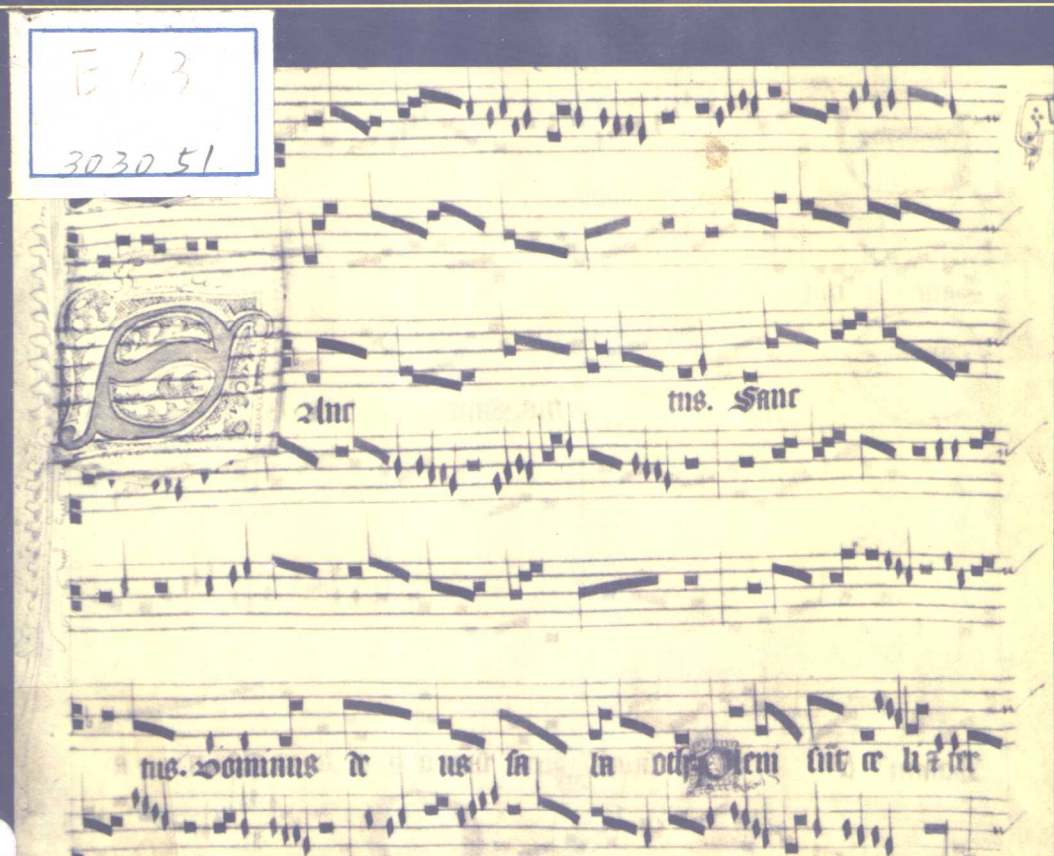


THE OXFORD HISTORY OF ENGLISH MUSIC

∞ VOLUME I ∞

From the Beginnings to c.1715



JOHN CALDWELL

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FRONTISPIECE. British Library, MS Add. 57950, fo. 81^r
(early 15th century: see Ex. 47)

To Janet, Peter, and Sarah

not forgetting

Dorabella and Fiordiligi,

*whose constant need for personal services
during the decade of this book's composition
has considerably delayed its eventual completion*

Preface



THIS book owes its inception to a suggestion made many years ago that I might write a replacement for Ernest Walker's *History of Music in England*, the third edition of which appeared, substantially revised by J. A. Westrup, in 1952. I say 'inception' advisedly, since neither I nor the publisher foresaw the extent to which the project would have to grow in order to attain even a modest degree of comprehensiveness. In the event the new work, now entitled *The Oxford History of English Music*, has been divided into two volumes, a decision that has solved some problems and created others.

My definition of 'English Music' is inevitably wide and flexible. England absorbed a great deal of French culture in the Middle Ages, and it is not always easy to say whether a piece of music in an 'English' manuscript is English or not, even in a narrow geographical sense. The difference in nationhood was nevertheless apparent to contemporaries, even to the majority of the educated and well-to-do who wrote Latin and spoke French; and we should endeavour as far as possible to maintain and recognize the distinction as regards musical origins. Nearer to home, the word 'English' may grate upon the sensibilities of those from outside English borders who notice that Scottish and, in the next volume, Welsh and Irish matters are touched upon now and again. But 'British' would have been equally unsatisfactory, and I wanted to avoid giving the impression by the use of still more inclusive language that an account of music throughout these islands was being attempted. The intention, rather, is to discuss only those aspects of music outside England that can be illuminated by the comparison or that embody a substantial English element.

