

# The many performance spaces for music at Jacobean indoor playhouses

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## Music's mobility: the many musical performance spaces of Jacobean indoor playhouses

Simon Smith

‘Where breath’s that musique?’ So asks Duke Pietro upon hearing the ‘*vilest out of tune Musicke*’ that so memorably opens John Marston’s *The Malcontent* (CQR, c.1603, Blackfriars).<sup>1</sup> The most likely location for music at a Jacobean indoor playhouse would be the music room above the stage, and indeed these out of tune sounds emanate from ‘the Malecontent *Maleuoles* chamber’, an unseen space on the upper level from which the title character will later emerge. Scholars of early modern drama are often quick to focus on the music room as the locus of music, and of instrumental performance in particular, at indoor venues, be that in adult company plays by Shakespeare and others after 1609, or in youth company drama before 1613. Andrew Gurr, for instance, sees Blackfriars’ ‘consort of professional musicians’ as synonymous with the music room above the stage, two components of a ‘ready-made musical accessory’ for Shakespearean performance after 1609.<sup>2</sup> The music room was certainly an important location, but as Linda Phyllis Austern reminds us, ‘music also sounded from within, below, and afar off’ at Jacobean indoor playhouses.<sup>3</sup> This chapter investigates the many musical performance spaces of these venues, arguing that instrumentalists were far more itinerant, flexible and indeed visible at Blackfriars, Paul’s, Whitefriars and the Cockpit than a close focus on the music room would suggest. It will also ask whether performances in the music room were hidden from sight as often as is currently assumed. The chapter’s ‘musicians’ include actors playing a range of instruments, and hired or retained professionals. Our knowledge of musical expertise amongst early modern actors, and of the extent to which professional musicians were used in commercial theatres, is partial, but this chapter is not an intervention in recent debates about playhouse musical

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<sup>1</sup> John Marston, *The Malcontent* (London, 1604), B1r [STC 17479]. Here and throughout, details of first performance including company, date and venue are given in parentheses, following *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks*, ed. by Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser (2007), <http://deep.sas.upenn.edu> (Accessed 18 September 2015). Company abbreviations are: CKR – Children of the King’s Revels; CQR – Children of the Queen’s Revels; LCM – Lord Chamberlain’s Men; LEM – Lady Elizabeth’s Men; KM – King’s Men; PB – Paul’s Boys; QAM – Queen Anna’s Men.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 80-81, 84.

<sup>3</sup> Linda Phyllis Austern, *Music in English Children’s Drama of the Later Renaissance* (Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach, 1992), 28.

personnel.<sup>4</sup> This is, rather, an attempt to chart some of the relationships between music and space at Jacobean indoor playhouses, investigating the conventions of indoor music use that informed Shakespeare's dramaturgy when writing for Blackfriars, as well as shaping indoor performances of earlier Shakespearean plays that remained in the King's Men's repertory after 1609.<sup>5</sup>

Musical performers were not exclusively confined to the playhouse music room. Singers on the lower stage are well documented both indoors and out, youth company repertories being particularly renowned for such inclusions.<sup>6</sup> Less remarked upon, however, is the common appearance of instruments on indoor stages. In John Day's *Humour out of Breath* (CKR, 1608, Whitefriars), the gullish Hortensio removes his blindfold (having believed he was playing blind man's bluff), and spies a musical instrument conveniently placed 'on the Lower stage':

HORTENSIO

what haue we here? a base viol! though I cannot tickle the  
mynnikyn within, ile (though it be somewhat base) giue them a  
song without, and the name of the Ditty shall be;

*The Gentleman Vshers Voluntarie.*

He sings.<sup>7</sup>

Day places a musical performer and his large viol ostentatiously upon the relatively small Whitefriars stage, drawing visual attention to the instrument even as Hortensio's punning on 'base' and 'bass' evokes the intimate encounter occurring 'within'.<sup>8</sup> This viol is momentarily

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<sup>4</sup> David Lindley offers the best recent account of the surviving evidence in *Shakespeare and Music* (London: Thomson, 2006), 90-103. David Mann has recently challenged prevailing opinion, particularly concerning music outdoors pre-1609, in 'Reinstating Shakespeare's Instrumental Music', *Early Theatre*, 15 (2012), 67-91.

