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MUSIC AT JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, c. 1557–1679

IAN PAYNE

Although Jesus College never at any time during this period boasted a professional choir of stipendiary lay clerks, boy choristers and a master of the choristers, it started to employ a College organist from the 1630s, under the powerful influence of the Laudian movement, and this practice was continued after the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. In this respect it is unlike King's and Trinity, both of which made full statutory provision for professional singers shortly after their respective foundation-dates of 1441 and 1546; but it is broadly similar to Peterhouse in that it owed its musical tradition largely to the high-church movement, though Peterhouse differed from Jesus in its maintenance in the 1630s of an apparently highly-skilled, semi-professional choir. The purpose of this paper, which is based on a thorough examination of the College archives, is to trace the history of music (which mainly concerns the Chapel) as it appears however vaguely from these sources.

Jesus, like other medieval university colleges, was from the first an academic chantry, and its founder, John Alcock, Bishop of Ely, intended it to train acolytes and choristers, the chantry aspect being confirmed by the College's first statutes. These were given in 1514/15 by James Stanley, Bishop of Ely, and made modest provision for Chapel music: they provided for four boys (pueri), sufficiently trained in singing and under 14 years of age, to be maintained by the College and to attend its grammar school for four years. In addition, the Chapel services were to be sustained by four juvenes, who were youths skilled in singing and apt for divine services, and one of their number was to act as organist. These statutes, however, were soon superseded by a set originally produced by another Bishop of Ely, Nicholas West, at some time during his episcopate (1515–35) and which, in a version radically altered by royal commissioners in 1549, and modified by one additional clause in 1559, remained in force until 1841. They also made some musical provisions; but these fell far short of even a semi-professional establishment. Stanley's four pueri and four juvenes were replaced by eight discipuli, and both these and the fellows were to have been adequately instructed in singing (in cantu competenter instructos) prior to their admission. No provision was made for an organist; but West ordained that all the fellows, scholars, students, and boys of the College and its grammar school who were present in Cambridge (pueris Collegis in villa presentibus) should attend in the Chapel on Sundays and feast days to participate in divine services. Clearly, so small a body of singers, without the aid of either a professional choirmaster or highly skilled lay singers, was going to be musically very limited. Nevertheless, the Bursar's account for 1557/8 contains, in addi-

1 The Peterhouse choir in the 1630s comprised 'poor scholars', musical undergraduates and, from 1638, four Fellows of the Parke Foundation. The latter, while ordinary Fellows, were expected to be sufficiently skilled musicians and singers for them to be able to take an active part in the Chapel music. See also note 42, below.


3 Ibid., p. 30.

4 Ibid., p. 31.

5 Ibid., p. 33.

6 John Lamb, Documents relating to the University and Colleges of Cambridge, iii (London, 1852), pp. 98, 104.

7 Ibid., p. 111.
tion to references to service books, the only entry in the College records describing the organisation of part-music prior to 1665/6:

Item: [paid] to the stationer for binding booke of pricksong.

Apart from the master, seven fellows and about five male College officers or servants, and a female 'laundresse', there were between seven and sixteen discipuli on the foundation this year, almost all of whom, being over 13 or 11 years old, would have had broken voices. The unspecified grammar school boys were, therefore, probably called upon to sing the top part(s) of what was almost certainly simple music. The College officers included a 'ScoleMaster' and an Usher, but no musical personnel. This is the only reference to polyphonic part-music at Jesus during the whole of the period covered by this article. The supply of such youngsters would have been stemmed by the abolition, in 1567/8, of the College's grammar school.

THE ELIZABETHAN PERIOD

The sudden, striking transition from 'the magnificence of the ritual' in the College Chapel at the close of Mary's reign to its descent 'at one plunge into the chilliest of Puritanism' at the outset of Elizabeth's has been fully documented elsewhere. This climate certainly explains an apparent lack of musical activity in the Chapel prior to the 1630s. The following is a complete list of Elizabethan service books purchased for use there:

