



Cervantes's Sensitivity to the Music of His Epoch: Songs, Dances, and Instruments

For Miguel Querol Gavaldá's 75th Anniversary

IN CONTRAST WITH such earlier writers as Juan del Encina (1469–1529?), Jorge de Montemayor (1519–1561), Gregorio Silvestre (1520–1569), and Vicente Espinel (1550–1624), Cervantes apparently enjoyed no formal musical education. True, his first schoolmaster was the musician-priest at Córdoba, Alonso de Vieras (*maestro de capilla* of Córdoba Cathedral from May 11, 1562, to his death in October of 1576). Or at least Vieras was Cervantes's first schoolmaster according to Luis Astrana Marín (*Vida ejemplar y heroica*, I, 313). Vieras's brother Álvaro de Cervantes was *maestro de capilla* of Córdoba Cathedral from 1548 to 1556.

In October of 1553, when Rodrigo de Cervantes arrived at Córdoba with his wife and five children, Alonso de Vieras was *maestro de mozos*. As such, he taught the boys placed under his charge reading, writing, Latin fundamentals, plainchant, and *canto de órgano*. What musical profit did Cervantes gain from Vieras's instruction, or from that of any later teacher?

In his *El coloquio de los perros Cipion y Bergançá* (*Novelas ejemplares*, 1613), the intelligence of a dog is vaunted by his knowing the musical syllables *sol fa mi re* (*Obras Completas*, Real Academia Española [hereafter, *OC*], IV, 259v: *entona vn solfamire tambien como vn sacristan*). In *El viage del Parnaso* (1614) Cervantes imagines a motet being sung with a sweet voice by Gerónimo de Castro (*OC*, VI, 26: *A la sombra de vn Mirto, al verde amparo /*

Gerónimo de Castro festeaua, / Varon de ingenio peregrino y raro, / Vn motete imagino que cantaua / Con voz suaue, Yo quedé admirado / De verle alli, porque en Madrid quedaua).

To believe this last reference, a *motete* can properly be sung by a soloist. Cervantes does not specify the soloist's voice range. However, in *La casa de los Zelos* (*Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses nuevos*, 1615), the shepherd Rústico proclaims *contrabajo* (with perhaps a pun intended) to be a better voice than the tiple, contralto, and tenor voices proposed by fellow shepherd Corinto (*OC*, v, 49v: *Cor. Con que voz quieres quedar / tiple, contralto, o tenor. Rust. Con trabaxo es muy mejor*).

None of these musical allusions demonstrates any profound knowledge of music as taught by *maestros de capilla* in mid-sixteenth-century Spain. Cervantes does show that he knows what counterpoint means when in *Los baños de Argel* (*Ocho comedias*, 1615), he defines it as music of various intertwining voice parts (*OC*, v, 76v: *Os[sorio]. Misterio es este no visto, / veynte Religiosos son / los que oy la Resurreccion / han celebrado de Christo, / (Con musica concertada, la que llaman contrapunto)*).

Twenty religious singing polyphony in honor of the Resurrection may do very well, but in *Don Quixote, segunda parte* (1615), Maese Pedro tells his assistant to get on with the story, and not to add head-breaking counterpoints to the plainsong (*OC*, III, 100v: *Tambien dixo maesse Pedro desde dentro:*



Muchacho, no te metas en dibuxos, sino haz, lo que esse señor te manda, que sera lo mas acertado: sigue tu canto llano, y no te metas en contrapuntos, que se suelen quebrar de sotiles). In the first part of *Don Quixote* the word *contrapunto* again crops up—this time at the close of the shepherd Grisóstomo's *canción* foretelling his suicide on account of Marcela's disdain. Grisóstomo anticipates no more fitting funeral pomp than a dolorous counterpoint added to his *canción* by Cerberus and a thousand other shades (OC, II, 54v: *Y el portero infernal de los tres rostros, / Con otras mil quimeras, y mil monstruos / Lleuen el doloroso contrapunto, / Que otra pompa mejor no me parece, / Que la merece vn amador difunto*).

