

Henri Collet, *Le mysticisme musical espagnol au xvie siècle* (1913)

Le mysticisme musical espagnol au xvi^e siècle is the primary thesis written by Henri Collet for his Doctor of Letters degree, in conjunction with a “complementary thesis”, [*Un tratado de canto de órgano \(siglo XVI\). Manuscrito en la Biblioteca nacional de París. Edición y comentarios*](#) (Madrid: Librería Gutenberg de José Ruiz/Ruiz hermanos sucesores, 1913). Collet defended both works at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Paris on 11 March 1913; his jury included, notably, the musicologist André Pirro (1869–1943). Dedicated “To Monsieur Pierre Paris [1859–1931], Directeur de l’École française d’Espagne” (the future École des hautes études hispaniques or EHEH, of which Collet was one of the first students in 1909–11), the work was published in 1913 by Félix Alcan in Paris (535 pp.). It was twice reprinted in the 1970s, by Presses universitaires de France (Paris, 1978) and Éditions d’Aujourd’hui (Plan de la Tour, 1979, as part of the series “Les Introuvables”).

A mixture of technical analysis and, above all, historiography, Collet’s thesis presents a wealth of documentation and reflection on Spain during its “Siglo de oro” (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). The critic Camille Bellaigue (1858–1930) gave it a very thorough review in the *Revue des deux mondes* (1 Nov. 1913, pp. 697–708).

The first chapter attempts a survey of “musical mysticism” in general, seeking to establish a definition and a history that starts from Greek antiquity (Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle), emphasises the hybridisation of Jewish and Arab aesthetic traditions, and traverses the medieval influence of Boethius and Isidore of Seville. Collet then tries to identify the means of expression of this musical mysticism, taking into account modality (Arab and Greek modes, liturgical modes derived from plainchant) but also Spanish organology and chant manuscripts, and the origins and evolution of polyphony. The second chapter, “Renaissance Europe”, takes the form of a panorama of the most important musical “nationalities” of the sixteenth century, the better to contextualise Spain’s place in the European landscape: the Franco-Flemish school (or “Netherlandish” as Collet calls it) of Josquin and Lassus; the French, English, German, and Scandinavian schools; and above all the Italian school (Palestrina, the Sistine Chapel, the exchanges of influence between Italy and Spain as seen in the Council of Trent and the revision of the *Graduale romanum*). The third chapter returns to “the Spanish milieu”, covering the place of music and musicians in society, especially during the reigns of Charles V, Philip II, and Philip III. The following two chapters deal more directly with music, including “Music in the Theatre” (Ch. 4) and the “Scholastic Tradition” (music as science, music in the university, Spanish theorists of the sixteenth century) in Ch. 5. Collet next reviews the composers and examines the musical characteristics of the various “schools” of

the peninsula: the “Andalusian school” (Ch. 6), with remarks on the archives of the Seville Cathedral; the chapels of Granada, Malaga, and Cordoba; the composers Morales, Guerrero, Navarro, Las Infantas, etc.; the “Valencian and Catalan schools” with an excursion to the monastery of “Montserrat and its choir school” (Ch. 7); and the “Castilian school” (Ch. 8), including the Toledo Cathedral, fauxbourdon, the Mozarabic Rite, music in Aragon, and Cabezón and the Spanish organ school of the sixteenth century. Finally, the ninth and last chapter—the longest of all—is entirely dedicated to the “musician who sums up the age”, Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548–1611), covering his life, works, and aesthetic ideas.

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Further reading

- Bellaigue, Camille, « Vieille musique espagnole », *Revue des Deux Mondes*, rubrique « Revue musicale », 83^e année, 6^e période, tome 18, 1^{er} novembre 1913, p. 697-708.
- Ros-Fábregas, Emilio, « “Foreign” Music and Musicians in Sixteenth-Century Spain », dans Carreras, Juan José et García García, Bernardo (dir.), *The Royal Chapel in the Time of the Habsburgs: Music and Court Ceremony in Early Modern Europe*, édition anglaise de Tess Knighton, chapitre 7, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2005, p. 65-84.
- Ros-Fábregas, Emilio, « Música y músicos “extranjeros” en la España del siglo xvi », dans Carreras, Juan José et García García, Bernardo (dir.), *La Capilla Real de los Austrias: música y ritual de corte en la Europa moderna*, Madrid, Fundación Carlos de Amberes, 2001, p. 103-129.
- Ros-Fábregas, Emilio, « Musicological Nationalism or How to Market Spanish Olive Oil », *Newsletter of the International Hispanic Music Study Group*, vol. 4, n° 2 (Spring/Fall 1998), p. 6-15.

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