

Conclusion

The central concern of this thesis was to explore the ways in which people in early Stuart England understood the place of music in worship, its effect on the auditor, and the task of determining what was appropriate music for the task. Central to this was the task of exploring the validity of the trend in current historiography to assign to the 'Laudian' movement a polemically and practically distinctive view of music in worship.

Part One dealt with contemporary published and manuscript discussions of the nature and role of music. It was concluded that the forcible removal and destruction of organs and other musical equipment in the 1640s was not due to a settled, considered and distinctive 'Puritan' view of the right or wrong use of music, but rather that music had become associated with one of the two burgeoning conspiracy theories of Popish tyranny and Puritan profanity and subversion that Peter Lake has identified. In subsequent chapters it was demonstrated that writers of all theological labels could deploy the language of the engagement of the understanding, of edification and of music 'rightly used.' The use of any of these terms cannot therefore be taken in itself to exemplify one or the other side of a polarised debate over the nature of music in worship.

In successive examinations of the treatments of Biblical precedent, the witness of the early church and the reformed churches of continental Europe, the fundamentally ambiguous nature of these authorities was elucidated. Also explored was the complex and diffuse background of classical and medieval understandings of the place of music in the ordering of the cosmos, its affinity with man's nature and its various consequent effects on him. Authoritative writings on church music had been able to find and utilise two equally powerful but mutually contradictory principles. On the one hand, music was uniquely powerful to stir up the heart of the worshipper, to inculcate doctrine and add to the spirit of the body of the church. At the same time, however, music was also terrifyingly able to distract, deprave and corrupt, and to prevent the engagement of the heart with divine truth. As this fissure was present in the catalogue of authorities available to thinkers in early Stuart England, so was it perpetuated in the discussions of music in the period, with almost all authors assenting to both principles in general, with very few attempts being made to explore how a balance might be struck in practice. This pattern was found to cut across

categories of ‘Laudian’ or ‘Puritan’, as these ideas concerning the ‘right’ role of music were in fact almost universally axiomatic in the discourse of the period.

In Part Two, the thesis considered the surviving musicological evidence of practice in cathedral and collegiate churches from 1603 onwards, to attempt to discern any patterns of distinctive usage in ‘Laudian’ institutions, to which the polemical reaction of Chapter 1 can be attributed. It was in fact found that the evidence provided a number of varied patterns.

With regard to the use of musical instruments (organs, viols, and sackbuts and cornets) it was found in Chapter 9 that little distinctively Laudian activity could be found. Expenditure on the provision and repair of organs predated Laudian influence, was not universal to Laudian chapters, and was to be found in chapters not under the direct influence of Laudian clergy. Similarly there is no evidence of novel use of other instruments in Laudian chapters. In fact, what very little evidence there is of such experimentation was found to be occurring independently of Laudian influence. In this, Laudian chapters were indistinguishable from what had been common practice in most, if not all, Jacobean cathedrals.

In the areas of the utilisation of music at unusual parts of the liturgy, the choice of anthem texts, and in questions of compositional style, a number of different patterns were identified. In some cases, as demonstrated in Chapter 10, the practices of John Cosin at Peterhouse, Cambridge and Durham Cathedral were entirely unique, being repeated neither in non-Laudian institutions nor in other Laudian churches. In other cases the Chapel Royal practice, which cannot easily be called ‘Laudian’, was found to be distinctive from both Cosin’s practice and elsewhere, (Chapter 12). Finally in some areas, such as the use of *contrafacta*, and the incidence of anthems with Sternhold and Hopkins texts, no clear division can be found at all, with these pieces being evenly spread across all types of surviving sources (Chapter 11). It was therefore the case that much ‘Laudian’ practice was indistinguishable from that in non-Laudian cathedrals, and that the habit of scholars to extrapolate a ‘Laudian’ style from the work of Cosin is a misleading one.

Overall, it is then possible to conclude that the historiographically established place that church music has been given in the Laudian experiment, either in theory or practice, is a problematic one. It was certainly the case that the most advanced musical practice was carried out under the ‘Laudian’ John Cosin. It can also be argued that the most elevated rhetoric tended to be employed by Laudian figures,

although not exclusively. However, any link that there was between Laudian churchmanship and elaborate church music can only be described as a contingent, rather than a necessary, one. As Part One demonstrated, any such tendency was not founded on a distinctive theological understanding of the role of music in worship among Laudian thinkers. It was also the case that any such link was not uniformly applicable in practice, as Part Two has shown. It is therefore difficult to posit a distinctive Laudian understanding of, or practice in, church music.