<sup>5</sup> The significance of Shakespeare to the company's later repertory is clear from a payment of £5 for the Master of the Revels to 'forbid the playinge of any of Shakespeare's playes to the Red Bull company' on 11 April 1627. N.W. Bawcutt (ed.), *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623-73* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 165.

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance: Austern, *English Children's Drama*, 50-59; Michael Shapiro, *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and their Plays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977), 236.

<sup>7</sup> John Day, *Humour Out of Breath* (London, 1608), G1r-G2r.

<sup>8</sup> See: Jean McIntyre, 'Production Resources at the Whitefriars Playhouse', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 2.3 (1996), 21-35.

a staged property, to be seen as well as heard. After the song, Hortensio shouts towards the tiring house until a servant enters ‘*aboue*’.<sup>9</sup> This entrance inverts the expected placement of instrument (and musician) in music room and dramatic character below, an inversion elsewhere used to great effect in *The Insatiate Countess* (CQR, c.1607-1608, Blackfriars; revised 1609-1613, Whitefriars).<sup>10</sup> To see an actor on the upper stage was not unusual, and neither was it unexpected to see instruments below. But by inverting the most *common* respective locations of musician and actor, such scenes draw attention to the movement of musical instruments and performers, emphasising music’s contribution not just as sound but as sight.

Scenes of self-accompaniment require relatively modest musical resources, but Shakespeare’s *Cymbeline* (KM, c.1608-1611, Blackfriars & Globe) is more demanding of its playhouse musicians. The play is usually thought to post-date the company’s move to Blackfriars, although if earlier, it would nonetheless have been performed at both of the King’s Men’s venues after 1609 and before its 1623 publication.<sup>11</sup> In the second act, Cloten seeks to seduce Innogen, and so prepares a serenade beneath her window:

CLOTEN

I would this Musicke would come: I am adui-  
sed to giue her Musicke a mornings, they say it will pene-  
trate. *Enter Musitians.*

Come on, tune: If you can penetrate her with your fin-  
gering, so: wee’l try with tongue too: if none will do, let  
her remaine, but Ile neuer giue o’re. First a very excel-  
lent good conceyted thing; after a wonderful sweet aire,  
with admirable rich words to it, and then let her consi-  
der.

SONG.

[...]

So, get you gone: if this pen[e]trate, I will consider your  
Musicke the better: if it do not, it is a voyce in her eares

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<sup>9</sup> Day, *Humour*, G2r.

<sup>10</sup> Lewis Machin, William Barkstead and John Marston, *The Insatiate Countess* (London, 1613), D4v.

<sup>11</sup> See: Martin Butler (ed.), *Cymbeline*, New Cambridge Shakespeare (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3-6.

which Horse-haires, and Calues-guts, nor the voyce of  
vnpaued Eunuch to boot, can neuer ame[n]d.  
(2.3.10-27; TLN 972-92)<sup>12</sup>

A ‘very excellent good conceyted’ piece of instrumental music precedes a ‘wonderful sweet’ song, ‘Hark, Hark, the Lark’, selected by Cloten to ‘penetrate’ Innogen, in his own unpleasant, punning phrase. Precisely which instruments are used is unclear, although ‘Horse-haires’ and ‘Calues-guts’ indicate bowed strings. Cloten’s advice to try ‘with tongue’ perhaps suggests wind instruments too, or may simply mean singing. Where Hortensio’s verbal delight upon spying the bass viol foregrounds the materiality of a single instrument, here the rigmarole of many musicians coming on stage and ‘tun[ing]’ their instruments before playing, coupled with Cloten’s extended musical innuendos, emphasise the musicians-as-bodies and instruments-as-objects moving in and out of the tiring house in the immediate proximity of Blackfriars’ on-stage playgoers.