The division into two volumes, though forced on me by circumstances, has enabled me to make a small historiographical point. The date c.1715 may look odd in view of the change of dynasty in 1714, but the latter does not have quite the significance for musical history as it does for political. At the same time it is not unconnected with the profound changes that one can observe during the years 1711–20. At the beginning of that decade, Handel arrived in London to participate in a lively if somewhat decadent musical culture; by the end of it he had established himself as the major figure on the English musical scene. English music had ceased to be post-Purcellian; it had become thoroughly Italianate, and it was Handel who

rescued the idiom from its potential for triviality. The consequences of that coup are matter for my second volume; in the meantime it is pleasant to reflect on the historical irony that brought to the English throne the very employer from whom Handel had overstayed his leave. The guarantee of stability provided by the Act of Succession was paralleled by the teutonic solidity offered by Handel, in its own way a guarantee of musical continuity in this country.

I am grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for the award of a Fellowship that facilitated the profitable use of a sabbatical year while the research for this volume was at a crucial stage. My personal debts to individuals during what has become a very long haul are too numerous to mention in full, but I wish particularly to thank those who read substantial parts of the typescript and by whose comments I have been saved from many a blunder and omission: Professor Brian Trowell, Dr Christopher Page, Dr Andrew Wathey, Dr John Milsom, and Dr Harry Johnstone. Dr F. W. Sternfeld has given invaluable advice and encouragement from the inception of the book onwards. I need hardly add they are not responsible for errors and inadequacies remaining; for these, I alone must take the blame. I also acknowledge with pleasure the encouragement and assistance of the staff of Oxford University Press, in particular Bruce Phillips and David Blackwell. My greatest debt, however, is to my wife, Janet, who has transformed a chaotic bundle of manuscript and typed material into a series of immaculately word-processed files, always with the greatest tact and efficiency; the index in particular is as much her work as mine. My dedication reflects my obligation not only to her, but to a family whose growing pains have largely coincided with those of this book, and whose members have put more into it than they know.

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1991

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- II Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson g. 22, fos. 1^r, 1^v (13th century: see Ex. 7)
- III Oxford Bodleian Library, MS Digby 90, fo. 45^r (*Quatuor principalia musice*, 1351, copied between then and 1388)
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Abbreviations



THE following, in addition to those in common use, are employed in the footnotes and bibliography. Where full details are given here the item is not repeated in the bibliography; nor are details given of easily found journals and some other series.

<i>AcM</i>	<i>Acta Musicologica</i>
AH	Analecta hymnica medii aevi, ed. G. M. Dreves, C. Blume, and H. M. Bannister, 55 vols. (Leipzig, 1886–1922). <i>Register</i> , ed. M. Lütolf, 2 vols. in 3 (Berne and Munich, 1978)
AIM	American Institute of Musicology
<i>AMw</i>	<i>Archiv für Musikwissenschaft</i>
<i>AnnM</i>	<i>Annales Musicologiques</i>
AS	<i>Antiphonale Sarisburiense</i> (fac.), ed. W. H. Frere, 6 vols. (London: PMMS, 1901–25; repr. Farnborough: Gregg, 1966)
BGPM	<i>Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters</i>
BUCEM	<i>British Union Catalogue of Early Music</i> , ed. E. Schnapper, 2 vols. (London, 1957)
CEKM	Corpus of Early Keyboard Music, ed. W. Apel and others (AIM, 1963–)
CMM	Corpus Mensurabilis Musicae, ed. A. Carapetyan and others (Rome, etc.: AIM, 1947–)
CNRS	(Éditions du) Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
CS	Scriptorum de Musica ... Nova Series, ed. E. H. de Coussemaker, 4 vols. (Paris, 1864–76; repr. Milan, 1931; Hildesheim, 1966)
CSM	Corpus Scriptorum de Musica, ed. A. Carapetyan (Rome, etc.: AIM, 1950–)
DPL	Documenta Polyphoniae Liturgicae Sanctae Ecclesiae Romanae, ed. L. Feininger, 13 vols. (Rome and Trent: Societas Universalis Sanctae Ceciliae, 1947–52)
DTO	Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich, ed. G. Adler and others (Vienna and Graz: Artaria, 1894–)
EBM	<i>Early Bodleian Music</i> , 3 vols., ed. Sir J. Stainer (vols. 1–2) and E. W. B. Nicholson (vol. 3) (London: Novello, 1901–13)
EECM	Early English Church Music, ed. F. Ll. Harrison and others (London: Stainer and Bell, 1963–)

