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Hearing the City

in Early Modern Europe

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BREPOLS

Urban Musicologies*

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A prelude

The connection between ‘music’ and ‘urban space’ has been considered from a variety of observation points. A student starting research in this field, on consulting the RILM database, will find very few titles under the words ‘urban musicology’ but an impressive list of over 1,400 titles for the alternative notion of ‘soundscape’. Here the majority of the items are related to popular music, electroacoustics, ecology of music, and all the possible applications of the intensive debate created worldwide in the early 1990s by the appearance of Murray Schafer’s *The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Tuning of the World* (1993), a project he had started some thirty years previously. This kind of production has much to do with so-called ‘acoustic ecology’ or ‘noise pollution’ in modern cities (with an interesting application to the fields of electroacoustic and computer music). However, it became specifically associated with the so-called ‘new-age music’ and in this context, became a topic sometimes also studied in musicological essays, although largely unrelated to historical musicology (Zhiyong Deng & Ran Deng 2010).

The notable success of Schafer’s proposal in the ethnomusicological milieu is testified by the joke made in transforming the term ‘ethnomusicology’ into ‘Echo-Muse-Ecology’ (see Feld 1994). The echological and ethical aspects implicit in Schafer by the notion of the ‘soundscape’ have been taken seriously in several advanced research institutions around the world, particularly in Northern Europe (Norway and Finland). Even in this far end of the field, historical musicology could have a role, as demonstrated by Katrin Losleben (Losleben 2012). It is perhaps not by chance that one of Schafer’s earlier books—later incorporated into *The Soundscape*—was entitled *The Tuning of the World* (1977), the title of Robert Fludd’s celebrated illustration of the Hand of God tuning the Celestial Monochord of the World to create harmony (printed in 1618).¹

* This text was presented as the Opening Lecture at the ICREA International Workshop ‘Hearing the City’, Barcelona, 24–26 September 2015. I wish to thank Malena Kuss, Vicepresident of the

