Uncovering a Diverse Early Music

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The “Unite the Right” rally in Charlottesville in August 2017 became a call to action for medievalists across the United States to find new and more explicit ways to reject racism and white supremacy. While pseudo-medieval symbols had long been used by white supremacists, social media exploded with images of participants in Charlottesville wielding, for instance, shields bearing a black eagle, associated with the Holy Roman Empire and used in Germany through the Nazi era to the present day. The Medieval Academy of America, along with 29 other organizations, responded with a statement a few days after the rally, which read in part:

1. This conversation has been growing in volume for a while now—long enough that I can’t always pinpoint where I first found out about some of the material I include here. Discussions at the virtual Teaching Music History Conference and continuing on the AMS Pedagogy Study Group Facebook group have been invaluable, and bibliographies and resource lists have been circulated more and more, most notably the new Inclusive Early Music site (https://inclusiveearlymusic.org/), which will be a tremendous benefit to all of us going forward. Individuals who have been particularly influential and helpful to me include Karen Cook, Andrew Dell’Antonio, Daniel DiCenso, Gillian Gower, Jeannette DiBernardo Jones, Rebecca Maloy, Luisa Nardini, Laurie Stras, Jennifer Thomas, and Elizabeth Randell Upton; I apologize to anyone I may have neglected to include here.

Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Chapter of the American Musicological Society (Tallahassee, February 15, 2020) and the virtual Teaching Music History Conference (June 2020). I am grateful to the other participants in those sessions—especially Jennifer Thomas and Douglass Seaton for AMS-S and Margaret Walker and Lars Christensen for TMHC—and those who commented on both papers and participated in later discussions. This version was significantly improved by the comments of the anonymous readers for the Journal, and I am also grateful for the help and encouragement of its editor, Sara Haefeli.

2. See the photos published with Josephine Livingstone, “Racism, Medievalism, and the White Supremacists of Charlottesville,” The New Republic, August 15, 2017, https://newrepublic.com/article/144320/racism-medievalism-white-supremacists-charlottesville. The history of the black eagle is complex; however, the young men using the symbol are quite possibly aligning themselves with Nazi Germany. In any case, the evocation of an imagined ethnically pure past seems clear.
As scholars of the medieval world we are disturbed by the use of a nostalgic but inaccurate myth of the Middle Ages by racist movements in the United States. By using imagined medieval symbols, or names drawn from medieval terminology, they create a fantasy of a pure, white Europe that bears no relationship to reality. This fantasy not only hurts people in the present, it also distorts the past.3

The concern to push back against the misappropriation of the past extended to the musicological community, and the call for papers for the 2018 Medieval and Renaissance Music Conference asked scholars to consider the politics around researching, teaching and performing Med & Ren music in a time when racists, white nationalists (not only in the US) and xenophobes feel emboldened. How do we teach Med & Ren music courses that do not appear to be safe havens for white supremacists? That challenge ahistorical views of Med & Ren as all white (male) and Christian?4

The conference featured a packed session with papers by Brandi Neal, Elizabeth Randell Upton, and Samantha Bassler, followed by a lively discussion that continued beyond the conference.5

The call to diversify the material we study and especially teach is, of course, not new, but what is notable here is the explicit focus on the Middle Ages and

3. The statement also noted that “medieval Europe was not the entire medieval world.” For the complete statement, see “Medievalists Respond to Charlottesville,” The Medieval Academy Blog, August 18, 2017, http://www.themedievalacademyblog.org/medievalists-respond-to-charlottesville/. There is in fact ample visual and textual evidence of non-Europeans and non-Christians in medieval and early modern Europe, evidence that has been extensively studied and taught by historians, art historians, and scholars of literature. See for instance Jonathan Hsy and Julie Ormanski, “Race and Medieval Studies: A Partial Bibliography,” postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies 8 (2017): 500–31, https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1057%2Fs41280-017-0072-0.pdf. The bibliography was published before Geraldine Heng’s essential The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).


