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International Symposia on Jesuit Studies
ISSN: 2766–0664

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Source: *Circa Missiones: Jesuit Understandings of Mission through the Centuries* (Proceedings of the Symposium held at Lisbon, Portugal, June 12–14, 2023)

Edited by: Alessandro Corsi, Claudio Ferlan, and Francisco Malta Romeiras

ISBN: 978–1–947617–35–3

Published by: Institute of Jesuit Sources

Originally Published: September 30, 2025

https://doi.org/10.51238/ISJS.2023.17

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A Prosopography of Jesuit "Musical Missionaries" in the Early Modern Era

DANIELE V. FILIPPI[1]

Music, as is well known, had an ambiguous status in Ignatius of Loyola's conception of the Society of Jesus and in the early life of the new institution. In the extra-European missions, however, sounds and music soon became crucial tools in the Jesuits' apostolic efforts.[2] Missionaries became choir leaders, composers, song writers, music teachers, and instrument makers. The encounter with local musical cultures was stimulating but also problematic and required remarkable creativity and adaptability. How did all that fit with the missionaries' own education, skills, and personality? How did it interact with their understanding and experience of the mission? And how did they account for their musical activities in letters and reports? This paper addresses these questions and tries to define a prosopography of Jesuit "musical missionaries" in the Americas between the seventeenth and the eighteenth century, based on three case studies presented in chronological order: Juan María Salvatierra (1648–1717), missionary in Baja California; Anton Sepp (1655–1733), in the Guaraní *reducciones* of "Paraquaria"; and Martin Schmid (1694–1772), in Chiquitos (Bolivia).

Juan María Salvatierra

Juan María Salvatierra, or Salvaterra, was born in Milan to a Spanish-Italian aristocratic family (his father was Andalusian, his mother Milanese).[3] He apparently felt the vocation to become a missionary in his teens, while studying at the Jesuit college for nobles in Parma. He had been sent there not to become a Jesuit but rather a gentleman. In 1668, however, following in the steps of his elder brother Giovanni and overcoming the

1. I am grateful to the staff of the Peter-Hans Kolvenbach Library, Rome, for their assistance, and to Jutta Toelle for sharing published and unpublished research materials. Preliminary versions of this paper were read at the online roundtable "Horizons" during the conference "The Music Repertoire of the Jesuits in the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth: Editions—Discoveries—Perspectives," Warsaw, September 9–10, 2021, and at the International Symposium on Jesuit Studies "Circa Missiones: Jesuit Understandings of Mission through the Centuries," Lisbon, June 12–14, 2023. In all the transcriptions from early modern documents, I standardize the use of capitals and of punctuation but retain the original spelling. All English translations are mine, except where otherwise stated.

2. See esp. Thomas D. Culley and Clement J. McNaspy, "Music and the Early Jesuits (1540–1565)," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 40 (1971): 213–45; T. Frank Kennedy, "Jesuits and Music: Reconsidering the Early Years," *Studi musicali* 17, no. 1 (1988): 71–100; *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 3, no. 3 (2016), special issue "'Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth': Music and Sound in the Ministries of Early Modern Jesuits," guest ed. Daniele V. Filippi, https://brill.com/view/journals/jjs/3/3/jjs.3.issue-3.xml.

3. For Salvatierra's biography, see Pietro Tacchi Venturi, "Per la biografia del p. Gianmaria Salvaterra: Tre nuove lettere," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 5 (1936): 76–83, which references earlier Jesuit literature, as well as Ernest J. Burrus and J. Gómez F., "Salvatierra, Juan María," in *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2001), 4:3479–80. See also the profile by Javier Burrieza Sánchez in the Diccionario Biográfico electrónico de la Real Academia de la Historia, https://dbe.rah.es/biografias/15170/juan-maria-salvatierra (accessed December 3, 2024).

family's resistance, he entered the Society. In one of at least three *indipetae* addressed to Superior General Giovanni Paolo Oliva (1600–81, in office 1664–81) from Genoa, where he was teaching, Salvatierra retrospectively wrote in 1671:

> Imparai per quatro anni (mentre ero nel Collegio de nobili di Parma) a suonare di liuto, alla quall'arte m'applicai molto più quando intesi nella lettione di tavola, cioè della China, che con questa arte si era uno della Compagnia molto avanzato nella gratia di que' re chinesi. (Genova, 8 giugno 1671)[4]
>
> For four years, while I was studying at the college for nobles in Parma [in the 1660s], I learned to play the lute: I applied myself to it much more when I heard, at the table reading, about China, and how one of the Society [of Jesus] won the favor of those Chinese emperors thanks to this art. (Genoa, June 8, 1671)

In his hagiographic portrait of Salvatierra, Miguel Venegas (1680–1764) confirms this and gives further context about the typical educational approach of the colleges for nobles; according to Venegas, Salvatierra's elder brother suggested

> que fuesse embiado al Seminario de nobles que hay en Parma, y está à cargo de la Compañia, en donde concurre mucha nobleza de toda Europa para aprender buenas letras y exercitarse en las habilidades proprias de una noble juventud [...] en èl por espacio de quatro años se aplicó con empeño al estudio de las letras y exercicios proprios de un cavallero, y saliò eminente, especialmente en la esgrima y en la musica; y juntamente se dedicò, aunque con bastante trabajo, al estudio de la lengua francesa.[5]
>
> that he should be sent to the college for nobles in Parma, run by the Society [of Jesus], where many nobles from all over Europe converge in order to learn good letters and exercise the abilities that are appropriate to a noble youth [...] there, over four years, he committed himself to the study of letters and of the exercises appropriate to a gentleman, with excellent results, especially in fencing and music; at the same time, he devoted himself, although with some difficulty, to the study of the French language.

