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“Señora, donde hay música no puede haber cosa mala”: Music, Poetry, and Orality in *Don Quijote*

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Abstract: In Cervantes’s Spain, music was considered one of the foremost arts, and cultural elites aspired to learn to sing different genres and to play fashionable instruments. Music’s special status was most visible at the Universities of Salamanca and Alcalá, both having chairs of music charged with the instruction of trendy polyphonic styles. However, Miguel de Cervantes never attended these universities and he was not a professionally trained musician. Yet, throughout *Don Quijote* he includes a considerable number and variety of lyrical poems set to an abundance and diversity of period instruments. Entire episodes in the novel turn upon the fusion of song, dance, and instrumentalism. Placed against Cervantes’s biography, the commonality of these instances challenges assumptions about his life and suggests his particular affinity for music. In particular, this essay is concerned with demonstrating Cervantes’s agility with musical forms through an examination of the *romance* and the sonnet, the two lyrical poems that appear most regularly in the novel. Textual cues indicate that Cervantes meant for these poems to be performed orally, not just by the characters within the text but also by the seventeenth-century implied reader who likely read the novel aloud to a group of listeners.

Keywords: Don Quijote, Golden Age, Miguel de Cervantes, music, orality, poetry, Spanish literature

In Cervantes’s Spain music was considered one of the foremost arts, and cultural elites aspired to learn to sing diverse genres and to play fashionable instruments. Music’s special status was most visible in academic study: the two major universities in the peninsula, Salamanca and Alcalá, both had chairs of music who instructed society’s upper echelons in trendy polyphonic styles (Istel and Baker 435). Miguel de Cervantes never attended these universities, nor was he a professionally trained musician, although Mariano Soriano Fuertes believed the author was a guitarist (153), and Charles Haywood wrote that, as a captive in Algiers, the writer became a “fairly accomplished performer of the guitar” and sang old ballads to pass the time (144–45). Although no historical records exist to validate Soriano Fuertes’s and Haywood’s claims, Cervantes likely had some very good musical training at a young age, first as a student of the Jesuit musician and priest Alonso de Vieras, chapel master of Córdoba’s Cathedral¹ and continuing with the Jesuits in Córdoba and Seville. Several historians believe that Cervantes, while in the service of the Count of Lemos, may have met the most esteemed musician and composer of the period, Tomás Luis de Victoria, and the eminent musical theorist Pedro Cerone (Pastor Comín 386; Avello 86). However, Cervantes never mentions either of these *maestros* or any other celebrated musician or composer from the epoch.² If the author acquired musical training, there is no way to know how advanced it was. In short, nothing in the biographical record sheds light on Cervantes’s attraction to particular musical forms; nor do these sources explain his insightful and vast knowledge of music as evidenced in the novel.

Throughout *Don Quijote* a rather considerable number and variety of lyrical poems appear frequently, and they are regularly accompanied by an abundance and diversity of period instruments. Moreover, the novel also boasts references to pieces and instruments that appear as contextual information, and entire themes or episodes in the novel often turn upon the fusion of song, dance, and instrumentalism.

The discordance between Cervantes's musical background and his heavy reliance on lyrical forms and other musical representations raises some important questions for scholars. Was Cervantes's early instruction sophisticated enough to account for such a repertoire? Why do most lyrical poems also incorporate textual cues that suggest they be orally reproduced? Finally, to what extent did Cervantes mean for these poems to be performed orally, not just by the novel's characters within the frame of the novel but also by the seventeenth-century implied reader who likely read the novel aloud to a group of interested listeners?

Cervantes incorporated all sorts of musical forms and genres into *Don Quijote*. Taken as a whole, the number of musical references in his novel is astounding. Luis Leal Pinar has painstakingly tallied the numbers. Of the 126 chapters comprising both parts, a total of 51 (more than 40%) refer to some form of music, and references to thirty-five different instruments appear in some combination 125 times (71–76). This is an extraordinary number in a literary work that has little to do with music per se. Equally interesting, the novel begins on a “musical” note. In the first chapter the knight settles on the name Rocinante for his steed, “nombre, a su parecer, alto y sonoro,” and for his lady Dulcinea, “nombre, a su parecer, músico y peregrino” (154).³ Since critics generally agree that *Don Quijote* is based on previous chivalric narratives, it is not surprising that the knight points to earlier models when he tells Sancho that his most admired heroes were great singers and musicians: “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” (212). His rival, the Caballero de los Espejos, follows these same models when he sings a sonnet dedicated to Casildea de Vandalia as he plays “un laúd o vigüela” (353). At the inn, while the innkeeper tends to the hogs, “sonó su silbato de cañas cuatro o cinco veces,” which confirmed that the knight had arrived at some castle “y que le servían de música” (156). In the presence of ladies, he requests an instrument so that he can sing a ballad: “que se me ponga un laúd esta noche en mi aposento, que yo consolaré lo mejor que pudiere a esta lastimada doncella” (436). Cervantes's overall musical philosophy is perhaps summed up when Sancho tells the duchess, “Señora, donde hay música no puede haber cosa mala” (413). Some of these references confirm Cervantes's imitation of earlier chivalric tales. Others, however, suggest that Cervantes's knowledge of musical forms went well beyond what he studied in the chivalric romances.