5. The presentations were: Brandi A. Neal, “‘An Ounce of Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure’: Shielding Early Music from the Alt-Right”; Elizabeth Randell Upton, “Music, Medievalism and White Supremacy: Anti-Racist Pedagogy after Charlottesville”; and Samantha Bassler, “Music, Disability and a Twenty-First Century Pedagogy of Medieval and Renaissance Culture.”
early modern period. Most discussions of diversity in musicology have focused on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries where there is more surviving evidence, and many of the efforts toward diversification and decolonization in teaching reject the idea of a survey altogether, often marginalizing those periods that are not part of the performing repertory of most undergraduate students. While early music is getting more attention in conversations around diversity and global history, and scholars of early music are speaking more strongly about these issues, these efforts have needed time to reach critical mass. Inspired by these conferences and related conversations in the aftermath of Charlottesville, I began to rethink my own teaching of early music, particularly in the context of the first half of our one-year survey for music majors. Writing women, Jews, and people of color back into the narrative has expanded the content of the course. This required paying more attention to non-notated music alongside notated, as well as shifting some of the focus away from composers toward performers (past and present), patrons, and scribes. It also begins to show medieval and early modern Europe as part of a global network, where Europe was sometimes an intellectual backwater and sometimes a colonial power. The result has been a fuller and more accurate picture of the past, one that simultaneously provides a closer connection to the lived experience of current students. My hope here is that, by outlining my own ongoing journey, I can provide others with some tools for their own and continue the growing conversation about diversity in early music.

To Survey Or Not To Survey?

The traditional survey of music before c. 1750 focuses almost entirely on white Christian men, with only a handful of exceptions. Several women composers from medieval and early modern Europe have become part of the pedagogical canon in recent years and are included in standard textbooks and anthologies, including Hildegard of Bingen, the Comtessa de Dia, Barbara Strozzi, and Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre. The Italian Jew Salamone Rossi is occasionally mentioned in passing in textbooks, and one of his sonatas appears in the anthology accompanying the Wright-Simms text. Based on what I have seen, none of the standard textbook materials currently names a musician of color active before the late eighteenth century.

One could take this as yet another reason to eliminate the survey altogether, as some have done.\(^7\) I am one of those, however, who still believes in the value of a skeletal framework of Western art music for undergraduate music majors, even while we also try to show its limits. While I’m perfectly ready to question the canon and all that it entails, including its coloniser legacy, I don’t believe our students can join in or even fully understand those issues until and unless they have some idea of what that canon is. There are places within the curriculum where I will deliberately mix musics from different styles, times, and places, but I still believe a historical survey has a useful role.\(^8\) Including early music within that survey is to my mind valuable because it shows a world before the creation of the museum repertory, a time when nearly all music was effectively new music. Studying early music, then, can help unsettle the romantic attitudes that continue to resonate in our world, such as the composer as genius, the autonomous artwork, and originality and self-expression as the essential goals of art music. It can therefore further set the stage not only for understanding of later music but also for problematising the canon.\(^9\)

This critical work can start at the beginning: in the first week, my students, like many, read a number of excerpts about music by ancient and late antique writers. I ask them not only to identify trends within what is written, but also to consider who and what is missing. As students realize that this seemingly


\(^8\) Our one-year survey is preceded by a course conceived as a series of snapshots, putting side-by-side selected pieces from Western art music and non-Western cultures. In my own section of this course I have further experimented with “snapshots” of decades rather than works, mini-units where I can mix art and popular music by diverse creators and seek moments of intersection, and where we can explore broader issues such as music and social justice. I have been inspired in this regard by Andrew Dell’ Antonio, who most recently described the curricular reconfigurations he and his colleagues at UT Austin have made at the roundtable session “What Constitutes ‘Core’ in the Conservatory Curriculum.” I find this “bifocal” approach, combining open-topic courses with a survey, to create the best balance between sometimes competing needs.

\(^9\) This is a point David R. M. Irving also makes, to a different end, in “Rethinking Early Modern ‘Western Art Music’: A Global History Manifesto,” IMS Musicological Brainfood 3, no. 1 (2019): 6–10, https://brainfood.musicology.org/pdfs/ims_brainfood_3_no1_2019.pdf. I have not, as Irving does, emphasized the extent to which early music arguably does not participate in “art music,” but I may do so in the future.
neutral material consists of specific types of texts written by and for men of a
certain social and intellectual class, they see from the outset some of the limits
of the task we are undertaking. From that point, highlighting musicians who
were women or people of color not only shows that those individuals existed
in medieval and early modern Europe—even when their trace may be faint in
the written record—but it brings their activities to life. It also sometimes shows
their struggles.