Salvatierra actually became a missionary: in 1675, he sailed from Cádiz to Mexico, where he continued his studies, taught, and ministered to Indigenous people; later, from 1697, he adventurously opened pioneering missions in Baja California. There, he put his musical talents to good use, promoting liturgical and non-liturgical music, describing and occasionally joining in local dances, and playing for fellow missionaries.[6] Hagiographer Giuseppe Antonio Patrignani commented in his *Menologio*, elegantly touching upon a classical topos: "Col suono e col canto si adoperava, Anfione non fa-

4. Edited in Tacchi Venturi, "Per la biografia del p. Salvaterra," 81–82 from ARSI, *Fondo gesuitico, Indipetae* 15, fol. 330[2]; reported in Alfred E. Lemmon, "Jesuits and Music in Mexico," *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 46 (1977): 191–98, here 196.

5. *El apostol Mariano representado en la vida del V. P. Juan María de Salvatierra, de la Compañía de Jesús* (México: En la imprenta de Doña María de Ribera, 1754), 8.

6. See Juan Maria Salvatierra, *Mision de la Baja California*, ed. Constantino Bayle (Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1946), *passim* (e.g., 139); Kristin Dutcher Mann, "Opus Dei: Jesuit and Franciscan Music in Mexico," in *Religion in New Spain*, ed. Susan Schroeder and Stafford Poole (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 266–78, here 274–76.

voloso, a fabbricare in quel barbaro clima una novella Città di Dio" (As a non-fictional Amphion,[7] he worked with sound and singing to build a new City of God in that barbaric region).[8]

Interestingly, several texts about Salvatierra mention his singing of the catechism—the use of songs to teach the doctrine was a recurring feature in Jesuit missions throughout the early modern era.[9] Despite Venegas's remark about his difficulties with French in Parma, Salvatierra became a polyglot, mastering Nahuatl and various other Indigenous languages. The Italian polymath Ludovico Muratori, in his *Il cristianesimo felice nelle missioni de' padri della Compagnia di Gesù nel Paraguai* (The happy state of Christianity in the missions of the fathers of the Society of Jesus in Paraguay), explicitly affirms that Salvatierra translated "in versi e lingua californese" (in Californian language and verse) the most widespread Italian catechetical song: *In voi credo, in voi spero / o Dio onnipotente* (In thee I believe, in thee I hope / omnipotent God), that is, the so-called *Laude spirituale*, famously used by Paolo Ségneri (1624–94) in his popular missions around Italy.[10]

Without going into further details, two points are especially relevant here. The first regards the missionary's educational background. Probably after some private musical training during his childhood, Salvatierra studied music at a college for nobles, as part of the courses of "gentlemanly exercises." Music, together with dance, foreign languages, geography, painting, horse riding, fencing, and other sports, belonged to these optional courses, which became increasingly attractive to the students and their families and were distinctive of this kind of school.[11] Thanks to Salvatierra's exposure to missionary literature in the same school—during, but probably not limited to, the table reading—this element of his aristocratic training became the hinge on which to base his desire and, later, his application to become a Jesuit missionary. The sec-

7. In Greek mythology, Amphion "Son of Zeus and of Antiope [...] built a wall around Thebes, by enchanting the stones with his lyre-playing" (Albert Schachter and Richard Neudecker, "Amphion," in Brill's New Pauly Online, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1574-9347_bnp_e118730 [accessed December 3, 2024]).

8. Giuseppe Antonio Patrignani, *Menologio di pie memorie d'alcuni religiosi della Compagnia di Gesù* (Venice: N. Pezzana, 1730), t. 3, "Del P. Gianmaria Salvaterra," 66–72, here 69.

9. T. Frank Kennedy, "Some Unusual Genres of Sacred Music in the Early Modern Period: The Catechism as a Musical Event in the Late Renaissance; Jesuits and 'Our Way of Proceeding,'" in *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley, S.J.*, ed. Kathleen M. Comerford and Hilmar M. Pabel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 266–79; Daniele V. Filippi, "A Sound Doctrine: Early Modern Jesuits and the Singing of the Catechism," *Early Music History* 34 (2015): 1–43.

10. Ludovico Muratori, *Il Cristianesimo felice* (Venice: G. Pasquali, 1749), 2:169. The wording of the first half of Muratori's passage is almost identical to the corresponding one in Patrignani's *Menologio*, but the specific remark on *In voi credo* is his own. At the beginning of his discussion (151), Muratori declares that he based his account of Salvatierra's missions on a few letters to which he had access thanks to the heir of the missionary's family, the marquis Giuseppe D'Adda. Muratori, however, may also have consulted the same manuscript *Vita* preserved in the Milanese province on which Patrignani based his own treatment (see Tacchi Venturi, "Per la biografia del p. Salvaterra," 77n5). On the *Laude spirituale*, see Filippi, "Sound Doctrine," 24–29.

11. See Stefano Lorenzetti, "'Per animare agli esercizi nobili': Esperienza musicale e identità nobiliare nei collegi di educazione," *Quaderni storici* 32, no. 95/2 (1997): 435–60. I have framed the role of the Jesuit colleges for nobles in the musical education of young aristocrats in Daniele V. Filippi, "Education: Music among the Challenges of Early Modernity," in *A Cultural History of Western Music in the Renaissance*, ed. Jeanice Brooks and Richard Freedman, A Cultural History of Western Music 3 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), 145–70, here 163–64.

ond relevant point regards the sharing of methods and texts between internal and extra-European missions: as we have just seen, Salvatierra brought with him from Italy the method of teaching the catechism through songs and translated the text typically used in Italian internal missions. Apart from the remarkable *longue-durée* tradition of this approach—the sung catechism traveled from Spain to Italy, and then from there to countless missionary stations all over the world[12]—what is worthy of note is the similarity of methods adopted in internal and extra-European missions. Another case I have briefly discussed elsewhere, that of Diego Luis de San Vitores (1627–72) in the Mariana Islands, further illuminates this aspect: before becoming a "musical" missionary, San Vitores had been a preacher of popular missions in mid-seventeenth-century Spain, and he subsequently kept in touch with fellow preacher Juan Gabriel Guillén.[13] The examples of Salvatierra and San Vitores clearly indicate that, though still scarcely acknowledged by modern studies, there was a noteworthy exchange of methods and experiences between the European and extra-European Jesuit missions.