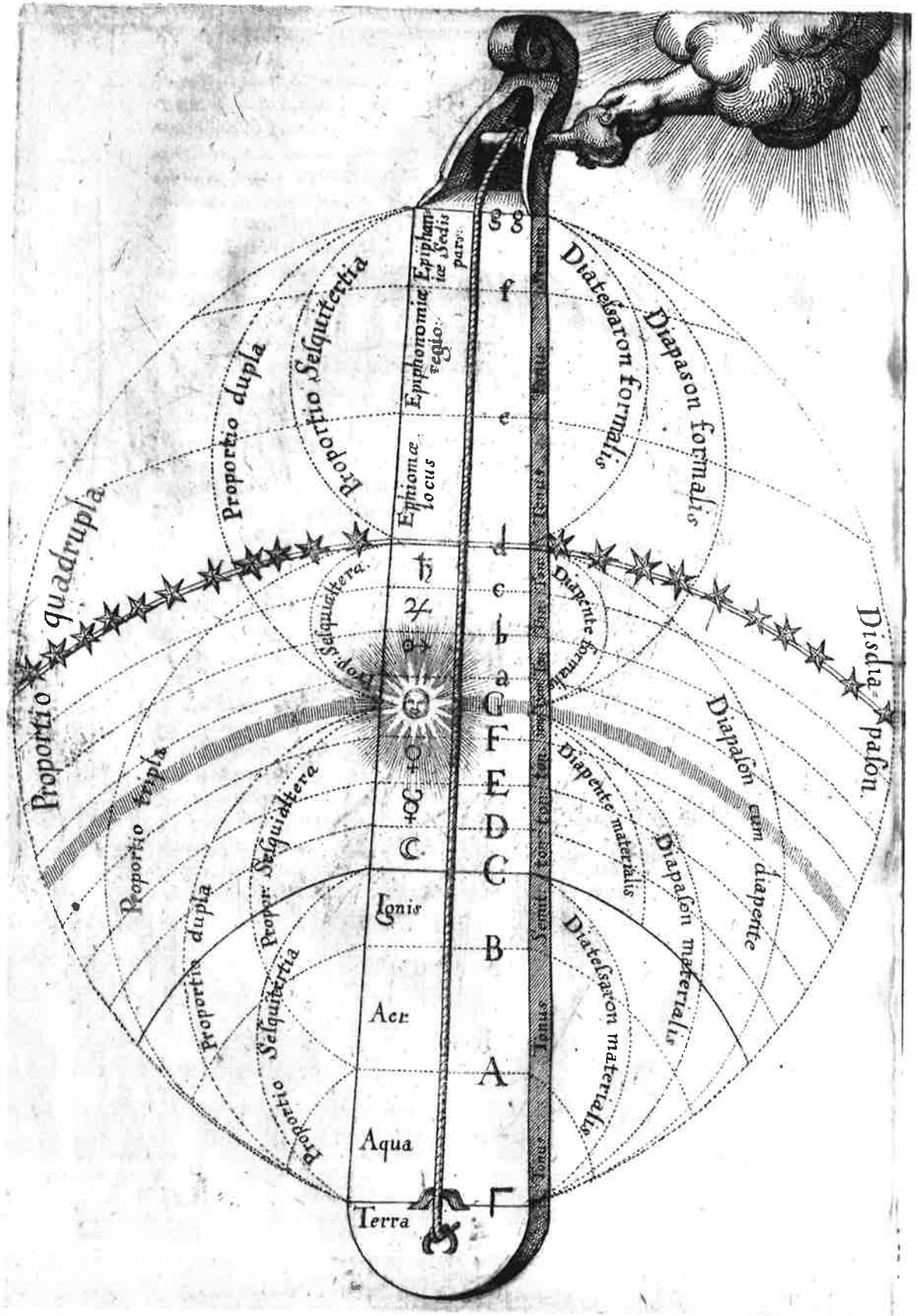


Fig. 2.1 – Robert Fludd (1574–1637), *The Tuning of the World* (1618)

As is well known, Reinhard Strohm was the first music historian to use the term 'soundscape' in his *Music in Late Medieval Bruges*, published in 1985 (Strohm 1985: 1–9). Only a dozen years later this pioneering study was transformed into a methodological model; I still remember the enthusiasm of the group created around Tim Carter and Andrew Wathey at Royal Holloway, University of London, where I also took part discussing a thesis together with other British and continental scholars involved in 'soundscape studies'.² The first international conference organized by the group was the conference *Musica y cultura urbana en la Edad Moderna* held in Valencia in 2000. The following year, Fiona Kisby, from the same group at Royal Holloway, edited the book *Music and Musicians in Renaissance Cities and Towns* including chapters by Reinhard Strohm, Iain Fenlon, Soterraña Aguirre, Barbara Haggh, James Saunders, Egberto Bermúdez, and others.³ The passage was then made from phase one (studies on patronage and powerful institutions in European—in particular Italian cities, typical of the 1980s)⁴ to phase two, the real 'urban musicology' as we called the new field. In 2005 the proceedings of the Valencia conference were published by the Universitat de València (Bombi *et al.* 2005), and the process was completed. The book included chapters by Clive Burgess and Andrew Wathey, Tess Knighton, Gretchen Peters, Geoffrey Baker, Iain Fenlon, Anna Tedesco, Greta Olson, Stephen Rose and, for the first time, by a number of young Spanish scholars: Javier Marín, Juan Ruiz Jiménez, Pilar Ramos López, María José del Río Barredo, Susana Flores Rodrigo, including colleagues from Argentina and Chile (Leonardo Weissman and Alejandro Vera). In his extended introduction entitled 'Musica y ciudad: de la historia local a la historia cultural', Juan José Carreras offered the first retrospective analysis of the new subdiscipline together with some methodological proposals (Carreras 2005).

The article by Tim Carter, read at the opening of the Valencia Conference, became the manifesto of urban musicology.⁵ It had, in fact, already been published in an English version

International Musicological Society (IMS), for her revision of the English of my original paper and many important suggestions.

- 1 Fludd 1618. The title also recalls Leo Spitzer's *Classical and Christian Ideas of World Harmony*, published in Italian in 1967 under the title *L'armonia del mondo. Storia semantica di un'idea*.
- 2 A series of doctoral thesis on the 'soundscape' of early modern European towns, were produced by the members of the group around Royal Holloway, University of London, later published as books: Kisby 1996; Marín 2002; and Fabris 2007.
- 3 Kisby 2001. Kisby's introduction ('Urban history, musicology and cities and towns in Renaissance Europe, pp. 1–9) contains an important statement: 'The research represented here is an offering to those working within at least two disciplines. To urban historians it shows the range of work beginning to be undertaken by music and other historians. To musicologists it presents some of the different approaches, questions and perspectives which may lead to new lines of enquiry for future investigations of the "music in..." type. It provides no definitive paradigms, but simply aims to make a start in the right direction ...' (Kisby 2001: 13).
- 4 The first phase was perceived as a specific new tendency in the 1980s ('cultural musicology') in the controversial book by Joseph Kerman; see Kerman 1985: 170–75. For a discussion on the limits of 'patronage studies', see Brown 1991: 28–32, and Annibaldi 1993: 9–45.
- 5 Carter 2005. Carter was probably the first to use the definition for the subdiscipline 'urban musicology'; see his review of the Valencia Conference published in *Early Music* 28 (2000), 313–14.

in a special issue of the journal *Urban History* published in 2002 (Carter 2002), where a number of other significant contributions were gathered together, including studies by Kisby, Marín and Scott in addition to Peter Borsay's 'Sounding the town' (in this essay the process of inserting 'Urban historical context' in the agenda of historical musicology was declared complete; Borsay 2002). Since the Royal Holloway group (including scholars not directly connected to the University of London, such as the already mentioned Tess Knighton, Juan José Carreras, Iain Fenlon, Andrea Bombi, Anna Tedesco, and many others) was following the anthropological methods considered a fundamental part of the New History (and so of the New Musicology), the historian Peter Burke became one of the preferred models for those involved.⁶ In the decade after Valencia the group's methodological model was exported in several directions outside Europe. A very good example is the book *Imposing Harmony in Colonial Cuzco*, published in 2008 by Geoffrey Baker, who not by chance had become a Lecturer at Royal Holloway University of London.⁷ The short history of urban musicology was completed fifteen years after the Valencia 2000 conference, for the second time in Spain, when a group of scholars and advanced students held in September 2015 a new discussion on this topic in Barcelona; this revitalized the old enthusiasms of the first group, almost all of whom were present at the meeting.

