



Review

Marín López, Javier, ed. *Músicas coloniales a debate. Procesos de intercambio euroamericanos*. Madrid: Instituto Complutense de Ciencias Musicales, 2019.

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“... one of the most common problems in contemporary Mexican musicology: sources are found, edited, contribute new data; but in reality, all critical ponderation is avoided. Until when – I ask – will Mexican musicology continue to transit such pathways?”

Ricardo Miranda’s words (p. 380) echo a similar assessment of Spanish and Latin American musicology by Drew Edward Davies (also a contributor to the present volume) ten years before: “Its methodology remains positivist and privileges the compilation of archival documents over avenues of critical theory” (2009: 381). Both authors see this “epistemological difference” – as Davies called it – through the lens of the “new” musicology (as Davies writes it). According to Miranda, the *New Musicology* (as he writes it) overcame (*superó*) this holding back on inquiry since the 1990s, which amounts to say that for both authors, Ibero-American music scholarship lags behind. And yet, Davies considered that such difference was necessary for North American musicology to fulfill its task: “In North America we need to digest the positivist works from Spain and reconceive our historiography to include Spanish and Latin American content as central rather than peripheral.” This geographical demarcation imbues Davies’s rhetoric with a racialized hue that makes difference (epistemological and political, as Mexico is not part of North America in this quote) a categorical imperative to North American musicology’s inclusivist ethics (i.e., to make Spanish and Latin American content *central*, not peripheral, to *North American* historiography, which is epistemologically defined).

Miranda’s and Davies’s observations of a need to develop lines of critical assessment (historical, cultural, sociological) is certainly valid; their uncritical exaltation of the new musicology from the 1990s, however, seems more ideologically than academically inspired. For, along with a critique of the continued production of scholarship focused on new sources, information, and editions, there should be also a consideration of how Spanish and Latin American musicology has been articulated and has developed as an institutional discipline: how have international publishers and institutions of higher education promoted musicology? Which questions, discourses, and histories – and from which lens of interpretation – have they advanced? What have they silenced? What gets included/excluded, and by whose rationale? On the one hand, if, as Davies observes, there is indeed an epistemological difference that separates Spanish and Latin American musicology from “the global north,” the critiques from both authors point to a perilous ethical blind spot. On the other, if the production of the sort of scholarship that both scholars observe remains important in Spain and Latin America (Vera, 2020: 5–6), the task of Spanish and Latin American scholars is to address such importance vis-à-vis the development of musicology (no adjectives) as a situated discipline, responsive to the institutional, cultural, and political demands and current challenges that articulate it as an intellectual field in Spain and Latin America. Javier Marín López is not impervious to the issue and responsibly addresses it in this edited volume, which shows Ibero-American music

scholarship as it stands: intellectually robust, methodologically rugged, and conceptually complex.

Overview

Músicas coloniales a debate. Procesos de intercambio euroamericano offers thirty-four essays across colonial history, with important new contributions to music studies in Cuba and the American southern cone. Essays range from studies about musical practice, material and historical assessments of surviving primary-source repertoire, new repertoires (yes, new finds), consideration of trans-Atlantic exchanges and their local effects, socio-cultural and deconstructive critical interpretations, to the current standing of colonial music performance internationally in concert and recording projects.

Description

The book makes timely inroads to Luso-Brazilian studies. Rodrigo Teodoro de Paula and Suely Campos Franco consider the cultural connections between Portugal and Brazil through ritual practices (a theme also explored in the first section of the book, which give the volume a nice rounded structure). Their ritual focus points to the interpretation and adaptation of these processes in ways that invite further investigation on local culture. Research by Alexandre Andrade and Marcia E. Taborda makes important interventions in the study of extant sources of music for woodwinds, and of organology, respectively. Meanwhile Paulo Castagna nods to the points raised above by the present author, situating musicology in relation to the work of Brazilian cultural institutions.