Anton Sepp

Although the figure of Anton Sepp has attracted a certain amount of attention from local historians and international musicologists, he is still virtually unknown to English-language scholarship.[14] He was born in Kaltern, near Bolzano, in South Tyrol, the fifth child of middle-class parents who aspired to nobility and provided a musical and religious education to their children.[15] One of his elder brothers, Paul (1649–92), was a choirboy in Bolzano and Innsbruck in the 1660s, then singer and composer at the Hofkapelle in Dresden in 1666–80, and finally organist in his hometown. Another brother, Franz Bruno (1653–1715), became a Benedictine monk—with the name of

12. Filippi, "Sound Doctrine."

13. Daniele V. Filippi, "Songs in Early Modern Catholic Missions: Between Europe, the Indies, and the 'Indies of Europe,'" *Troja: Jahrbuch für Renaissance-Musik* 14 (2015), special issue "Vokalpolyphonie zwischen Alter und Neuer Welt: Musikalische Austauschprozesse zwischen Europa und Latein-Amerika im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert," guest ed. Klaus Pietschmann, 39–67, here 66–67. On San Vitores's musical activities, see more recently David R. M. Irving, "Jesuits and Music in Guam and the Marianas, 1668–1769," in *Changing Hearts: Performing Jesuit Emotions between Europe, Asia, and the Americas*, ed. Yasmin Annabel Haskell and Raphaële Garrod (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 211–34.

14. See Johann Mayr, *Anton Sepp: Ein Südtiroler im Jesuitenstaat* (Bolzano: Athesia, 1988); Johann Herczog, *Orfeo nelle Indie: I gesuiti e la musica in Paraguay (1609–1767)* ([Galatina]: M. Congedo, 2001), 57–82; Jutta Toelle, "'Was michs kostet, die Indianer in unserer Europäischen Music zu instruiren, ist dem lieben Gott allein bekannt': Kircher und die jesuitische Mission durch Musik in Paraquaria," in *Steinbruch oder Wissensgebäude? Zur Rezeption von Athanasius Kirchers "Musurgia universalis" in Musiktheorie und Kompositionspraxis*, ed. Melanie Wald-Fuhrmann (Basel: Schwabe, 2014), 94–105; Esther Schmid Heer, *America die verkehrte Welt: Prozesse der Verräumlichung in den Paraguay-Berichten des Tiroler Jesuiten Anton Sepp (1655–1733)* (Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz, 2013); Esther Schmid Heer, "'Ein noch niemahls in Paraquaria erhoerte Sach': Musikalische und theatralische Passagen in den Reise- und Missionsberichten des Paraguay-Missionars Anton Sepp S.J.," in *Die Musik- und Theaterpraxis der Jesuiten im kolonialen Amerika: Grundlagen, Desiderate, Forschungsperspektiven*, ed. Christian Storch (Sinzig: Studio, 2014), 59–74; Julia Brandt, "Ein Stück Bayern in Brasilien," *Denkmalpflege Informationen* 171 (2019): 81–86; Jutta Toelle, *Mission durch Musik: Stimmen zu Musik und Klängen in der europäischen Missionierung Hispanoamerikas* (Münster: Waxmann, 2023), *passim*.

15. The main reference for Sepp's biography is Mayr, *Anton Sepp*. See also Philip Caraman and Clement J. McNaspy, "Sepp von Reinegg, Anton," in *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, 4:3555–56.

Alphons—and was active in Marienberg as musician and composer.[16] Anton himself was a choirboy at the imperial court chapel in Vienna for around three years in the mid-1660s.[17] After that, however, and after a rather mysterious journey to England in 1667, he did not pursue a musical career but went to study at the Jesuit college in Innsbruck. There, in turn, he was exposed to rich musical and theatrical activity: his active participation, sometimes with singing roles—notably in a school drama on missionary themes dedicated to Francis Xavier—is documented in various *periochae*, or theater programs, from the period.[18] He entered the Society in Landsberg am Lech in 1674, studied in Ingolstadt, and then taught in various Jesuit institutions. In Lucerne and subsequently in Augsburg, besides teaching rhetoric, he was also *Musikpräfekt* and authored various school dramas that included plenty of musical numbers.[19]

Before examining his further achievements as a missionary, let us pause to assess Sepp's musical education: unlike Salvatierra, whose musical training had been part of his education as an aristocratic youth, Sepp initially received the preliminary training that typically paved the way for a professional career as church musician—and this at the high qualitative level that only the imperial court chapel could offer. The second layer of his musical education comprised his experiences in various Jesuit schools, from theater music to liturgical and paraliturgical singing.

In September 1682, Sepp wrote his *indipeta* to the new superior general, Charles de Noyelle (1615–86, in office 1682–86);[20] in the letter, however, he did not advertise his musical talents. Or perhaps he did so in a very indirect way: he contemptuously mentioned his travel to England, made in order to "obtain wealth and the favor of princes." If we assume that the young singer of the imperial court chapel had gone to England to exhibit his talent and obtain an appointment, then music would be among the "things of this world" that, according to the same passage in the *indipeta*, he later renounced by entering the Society. Be that as it may, in the space of a few years his desire to become a missionary was fulfilled.

In 1689, Sepp reached Genoa and sailed to Spain; after a long stopover, he crossed the Atlantic and landed in Buenos Aires in 1691. He subsequently started working in the Guaraní *reducciones*, in an area between what is now Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay.[21] As already pointed out by previous scholars, his missionary travelogue *Reißbeschreibung* [...] *in Paraquariam* (Description of a journey [...] to Paraguay) is full of

16. Christian Fastl, "Sepp, Brüder," in Oesterreichisches Musiklexikon Online, https://dx.doi.org/10.1553/0x00223da5 (accessed December 3, 2024).
17. Mayr, *Anton Sepp*, 54–61.
18. Mayr, *Anton Sepp*, 65–72.
19. Mayr, *Anton Sepp*, 103 (Lucerne), 114 (Augsburg).
20. The letter is reproduced in Mayr, *Anton Sepp*, 102, and commented and translated in German on 428–29.
21. See Mayr, *Anton Sepp*, 13–14 for a list of the various *reducciones* in which Sepp was active during his forty years as a missionary.

interesting musical moments.[22] Without aiming to give a complete picture of Sepp's musical activities in the mission, which would deserve a monographic study, I will focus on a few points that I find especially relevant from the perspective of this research.