In the second part of *Don Quixote*, chapter 28, Sancho Panza's master reproves him for the foolishness of braying: "What counterpoint to the music of your braying could you expect but blows?" he asks (OC, III, 108: *¿a musica de rebuznos que contrapunto se auia de llevar sino de varapalos?*). Still more on the ridiculous side, Cervantes anticipates the claims of present-day percussionists who call mere noise-making music when in his tale of the two apprentice rogues operating in the underworld of Seville, *Rinconete y Cortadillo* (*Novelas exemplares*), he allows their master Monipodio to break a platter, hit the pieces together quickly, and thus create a counterpoint to the scraping of a broom (OC, IV, 81v: *Monipodio rōpio vn plato, y hizo dos tejoletas, q̄ puestas entre los dedos, y repicadas cō grā ligereza, lleuaua el cōtrapūto al chapin, y a la escoba*). Could Cervantes correctly refer to such mere noise-making as counterpoint—even in jest? Rodríguez Marín in his edition of *Rinconete y Cortadillo* (Madrid, 1920) took issue, quoting the *Diccionario de Autoridades* of the Real Academia Española to the effect that counterpoint must always imply harmonious concordance of independent voices (*Diccionario de la lengua española*, tomo segundo [Madrid: Francisco del Hierro, Impresor de la Real Academia Española, 1729], 565: *concordancia harmoniosa, de voces contrapuestas*).

Except for Vicente Espinel, who ranks equally as a literary paladin, Cervantes mentions none of the chief native or foreign composers of his epoch. Even if he knew them by name, as he certainly must have known world-famous Francisco Guerrero (1528–1599) during his residences in Seville beginning in 1564–1565, Cervantes never alludes to either Guerrero—associate director of Sevillian Cathedral music from 1551 to 1574 and thereafter director—

nor to Guerrero's teacher, Cristóbal de Morales (ca. 1500–1553), Tomás Luis de Victoria (ca. 1548–1611), or any other musical composer. In Cervantes's defense, it must of course be acknowledged that his contemporary, Shakespeare, mentioned neither William Byrd, Thomas Morley, nor any other musician—except possibly the lutenist John Dowland (1563–1626) in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, published in 1599. However, even the eighth poem in *The Passionate Pilgrim* mentioning Dowland had been published in 1598 with ascription not to Shakespeare but to Richard Barnfield.

Cervantes did on three occasions mention Vicente Espinel. Already in the *Canto de Caliope* climaxing *libro sexto* of *La Galatea* (1585) Cervantes exalts Espinel to the skies. No words of his can adequately encompass Espinel's merits, either as writer or as musical performer (OC, I, 328v: *De el famoso Espinel cosas diria / que exceden al humano entendimiento / de aquellas sciencias que en su pecho cria / el diuino de Febo sacro aliento. / Mas pues no puede de la lengua mia / dezir lo menos de lo mas que siento / no diga mas, sino que al cielo aspira / ora tome la pluma, ora la lira*). He eulogizes Espinel as a great guitarist in his *Viage del Parnaso* (OC, VI, 11v: *Este, aunque tiene parte de Zoylo, / Es el grande Espinel, que en la guitarra / Tiene la prima, y en el raro estilo*). In the *Adivnta al Parnaso*, Cervantes salutes Vicente Espinel—who like him had joined the Hermandad de Esclavos del Santísimo Sacramento in the year of its founding (Cervantes on April 17, 1608, Espinel on July 5 [*Vida ejemplar*, VI, 320, 323])—as one of his oldest and truest friends (OC, VI, 76v: *Al famoso Vincente Espinel dara V.m. mis encomiendas, como a vno de los mas antiguos y verdaderos amigos que yo tengo*).

How much of a musician was Espinel? When attributing to Espinel the addition of a fifth string to the four-course guitar (Cervantes mistakenly implies the highest sounding string), he joins company with Lope de Vega. In *La Dorotea*, I, IV, published in 1632 but referring to events forty-five years earlier, Lope de Vega erroneously credited Espinel with having introduced the five-string guitar to the detriment of such other noble instruments as the more difficult six-course vihuela (*perdóneselo Dios a Vicente Espinel que nos truxo esta nouedad y las cinco cuerdas de la guitarra, con-que ya se van olvidando los instrumentos nobles*). Lope again hammered home the same false notion that Espinel pioneered the five-course guitar when in his *Laurel de Apolo*, I, 23, he



asked Apollo to reward Espinel for his verses cast in "sweet, sonorous espinelas" and for the five-string guitar.

Cervantes's various allusions to Espinel do not therefore mean that he correctly understood Espinel's musical contributions, any more than did Lope. So little interested indeed was he in Espinel's true qualifications that he never once alludes to any musical composition by Espinel—despite Espinel's quarter-century spent as maestro of the Capilla del Obispo at the Church of San Andrés in Madrid, May 1599 to February 1624, and Espinel's attendant obligations to compose villancicos, train choruses, and select music for purchase. Apparently these details did not interest Cervantes. Nor for that matter do they interest the literary public today.