As depicted time and again in *Don Quijote*, music is a central feature of everyday life and nearly everyone the knight meets enjoys some sort of musical background, regardless of social status. Some important examples include the following: Cardenio, who writes and performs sonnets (1: 23, 27); Dorotea, who plays the harp in her spare time because experience has taught her that “la música compone los ánimos descompuestos y alivia los trabajos que nacen del espíritu” (223); and Altisidora, who sings a lengthy *romance* while playing the harp (2: 34).⁴ Among the lower classes, a mule driver sings a *romance* about Roncesvalles (2: 9); the goat herder Antonio performs *romances* as he plays the stringed *rabel* (1: 11)⁵ and 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” (313). Musical performance also operates in the background and in passing references. In nearly every chapter devoted to the duke and duchess, music is performed; Belerma and her maidens sing four days a week in their procession to the tomb of Durandarte in the Montesinos Cave (2: 23);⁶ songs accompany the arrival of la Condesa Trifaldi (2: 37); Sancho is welcomed to his post as Governor of Baratania with bells and *chirimías* and is chased out amid loud drumming, blaring trumpets, and deafening bell ringing (2: 47); on the road to find Don Quijote, the squire meets Ricote and other singing pilgrims (2: 54); and Don Quijote's meeting with the Catalan bandit Roque Ginart ends amid the music of *chirimías* and *atabales* (2: 61). These examples illustrate that during Cervantes's era music was an art form that bonded people regardless of their background, as well as a medium within which key themes and actions of the novel play out.

The most widely cited musical forms in *Don Quijote* are lyrical poetry, sometimes sung and accompanied by music, other times recited and performed from memory, and on occasion

just mentioned in passing. These lyrical types include *romances* (ballads), sonnets, carols, couplets, *seguidillas*, *silvas*, madrigals, and Cervantes's original creation, the first ever recorded *ovillejo*.⁷ This article draws attention to the two principal musical-poetic forms in *Don Quijote*, the *romance* and the sonnet. Specifically, the essay points out that in nearly all cases in the novel characters deliberately perform these poems out loud, which suggests Cervantes's promotion of an oral culture at a time when a nascent literary tradition is taking root in Spain. As James A. Parr has indicated: "[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" ("Plato" 171–72). In other words, there are several aspects that indicate orality's constant presence. According to Parr, these characteristics include the depiction of storytelling within the narrative marked by oral and corporal performance, the employment of literary derivations from traditionally oral genres such as ballads and folklore, and the widespread use of popular expressions, *refranes*, and direct address from narrator to narratee through oral markers such as "they say" or "You, dear reader . . ." (172). These strategies in addition to intentionally placed interruptions not only hold the receptors' attention during storytelling but also build interest in knowing the outcome of any given tale (Botello 197). All of these verbal strategies reveal that Cervantes was quite rooted in oral techniques similar to those employed in public storytelling.

Lyrical poems are the source of nearly all music in the novel and necessarily appear as literary objects. However, despite a proliferation of written texts during Cervantes's time, the oral tradition was alive and well, enduring well beyond his lifetime (Zumthor 155; Frenk 17–19; García de Enterría 90–95). Although the vast majority of people in early modern Spain could not read (nor did they have the economic means to purchase expensive books), every town had at least one person who could, and he or she was often charged with reading to others. In formal spaces such as the church, universities, and government, texts did not exist; most communication was accomplished orally. Indeed, contracts of all kinds, purchase agreements, and other juridical requirements were nearly always done orally, and they remain legally binding in most societies today. Even in informal spaces such as friendly gatherings, public proclamations, or at taverns and inns, texts did not form a significant part of the everyday. Margit Frenk observes that authors anticipated such orally inclined audiences and conceived their prose so that it could be heard (22).

