

Contents

<i>List of Plates</i>	xvii
<i>List of Figures</i>	xviii
<i>List of Music Examples</i>	xix
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xxi
<i>Bibliographical Note and University Terms</i>	xxiii

Part I The Eighteenth Century

1 Introduction: The Tradition before c.1660	3
2 Music in an Academic Context, I	8
3 Music in the University and City, I	35
4 Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Oxford	44
5 The Colleges, I	75
6 Personalities: The Goodsons, William and Philip Hayes, Crotch, and Malchair	87

Part II The Nineteenth Century

7 Music in an Academic Context, II	97
8 Music in the University and City, II	130
9 Nineteenth-Century Concert Life	142
10 The Colleges, II	182

11	Personalities: Bishop, Ouseley, Stainer, Parry, Parratt, and Allen	203
12	Epilogue: The Tradition after c.1914	222
	<i>Acknowledgements and Sources for Illustrations</i>	225
	<i>Bibliography</i>	227
	<i>Index</i>	236

PART I

*The
Eighteenth
Century*

I



Introduction: The Tradition before c.1660

Oxford's history can be traced back as far as the year 912. Parts of its early fortifications are still visible today in the remains of the city walls (some of which were incorporated into the colleges) and the castle tower, built for William the Conqueror in 1071. The two great Augustinian priories of St Frideswide's and Oseney Abbey, dating from 1122 and 1129 respectively, promoted an environment of learning which contributed to the development of the university towards the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth centuries: the appointment of a chancellor of the university was first mentioned in a document of 1214.¹

From the earliest period there are reports of both private and sociable music-making within the university community. It was written of Robert Grosseteste (Chancellor of the University c.1224) that:

He loved moche to here the Harpe,
For mans witte yt maketh sharpe.
Next hys chamber, besyde his study,
Hys Harper's chamber was fast the by.

¹ For the general history of the university see V. H. H. Green, *A History of Oxford University* (London, 1974); and *The History of the University of Oxford*, 8 vols. (Oxford, 1984 ff.). Generally on Oxford's musical history see Wollenberg, articles 'Oxford' in *NG2*, and *MGG*. These are the chief sources of the information presented here.

And Chaucer's Nicholas, the poor 'Clerk of Oxenford', possessed,
according to the *Miller's Tale*, a psalter,

On which he made a nightes melodye
So swetely that al the chamber rang:
And Angelus ad virginem he sang.

In 1381 three harp makers were documented in Oxford; a variety of musical instruments, including harps and lutes, appeared among fifteenth- and sixteenth-century inventories of the goods of university members. Informal musical gatherings included the medieval college custom of singing around the fire in hall after supper on festivals and special occasions. Formal provision for music existed in the various college statutes; New College (1379), the first of the three major choral foundations, had a statutory allocation (to be retained whatever the college's financial position) of ten chaplains, three clerks, and sixteen choristers, with an *informator choristarum* first documented in 1394–5. An element of training occurred specifically in the founder's statutes for the Queen's College (1340) with the prescription of thirteen chaplains and two clerks to give instruction in plainsong and polyphony to the 'poor boys'. The second of the major choral foundations to be established, Magdalen College (1458), was provided with four chaplains, eight clerks, sixteen choristers, and their *informator*. Evidence of the latter's function in composing chapel music for the choir survives in the work by Richard Davy (*informator* 1490–2) preserved in the Eton choirbook, with the inscription 'hanc antiphonam composuit Ricardus Davy uno die collegio magdalene Oxoniis'.

At Cardinal College (1525) on the site of St Frideswide's, the third of the great choral establishments to be founded, Wolsey provided for thirteen chaplains, twelve clerks (one of whom was to serve as organist), sixteen choristers, and an *informator*. In 1546 the old priory church of St Frideswide's was designated Christ Church Cathedral, henceforth functioning—uniquely—as both diocesan cathedral church and college chapel for Henry VIII's refounded college of Christ Church (or *Aedes Christi*). Also in 1546 Henry VIII established the cathedral school for the free education of the choirboys, together with a complement of fee-paying pupils.²

² On Oxford's later role as refuge for King and court in the 1640s see Ch. 4 below.

Degrees in music (B.Mus., D.Mus.) had been awarded at Oxford from at least the late fifteenth century. These belonged to a distinct category separate from the BA and MA obtainable after four, and then a further three, years' study of the liberal arts. Some thirty candidates took music degrees (the majority B.Mus.) in the period up to 1535, among them Hugh Aston (1510) and Robert Fayrfax (incorporated D.Mus. from Cambridge in 1511, the earliest recorded mention of the doctorate). The candidates were expected to have spent a substantial number of years in the study of music (which could be external to the university) and to compose a mass, or mass and antiphon, customarily performed during the degree ceremony. A series of distinguished composers supplicated for the Oxford degree of B.Mus. during the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, including John Bull and John Munday (1586), Thomas Morley and John Dowland (1588), Giles Farnaby (1592), Thomas Weelkes (1602), Thomas Tomkins (1607), and Richard Dering (1611). The D.Mus. was granted to, among others, John Sheppard (1554), *informator* at Magdalen College. A glimpse of the splendour attached to the Oxford degrees in the seventeenth century is provided by Christopher Gibbons (son of Orlando) who in 1663 was 'nominated by the King for the degree of D.Mus. at Oxford University'; this was conferred in July 1664, and Wood related that the music for the occasion was performed 'with very great honour to himself and his faculty'.³