Where Hortensio’s bass viol and Cloten’s musicians are displayed ostentatiously, other plays hide music in the lower tiring house. Cues for music ‘within’ are generally taken to indicate performance below, although this assumption has been destabilised by Mariko Ichikawa’s observation that ‘within’ can also mean out of sight above.<sup>13</sup> The safest examples of lower tiring house music therefore involve a musician either entering or visible through the stage doors, or explicitly cued as ‘below’. For instance, *The Spanish Gypsy* (LEM, 1623, Cockpit) instantly follows a ‘*Florish*’ with the entrance of the performer: ‘*Enter Soto, with a Cornet in his hand*’.<sup>14</sup> Cornetts (or sometimes hautboys) were generally preferred to trumpets for fanfares and signals at indoor playhouses, although as Linda Phyllis Austern has demonstrated, trumpets were not entirely absent.<sup>15</sup> Soto’s cornett confirms this preference at the Cockpit in 1623, whilst his entrance from the lower tiring house clarifies the performance location. Soto is probably the performer who again sounds a ‘*Florish within*’ to announce the start of the gypsies’ play-within-a-play in act four, presumably upon the cornett and at the

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<sup>12</sup> Here and throughout, Shakespearean quotations are from the 1623 Folio, with through line numbers following the Norton Facsimile (*The First Folio of Shakespeare*, ed. by Charlton Hinman, 2nd edn, rev. by Peter Blayney (London: Norton, 1996)), and act, scene and line numbers keyed to the New Cambridge Shakespeare.

<sup>13</sup> Mariko Ichikawa, *The Shakespearean Stage Space* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 52-67.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Dekker, John Ford, Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Spanish Gypsie* (London, 1653), E2r.

<sup>15</sup> Austern, *English Children’s Drama*, 67-8. See, too: Mann, ‘Instrumental Music’, 69-70.

lower level; he enters from the tiring house a few lines later to act the part of Lollo.<sup>16</sup> It is notable that *The Spanish Gypsy* uses a cornett here, for whilst, as David Lindley observes, playing ‘basic fanfares and signals’ on the natural trumpet is ‘not a particularly difficult task’, cornetts require more practice.<sup>17</sup> Like the youth playing Hortensio, this adult actor – possibly a clown, for Soto is ‘A merry fellow’ – fulfils a significant dramatic role, as well as demonstrating instrumental competence.<sup>18</sup> That said, these cornett flourishes were probably less demanding than the bass viol accompaniment required of Hortensio. Robert Daborne’s *The Poor Man’s Comfort* (QAM, 1615-17, Cockpit), performed ‘divers times’ at the same venue as *The Spanish Gypsy*, similarly calls for a ‘Horn within’ immediately followed by the stage-door appearance of the messenger who sounded it: ‘Enter Post’.<sup>19</sup> It is a stretch to classify a blast on a post-horn as ‘music’, however.

Two Blackfriars plays place sophisticated and varied musical performances in the lower tiring house. Marston’s *The Wonder of Women, or Sophonisba* (CQR, 1605-1606, Blackfriars), a particularly musical play, requires at least two groups of musicians, or some extremely hasty movement between levels. In a scene of dubious witchcraft, Erichtho casts a ‘spell’ that will supposedly summon the play’s eponymous heroine to a bed just offstage, allowing the villain Syphax to have sex with her. Erichtho’s conjuring requires significant assistance from the Blackfriars musicians, beginning with some ‘*Infernall Musique softly*’ from an unspecified location. The next cue is precisely placed: ‘*A treble Violl and a base Lute play softlyd [sic] within the Canopy*’. That the canopy is the discovery space curtain on the lower level is clear from entrance and exit cues: Syphax exits into ‘*the Canopy*’ from the main stage, having entered ‘*Through the vautes mouth*’ (described also as ‘*a caues mouth*’) represented either by one of the flanking stage doors or, more probably, the trapdoor. The canopy is put to practical use at the opening of the fifth act when Syphax ‘*drawes the curtaines and discouers Erictho lying with him*’ in a particularly memorable bed-trick. With viol and lute ‘*within the Canopy*’, it might seem logical to place further cues ‘below’, yet ten lines later the text calls for ‘*A short song to soft Musique aboue*’. Not only singers (Syphax can hear the harmonious voices of several ‘inforced Spirits’) but also players of ‘*soft Musique*’ are required on the upper level, raising questions of practicality. Unless the viol and lute players could move between levels with remarkable swiftness they presumably remain