To what extent these readers "performed" aloud the text for their audiences is difficult to gauge. Nonetheless, Michel Moner's research on orality demonstrates that Cervantes purposely integrates visual and structural strategies into his narrative as storytelling cues, suggesting the author knew his text would be read aloud. These cues include *gestos verbales* ("*veis aquí*," "*lo que verás y oirás*," etc.), rhetorical devices (pauses, exclamations, etc.), and sound effects ("*¡crac!*," etc.), all of which are derived from the oral tradition and help guide an oral narration. For Moner, this occurs equally with amateur storytellers (like Sancho) and professional ones (such as Maese Pedro) and indicates that Cervantes was more interested in promoting orality than other authors (*Cervantès* 100–01). As Parr makes clear, Cervantes's constant employment of verbs like *decir* and *contar* indicates that the written is a visual vehicle for oral production ("Sobre" 318). This, in turn, suggests that Cervantes is questioning "la fidelidad de la transmisión de los textos escritos" (325). A close reading of the novel illustrates these points. As James Iffland has observed, most texts appearing within *Don Quijote* are not read silently but rather aloud (27).⁸ When at the inn Cardenio asks the priest to read the interpolated *El curioso impertinente* "de modo que todos le oyesen" (250), the scene parallels everyday events in early modern Spain. Here a community composed of Cardenio, Luscinda, Fernando, Dorotea, the innkeeper's family, and other guests at the inn listen to a storyteller who incorporates his own performance style by taking cues from the text. Reader-storytellers, like the priest, presumably would have been important contributors to the cultural life of their hometowns. Such episodes

show that Cervantes's intertextual public was a listening one, not unlike his readers (listeners), who, for centuries, had been orally inclined as well.

Don Quijote is one of the first prose works that is a product of reading. Alonso Quijano, we are told, goes mad from reading books of chivalry and seeks to become a knight. Within what might seem to be a literary world, however, Don Quijote does not generally read lyrical poetry; he hears and sings it, emphasizing musicality in the novel. Critics have mostly opted for what might be viewed as a romantic vision that praises the music's beauty, historicity, and entertainment value.⁹ Although music in *Don Quijote* can elicit such enthusiasm (especially for readers), these approaches add little to our understanding of music as a part of literature. Indeed, at first glance it seems that the variety of musical pieces performed, recited, or referred to in the novel, as well as the assortment of pastoral, military, aristocratic, and popular instruments are nothing more than contextual information for the broader adventures of Don Quijote and Sancho. Nonetheless, it is not by accident that entire episodes pivot on songs or instrumentation. Throughout the pages of *Don Quijote*, the reader is witness to several polyphonic and monadic musical forms from early modern Spain, many accompanied by instrumentation. The musical pieces can be divided into two categories: (1) original creations possibly invented by Cervantes, and (2) those drawn from printed sources from the period and for which actual musical accompaniment is extant or known to have existed but is now lost. This essay will limit itself to the second category, musical works from the period that are cited in *Don Quijote* and collected in such well-known primary sources as the *Cancionero de palacio* or the *Romancero general*.¹⁰ We can trace some of the formal pieces to the *Romancero general* by virtue of Cervantes's own professed familiarity with it. In *La Gitanilla*, Preciosa proclaims that the verses by an admiring poet are so good they should appear in the *Romancero*: "Si con esta añadidura han de venir sus romances, traslade todo el *Romancero general* y envíemelos uno a uno, que yo les tentaré el pulso, y si vinieren duros, seré yo blanda en recibillos" (520). However, this is the only obvious reference to source material that appears in Cervantes's works. Other sources are hard to determine since the author may have consulted any of a number of songbooks available during his lifetime, not to mention the variety of songs transmitted orally and never set in print.¹¹

The most popular song form in Cervantes's Spain was the *romance* or ballad. The *romances* were memorized and performed aloud as solo songs accompanied by a strummed instrument such as a harp or a *vihuela*,¹² and over time they were altered, depending on the minstrel or poet singing them. Groups of two or three singers sometimes performed them in early polyphonic style. *Romances* were composed of four octosyllabic verses with a repeated melodic phrase every four verses until the end of the ballad. Their entire structure consisted of thirty-two syllables matched to thirty-two musical notes. The principal base of the poem was the first two verses divided by a strong pause between them. Generally, the first verse was to be a point of suspension that concluded in the second. Because each verse essentially matched a simple melodic line, the musical sound was inherently tied to the verse. Indeed, as Elias Rivers points out, music and verse were mutually dependent, helping to install both firmly in memory: "Se funden la melodía y el sonido de las palabras, y se evocan mutuamente de tal manera que casi no se puede repetir la melodía sin las palabras, ni las palabras sin la melodía" (17).

