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Abstract

Cervantes must have felt that the ongoing transformation to a culture dominated by the written verse had significant drawbacks, at least when it came to music and poetry. As a result, in *Don Quixote* the author expects the reader to find the textual cues to suitably perform the novel's lyrical poetry, in much the same way as the troubadours of his youth would have. We will never know if his contemporaneous readers picked up on these clues. But, they are there nonetheless, indicating that Cervantes had an astonishing knowledge of early modern musical forms, while also reminding us that he was at a crossroads in history when society struggled with the significance of the written word.

Keywords

sonnets, ballads, villancicos, coplas, canciones, seguidillas, silvas, madrigals, ovillejo, Cervantes

Disciplines

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Writing to be Heard: Performing Music in *Don Quixote*

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Music is so prominent in *Don Quixote* that it would seem that Miguel de Cervantes must have been a trained instrumentalist or singer. While it is possible that Cervantes was a musician—or received some early instruction in the several Jesuit schools where he studied—nothing in the historical record assures that to be the case.¹ But, the archival record also cannot account for the writer's remarkable knowledge of a range of sixteenth and seventeenth-century musical pieces and instruments that appear in his works. Consider, for example, the frequency and number of musical references in *Don Quixote*: some allusion to music appears in 51 of the 126 chapters comprising Parts 1 and 2 and thirty-five different musical instruments are mentioned 125 times in different combinations (Leal Pinar 2006: 71-76). In a work of literature that has little to do with music specifically, such an extraordinary number and variety of songs and dances invites us to consider Cervantes's

¹ According to Mariano Soriano Fuertes, Cervantes was a guitarist (1855: 153), and Charles Haywood states that the author's time as a captive in Algiers provided the opportunity to become a "fairly accomplished performer of the guitar" and sing old ballads to pass the time (1948: 144-45). None of the major biographies on Cervantes provides information on any musical training. Except to state that Cervantes' father, Rodrigo, owned a viol (1986: 59), Jean Canavaggio makes no reference to music in Cervantes' life. However, Cervantes' own education would have included musical instruction. The Jesuits, who were acclaimed for integrating song and performance into daily lessons, schooled Cervantes in Córdoba and Seville. The Jesuit Chapel Master, Alonso de Vieras, was Cervantes' teacher in Córdoba where the master trained the choir in polyphony, known then as *canto de órgano*. Given that musical training was mandatory in all Jesuit schools, it is likely that Cervantes was trained under Vieras, but to what degree of expertise, we cannot know.

engagement with music in the novel. Yet the topic has received scant attention. Elsewhere in an essay on music in *Don Quixote* I tried to show that Cervantes was writing at a historically pivotal moment when literary culture was expanding but where oral discourse still dominated Golden Age Spain.² In his novel, Cervantes grappled with this cultural shift by featuring implicitly oral poetic forms—sonnets and ballads (*romances*)—accompanied by reading cues that serve as strategies for performing the text. Such an approach to writing suggests he was accommodating an oral society. This essay will expand somewhat on that initial study by examining the remaining poetic-musical forms I was unable to consider previously: *villancicos*, *coplas*, *canciones*, *seguidillas*, *silvas*, madrigals, and Cervantes's original creation, the first ever *ovillejo*. I will provide an overview of these different pieces, their origins and sonic significance in the novel in order to demonstrate that while lyrical poetry appears in *Don Quixote* as a literary object, such verse forms are actually meant to be considered oral markers to guide the reader toward auditory performance when his work was read for an audience. Such a strategy on Cervantes's part would have made sense given he was writing at a time when orality still dominated social, religious, and juridical circles, and where any sort of widespread literacy was still off in the future. But, more than anything else, I want to demonstrate how important musical pieces are to plot and characterization and how Cervantes had an amazing agility with a variety of lyrical verse forms.

Mikhail Bakhtin famously described *Don Quixote* as a polyphonic work where a plethora of characters and voices is freed from total authorial control.³ The notion of literary polyphony, however, can be taken quite literally because the novel at times overwhelms with a sonic outpouring of musical forms and styles forwarded by a variety of characters and voices. Numerous characters sing or play instruments, entire episodes pivot on melodious interludes, or music is operative in background context.⁴ In Cervantes's Spain, both historically and literarily music

² See my article “‘Señora, donde hay música no puede haber cosa mala’: Music, Poetry and Orality in *Don Quijote*.” This essay builds on that earlier study, which examined only the *romances* and sonnets appearing in the novel.

³ This idea was first examined in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984: 33) and further developed in “Discourses in the Novel.”

⁴ Some of the more well known examples include the following: the knight calls his steed Rocinante, “nombre, a su parecer, alto y sonoro,” and his lady Dulcinea, “nombre, a su parecer, músico y peregrino” (1999: 154); Don Quixote tells Sancho that “todos o los más caballeros andantes de la edad pasada eran grandes trovadores y grandes músicos; que estas dos habilidades, o gracias, por mejor decir, son anexas a los enamorados andantes” (1999: 212); his rival, the Caballero de los Espejos, sings a sonnet dedicated to the imaginary Casildea de Vandalia while playing “un laúd o vigüela” (1999: 353); at the inn, “sonó su silbato de cañas cuatro o cinco veces” which suggested he had arrived at some famous castle “y que le servían de música” (1999: 156); Don Quixote requests

and song enjoyed a direct and dependent relationship with poetry. It is therefore not surprising that the most widely referenced musical forms in *Don Quixote* are lyrical poems, sometimes sung and accompanied by music, other times recited and performed from memory, and on occasion just mentioned in passing. The fact that in so many instances characters in the novel intentionally perform these pieces out loud references Cervantes's concern with the pressing social and cultural changes of early modern Spain. More specifically, the author uses literature to promote an oral culture even as a burgeoning literary tradition is beginning to overwhelm orality. Despite a proliferation of written texts during Cervantes's time, the oral tradition endured well beyond his lifetime (Zumthor 1987: 155; Frenk 2005: 17-19; García de Enterría 1988: 90-95). Indeed, most citizens of early modern Spain were illiterate and poor, unlikely to learn to read or write, or purchase books. But, each town boasted at least one erudite citizen, and he was frequently asked to read aloud to gathering friends and family. Hence, in the church, the university, or town government, official communication was mostly done orally; formal contracts of all kinds, purchase agreements, and other juridical covenants were nearly always done verbally, and they remain legally binding in many societies today. Orality's pervasiveness and significance was paramount but also customary. For example, Lazarillo de Tormes' most rewarding occupation was that of town crier of Toledo, and the townsfolk and government depended on him to broadcast important news and pronouncements. Hence, texts did not form a significant part of everyday life in more informal spaces such as friendly gatherings or at taverns and inns, either. According to Margit Frenk, authors like Cervantes were well aware of these circumstances and anticipated such orally inclined audiences by conceiving prose works destined to be heard, rather than read on any large scale (2005: 22).

