

## **Part Two**

### **Musical practice and theological allegiance in early Stuart England**

## **Introduction**

In the second part of this thesis, we shall be examining the surviving evidence for musical practice in cathedral and collegiate churches in a period mostly coterminous with the reigns of James I and Charles I. As was demonstrated in Part One, little of the discussion about the corruption of music in the 1630s, or indeed at any time previously, was explicit on the specific musical manifestations of the problem. The most detailed accusations were those made by Peter Smart about Cosin's practice at Durham. Taking its cue in part from the issues raised in the Smart/Cosin exchange, and in part from those practices presented in the historiography of the period as defining points of Laudian practice, this second part of the thesis will investigate these issues from a number of angles. Firstly, in Chapter 8, it will examine the surviving music manuscripts, and the theological allegiance (as far as it can be determined) of the institutions in which they were used, to determine which of these sources (and therefore which compositions) were probably used in Laudian or non-Laudian cathedrals or collegiate churches. The chapter will also examine the churchmanship of a number of other institutions where, despite there being no surviving musical manuscripts, significant other evidence of musical practice survives. In the light of this investigation, chapter 9 then investigates the evidence of the use of musical instruments.

The thesis in chapters 10, 11 and 12 then proceeds to examine to what extent a number of specific musical practices (the choral singing of various parts of the liturgy, the use of Latin, the use of non-canonical texts and texts of a royal or national nature, and questions of musical style) can be correlated with institutions of particular theological allegiance. Chapter 10 examines a number of practices to determine whether they were specific to Laudian, as distinct from non-Laudian, institutions, or if any were unique to Cosin, or any other institution, Laudian or otherwise (chapter 10). It will also investigate whether there were any practices, which the rhetorical background suggested should have been controversial, but that were in fact universal in cathedral and collegiate churches (chapter 11). Chapter 12 then examines specific questions of musical style, and demonstrates that the incidence of certain practices fits neither of the two trends investigated in the previous two chapters.

### The state of cathedral music c.1603.

To put this in context, however, an examination of the position of cathedral music at the accession of James is in order, and the prevailing picture, as painted by Peter Le Huray and Alan Smith, is a one of cathedral music at a low ebb.

The situation as suggested by Le Huray and Smith during the reign of Elizabeth was of a persistent malaise in standards of cathedral music, due to the effects of inflation and ‘Puritan’ influence within the church.<sup>1</sup> It is well established that prices rose massively during Elizabeth’s reign, and cathedral incomes, being based on fixed rental income, and the stipends paid to musical staff, being generally fixed by cathedral statutes, declined greatly in real terms.<sup>2</sup> It is also suggested, quite reasonably, although it is difficult fully to establish such a connection, that such hardship may have contributed to the general levels of absenteeism and general misbehaviour amongst singing men, organists and masters of the choristers.<sup>3</sup>

It is also argued, using what seems to the present writer to be less conclusive evidence, that a further contributory factor to the apparent decline in morale was the distaste, and in cases outright hostility, of a predominantly Puritan clergy towards the at best unnecessary and at worst pernicious sung cathedral service.<sup>4</sup> Both Le Huray and Smith cite the evidence of the two attempts in the lower house of Convocation (of 1562) to abolish ‘all curious singing and playing of the organs’ and at the second attempt to remove ‘the use of organs’, and the 1571 injunctions of Bishop Robert Horne for Winchester Cathedral severely restricting the type of music permitted, as

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<sup>1</sup> Roger Bowers, in his study of Canterbury cathedral, suggests that ‘during the 1590s and the first years of the new century, the practice of music [in cathedral and greater churches] was lifted from the relatively depressed state in which it had been labouring thitherto to a new and higher plateau of endeavour, in terms of objective, accomplishment, and – in many quarters – esteem’: ‘Cathedral Liturgy and Music’ in P. Collinson, N. Ramsey, M. Sparkes (eds), *A History of Canterbury Cathedral* (Oxford, OUP, 1995) pp. 408-450: p.438.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Smith, ‘The cultivation of music in England in cathedrals in the reign of Elizabeth’ *PRMA* 94 (1967-8) 37-49; pp. 42-3. Le Huray, *Music and the Reformation in England* pp.39-40. For an indication of the movement in prices, see the Appendix to Alan G.R. Smith, *The Emergence of a Nation State. The commonwealth of England, 1529-1660* (London, Longman, 1984) pp. 436-7.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, ‘Cultivation’ pp. 43-44: Le Huray, *Music and the Reformation* pp.41-44. The accounts of cathedral singers’ misbehaviour, of drunkenness, brawling, absenteeism and moral misconduct are too numerous to cite exhaustively here. See, *inter alia*, Andrew Cornall, *The Practice of Music at Norwich Cathedral c.1558-1649* (U.E.A. M.Mus. 1976) pp.77-94.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, ‘Cultivation’ p.45: Le Huray, *Music and the Reformation* pp.37-40.