- EEH *Early English Harmony*, vol. i, ed. H. E. Wooldridge (fac.) (London: PMMS, 1897)
- EETS Early English Text Society
- ELS The English Lute-Songs (= The English School of Lutenist Song Writers, ed. E. H. Fellowes, 32 vols. in 2 series (London: Stainer and Bell, 1920–32); rev. R. T. Dart and others, 1959–)
- ELS (fac.) *English Lute Songs, 1597–1632: A Collection of Facsimile Reprints*, ed. F. W. Sternfeld (Menston: Scholar Press, 1967–9)
- EM The English Madrigalists (= The English Madrigal School, ed. E. H. Fellowes (London: Stainer and Bell, 1914–24); rev. R. T. Dart and others, 1958–)
- EMH *Early Music History*, ed. I. Fenlon (Cambridge, 1981–)
- EMV *English Madrigal Verse 1588–1632*, ed. E. H. Fellowes (Oxford, 1920; 3rd rev. edn. by F. W. Sternfeld and D. Greer, 1967). References are to the 3rd edition
- ESLS English School of Lutenist Song Writers (see ELS)
- ESPHT *English and Scottish Psalm and Hymn Tunes c.1543–1677*, ed. M. Frost (London: SPCK and OUP, 1953)
- GS *Graduale Sarisburiense* (fac.), ed. W. H. Frere, 2 vols. (London: PMMS, 1894; repr. in 1 vol., Farnborough: Gregg, 1966)
- GSJ *Galpin Society Journal*
- HBS Henry Bradshaw Society, Publications of (London, etc., 1891–)
- IMM Institute of Medieval Music
- JAMS *Journal of the American Musicological Society*
- JPMMS *Journal of the Plainsong and Medieval Musical Society*
- JRMA *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*
- LSJ *Lute Society Journal*
- MB *Musica Britannica* (London: Stainer and Bell for the Royal Musical Association, 1951–)
- MC *Musica da Camera*, ed. J. Caldwell (London: OUP, 1972–)
- MD *Musica Disciplina*
- MGG *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. F. Blume, 16 vols. (Kassel and Basel, 1949–79)
- ML *Music and Letters*
- MLE *Music for London Entertainment 1660–1800* (Tunbridge Wells: Richard Macnutt, 1983–7; London: Stainer and Bell, 1988–)
- MMMLF *Monuments of Music and Music Literature in Facsimile* (New York: Broude Bros.)
- MQ *Musical Quarterly*
- MR *Music Review*
- MSD *Musicological Studies and Documents*
- MT *Musical Times*

NGD	<i>The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians</i> , ed. S. Sadie, 20 vols. (London, 1981)
NOHM	<i>The New Oxford History of Music</i> , ed. J. A. Westrup and others, 10 vols. (London and Oxford, 1954–90)
PMA	<i>Proceedings of the Musical Association</i>
PMFC	Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century, ed. L. Schrade and others (Monaco: Éditions de l'Oiseau-lyre, 1956–85)
PMMS	Plainsong and Medieval Music Society
PRMA	<i>Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association</i>
PS	<i>The Works of Henry Purcell</i> (Purcell Society)
RBMAS	Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores (Rolls Series), 99 vols. (London, 1858–96)
RISM	<i>Répertoire International des Sources Musicales</i> (Munich and Duisberg, 1960–)
RMARC	<i>Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle</i>
RRMBE	Recent Researches in Music of the Baroque Era
RRMR	Recent Researches in Music of the Renaissance
SBK	Stainer and Bell, Keyboard Series
SS	Surtees Society, Publications of
STC	<i>A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland . . . 1475–1640</i> , 2nd edn. by W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and K. F. Pantzer, 3 vols. (London, 1976–90)
TCM	Tudor Church Music, ed. E. H. Fellowes and others, 10 vols. (London: OUP, 1922–9); Appendix (London, 1948)
TVNM	<i>Tijdschrift der Vereeniging voor Nederlands Musikgeschiedenis</i>

Author's Note



SMALL roman numerals refer to volumes, arabic numerals to pages, except that arabic numerals are used for volumes of journals and, following an oblique stroke, for parts of a volume. Large roman numerals refer to a series within a collection. In the books of the Bible, small roman numerals indicate the chapter or psalm number in the Vulgate Latin, arabic numerals those of the Authorized Version (which in the Old Testament follows the Hebrew). In both cases the verse, if cited, follows in arabic after a colon. For example, Ps. cxviii: 1 (Latin) = Ps. 119: 1 (English), though the verses are not always identical.