an instrument to sing a ballad he invents on the spot: “que se me ponga un laúd esta noche en mi aposento, que yo consolaré lo mejor que pudiere a esta lastimada doncella” (1999: 436); Sancho tells the duchess, “Señora, donde hay música no puede haber cosa mala” (1999: 413); Cardenio writes and performs sonnets (I.23, 27); Dorotea plays the harp because “la música compone los ánimos descompuestos y alivia los trabajos que nacen del espíritu” (1999: 223); Altisidora also plays the harp and sings a lengthy *romance* (II: 34); a mule driver sings a popular *romance* about Roncesvalles (II.9); the goat herder Antonio plays his stringed rabel and performs *romances* (I.11); Antonio then narrates the story about Vicente de la Rosa, a musician and poet who played the guitar so well that “decían algunos que la hacía hablar” (1999: 313); in the Cueva de Montesinos, Balerna and her maidens sing four days a week in their procession to the tomb of Durandarte (II.23); Condesa Trifaldi's arrival includes songs (II.37); Sancho takes up his post as Governor amidst bells and *chirimías*, and flees while drums, trumpets and ringing bells blare (II.47); Ricote and other pilgrims sing and solicit alms (II.54); and the Catalonian bandit Roque Guinart ends his speech with applause played to the music of *chirimías* and *atabales* (II.61). These are but a sample of the numerous references that appear in the novel. For a more complete listing, see Leal Pinar.

We, of course, have no way of knowing the extent to which readers reading the novel “performed” aloud the written text for their audiences. However, research on orality suggests that writers throughout early modern Europe recognized that their texts would be read out loud to others, linking literature to orality. As James A. Parr has shown, Cervantes knew this too: “[i]t would seem obvious that Cervantes, as a writer of narrative, would privilege writing, and in a sense he does. We have the book itself as good evidence. And yet orality is quite literally there from the outset, informing writing, reading it aloud, invading its domain, parodying it” (1991: 171-72). As Parr shows, Cervantes inserts textual cues and carefully integrates reading strategies that establish orality’s continuous presence and, often, dominance. The novelist’s tactics include the insertion of textual cues that guide the reader toward oral or corporal performance of the text, an engagement with literary derivations from traditionally oral genres such as ballads and folklore, the prevalent use of popular expressions and *refranes*, and the practice of using direct address from narrator to narratee through oral markers such as “they say” or “You, dear reader...” (Parr 1991: 172). Similarly, Michel Moner argues in “Técnicas del arte verbal y oralidad residual en los textos cervantinos” that Cervantes knowingly integrated visual and structural strategies into his narrative as spoken prompts: verbal gestures (“veis aquí,” “lo que verás y oirás,” etc.), rhetorical devices (pauses, exclamations, etc.), and sound effects (“¡crac!”), all of which are ubiquitous in the oral tradition and guide the reader’s performance. Moreover, Cervantes’s constant use of verbs like “decir” and “contar” reveals that the written is a visual vehicle for the oral (Parr 2005: 318). According to Moner, the employment of these visual (literary) signals occurs equally with amateur storytellers (like Sancho) and professional ones (such as Maese Pedro), and denotes Cervantes’s personal interest in promoting orality more than other writers (1989: 100-01). This, in turn, suggests that Cervantes is questioning the reliability of the transmission of written texts (Par 2005: 325). Indeed, most texts within the frame of *Don Quixote* are read aloud, not silently (Iffland 1989: 27).⁵ For example, Cardenio asks the Priest at the inn to read the interpolated *El curioso impertinente* “de modo que todos le

⁵ Margit Frenk argues that “leer” and “oír” were meant more or less the same thing and offers several examples of their exchangeable use (2005: 75-77): referring to Grisóstomo’s *Canción desesperada* Ambrosio asks Vivaldo to “lealdo de modo que seáis oído” (1999: 181), Sancho asks Don Quixote to “lea vuestra merced alto” Cardenio’s sonnets (1999: 212), the Priest reads aloud Teresa Panza’s letters and “las oyó Sansón Carrasco” (1999: 449), the Duchess reads Sancho’s letter “en voz alta para que el duque y los circunstantes la oyesen” (1999: 454) and Sancho’s letter to Don Quixote “se leyó públicamente” (1999: 455).

oyesen” (1999: 250).⁶ Here the priest takes cues from the text and invents his own performance style for a community of listeners comprised of Cardenio, Luscinda, Fernando, Dorotea, the innkeeper’s family, and other guests. From our present-day perspective, this is an important socio-cultural event because it provides us with a depiction of the sort of public reading that took place throughout Spain, not to mention it demonstrates how the act of reading could be an act of public performance. In fact, the Priest and other readers/storytellers like him would have been significant contributors to the cultural life of their villages. Such events remind us that Cervantes was well aware that both his inter-textual and extra-textual readers approached the novel with a retinue of strategies directed at listeners.

An examination of the different melodic pieces that appear throughout the novel amply demonstrates this process. *Don Quixote* features several polyphonic and monadic musical forms from early modern Spain, often accompanied by instrumentation. I divide the pieces roughly into two classes: “original”—those that Cervantes invented—and “formal”—lyrical works drawn from printed sources such as the *Cancionero de Palacio* or the *Romancero general*, the two primary sources with which Cervantes must have been familiar (Haywood 1948: 132), and for which actual music accompaniment is extant.⁷ In cases where the music no longer exists, there is usually enough historical source material to confirm the existence and popularity of the pieces in question. *Romances* and sonnets encompass the largest number of formal musical-poetic pieces in *Don Quixote*, and the groups that are most located in printed matter from the period. My aforementioned essay analyzed these two musical forms, but I list them here for convenience. Thirteen unique *romances* appear in *Don Quixote* (most of which are *romances viejos*) sung verbatim or nearly verbatim, whose musical notation is collected in one of the aforementioned anthologies or other published sources.⁸ Don Quixote mentions in passing an additional

⁶ All citations from *Don Quixote* are taken from the Florencio Sevilla edition. In referring to particular episodes, I include the part and chapter, but page numbers are used in parentheses when quoting directly from the text.