Travellers to faraway countries

The title of Tim Carter's essay, 'The Sound of Silence' (2002), has given rise to my first point of reflection in preparing the present text. Since music is an invisible art in which silence is prominent, it brought to mind Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities*:

... All look down and speak of Irene. At times the wind brings a music of bass drums and trumpets, the bang of firecrackers in the lightdisplay of a festival; at times the rattle of guns, the explosion of a powder magazine in the sky yellow with the fires of civil war ... (Calvino 1974 [1972]: 124; Irene)

... In Hypatia ... when my spirit wants no stimulus or nourishment save music, I know it is to be sought in the cemeteries: the musicians hide in the tombs; from grave to grave flute trills, harp chords answer one another ... (Calvino 1974 [1972]: 48; Hypatia)

In *Invisible Cities*, Italo Calvino creates a dialogue between Marco Polo the traveller and Kubla Khan the Emperor, in which they discuss 55 unknown cities of the empire as in a puzzling and combinatory game. I take Calvino as a starting-point because this novel is concerned with trav-

6 One of Burke's most popular and celebratory books, with many references to music is Burke 2009 [1978].

7 Baker 2008. Not by chance Chapter 1 is entitled 'The Urban Landscape' and contains a brief retrospective of urban musical studies. Since 2000, Latin-American scholars have contributed essays on American town-cases. In Kisby's collection of essays, Egberto Bermúdez published an important essay on this topic (Bermúdez 2001).

ellers, new worlds and the ancestral utopia of the Ideal City governed by musical rules to create harmony among the citizens. Calvino is right to consider that even if every city of the empire (country or region) is different, the stranger visiting it for the first time can immediately understand the most important places and functions: this, in Calvino-Polo's words 'confirms the hypothesis that each man bears in his mind a city made only of differences ... and the individual cities fill it up' (Calvino 1974 [1972]: 34; Zoe). To disturb this easy image, Calvino invents Zoe, a city that is impossible to distinguish and to understand (Calvino 1974 [1972]: 34). In fact, Calvino is following Jonathan Swift's wise judgment that 'nothing is great or little otherwise than by comparison' (Swift 2010 [1726]: 83). There is a moment in *Gulliver's Travels* when the fictional traveller comes across the native music of the Kingdom of Brobdignac: at first, he says, 'the noise was so great that I could hardly distinguish the tunes'; then, having moved to a correct distance from the performers and having shut doors, windows and curtains, 'I found their music not disagreeable' (Swift 2010 [1726]: 124).

Any expert in travel literature will recognize the same attitude in the many diaries, journals, letters and other kind of travel accounts that have now been intensively catalogued and studied by specialists of different disciplines. A typical limitation of this kind of source is outlined by Peter Burke as follows: 'These witnesses deserve to be taken seriously', but 'taking them seriously does not of course mean believing every word they wrote' (Burke 2005 [1987]: 16). And Calvino begins his novel with a similar assumption: 'Kubla Khan does not necessarily believe everything Marco Polo says when he describes the cities visited ..., but the emperor ... does continue listening to the young Venetian with greater attention and curiosity ...' (Calvino 1974 [1972]: 5). The tendency of travellers to describe, in the exotic cities they visit, only the different (or comparable) things according to their normal customs as a point of departure (architecture, rites, costumes, etc.) means that we must necessarily consider these sources as not objective and incomplete. The sense of frustration after reading thousands of pages from travellers' books concerning a town and a period of interest only to discover that the few references to music are generic and of little use, is only too familiar. I spent many years reading most of the published—as well as some unpublished diaries—of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land from Santo Brasca in the fifteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, with the hope of tracing a consistent soundscape in which to insert the nineteen Franciscan liturgical books, illuminated and notated, that survive in the *Custodia francescana* in Jerusalem today.⁸

I found almost nothing apart from a generic allusion to the choral singing of chant at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, but at the same time I learned a lot about the different uses of music encountered by pilgrims in the cities visited during the pilgrimage—sometimes very

8 The pilgrimage from Europe to the Holy Land has produced since the fifteenth century an impressive literature, summarized in part in the classic study: Prescott 1954. The most important sources I have studied are: Brasca 1966 [1481]; Fabri 1843–49; and Volterra 1981 [Ms. 1480] and 1855 [Ms. 1494]. It is curious that many travellers describe the city of Jerusalem around the same time (1480–94) which offers a rare opportunity to compare different kinds of information. But the soundscape of the holy city was not the writers' primary interest.