To avoid monotony or to demonstrate agility, players varied their performance by introducing short musical intervals between the sung verses. Singers, knowing these deviations were in the offing, waited for the musician to bring the main melody back before continuing the vocals. Hence, an unlimited number and types of vocal and instrumental styles could be applied as long as they obeyed the general syllabic count of the poem. This pliability of the verse allowed for a variety of melodies or an array of verses and helps explain why there are so many different versions of the same *romance*.

This clever, simple combination of music and poetry made the ballads easy to remember, afforded great opportunity for improvisation, and facilitated their oral transmission across classes, becoming a part of the social fabric. Around the time Cervantes wrote *Don Quijote*, two

key developments occurred: first, the ballads were beginning to be set down for perpetuity in printed songbooks, securing their musical spirit and, second, due to their literary qualities, the ballads invaded the upper classes where they were routinely performed during palace events. Eventually, professional singer-songwriters called *juglares* or *trovadores* earned a livelihood by writing and singing longer narrative ballads. Their widespread citation in period literature suggests their centrality to everyday life. Generally, only a few lines needed to be mentioned, and the listener might automatically recall the remaining verses. Regardless of the literacy of the *romances*, they were still based in oral traditions.

The earliest *romances* were short lyrical ballads extracted from popular epic poems such as the *Cantar de mio Cid* or the *Infantes de Lara*, or they were lifted from the legends of King Arthur or Charlemagne. Cervantes himself knew a great number of *romances*, both through hearing and reciting them, just as any Spaniard of the period did, but he may also have read them in one of the published songbooks (Querol Galvadá 44). He knew the older *romances viejos* (up through the fifteenth century) and the newer *romances nuevos* (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). Indeed, his travels around the peninsula (especially in Andalucía, where *romances* were most popular) and his time in the military provided the impetus to learn a large repertoire of unpublished, orally transmitted versions. It is precisely the popularity, endless variety, and flexibility of form that accounts for an endless supply of *romances* and that explains the difficulty in identifying the origins of many of the versions in *Don Quijote*. Indeed, Cervantes amalgamates verses from different versions of the same poem, rarely cites an entire *romance* (choosing only the most memorable verses), and evidently incorporates versions that either were not published at the time he wrote or never ended up in print.

Based on their popularity and familiarity during Cervantes's time, it is not surprising that most song parts in *Don Quijote* were derived from the *romances*. There are thirteen unique *romances* appearing in *Don Quijote* (most of which are *romances viejos*) that are sung verbatim or nearly verbatim and whose musical notation is collected in one of the aforementioned anthologies or other published sources.¹³ They are summarized as follows:

1. With no available bed at the inn (1: 2), Don Quijote states that his arms will provide comfort ("mis arreos son las armas, / mi descanso el pelear, etc." [156]), a *romance* published in the *Cancionero de romances* and the *Romancero general*.

2. As Don Quijote lies nonsensical along the road, he mistakenly takes his neighbor for the "noble marqués de Mantua" (161) taken from the *Romance del Marqués de Mantua y de Valdevinos* (1: 5) found in the *Cancionero de romances*.

3. Luis, "el mozo de mulas" and "desdichado músico" (1: 43), serenades Clara by singing "Marinero soy de amor" (290) followed by a *canción* previously invented by Cervantes, "Dulce esperanza mía" (291).¹⁴ Luis's talent for inventing songs on the spot replicates the improvisational process of minstrels who put verses to music at any given moment. According to Clara, "Todo aquello que canta lo saca de su cabeza; que he oído decir que es muy gran estudiante y poeta" (291).

4. Chapter 9 (part 2) begins with "Media noche era por filo" (345), included in the *Romance de Conde Claros de Montalbán*, the *Cancionero de romances*, and the *Romancero general*; it has been considered a model ballad and one of the two most well known (González 232).

5. Upon entering El Toboso (2: 9), Don Quijote and Sancho happen along a man singing the first verses of the famous *Romance de Roncesvalles* ("Mala la hubistes, franceses, / en esa de Roncesvalles" [346]) found in the *Cancionero de romances* and the *Romancero general*.