⁷ Francisco Asenjo Barbieri compiled the *Cancionero de Palacio* songbook anthology of 458 profane musical pieces of polyphony from between 1474 and 1516, nearly all with instrumental notation. As Stevenson points out, the original indexer believed the majority of these lyrical works to be *villancicos* whenever they did not correspond to his own standards for *romances*. As such, 396 were labeled secular *villancicos*, another 29 as sacred *villancicos* and only 44 as *romances*. Such norms of musical categorization are not in line with standards today (1960: 252). The most significant collection of *romances* from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was the *Romancero general*, first published in Valencia in 1511 and edited by Hernando del Castillo.

⁸ They are summarized as follows: (1) Don Quixote states that his arms will provide com-

three *romances*, but does not recite or sing their verses, and still another three are Cervantes's own invention.⁹ With respect to sonnets, six appear in the novel, usually sung by a character aloud, sometimes with instrumental accompaniment: Cardenio sings about lost friendship in which “la música se había vuelto en sollozos y en lastimeros ayes” (1999: 227); the Captive recites “de memoria” two sonnets composed by his own brother “a manera de epitafios” (1999: 277) describing the fall of La Goleta (I.40); the Caballero del Bosque plays his *laúd* and sings about Casilda de Vandalia (II.12); Don Quixote recalls Garcilaso's “¡Oh dulces prendas, por mi mal halladas / dulces y alegres cuando Dios quería!” (367); and Don Lorenzo sings about the fable of Pyramo and

fort by singing “mis arreos son las armas, / mi descanso el pelear,” etc. (1999: 156), a *romance* published in the *Romancero general*; (2) the knight, laying illogical along the side of the road, sings the *Romance del Marqués de Mantua y de Valdevinos* (I. 5) found in the *Cancionero de Romances*; (3) Luis, “el mozo de mulas” and “desdichado músico” (I.43), serenades Clara by singing “Marinero soy de amor” (290) followed by a *canción* previously invented by Cervantes, “Dulce esperanza mía” (291); (4) Chapter 9 (Part II) begins “Media noche era por filo” (345) taken from the *Romance de Conde Claros de Montalbán* which is also a verse from a well known romance dedicated to El Cid held in the *Cancionero de Romance* and the *Romancero General*; (5) Entering El Toboso (II.9), Don Quixote and Sancho happen along a man singing the first two verses of the famous *Romance de Roncesvalles* (346), now found in both the *Cancionero de Romances* and the *Romancero General* (6) Emphasizing the friendship of Rocinante and Sancho's donkey (II.12), the narrator quotes, “No hay amigo para amigo: / las cañas se vuelven lanzas” (353) taken from the *Romancero general*; (7) Durandarte, in the Cueva de Montesinos, sings a version of the *Romance de Durandarte* (II.23), which appears in the *Cancionero de Palacio* and *Romancero General* as well as in Luis de Milán's *Libro de música de vihuela*; (8) the boy-narrator of the tale of Gaiferos and Melisendra in the “Retablo de Maese Pedro” (II.26) recites two verses taken an original ballad found in the *Cancionero de Romances* and the *Romancero General*; (9) Different verses from the same *Romance del rey don Rodrigo* are sung twice, first in the Retablo de Maese Pedro (II.26) then by doña Rodríguez (II.33); (10) Sancho derives verses from the *Romance del Rey Favila* contained in the *Cancionero General* (II.34); (11) Sancho defends himself from Don Quixote's proposed whippings with verses taken from the *Romance de don Rodrigo de Lara* (from *Romance de don Rodrigo de Lara* in the *Cancionero de Romances* and the *Romancero General*) (II.60); (12) Cervantes closes the second part with “para mí estaba guardada,” from Pérez de Hita's *Guerras civiles de Granada* (II.74); (13) Four different versions of the Arthurian ballads of *Lanzarote del Lago* appear in the novel (I.2, I.13, I.31 and II.23). The source materials cited here are provided by Stevenson and Querol Galvada. See my article (2010) for more information.

⁹ Those mentioned in passing include the *Romance of Lancelot*, mentioned twice (I.49 and II.23), Don Quixote's reference to the Marqués de Mantua (I.10), and Sancho's mention of the *Romance of Calainos* (II.9). With respect to the two *romances* invented outright by Cervantes, they include one sung by Altisidora accompanied by the harp (II. 59), and one about knights, ladies and love composed and sung by Don Quixote at the Duke's palace (II.46).

Additionally, the appearance of Cardenio in the novel (I.23 and I.24) may be a nod to the poet, dramatist, musician and singer Juan del Encina whose *Romance of Cardenio*, which does not appear in the novel, was extant in the *Cancionero de Palacio* and the *Romancero General*.

Tisbe (II.18), a poem from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. No musical scores exist for any of these, which likely means that none ever existed.

The next largest group of lyrical poems is the *copla*, or couplet, popular short songs sung by all sorts of people in Golden Age Spain. We are told that the student-turned-shepherd Grisóstomo was fond of composing them (I.12), and there are a few included among Cardenio's assorted written poetry (I.23). By my count, there are four instances in *Don Quixote* featuring couplets: Don Quixote dedicates six to Dulcinea (I.26); each of the allegorical characters in the theatrical spectacle staged for Camacho's wedding—Cupido, Interés, Poesía, and Liberalidad—sing one (II.20); the Countess Trifaldi sings two different couplets about lost love (II.38); and Sansón Carrasco contributes two as an epitaph upon Don Quixote's death (II.74). Some are found in published sources from the period while Cervantes himself may have invented others.