Fig. 2.2 – Angels singing with two lutes in the decorated capital of the prayer for the Assumption of Mary (Jerusalem, Museum of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, codex H, fourteenth century)



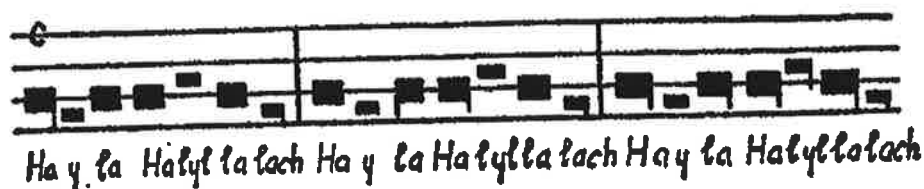
Fig. 2.3 – The city of Jerusalem in the decorated capital of 'Hyerusalem' (Jerusalem, Museum of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Codex D, fourteenth century)

far from the place I was interested in studying.⁹ The only music fragment inserted in travellers' diaries (in that by Santo Brasca dated 1480) refers to the song heard at the 'Moslem boys' school' where

... the heathen children are instructed in the law of Mohammed, and there they shout all day long, making a surprising noise ... They were sitting in rows upon the ground, and all of them were repeating the same words in unison in a shrill voice, bowing down their heads and their backs, even as the Jews ... do when saying their prayers. They repeated the same words so many times, that I remembered both the words and the notes, which sounded thus:¹⁰

9 A good example is Pietro Casola's account in which the only information on music concerns the singing of Mass performed in San Marco's Basilica ('giesia de de sancto marco'); he included this extended description because he perceived major differences to the 'normal rite' in Milan: 'et da questo pigliai, grande ammirazione, perché non vide mai tanta obedientia a tali spectaculi Le cerimonie de la missa me pareno assai legiere per rispetto a le Milanesi o vero Ambrosiane, quando canta la messa el nostro R.mo Monsignore de Milano; ne vidi cosa digna de mandare a memoria, excepto che quando fu fornito lo evangelio ... Altra cerimonia vidi maxime inusitata, excepto che quando se dice el Gloria in excelsis, el patrem omnipotentem, el Sanctus et li Agnus Dei, vanno quatro de li presti de sancto Marco con le loro superpelicie sue cotte in ante al Duce ...' (Volterra 1855 [Ms. 1494]: 16). Many references are to 'oriental' or exotic performances, as witnessed in the Mesullam da Volterra journal of 1481: a public ceremony held at Cairo by the Sultan with 'songs and music of drums and harp' and in Ramulah or Gat held by the entire population of a thousand citizens with an enormous *tamburo* (drum, in Italian in the original), apparently the only musical instrument used in that place (Volterra 1981 [Ms. 1481]: 53, 84).

10 Brasca [1481] cited in Prescott 1954: 181.



A simplified conclusion could be that for almost four centuries the *Custodia francescana* in Jerusalem performed liturgical chant in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre exactly as at any European church and monastery, as witnessed by the aforementioned chant books, all of Italian provenance, and written from the thirteenth to the late seventeenth centuries.¹¹ In fact, a Western visitor was attracted primarily by difference rather than by similarity with objects and situations commonly found in Europe. Santo Brasca's attention, for instance, is attracted by Muslim dress ('their dress and clothes are very different from ours'), and, for similar reasons, by the unusual musical instruments accompanying women dancing ('drums and other instruments very different from ours'; Brasca [1481] cited in Prescott 1954: 178–79). There is no hope of finding descriptions of Christian chanting in churches or open air processions in Jerusalem, and even less chance of discovering traces of the most ancient musical instruments preserved in the area.¹²

Two essays have been published only recently on the soundscape of pilgrimage in Jerusalem, although from the anthropological perspective of ethnographic material collected today and without consideration of the historical landscape (Wood 2014a and 2014b: 286–93).

Travellers and travel itineraries from Europe to Middle and Far East Asia, Africa and the Americas have been intensively studied by both ethnomusicologists and music historians for the impressive amount of musical information they offer.¹³ By contrast, there are very few cases of studies on the kind of musical souvenirs recorded by travellers from faraway countries to European cities. Travellers all around Europe from the Middle Ages to the end of the *ancien régime* are fundamental sources for research on the soundscape of Western cities of the past. The most recent publication on the European Grand Tour, celebrated in the eighteenth century,

- 11 See the list and description of the nineteen chant books, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, today preserved in the Museum of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (1990 and 1995).
- 12 In the historical catalogue Bagatti 1939, reference is found to the remains of the oldest extant Western organ (only the pipes of an instrument sent from France around the twelfth century) and to a series of bells also of French origin: these two relics could represent the only witness to the real 'soundscape' of Jerusalem in about the thirteenth century. Unfortunately, neither was available during my visit to Jerusalem in 2013 because the Museum of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (or 'della Flagellazione') was being restored. I wish to thank Nicola Bux for his help at the start of my research on Jerusalem many years ago.
- 13 From the viewpoint of historical musicology, the most important project on music in the diaries of European travellers is the Doctoral Atelier held at the University of Bologna, chaired by Franco Alberto Gallo, Donatella Restani and Nicoletta Guidobaldi, which has already produced a number of published proceedings: see *Musica e Storia* 9 (2001), pp. 375–529 and 13 (2005), pp. 81–175 and *Itineraria* 6 (2007) and 16 (2017); see also Dessì 2010. In this book, most of the thirty case studies are based on the impressive collection of early travel accounts in Ramusio 1978–83.