6. Emphasizing the friendship shared by Rocinante and Sancho's donkey (2: 12), the narrator quotes, "No hay amigo para amigo: / las cañas se vuelven lanzas" (353) taken from the *Romancero general*.

7. In the Cueva de Montesinos, Durandarte delivers a version of the *Romance de Durandarte* (2: 23), which tells the tale of how the knight Montesinos is to deliver Durandarte's beating heart to Belerma. The original appears in the *Cancionero de palacio* and *Romancero general*, as well as in Luis de Milán's *Libro de música de vihuela*. Milán's version features instrumental introductions, interludes, and voice parts (Simpson and Mason 53).

8. During the "Retablo de Maese Pedro" (2: 26), the boy-narrator recites, "Jugando está a las tablas don Gaiferos, / que ya de Melisendra está olvidado" and "Caballero, si a Francia ides, / por Gaiferos preguntad" (391), taken from the *Entremés de Melisendra* (Romero Muñoz 127–28). The original is from the *Cancionero de romances* and the *Romancero general*.

9. Different verses from the same *Romance del rey don Rodrigo* (*Cancionero de romances*) are sung twice, first in the Retablo de Maese Pedro (2: 26), "Ayer fui señor de España . . . / y hoy no tengo una almena / que pueda decir que es mía" (392), then by doña Rodríguez (2: 33) recounting don Rodrigo's penitence: "Ya me comen, ya me comen / por do más pecado había" (409).

10. Sancho reminds Don Quijote that "yo me acuerdo haber oído cantar un romance antiguo que dice 'De los osos seas comido, / como Favila el nombrado'" (2: 34), drawn from the *Romance del Rey Favila* in the *Cancionero general* (411).

11. To avoid his whipping (2: 60), Sancho defends himself with verses from the *Romance de don Rodrigo de Lara* (found in the *Cancionero de romances* and the *Romancero general*): "[A] qui morirás, traidor, / enemigo de doña Sancha" (473).

12. The verse "para mí estaba guardada," from Pérez de Hita's *Guerras civiles de Granada*, appears in the final paragraph of the book (2: 74) to remind readers that *Don Quijote* belongs to Cervantes.

13. Four different versions of the Arthurian *Ballads of Lanzarote del Lago* appear in the novel. In a conversation with Vivaldo (1: 13), Don Quijote defends the value of knight-errantry by citing verbatim the entire "tan sabido romance": "Nunca fuera caballero / de damas tan bien servido / como fuera Lanzarote / cuando de Bretaña vino" (178); during his stay at the first inn (1: 2) he praises the prostitutes: "—Nunca fuera caballero / de damas tan bien servido" (156); the verse "cuando de Bretaña vino" (383) is cited in Don Quijote's experience in the Cave of Montesinos (2: 23); and speaking with doña Rodríguez (2: 31), Sancho declares that "he oído yo decir a mi señor, que es zahorí de las historias, contando aquella de Lanzarote, 'cuando de Bretaña vino, / que damas curaban dél, / y dueñas del su rocino'" (401). Recognizing the verses but not amused, doña Rodríguez replies, "Hermano, si sois juglar . . . , guardad vuestras gracias para donde lo parezcan y se os paguen . . ." (401). Both the music and lyrics of the *romance* were published in Milán's *El cortesano* (1561; Querol Galvadá 48–49), a work modeled after Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*.¹⁵ It is also found in the *Cancionero de romances* and the *Romancero general*.

Additionally, three *romances* are referenced in passing, but no verses are recited or sung, and another three are original poems invented by Cervantes for which no music ever existed.¹⁶ In general, since the musical notation for most *romances* did not always accompany the lyrics, scholars have had to match the music to the lyrics by consulting the anthologies such as the *Cancionero de palacio*, a songbook that contains not only the text of the most well-known examples but also the music to be played with them. This is furthermore the case with *Don Quijote*: of the thirteen extant *romances* mentioned above, all except one are found in the *Romancero general*, the *Cancionero de romances*,¹⁷ or the *Cancionero de palacio*. Since so many *romances* are found in the songbooks (as opposed to other print sources), Carmen Valcárcel asserts that their written conservation was not necessarily an attempt to subvert the performance qualities of the poems but to find a suitable means (the songbooks) to teach others how to perform them (145).