Whereas the *romance* contained an indefinite number of octosyllabic verses with a repeated melodic phrase every four verses until the end of the ballad, the couplet typically was composed of four verses with varying lengths and no fixed rhyme. The most popular ones, however, featured four octosyllabic verses (called *arte menor*). Couplets were memorized and performed aloud as solo songs accompanied by a strummed instrument such as a harp or a *vihuela*. This simple configuration allowed it to be easily manipulated and matched to music. It also made them easy to remember, afforded ample opportunity for improvisation, and facilitated their oral transmission across classes, becoming a wildly popular part of the social fabric of Golden Age Spain. They *usually* expressed popular themes, often in colloquial language, and at times hinted at the comic or even the melodramatic. But, it may be exactly their popularity that led Cervantes to express dissatisfaction with the verse form. In the novel, he alludes to how the *copla* has been misused to the point of artlessness. Countess Trifaldi's comments prior to actually reciting the verses perhaps provide the most intense perspective: “Y así digo, señores míos, que los tales trovadores con justo títulos los debían desterrar a las islas de los Lagartos” (1999: 420). Trifaldi calls for the banishment of any poet whose depraved seduction includes the overuse of the couplet, but she admits that the fault lies with “los simples que los alaban y las bobas que las creen” (1999: 420). As governor, Sancho similarly criticizes the lack of originality that permeates couplets such that “los pensamientos que dan lugar a hacer coplas no deben de ser muchos” (1999: 492). Sancho previously had declared that “Verdad es que las coplas de los pasados caballeros tienen más de espíritu que de primor” (1999: 212), suggesting that in his lifetime the couplet has lost its luster. What makes Cervantes so critical? Part of his reproach has to do with the couplet's popularity in Golden Age Spain, which led to its overuse. Couplets recounted popular stories, local incidents or

even praised specific people who became well known in the towns where the verses were composed. Since they were generally free, unrestricted, and easy to create, they provided a great harmonious way to produce stories in a memorable fashion. This also naturally meant that anyone could compose one, thus discounting their value for serious poets like Cervantes. It was probably the case that Cervantes is not criticizing the verse form but rather the unqualified people who simplified them to such a degree as to render them unsophisticated. Therefore, it is probably no accident that the author expresses such an aversion by deliberately having couplets sung by presumably literate characters in the novel. Indeed, unlike other poems in *Don Quixote*, it appears that the *coplas* are recited exclusively by the learned: Alonso Quijano famously has read so much that “se le secó el cerebro” (1999: 153); as majordomo to the Duke and Duchess, Trifaldi also must have known how to read and write; the actors at Camacho’s wedding were no doubt accustomed to reading scripts for performance; and Sansón is a university graduate who, we are told, has read widely. For Cervantes, the ease of creating a couplet and its widespread popularity equaled a lack of sophistication that highlighted its technical worthlessness. This was especially critical for the author whose desire to be a professional poet was paramount.

Examining the couplets in question, however, does not easily lead us to such drastic viewpoints. One of the most prominent examples is found in the episode of the Countess Trifaldi, who tells Don Quixote how she sought to protect Princess Antomasia from the amorous pursuits of a young suitor. The young lover’s preferred method of wooing the princess? Singing couplets, which for Trifaldi so charmed the young woman that her downfall and surrender to him was imminent: “lo que más me hizo postrar y dar conmigo por el suelo fueron unas coplas que le oí cantar una noche desde una reja que caía a una callejuela donde él estaba, que, si mal no me acuerdo...” (1999: 420). Trifaldi then performs aloud the two *coplas*, both of which are known by their first verse, “De la dulce mi enemiga” and “Ven, muerte, tan escondida:”

De la dulce mi enemiga
nace un mal que al alma hiere,
y por más tormento, quiere
que se sienta y no se diga. (1999: 420)¹⁰

¹⁰ This particular *copla* was sung often at the end of the fifteenth century. Edward M. Wilson and Arthur L.F. Askins describe the evolution of this poem in “History of a Refrain: ‘De la dulce mi enemiga’” and provides examples of its transition through time and cultures. Pastor Comín provides musical notation for a variety of these same examples in “‘De la dulce mi enemiga.’ Ecos y contextos de una referencia musical en la obra cervantina.”

Ven, muerte, tan escondida,
que no te sienta venir,
porque el placer del morir
no me torne a dar la vida. (1999: 420)

Trifaldi’s couplets feature vocal parts and courtly language emblematic of the epoch’s art of seduction, a usage appropriate to this particular verse form. They are also considered excellent examples of the power of the couplet. In fact, hers are the most well known examples cited in *Don Quixote*. Querol Galvadá has traced the origins of the first of these to the *Cancionero de Palacio*—likely by an anonymous singer-songwriter—but postulates that the composer could have been Gabriel Mena who published a number of his works in the *Cancionero general* (1948: 80-81). Several others have confirmed Mena as the author. The author of the second couplet was Comendador Juan Escrivá, a fifteenth-century poet. It initially was published in Hernando de Castillo’s *Cancionero general* (1511) from which it was imitated many times by other poets such as Lope de Vega, thus leading to its contemporaneous fame (Querol Galvadá 1948: 83).

A second example occurs during the knight’s penitence in the Sierra Morena (I.26). There, away from urban life and seemingly alone with his thoughts, the knight imitates Amadís’ own penitence by carving into trees or writing in the sand six couplets in praise of Dulcinea:

Árboles, yerbas y plantas
que en aqueste sitio estáis,
tan altos, verdes y tantas,
si de mi mal no os holgáis,
escuchad mis quejas santas.
Mi dolor no os alborote,
aunque más terrible sea;
pues, por pagaros escote,
aquí lloró don Quijote
ausencias de Dulcinea
del Toboso.
Es aquí el lugar adonde
el amador más leal
de su señora se esconde,
y ha venido a tanto mal
sin saber cómo o por dónde.
Tráele amor al estricote,
que es de muy mala ralea;

y así, hasta henchir un pipote,
 aquí lloró don Quijote
 ausencias de Dulcinea
 del Toboso.
 Buscando las aventuras
 por entre las duras peñas,
 maldiciendo entrañas duras,
 que entre riscos y entre breñas
 halla el triste desventuras,
 hirióle amor con su azote,
 no con su blanda correa;
 y, en tocándole el cogote
 aquí lloró don Quijote
 ausencias de Dulcinea
 del Toboso. (1999: 220)

The verses juxtapose appreciation for the natural world with feelings of longing and absence for Dulcinea, a topic commonly expressed by knights-errant in the chivalric literature of the period. Cervantes himself composed the verses, but music was later added by Mateo Romero and included in the *Cancionero de Claudio de la Sablonara* (ca. 1625) (Lambea 2006: 402). Certainly, here and elsewhere, the couplets provide Cervantes the occasion to showcase his poetic ability. However, the ease with which Don Quixote invents them on the spot, the simplicity and even absurdity of their message, and the fact that they are contrived to reflect the knight's enamored situation all serve to reference Cervantes's unhappiness with verse form. He reveals that dissatisfaction through the narrator, who alludes to the ridiculousness that one could write oneself into the poem irrespective of whether or not anyone else would understand the context for such an inclusion: "No causó poca risa en los que hallaron los versos referidos el añadidura 'del Toboso' al nombre de Dulcinea, porque imaginaron que debió de imaginar don Quijote que si en nombrando a Dulcinea no decía también 'del Toboso', no se podría entender la copla; y así fue la verdad, como él después confesó" (1999: 205). For Cervantes, the couplet is an overused poetic form that reflected whatever was in vogue at the time and, perhaps worse, they were effortlessly transferable to personal situations. They were not technically superior or thematically pleasing like the *romances* or sonnets.

