

CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN MUSIC

# Patrons and Musicians of the English Renaissance

David C. Price



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## *To My Parents*

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Thomas Mann, *Doctor Faustus*,  
trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter  
(Harmondsworth), ch. 31.



## FOREWORD

THE POSSIBILITY of a study of this nature was first suggested to me by the apparent evidence of close, creative relations between musicians and patrons contained in the dedications to music publications of all kinds printed between 1570 and 1630. These dedications had never been comprehensively examined before, nor had their inferences of special service been fully considered in the context of English social and cultural history. A closer study of these inferences required in turn a closer study of accepted concepts of the Elizabethan period as a 'Golden Age' of domestic music-making. Fortunately, this idealisation of the social atmosphere surrounding the performance and composition of madrigal and lute-song music, so current in musicological and historical scholarship before the Second World War, had already been severely undermined by the publication of W. Woodfill's *Musicians in English Society from Elizabeth I to Charles I*, and the sceptical attitude of this work towards the flourishing of household music between 1560 and 1630 has been little challenged in recent years. Indeed, it was partly supported by the publication of J. Kerman's *The Elizabethan Madrigal*, in which the Elizabethan music publishing trade was relegated to the position of a temporary, amateur-league affair in comparison with the greater publishing ventures attempted successfully – and much earlier – in other parts of sixteenth-century Europe.

It is inevitable that this study of a network of enlightened musical patronage, undoubtedly an amateur network but one which may have provided the literate market and stimulus for the English music publishing trade, has had to refer continually to these critical works. Important too was the chronological and cultural context provided by J. Stevens, *Music and Poetry at the Early Tudor Court* and by J. Westrup, 'Domestic Music under the Stuarts'.

It seemed clear to me from all these studies that the period of private

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musical patronage *c.* 1550–1630 could only be treated historically if the implications of enlightened patronage contained in the published dedications were related to the pre-Reformation period, to the Reformation crisis itself, to the contemporary extension of literacy and education and to possible developments or decline after 1630. In other words, secular musical patronage could only be considered in relation to a complex of religious, political, social and economic developments throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Indeed, I found the concept of ‘secular’ patronage in itself ambiguous as a description of private musical interest at this time. Much of this interest was dictated by the necessities of a religious crisis which prevented many musicians from enjoying a secure career in the Church. ‘Secular’ was therefore related to ‘religious’ musical activity. One example of this was the way that private individuals continued to encourage their own chapel music and, in addition, ‘secular’ music of all kinds – especially after the so-called Elizabethan Settlement. No better witness to this interdependence of interests can be found than the corpus of Elizabethan and early Jacobean musical manuscripts which, although not of a liturgical source, contain music of both a secular and devotional nature and also music which could clearly be enjoyed as ‘dual-purpose’, suitable for both domestic and church worship.

One way therefore in which this aspect of the present study could be defined is by negatives. It is not primarily concerned with the employment of musicians, singers and composers by the Church. Neither is it primarily concerned with religious composition, with the Chapel Royal or cathedral performance (nor incidentally with theatre music). It is however a study of the creative and financial assistance which individuals or groups of individuals gave to the performance and composition of music for personal rather than for public or institutional satisfaction. This emphasis on a loosely-defined but increasingly active ‘milieu’, one in which private music as a recreation was paramount, has inevitably involved recognition of various processes whereby religious and secular stimuli were related – of cathedral, Chapel Royal and private employment as an example of combined patronage, of devotional music as an integral part of domestic worship and recreation, of the impetus to private collection and performance which extreme religious loyalties provided. The Court’s musical life

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has also been closely examined not only because it was – at least in the earlier sixteenth century – the centre of musical resources and continued to be the inspiration to private, cultivated households, but also because it was the fount of all patronage and dual employment in the musical service of the Court, and the Chapel Royal was the final ambition of all literate musicians. Moreover the mutual dependence of the religious and secular, itself both a symptom and cause of the music profession's dilemma in the late sixteenth century, I found to be matched by the cultural interdependence of the Court, the epitome of public position and private interest, and the country house.