Research on orality and Spanish literature suggests that written poetry was meant to be sung phonetically and acoustically out loud and, as shown above, Golden Age Spain was still

an oral culture. According to Rivers, regardless of medium, “la composición poética es siempre oral, que uno siempre compone mentalmente los versos, antes de transcribirlos en el papel, y que el poeta tiene en su memoria palabras y textos ajenos que funcionan ahí acústicamente, rítmicamente” (19). Similarly, María Cruz García de Enterría cites a variety of historical accounts to demonstrate that all poetry, especially the *romances*, was routinely sung aloud, regardless of its written nature (94–97). And Jesús Botello describes how Sancho, who cannot read or write, employs a learning tactic so typical in oral societies, “Donde los individuos aprenden escuchando y repitiendo el material oral legado por las generaciones que les procedieron,” followed by their own performance (199). However, Sancho’s (often inaccurate) citation of certain verses reminds us, as Albert Lord does in *The Singer of Tales*, that the minstrel “builds his performance . . . on the stable skeleton of narrative” by matching an established melody to a series of plausible lyrics conceived on the fly (99).

Hence, it is plausible that Cervantes, like other poets, would have had a specific melody, cadence, or baseline in mind when citing some *romances* in *Don Quijote*. Moreover, Cervantes sets down the poems in such a way as to emphasize performance, albeit not always with musical accompaniment. As Moner has argued, the strategic cues implicit in the text remind the reader of their orality and musicality. Often, these indicators are an obvious part of the text, such as in the case of the laborer singing the *Romance de Roncesvalles* (2: 9) where Don Quijote’s comment to Sancho, “¿No oyes lo que viene cantando ese villano?” (346; emphasis mine), points out that the verses are to be sung. Sancho’s reply, “Así pudiera cantar el romance de Calainos, que todo fuera uno para sucedernos bien o mal nuestro negocio” (346; emphasis mine), likewise links *romance* to *romance*, reminding us that all were sung.¹⁸ Similarly, when depicting Luis’s two songs (1: 43), the narrator informs us that “llegó a los oídos de las damas una voz tan entonada y tan buena. . . . Nadie podía imaginar quién era la persona que tan bien cantaba, y era una voz sola, sin que la acompañase instrumento alguno” (290; emphasis mine). In both cases, specific textual cues lead us to consider the musicality of the episodes: verbs such as *cantar* and *oír* and even descriptors like *romance*, *voz*, and *instrumento* all prompt the reader to consider the poem’s musical or oral significance.

An examination of the sonnets, the next largest number of songs in *Don Quijote*, further illustrates the case for reinscribing orality. All sonnets in the novel are Cervantes’s creations and, therefore, no music exists. In Spain and other countries, “soneto” was interchangeable with “song” but, unlike the *romances*, the majority was not conserved or anthologized. Indeed, the sources for most extant sonnets are the *vihuela* tablature books of the sixteenth century.¹⁹ According to Ignacio Navarette there is general disagreement, both now and in Cervantes’s time, as to whether or not a *soneto* in Spain was musical (oral) or literary (written). This debate stems from the move toward the Italian-style hendecasyllabic written form that came to dominate Spanish literary circles in the mid–sixteenth century, starting with Juan Boscán and Garcilaso de la Vega (Navarette 771–72). Indeed, Navarette cites Boscán, who complained that too many understood only the orally recited sonnets:

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? (87–88)

Boscán’s comments highlight the lyrical and vocal significance of early sonnets: they were, for a time, considered melodic songs, even as poets began writing them down. It seems as though seventeenth-century readers could not follow the cadence or fix the melody as they could when they were sung out loud, suggesting a need to perform them even when written. It is perhaps exactly this uneasiness of form, as well as the transformation from the oral to the written, that encompasses Cervantes’s use of the sonnet in *Don Quijote*. There are three sonnet types in

the novel. First, a narrative, written type that adorns the preface of the book or that is written within the novel. Examples include one written sonnet by Cardenio in his book found by Don Quijote and the burlesque and satirical sonnets outside the frame of the novel that begin and end both parts 1 and 2. Second, Lotario recites two metatextual sonnets in the interpolated *El curioso impertinente*, though there is no indication they were sung. Third, the majority of sonnets in the novel are those sung by a character aloud, sometimes with musical accompaniment, and there are six of these: Cardenio sings about lost friendship in which “la música se había vuelto en sollozos y en lastimeros ayes” (227); the Captive recites “de memoria,” two sonnets composed by his own brother “a manera de epitafios” (277) describing the fall of La Goleta (1: 40); the Caballero del Bosque plays his *laud* and sings about Casilda de Vandalia (2: 12); Don Quijote cites 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 y Tisbe (2: 18), a poem from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Unfortunately, no musical scores have been found for any of these sonnets, suggesting that perhaps none ever existed.