Broadening the Field: Focus on Gender

A month before the “Unite the Right” rally, as it happens, Kira Thurman and
Kristen Turner published a column in *Musicology Now* entitled, “Six Easy Ways
to Immediately Address Racial and Gender Diversity in Your Music History
Classroom.”¹⁰ Several of their suggestions relate mostly to later music, but the
first three have clear relevance for early music:

1. “Be transparent.” As Thurman and Turner state at the outset, “the
canon is dominated by European male composers,” and this is par-
ticularly true of composed music written down during the Mid-
dle Ages and early modern period. That is a reality that must be
acknowledged, even while we push against it. Indeed, being honest
with our students about our choices, whatever they are, may be the
most important thing we all can do.

2. “Consider the concept vs. the composer.” This is the place to ask
whether a woman or a person of color can replace a white man.
Elisabeth-Claude Jacquet de la Guerre has effectively replaced the
Couperins in the Norton Anthology and elsewhere, for instance.
Hildegard of Bingen, the Comtessa de Dia, and Barbara Strozzi
are similarly present in all the currently available anthologies, not
replacing men but appearing beside them.¹¹

3. “Play canonical composers—but use a recording featuring a musi-
cian of color or a woman musician.” This is a particularly easy fix
for us all. My personal recording of the trope *Gaudeamus omnes*,

¹⁰ Kira Thurman and Kristen Turner, “Six Easy Ways to Immediately Address Racial
and Gender Diversity in Your Music History Classroom,” *Musicology Now*, July 17, 2017,
https://musicologynow.org/six-easy-ways-to-immediately-address-racial-and-gender-diver-
sity-in-your-music-history-classroom/. The other three are “Let diverse voices speak,” “Think
local,” and “Think of the present.”

¹¹ A useful resource here is “Music Theory Examples by Women,” accessed November
10, 2020, https://musictheoryexamplesbywomen.com/. This site includes a few pre-Baroque
composers and a few from the Baroque, but its primary focus is later.
on the Christmas introit *Puer natus est*, is by the Ensemble Gilles Binchois and features female singers; when I use it, I almost invariably get a question about whether women could sing this music in the Middle Ages.\(^{12}\) My recording of Monteverdi’s *Poppea* features the African-American Dana Hanchard as Nerone, and I regularly use a video of the opera’s final duet “Pur ti miro” featuring the countertenor Philippe Jaroussky as Nerone and Danielle De Niese as Poppea.\(^{13}\) My initial goal in using this video was to have students see Nerone’s treble voice coming out of a male body, but seeing a soprano of Sri Lankan heritage makes its own point.

As useful as it is to show diverse performers in the present, however, we also need to look more carefully at the past. Both literary and documentary evidence survives of women musicians and entertainers in the Middle Ages,\(^{14}\) as well as images of women—real, fictional, and allegorical—making music.\(^{15}\) We may not always be able to retrieve the sounds those women made, because they were not written down, but one of the major themes of this journey has been that marginalized populations in medieval and early modern Europe often appear in the margins, as it were, of the written record. That means that our normative pedagogical focus on the composer and on notated music gives us

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12. The recording is Ensemble Gilles Binchois, dir. Dominique Vellard, *Les premières polyphonies françaises: organa et tropes du XIe siècle* (Virgin Veritas 45135, 1994). Of course women could sing chant and other sacred music, but only in a convent setting. I usually do not underline that women are singing myself, preferring to let students come up with the question—a more active approach.


14. For example, Christopher Page discusses a set of ordinances for minstrels produced in 1321 in *The Owl and the Nightingale: Musical Life and Ideas in France 1100–1300* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 61ff. More recently, Carol Symes has noted that the constitutions of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Burning Ones, also known as the Brotherhood of Jongleurs and Townspeople, speaks of both men and women as members; see “The ‘School of Arras’ and the Career of Adam,” *Musical Culture in the World of Adam de la Halle*, ed. Jennifer Saltzstein, (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 35. Brianne Dolce has used these same constitutions as a “witness to women’s musical activity in the region” (308) in “Soit hom u feme’: New Evidence for Women Musicians and the Search for the ‘Women Trouvères’,” *Revue de Musicologie* 106, no. 2 (September 2020): 301–27. She also uses the contrafacture practice of the thirteenth-century mystic Hadewijch to suggest networks of poets and musicians, including women, between Arras and the Dutch-speaking areas of Brabant and Flanders.

an incomplete picture of the musical world, and we therefore need to give more space in our surveys to unwritten musics. Even those of us who frequently use notation as a valuable tool to understanding developments in early music can often do more to acknowledge and make better use of both surviving hints about what does not get written down and the interpretive decisions that are involved in recreating what does.