We may wonder to what extent musically talented missionaries knew what awaited them at their destination and whether they made specific preparations before traveling overseas. In the case of Sepp, we learn from the *Reißbeschreibung* that he brought musical instruments from Europe to America (148ff.): a large theorbo from Augsburg, a smaller one he had bought in Genoa, a trumpet marine he had ordered in Cádiz,[23] and a set of flutes again purchased in Genoa. It seems, then, that he gradually equipped himself with musical instruments during the preliminary European stages of his travel, especially in Spain (besides the trumpet marine, the procurator bought him a spinet, a clavichord, and some shawms [264]). This, by the way, enabled Sepp to engage in musical activities during the long transatlantic crossing (63–64). On board the ship, he also started practicing what we may call intercultural musical transfer (84–5 and 101): he taught four African-born trumpet players (slaves of the captain) new pieces of music by repeatedly singing the notes to them until they had learned the parts by heart, since they could not read music.

According to a widespread commonplace in early modern missionary literature, European music and musical instruments were powerful means to impress the Indigenous. Sepp too embraced this topos and remarked on the Indigenous peoples' special love for music in general, as well as their specific interest in European music (22):

> Kein Kunst wird von ihnen mehrers dann die Music geschätzt. Als ich ihnen meine Europäische Instrumenten und Compositionen gewiesen auf jeden ein wenig (dann ich nicht viel kan und um dieses den lieben Gott über alles dancke) gespielet, kunten sie sich nicht fassen, betteten mich gleichsam für einen Gott an.
>
> No art is held in higher esteem among them than music. When I played to them my European instruments and my compositions (a little bit on each instrument—because I am not too good, but for what I can do, I am most thankful to God!), they could not contain themselves and immediately began to adore me like a god.

For a missionary, however, music was also a tool for sociability with fellow Europeans (148ff.). When, for instance, two German Jesuits visited the newly arrived missionaries at the College of Buenos Aires, Sepp and his companions updated them about the

22. First published both in Nuremberg and Brixen in 1696, Sepp's book—which has a somewhat unconventional, quirky, and ironic style—became a best-seller and was repeatedly reprinted, translated into English, and summarized in various other languages. A digitization of the 1697 Nuremberg edition (to which I will refer in what follows) is available online at https://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10468162-5 (accessed December 3, 2024). Sepp's works have appeared in Spanish translation in *Edición crítica de las obras del padre Antonio Sepp S.J., misionero en la Argentina*, ed. Werner Hoffmann, 3 vols. (Buenos Aires: Eudeba, 1971–74). For a modern edition of his "Paraguayan Flower Garden," see Anton Sepp, *Paraquarischer Blumengarten*, ed. Esther Schmid Heer (Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2011).
23. The trumpet marine (or *tromba marina*) was a bowed instrument with only one string and a long triangular body, especially popular in the second half of the seventeenth century.

political news in Europe; Sepp then played for his guests on each of his two theorbos and then on the flute in a duo with Father Anton Böhm.

In the description of a typical day in the *reducción* (322–24), Sepp mentions teaching singers, instrumentalists—wind instrument players, harpists, organists, and theorbists—and dancers among his morning duties. (The idea that the missionary instructed dancers might have shocked his readers, and he therefore provided appropriate cultural references: he invoked the European *Comedien*, likely alluding to Jesuit theater and the sacred dances of Spanish church festivals. It was, in fact, necessary "to impress into [the Indigenous] an internal affection to the Christian religion through such external ecclesiastical pomp" [*mit denen äusserlichen Kirchen Gepräng̃en eine innerliche Affection zur Christlichen Religion ihnen* (...) *einzudrucken*].)[24] After lunch (328), Sepp would compose some music and learn the local language. It is worth remarking on the recurrent juxtaposition of music and local language in his notes: just like countless other missionaries, Sepp used the Indigenous languages to write songs that conveyed the tenets of Christian doctrine; conversely, in the *Paraquarischer Blumengarten* (Paraguayan garden of flowers) Sepp affirms that the Indigenous youngsters were taught to read and write texts in Latin and Castilian not in order for them to speak or understand those languages but primarily to be able to sing choral music and read edifying texts aloud (to master Castilian was deemed dangerous because it could facilitate exchanges with Spanish colonizers).[25]

In one of the most interesting passages of his witty narrative, Sepp enters into more details about his music teaching (*Reißbeschreibung*, 266–68):

> Was mich kostet die Indianer in unserer Europäischen Music zu instruiren ist dem lieben Gott allein bekannt. Alle Missionarii, der eine von da, der andere von dorten, auch über die hundert Meil weit, schicket mir seine Musicanten, daß ich sie unterweise in dieser Kunst, welche ihnen ganz neu und von der alten Spannischen, so sie annoch haben, wie Tag und Nacht voneinender geschieden. Sie wusten nicht um unsere Mensur, Statuta oder Tact, nichts um die unterschiedliche Trippel, nichts um die Zieffer 7-6, 4-3 etc. [...] Ihre Noten seynd alle weiß, Gantze, halbe und Coral-Noten, nemlichen uhralte Music, dergleichem Scarteken die Corregent ganze Kästen voll in der teutschen Provinz haben, und zum Einbinden neuer Auctores tauglich seyn. Muß also mit diesen meinen gestandnen, barteten Eiß-grauen Capell-Buben von der Scala Musica, Ut, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, gantz auf ein neues anfangen, so ich wegen der liebe Gottes gar gerne thue.
>
> Dieses Jahr hab ich schon instruirt und gleichsam zu so viel Meister gemacht: Sechs Trompetter unterschiedlicher Reduction, ein jedes Dorff hat 4 Trompetter, drey gute Tiorbisten, 4 Organisten. (Zeigte diesen noch kein

24. This concept of "ecclesiastical pomp" as a means to instil devotion had a long tradition in early modern Catholic apologetics. Sepp's words almost literally echo some passages in his fellow Jesuit (and fellow Tyrolean) Georg Scherer's treatise on Corpus Christi processions (1588): see Daniele V. Filippi, "A Multimedia Response to the Real Presence: The Jesuit Georg Scherer on Corpus Christi Processions in Early Modern Vienna," *Journal of the Alamire Foundation* 15, no. 2 (2023): 203–21.
25. Hoffmann, *Edición crítica*, 3:196.