However, as much as Cervantes may not have liked it, the couplet's popularity, especially around 1600, owed exactly to what the author detested—its lack of precision and sophistication. And, when matched to music, its simplicity made it an appreciated source of communal entertainment. Such is the case

in the public performance of the allegorical rustic "danza de artificio" during Camacho's wedding. Each danced *copla* represents the speaking parts of the four actors, Cupido, Interés, Poesía, and Liberalidad, who tell the allegorical story of how the power of money (Interest) wins over a damsel by overpowering love (Cupid) (II.20). The narrator informs the reader that the allegorical characters take the stage accompanied by four "very capable" drum and flute players: "Hacíanles el son cuatro diestros tañedores de tamboril y flauta" (1999: 374). The performance then commences with Cupid, "el dios poderoso," whose song is complemented by the strumming musicians and followed in turn by Poetry and Liberality. As might be expected of any theatrical work, then, each performer performs in order: "Deste modo salieron y se retiraron todas las dos figuras de las dos escuadras, y cada uno hizo sus mudanzas y dijo sus versos, algunos elegantes y algunos ridículos, y solo tomó de memoria don Quijote—que la tenía grande— los ya referidos; y luego se mezclaron todos" (1999: 375). It is clear from the text that music was played in this meta-theatrical production: the entire theatrical company entered in a sort of procession that included dances while musicians played their instruments. Indeed, they are only silent when the characters sing their respective verses: "Acabó la copla, disparó una flecha por lo alto del Castillo y retiróse a su puesto. Salió luego el Interés, y hizo otras dos mudanzas; callaron los tamborinos..." (1999: 375). The entire presentation provides a hierarchy in which voice is superior to music. The process is repeated with Poesía, then Liberalidad; each time a character sings, the music and dancing stops. What makes the theatrical spectacle so significant is that it is the only event in the novel where music, song, and dance are intertwined to such an extent that each artistic form drives the other. The *danzas* at Camacho's wedding are also excellent examples of the performative nature of the entire novel.

As demonstrated by their centrality in the wedding and by their lack of precision or technical superiority, *coplas* were often considered a rustic verse form, easy to create and free of stringent poetic rules. Given that farming neighbors populate Camacho's wedding, and that the festivities take place in a rural setting, it makes sense that the popular couplet is the preferred musical form. And Cervantes featured them in the episode precisely for that reason. Couplets were central to lower-class entertainment as was the case of the *seguidilla*, a type of couplet that differed only in that the even numbered verses were shorter than the odd numbered ones: it alternates between six or seven syllables in the odd-numbered verses and six in the even-numbered verses (only the last stressed syllable is counted and one is added). The *seguidilla* was regularly associated with folk song and dance originating from La Mancha and often sung with music. The most well known example

of the *seguidilla* in *Don Quixote* appears in the chapter following the episode of the Cueva de Montesinos when Don Quixote, Sancho, and the Cousin come upon a young man “cantando seguidillas, para entretener el trabajo del camino. Cuando llegaron a él, acababa de cantar una, que el primo tomó de memoria...” (1999: 386). As the man explains, he is off to war, and his song expresses not only his journey to the front, but also his determination to overcome his poverty and make something of himself:

A la guerra me lleva
mi necesidad;
si tuviera dineros,
no fuera, en verdad (1999: 386)

The man admits that he must serve his king and country or else risk becoming a burden to society. His comments nonetheless reference those who frequent the court, rather than common citizens like himself: “Y más quiero tener por amo y por señor al rey, y servirle en la guerra, que no a un pelón en la corte” (1999: 386). Here, the man sings a well-known poem without musical accompaniment to pass the time, as any person of the period might, but his comments conceal scorn for those better off than him.

Although the *seguidillas* differed based on regions and time, in formal terms, by the sixteenth century most began with a guitar introduction followed by the poet’s vocal freestyle. This is similar to the *romance* in that players varied their performance by introducing short musical intervals between the sung verses. Singers, knowing these deviations would take place, waited for the musician to bring the main melody back before continuing the vocals. Hence, an unlimited number and type of vocal and instrumental styles could be applied as long as they obeyed the general syllabic count of the poem. In other words, *seguidillas* and other couplet forms were liberally interpreted and sung, making them accessible to anyone and, as a result, a rather fashionable genre. In fact, the themes of the *seguidillas* normally reflected common subjects that were lively and trendy (modern versions, however, are much more emotional and passionate). Nonetheless, the vocal aspects of the Golden Age *seguidilla* seemed to have been secondary to the dance movements. Countess Trifaldi has already warned against a suitor who sung “otras coplitas y estrabotes, que cantados encantan y escritos suspenden” (420).¹¹ Among these were *seguidillas* which, according to

¹¹ The *estrambote* was the Spanish version of the Italian *strambotto*, a series of satirical or amorous verses added to a structured poem, usually a sonnet. Cervantes’ “Al tûmulo del rey Felipe II en Sevilla” is probably his most well known example of the verse.

Trifaldi, were rather inappropriate because of their seductiveness: “era el brincar de las almas, el retozar de la risa, el desasosiego de los cuerpos y, finalmente, el azogue de todos los sentidos” (1999: 420). Trifaldi’s criticism specifically references the lascivious nature of writhing bodies dancing to the tunes. Like the *chacón* or *zarabanda*, the *seguidilla* often was associated with lewd dancing, and attempts by moralists were made to outlaw them.¹² They seem to have been at the center of debates often regarding public decency and morality. One of Governor Sancho Panza’s orders was to outlaw the misuse and overuse of the poetic form: “Puso gravísimas penas a los que cantasen cantares lascivos y descompuestos, ni de noche ni de día. Ordenó que ningún ciego cantase milagro en coplas si no trujese testimonio auténtico de ser verdadero, por parecerle que los más que los ciegos cantan son fingidos, en perjuicio de los verdaderos” (1999: 453).¹³ Sancho seems to imply that when couplets drift from their responsibility of being beautifully crafted, thematically pleasing, and technically well-conceived, they should be banned.