While texts of several women troubadours exist, “A chantar” by the Comtessa de Dia is the only song by any trbairitz to survive with a melody. That melody appears in only one source, without attribution, and incompletely copied with only one stanza of text. Teaching this song alone can be seen as a tokenizing gesture, but it can be valuable to pair it, as anthologies often do, with Bernart de Ventadorn’s “Can vei la lauzeta mover,” one of the most widely transmitted of troubadour songs. When we consider the two together, we see how fragile and open notation is at this point: not only are all the manuscript sources considerably later than the songs themselves, there are extensive variants between the notated versions of Bernart's song (one of which is actually attributed to Peire Vidal), which tells us that neither the texts nor the melodies of such songs were as fixed as we might expect. The notation used for both songs, moreover, provides only pitches and words, leaving many interpretive decisions (starting with rhythm) up to the performer—who likely would not have been using notation in any case. Teaching both songs together opens up the spectrum of what we can and cannot know about troubadours and their songs, and it can foreground the challenges in performing that music today.

Women religious left more compositional evidence. The chant of the twelfth-century visionary Hildegard of Bingen has entered the pedagogical canon, though it should be remembered that it was compiled with her other work as part of a canonization campaign—in other words, not with other chant, which would be transmitted anonymously. That unique purpose for writing down her chant is the only reason we can attach her name to it. Because Hildegard was working centuries after the first surviving traces of “Gregorian” chant, she cannot effectively replace that earlier (anonymous) repertory, but she can remind us, and our students, that both men and women sang chant through the Middle Ages and beyond, and surely composed it as well. She can

also provide great examples of eleventh-century German chant for those who have time to consider the post-Carolingian expansion of chant.\(^\text{17}\)

Thirteenth-century polyphony in the style of the Notre Dame school survives in fragments from the Convent of Poor Clares of Stary Sącz in Poland, and the early-fourteenth-century Las Huelgas codex was copied and still remains in the Cistercian convent of Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas in Burgos, Spain.\(^\text{18}\) Again, we do not know who composed most of the music in these sources,\(^\text{19}\) but it is likely that at least some pieces were created by members of those houses, and in any case those nuns surely sang the music. Even though anthologies, and therefore courses, tend to focus attention on the compositional innovations of the two-part organum of Leonin and his contemporaries as transmitted in the central Notre Dame manuscripts, these sources can show that this style extended across Europe, not only to cathedrals and major Benedictine monasteries, but also to some of the wealthier women’s houses, even those associated with more austere orders.

Nuns, as well as lay women, became more important as composers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Craig Monson, Robert Kendrick, Laurie Stras, and others have shown.\(^\text{20}\) Some of their music may be able to replace

\(^{17}\) On Hildegard’s chant in its eleventh-century German context, see for instance Jennifer Bain, “Hildegard, Hermannus, and Late Chant Style,” *Journal of Music Theory* 52, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 123–49. Bain further traces Hildegard’s afterlife in *Hildegard of Bingen and Musical Reception: The Modern Revival of a Medieval Composer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). There she demonstrates, among other things, that Hildegard was “never truly a forgotten figure” (35), and she shows the different patterns of attention between nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Germany and late-twentieth-century England and North America.


\(^{19}\) One of the Stary Sącz fragments transmits a sequence by Philip the Chancellor, and the Las Huelgas codex includes one piece attributed to Perotin, but the other pieces are anonymous. I rely here on DIAMM, the Digital Archive of Medieval Music, accessed August 12, 2020, https://www.diamm.ac.uk/.

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pieces in the primary narrative of the course. Stras’s work on Ferrara considers not only the compositional evidence for nun composers, but also places them within the wider context of women’s music-making both in the convent and at court, beginning with Isabella d’Este, herself a singer.21 A marvelous video directed by Anne MacNeil shows Isabella’s music room or grotta and discusses her patronage of the frottola.22 Focusing on Isabella allows us to present the frottola as an important cultural moment in its own right, not only as a way station to the compositional achievement of the madrigal. Stras also puts the virtuoso singers of the musica secreta or concerto delle donne into a broader Ferrarese context.