Fig. 2.4a – The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in 1480 (Santo Brasca)



Fig. 2.4b – The Church of the Holy Sepulchre today (photo: author, 2013)

is *Passaggio in Italia. Music on the Grand Tour in the seventeenth century* edited by Margaret Murata and myself as a collection of fifteen papers presented at the Utrecht Conference in 2006 (Fabris & Murata 2015). The case that needs to be made here concerns the way in which scholars often use short quotations relating to music events from travel literature without concern as to the whole context and nature of those specific sources. Indeed, I agree with Franco Alberto Gallo's proposal to create a new discipline to study, with a specifically developed methodology, the presence of music in travel literature:

I believe it would be highly interesting to create a new discipline, a sort of geography of music that could complement the history of traditional music ... allowing us to understand better the musical repertoires and personal tastes that different forms of travel have happened to transmit ...¹⁴

Unfortunately, Gallo's recommendation has only rarely been followed since then. I can cite Adam Krims's book *Music and Urban Geography*, in which the author fuses cultural musicology, ethnomusicology and the 'Urban Geography' to explore how music is mediated in the urban context (Krims 2007). Krims pretends to have invented a new concept he calls the 'urban ethos', but this is merely an echo of the ancient theories of the cities of Utopia.

Utopians cities

As regards travels to Jerusalem, it is clear that any realistic account of the Holy City is related to the most impressive model of the Ideal city, from the Middle Ages to the Modern Era.

First published in Latin in 1516, Thomas More's *Utopia* depicts a perfect government that promoted harmony and hierarchical order, and music was one of the ways in which to attain this order: the musical instruments and music produced are similar, but not identical to, those used by the Europeans because—according to More—'all their music, both vocal and instrumental, renders and expresses natural feelings and perfectly matches the sound to the object' (More 1995 [1516]: 239; 'Utopian music'). This description includes all the elements of the subsequent utopic visions of Urban Harmony, as well as the comparative eye-witness approach used by New History. Less than a century later, Tomaso Campanella, in his *The City of the Sun* (*La città del Sole*, 1602) imagined that sounds could one day be amplified through a kind of acoustic telescope (Campanella 1991 [1623]). In 1626 Francis Bacon described in *The New Atlantis* that citizens would one day store and preserve sounds, to be heard again at the earliest convenience (Bacon 2017 [1627]: 106). Not only is the music associated with Utopian cities considered to be something new and previously unheard, but also its symbolic meaning to create harmony, as the representation of perfect government. In this regard, iconography anticipated even the Utopian classics: in Lazzaro Bastiani's *Offerta della reliquia della Croce ai*

14 Gallo 2002: 171: 'Il me semble qu'il serait fort intéressant de créer une nouvelle discipline, une sorte de géographie de la musique qui pourrait compléter l'histoire de la musique traditionnelle ... permettant de mieux connaître les répertoires et les goûts personnels que les différentes formes de voyage ont voulu nous transmettre ...'.



Fig. 2.5 – *Celestial Jerusalem*, engraving by Adriaen Collaert (Antwerp, c.1550)



Fig. 2.6 – *Utopiae Insulae Figurae* from Thomas More, *Utopia* (1516)

confratelli della Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista, dating from 1494 (Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia), the harmony of Venetian government is represented by a lute on a table, the perfect instrument with its strings held in the hands of the Doge's officer. In the emblem of the city of Naples, as depicted in Giovanni Cesare Capaccio's treatise *Delle imprese* (1596), a siren is pouring milk on an instrument described as a six-stringed lyre, a symbol of the harmony among the six groups forming the civic government.¹⁵

It is not difficult to conceive of the early Utopias as 'musical cities' in the context of a dialogue between disciplines such as architecture or archeology. Good examples of studies on the relationship between music and architecture are Iain Fenlon's Introduction to an Italian book devoted to music from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries which defined this dialogue between architecture and music as 'cross-fertilization',¹⁶ and the study by Deborah Howard and Laura Moretti on *Sound and Space in Renaissance Venice* (Howard & Moretti 2010). As regards the music-archaeology relationship, several recent studies attempt to reconstruct the music associated with ancient towns: for instance, Roberto Melinito 'The Soundscape of Pompeii' published in a German collection of essays.¹⁷

¹⁵ Capaccio 1592: Libro I, 23–24; see Fabris 2016: 64–67.

¹⁶ Fenlon 2012b, introduction to Amendolagine 2012, including five chapters each written by a scholar with double expertise in both music and architecture from the Istituto Universitario di Architettura in Venice.

¹⁷ Melini 2012. The book gathered together the proceedings of the International Study Group on Music Archaeology. Melini had already published a volume on the 'soundscape' of Pompeii (Melini 2008); and see Till 2014 for the study of the pre-historical 'soundscape'.