Although the Puritan proscriptions had disrupted the choral tradition in Oxford, as elsewhere, the college resources either remained or were restored after 1660. In 1663 a 'large and stately organ' was fitted up in New College chapel; the organ of Magdalen College chapel, removed on Cromwell's orders to Hampton Court, was returned to the college after the Restoration; and the organ in use at St John's College until 1768 was the same as before the Restoration.⁴ Music teaching is documented in Oxford at this time; Wood took lessons on the violin from one of the city waits, for which he paid '2s.6d. Entrance, and 10s. Quarterly', and Edward Lowe taught a young lady to play the virginals, preparing a manuscript collection of virginals pieces for her together with advice.⁵

³ NG2 ix. 830, 'Christopher Gibbons'.

⁴ Wood, *History and Antiquities* (ed. Gutch), i. 199; ii. 271; and iii. 554. For the history of New College organ see also P. Hale in Buxton and Williams (eds.), *New College, Oxford*, 270–3.

⁵ Cf. Spink, *The Seventeenth Century*, 25.

All these elements of musical provision set the pattern for the diversity of music-making in Oxford throughout the following centuries. The medieval scholars also established a tradition of theoretical music in connection with the study of the seven liberal arts, whereby music was studied alongside arithmetic, astronomy, and geometry in the quadrivium. A series of theoretical treatises on music emanated from Oxford writers during the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. During this period, too, the *De musica* of Boethius (d. 524) was granted, and retained, its leading position in the Oxford curriculum: Boethius's text was specified in the MA regulations from at least 1431. This speculative element in Oxford's musical tradition was renewed in the seventeenth century by the work of a group of Oxford mathematicians and philosophers (Edmund Chilmead, John Wallis, John Wilkins, and their colleagues); Wilkins's Oxford group formed the nucleus of the early Royal Society (founded 1660).

When William Heather endowed the Professorship of Music at Oxford that bears his name, in 1627 (inspired by his friend Camden's similar foundation in History in 1622)⁶ he recognized the dual strands of practical and theoretical music in his stipulation that the Choragus (later known as Professor), with a stipend of £13.6s.8d. per annum, should preside over weekly music practices during termtime (except in Lent), while the Lecturer in the science of music, at a yearly stipend of £3, should be responsible for theoretical instruction. This latter post fell into disuse in the course of the seventeenth century, but survived in the Music Lecture or Music Speech which formed part of the annual Act (degree ceremonies). Nevertheless Heather's endowment of the Professorship was a landmark event that put Oxford music 'on the map' for the future. A series of distinguished holders of the post during the seventeenth century included Richard Nicholson (1627–39), John Wilson (1656–61), Edward Lowe (1661–82), and Richard Goodson senior (1682–1718). The Heather Professor traditionally presided over the Music School (located in the Bodleian Quadrangle, where the inscription 'Schola Musicae' still stands over the

⁶ See *HUO* iv. 345, 623–4. Heather himself in 1622 took the degrees of B.Mus. and D.Mus. at Oxford simultaneously (a practice later regarded as undesirable: see Ch. 2 below); it was thought that on the same occasion his Chapel Royal colleague and friend Orlando Gibbons took the D.Mus. at Oxford, having previously graduated Mus.B. at Cambridge in 1606 (*NG* vii. 354, 'Orlando Gibbons'), but doubt has been cast on this (cf. *NG*2 ix. 833). On Gibbons's 'O clap your hands', evidently written for this occasion, see Caldwell, *OHEM* i. 369–70.

doorway), which housed Heather's collection of music books, portraits, and instruments: successive Professors arranged for refurbishments and added to the collection. As Hawkins (who worked there in preparing his *History of Music*) later described it, the 'music-school at Oxford' was 'the repository of a great number of books containing compositions of various kinds, some of them of great antiquity'.⁷ Oxford by that time reflected and stimulated both the traditional antiquarian interests in music, and the development of the newer historical scholarship in the subject.

⁷ Sir John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (London, 1776), preface to vol. i; on the early holdings of the Music School see M. Crum, 'Early Lists of the Oxford Music School Collection', *ML* 48 (1967), and Ford, 'The Oxford Music School in the late 17th century', *JAMS* 17 (1964); generally on the early Music School see *HUO* iv. 625–6. Hawkins, *History* (2nd edn., London, 1875) refers (ii. 699) to 'a rare Theorbo for singing to . . . with the Earl of Bridgwater's crest in brass just under the fingerboard' . . . given by Lawes to the Oxford Music School and survived until the middle of the nineteenth century' (quoted in Spink, *The Seventeenth Century*, 304).