Continuing with female singers leads us to the Florentine intermedi and the beginnings of opera, where the intersections between seventeenth- and eighteenth-century divas and castrati and the singers who inhabit their roles today allow a class to consider gender issues in both past and present.23 Female singers and instrumentalists also appear at the Pio Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, for which many of Antonio Vivaldi’s concertos were likely written.24 And behind the scenes, Maria Cavalli, like Anna Magdalena Bach, had an active role in copying her husband’s work, while in the sixteenth century Katharina vom Berg managed the Berg and Neuber publishing firm for decades after her husband’s death.25 All these activities may fall below the compositional radar, but they are virtuoso court singers of the Musica Secreta (Concerto delle Donne) of Alfonso II d’Este and the music of Alfonso’s aunt, the nun Leonora d’Este. Stras has also contributed to this field through her recordings as co-director of the ensembles Musica Secreta and Celestial Sirens, including Lucrezia Borgia’s Daughter (Obsidian CD717, 2017).


essential for music-making, and women have a significant role in these areas.²⁶

**Broadening the Field: Focus on Race, Ethnicity, and Religion**

People of color are harder to find. It is worth remembering, though, that the Roman Empire circled the Mediterranean basin, which means that people moved freely between Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East throughout antiquity and late antiquity. Many of us use that marvelous passage in Augustine’s *Confessions* about the power of music—but we may not inform our students that Augustine was a Berber, born in what is now Algeria, and that, after about five years in Italy, he returned to Africa, becoming bishop of Hippo Regius, now the Algerian city of Annaba.²⁷ Many of the Church Fathers whose writings are excerpted in source readings collections came from the Middle East, including Basil of Caesarea (in modern Israel) and John Chrysostom (born in Antioch, later Patriarch of Constantinople). Jerome came from Dalmatia, in modern Croatia, and died in Bethlehem.

Even after the Roman Empire crumbled, contact continued across the Mediterranean and beyond. A man named Hadrian, for instance, identified as “natione afric anus” (African by birth) in a *Life* by the eleventh-century Benedictine Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, was sent by Pope Vitalian to England in 668 along with Theodore of Tarsus, the newly named Archbishop of Canterbury (himself a native of what is now Turkey).²⁸ Hadrian became abbot of the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul in Canterbury, where he would of

²⁶ Including areas of music-making beyond composition and performance resonates with the idea of an art world defined by Howard Becker as the “network of people whose cooperative activity” is necessary to produce a work of art. Becker’s work focuses on “patterns of cooperation among the people who make the works” rather than on “the works themselves” or “those conventionally defined as their creators”; Howard S. Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), ix, x.


²⁸ On Hadrian, see Alison Hudson, “An African Abbot in Anglo-Saxon England,” *Medieval Manuscripts Blog* (October 27, 2016), https://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2016/10/an-african-abbot-in-anglo-saxon-england.html. Gregory of Tours also writes about a group of Frankish diplomats who stopped in Carthage on their way to Byzantium in the 590s—the so-called Frankish layover in Carthage—that included a brawl with locals; Sihong Lin discusses this in “The Mystery of Stephen the
course have participated in the Daily Office. Both Hadrian and Theodore may have been refugees from the Muslim expansion, which was finally turned back in the West by Charles Martel (Charlemagne's grandfather) at the battle of Tours (or Poitiers) in 732, but the Umayyad dynasty ruled most of the Iberian peninsula into the eleventh century, and Muslim rule was not eliminated from Spain until 1492—the year Jews were also expelled from the kingdom. That, of course, was also the year Cristoforo Colombo landed in the Americas, marking a significant new stage in European colonialism. During the intervening centuries, poet-composers such as Thibaut de Champagne and other musicians were among those Europeans who went to the Middle East on Crusade, though it is unclear how much native music they would have encountered on those journeys.

The rapid spread of Islam made the Iberian Peninsula a center of cross-Mediterranean contacts. Aristotle's works, largely unavailable to early medieval Europe, came to Paris and other European intellectual centers in the twelfth century, largely through translations from Arabic texts. Instruments such as the lute likewise seem to come into Western Europe through the Iberian peninsula. Surviving texts of medieval song in Arabic, Hebrew, and Iberian Romance languages such as Galician-Portuguese show some structural similarities, and it seems reasonable to speculate that each had some interaction not only with each other but also with non-notated indigenous traditions that predate the Islamic invasions. The medieval Andalusian zajal and muwashshah were not

African," The Public Medievalist (May 2, 2017), https://www.publicmedievalist.com/mystery-stephen-african/. Lin further reports that Roger Collins has argued that Isidore of Seville may have been from North Africa.

