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Review/Reseña

Imposing Harmony: Music and Society in Colonial Cuzco, by Geoffrey Baker. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008.

A Broader Perspective on Music in Colonial Cuzco

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With few exceptions, monographs on music in Latin America during the colonial period center on cathedrals and their associated musical repertoire.¹ In *Imposing Harmony*, Geoffrey Baker rightly observes that

¹ *Imposing Harmony* is preceded by five book-length studies at least partially dedicated to the study of music in a colonial cathedral in the Viceroyalty of Peru. See Robert Murrell Stevenson, *The Music of Peru: Aboriginal and Viceroyal Epochs* (Washington: Pan American Union, 1960); Andrés Sas, *La música en la catedral de Lima durante el Virreinato*, 2. vols. (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayos de San Marcos/Casa de la Cultura del Perú, 1971); Juan Carlos Estenssoro,

this trend stands in sharp contrast to the social and racial concerns that dominate parallel branches of historical scholarship (12). In a decisive break from his precedent work, Baker examines the music associated with the full spectrum of urban and rural religious institutions throughout the diocese of Cuzco. *Imposing Harmony* demonstrates that Cuzco's so-called "peripheral" institutions were homes to vibrant musical activity, and that this musical culture was the result of Andean, as much as Spanish, contributions. Many of the findings presented draw on the author's work with notary records held in Cuzco's local archives, but these are balanced in-text with historical background, biography, and extensive comparisons to other Spanish and Latin American cities. In addition Baker thoroughly critiques his sources, adding a valuable methodological component.

The work contains a wealth of new material, but at the same time provides valuable musical context for documents already familiar to cultural historians, including the Quechua-language hymn "Hanacpachap Cussicuinin," from Juan Pérez Bocanegra's *Ritual Formulario* (1631), in addition to the musicians drawn by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala in his *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* (1615), and also those appearing in the anonymous series of Corpus Christi paintings (1674–80).² After establishing the place of European-derived music within colonial life in Chapter One, the subsequent four chapters address music in specific institutions.

Beginning with a period chronicler's description of Viceroy Francisco Toledo's visit to the city in 1571, Baker's first chapter, "The Urban Soundscape", introduces readers to Cuzco's sonorous world through a series of literary and visual windows from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. Grounded in this documentary evidence, Baker

Música y sociedad coloniales: Lima 1680–1830 (Lima: Editorial Colmillo Blanco, 1989); Bernardo Illari, "Polychoral Culture: Cathedral Music in La Plata (Bolivia), 1680–1730," (Ph.D. Dissertation., University of Chicago, 2001); and José Quezada Macchiavello, *El legado musical del Cusco barroco: Estudio y catálogo de los manuscritos del archivo de San Antonio Abad del Cusco* (Lima: Fondo Editorial del Congreso del Perú, 2004).

² These paintings are the topic of Carolyn Dean's *Inka Bodies and the Body of Christ: Corpus Christi in Colonial Cuzco, Peru* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999).

argues that the Spanish colonial project also assumed an aural dimension that must be considered alongside its much-noted architectural and literary transformations. Formal services within the new Catholic institutions incorporated plainchant and polyphony, while out on the street, town criers accompanied by trumpets proclaimed the news, and church bells punctuated daily life. Civic celebrations that drew the Spanish and Andean populations together also served to rehearse the connections and hierarchies of the idealized colonial urban system.³ This opening serves to illustrate Baker's most pervasive argument: in each succeeding chapter he will establish an Andean presence, participation, and influence in Cuzco's colonial musical culture, adding new dimensions to their involvement as his study moves from the Spanish-dominated cathedral to increasingly Andean-controlled institutions. Instead of relying on notated music as previous studies have done, Baker examines the role of music not only "as a profession and a part of everyday urban experience, but also as a vital component of beliefs, aspirations, and social identities" (11).

Baker's consideration of cathedral music in Chapter Two first lays out the basics of musical organization in this institution. Cathedral music practice in Cuzco began to deviate from the Spanish-American standard in the early years of the seventeenth century. Rather than paying a core ensemble of singers to perform polyphony in services, cathedral authorities de-professionalized their ensembles. The documentation indicates that those studying at the Seminary of San Antonio Abad assumed this role, likely replacing salaried polyphonic singers entirely by 1700. Cathedral chaplains would have performed plainchant separately. Andean and African musicians appear to have participated exclusively as instrumentalists. In the second half of this chapter, Baker presents six case studies representing a diverse group of performers in the cathedral: Spaniards and Andeans as well as chapel masters, singers, and instrumentalists. These accounts consider where cathedral performance fell

³ Baker's arguments regarding the symbolic enactment of colonial hierarchy through music nicely complement Linda Curcio-Nagy's book *The Great Festivals of Colonial Mexico City: Performing Power and Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004).

in their career paths and their range of professional involvements in and outside of music.