Fig. 2.7 – Lazzaro Bastiani, *Reliquie della Santa Croce* (1494) (Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia)



Fig. 2.8 – Emblem of the city of Naples, from Giovanni Cesare Capaccio's *Delle imprese* (Naples, 1596)

From the earliest archaeological past to the future, the only way to build an ideal town seems to have been, or to be, the music-based structure. In Hector Berlioz's *Euphonia, ou la ville musicale*, the 'novel of the future' published in 1844, the composer described the city of Euphonia, located in Germany at the year 2344, as a vast music conservatoire where all the 12,000 citizens were employed with different functions, all related to music (Berlioz 1844; see Bloom 2003). The function of music even in late Utopian descriptions of fictional towns is evident also in both Germany at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century and in Soviet-era Russia. In Yan Larri's science-fiction novel *The Land of the Happy* (published in 1931 and considered the last example of the genre, purged by Stalin immediately afterwards), the plot is developed in the future USSR of the 1980s. Apart from the naive inventions of

future machines that were already old-fashioned at the time, music has an exceptionally prominent role as a pervading medium of community and joy, thus illustrating the typical utopia of the Russian Revolution with music as a symbol of centralized power connecting different populations through futuristic electric cables and celebrating the youth of the nation. Not by chance the climax is reached by the staging of a composition entitled *Youth*, ‘a symphony of colour and sounds’.¹⁸

Ideal soundscapes and real cities: stories of illusion and frustration

Two images of Naples, both painted at the beginning of the seventeenth century, can demonstrate two different ideas of the city during Spanish domination: the first (Fig. 2.9a) from a manuscript sketched before 1609 by Giovanni Antonio Nigrone (*I-Nn*, ms. XII G 59), is clearly a Utopian representation of a beautiful fountain with sirens to be placed in the garden of a Nobleman (‘S.r Scipione de Curtis nel suo giardino a Santa Maria del Monte in Napule’). The second image (Figure 2.9b) is the desolated and terrifyingly realistic landscape of Naples (with a similar fountain in the middle) during the 1656 plague epidemic, when a third of the population died.



Fig. 2.9a – Giovanni Antonio Nigrone, Fountain with sirens in the garden of a nobleman in Naples, c.1609, from *Vari disegni* (Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, MS XII. G. 5g)

