with the courts of Ferdinand and Isabella. Anglés was followed in 1960 by Robert Murrell Stevenson (1916–2012) whose *Spanish Music in the Age of Columbus* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff), described by the author as a “résumé of Spanish music to 1530” (xi), brought to an anglophone audience a distillation of Anglés's findings together with the results of his own archival work, especially in Seville. While inevitably conditioned by the concerns of the intellectual *milieux* from which they arose, these studies laid the pioneering contours that have influenced all subsequent studies of the subject.

When Knighton began work on her PhD at Clare College, Cambridge, in the early 1980s, she sought to amplify the documentary base through her own archival work. In the process, she consciously weighed the balance of treatment in Fernando's favor, partly because he outlived Isabella. In addition, Knighton embraced a wider geographical and historiographical context for her consideration of the courts of the Catholic Monarchs. It was not until 2001, however, that her impressive work saw the light, published in a superb translation by Luis Gago, under the title *Música y músicos en la Corte de Fernando el Católico, 1474–1516* (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico). If this splendid study, almost two decades in gestation, reflects the broadly accepted concerns of historical musicology in the 1980s, the volume under review presents a much more ambitious agenda. Without eschewing such traditional preoccupations of music research as biographical and archive-based source studies, Knighton's

*Companion* expands the field to include the myriad consequences of the arrival of the *conquistadores* in the Americas, the vast terrain of improvisatory and oral musical practices that by their very nature elude historical documentation, the role of women in music making, the musical lives of Hispano-Jewish communities, contacts between Christian, Muslim, and Jewish musicians, the role of music in the propagandistic pageantry of the monarchs' public relations program, the separate traditions of music for instruments, theoretical writings about music, and liturgical chant in an age of reform.

It will be clear from the foregoing that the concerns of this collection are far from narrowly musicological. Rather, context is all. The composition and performance of music is understood for its integral role within a broader society. Few aspects of either public or private life in this period went unaccompanied by some kind of music. Whether as part of such elaborate occasions as Philip the Fair's oath as heir to the Castilian throne in 1502, involving about forty singers and musicians at Toledo, or in the pageantry designed by the Jews of Saragossa to accompany the 1481 entry into their city by the monarchs, musical practice has much to tell us about the articulation of identity, class, faith, society, and politics.

Casting such a broad net demands careful curatorial oversight and a sure editorial hand. Far from the random miscellanies that so often lie barely concealed beneath the label *Companion*, the result is a milestone of state-of-the-art research by nearly all of the most active scholars in the field. The scholarship is rigorous and wide-ranging, and clearly the product of recent and ongoing colloquy between the authors and the editor.

Of particular interest to readers of this journal, given that Fernando died twenty-four years before the papal bull *Regimini militantis ecclesiae* was issued over the signature of Pope Paul III, are the testimonies of such Jesuits as José de Acosta (1540–1600). His *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590) offers fascinating insights into the ways in which both indigenous texts were fitted to Christian melodies and Christian texts were adapted to indigenous songs.

And of course, as one might expect, there is much new information concerning Juan de Anchieta (1462–1523), the composer who in 1489 was appointed as a singer to Isabella's court and whose mother was both a great aunt of St. Ignatius himself as well as a relative to the Jesuit missionary José Anchieta. Indeed the saint was allegedly detained in an ecclesiastical prison for assaulting Anchieta in the carnival season of 1515.

If the child is indeed father to the man, then our knowledge and appreciation of the cultural environment that nourished the young Ignatius will immeasurably enhance our understanding of the courtier, the soldier, the man,

and the saint. This age of expulsion, discovery, conquest, and nation building was the age into which St. Ignatius was born.

Knighton's generous anthology comprises fifteen substantial essays, three of them translated from the Spanish by the editor herself. The essays are supported by more than thirty figures (many in full color), more than forty examples of music notation, and more than thirty tables, and the bibliography is a *tour-de-force*. Unpretentiously signaled with the prosaic heading "works cited" it offers, in eighty pages, a comprehensive listing broken into the following categories: primary sources, *cancioneros* and songbooks, early printings, music and music-related sources, printed music books, modern editions of musical works, etc. And fortunately, this comprehensive volume is equipped with a well-constructed index that makes navigating its seven hundred pages a joy. What we have here is a deeply satisfying mosaic of current knowledge that richly serves both specialists and the informed general reader and that will set the research agenda for further decades.

*Michael Noone*

Boston College

*michael.noone@bc.edu*

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