However, the obvious fact that he himself took no interest in the abracadabra of the music profession cannot justly be called a misfortune. What songs he does mention, what dances he does record, and what instruments he does itemize, stimulate all the greater interest among cultural historians bent on understanding the popular culture of his epoch. Not to Espinel's supremely informative *Relaciones de la vida del Escudero Marcos de Obregon* (Madrid: Juan de la Cuesta, 1618)—crowded as is this autobiographical novel with musical data of every kind—but rather to *Don Quixote*, the *Novelas Exemplares*, and the *Ocho comedias y ocho entremeses* must one now turn for any comprehensive understanding of the musical culture rampant among Spanish middle and lower classes during the reigns of Philip II and III.

Insofar as songs go, Miguel Querol Gavaldá listed no less than thirteen romances in *Don Quixote* for which traditional music from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be supplied. In part one, Querol Gavaldá itemized the following examples:

- Chapter 2, the romance *La constancia* with lines beginning *Mis arreos son las armas* (*Cancionero de Romances de Amberes*, fol. 252; *Romancero General*, no. 300);
- Chapters 2, 13, 19, 23, and 31, a parody of the *Romance de Lanzarote del Lago* with lines commencing *Nunca fuera caballero / de damas tan bien servido* (*Romancero General*, no. 352);
- Chapter 5 and in *El Celoso Extremeño* the *Romance de Abindarráez y Jarifa* with lines starting *La mañana de San Juan* (*Romancero General*, no. 80);

Chapter 5, the *Romance del Marqués de Mantua* with lines that begin *Donde estás, señora mía, que no te duele mi mal* (*Cancionero de Romances*, fols. 29–34);

Chapters 23 and 24, the *Romance de Cardenio en Sierra Morena* with lines that commence *Por unos puertos arriba / de montaña muy oscura* (*Romancero General*, no. 1420; *Cancionero musical de Palacio*, no. 107).

In part 2 of *Don Quixote* Querol Gavaldá called attention to the following examples:

Chapter 9, the *Romance del Conde Claros de Montalbán* with lines beginning *Media noche era por hilo* (*Cancionero de Romances*, fols. 85–90; *Romancero General*, no. 362);

Chapter 9, the *Romance del Conde Guarinos* with lines that start *Mala la visteis, franceses / la caza de Roncesvalles* (*Cancionero de Romances*, fols. 100–105; *Romancero General*, no. 402; *Flor Nueva de Romances*, p. 92);

Chapter 9, the *Romance de Calaiños* with lines beginning *Ya cavalga Calaiños / A las sombras de una oliva* (*Romancero General*, no. 373);

Chapter 23, the *Romance de Durandarte*, with lines that start *Durandarte, buen caballero probado* (*Cancionero musical de Palacio*, no. 445; *Romancero General*, no. 385);

Chapters 26 and 64, the *Romance de Don Gayferos* with lines that commence *Asentado está Gayferos* (*Cancionero de Romances*, fols. 55–65; *Romancero General*, no. 377);

Chapter 34, the *Romance del rey Favila* with text starting *De los osos seas comido / como Favila el nombrado*;

Chapter 60, the *Romance de Don Rodrigo de Lara* with verses that begin *A cazar va Don Rodrigo* (*Cancionero de Romances*, fols. 164–165; *Romancero General*, no. 691).

So far as accompaniment for the singing of romances, or for that matter of any other song-type, Cervantes has it that "the best voice in the world loses its value when not accompanied by an instrument" (*Novela del Zeloso Extremeño* [OC, iv, 143v]: *la mejor voz del mundo pierde de sus quilates quando no se acompaña con el instrumento*). Cervantes specifies the best accompanying instruments in this descending order: guitar, harpsichord, organs, harp (*ibid.*: *ora sea de guitarra, ò clauicimbano, de organos, ò de harpa*). The single word in



Cervantes's list that may give pause is *clavizimbano*, another spelling for *clavicembalo* or *clavicimballo* (*Diccionario básico Espasa*, II, 1341). *Clavicymbalo*, according to the *Diccionario de la lengua española*, tomo segundo (Real Academia Española, 1729), 377, equals *clavicordio*, defined in the same dictionary as "an instrument strung with wires that are plucked by some strong quills or plectrums governed by keys that are struck by the player of the instrument; because of the shape of the instrument, which resembles that of the spinet, the *clavicordio* is sometimes called *clavicymbalo*" (*instrumento de cuerdas de alambre, à las quales hieren unas plumillas fuertes ò clavetes, movidos de las teclas, segun y como las toca el que usa de este instrumento; el qual es à la forma de un cymbalo, por lo que otros se llaman clavicymbalo*).