References to musical pitches are to the Helmholtz system (*C* = cello *C*; *c* = viola *C*; *c'* = middle *C*, etc.). The anachronistic but convenient convention *a* 2, *a* 3, and so on, refers to polyphonic music in two, three (etc.) strict parts. In the musical examples, time-values are generally reduced (by the amount stated) in Chapters 1–5; but not thereafter, although some examples are transposed if the written pitch is seriously misleading. Small accidentals are implied by but not stated in the source, while those above the staff or in square brackets are purely editorial. English texts set to music are given in the original orthography in Chapters 1–4; thereafter, except where stated, they are modernized (to avoid inconsistencies between part-books or different editions), although titles (but not first lines) and literary quotations retain the original spelling wherever possible. Medieval Latin texts are given a medieval orthography, later ones that of the source used.

In the first four chapters, part-names, including *tenor*, are treated as Latin technical terms referring primarily to polyphonic function rather than to vocal range, and are given in italic type; thereafter they are treated as voice-parts in the modern sense and are given in roman type, even if in Latin. In Anglican music the terms 'decani' ('of the dean') and 'cantoris' ('of the cantor') are used of the south and north sides of the choir respectively and are sometimes abbreviated in the examples to 'Dec' and 'Can'. Other abbreviations used in some of the examples are Tr (triplex or treble), M (medius or mean), Ct (contratenor or countertenor), T (tenor), and B (bass or bassus).

References to the calendar year are adjusted to begin on 1 January; dates refer to the Julian calendar throughout the period covered by this book. Thus Charles I was executed on 30 January (not 10 February) 1649 (not 1648). There are no references to Continental dates after 1581.

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FROM THE BEGINNINGS TO THE MIDDLE OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

WHEN during the course of the fifth century Britain was first colonized by Germanic peoples in appreciable numbers, they brought with them a long-standing tradition of sung narrative poetry, which according to Tacitus was their only record of the past.¹ Although similar traditions no doubt already belonged both to the Celtic peoples whom they eventually supplanted in most parts of Britain, and to the Scandinavians who invaded and settled in large numbers from the end of the eighth century, it was in the context of the Anglo-Saxon language and culture that the genre first made a noticeable impact on the artistic life of the country. The great monument of this tradition is *Beowulf*, a poem of over 3,000 lines and the oldest epic in any Germanic language. Neither its date nor its place of origin is known for certain, but an eighth-century Midlands or Northern milieu is generally assumed. The single manuscript in which it has come down to us, however, was written in Wessex in the tenth century, and it is uncertain how closely the extant version resembles chanted heroic poetry, orally composed and orally handed down from singer to singer. Nor do we know to what extent the poem, even if faithfully recorded in the first instance from an authoritative branch of the oral tradition, was subsequently modified on the basis of written copies. In all probability a poet of genius has at some point refined and polished a rougher original, perhaps arranging a number of distinct lays into a single cohesive narrative. That, after all, is a plausible view of the Homeric poems, or, in a period long after that of *Beowulf*, such European masterpieces as the *Chanson de Roland* and the *Nibelungenlied*.

The musical nature of the *Beowulf* poem or its unwritten ancestor is also a matter that has occasioned a good deal of speculation. But while

¹ *Germania*, ch. 2.

the structure of alliterative verse may lead to certain conclusions, the precise rhythms and the melodic contours, the nature of the accompaniment and its relation to the vocal line, can only be conjectural.²

The main interest of *Beowulf* in musical history is as a source for the social context of singing and 'harping' in heroic terms. As in the *Iliad*, music-making is as likely to be by the aristocrat as by the professional. After the defeat of the monster Grendel 'a fellow of the king's . . . wrought a new lay made in the measure'.³ Improvised as it was on horseback during the journey home, no mention is made of any musical content: but this is surely the kind of thing which, recollected in the tranquillity of the king's hall, would have been given a musical setting either by the versifier himself or by a professional singer. The discovery of a hoard of treasure, and the reflection that the men who amassed it have wholly disappeared, gives rise to the comment 'there's no joy from harp-play, gleewood's gladness'.⁴ The word 'harp' (as verb or noun) must refer in this poem not to the triangular or quadrangular instrument later so called, but to a form of lyre known from a number of survivals and representations from the ancient Germanic world. The most spectacular of these survivals, and one which is lent an added significance by its discovery in a ship-burial analogous to that described at the beginning of *Beowulf*,⁵ is the extensive remains of a musical instrument found at the Sutton Hoo site in 1939. Though originally reconstructed as a quadrangular harp, it has more recently been appreciated that it must have been a 'round lyre' of the Germanic, and more specifically Anglo-Saxon, type, and it is now displayed as such, side by side with the original fragments and much else of great historical interest, in the British Museum.⁶ We shall never know the exact nature of the music played on such an instrument; but the small number of its strings (six) suggests a gapped tuning suitable for the accompaniment of song, while its quiet tone would have been appropriate both to the performance of a professional singer before a hushed audience and to the private amusement of an aristocrat.