Will this still be a very partial account of sixteenth-century musical culture? Yes, but in the sense in which any study involved with the composition and performance of written music, rather than with the immensely fertile oral and folk music traditions of the period, must give prior consideration to those members of society who could afford to employ musicians, attend music teachers, purchase music publications and who had enough leisure to enjoy the fruits of such investment, both spiritual and material. It is however a remarkable and highly attractive aspect of English musical life at this time, at least until the later Jacobean period, that this society was flexible and intimate enough to share musical experience. Not only were folk and ballad tunes a vital stimulus to art music and poetry, a stimulus shared by both Henrician and Elizabethan court culture, but private households also continued to enjoy the visits of maskers, mummers, jugglers, clowns, harpers, bagpipers and morris-dancers, indeed all the representatives of what is termed, for good or ill, the 'folk' tradition, until well into the seventeenth century and in some places well after. In the same spirit of exchange provincial city waits, private household musicians, theatre consorts, livery bands, ambassadors' musical retinues, university players and Court musicians performed often and publicly enough for the general populace of town and country to be reasonably aware of expertise, of familiar tunes in unfamiliar arrangements and of a refined musical experience not so far from their own. A remarkable number of Elizabethan and Jacobean parish inventories mention house virginals on which, for example, a ballad tune could easily be learnt. Similarly, financial and social ambitions were intense enough and the possibilities of promotion general enough to guarantee that no single section of

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this society could be considered the exclusive dispenser of cultural patronage. Written music did not belong solely to a self-chosen élite. On the other hand it cannot be denied that musical pursuits were encouraged and satirised in dramatic and courtly literature as a confirmation or failure of good breeding. 'Private Musicke' did contain an implication of intimacy, even a hint of snobbery, attractive as a mark of gentility to families conscious of their social rank. The Elizabethan and early Jacobean musical profession could not have survived its birth-pangs, even in the haphazard way it did, without the social, financial and often genuinely creative help of the higher reaches of Court and country society. However this interest was not confined within special limits or groups. It could be and often was revealed by both Roman Catholic and Puritan, old and new nobility, academic and merchant community, metropolitan and provincial household alike. No attempt at quantitative analysis of numbers involved would be worth making – artistic interest being primarily a matter of quality – but it is well to remember that the intensity of musical experience reflected in household accounts, dedications and contemporary literature was as much enjoyed by members of the professional classes – by clerks, shopkeepers, stewards and schoolmasters – as by the best of best society. This middle-class interest in musical literacy and composition, although not of decisive importance in the period considered here, at least heralded the major part the general public was to play in developing a more independent music profession by the later seventeenth century.

Finally, having discussed the problem of selectivity I should also mention that of insularity: a charge which might be brought against a study of solely English musical patronage. My defence is that it would have been impossible to complete this study without considering the uniquely powerful influence which European music and musicians, especially those of Italy and the Lowlands, exercised on the composition, performance and mode of enjoyment of music in England by the late sixteenth century. The travels of English musicians abroad, their reception at foreign courts, the import of foreign music publications, indeed of foreign composers, all added a further dimension to the quality of amateur musical patronage at this time, to the flexibility of English musical life and have, it is hoped, to the horizons of this book itself.



## PREFACE

IN THIS STUDY the staple of cross-reference to the dedications has been the accounts and papers of private families. Fortunately, some of the basic material in relevant household archives and centrally-deposited family holdings had already been collected by W. Woodfill and published as an Appendix to his book. This material has been checked during my researches, re-analysed, and, except where indicated, the conclusions drawn are basically my own. Where the signs seemed favourable this evidence has also been supplemented by an examination of relevant family documents, accounts and musical manuscripts, some of which have only been traced since Woodfill published his book in 1948. The corpus of this material was, naturally enough, defined by its availability and relevance. Any hope of a comprehensive pursuit of all the hints of patronage contained in the musical dedications, a pursuit through every helpful household muniment room, could not be sustained. My necessarily limited ambition was to draw attention to possible trends in Elizabethan and early Jacobean musical patronage for the guidance of future scholars, performers and laymen.