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<sup>16</sup> Dekker, Ford, Middleton and Rowley, *Spanish Gipsie*, G4r.

<sup>17</sup> Lindley, *Shakespeare and Music*, 102.

<sup>18</sup> Dekker, Ford, Middleton and Rowley, *Spanish Gipsie*, A2r.

<sup>19</sup> Robert Daborne, *The Poor-Mans Comfort* (London, 1655), A1r; E4r.

‘*within the Canopy*’, leaving singers and instrumentalists above, two instrumentalists below, and possibly yet more musicians elsewhere, if the ‘*Infernall Musique*’ sounded from a third location. Syphax’s observation that ‘Hell and Heauen ringes | With Musique’ hints at a rationale for this precise placement of music at upper and lower levels, given the association of music under ‘th’earth’ and ‘I’t’h aire’ (*The Tempest*, 1.2.387; TLN 530) with the respective abodes of the Devil and God.<sup>20</sup> It is also possible that the infernal music heard earlier in the scene sounded from underneath the stage, making this the music that ‘ringes’ through ‘Hell’, although it is not clear that Shakespeare’s contemporaneous and unique cue in *Antony and Cleopatra* (KM, 1606-1608, Globe) for ‘*Musicke of the Hoboyes...vnder the Stage*’ (4.3.12.1; TLN 2482) reflects wider playhouse practice rather than the playwright and company’s idiosyncratic choice.

A similarly swift juxtaposition occurs in Nathan Field and Philip Massinger’s *The Fatal Dowry* (KM, 1617-1619, Blackfriars & Globe), when a ‘*Song Aboue*’ is shortly followed by a ‘*Song Below*’. Both are sung on the stage by Aymer, but accompanied by offstage and out of sight ‘instruments’; Charalois has come to hear this famed singer, but is disappointed he ‘*Shall...not see*’ the musicians too.<sup>21</sup> Quite how the songs were performed at Blackfriars, then, is far from clear. Aymer is on stage and not directed to be above; moreover, with less than ten lines between singing the first song and introducing the second, there does not seem to be time for him to move unremarked from the upper stage down through the tiring house and out onto the lower stage in a fit state to sing again. It seems more likely that ‘*Aboue*’ and ‘*Below*’ refer to the accompanying musicians, presumably two separate groups located out of sight and awaiting Aymer’s cues, for if the singer cannot quite move between levels in time, multiple instrumentalists would certainly struggle. The dramatic purpose of this apparent dual location of invisible musicians is opaque, but once more it places instrumentalists in the lower tiring house.

One particularly tantalising location for drums, trumpets and cornetts is ‘*afar off*’, *Sophonisba*, for instance, calling for ‘*A march far off*’, ‘*Cornets a march far off*’ and ‘*The Cornets a far off sounding a charge*’.<sup>22</sup> The phrase could pertain to the diegetic world rather

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<sup>20</sup> John Marston, *The Wonder of Women or The tragedie of Sophonisba* (London, 1606), E2v-F2r. On the early modern associations of music above and below, see: Simon Smith, “‘I see no instruments, nor hands that play’: *Antony and Cleopatra* and visual musical experience”, in Simon Smith, Jackie Watson and Amy Kenny (eds.), *The Senses in Early Modern England, 1558-1660* (Manchester University Press, 2015), 167-84 (177-8).