29. The monastery is better known as St. Augustine's. According to George Cyprian Alston, the abbey was dedicated to Peter and Paul on its founding in 605, but after later expansion it was rededicated to Peter, Paul, and Augustine of Canterbury by Dunstan, then archbishop of Canterbury, in 978. "Abbey of Saint Augustine," The Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 13 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), available online at New Advent, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13333a.htm.


notated, so the ensemble Altramar combined medieval texts and descriptions of performances with existing oral traditions from northern Africa for its two Iberian Garden recordings.\(^{33}\)

The *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, examples of which are included in all the major anthologies, can also be used to provide a window on this diverse Iberian world, though it must be acknowledged that the modern ideal of “convivencia” between Islamic, Christian, and Jewish societies at the court of Alfonso the Wise (1221–84), king of Castile, León, and Galicia, does not always align with the more complex evidence of both coexistence and conflict.\(^{34}\) Because modern performances of cantigas tend to be heavily influenced by the sounds of modern middle eastern and north African music, I sometimes assign students John Haines’ article on “The Arabic Style of Performing Early Music,”\(^{35}\) which reinforces the point made earlier about the openness to interpretation of the notation of medieval song.

Substantial communities of Jews existed across Europe in the Middle Ages, though their presence was not always welcome. For instance, Philip II Augustus, king of France, expelled all Jews from the territories he directly controlled in 1182, and some French lords did likewise over the course of the thirteenth century, though there was no large-scale expulsion in France until 1306.\(^{36}\) A collection of French and Hebrew songs from the Jewish community of northern France in the second half of the thirteenth century survives in a manuscript now at the British Library. This source does not include notation,

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\(^{36}\) Even then, Louis X had to let the Jews return in 1315. For an introduction to these events and the financial and political reasons behind them, see William Chester Jordan, “Jews, Regalian Rights, and the Constitution in Medieval France,” *AJS Review* 23, no. 1 (1998): 1–16.
but the rubrics for two texts name the trouvère song whose melody should be used; the members of the Ensemble Alla francesca used these two melodies and fit others to surviving poems to create their recording *Juifs et trouvères*.\(^{37}\)

Instead of replacing more commonly-taught pieces with one of these, I use them to expand the field of monophonic song beyond what there is usually time to include. Following up on full-class discussion of issues of creation, transmission, and performance, using Bernart de Ventadorn’s *Can vei la lauzeta mover* and the Comtessa de Diàs *A chantar*, and the Cantigas de Santa Maria, I assign small groups other examples to study: the Hebrew and Andalusian songs mentioned above, Latin conductus, Minnesang, *cantigas de amigo*, and laude, as well as songs by troubadours and trouvères. In this context, these all become equally valid and valued forms of song. The work of the class as a whole not only serves to represent women and people of color as creators of medieval song, it also challenges misleading ideas of musical transmission by providing examples of a wide range of possibilities for notation and performance, both in the Middle Ages and in our own time.

The combination of full-class and small-group work allows for a picture of medieval monophonic song that is both geographically wider and more diverse. Similarly, I have assigned to small groups pieces of sixteenth-century sacred music by Cristóbal de Morales and Francisco Guerrero that appear in North American colonial sources, a motet by the Portuguese Vicente Lusitano, who is called “pardo” (of mixed blood) in a seventeenth-century source,\(^{38}\) and Hebrew-texted music by the Italian Jew Salamone Rossi, alongside sacred music by William Byrd, Adrian Willaert, and others.

Sixteenth-century England also gives us a rare example of a named musician of African heritage—John Blanke, trumpeter at the court of Henry VIII. Blanke is even depicted on the 60-foot-long Westminster Tournament Roll, which commemorates the 1511 celebrations of the birth of a son to Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon.\(^{39}\) (That baby, unfortunately, died shortly thereafter.)

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39. This is held at the College of Arms in London; a reproduction of the relevant section of the Roll can be found at “An Evening with John Blanke,” College of Arms, November 10, 2017, https://
Miranda Kaufmann’s book *Black Tudors* presents and contextualizes a number of documents referring to Blanke in her first case study—an accessible reading for students.⁴⁰ Arne Spohr’s recent work on Black court musicians in early modern German states focuses on the seventeenth-century trumpeters Christian Real and Christian Gottlieb. Spohr demonstrates that attitudes toward these musicians of African birth were ambivalent, and that their social and legal status was sometimes complicated.⁴¹ At court, they were valued but also exoticized, and when they left the court for the town, they might find themselves the victims of discrimination and even physical danger.

