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Editorial

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Editorial

Markus Rathey
Guest Editor

Pulpit and choir loft often vie for attention. And yet, in spite of the competition for the “ear” of the listener, they share analogous paradigms. Both preaching and music are performative arts in a liturgical or paraliturgical context, trying to convey the meaning of a biblical text or a religious idea. Both are rhetorical arts that seek to capture the attention and stir the emotions of the congregation. As preachers in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries increasingly focused on stirring the emotions of their audiences, and composers attempted to capture the affective potential of the texts they set to music, both of these “arts” elicited an intellectual as well as an emotional response from the listener. Preaching manuals from that time frequently referenced musical performance to explain how a sermon should be delivered; and treatises on composition taught the composer how to use rhetorical strategies to convey the meaning of a specific text.

In a sense, things have not changed much since the sixteenth century. Musical styles have changed, preaching styles have evolved; however, both music and preaching are still performative today: more than a neutral delivery of a text, they continue to live in the interaction between preacher/musician and listener.

Forms of preaching underwent significant changes from the second half of the fifteenth century to the later seventeenth century. Scholars such as Larissa Taylor,¹ Susan Karrant-Nunn,² John O’Malley,³ and Anne Thayer⁴ have in recent decades analyzed paradigm shifts in the way sermons were written, delivered, and perceived. We have learned to understand the significance of preaching as a performative art, embedded in a larger cultural, religious, and political context.

During this time period, changing perceptions of sermons coincided with changing views of music. For instance, we can begin to see the influence of humanism on music theory, musical practice, and homiletics alike. The Reformation was a watershed moment in the history of preaching, but it also had an immense impact on the world of music: Lutherans included vernacular hymns in the liturgy; Calvinists limited musical activity during the service to hymns from the Genevan Psalter; Huldrych Zwingli rejected music during the service altogether; while the Catholic Reformation had to find its own way between maintaining its long tradition and navigating the aesthetic shifts of its time. The differences between religious groups extended into musical as well as theological, political, and socioeconomic territory. After the turn from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century, Baroque aesthetics shifted the focus on the human senses and

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¹ Larissa Taylor, *Soldiers of Christ: Preaching in Late Medieval and Reformation France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and her edited volume *Preachers and People in the Reformations and Early Modern Europe* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2001).

² Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Feeling: Shaping the Religious Emotions in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³ John W. O’Malley, *Religious Culture in the Sixteenth Century: Preaching, Rhetoric, Spirituality, and Reform* (Aldershot, Hampshire, and Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1993).

⁴ Anne T. Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching, and the Coming of the Reformation* (Aldershot, Hampshire, and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2002).

emotions, which became a driving force both in contemporary sermons and in the music of the time. Andrew Dell’Antonio has shown this in an impressive way in his study on *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

But let us go back to the years around 1500, when music was increasingly being seen as a rhetorical art. Once part of the *quadrivium*, in the old canon of the *artes liberales*, it began to move closer to the *trivium*. Simply put, a discipline focusing on numbers turned into a discipline focusing on words. Music adopted rhetoric as a guiding paradigm, and rhetoric discovered music as a model. Erasmus of Rotterdam wrote in a treatise on rhetoric from 1528: “Why should we be so crude and unmusical when we talk, making every syllable that is accented high long and all the others short? . . . The accentuation and lengthening of some syllables can of course only be perceived in relation to others. . . . The same happens in music.”⁵ Music becomes a model for the proper pronunciation of a text. Todd Borgerding has shown in an inspiring article how this view extends into preaching treatises from the sixteenth century; how *pronunciatio*, as a fundamental rhetorical category, is taught by drawing connections to music.⁶

We can extend this connection between preaching, music, and rhetoric one step further. The three main goals of classical rhetoric are *docere*, *movere*, and *delectare*—to teach, to move, and to delight. We might be inclined to see teaching as the realm of the sermon, while music is the art that delights and moves the emotions. However, preachers, and especially Catholic preachers, in the early modern period “increasingly emphasize the goal of *delectare* . . . over *docere*.”⁷

Descriptions of Dominican and Franciscan preachers in the early modern period often highlight their performative, even dramatic talent. The same could be said of some Jesuit preachers. A little anecdote from the second half of the seventeenth century brings this into sharper relief: Marco d’Aviano, a charismatic Italian preacher, traveled north and preached in Vienna, Cologne, and Antwerp. In one sermon he screamed in Italian: “*Io non so parlare Tedesco*—I am not able to speak German. But I trust in the Lord that he will touch your hearts inwardly, will instruct them, inflame them, and shatter them.”⁸ We do not know whether Marco’s words were translated. However, the efficacy of his sermon depended less on what he said than on how he said it—on his gestures, the modulation of his voice. Is this so far away from a musical performance?