In Chapter Three Baker examines music in institutions run by monastic orders, including houses for male and female religious, *beaterios*, hospitals, schools, and confraternities. With regards to the city's three female convents, the author uncovers evidence of practices also typical in Lima and Spain.⁴ Musical activities in Santa Clara and Santa Catalina included plainchant and polyphony with instrumental accompaniment that the nuns performed at mass and other festivities, including musical theater performances. In general, music performance in the convents facilitated networking with local elites and important visitors, as well as interaction with local male musicians who were contracted to provide music instruction, compositions, and possibly also musical direction. Young women with musical abilities could receive considerable dowry reductions, scholarships that could afford girls of modest, or indigenous, backgrounds the opportunity to profess in one of these institutions. Regardless, the city's convents were principally inhabited by Spanish women, and Andean female religious resided primarily in *beaterios*—or lay religious houses. The state of the evidence did not allow Baker to determine the exact number of *beaterios* in Cuzco, nor many details of their musical practices, but he did find evidence that these institutions had the potential to add an important additional facet to the city's musical environment. *Beaterios* provided a space in which Andean religious women could literally perform their Christian identity for Andean audiences and thus aid the missionary effort (125–7).

Andean musicians participated directly in institutions run by male religious orders. Music in Cuzco's seven male monasteries appears to have

⁴ Baker barely encountered any evidence of musical activity in Cuzco's Discalced Carmelite convent, Santa Teresa. He suggests that their austerity in public displays might be because "it was founded in response to the perception that the lifestyle of the city's nuns had become excessively lavish; it may therefore have tended toward austerity in its external displays" (112). This finding also reflects seventeenth-century trends in reformed (discalced or recollect) convents in seventeenth-century Castile. See Colleen Baade, "Music and Music-Making in Female Monasteries in Seventeenth-Century Castile" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Duke University, 2001), 37–39.

been significantly less extravagant than that in their female counterparts. In fact, these communities appear to have performed plainchant exclusively. A number of musical manuscripts suggest that the monasteries contracted seminary musicians for special occasions, but local Andean musicians seem to have been contracted to perform in daily services. Likewise, Cuzco's hospitals hired Andean musicians based in the parish churches to perform in daily services, as well for special services for the dead. Confraternities, lay religious brotherhoods popular among Andeans, also sponsored numerous concerts in monastic churches.

Baker's fourth chapter examines music in Cuzco's eight urban parishes, *parroquias de indios*, where the majority of the city's Andean population resided. Service as a church musician was usually a part-time occupation, for which musicians seem to have been either remunerated by the cacique, or through an exemption from taxes and required labor. In addition to these benefits musicians enjoyed a level of prestige as mediators between the Spanish and Andean communities, and for this reason they tended to be filled by Andeans of high status. Confraternities were also important sponsors of music in parish churches, and some institutions grew to have over a dozen of these brotherhoods supporting music on an occasional or even daily basis. Indigenous maestros served as choirmasters in church and village schoolmasters, teaching students to read and write, as well as to sing polyphony. Three case studies of parish musicians, composers, and maestros shed light on their economic activities. Baker explains that these included property investments, which suggests their higher economic status. Here he underscores the exceptional case of Matías de Livisaca, an Andean maestro active in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, who appears to have supported himself entirely as a composer of music in the European idiom. He owned copies of major Spanish-language music-theory treatises and also carried out correspondence with the chapel master at the cathedral at Potosí (182–6).

Chapter Five considers music in the rural *doctrinas de indios*, which were organized similarly to the urban parishes. Their distances from Spanish supervision, however, afforded a level of autonomy unavailable to their urban counterparts. In fact, the *doctrinas* were governed principally

by the Andean caciques with the supervision of Spanish officials. As in the city center, music assumed an important role in the organization of these communities. Choirmasters, who also served as school teachers, had the responsibility of providing music for important occasions, and usually also directed rehearsals and performances. They did not necessarily compose their own music. Four to six singers, who also doubled as instrumentalists, commonly performed in each church. These positions also seem to have been highly desirable because church musicians received an exemption from tribute taxes and labor that frequently included dangerous work in the mines at Potosí. Music also formed an important part of ceremonial life of the confraternities of the *doctrinas*, which, akin to their urban counterparts, supported these endeavors financially.

Arguing that music was much more than a straightforward means of colonial domination, Baker asserts that music instruction in the *doctrinas* was actively sought by the Andean residents rather than forced upon them. The relative flexibility of colonial officials towards music-making likely fostered the creation of music and dance repertoires that combined music in the European idiom with native traditions. Musical involvement afforded rural Andeans, just as their urban counterparts, an active role within colonial society. And through musical patronage rural elites were able “to promote their own interests and shore up their position in the colonial social hierarchy” (236). Returning to the perspective with which he began, Baker notes that Andean elites also adopted musical sounds—“church bells, trumpets, and drums”—as their own status symbols (229).

Baker’s study leaves little doubt that European music played more complex roles in colonial society than previous accounts have brought to light—and one that cannot be divorced from colonial racial and economic considerations. It is worth noting, however, that it provides an essentially local perspective on Cuzco’s musical traditions, downplaying other colonial, and ultimately transatlantic, networks and exchanges. To what larger systems can we attribute such exceptional cases as the Andean composer Livisaca? In this respect, Baker’s work suggests many avenues for future research, and his call for the creation of a “distinctly Latin American

historical musicology” will have to be taken into account in future work (239). Clearly-written throughout, *Imposing Harmony* is eminently comprehensible for both music students and non-music specialists. The volume is well laid-out, making it easy to navigate between chapters and endnotes. Sixteen images add an important visual dimension to the argument, but the lack of a table listing their locations makes them more difficult to reference later. All considered, this book will be a valuable addition to Latin Americanists’ collections, as well as to university courses with an emphasis on Latin American music or research methodologies.