I should like to thank for their invaluable advice and assistance while I was attempting to fulfil this: the staff of the Manuscript Room and Royal Music Library of the British Library; the staff of the Manuscript, Rare Books and Readers Rooms of the Cambridge University Library; the staff of the Duke Humphrey Room of the Bodleian Library Oxford; the staff of the Lambeth Palace Library, of the Public Record Office, of the Lincoln Record Office, of the Berkshire Record Office, of the Essex Record Office, of the Surrey Record Office, of the College of Arms London, of the Trinity College Library Cambridge, of the Christ Church Library Oxford, and of the Guildhall Library London. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Duke of Devonshire for his Grace's permission to visit the library at Chatsworth, and to

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the Marquess of Bath for allowing me to inspect the manuscripts at Longleat. Individual thanks must also be extended to Mr B. C. Jones of Carlisle Record Office, to Mr Felix Hull of Kent Record Office, to Miss A. Green of Berkshire Record Office, to Mr S. Thomas of Staffordshire Record Office, to Mr S. Newton of East Sussex Record Office, to Miss Shelia Craik of Glasgow University Library, to Mr K. Hall of West Suffolk Record Office, to Miss Sheila Macpherson of Cumberland and Westmorland Record Office, to Mr P. I. King of Northamptonshire Record Office, to Miss Jean Kennedy of Norfolk and Norwich Record Office, to Dr Patrick Strong of Eton College Library, to Mr R. Harcourt Williams of Hatfield House Library, to Professor Peter Aston of the University of East Anglia, to Sir Giles Isham of Lamport Hall Northampton, to Dr Roy Strong of the Victoria and Albert Museum, to Mr F. G. Emmison, formerly County Archivist of Essex, to the librarian of the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge, to Mr S. Buck of St John's College Library Cambridge, to the late Dr Charles Cudworth of the Pendlebury Music Library Cambridge, to Mr W. O'Sullivan of Trinity College Library Dublin, to Mr D. Hubert-Johnson of the College of Arms, and to Mr Derek Williams of the Music Room, Cambridge University Library. All gave me advice on the availability of evidence and therefore helped to define the initial boundaries of this study.

Finally, I would like to thank those whose consistent personal interest and advice sustained the research for this book: Dr P. le Huray, Professor John Stevens, Dr Glen Cavaliero, Professor Charles Wilson, Dr H. C. Porter, Mrs Margaret Bowker, Dr Roy Porter, Mr Andrew Duff, Mr Ian Adamsen, all of Cambridge University; Mr John Thomson of Oxford University Press; the Council of St John's College Cambridge; Dr David Streiff; and most of all my parents – to whom this book is dedicated.

D.C.P.

*July 1977, Volterra*

## ABBREVIATIONS

B.L.	British Library
Bodl.	Bodleian Library Oxford
C.A.	College of Arms London
Chats.	Chatsworth Derbyshire
C.U.L.	Cambridge University Library
E.R.O.	Essex Record Office Chelmsford
Lam.Pal.	Lambeth Palace
Lincs.R.O.	Lincoln Record Office
Long.	Longleat Wiltshire
Notts.U.L.	Nottingham University Library
P.R.O.	Public Record Office
<i>Cal.S.P.Dom.</i>	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series</i> , ed. R. Lemon and M. A. E. Green (1856-72)
<i>Dict.Nat.Biog.</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> , London 1885-
<i>H.M.C.</i>	<i>Historical Manuscripts Commission Reports</i>
<i>L.P.</i>	<i>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII, preserved in the Public Record Office, the British Museum and elsewhere</i> vol. I catalogued by J. S. Brewer, 2nd edn by R. H. Brodie, London 1920 vols. II-IV catalogued by J. S. Brewer, London 1864-72
<i>L.P.Milan</i>	<i>State Papers...existing in the archives of Milan</i> , ed. A. B. Hinds, London 1912
<i>L.P.Venice</i>	<i>State Papers...existing in the archives of Venice</i> , ed. R. Brown, London 1864-73

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## *To My Parents*

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