<sup>21</sup> Nathan Field and Philip Massinger, *The Fatall Dowry* (London, 1632), I1r.

<sup>22</sup> Marston, *Sophonisba*, F3r-v, G1r.

than to playhouse space, as a Caroline Blackfriars retreat ‘*sounded as from far*’ suggests, but John Fletcher’s calls for ‘*Drums within at one place afar off*’, followed by ‘*Drums and Trumpets in severall places afar off, as at a main Battell*’ in *Bonduca* (KM, 1611-14, Blackfriars & Globe) imply that the effect was achieved at least in part through physical location at a particular ‘*place*’ or ‘*places*’ in Jacobean performance.<sup>23</sup> Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson note a cue in Folio *Hamlet* (LCM, 1600-1601, Globe) for a ‘*March afarre off, and shout within*’ (5.2.328.1; TLN 3836), suggesting that the former is ‘a sound in the distance’, presumably at the back of the tiring house, the latter ‘just offstage’ at the lower level.<sup>24</sup> This seems persuasive, assuming that *Hamlet*’s insidious hendiadys has not spread to the stage directions here, although as the Folio text is thought to pre-date the move to Blackfriars by six years, it cannot be said to preserve conventions of musical staging specifically indoors.<sup>25</sup> Dessen and Thomson also note two Blackfriars cues to stand afar off on the stage itself, which would suggest ‘afar’ need not be any great distance: Fletcher and Massinger’s *The Double Marriage* (KM, 1619-1623, Blackfriars & Globe) requires two citizens to enter ‘*at both dores, saluting afar off*’; Thomas Middleton directs the ‘*Nobles afarr of*’ from the ‘*Tirant*’ who enters ‘*wondrous discontentedly*’ in *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy* (KM, 1611, Blackfriars & Globe).<sup>26</sup> On the balance of probability, then, it seems likely that musicians afar off at Jacobean indoor playhouses stood at the very back of the tiring house, perhaps also moderating the volume of their instrument. In the case of the highly directional trumpet, this could even have involved facing away from the *frons scenae*.

So far, this investigation has considered musicians on the stage, in the lower tiring house and (briefly) at the upper level. Having explored a range of locations other than the music room, the remainder of the chapter will ask how far the most familiar of musical performance spaces might have contributed to the itinerance, flexibility and visibility of music at Jacobean indoor playhouses. Music rooms were located in the ‘gallery or galleries

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<sup>23</sup> William Davenant, *Love and Honovr*, (London, 1649), A2r (my emphasis); John Fletcher, ‘The Tragedie of Bonduca’, in *Comedies and Tragedies* (London, 1647), 4H1v-4H2r. Cornetts could possibly have replaced trumpets for Blackfriars performances of *Bonduca*, but this is uncertain (see note 15).

<sup>24</sup> Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2.

<sup>25</sup> See: Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (eds.), *Hamlet*, The Arden Shakespeare Third Series (London: Thomson, 2006), 74-86.

<sup>26</sup> Dessen and Thomson, *Stage Directions*, 3. John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, ‘The Double Marriage’, in *Comedies and Tragedies*, 5D4v; Thomas Middleton, *The Second Maiden’s Tragedy*, The Malone Society Reprints (Oxford: Malone Society, 1909), TLN 1655-6.