> partitur, weilen dieses ihnen noch zu schwehr, sondern nur gewisse Arien, Praeambula und Fuga: O wie so schwehr kommt mich dieses an!). Schallmeyer 30, Cornettisten 18, Fagotisten 10, hab ich dieses Jahr so weit gebracht, daß sie alle meine Compositiones blasen und singen können. Discantisten habe ich schon unterwiesen über 50, so nicht üble Stimmen.
>
> God alone knows how much it costs me to instruct the Indians in our European music! All the missionaries send me their own musicians from here and there, even from one hundred miles away, in order for me to teach them in this art, which is totally new to them and as different as it can be from the old Spanish music they know [from earlier missionaries]. They did not know a thing about our Mensura or Tactus, the different ternary measures, the figures 7-6, 4-3 etc. [of basso continuo] [...]. They know only white whole and half notes, and choral-notes, of such an old-fashioned music as the choirmasters in our German province have entire boxes full of, good only to bind newer compositions![26] So with these seasoned and bearded choirboys of mine, I have to start afresh with the *scala musica*, *ut*, *re*, *mi*, *fa*, *sol*, *la*, which I do gladly for the love of God.
>
> This year I have already taught and turned into masters six trumpet players of various *reducciones* (each village has four trumpet players); three good theorbists, four organists (but I haven't shown them any score yet, because it is still too difficult, only some arias, praeambula and fugues: how very difficult it is for me!). Thirty shawm players, eighteen cornetto players, and ten bassoon players, so that they can all sing and play my own compositions. Additionally, I have already instructed over fifty boy sopranos with not-too-bad voices.

Several elements stand out in this account. From the point of view of the missions' organization, we note the existence of a wide local network that connected missionaries in stations "even [...] one hundred miles away" from each other: when a missionary like Sepp was especially good at teaching music, his school turned into a musical hub serving the entire network. As to Sepp, it seems clear that teaching music became a more extensive and exacting task than he had anticipated before reaching the *reducciones*. In a broader perspective, it is also clear that in these remote areas music was not undergoing the relatively swift stylistic transformations that Europeans took for granted. Sepp did not have to build from scratch, as previous Spanish and Netherlandish missionaries had already introduced European music to the area; to his own dismay, however, he found himself compelled to suddenly update the local practice from a long outdated (Spanish) "prima prattica" to current (South German) baroque (with basso continuo and a different textural and rhythmical organization).[27]

Sepp had a background as a choirboy in a prestigious European chapel, had mastered several instruments, and had been music director in various Jesuit institutions. But he was also aware of his own limitations and had no serious training in composi-

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26. Early modern bindings often contained, or were reinforced with, scraps of discarded manuscript or printed books.

27. See Mayr, *Anton Sepp*, 208–210; Herczog, *Orfeo nelle Indie*, 63–64; Toelle, "Was mich kostet," 99–100.

tion. He had arrived in America relatively well equipped with musical instruments but apparently less well stocked with musical scores. The *Reißbeschreibung* documents requests for music books sent to fellow Jesuits in Europe (258–60, 263–66): in particular, he asked the brothers Ignaz and Paul Gletle to send over liturgical music by their father Johann Melchior Gletle (1626–83), who had been chapel master at Augsburg Cathedral. Remarkably, Sepp specified that the music books needed not be in perfect shape, provided they were legible: his Indigenous musicians, in fact, were also skilled music scribes, and they would prepare multiple copies for the various *reducciones*. However, since the purchase of music from Europe could take years,[28] Sepp almost single-handedly turned composer—reportedly with the sole support of a *Modus componendi* (Method for composing) written for him on two octavo folios by the Jesuit Christoph Brunner (256)—in order to provide his students with appropriate liturgical compositions.[29] In 1700, Sepp received some long-awaited music books from his European correspondents, including the collections *Cithara Davidica* (1682) and *Apollo Seraphicus* (1688) by the Bavarian composer Georg Christoph Leuttner and additional works for voices and instruments by Gletle and others.[30]

Each musical missionary brought a unique musical microcosm to their respective missions, the fruit and sum of their musical experiences during their education and the early stages of their life in the Society. In the case of Sepp, the wealth of experiences accumulated in baroque Austria and Bavaria made him apt to become a full-fledged musical missionary, but his existing skills still needed to be complemented on the ground by a good amount of self-teaching and improvisation—as a matter of fact, Sepp was capable of such musico-technological exploits as building a great organ without previous professional experience.[31] The results of his long career earned him "ein unsterbliches Lob," "an immortal praise," as a younger Jesuit missionary, Matthias Strobl, wrote in 1729: impressed by the musical proficiency of the Indigenous from the *reducciones*, the newly arrived Austrian missionary reported in a letter that Sepp had been responsible for this musical flowering, and that despite his age he was still able to run the *reducción* of La Cruz entirely on his own.[32]

28. Toelle, "Was mich kostet," thought-provokingly connects the problem of getting new music to remote missions with the Jesuit polymath Athanasius Kircher's utopian project of an automatic music-composing machine.

29. On Brunner's activity at the Gregorianum in Munich, see Max Wittwer, "Die Musikpflege im Jesuitenorden unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Länder deutscher Zunge" (inaugural-diss., Greifswald, 1934), 24.

30. Mayr, *Anton Sepp*, 307–8. See the copious remarks in Herczog, *Orfeo nelle Indie*, 177–87.

31. For the construction of the organ for the *reducción* of Yapeyú in the early 1690s, see Anton Sepp, *Continuación de las labores apostólicas*, in Hoffmann, *Edición crítica*, 2:137–9, and Mayr, *Anton Sepp*, 238–42. Besides the impressive richness of sound and the presence of a pedal keyboard (which greatly surprised the Indigenous), the new organ had the advantage of being tuned to concord with the wind instruments played by Sepp's musicians. See also Herczog, *Orfeo nelle Indie*, 69–73.