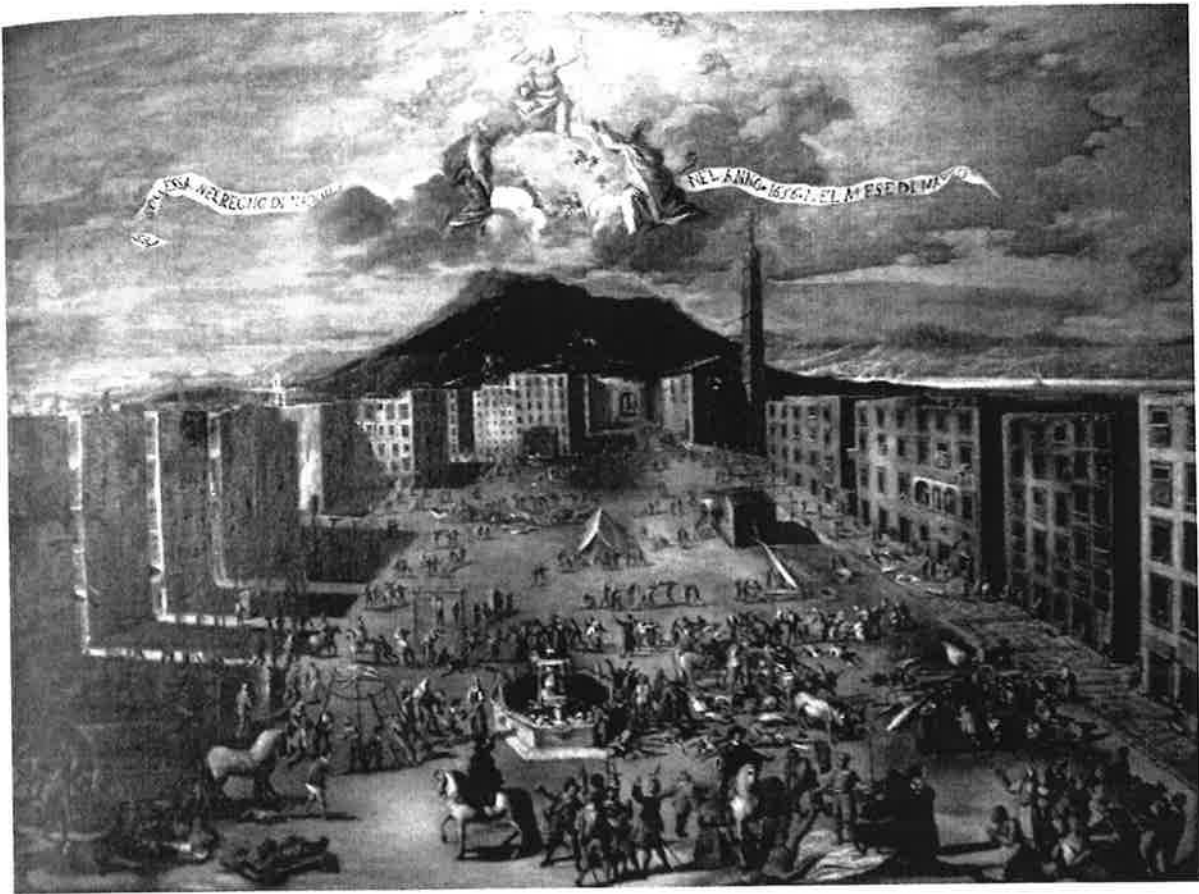


Fig. 2.9b — Micco Spadaro, Piazza Mercato in Naples during the plague of 1656

Each scholar, starting from a different discipline, has scoured archival documents and travellers' accounts with the sole aim of finding information related to their own research interests. As a result, the towns described are never the same: for the art historian, the town is full of painters and artists; for the architectural historian the buildings, churches, palaces and gardens are all-important; while for various specialized historians the city is just the exercise of power, the combination of income and economic strategies, a sum of languages or anthropological, or even religious, groups. On occasion, music historians—possibly in reaction to the little attention they can attract from other disciplines in their university departments—are more open-minded than many in comparing and connecting fragments of knowledge from many other fields to reconstruct what is normally intended today as the soundscape of a city from a specific period. Strohm's *Music in late Medieval Bruges* is not just the milestone from as early as 1985 for the prolific research field later termed 'urban musicology', but is also the best example of a great music historian's approach to a humble reading and use of the results of other specialists interested in reconstructing the image of a city in the past.¹⁹ The opposite case—of

19 A similar spur to interdisciplinary studies was recommended by Gallo 2010: 7, where he recalled that both historical musicology and ethnomusicology have recorded music (in written scores in the first case, on tapes in the second case) as their objective. Gallo indicates that besides those two categories, there are innumeral sonic events that were never notated in scores or recorded, but

another kind of historian including music in the urban historical complex—is very rare, probably because music is often considered exotic and not immediately comprehensible, even though the music historian is often drawing on the same kinds of historical documents they use daily. It would be relatively straightforward to resolve this impasse, by creating collaborative groups of experts of different disciplines to work together on a common project, such as the comprehensive image of a city of the past. A sub-discipline that seems particularly appropriate to this interdisciplinary approach could be music iconography, the parameters for which were defined in the early 1970s.²⁰ I have always considered this a very important point of contact among music and other disciplines, but my concern is still that very few historians of the other arts are generally involved in the many music iconography study groups.²¹ The ‘cross-fertilization’ evoked by Fenlon could open new ways for collaboration in this field.

Urban + musicology

So far I have limited my discussion on urban musicology almost exclusively to European case-studies, but musicology today should clearly be considered in the context of a wider global perspective. It seems natural to connect the history of Western music with European towns, since the kind of information known from the past is generally related to musical events that took place in the urban context, at least from the late Middle Ages. As Fiona Kisby summarized in her Introduction to *Music and Musicians in Renaissance Cities and Towns* (2001), ‘the early Middle Ages was an era of predominantly rural existence ... many urban centres were small ... none had reached 50,000’. The following period up to the 1340s witnessed the first urban expansion and around 1500 a larger proportion of Europe’s population lived in urban communities (about 10%), even if this did not occur uniformly across Europe, and the majority of the global population still resided in rural places (Kisby 2001: 1).

Of course, an isolated convent on a hill can have a continuous musical activity even in the year 1000 (as in the case of the Benedictine Abbey of Montecassino); a traveller on the European Grand Tour could record his impression of musical events listened to on the way, whether in open countryside or small villages; rich aristocrats often organized music perfor-

were described in the form of historical documents or images. A substantial third category can be added to this in the form of urban musicology.

20 See Seebass 2001 (the bibliography is to be updated on the website of the IMS Music Iconography Study Group: http://patrimonioculturale.unibo.it/ims/?page_id=210).

21 The most important institutions and research groups on music iconography are: the Association Ridim, Zurich (<<https://ridim.org>>); the Research Center for Music Iconography at the City University of New York; the Music Iconography Study Group of the International Musicological Society (<www.ims-online.ch>); the Music Iconography Study Group of the International Council for Traditional Music (<<http://www.ictmusic.org>>); and the AEDOM Music Iconography Project at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. At least three international journals publish essays by music iconographers: *Imago Musicae*, *Music and Arts*, and *Musique. Images. Instruments. Revue française d'organologie et d'iconographie musicale*.

mances, and even opera productions, in their villas and other summer residences far from the towns where they usually lived. Because of the simplistic division of expertise among historical musicologists and ethnomusicologists, these collateral, non-urban events have in many cases been considered to belong to the field of ethnomusicological research. As a result, works published by historical musicologists on music events far from the urban context, in the countryside or other specific places not included in the concept of the town, are rare indeed up till now. Among the few exceptions I would recall here the research by Xavier Bisaro (CESR, Tours) on the late tradition of chant in rural and peripheral areas of France at the end of the Ancien Régime, and in particular his book *Chanter toujours* (Bisaro 2010). It is interesting that Bisaro has also studied urban space ('l'espace urbain') in France's second city, Lyon, at the end of the seventeenth century.²²