1562/3 Item: [paid] for a booke of common prayer 8d

1563/4 Item: [paid] for 5 psalteres in quarto 10s
1566/7 Item: [paid] to John Cutbart for 4 psalter with the hole Geneva psalmes in meter 16s
1568/9 Item: [paid] to Mr Toye for 4 psalter with Geneva psalmes in meter, and the bringinge of them from London 16s 4d
1571/2 Item: [paid] to Mr Toye for fuye Psalteres with the Geneva Psalmes, & the bringinge of them from London, [including] 6d for the cariage 20s 6d
1573/4 Item: [paid] for the newe bindinge of three of the great psalter booke in the Chappell 2s
1575/6 Item: [paid] to Peter Sheres stationer for fourw psalteres with Geneva psalmes in meter 16s
1579/80 Item: [paid for] 4 new psalter 13s 4d
1592/3 Item: [paid to] Burwell for a new Communion booke bound in bordes & bosses 7s 6d

There is no evidence that these psalteres contained psalms 'with the note' in four-part harmony, such as were specifically purchased for cathedral choirs, though it is not impossible: John Day's Whole Booke of Psalmes with monophonic tunes was first published in 1562, to be followed in the next year by his Whole Psalms in Foure Partes and in 1565 by his Certaine Notes. The new tunes, some of them from Germany, became immensely popular, and 'from 1562 until 1586 at least, varied little from one edition to another'. In view of the College's limited musical resources at this time, however, it is unlikely that any music more adventurous than the singing of monophonic metrical psalms was ever attempted.

Although Jesus, as Gray and Brittain have pointed out, 'was spared the fanatical displays however, was not paid even for this quarter, though his name appears in the list, suggesting that the school was being allowed to run down.

Item: [paid for] the byndinge of 2 ould psalteres and the claspinge of 4 others 3s

Item: [paid] to Mr Toye for 4 psalters with the hole Geneva psalmes in meter, and the bringinge of them frome London 16s
of Puritan zeal', such as the rejection of the surplice in the chapels of Trinity and St John's during the 1560s, the 'highly Protestant pattern' of its Chapel services which it had enjoyed since 1558 survived into the early seventeenth century. In the light both of this attitude, and of the general opposition to the use of organs at this time, it is hardly surprising that the only specifically musical reference during the whole of Elizabeth's reign is to the dismantling of the Chapel organ, which was apparently sold for scrap:

1582/3  Item: received of Mr Ball for 3 pypes weing [i.e. weighing] fyve pounde 2s 6d
[Item]: receyved of Mr Lansdalle for the case of the Orgaines 6s 8d

1583/4  Item: [received] of Robert Lawrence for the rest of the organ pipes weying 28i [pounds] after [i.e. at] 5d

No other musical instruments are recorded as having been used in the College, either in Chapel or for domestic music-making, though the town waits were regularly (since 1563) paid an annual fee of 6s 8d for their services. This payment was usually made at Candlemas or Christmas; but an unusually full entry in the account for 1597/8, of 6s 8d 'to the Musitions for ther whole yeares wages', may imply that their visits to the College were spread over the year rather than concentrated on one feast-day.

COLLEGE MUSIC AND THE LAUDIAN MOVEMENT

In 1632 Dr William Beale was appointed to the Mastership, and the purchase in 1632/3 of '9 Latin service books' at a cost of £1 lOs lOd, together with the total sum of £5 13s 6d paid 'For the hanginges & making [them]', is the first sign of the influence of Laudian high-church practices on the Chapel ritual. This service-book – Walter Haddon's Liber Precum Publicarum (1560), a Latin translation of the Book of Common Prayer – had originally been condemned by some Cambridge dons as 'the Pope's dregs'; but the fact that Archbishop Laud had recently introduced it at Oxford suggests that his influence was also largely responsible for its introduction to Cambridge.

But it was the Mastership of Beale's successor, Richard Sterne (1634–44), that witnessed the greatest increase in musical activity, notably in the provision of a new organ and of an organist. On 18 October 1634 the College agreed to pay the Westminster builder, Robert Dallam, £200 'touching the Organs for the Chappell', and on 27 July 1635 a further £12 was paid to him 'pro Peds' (presumably pedals for the organ, though this case has never been proved).

The agreement of 18 October 1634 was sealed two days later. On 28 November 1634 the following decree was made regarding the funding of an organist's post, for the first time in the College's history:

. . .decretum est ut in stipendium Organistae singuli quorum nomina in albo fuerint (exceptis Sizatoribus) pendant singulis Tnmeastnibus, 12d. Sizatonibus autem singulis suis vicibus ad inflandum Organum peram impedant hebdomadatim.