Whether or not Sancho’s order exposes Cervantes’s true opinion of the couplet is difficult to determine. As is customary in Cervantes’s works, the author may be expressing his dissatisfaction with great wit, expecting the reader to take Sancho’s statement lightheartedly. On the other hand, a stinging condemnation of how the verse form is used may simply be hidden behind such jocularity. Regardless, ordering a fictional prohibition in no way impeded Cervantes from integrating couplets into *Don Quixote*. Even in the final chapter of the novel, arguably one of the most important and somber, which centers on Don Quixote’s death, Sansón Carrasco contributes the final verses of the novel and both are couplets:

Yace aquí el hidalgo fuerte
que a tanto extremo llegó
de valiente, que se advierte
que la muerte no triunfó
de su vida con su muerte.

¹² The *chacón* and *zarabanda* were native Peruvian dances set to profane music that eventually became popular in Spain. They were generally considered lascivious and lewd. While the *chacón* and the *seguidilla* became more stately and acceptable, ultimately the *zarabanda* was outlawed in 1630 by the Consejo Real de Castilla. See Louise K. Stein’s “De chacón, zarabanda y *La púrpura de la rosa* en la cultura musical del Perú colonial.”

¹³ According to the Francisco Rico edition, a similar prohibition existed in the *Nueva recopilación de las leyes de estos reynos* (1640): “Otro sí mandan que ninguna ni algunas personas sean osadas de echar ni decir pullas ni cantares ni palabras feas ni deshonestas en esta corte, de noche ni de día, so pena de cada cien açotes y destierro desta corte por un año” (1998: 602).

Tuvo a todo el mundo en poco,
 fue el espantajo y el coco
 del mundo, en tal coyuntura,
 que acreditó su ventura
 morir cuerdo y vivir loco. (1999: 505)¹⁴

The content of the verses may seem strange given the usual playful nature of the couplets. Here, Sansón replaces the good-naturedness with mocking and scorn for the hidalgo's recent adventures, stating that the man died sane after living crazily. The timing for such criticism may also seem unpleasant since, as P.E. Russell notes, the cruelty upends the solemnity of the knight's serene death (1969: 324-25). Russell is correct, of course, but subverting the gravity and seriousness of the occasion is exactly what couplets were meant to do as they implicitly were of a burlesque nature.

Given the couplet's various usages in *Don Quixote*, it seems clear to me that a distinct oral tradition serves as the basis for each one. None is explicitly said to be recited from any literary artifact and all are performed. In fact, all are either composed on the spot and sung aloud, or recalled from memory, perhaps suggesting to the reader that he or she should do the same. For instance, the text plainly states that Trifaldi's couplets were drawn from her own memory ("si mal no me acuerdo decían") and, at the moment of the knight's death, Sansón follows the others by tacking on a few verses of his own in the form of an epitaph: "Déjanse de poner aquí los llantos de Sancho, sobrina y ama de don Quijote, los nuevos epitafios de su sepultura, aunque Sansón Carrasco le puso éste (...)" (1999: 505). Similarly, the four couplets at Camacho's wedding may or may not have been written, but for the theatrical production they were committed to memory and performed aloud without script. Although Don Quixote writes his couplets to Dulcinea on the bark of nearby trees, it is clear from the text that he, too, formulates them at the moment, then writes them down: "Y así, se entretenía paseándose por el pradecillo, escribiendo y grabando por las cortezas de los árboles y por la menuda arena muchos versos" (1999: 224). Finally, we are told that the soldier sang aloud from memory to pass the time and that he just finished a song, which the Cousin then committed to memory. As presented in the text, each references a performative and oral context and likely mimics how others in Golden Age Spain both received or sang them.

¹⁴ Like Don Quixote's couplets for Dulcinea, Sansón's are original creations by the author and, hence, no music originally existed. In 1610 Joan Pau Pujol eventually composed music to match the verses (Lambea Castro 2005: 402).

The same cannot be easily said of the other lyrical poetic forms in the novel—*villancicos*, *silvas*, and madrigals—which appear much more limitedly in *Don Quijote*. The first, *villancicos*, or carols, were performed around Christmas time each year, especially at the "Misa de Gallo," a midnight mass celebrated on December 24. Their origins can be traced to the medieval period when they were sung according to the prominent events of the liturgical calendar. By the sixteenth century, however, *villancicos* became more prevalent and popular in nature, deriving their name from the lower class "villanos" who sang them. These tended to be polyphonic and sung by groups of three or four and accompanied by a *vihuela*. The standard poetic form for the carols included a refrain set to music. In *Don Quixote*, reference to the carols is made twice. First, we are informed that the shepherd Grisóstomo was "grande hombre de componer coplas; tanto, que él hacía los villancicos para la noche del Nacimiento del Señor, y los *autos* para el día de Dios" (1999: 81), but none of his carols is later recited at his funeral, though we may presume that a few were included among the papers with which he was buried. The second example involves Don Quixote's contemplated return as "el pastor Quijotiz." Upon learning of her uncle's unthinkable plans and unnerved by yet another foray into mischief, his niece declares that he must stay at home, rest, and live a tranquil and honored life so as to not entangle himself in further problems. She further chides him by reciting "Pastorcillo, tú que vienes, / pastorcico, tú que vas?" (1999: 503). This well-known *villancico* appears in various versions in a number of sources from the period including the *Cancionero de Palacio* and the *Cancionero de Francisco Ocaña*, meaning it was oral in nature, then later set down in print. It was no doubt widely known across Spain during Cervantes's lifetime (Pastor Comín 2005: 43). It may have been Don Quixote's pastoral pursuits that brought the well-known song to Cervantes's mind, thus finding its way into the novel. The scarcity of other textual *villancico* examples is probably related to the short Christmas holiday season during which they were performed each year.