John Blanke, Christian Real, Christian Gottlieb, and their often-anonymous colleagues not only show us that Black musicians existed, but they also remind us of the non-notated music they played. Although we necessarily spend much of our time focusing on the written traditions of polyphonic music, both monophony and music that was orally transmitted and/or improvised still made up much of most ordinary peoples’ daily musical experiences, even in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Resources such as YouTube are full of reenactments and other materials that, while necessarily speculative and sometimes problematic, can at least shed some light on earlier practices and open space for questions and discussion.

**Colonization and the Jesuits**

The history of the early modern period is shaped not only by developments within Europe, but also by colonization. Music was a useful tool for many groups of colonizers, but perhaps for none so strongly as for the Society of Jesus. Because I teach at a Jesuit university, it is a particularly natural move to consider the use of music in Jesuit missions. The available literature is growing, but I have found especially useful a pair of essays that allow a comparison between the ways music is used to teach Christian doctrine in Brazil and Japan.⁴² In Brazil, sacred texts translated into local languages were initially set to both European

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⁴¹ Arne Spohr, “‘Mohr und Trompeter’: Blackness and Social Status in Early Modern Germany,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 72, no. 3 (Fall 2019): 613–63.
and local melodies, but the bishop complained about the use of native music, so soon only European melodies were used. Native music was used much more freely in the Japanese missions, surely in part reflecting Japan’s identity as an independent state rather than a colony like Brazil. Moreover, Jesuit attitudes were shaped by the hierarchical classification of civilizations articulated by the sixteenth-century Jesuit José de Acosta, who put Japan and China at the highest tier, because of their “highly organised system of public administration, a legal order rooted in culture, and a well-developed literary tradition.” This implicit bias may account for the apparent acquiescence of the Brazilian Jesuits to the bishop’s prohibition of the use of indigenous music in the missions.

Another Jesuit worth attention is Joseph-Marie Amiot, who spent most of his life in China, remaining even after the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773. While there he served as translator for the Chinese emperor, and he compiled a French-Manchu dictionary. Among his many writings on Chinese culture is Mémoire sur la musique des chinois tant anciens que moderns, published in Paris in 1779 with “notes and observations” by Pierre-Joseph Roussier, a theorist who edited Amiot’s work with a heavy hand—Stewart Carter goes so far as to call Roussier “the editor from Hell.” Carter’s essay shows how Roussier both imposed his own theories on Amiot’s text and simplified it with an eye toward his French readers. This shows both the interest in Chinese music in France and the levels of misunderstanding about it. Amiot also compiled a collection of Christian sacred music with Chinese texts and a collection of Divertissements chinois, both written in Chinese characters placed on a western staff; some of this music has been recorded, which allows for discussion of the interpretive decisions made by the performers and questions of cultural appropriation.


Interest in the wider world in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was not limited to European missionaries abroad, as the publication of Amiot’s work in France shows. It is common to consider orientalism when teaching operas from the nineteenth century, but forms of exoticism are worth acknowledging when teaching baroque musical theatre as well. The fifth-act masque of Henry Purcell’s *Fairy Queen* includes a Chinese Man and Woman, as well as a “Monkey’s Dance,” while Jean-Philippe Rameau’s *Les indes galantes* has entrées set in imagined versions of Turkey, Peru, Persia, and North America. There is little or no musical exoticism in either piece, but it can be fruitful to pair them with their more frequently anthologized counterparts (Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas* and Jean-Baptiste Lully’s *Armide*) and discuss with students both the popularity at the time of characters and settings from Asia or North America and the apparent lack of interest in those musics. This can also set the stage for nineteenth-century opera and other works where musical orientalism becomes more apparent.

The first half of most yearlong surveys ends with Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel, powerhouses of the traditional canon. Michael Marissen has shown anti-Jewish elements in the work of both composers, and Bach’s *Schauet doch und sehet*, BWV 46, can easily replace the more commonly anthologized cantatas, allowing discussion of the Lutheran theological idea that the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem was punishment for the rejection of Christ by first-century Jews. For Handel, I draw on David Hunter’s work on Handel’s investments in the Royal African Company. Because I focus on


Handel’s response to market forces in the creation of the English oratorio, I have come to see Hunter’s contribution as a necessary acknowledgement of how deeply embedded the slave trade was in the economy of the time. The end of the survey, then, not only focuses on two composers central to the traditional canon, it also situates them within, on the one hand, the long history of European anti-semitism, and on the other, the colonialist underpinnings of Western art music.