And on 13 June 1635 [George] Loosemore was elected 'Organista'. George was probably the younger brother of Henry, organist of King's from 1627 to 1670. Born at Barnstaple, Devon, in September 1619 George would

18 Temperley, op. cit., pp. 42, 44.
19 JCA A/C 1.2, Recepta Forinseca.
20 Ibid., Recepta Forinseca.
21 Ibid., Expense Necessarie. Usually such payments were made to the chief wait in 1589/90, for example, one 'Byrd' was their receiver; while that for 1591/2 was made 'to Gibbons for his wages at Candlemas'. (Ibid., Expense Necessarie.)
22 Morgan, op. cit., p. 178.
23 JCA A/C 1.3, In Capella. Similar purchases were made at Peterhouse at roughly the same time.
25 Gray and Brittain, op. cit., p. 76.
26 These references, and many other interesting extracts from the JCA's relating to the Chapel, are in Robert Willis and John Willis Clark, The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge, ii (Cambridge, 1886), pp. 141–5 (p. 142, notes 4 and 5). For comment on the second reference, see Nicholas Thistlethwaite, The Organs of Cambridge (Oxford, 1983), p. 46.
27 JCA COL.1.1., sub 20 October 1634.
28 Ibid., sub 28 November 1634.
29 Ibid., sub 13 June 1635.
30 Ex Info Mr W.R. Loosemore. See also note 62 below.
have been about 16 years old at the time of his appointment. This was probably the average age of first-year undergraduates in the 1630s.\(^3\) In March 1640 he was admitted a Pensioner, and on 13 July a Scholar,\(^3\) though there is no evidence that he ever either matriculated or took the B.A. degree. He became organist of Trinity in 1660, and took the Mus.D. in 1665.\(^3\) He had vacated his scholarship by 6 July 1641\(^3\) and disappears from the Steward's accounts (he appears for the first time in 1638) at the same time.\(^3\)

On 31 July 1641, therefore, one 'Henricus Davell' was elected organist in his stead.\(^3\) Davell, who was never admitted as an undergraduate, probably remained organist up until 1642/3, when the organ was taken down:

[Paid] for taking down the organs 15s\(^3\)

While no details of the organist's duties have come down to us, they are most unlikely to have been as time-consuming as those of the organists of King's, Trinity and Peterhouse; indeed, the post may even have been treated to some extent as an informal condition of a student's admission, as set out in West's statutes.\(^3\) Certainly the organ saw some use at this time, as the following entries make clear:

1638/9  [Paid] to Mr Dallam for tuneing the organ, May 15 1638 5s\(^3\)
1639/40 Item: [paid for] wire for the clock and organ, June 20 1640 1s10d\(^3\)

POST-RESTORATION MUSICAL PROVISION AT JESUS

The first post-Restoration reference to music in the College records concerns the singing of the Litany (probably *alternatim*, and in plainsong) by either the B.A. scholars or the fellowship below the orders of priest:

[17 September 1663] . . . decretum est per Magistrum et majorem partem omnium sociorum quod Letania diebus festis in quibus Cantant Cantabri solitii Cantantur a Scholaris.

Office, D&C Deposit, DCN 10/1/78, *Expensae Extraordinariae*.
37 JCA A/C 1.3, *Expense Necessarie*.
38 See above, p. 97, and note 4.
40 Ibid., In Capella.
41 Ibid., In Capella.
42 Although the Peterhouse choir is recorded to have used musically-trained 'poor scholars' and undergraduates during the mid-1630s, in 1638 the Parke Foundation provided for four fellows and four scholars all of whom were 'to the best of their endeavors, [to] acquire to themselves so much knowledge and readiness in song as that thereby they may be able to performe their parts with [the] others that sing divine service in the Chappell' (Peterhouse Archives, 'Registrum Coll. Div. Pet.' (i.e. College Register), p. 507).
bus Baccalaureis, aut, si pauciores sint, ab omnibus Sociis; exceptis is qui in ordinem Presbyterorum cooptati sunt.\textsuperscript{43}

On 3 February the following year, the College acknowledged a gift of £22 by Thomas Bucke, Esquire Bedell, 'ad conficiendum organa pneumatica, et ad exornandum sacellum Collegii';\textsuperscript{44} this gift, however, would have fallen far short of the amount required to make a whole new instrument. In fact, a College receipt, dated 20 May 1665, suggests that this figure may have been augmented to a total of £60 from other sources in order to finance repairs to Dallam's instrument:

Received of Dr Boldero, Master of Jesus College, the summe of 60li being [payment] in full for making up the Organ for the same College
I say received by me [signed] Tho. Thamer.\textsuperscript{45}

On 25 April, less than a month before, apparently for the first time since the Restoration and in anticipation of the new organ, an organist was appointed according to an amplified version of the original decree of 1634 (see above, p. 99), with the altered proviso that each member's contribution should vary according to his College standing. The sizars were still required to take it in turns to blow the organ, however:

\ldots decretum est ut ad Stipendium Organistae Magister Collegii singulis trimestribus solvat quatuor solidos, singuli socii et commensales maiores quorum nomina sunt in albo duos solidos, pensionarii unum solidum, sizatores autem singuli ei qui Inflat' Organum sex denarios singulis trimestribus solvent.