Singing to such an instrument must have been an accomplishment which permeated several layers of Anglo-Saxon society. Apart from the hints in

² For a recent thorough discussion of the issues involved, with reference to earlier writers, see J. Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages: Song, Narrative, Dance and Drama, 1050-1350* (Cambridge, 1986), 204-12.

³ ll. 867-71. This quotation and the next are from the translation of extracts from *Beowulf* in M. Alexander, *The Earliest English Poems* (Harmondsworth, 1966). Cf. *Beowulf*, ed. with an intro., notes, and prose transl., by M. Swanton (Manchester, 1978), the most useful edition for the general reader.

⁴ ll. 2262-3.

⁵ ll. 26-52; Alexander, *Earliest English Poems*, 49.

⁶ Cf. Plate VI. For the details of this and other Germanic lyres see R. and M. Bruce-Mitford, 'The Sutton Hoo Lyre, *Beowulf*, and the Origins of the Frame Harp', *Antiquity*, 44 (1970), 7-13.

Beowulf, the representation in more than one psalter of King David playing the lyre suggests an aristocratic use, while the well-known story of St Aldhelm retaining his congregation for the sermon after Mass by addressing them in the manner of a minstrel⁷ is scarcely less apposite. Bede's account of Cædmon's shame at being unable to play when the 'cithara' was handed round after a meal gives a vivid picture of the level of accomplishment expected at a lower social level,⁸ while *Widsith*, which is believed to incorporate some of the oldest poems in the English language, is the story of a widely travelled minstrel, or *scop*, and his repertory of ancient Germanic legend.⁹ Much of this evidence illustrates the adaptation of a heathen practice to the purposes of the church—Cædmon's inspiration, when it came, was of a wholly religious kind—and it prompts the conjecture that the singing of alliterative verse may have resembled, or become assimilated to, the idioms of Christian psalmody.

The lyre was eventually superseded in England as the minstrel's instrument *par excellence* by the true harp, although it survived for several centuries in a modified form both as a plucked instrument and, as the *chorus* or *crowd* (from the Welsh word *crwth*) as a bowed instrument. The origin of the harp in medieval Europe is in many ways a mystery. The large triangular form, as tall as the player, is already found carved on Scottish standing stones of the ninth and tenth centuries, which tends to confirm an insular origin; while in subsequent epochs a wide variety of sizes and shapes can be seen. The Junius XI manuscript in the Bodleian Library, of the tenth or early eleventh century, already shows the smaller triangular form, resting on the player's knee, perhaps the most characteristic type of the Middle Ages.¹⁰ The word *hearpe* eventually came to denote this instrument alone, though for a time it must have referred to both lyre and harp. The newer instrument may have owed its popularity in England to its suitability for a wide repertory and a more brilliant manner of performance, perhaps as much in solo instrumental music as in accompanying the voice. A passage in the poem known as *The Fortunes of Men* seems to illustrate this type of virtuoso music, the province of the skilled, if indigent, professional:

Another shall sit with his harp at his lord's feet, and shall receive payment; and

⁷ 'quasi artem cantitandi professum'. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum*, ed. N.E.S.A. Hamilton, RBMAS, lii (1870), 336. The story is derived from King Alfred's lost *Handboc*. Cf. Aldhelm, *De virginitate*, ll. 67-74.

⁸ *Historia ecclesiastica*, iv, ch. 22.

⁹ Alexander, *Earliest English Poems*, 38-42.

¹⁰ R. and M. Bruce-Mitford, 'The Sutton Hoo Lyre', 11-12. A small quadrangular type also existed, though this is sometimes hard to distinguish, especially when carved on standing stones, from the Celtic *crut* (or *cro*; Lat. *rotta* etc., Welsh *crwth*), which is a form of lyre.