Toward the end of Part I, the guests at the inn are confronted with the sweet song of Luis, "el mozo de mulas," and "desdichado músico" who, according to Dorotea, possesses "la mejor voz que quizá habrás oído en toda tu vida" (1999: 290). Luis is searching for his beloved Clara. As all the guests at the inn remain attentive, he follows up his singing of the *romance*, "Marinero, soy de amor," with a *canción*, "Dulce esperanza mía." The song is actually a poem previously written by Cervantes then incorporated into *Don Quixote* (I.43).¹⁵ The song's theme describes the perceived impossibility of love between young lovers. Its appearance

¹⁵ This poem is held in the Biblioteca Nacional (MS 3.985, f. 142v).

in the novel references both Luis' relationship with Clara and also alludes to the love affairs featuring Dorotea and Fernando and Luscinda and Cardenio. The *canción*, loosely translated as "song" or "ballad," imitated the sixteenth-century Italian *canzone* or Petrarchan ode, and was originally octosyllabic, sharing commonality with the earliest sonnets as well as the Italian madrigal. Luis' poem, however, represents a new form called the *silva*, a strophe designed to be less restrictive than the Petrarchan *canzone* in that it alternated between heptasyllables and hendecasyllables with a consonant rhyme throughout.¹⁶ The form was in its infancy when Cervantes included this lone example in the novel. But, its immediate popularity was such that by 1613 Góngora's entire *Soledades* was written in *silvas*. Cervantes's use of it, like other poetic forms in *Don Quixote*, suggests that he considered them musical in nature. Such was the case that in 1591 Salvador Luis, Philip II's royal musician, composed music for "Dulce esperanza mía." Soriano Fuertes postulates that Cervantes wished to commemorate the musician by including a character named Luis singing the tune in *Don Quixote* (1855: 87).¹⁷ In the novel, the young man's harmonious voice is so melodious "que de tal manera canta, que encanta" (1999: 290). Based on the historical information related to the music and verse for "Dulce esperanza mía," it seems likely that Cervantes intended for Luis' version to be musical even though he sang monodically with "una voz sola, sin que la acompañase instrumento alguno" (1999: 290). The fact that Luis' song was a *capella* is similar to the vast majority of lyrical poems in *Don Quixote*. Most of the *romances*, sonnets, couplets, and other poems are performed as solo songs. The number and frequency of these performances represents the changing times. For most of the sixteenth century in Europe leading up to the publication of *Don Quixote*, most poetry was performed in polyphony. However, by the time Cervantes wrote the novel, so many people were performing the most popular versions of these different poems that musical accompaniment simply was neither necessary nor expected.

Such a situation is very different from the madrigal, however. In many European court festivities in the fourteenth century, especially in Italy, the *madrigal* was the most popularly performed polyphonic work. The early madrigal was a short strophic poem of two or three verses sung with a single repeated melody

¹⁶ Aurora Egido reports that both the *silva* and the *canción* were often confused: "Los límites entre canción y silva quedaron confusos en algunos casos..." (1989: 15).

¹⁷ Querol Galvadá doubts the connection: "El hecho de que un investigador tan sagaz y minucioso como H. Angelés no lo nombre en su estudio sobre los músicos de la Corte de Felipe II, es ya motivo suficiente para dudar de la afirmación de Soriano, historiador de la música tan famoso como sospechoso, por sus yerros y fantasías" (1948: 107). We might remember that Soriano also claimed Cervantes was a guitarist without offering proof. See Note 1.

and included a refrain. It could be compared to putting a Petrarchan sonnet to music so that singing brings out the poem's images and emotions by providing aural and visual stimuli. By the fourteenth century, the madrigal evolved to a free poetic composition without strophic repetition or a refrain and was instead sung collectively by three to five courtesans, thus producing a certain pleasing auditory polyphonic combination. The only requirement for this latter version was to adapt the musical rhythms to the poems being sung. Hence, they were flexible enough for singers to adorn them with their individual vocal talents, giving some independence from the polyphony and making it one's own. To increase or improve one's repertoire, madrigal singers went beyond established singing practices to include notes or harmonies that at first were not permitted by the Church. In *Don Quixote* one "madrigalete" is sung by the knight when he decides to forgo the night's sleep in order to compose a poem about love: "daré rienda a mis pensamientos, y los desfogaré en un madrigalete, que, (...) anoche compuse en la memoria" (1999: 492). There, lying against a tree, the knight sings to himself from memory the following verses:

Amor, cuando yo pienso
 en el mal que me das, terrible y fuerte,
 voy corriendo a la muerte
 pensando así acabar mi mal inmenso;
 mas en llegando al paso
 que es puerto en este mar de mi tormento,
 tanta alegría siento,
 que la vida se esfuerza, y no le paso.
 Así el vivir me mata,
 que la muerte me torna a dar la vida.
 ¡Oh condición no oída
 la que conmigo muerte y vida trata! (1999: 493)

This madrigal was first composed in Italian by Gli Asolani and translated by Pietro Bembo, although in the novel the narrator tells us that Don Quixote "compuso en la memoria." Cervantes probably came to know it through his time in Italy when Bembo's poetry was prevalent (Pastor Comín 2005: 56). Cervantes, quick to underscore the sentiment that the madrigal often elicited, tells us that Don Quixote's verses were accompanied with all of the emotions that poetry could evoke: "acompañaba con muchos suspiros y no pocas lágrimas, bien como aquel cuyo corazón tenía traspasado con el dolor del vencimiento, y con la ausencia de Dulcinea" (1999: 493). As Jaime Fernández reminds us in reference to this madrigal, divergent emotions are predominant: "es lógico que

aparezcan la seriedad y la burla, la alegría y la tristeza, es decir, que aparezcan los aspectos contrapuestos...” (2006: 110). Madrigals are normally polyphonic, but Don Quixote’s is interestingly monodic and without musical accompaniment. In that sense, and following the different antithetical emotions evoked by the poem, it could be viewed as a sort of parody of the genre. But, it more likely signals the quickening transition in Golden Age Spain away from the popular polyphonic songs to the monadic tunes that were sweeping much of Europe in the seventeenth century. Indeed, if Cervantes had been born just two decades later, his own life adventures, which took him to Florence, Naples, Rome, and Sicily, among other Italian places, might have also given him an opportunity to be acquainted with another style of monody—early opera from central Italy.¹⁸