32. Mayr, *Anton Sepp*, 380–81. For an earlier testimony (1719) about Sepp and his Indigenous musicians by another Swiss Jesuit, Father Anton Betschon, see Herczog, *Orfeo nelle Indie*, 75–78.

Martin Schmid

Another future musical missionary landed in Buenos Aires in 1729 together with Strobl (and others): the Swiss Martin Schmid. He too mentions Sepp in a letter written from Chuquisaca (now Sucre, Bolivia) the following year: he wanted to let his family know that the missionary whose famous "getruckets büchlein" ("small printed book"—undoubtedly the *Reißbeschreibung*) they had read was still alive and in good health.[33] Schmid, however, was not dispatched to the same area as Sepp, whom he would never meet, but to Chiquitos.[34]

Born in 1694 in Baar, German-speaking Switzerland, Schmid had attended the Jesuit college in Lucerne, where he learned music as an additional subject to the humanities curriculum.[35] In his *De vita et moribus tredecim virorum paraguaycorum* (Of the life and manners of thirteen men in Paraguay),[36] José Manuel Peramás (1732–93) comments that the love and cultivation of "honest and serious music" was not only a "sweet and useful" benefit for Schmid but would become a tool for his later missionary activities among the Chiquitanos—"whom he taught to sing and play" (*quos cantu manuque modulari docuit*), like a new Orpheus among the "Indian peoples" (*Indicarum gentium velut alter Orpheus* [407]).

Schmid entered the Society in Landsberg in 1717 and studied in Hall and Ingolstadt. Immediately after his ordination as a priest in 1726, he was chosen for the American missions, as he announced to his brother in one of his highly interesting letters, which he already proudly signed as "indianischer missionarius."[37] The departure was delayed until 1728 by the Anglo-Spanish War, with Schmid arriving in Latin America the following year. He would remain there, missionizing a remote area in the very heart of the continent, for almost four decades, until the expulsion of the Society from the Spanish colonies in the late 1760s.

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33. Rainald Fischer, ed., *P. Martin Schmid SJ 1694–1772: Seine Briefe und sein Wirken* (Zug: Verlag Kalt-Zehnder Druck, 1988), 72 (letter of May 18, 1730).

34. See Jerzy Henryk Skrabania, "Gesungener Glaube: Musik im Kontext jesuitischer Missionspraxis unter den Chiquitos," in Storch, *Die Musik- und Theaterpraxis der Jesuiten*, 93–111; Hans-Jakob Zimmer, "Das Musikleben in den Jesuitenmissionen von Chiquitos: Eine Rekonstruktion anhand zeitgenössicher Quellen vor und nach der Ausweisung der Societas Jesu aus Lateinamerika," in Storch, *Die Musik- und Theaterpraxis der Jesuiten*, 113–32.

35. On Schmid's biography, see Felix Alfred Plattner, *Ein Reislaufer Gottes: Das abenteuerliche Leben des Schweizer Jesuiten P. Martin Schmid aus Baar (1694–1772)* (Lucerne: Raber, 1944); Werner Hoffmann, *Vida y obra del P. Martin Schmid S.J. (1694–1772)* (Buenos Aires: Fundación para la educación, la ciencia y la cultura, 1981); Eckart Kühne, ed., *Martin Schmid: 1694–1772: Missionar—Musiker—Architekt; Ein Jesuit aus der Schweiz bei den Chiquitano-Indianern in Bolivien* (Lucerne: Historisches Museum, 1994) (with a useful appendix of documents at 181–83); Herczog, *Orfeo nelle Indie*, 97–106; Ferdinand Strobel and Antonio Menacho, "Schmid, Martin," in *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, 4:3523–24; Rainald Fischer, "Schmid, Martin," in Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz, https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/025240/2013-01-17/ (accessed December 3, 2024).

36. Faenza: Ex typographia Archii, 1793. The part on Schmid is at 405–60.

37. Fischer, *Schmid: Seine Briefe*, 25.

Schmid was the typical multi-talented Jesuit: his work as a missionary architect has attracted scholarly attention,[38] but what concerns us here are, of course, his musical activities, which, as in the case of Sepp, have so far been discussed only in Spanish- and German-speaking scholarship.[39] He taught music to the Chiquitanos and composed, arranged, and copied vocal and instrumental pieces for those communities. Moreover, out of necessity he had to become an instrument maker, even if he admittedly did not have any specific training in this art (his other skills as architect and craftsman surely helped, with a good deal of imitation and learning by doing):

> Hab ich auch allerhand musicalische instrumenten gemachet, ohne das ich in Europa selbes gelehrnet, oder mir eingebildet hätte. Aber die nothdurfft und abgang der meister haben mich ein künstmeister gemacht. Dan alle völckerschaffen haben ihre orgel: haben viel geigen und bassgeigen von cederholz gemacht; sie haben clavicordia, spinete, harpen, trompeten, schallmeyen, welche alle instrumenten ich gemacht, auch die Indianeer knaben zu schlagen und zu brauchen gelehrnet.[40]
>
> I have also made all sorts of musical instruments, without having learned this same art in Europe, or having imagined [to practice it]. But the necessity and the lack of masters have turned me into a master of this art. So all the *reducciones* have their organ; they have many violins and basses [*Bassgeigen*] made of cedar wood; they have clavichords, spinets, harps, trumpets, [and] shawms, all instruments that I have made and that I have taught the Indian boys to use and play.