that fronted the tiring house at the second storey', and scholars generally imagine a single, central music room.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, the only direct reference in a pre-Caroline indoor play-text actually describes two music rooms flanking a central 'upper stage' performance space at the tiny Paul's playhouse: '*Andrugios ghost is placed betwixt the musick houses*' in Marston's *Antonio's Revenge* (PB, 1600-1601, Paul's).<sup>28</sup> Scholars often argue that music room curtains were normally only opened when musicians played 'for the Act' whilst the wicks of the candles were trimmed, act breaks being observed at indoor venues throughout the Jacobean period.<sup>29</sup> Richard Hosley has been influential in suggesting that 'the chief function of the curtains over the stage...was to conceal musicians, a possible secondary function...being to reveal the musicians between the acts and before and after the play', drawing upon pictorial sources of 1640 and 1662.<sup>30</sup> Andrew Gurr argues that '[s]ome of Fletcher's stage directions assume a curtain across the central section of the balcony behind which the invisible musicians played', and notes a 1631 reference to 'the encurtain'd musique'.<sup>31</sup> Linda Phyllis Austern takes 'verbal directions for music to begin' in plays staged at Paul's and Blackfriars similarly to indicate that during dramatic performance, '[t]he music room was undoubtedly located behind a curtain that could be pulled aside when the musicians were to be made visible'.<sup>32</sup> As Gurr and Hosley demonstrate, the evidence for habitual curtaining of musicians by the Caroline period is reasonably strong, but similar evidence from earlier years is lacking. Austern's 1600s play-text evidence indicates that musicians could have played many of their mid-scene cues from behind a curtain, but it does not necessarily follow that they must, therefore, have done so. In fact, a closer look at certain dramatic and non-dramatic texts suggests rather different music room practices in the first decade or so of the seventeenth century.

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<sup>27</sup> Austern, *English Children's Drama*, 26.

<sup>28</sup> John Marston, *Antonios Reuenge* (London, 1602), K1v; Roger Bowers, 'The Playhouse of the Choristers of Paul's, c.1575-1608', *Theatre Notebook*, 54 (2000), 70-85

<sup>29</sup> Marston, *Sophonisba*, B4v. For a recent account of the practicalities of candle use at indoor playhouses, see: Martin White, "'When Torchlight Made an Artificial Noon': Light and Darkness in the Indoor Jacobean Theatre', in Andrew Gurr and Farah Karim-Cooper (eds.), *Moving Shakespeare Indoors: Performance and Repertoire in the Jacobean Playhouse* (Cambridge, 2014), 115-36.

<sup>30</sup> Richard Hosley, 'Was There a Music Room at Shakespeare's Globe?', in Allardyce Nicoll (ed.), *Shakespeare Survey Volume 13: King Lear* (Cambridge University Press, 1966), 113-123 (115).

<sup>31</sup> Gurr, *Shakespeare Company*, 80.

<sup>32</sup> Austern, *English Children's Drama*, 26, 29.

Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (CQR, 1607, Blackfriars) places a 'Grocer' and his 'Wife' amongst genuine playgoers on stage stools; they interrupt the play with scripted, comic and often meta-theatrical interjections. The Wife in particular struggles not just with the conventions of decorous playgoing, but even, in places, with distinguishing dramatic performance from reality. At one point, she seeks to amass witnesses with a view to detaining one of the dramatic characters, Jasper, who has just stolen his mother's casket of jewels; she 'do[es] not like that this vnthrifty youth should embecill away the money'.<sup>33</sup> She believes she could easily substantiate her accusation that Jasper is a thief, noting, 'heere are a number of sufficient Gentlemen can witnesse, and my selfe, and your selfe [her husband], and the Musitians, if we be cal'd in question' (D3<sup>r</sup>; ll. 158-60). Critically, she can see the musicians from where she sits, and she is also adamant that they have a clear view of the stage from their place in the music room above, sufficient for them to act as 'witnesse[s]' to the preceding events. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is preoccupied with playhouse conventions; the Grocer's Wife's unfamiliarity with these conventions leads to much meta-theatrical comedy, but she also provides helpfully clear observations of details that more seasoned playgoers may not bother to mention. In so doing, she offers strong evidence for visible musicians not just during act breaks but also in the middle of a scene at Blackfriars.