It is indeed unfortunate that the great novelist did not have the opportunity to know opera first hand. But, Cervantes must have known something of the genre prior to his death in 1616, when operas by the *Camerata Fiorentina* (*Dafne*, 1597, no longer extant, and *Euridice*, 1600) had become widely known across Italy, and the great madrigal composer, Claudio Monteverdi, had perfected monodic recitative, profane music, and secular dramatic themes in several of his operas. The fact that so many sung poems in *Don Quixote* are in the new and fashionable monadic style at precisely the same time as monadic arias were being put to use in Italian opera may indicate Cervantes’s knowledge of these musical transformations. A couple of references in *Don Quixote* bear this out. First, in Maese Pedro’s Puppet Show, Cervantes demonstrates his awareness of polyphonic “counterpoint” (various independent melodies sung simultaneously) when the knight interrupts the boy-narrator of the story of Don Gaiferos and Doña Melisendra imploring him to not tell the tale in such a confusing fashion by straying from the main storyline. Maese Pedro chastises the boy by metaphorically reminding him to stick to the story and tell the tale plainly: “sigue tu canto llano, y no te metas en contrapuntos, que se suelen quebrar de sutiles” (1999: 391). This is followed two chapters later when one of the town mayors beats Sancho for braying like an ass, believing that the squire is mocking them. Reprimanding his squire, Don Quixote tells Sancho that “A música de rebuznos ¿qué contrapunto se había de llevar sino de varapalos?” (1999: 395). What this, and many other examples, suggest is that in *Don Quixote* Cervantes was intensely cognizant and perhaps had first-hand knowledge of the different musical forms in fashion in Spain, as well as those being developed outside of

¹⁸ Cervantes was in the service of Cardinal Acquaviva in Rome in 1569-1570, in Sicily in 1571 preparing for the Battle of Lepanto, and in 1574 he spent time again in Sicily, followed by Naples (1574-1575).

the peninsula. He recognized the cultural importance of music *as a part of* literary forms, and he went to great lengths to integrate all sorts of early modern musical genres into his works. From the examples provided thus far, it is evident that the writer integrated musical pieces that could be considered representative of both high and low culture.

Interestingly, it is the introduction of Cardenio that, in my opinion, provides what could be considered the most significant original advancement of music in *Don Quixote*. The Priest and the Barber, preparing to rest in the shade, are surprised to hear the sweet voice of someone singing nearby: “llegó a sus oídos una voz que, sin acompañarla son de algún otro instrumento, dulce y regaladamente sonaba, de que no pocos se admiraron, por parecerles que aquél no era lugar donde pudiese haber quien tan bien cantase” (1999: 212-13). Just as in the introduction to Luis’ *canción*, the narrator carefully and explicitly highlights the hierarchy of voice over instrumentation by stating that the voice rang forth without musical complement. Are these instructions as to how the poem is to be performed? We later find out that the voice belongs to Cardenio who also has stopped to rest and sings a song that speaks of love, jealousy, suffering, and absence, the principal themes of so many other lyrical poems in the novel:

¿Quién menoscaba mis bienes?
Desdenes.
Y ¿quién aumenta mis duelos?
Los celos.
Y ¿quién prueba mi paciencia?
Ausencia.
De ese modo, en mi dolencia
ningún remedio se alcanza,
pues me matan la esperanza
desdenes, celos y ausencia.

¿Quién me causa este dolor?
Amor.
Y ¿quién mi gloria repugna?
Fortuna.
Y ¿quién consiente en mi duelo?
El cielo.
De ese modo, yo recelo
morir deste mal estraño,
pues se aumentan en mi daño
amor, fortuna y el cielo.

¿Quién mejorará mi suerte?
 La muerte.
 Y el bien de amor, ¿quién le alcanza?
 Mudanza.
 Y sus males ¿quién los cura?
 Locura.
 De ese modo, no es cordura
 querer curar la pasión,
 cuando los remedios son
 muerte, mudanza y locura. (1999: 227)

The songs illustrate the first ever *ovillejos*, a rather complicated verse form invented by Cervantes and cultivated intermittently by other poets. The *ovillejo* is a ten-verse poem consisting of three octosyllabic lines alternating with tetrasyllabic verses (“pie quebrado”), followed by a four verses (“redondilla”) whose last line assembles the aforesaid three tetrasyllabic verses into one. Whereas the octosyllables pose queries, the “pie quebrado” provides answers—sort of like an echo—with an overall resolution offered in the poem’s final verse. In this case, Cardenio’s problems surrounding lost love are unscrambled with each “pie quebrado” and ultimately summarized in the last verse.¹⁹ The insertion of the *ovillejo* no doubt underscores the value Cervantes placed on lyrical poetry in the novel and highlights the author’s masterful use and agility with a variety of literary and musical forms. In this case, he invented his own lyrical form. Moreover, by putting such a complex verse form in the mouth of Cardenio, a citizen of the aristocracy, Cervantes again might be arguing that genuine advancements in poetic technique and structure were being made by the cultural elite. And this, in fact, is what the narrator seems to express when he states that the *ovillejos* “eran versos, no de rústicos ganaderos, sino de discretos cortesanos” (1999: 213). Indeed, perhaps in an attempt at putting his own stamp on period poetry, Cervantes includes other *ovillejos* sung by the rich man-turned-pícaro Avendaño in *La ilustre fregona*.

What we can glean from Cervantes’s application of diverse musical forms such as those mentioned here is that he was keenly aware that Spanish society was changing from a distinctly oral one to one where the written word would hold greater value. Troubadours and strumming players continued to play roles in both court and popular venues, but their centrality waned as the circulation of written literary works would eventually come to be the preferred form of en-

¹⁹ See Juan Diego Vila’s discussion for further information on the structure and content of this *ovillejo*.

tainment, slowly displacing orality. Such changes only accelerated with early modern technological advances such as the printing press. Nonetheless, some authors seemed to be quite aware of the downside to such social transformations. For instance, the poet Juan Boscán bitterly complained that written verse might not have been the ideal vehicle for reciting poetry stating that far too many could only understand his sonnets when they were recited aloud:

Los unos se quexavan que en las trobas d’esta arte los consonantes no andavan tan descubiertos ni sonavan tanto como en las castellanas. Otros dezían que este verso, no sabían si era verso, o si era prosa.... ¿Quién se ha de poner en pláticas con gente que no sabe qué cosa es verso, sino aquél que calçado y vestido con el consonante os entra de un golpe por el un oído, y os sale por el otro? (Boscán 1957: 87–88).

As Boscán points out, readers were unable to follow the poem’s cadence or fix its melody as they could when they were sung out loud, suggesting a need to perform them even when written. In itself, such a statement moderates the relevance and significance of written discourse. Like Boscán, Cervantes must have felt that the ongoing transformation to a culture dominated by the written verse had significant drawbacks, at least when it came to music and poetry. As a result, in *Don Quixote* the author expects the reader to find the textual cues to suitably perform the novel’s lyrical poetry, in much the same way as the troubadours of his youth would have. We will never know if his contemporaneous readers picked up on these clues. But, they are there nonetheless, indicating that Cervantes had an astonishing knowledge of early modern musical forms, while also reminding us that he was at a crossroads in history when society struggled with the significance of the written word.

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