We may wonder why Jesuit missionaries such as Sepp and Schmid invested so much time and effort in building musical instruments when they lacked the professional training for such a difficult craft. The possible reasons range from the realm of practical needs to that of symbolical connections. In terms of practical music, instruments were surely necessary for recreating the exuberant baroque sound ideal that Sepp and Schmid had experienced in Europe. Instruments were thus needed for a satisfying performance of the liturgical and devotional music they taught in the *reducciones*—in contrast with the probable "a cappella" ideal (vocal homophonic or polyphonic textures with optional instrumental reinforcement of the bass part) of missionaries from previous generations, as seen when discussing Sepp. From a symbolic point of view, instruments were distinctive material embodiments of European and Christian music, a role they shared with those other crucial objects, the written scores. Finally, musical instruments worked as "catalysts" of interest and involvement: the whole process of making, embellishing, owning, and using the instruments was part of the initiation to

38. Eckhart Kühne, "Die Missionskirchen von Chiquitos im Tiefland von Bolivien: Bau und Restaurierung der Kirchen von Martin Schmid (1694–1772)" (PhD diss., ETH Zürich, 2008). At the crossroad between architecture and music is Stefan Fellner, "Numerus Sonorus: Musikalische Proportionen und Zahlenästhetik in der Architektur der Jesuitenmissionen Paraguays am Beispiel der Chiquitos-Kirchen des P. Martin Schmid SJ (1694–1772)" (EngD diss. (Technische Universität Berlin, 1993).

39. See especially Leonardo Waisman, "'Ich bin Missionar, weil ich singe, spiele und tanze': Martin Schmid als Musiker," in Kühne, *Martin Schmid*, 55–63 (with a tentative catalog of his vocal works at 61).

40. Fischer, *Schmid: Seine Briefe*, 103–4 (letter of October 17, 1744).

European and Christian music; as is well known, many missionaries, including Sepp, remarked on the Indigenous peoples' skills as craftsmen, which probably encouraged the missionaries to embark on such complicated projects.

In another of his compelling letters,[41] Schmid reflected that his knowledge of music was among the reasons why he had been chosen for the mission ("Das ich [...] das glück gehabt in disse missiones geschicket zu werden, hatt nit wenig darzu geholffen, weillen ich die music verstehe").[42] He realized in retrospect why divine providence had made him study music in his youth: so that he could now turn the Chiquitanos not only into devout Christians but also into church musicians, in an area in which Western art music had been so far completely unknown:[43]

> Aniezo erkenne ich, wie Gott so wunderlich verordnet, das ich in der iugend die music erlehrnete: es wolte nemblich sein unendliche Majestät, das durch selbe disse seine Indier auch musicanten wurden, und ihn schon in dissem leben mit lobgesängen, und allerhand musicalischen instrumenten zu ehren wüssten, und das sie mittels der music ihr gemüth in den himmel erhebeten, und folglich ihr leben also anstelleten, damit sie die himlische music der hh. englen in ewigkeit zu hören würdig wurden.[44]
>
> Now I realize how God has so marvelously decreed that I should learn music in my youth: his infinite Majesty wanted that through this his Indians could become musicians and know already in this life how to honor him with songs of praise and all sorts of musical instruments, and that by means of music they could raise their souls to heaven, and live their life in a way so as to deserve to hear the heavenly music of the holy angels in eternity.

Perhaps the most famous quote by Schmid is revealing as to the centrality of his musical ability and activity for his calling as a missionary: "An excellent missionary, Your Reverence will say; just a missionary, I say, and a missionary precisely because I sing, play, and dance" (*Egregium* [...] *missionarium, dicit R.V.; imo missionarium, dico ego, et ideo missionarium, quia cano, psallo, tripudio*).[45] The quote is taken from a letter Schmid wrote in Latin to Father Joseph Schumacher of the Lucerne college in 1744. The entire section concerning missions and music in this letter is worth discussing at some length because it illustrates Schmid's appropriation of a series of topoi that are often found in such literature. After giving Schumacher a geographical, social, and religious description of the *reducciones*, Schmid turns to his own life as if to answer an imaginary question posed by his correspondent: "What does the 'tall Schmid' [*longus ille Faber*], the missionary, do in the other hemisphere?" It is at this point that Schmid starts talking about music as an essential part of his life, one that is "not merely joyful,

41. Which of course need to be read "critically": see for instance the useful observations in Zimmer, "Das Musikleben in den Jesuitenmissionen von Chiquitos," 115.
42. Fischer, *Schmid: Seine Briefe*, 70 (letter of March 3, 1730).
43. As he observed in the same letter, the Indigenous "bishero noch keine music nach der kunst oder auf die noten gesehen oder gehöret haben" (up to now had not yet seen nor heard any properly composed or written out music).
44. Fischer, *Schmid: Seine Briefe*, 104 (letter of October 17, 1744).
45. Fischer, *Schmid: Seine Briefe*, 84 (letter of October 10, 1744).

but delightful. In a word, it is about singing, intoning psalms, playing, and even dancing." Schmid explains this by referring to a famous passage in Scripture (indeed, an often-invoked motto of missionary life): "Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth" (Psalm 18 [19]:4). Schmid deliberately interprets "sound" (*sonus*) as "song" (*cantus*); he thus affirms to "sing" with his "voice, with organs, with cithers, trumpets, flutes, psalteries, violins and basses"[46] and to teach the same to the Indigenous youngsters. The subsequent remark is revealing as to the gap that many missionaries perceived between the skills they actually possessed and those they felt compelled to improvise in the field: "To be sure, poverty and necessity make us clever, so that here we know more than we actually know, and can do more than we actually can" (*Paupertas nempe et necessitas ingeniosos nos faciunt, ut sciamus hic plus quam sciamus, possimus plus quam possimus*).[47]

It is thanks to this pragmatic attitude that the missionaries could build "tools of every sort," "houses, churches, and even cities," and that Schmid himself could turn organ and instrument maker. He can now proudly proclaim that every town "resonates with the organs I have made" and that not a single day passes without music in each of the churches. At this point, Schmid introduces another crucial topos: because of this musical instruction, "those who until recently dwelled in the forest, as neighbors of the wild beasts, and could not but roar with lions and tigers, are now able to celebrate their Creator" with song and music; music, therefore, enables them to fulfil the duty of praise. Further on—after justifying the potentially controversial mention of dance with arguments similar to those used by Sepp, as discussed earlier—Schmid recurs to another frequent topic in missionary literature, one that hinges on the shared Eurocentric bias in a paradoxical way. His correspondent would be amazed, Schmid writes, if he could see how the young Chiquitanos, only recently "extracted" from the forest with their families, can sing, play various instruments, and dance with such precision that they could compete with their Europeans peers, and perhaps win.[48] And he concludes:

> Atque haec quidem etiam ideo a nobis docentur, ut ferinos mores paulatim deponant, atque hominibus aliquanto similiores, Christianis legibus aptiores efficiantur.
>
> And certainly we teach them such things [i.e., singing, playing, and dancing] precisely for this reason, so that they gradually dismiss their beast-like habits, and are made somewhat more similar to human beings, and more adapted to Christian laws.