In section five (19th century Cuba) Victoria Eli Rodríguez gives further attention to these points, while Verónica E. Fernández Díaz, Franchesca Perdigón Milá, and Indira Marrero Guerra address still largely neglected (even by the all-inclusive North American musicology) issues around music and social representation. Section four pays heed to the insurgency and the nascent republics of the 19th century. Ricardo Miranda's study of music during the time of Mexican independence offers always needed insight in to the Mexican 19th century. Yael Bitrán Goren's study of opera and civic identity in Mexico City sheds light on a highly important cultural and political debate around this time. A more focused treatment of Habermas' *Öffentlichkeit*, however, would have pointed to interesting racial tensions that went unexplored. The reader is left with the same curiosity after reading José Manuel Izquierdo König's rescuing of a lost generation of composers ca. 1790–1850; his call for a transhistorical analytical lens recalls scholarship already published on this very concept (and on this period in Mexican musical history), which passed unnoticed. The essay by José Miguel Hernández Jaramillo and Lénica Reyes Zúñiga makes nice counterpoint to that of Francesco Esposito, as both center on readings of modernity vis-à-vis music practices that are class-situated. Section three (a study of European cultural models transplanted to colonial Latin America) shows new cultural terrains in need of exploration (Violeta P. Carvajal Ávila), gender issues and neglected musical agents (John Swadley), unfinished, though critical and rescued scholarship on mission music culture (Bernardo Illari), and the effects of enlightened thought on musical activity, gender, and identity (Marisa Restiffo). Two articles in this section merit especial mention. Alejandro Vera's study on reception of instrumental music in Perú amplifies ongoing discussions about modern music and modernity after the 17th century in colonial Latin America. Gonzalo Camacho Díaz's deconstructive assessment of sound and image in New Spain, moreover, is exemplary of the kind of literary training that is needed in music scholarship (more so than a subscription to new-musicological critical

interpretative methods, perhaps). Camacho Díaz's reading posits his subjectivity as a critical stance to undo thus far accepted scholarly discourses on confessional colonial history. Such personal awareness is indicative of the temporal imaginative self-positioning from which critical inquiry emerges.

The merits of the aforementioned efforts notwithstanding, sections one and two are the most dynamic parts of the book. Contrary to decrying of sterile positivism in colonial music studies, these eight essays unfold a panorama of rich cultural practices, and of a terrain in a constant state of flux, where the ongoing dialogue between Europe and America produced localizations, adaptations, changes, and even transgressions, through which the past was locally (re)imagined in ritual practices that produced culture. Bárbara Pérez Ruiz's is the first focused study of choirbooks from Mexico City cathedral to breakout internationally, outside of otherwise typical "findings" or "new data from archives." Dawn De Rycke's study of chant for the office of Saint Peter stems from those materials and shows that, far from static, religious sources and rituals were in constant negotiation, as it was the structure of New Spanish society. Lucero Enríquez Rubio gives further insight into these exchanges in her study of *contrafacta*, while Gerardo V. Huseby's essay on liturgical chant in Chiquitos is a fascinating study on the development of literacy in relation to notational music practices. Omar Morales Abril study of a lamentation by Cristóbal de Morales centers melodic analysis in the context of the above-mentioned ongoing exchange, ferment, and transitoriness, and questions any straight-forward reading of Morales' opus in light of this activity. Egberto Bermúdez considers the tensions surrounding the (re)making of racialized lives in relation to music practices in this cultural scenario, while Ileri E. Chávez Bárcenas takes all of this context as a point of departure to reconsider colonial historiography – an actually self-aware and temporally situated intervention.

Overall, Marín López's volume is a tumultuous, dynamic, intellectually diverse read. One has to commend him for showing, without restraint, the current state of Ibero-American music studies, across centuries, methodologies, subjective points of inquiry and outlooks (not just in terms of ambitiously covering as much terrain as possible – topically and geographically – but of including different voices: Latin American scholars educated and studying in Latin America, Latin American scholars educated abroad and working in Latin America or in the United States, as well as American and European musicologists). In previous reviews, North American scholars have characterized Javier Marín López's research profile as orthodox – known for adhering to a more traditional, though judicious, shrewd, rigorous, and highly disciplined approach. However, the non-reflexive advocacy for a particular methodology such as the new musicology – disregarding the institutional and cultural position, access to, and development of intellectual labor – should remind us that epistemological decoloniality is not about advocating univocally for a particular method of inquiry; it is about a critical awareness about one's position amid the structural legacies that inform the constitution of subjectivity and critical thinking, and about the need for intervention from the *inside*. Marín López's openness to the plurality of ways in which Ibero-American music scholars address such need can be called anything but orthodox; his sensibility to the diversity of ways in which Ibero-American scholars have been traversed by power, and to the plurality of inquiries that stem from such experience – which also include Miranda and Davies in this volume – runs contrary to any discursive attempt at methodological foreclosure disguised as "progress." This book is an example of an epistemological debate that will continue to be unsettling. Marín López should be commended for moving fluidly in such intellectual terrain.

Sources

Davies, Drew Edward. "Book Review of *La música y el Atlántico. Relaciones musicales entre España y Latinoamérica*, edited by María Gembero Ustárroz and Emilio Ros-Fábregas (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2007)." *Journal of the Society for American Music* 3, no. 2 (2009): 246–251.

Vera, Alejandro. *The Sweet Penance of Music. Musical Life in Colonial Santiago de Chile*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.

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