The musicality of the sonnets in these examples yields important information regarding orality. First, as is the case with the *romances*, a distinct oral tradition serves as the basis for each. None is said to be written down, then recited. In fact, the text explicitly states that the captive’s sonnets were drawn from his own recollection of his brother’s singing them, whereas the others are performed from memory. Second, two sonnets were *sung* aloud rather than read (Cardenio and the Caballero del Bosque). And, finally, one includes musical accompaniment (Caballero del Bosque) although another suggests the use of at least some rhythmic style (Cardenio).

Regardless of the music supplied to these poems, Cervantes finds the general transmutation of poetry during his lifetime to be troublesome. Just a few moments after reading Cardenio’s sonnet, Don Quijote admits that the verse forms of the past were more spirited than beautiful: “Verdad es que las coplas de los pasados caballeros tienen más de espíritu que de primor” (212). Is Cervantes being critical of his own poetry? This could be the case, as the author admitted his own poetic limitations during the Scrutiny of the Library when the priest plainly downgrades Cervantes’s poetic abilities: “[M]uchos años ha que es grande amigo mío ese Cervantes, y sé que es más versado en desdichas que en versos” (165). Cervantes similarly discredits himself in his *Viaje del Parnaso*: “Yo que siempre trabajo y me desvelo / por parecer que tengo de poeta / la gracia que no quiso darme el cielo” (1187). In contrast, Don Quijote readily admits that Cardenio is a “razonable poeta, o yo sé poco del arte” and then informs Sancho that he knows much more about poetry (*trovas*) than one might think, a fact he intends to demonstrate with the letter in verse he will compose for Dulcinea (212).

In addition to the aforementioned written and metatextual sonnet types, these examples imply that Cervantes’s use of the sonnet is representative of the ongoing disagreement between its oral or textual nature. Literary historians have assumed that Spanish sonnets were written only to be read but, as Navarette makes clear, an examination of the seven *vihuela* tablature books “indicates that there was, throughout the sixteenth century, a demand for settings that would facilitate performance” (786). Even when it became literary or written, the sonnet was intended to be sung to musical accompaniment, again underscoring Boscán’s concerns about audience comprehension of the form. The varying contexts for the sonnets in the novel suggest that *Don Quijote* reflects the debate regarding oral and written cultures.

The number of musical references in a novel that has little to do with such topics indicates music’s importance and centrality to the daily life of early modern Spain. It also points to Cervantes’s superlative familiarity with musical forms, either drawn from published sources or derived from the oral tradition. Indeed, the insertion of other musical verse forms likewise indicates that Cervantes was at a crossroad as orality gave way to literature. Unfortunately, space does not allow for a discussion of these other genres (the popular *copla*, *seguidillas*, *villancicos*, *silvas*, *madrigals*, or Cervantes’s own *ovillejo*). However, a brief examination of each poem type reveals similar interests in orality and that Cervantes recognized the cultural

importance of music *as a part of* literature. As such, Cervantes's great affinity for music in *Don Quijote* reflects a complex and challenging cultural landscape that began to privilege the written over the oral, a privilege that Cervantes may have regretted to some degree, even as such transformations facilitated his own prominence as an author.

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NOTES

¹In his esteemed biography, *Cervantes*, Jean Canavaggio makes virtually no reference to music except for mentioning that Cervantes's father owned a viol (59) and that the author was trained by Vieras at the age of six. As was customary, the chapel master was charged with the choir's education and training such as reading and writing, Latin and Greek, and polyphony, known then as *canto de órgano*. Cervantes was definitely not a member of the choir, but it is quite likely that he received some musical training from Vieras. For its part, the Company of Jesus was well known for integrating music, voice, and performance into theological teaching, and Jesuit priests were excellent singers and instrumentalists.

²Pastor Comín (386) refers to Tomás de Victoria; the composer and *vihuelista* Luis de Milán (1500–1561?); the organist Antonio de Cabezón (1510–1566); the composers Cristóbal Morales (1500–1553) and Francisco Guerrero (1528–1599); Juan Blas de Castro the royal musician to Felipe III (1561–1631) and the master of the royal chapel under Felipe III Mateo Romero (1575?–1647); as well as the court composers Juan de Palomares (1573?–1600?) and Álvaro de los Ríos (1580?–1623). None are mentioned in Canavaggio's biography.