In contrast, many ethnomusicologists have begun to investigate diachronically sonic events of the present with written documents of the past, in particular with regard to music performances in urban communities. A good example is provided by Ignazio Macchiarella's studies of the written sacred pieces in *falsobordone*, transmitted by oral tradition from the sixteenth century to the present in peripheral small towns in southern Italy, such as the *Miserere* of Sessa Aurunca (Macchiarella 1995). And again the *falsobordone*—a fertile territory—has been recently studied by an interdisciplinary group of scholars, chaired by Philippe Canguilhem at the Université de Marseille, involving anthropological and historical issues.²³

I cannot list here the many contributions to the topic of music and urban space. Related material is relatively easy to find, such as that produced by the International Council for Traditional Music,²⁴ or proceedings of conferences and special journal issues, such as the December 2010 issue of *Anthropology News* entitled: *Soundscapes and Music Traditions*.²⁵ The case with other disciplines, such as popular music—also much involved in this discussion—is different. There are many interesting perspectives in this broad field, as demonstrated by the Blog 'Musical urbanism' which defines itself as 'Blogging at the intersection of urban studies and popular music'.²⁶ But there are also many ambiguities in the various meanings of the word 'soundscape', as I have suggested above.

If we confine ourselves once more to historical musicology, a new element in urban musicology over the fifteen years since the Valencia conference has been the gradual appearance of high quality studies produced in areas of the planet considered in the past to be 'peripheral'. Even within Europe, for instance, Poland has produced a number of publications on the sound-

22 Xavier Bisaro, 'Éducation de la parole et pastorale de l'espace urbain à la fin du XVII^e siècle: le cas des écoles de charité de Lyon', paper presented at the conference *Les identités religieuses dans l'espace urbain de l'époque moderne: une affaire de sens* (Orléans, 2015).

23 The project is described in Canguilhem 2010.

24 See the annual *Bulletin* and the *Yearbook for Traditional Music* of the ICTM on the website: <www.ictmusic.org>.

25 *Soundscapes and music traditions*, special issue of *Anthropology News* (2010), accessible online at: <<http://www.anthropology-news.org>>.

26 See <<https://pages.vassar.edu/musicalurbanism>>.

scape of ancient Polish towns, including a special issue of the journal *Glissando* in 2015.²⁷ In addition to the few contributions on soundscape in Africa, Asia, Latin-America and even Oceania contained in the above-mentioned collection of essays *Per una storia dei popoli senza note* (2010), a new proposal to analyze the 'musical crossroads' between Europe and Constantinople and other places in the Turkish empire (comparing, for instance, the diffusion of Byzantine chant and instrumental music traditions) has produced interesting results.²⁸ Recent contributions of great interest have been proposed by members of the International Musicological Society Regional Association for East Asia (from Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong).²⁹ The impact of European 'discovery' on the nearby area of the Philippine Islands was charted in David Irving's book on *Music in Early Modern Manila* (Irving 2010). The novelty of Irving's approach is to reconnect the Philippines to a wider mainstream, the discourse on the early modern Hispanic colonial world.³⁰ The same world has been examined for the first time from an urban musicological perspective by Clara Bejarano, a historian with musical interests, in her studies of the soundscape of Seville.³¹ One of the most recent books published on the soundscape of an Early Modern town focuses on Italy: Francesco Zimei's study of the peculiar tradition of singing 'laude e soni' of L'Aquila in the *longue durée* from the late fourteenth century to the end of the eighteenth century.³²

As should be clear from this brief survey, the field of urban music studies, with so many publications and findings from the last twenty years, is a veritable crossroads, where a constellation of different skills and specializations can together contribute to the recreation of the enchanting 'sound of silence'.

27 *Soundscape: miqandscape: mi.vassar.edu/musicalur*, special issue of *Glissando* 26 (2015), online: <<http://www.glissando.pl/aktualnosci/glissando-26-soundscape>>.

28 This new field was first proposed by the International Musicological Society Regional Association for the Study of Music in the Balkans; see the international conference entitled *Crossroads: Greece as an intercultural pole of musical thought and creativity*, held in 2011 at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (see information on the Regional Association and Reports of the Conferences at: <www.ims-online.ch>). See also Georghitã 2015.

29 More information on the Regional Association and Reports of the Conferences can be found at: <www.ims-online.ch>.

30 Urban musicological studies in Latin-America can be observed through the activity of the International Musicological Society Regional Association for the Latin-America and the Caribbean (see information on and reports of related conferences at: <www.ims-online.ch>).

31 Bejarano Pellicer 2015 and other studies on the same city, including Bejarano Pellicer 2009 and 2012.

32 Zimei 2015. This book inaugurated a new series devoted to 'Musica e contesto urbano' entitled *Civitatis aures* (the phrase 'Ears of the town' is taken from Martial's *Epigrams*, Book 12).