The Grocer's Wife's remarks are supported by two broadly contemporaneous and generally overlooked references to music rooms by dramatist Thomas Dekker, in texts not written for the commercial stage. Dekker's *The Bellman of London* (1608), a rogue pamphlet, opens with Envy and Avarice running amok through contemporary society in the form of furies 'begotten by a player' and 'a Dutch Burger'. The narrator seeks respite in 'the Country', where he stumbles upon a remarkable feature of the natural landscape:

It was a Groue set thicke with Trees, which grew in such order, that they made a perfect circle, insomuch that I stood in feare, it was kept by Fayries, and that I was brought into it by enchantment. The branches of the Trees (like so many handes) reached ouer one to another and in their embracements held so fast together, that their boughes made a goodly greene rooffe, which being touched by the winde, it was pleasure to behold so large a seeling to mooue: vpon euerie branch sat a consort of singers, so that euerie Tree shewed like a Musick room.

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<sup>33</sup> Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (London, 1613), D3<sup>r</sup>.

He resolves to dwell in ‘this goodly Theater’, dividing each ‘day into acts, as if the ground had beene a stage, and that the life which there I ment to leade, should haue bene but as a play’, but is swiftly distracted by a plume of putrid smoke that leads him to a hellish scene of food preparation in a nearby cottage. Dekker’s rich, fantastical description draws upon design features of both indoor and outdoor playhouses. The perfectly circular shape of this living wooden ‘O’ imitates the polygonal construction of the Globe and the Swan, yet the ‘seeling’ or ‘rooffe’ of interwoven green branches echoes the enclosed form of an indoor theatre. Continuing his theatrical comparison, Dekker suggests that the trees look like music rooms because one can see musical performers therein: the ‘consort of singers’ (in fact, ‘birds’) visible on each branch means that every tree ‘shewed’ – that is, looked – ‘like a Musick room’.<sup>34</sup> Dekker’s simile suggests that playgoers could see as well as hear musical performers in real music rooms, as could the Grocer’s Wife mid-scene at Blackfriars.

Dekker makes further comparisons with music rooms in his 1604 account of the entertainment offered to the new monarch, James I, in the City of London on 15 March. With expansive transcriptions and descriptions of his own contributions, and minimal references to those of Ben Jonson, Dekker’s printed text is a rich if partisan account of this day of celebration. In recounting the fifth pageant, he offers an extremely detailed description, corroborated by Stephen Harrison’s printed image, of the arch erected at Little Conduit (known widely as the Pissing Conduit) alongside Paul’s churchyard at the western end of Cheapside.<sup>35</sup> Dekker explains that the upper-middle part of the arch is best understood through reference to playhouse design:

Wee might (that day) haue called it, *The Musicke roome*, by reason of the chaunge of tunes, that danced round about it; for in one place were heard a noyse of cornets, in a second, a consort, the third, (which sate in sight) a set of Viols, to which the Muses sang.<sup>36</sup>

This ‘music room’ contains a variety of instruments including wind, bowed strings, and a ‘consort’ perhaps of mixed instruments, contrasting with another consort, or ‘set’, of viols. This tallies with Austern’s view of the Blackfriars music room as ‘large enough to

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<sup>34</sup> Thomas Dekker, *The Belman of London* (London, 1608), B1r-B2r, B3v-B4r.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Harrison, *The Arch’s of Trivmph* (London, 1604), G2r.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Dekker, *The Magnificent Entertainment* (London, 1604), G1v [STC 6510].

accommodate an organ, a consort of viols, and a chorus of singers at one time'.<sup>37</sup> Once again, Dekker implies that music rooms have at least some musicians 'sate in sight', in this case, the viol players. Such spaces are apparently characterized by the variety of musical possibilities they house, by their location on an upper level, and by the visual display of musical performers.