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46. It is worth reporting the original Latin, as the interpretation of the instrument names is not watertight: "Cano itaque voce, cano organis, cano cytharis, tubis, tibiis, et psalteriis, majoris minorisque modi chelibus" (Fischer, *Schmid: Seine Briefe*, 84 [letter of October 10, 1744]).

47. Fischer, *Schmid: Seine Briefe*, 84 (letter of October 10, 1744). Notice the consonance with a similar passage in the letter of October 17, 1744 quoted above: the two letters were, in fact, penned within one week.

48. An instance of this topos can be found as early as 1532 in a famous letter by the Franciscan lay brother Pedro de Gante, missionary in Mexico, to Emperor Charles V (r.1519–58): see Emilio Ros-Fábregas, "'Imagine all the people [...]': Polyphonic Flowers in the Hands and Voices of Indians in 16th-Century Mexico," *Early Music* 40, no. 2 (2012): 177–89, here 179.

According to Schmid, then—who, needless to say, partook of the prejudices of his time—the ultimate reason for introducing the Indigenous people to Western music was to civilize and humanize them, making them better prepared to adopt a Christian lifestyle.[49]

Conclusion

While in the early missions the expediency of music for the ministry to Indigenous people was mostly discovered in the field, the circulation of letters and reports and the developments in musical culture in Europe and within the Society eventually made musical skills an asset for prospective missionaries.[50] They mentioned such skills in their *indipetae* (Salvatierra)[51] and made arrangements before or during their travels overseas, notably by purchasing musical instruments (Sepp).[52] Salvatierra mentioned that he studied music even harder, during his education, when he realized that it could be expedient in the mission. Schmid retrospectively considered his musical activities and abilities central to his vocation. Besides their usefulness in ministry, musical abilities were considered a personal benefit (Schmid), as well as tools for spiritual recreation and sociability among the missionaries and with fellow Europeans (Sepp, Salvatierra).

Missionaries obtained their musical training in different ways: as part of Jesuit education properly speaking (Schmid), or as part of the education offered by a Jesuit institution to students who were not primarily destined to enter the Society (Salvatierra), or at non-Jesuit institutions before the contact with Jesuit education (Sepp). A disposition to self-teaching emerges, however, as an important or even necessary element (Sepp: in composition; Sepp, Schmid: in making instruments). If this is probably true for other arts and crafts too, can we thus surmise that a capacity to autonomously develop and multiply one's own talents in difficult situations was part of the Jesuit missionary's ideal profile? Furthermore, typical in missionary literature is the association between musical and linguistic skills (Salvatierra,[53] Sepp), the two fields intertwining

49. This was in accordance with the general civilizing and Christianizing program of the *reducciones*: see for instance Skrabania, "Gesungener Glaube," 94.

50. Jutta Toelle, "Fremdes oder eigenes Brot? Musik im 'Neuen Welt-Bott' Joseph Stöckleins," in Storch, *Die Musik- und Theaterpraxis der Jesuiten*, 75–92, here 91 mentions a letter of 1724/25 by the Austrian missionary Franz Xaver Zephyris (based in Popayán, Colombia), in which he recommended choosing prospective German missionaries to America from among those who had mastered a series of professions, including music, "which in the West Indies is valued above anything else."

51. The *indipetae* can prove valuable sources about the musical background of missionaries: in an enlightening article of 2010, Tomasz Jeż made good use of similar information drawn from the *indipetae* of Silesian candidates—see his "Jesuit Musicians from Baroque Silesia as Missionaries and Music Educators in South America," in *La cultura del barroco español e iberoamericano y su contexto europeo*, ed. Kazimierz Sabik and Karolina Kumor (Warsaw: Instytut Studiów Iberyjskich i Iberoamerykańskich, 2010), 607–17. It can be hoped that such projects as the Digital Indipetae Database led by Emanuele Colombo (https://indipetae.bc.edu/) will offer further material to explore this subject.

52. Right at the start of his mission in Chiquitos, the "Pater Procurator" provided Schmid with an organ built in Potosí, because "the Chiquitanos do not know yet what an organ is," and such an instrument would surely help impress and attract them: Fischer, *Schmid: Seine Briefe*, 70 (letter of March 3, 1730).

53. Notice that Salvatierra, in his *indipeta* of 1671, (1) affirms to have no "abilities" for the missions, except those bestowed by the Holy Trinity; (2) immediately thereafter mentions his musical skills; and (3) immediately thereafter again mentions the foreign languages he has learned (Spanish, French). See the letter in Tacchi Venturi, "Per la biografia del p. Salvaterra."

in songwriting; the struggle to master Indigenous languages, and to translate the main contents of Christian doctrine, required too a disposition to self-teaching and working with rudimentary or self-made tools and imitation.

Another aspect emerging from our case studies is the importance of networking: from the contacts and exchanges of musicians between missionary stations at a local level, to the exchange of experiences (also via the circulation of reports and letters) over wider distances; especially worthy of note are the exchanges between internal and extra-European missions. Despite this relative interconnectedness, however, it is also true that each new missionary freshly arrived from Europe brought with him a new layer of musical culture, even where European music had already been introduced by previous generations (Sepp).

Finally, our missionaries perceived music as an important part of their ministry for a series of reasons: it helped them structure the time and the social life of the Indigenous people and attract them to Christian rituals, and it contributed to intensify devotion and decorate liturgy. On an even wider plane, it was part of their effort to conform the *reducciones* to the standards of Christian civilization that the missionaries had experienced on European soil, and that they—not without a hint of nostalgia—aimed at recreating in the New World.