As reasons for preferring the guitar, Loaysa advises Luys that it suits his particular voice best, is easiest to play, and least expensive (*pero el que mas à vuestra voz le conviene, es el instrumento de la guitarra, por ser el mas mañero, y menos costoso de los instrumentos*).

Still another type of accompaniment for romances, villancicos, and canciones—apart from guitar, harpsichord, organs, and harp—turns up in the exemplary novel *La Gitanilla*. "Preciosa takes some jingles, makes some wide and very light twirls, and to their sound sings the following romance: 'Most precious tree that delays in yielding fruit'" (*OC*, IV, 2: *tomò Preciosa vnas sonajas, al son de las quales, dando en redòdo largas, y ligerissimas bueltas, cantò el Romance siguiente: Arbol preciosissimo, / Que tardò en dar fruto*). After she is done, some of her admiring public implore God's blessing on her, while others lament that she is a Gypsy girl and not the daughter of somebody important.

Cervantes labels her song a *cantar* (*OC*, IV, 3). But although romances are her specialty, she also excels in such other song types as villancicos, coplas, seguidillas, and zarabandas—the last two being dance songs as well as instrumental dances (*OC*, IV, IV: *Saliò Preciosa rica de villancicos, de coplas, seguidillas, y çarabandas, y de otros versos, especialmente de romances*). In *Don Quixote*, part I, chapter 12, deceased Grisóstomo wins praise for his ability to compose coplas, as well as Christmas villancicos (*OC*, II, 43v: *fue grande hombre de componer coplas, tanto que el hazia los villancicos para la noche del Nacimiento del Señor*).

In the seventeenth century (and later) villancico came to mean solely a religious poem with refrain sung at church festivals (*Diccionario de la lengua castellana*, tomo sexto [1739], 487: *Composicion de Poesia con su estrivillo para la Música de las festividades en las Iglesias*). But not so in the sixteenth century. That the word villancico could still mean a secular song consisting of estribillo and coplas as late as 1585 becomes clear in *La Galatea*, book I, when a shepherd "with signs of great contentment and with many joyful outcries began an entertaining villancico" (*OC*, I, I, 43: *Con muchos plazereros alaridos, dieron principio a vn gracioso villancico*).

The seguidillas in which Preciosa excelled—along with romances, villancicos, and zarabandas—was a song-type involving (from 1590) syncopated ternary meter. By no means was it merely a jocose, metrical composition of four verse feet, second and fourth assonating, first and third feet consisting of seven syllables, second and fourth of five syllables—as defined in the *Diccionario de la lengua castellana*, tomo sexto [1739], 66: *Composición métrica de quatro pies, en que el segundo ha de ser assonante del quarto, los quales constan de cinco syllabas, y el primero y tercero de siete*. Cervantes's other references to seguidillas force our believing that they were sung: "Monipodio asked that they sing some well-known seguidillas" (*OC*, IV, 82: *Monipodio le auia rogado, que cantasse algunas seguidillas de las que se vsauan*). In the second part of *Don Quixote*, chapter 24, "a pleasant-faced lad of eighteen or nineteen years while away the tedium of his journey singing seguidillas" (III, 93: *yua cantando seguidillas para entretener el trabajo del camino, quando llegaron a el, acabaua de cantar vna, que el primo tomò de memoria, que dizen, que dezia: A la guerra me lleua mi necesidad. / Si tuuiera dineros no fuera en verdad*).

Zarabandas and chaconas, later popularized in France, England, and Germany as purely instrumental types, were not only danced but sung; or at least so Loaysa infers when advising Luys that he can teach him to sing the history of the great Sofi Tomunibeyo—*con las de la Zarabanda a lo diuino*. Cervantes's other references to the zarabanda—widely scattered through his *Novelas Ejemplares*—decree its lascivious character (Carlos Fernández Gómez, *Vocabulario de Cervantes* [Real Academia Española, 1962], 1097).

In the *Gran Sultana*, jornada tercera, Madrigal

responds to a request for more singing when he replies: "A thousand zarabandas, a thousand pretty zambapalos, a thousand chaconas, a thousand pé-same dello, and a thousand folías (OC, v, 130v: ¿Que cantemos mas? / Mad. mil zarabandas / mil zambapolas lindos, mil chaconas, / y mil pesame dello / y mil folías).