Dekker wrote a number of plays for indoor, youth company performance at Paul's in the 1600s, so it is no surprise to find musicians visible mid-scene at that venue. In Middleton's *A Mad World, my Masters* (PB, 1604-7, Paul's), Sir Bounteous Progress speaks repeatedly of a wonderful organ installed at his house and valued at 'some hundred and fifty pound', and a performance shortly follows in one of the theatre's 'musick houses'.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps this was a meta-theatrical advert for a recent addition to the company's musical resources, or perhaps Middleton simply found over-zealous organ enthusiasts as ripe a target for satire as Puritans. In any case, the scene indicates that musicians could be seen from the stage below, for Sir Bounteous points out 'My Organist' to his guest immediately before '*The Organs play*'. This is presumably the 'Walloon' who 'plaies vpon e'm', rather than the 'Welchman' who 'blowes wind in their breech', as Sir Bounteous describes them through typically Middletonian *double entendres*. Austern sees it as exceptional that 'the curtains of the music room have been drawn back so that it becomes the musicians' gallery of a banqueting hall' here.<sup>39</sup> Certainly, the scene echoes the design features of such a venue, but in light of Beaumont's stagecraft at Blackfriars and Dekker's repeated references to music rooms as spaces for the display of musicians as well as their music, it seems likely that a visible organist mid-scene was as conventional to indoor playhouse practice in the earlier Jacobean period as it was to the diegetic world of this particular play.

Performers in the music room could nonetheless be concealed, presumably by curtains, when necessary for particular dramatic purposes. Such concealment is required in Fletcher's *The Captain* (KM, 1609-1612, Blackfriars & Globe) when characters on the lower stage hear but cannot see music emanating from an upper 'chamber', before two more characters '*Enter at the window*' and sing a duet in full sight.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, the previously considered 'instruments' playing for the '*Song aboute*' in *The Fatal Dowry* are explicitly hidden from the sight of Charalois below. However, our assumption that musicians were hidden *by default* in

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<sup>37</sup> Austern, *English Children's Drama*, 28.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Middleton, *A Mad World, my Masters* (London, 1608), B4v-C1r; Marston, *Antonios Reuenge*, K1v.

<sup>39</sup> Austern, *English Children's Drama*, 74.

<sup>40</sup> John Fletcher, 'The Captaine', in *Comedies and Tragedies*, 2G4r.

music rooms requires rethinking, at least in relation to earlier years of the Jacobean period, given that playhouse musicians at Blackfriars and Paul's, not to mention Dekker's viol consort and beautifully warbling birds, are all noted for their visibility in music rooms literal and figurative of the 1600s. The music room, like the stage, appears to have been a space for the visual display of musicians, as well as a significant location for musical performance.

This chapter has explored many musical performance spaces at Jacobean indoor playhouses, taking in whole groups of musicians on the lower stage, music both afar off and within inches of playgoers, and swift transitions between tiring house music above and below. Instrumentalists appeared ostentatiously on the stage and, it seems, were often on display in the music room as well. Clearly, unseen performance in the music room was just one of many sorts of music heard and seen indoors. What might this investigation suggest, then, about the role of music in Jacobean dramatic performance, including in the work of Shakespeare and the King's Men after 1609? Certainly, musical locations often serve important dramatic purposes, offstage flourishes creating imagined worlds of military conflict, or serenades below recasting the upper tiring house as a dwelling. Moreover, musicians appear as strikingly dynamic playhouse presences, not altogether different from the actors making their exits and their entrances. Their visual contribution to the experience of playgoing is both significant and easily overlooked when a music room curtain becomes the symbol of music indoors. Yet these musicians occupy a liminal place within diegetic worlds, sometimes appearing as characters, sometimes unseen, and at other times visible mid-scene above the stage yet outside of the dramatic world, as 'necessary attendantes' of the playing company.<sup>41</sup> In their very appearance, then, musicians draw attention to the Jacobean indoor playhouse's fluid boundaries between diegetic world and social event, serving as a reminder that Shakespeare and his contemporaries wrote for theatres in which the relationships amongst playgoers, musicians and actors had different configurations from those of contemporary dramatic performance.

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<sup>41</sup> Bawcutt (ed.), *Control and Censorship*, 158.