Most of this does not in fact seriously change the core of the narrative, nor does it remove Western art music from the center of the course. Some might condemn me for that. But, as I said at the outset, I think that basic skeleton has value, so my goal here is to extend from it more than to replace it entirely.

Concluding Thoughts

The history of European music in the Middle Ages and early modern period includes cross-Mediterranean contacts, colonial encounters, the persistent prejudice against Jews, women whose contributions are often invisible, and the economic entanglements of European colonialism and the transatlantic slave trade. Acknowledging this more complex story nudges the undergraduate survey away from its traditional emphasis on “great works,” “great men,” and style history, putting more emphasis on the musical world, where written music by named composers is only part of the picture. I will not claim to have achieved a “global history,” nor to have “decolonized” my course—indeed, what I do here may serve more to uncover the colonialist underpinnings of Western art music than to decolonize it. Nevertheless, this approach may have value as a necessary first step, both toward acknowledging the past on which we stand and toward finding a way forward.

To me, this ongoing journey has been valuable not only for its own sake, but also because it serves to expand the focus to include not only composers but also performers, to pay attention to non-notated musical practice as well as the development of notation, and to explore the broad space between notation and sound that is central to early music. This wider scope allows students both to understand music of the past and to consider it within their own present.

I recognize that this kind of work can turn the added material into “tokens” that reinforces their uniqueness. I hope that I have alleviated this potential by putting these new pieces into dialogue with other pieces and shifting the focus toward musical communities. I have also tried to follow the advice of Hussein appears in David Hunter, The Lives of George Frideric Handel (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015).
Fancy who, in a recent webinar on “Race, Racism, and the Middle Ages,” recommended that we show the work involved in adding this material to the course, so students can see the extent to which the traditional approach dominates our own training. 50 One of the difficulties of this process has been that the materials easily available to us too often reinforce the standard narrative, so expanding the field requires considerable work. We are at a turning point, however, where both materials and ideas about how to use them are becoming ever more widely shared. Even during the period of writing this article, new resources have become available, and my own journey is not done.

I sympathize with the criticism of “the imposition and dominance of Western Euro-American systems of knowledge,”51 and I acknowledge that the typical history survey does reflect a white racial frame,52 telling a story that is both Eurocentric and shaped by the age of colonialism. But I also question whether eliminating the survey actually serves to dismantle that frame. Perhaps maintaining that survey, especially the earlier stages of it, but expanding its scope can help show how music became entangled with colonialism, and how it reifies a white racial frame, which may in turn help us to dismantle it.

Appendix: Article Report Assignment

In recent years, I have often used an article report assignment to give students experience reading scholarly literature in music.\textsuperscript{53} The list of articles from which students could choose in fall 2019 follows; nearly every item deals with women, gender, non-Europeans, or European Jews. Over half the articles were written by women, and a couple are by women of color. Just as Thurman and Turner noted the value of playing performances by women and musicians of color, having students read the work of a diverse group of scholars allows all students to see people who look like them engaging in a wide variety of musical practices and as creators of knowledge. This kind of assignment can be a first step toward expanding a traditional survey, because it operates in parallel to the in-class portion of the course.

Monophony:

- Stoessel, Jason. “Voice and Song in Early Encounters between Latins, Mongols, and Persians, ca. 1250–ca. 1350” In \textit{Studies on a Global}

\textsuperscript{53} I used a 3-2-1 assignment format: three important aspects, two aspects the student didn't understand, and one question the student has for the author. See Geraldine Van Gyn, “The Little Assignment with the Big Impact: Reading, Writing, Critical Reflection, and Meaningful Discussion,” \textit{Faculty Focus} (May 6, 2013), https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/course-design-ideas/the-little-assignment-with-the-big-impact-reading-writing-critical-reflection-and-meaningful-discussion/. This is mostly an accountability measure and an opportunity for student reflection, so I didn't spend much time grading them. Students did at least three of these assignments, one for each of the four units, with the fourth report available for extra credit.

Polyphony to c. 1450:

c. 1450–c. 1600:

Baroque:
Austern, Linda Phyllis. “‘No pill’s gonna cure my ill’: Gender, Erotic Melancholy and Traditions of Musical Healing in the Modern West.” In

Lam, Joseph S. C. “Music and Masculinities in Late Ming China.” Asian Music 42, no. 2 (Summer/Fall 2011): 112–34.