Eodem die Franciscus Crispe electus est Organista.\textsuperscript{46}

Crispe, like Davell before him, was never registered as an undergraduate,\textsuperscript{47} and consequently nothing is known of his career at Jesus. His successor, Thomas Wren, was elected organist on 7 April 1671;\textsuperscript{48} a native of Canterbury, he had matriculated in 1670, become a scholar and a B.A. in 1673, and an M.A. in 1676.\textsuperscript{49} He had certainly ceased to be a scholar (and also organist?) by 17 March 1676, however, on which date his replacement was admitted 'scholaris discipulus in locum Magistri Wren'.\textsuperscript{50}

On 7 July 1676 Benjamin Young took over the post.\textsuperscript{51} He, like Loosemore, served as organist before being admitted to a scholarship, though unlike the latter Young had been an undergraduate 'without title' for nearly four years previously. After becoming both a scholar and a B.A. in 1677, he was ordained a priest at Norwich two years later.\textsuperscript{52}

Alexander Norfolk succeeded Young on 27 September 1678 'unanimi consensu Magistri et Sociorum': this entry is common form and does not necessarily imply that earlier occupants of the post did not meet with unanimous approval. Like Davell and Crispe, Norfolk was never an undergraduate\textsuperscript{53} and nothing further is known about him. (Perhaps these youths had been placed under a private tutor in the College at a very early age, and they may even have acted unofficially as choristers for they had certainly had some musical training to enable them to play the organ; this

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{43} JCA COL. 1.1., sub 17 September 1663.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{44} JCA CH. 1.1. (no date or pagination).}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{45} JCA EST. 1.2. As Thistlethwaite has shown (op. cit., p. 46) Dallam's organ was built in 1634, dismantled in 1642, and hidden away (possibly in the Master's garden) until its 'discovery', probably some time between 23 October 1652 and 22 January 1653, the dates of surrounding entries (JCA A/C 1.4, Expense Necessarie). If, as is likely, this instrument was reassembled after the Restoration it was probably in very great need of 60-pounds-worth of professional maintenance in the mid-1660s. There is no record of the building of a new organ until 1689 (Thistlethwaite loc. cit.); but the following payments were made for the maintenance of Dallam's organ:

1669/70 [Paid] To Mr Thamar for tuning the Organ, £1 10s

(JCA A/C 1.4, In Capella.)

1670/1 [Paid] To Thamar for mending the Organ, £1 10s

(Ibid., loc. cit.).

1679/80 [Paid] For mending the Organ. . . , £2

(JCA A/C 1.5, loc. cit.).

46 JCA COL. 1.1., sub 25 April 1665.

47 There is no record of him in Gray's MS List of Members.

48 JCA COL. 1.1., sub 7 April 1671.

49 Gray, MS List of Members.

50 JCA COL. 1.1., sub 17 March 1676.

51 Ibid., sub 7 July 1676.

52 Gray, MS List of Members.

53 There is no record of him in Gray's MS List of Members.}
is pure speculation, but the possibility is further discussed below.)

By 1 December 1679, the sequence of appointments had come full circle. Loosemore was reappointed, his stipend to be paid by the Steward, on condition that either he or a deputy instruct the scholars and discipuli in the art of choral singing:

Decretum est per Magistrum & majorem partem Sociorum ut futuris temporibus solvatur a Seneschallo Collegii singulis anni quart[er]is Magistro Loosemore alive Musices Magister summa unius solidi pro quolibet Pensionario & sex denariis pro quolibet sizatores quorum nomina sunt in tabellis Promi, Ea conditione, ut Mr Loosemore vel alius Musicae Magister scholares & discipulos hujus Collegii quotcunque ad illum confluxerint, ad cantandum in choro idoneos instruere teneatur