evidence of Puritan pressure on musical establishments.<sup>5</sup> However, as both authors admit, the effect ought not to be overstressed, as some figures such as the Genevan exile William Whittingham, Dean of Durham from 1563 to 1579, spent considerable sums of his private income on procuring music from the Chapel Royal for use at Durham, as had already been noted. As was demonstrated in Part One, much debate over the state of the cathedrals found its way into print during Elizabeth's reign. However, much further case study research needs to be done on the cathedral chapters of Elizabethan England and their relationship with their musicians before such hostility can firmly be posited as a cause of an actual decline in standards of cathedral music.

Recent work by Ian Payne has suggested that the last years of Elizabeth's reign saw a significant revival in the activity and expenditure in the sample of cathedrals and Cambridge college chapels examined in his study. From 1580 onwards he detects an increased usage of the organ (on the basis of increased spending on repair), increased music copying, and an increasing instance of the separation of the offices of master of the choristers and organist, thus denoting a greater significance of the organ.<sup>6</sup> While Payne's archival work provides a useful corrective to the picture painted by Le Huray and Smith, his understanding of the causation of this expansion requires some exploration, explained as it is (in the 1580s and 1590s) by 'the growing "high-church" awareness of the role of music in religious ritual which accompanied the weakening of both the Puritan and the Catholic threats by early in the 1590s.' The renewed copying of polyphonic music at Trinity College Cambridge in 1585/6 suggests to Payne 'an embryonic adherence to the Arminian ideal of beauty in worship, which achieved its full strength in the early seventeenth century.'<sup>7</sup> While there was some evidence of a renewed emphasis in Cambridge on non-Calvinist doctrines of grace, it is important not to overstress this, as the Master of Trinity from

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, 'Cultivation' pp. 45-6; Le Huray, *Music and the Reformation* pp.37-9. Horne's 1571 injunction reads:

Item, that in the quire no note shall be used in song that shall drown any word or syllable, or draw out in length or shorten any word or syllable, otherwise than by the nature of the word it is pronounced in common speech, whereby the sentence cannot well be perceived by the hearers. And also the often reports or repeating of notes with words or sentences, whereby the sense may be hindered in the hearer shall not be used.' W.H. Frere (ed.), *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Period of the Reformation vol. 3 1559-1575* (Alcuin Club Collections 16, London, 1910) p.319.

<sup>6</sup> Payne, *Provision and practice* pp.59 – 76.

1577 to 1593, John Still, whilst an opponent of non-conformity, was no Arminian.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the Master from 1593, Thomas Neville, the main patron of music in the college, was in fact one of those divines involved in the refutation of the early attacks on Calvinist doctrine in the University, by Peter Baro and William Barrett, in 1595.<sup>9</sup>

A useful, if limited, yardstick of the vitality of cathedral music in Elizabethan England, and one used by Payne in his analysis, is the number and usage of organs. We shall see below that the early years of James's reign saw numerous examples of new organ building, and renovation of existing instruments. The organ situation under Elizabeth as depicted by Stephen Bicknell is one of stagnation and decline. Bicknell lists some eleven London parish organs removed and sold between 1566 and 1585, and six more in Cambridge and East Anglia up to 1576, plus those in Norwich Cathedral and Queen's and Jesus College, Cambridge.<sup>10</sup> Nicholas Temperley also noted increasing disuse of parish organs between 1570 and 1585, and both record the paucity of new building or significant renovation work done in these organs.<sup>11</sup> However, as Temperley indeed notes, in this a division can be seen between parish and cathedral practice.

It was not the case that cathedral organs had fallen into disuse during the period. The Norwich organ, broken down by a number of the clergy in 1569-70, appears to have been replaced, as some £16 12 s were spent on it in 1577-8.<sup>12</sup> At Rochester, an organ builder was retained, presumably for maintenance, at a fee of £2 p.a. throughout the period in question, as was the choral establishment.<sup>13</sup> Unbroken successions of the combined office of organist and master of the choristers are recorded by Ian Payne at Lincoln, York, King's College, Cambridge, Peterborough

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. pp. 59, 60.