The musician and the preacher both perform a text. And preaching and music both elicit an emotional as well as an intellectual response from the listener.

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The idea for this second issue of the *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* started with a small conference held at Yale in the fall of 2013. The symposium brought together musicologists,

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⁵ Erasmus of Rotterdam, *De recta latini graecique sermonis pronuntiatione* (“On the Proper Pronunciation of Latin and Greek Speech”). Quoted in Hyun-Ah Kim, *Humanism and the Reform of Sacred Music in Early Modern England: John Merbecke the Orator and The Booke of Common Praier Noted (1550)* (Aldershot, Hampshire, and Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2008), 78.

⁶ Todd Borgerding, “Preachers, ‘Pronunciatio,’ and Music: Hearing Rhetoric in Renaissance Sacred Polyphony,” *Musical Quarterly* 82 (1998): 586–98.

⁷ Emily Michelson, *The Pulpit and the Press in Reformation Italy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 22.

⁸ Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Feeling*, 54.

historians, and theologians to explore the relationship between music and preaching from the late fifteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century. The papers dealt with pre-reformatory traditions in the Netherlands, shifts in preaching traditions during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, modes of listening to music and sermons in the Italian Baroque, and the use of hymns in sermons and concerted church music in German Protestantism.

Three of the papers in this volume were presented at the conference: Barbara Pitkin's fascinating overview of changing "worship soundscapes" during the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland, Thomas Troeger's reflections on a "musical homiletic," and my own case study on a collaboration between preacher and cantor in Leipzig in 1689. Three of the other participants in the symposium had already committed their papers elsewhere or published the material in a different context. I still want to mention these papers because they give an idea of the wide spectrum of music and preaching during the early modern period. Jennifer Bloxam's "Preaching to the Choir: Obrecht's Motet for the Dedication of the Church" showed how Obrecht's treatment of a text lined up perfectly with the way contemporary preaching manuals recommended interpreting a biblical *perikope* in a sermon.⁹ Todd Borgerding explored the relationship between "Improvisation in Music and Preaching during the Renaissance," drawing on his enlightening article on music and preaching in the sixteenth century entitled "Preachers, 'Pronunciatio,' and Music: Hearing Rhetoric in Renaissance Sacred Polyphony," cited above. The third presenter, Andrew Dell'Antonio, looked at the other side of the communicative process, the listener, the perception, and modes and attitudes of listening that are similar in music and preaching in the seventeenth century; readers will find the material readily available in Dell'Antonio's aforementioned book *Listening as Spiritual Practice in Early Modern Italy*.

The three remaining papers from the symposium are here combined with two new essays. Joyce Irwin's article analyzes Lutheran organ sermons from the seventeenth century. The dedications of organs provided a welcome opportunity for preachers not only to talk about the importance of organs but to elaborate on the meaning and significance of music in general. Organ sermons were often a place to explore the theological foundations of music. Some of the preachers even dealt with the social issues connected with the expenses for large instruments.

The other new essay takes us in a new direction, building on Thomas Troeger's reflections at the end of the conference: the idea that the links between music and preaching are not merely a historical phenomenon but are of continuing relevance. This ongoing dialogue between pulpit and music is explored in an article by Emmett G. Price III, which looks at traditions of music and preaching in the Black Christian Experience. As he points out, music and preaching do not only serve as independent expressions of faith and theology; the two disciplines also often work in tandem as the preacher "sings" and performs the sermon.

This volume of the *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* concludes with Thomas Troeger's observations on music and preaching. He summarizes intersections of these two liturgical arts in the past and shows how choir loft and pulpit can interact successfully by creating a liturgical soundscape.

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⁹ Bloxam's essay is forthcoming in a *Festschrift*.