What, exactly, would have been his duties? The average age of a Jesus undergraduate at his admission was, as we have seen above (p. 100), 15 or 16. Few boys aged 14 or over would have possessed unbroken voices, and by choristers (if indeed any of these were trained by Loosemore) must therefore have been chosen from boys of grammar-school age, who may have been connected with the College through a private tutor. Such youngsters certainly existed at Peterhouse, though there is no evidence that they sang in the chapel choir;

and some of the Trinity choristers of whom there is no mention in the College records may also have fitted this category. Although such a supply is likely to have been most irregular, one wonders whether these young private pupils might have been the seventeenth-century equivalent of Bishop West’s puerti Collegii in villa presentibus mentioned above (p. 97), after the grammar school had long since disappeared.

In any event, the organist was responsible for their musical training, such as it was. A more helpful clue to the nature of his duties may be a somewhat later minute, in the records of Pembroke College, Cambridge, recording the provisions made for the appointment of a stipendiary organist, for the first time in that College's history, on 2 December 1701:

Also [it was ordered] that it be referred to the Master... to consider of waies to ascertain a revenue of twenty pounds a year to the Organist, upon condition that he undertakes to instruct the Scholars in singing so farre as to enable them to chant the Psalmses in tune to the Organ, & perform with decency all the other parts of the service to be chanted; & also the Conducts or others whose duty it shall be to read prayers, in a tunable way of chanting them according to the capacity of their voices, when that by the statutes or custom of the College is required of them

An isolated payment was made ‘Pro [le] Organ Player’ as early as 1470; but no other references to organs or organists are found in the Pembroke archives until 1567, when the organ was sold for 33s 4d. And although an organ had been built by Thamar of Peterborough in the newly consecrated chapel in 1675, no stipendiary organist was appointed before 1706, when Thomas Tudway was chosen under the terms of the above act. Pembroke, like Jesus, had no professional choir; but in contrast to those of the newer foundation, the Pembroke statutes make no mention of choristers and there is nowhere any record that either ‘pricksong’ books or metrical psalters were acquired by the College at any time during the period under discussion. The references to chanting are of interest, since both the methods and the music used differed but little between the 1630s and the early 1700s. One

54 JCA COL. 1.1., sub 1 December 1679.
57 Pembroke College Archives (PCA) B.β.4, p. 285.
58 PCA B., p. 184.
59 Thistlethwaite, op. cit., p. 57.
60 Among the PCAs searched are ‘Registrum Magnum, ii, 1616–1654’ (B.β.2); ‘Treasury Accounts, 1550–1641, vol.1’ (M.α.); and ‘Bursar’s Accounts, 1686–1741, vol. 1’ (M. λ).
possibility, therefore, is that Loosemore, like Tudway, was required to provide just enough musical training to enable the scholars to chant simple music for the psalms, accompanied by the organ, and the chaplains to intone correctly, or at least to the best of their abilities. But a unique reference to part-music at Jesus, for the first time since 1557, suggests that the College may have mustered two choirs of soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices (one Decani, the other Cantoris) for the execution of the following music, provided by Loosemore before his formal appointment to the post of organist in 1679:

1665/6  Paid [to] Mr Leusmore for pricking the Organbooke, & the 8 bookes [for the choir] 13s 6d61

The archives of Trinity College, where he was stipendiary organist and master of the choristers from 1660 until his death in 1682, contain no specific mention of a book of organ accompaniments to anthems copied as one complete set,62 but it is unlikely that the hitherto unidentified Jesus College organ book is identical with the so-called 'George Loosemore Organ Book',63 partly because of the presence in the latter manuscript of music by John Cutts, a Trinity lay clerk. However, the very existence of the Jesus set certainly proves a measure of musical variety and attainment, however limited, in Chapel music which is only hinted at by the other archival entries.

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61 JCA CH.2.1, ‘An Account of the offerings from Mich. 1665 to Mich. 1666’. To judge from the dates of surrounding entries, this music was paid for (out of the Chapel collections) probably on 5 October 1665.

62 For comparable entries in the Trinity archives, see Ian Payne, ‘George Loosemore at Trinity College, Cambridge, 1660–82’ (forthcoming). The only reference to an organ book at Trinity occurs in the Trinity College Conclusion Book (1646–1811), p. 162, where it is recorded that George’s widow was paid £5 ‘for the Through Base Organ Book made & pricked by her husband’, in 1682.

63 B.L. Add. MS 34203.
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