<sup>8</sup> Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists* pp.29-39; H.C.Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge, CUP, 1958) pp. 376-90. On Still's petitioning on behalf of the Puritan Thomas Cartwright, Porter, *Reform and Reaction* p.208; *DNB* 'Still' liv.370-372.

<sup>9</sup> *DNB* xxx.302-3 'Neville'.

<sup>10</sup> *The history of the English organ* (Cambridge, CUP, 1996) p.49.

<sup>11</sup> Temperley, *The music of the English parish church* (Cambridge, CUP, 1979, 2 vols) vol. 1, pp. 43-44; Bicknell, *English organ* pp.45-54. Bicknell does however note the patchy nature of this analysis, noting various examples of new organs being built, in particular in the south west, where the Chappington family continued to build and repair throughout the period.

<sup>12</sup> Cornall, *Norwich* pp.16, 47.

<sup>13</sup> C.S.Knighton, 'The Reformed Chapter 1540-1660' in Nigel Yates, Paul A. Welsby, (eds), *Faith and Fabric: A History of Rochester Cathedral, 604-1994* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 1996) pp.57-76: p.64.

and Ely, amongst others.<sup>14</sup> Although this in itself does not fully indicate the state of the instrument, or the degree to which it was used, it suggests nonetheless a degree of institutional continuity within these musical foundations.

It is also interesting to note that, in some instances, the choral service and the singing of metrical psalms could coexist in the same institution. At Canterbury, a new organ was built in 1565 (an unusual occurrence in the context of Stephen Bicknell's findings, discussed above) and new music copied in 1567-8, probably including music newly composed. However, at the same time the cathedral chapter house, or 'Sermon House' as it became known, was being established as a local preaching centre, with a metrical psalm sung before and after the sermon. So well established was this part of the cathedral's activity that some forty years later a parishioner of a local parish church, St Alphege, recounted using a tune 'in which the said psalme is and hath bin accustomed to be sung in Christ Church.'<sup>15</sup>

It was also the case that choral establishments were maintained throughout Elizabeth's reign in some, albeit unusual, parish churches. The church of Ludlow, as the church of Sir Henry Sidney, and in a centre of governance of the Marches, maintained a choral establishment throughout the period, unusually with the corporation paying the stipends of the musicians. That this establishment used the anthem repertory of the time is clear from surviving music manuscripts, and from an agreement between Sidney and the church, dated 1581, that 'the organs to be used betwene the psalmes and with the Antheme or hymne.'<sup>16</sup>

Patterns of music copying during Elizabeth's reign suggest that we ought not to conceive of the period as barren of musical activity. New music was being copied at Canterbury in 1567-8, and this was followed by more in 1574-5 and 1583. Roger Bowers has made the reasonable suggestion that the description of the first two of these instances as for 'makyng and prckyng' suggests that those being paid were actually composing and copying new music, as the term 'pricking' normally sufficed

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<sup>14</sup> Payne, *Provision and Practice* pp.239-41, 247-49, 254-55, 270-72, 264-66. A similar continuity was the case at Exeter: Matthews, *Organs and Organists of Exeter* pp.22-3. At Salisbury, the accounts contain no references to the organ between 1570 and 1622. However, there was nonetheless an unbroken succession of holders of the position of organist in that period: Betty Matthews, *The Organs and Organists of Salisbury Cathedral, 1480-1972* (no place of publication, 1972) pp. 3-4, 25-6.

<sup>15</sup> Roger Bowers, 'Cathedral Music and Liturgy' pp. 435-6, and Patrick Collinson, 'The Protestant Cathedral', p.179, both in P. Collinson, N. Ramsey, M. Sparkes (eds), *A History of Canterbury Cathedral* (Oxford, OUP, 1995), pp.408-450 and pp. 154-203 respectively.

<sup>16</sup> Alan Smith, 'Elizabethan church music at Ludlow' *M&L* 49 (1968) 108-21, pp.110-13.

for copying.<sup>17</sup> At Ludlow, Alan Smith records some five payments for music copying of some sort between 1559 and 1569.<sup>18</sup> Ian Payne has argued however that the major spate of copying under Elizabeth occurred in the 1580s and 1590s at Trinity, Cambridge, York, Lincoln and Norwich, and it is indeed the case that these instances of copying of new music in the 1560s were limited in number.<sup>19</sup>

The situation then in cathedral music in 1603 was not one of complete neglect, but at the same time those signs of vitality that we have identified were unevenly spread.

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<sup>17</sup> Bowers, 'Cathedral Liturgy and Music' p.436.

<sup>18</sup> Smith, 'Ludlow' p.111.

<sup>19</sup> Payne, *Provision and Practice* p.60, 64, 65, 73.