Carlos Fernández Gómez, in his alphabetized *Vocabulario de Cervantes*, itemizes precise line locations in Cervantes's works at which are mentioned the following dance types and dance steps:

Court and Chamber: gallarda, Rey Don Alonso, Rey Perico;

Popular: canario, chacona, contrapás, escarramán, folías, gambetas, perra mora, pé-same dello, pol-villo, rastreado, villano, zambapalo, zarabanda;

General: concertadas, de artificio o habladas, de cas-cabel, de gitanos, de hortelanos, de zapateadores;

Steps and turns: boladillo, cabriolas, floreo, laberintos, lazos, vueltas.

The same *Vocabulario de Cervantes* provides line locations for these instruments:

Bowed: rabel;

Plucked: bandurria, cítola, guitarra, (h)arpa, laúd, lira, salterio, vihuela;

Keyboard: clavicím-bano, órgano;

Woodwinds: caramillo, chirimía, churumbela, dul-zaina, flauta, gaita, gaita zamorana, pí-faro (pífano), zampoña;

Brass: bocina, clarín, corneta, cuerno, sacabuche, trompeta, trompeta bastarda, trompa de París(?);

Percussion: albugues, cascabeles, castañetas, chapas, sonajas, tejoletas; campanas, campanillas, cencerros; atabales, atambor, caja, tamborete, tamboril, tamborino; panderete, pandero.

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Except for the first item, which he co-authored, Miguel Querol Gavaldá was the sole author of all other items in the following list.

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In addition to editing Espinós's diffuse text, Querol himself contributed half the entries and should therefore rank as co-author.

"Don Quijote en la verbena de San Juan en Barcelona," in *Diario de Barcelona*, Año 156, núm. 149, June 24, 1947, p. 2.

Don Quixote reached Barcelona on the eve of St. John's Day.

"La Música de los romances y canciones mencionados por Cervantes en sus obras," *Anuario Musical*, II (1947), 53-68.

Querol transcribes and comments on the melodies of various romances mentioned in *Don Quixote*.

"Cervantes y la Música," *Revista de Filología Española*, xxxii (1948), 367-382. (*Actas de la Asamblea Cervantina de la Lengua Española* [Valladolid], 1947-1948.) Not only in *Don Quixote* but throughout his entire oeuvre, Cervantes scattered numerous musical allusions.

"Cervantes y los barberos," in *Diario de Barcelona*, Año. 157, núm. 123, May 23, 1948, p. 1.

Barbers figured prominently in village festivals, always as players of the guitar.

"Los conocimientos musicales de Cervantes," in *Diario de Barcelona*, Año 157, núm. 77, March 31, 1948, p. 2.

An assessment of Cervantes's musical knowledge, based on musical allusions in his works.

La música en las obras de Cervantes. Prólogo by Juan Sedó Peris-Mencheta. Barcelona: Ediciones Comtalia, 1948. 173 pp.

Definitive study of the romances, canciones, bailes, danzas, and musical instruments mentioned by Cervantes.

"Partituras musicales inspiradas en Cervantes," in *Diario de Barcelona*, Año 157, núm. 103, April 30, 1948, p. 3.

Listing of the chief operas, operettas, zarzuelas, and orchestral works inspired by episodes in *Don Quixote* and in other works by Cervantes.

"El villano en la época de Cervantes y Lope de Vega y su supervivencia en el folklore contemporáneo," *Anuario Musical*, xi (1956), 1-12.

Allusions in Cervantes and Lope de Vega reflect the character of the dance known as "El villano," the music of which is the same as that of the popular Catalan song, "Quan el pare no té pa."

"La chacona española del tiempo de Cervantes," *Anuario Musical*, xxv (1970), 49-65.

Brought over from New Spain as a popular dance, the chacona took root in the Iberian peninsula as an art-form, and from there radiated out to the rest of Europe.

La música en las obras de Cervantes. Romances, canciones y danzas tradicionales a tres y cuatro voces y para canto y piano. Transcriptions by Miguel Querol Gavaldá. Explanatory notes in Spanish, French, and



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All the items in this anthology are cited in Cervantes, and the musical source is in every instance contemporary with him.

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Comments on the musical excerpts performed during the Fifth Cervantine Meeting Days and on Cervantes's musical culture in a general sense.

Supplementary Reading

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