³All citations from *Don Quijote* are taken from the Florencio Sevilla edition. I include the part and chapter numbers for particular episodes and page numbers when quoting directly from the text.

⁴The harp is played only by women in *Don Quijote*. See Calvo-Manzano's study *El arpa en la obra de Cervantes*.

⁵Covarrubias defines "*rabel de box*" as "Instrumento músico de cuerdas y arquillo; es pequeño y todo de una pieza de tres cuerdas y de voces muy subidas. Usan dél los pastores, con que se entretienen" (893).

⁶Since music is performed during this adventure, it is possible that at least part of the episode was drawn from the musically crafted *romances*. Readers in 1615 would probably have recalled several *romances* that treated Belerma negatively (Dunn 196–97).

⁷Cardenio sings three consecutive *ovillejos* (227), ten-verse poems consisting of three-octosyllabic lines alternating with tetrasyllabic verses (*pie quebrado*), followed by a four-line strophe whose last line assembles the aforesaid three-tetrasyllabic verses into one. Whereas the octosyllables pose questions, the *pie quebrado* provides answers, with an overall resolution in the final verse. See Juan Diego Vila's discussion on the poem's structure and content.

⁸According to Frenk, several examples indicate that *leer* and *oír* were one and the same (75–77): referring to Grisóstomo's *Canción desesperada*, Ambrosio asks Vivaldo to "leeldo de modo que seáis oído" (181); Sancho asks Don Quijote to "lea vuestra merced alto" Cardenio's sonnets (212); the priest reads aloud Teresa Panza's letters and "las oyó Sansón Carrasco" (449); and the duchess reads Sancho's letter "en voz alta para que el duque y los circunstantes la oyesen" (454) and Sancho's letter to Don Quijote "se leyó públicamente" (455).

⁹This is especially the case with the earliest studies (de Roda 1905; Alustiza 1917; Espinós 1947; Salazar 1948; and Diego 1951), which tend to evaluate music with little critical analysis.

¹⁰The *Cancionero de palacio* was a songbook anthology compiled by Francisco Asenjo Barbieri featuring 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*. These norms are not in line with standards for musical categorization today (*Spanish Music* 252). The *Romancero general*, first published in Valencia in 1511 and edited by Hernando del Castillo, was the most significant collection of *romances* from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

¹¹Among possible sources, Gutiérrez includes the *Cancionero de Segovia* (sixteenth century), containing over 200 works in 5 languages (generally masses, *villancios*, motets, and instrumental pieces), and the

Cancionero de Medinaceli, which holds 177 polyphonic works (mostly *madrigals*, *romances*, and *villancicos*) compiled in the sixteenth century (31). However, no single piece appearing in *Don Quijote* is found in these collections. Instead, if Cervantes knew these songbooks, they likely served as inspiration. Another source could have been the *Cancionero de López Maldonado* (Madrid, 1586), as the collection is saved during the *Escrutinio de la biblioteca*: “[E]s grande amigo mío, y sus versos en su boca admiran a quien los oye; y tal es la suavidad de la voz con que los canta, que encanta. Algo largo es en las églogas, pero nunca lo bueno fue mucho: guárdese con los escogidos” (50). No particular lyrical poem from *Don Quijote* has been traced to Maldonado’s *Cancionero* despite Cervantes’s supposed friendship with the author.

¹²The *vihuela* was a popular stringed instrument with six double strings, considered a precursor to the classical guitar. The first published collection of *vihuela* music was Luis de Milán’s *Libro de música de vihuela de mano intitulado El maestro* (1536).

¹³Diego Clemencín, Stevenson, and Querol Galvadá provide the source material for the pieces described here.

¹⁴The music for “Dulce esperanza mía,” was composed in 1591 by Salvador Luis, Philip II’s royal musician, leading Soriano Fuertes to postulate that Cervantes wished to commemorate the musician by including the character Luis in *Don Quijote*.

¹⁵Milán’s work gave insight into the musical life of the Valencia ducal court. The passage in question reads, “Dixo el paje: Señor don Luis Milán, mi señora y las señoras que arriba están, mueren de deseo de veros y oiros, y dicen que si vuestra merced tiene el mismo deseo, podéis cantar: ‘Nunca fuera caballero / De damas más bien querido’” (118).

¹⁶Those mentioned in passing include the *Romance of Lancelot*, mentioned twice (1: 49, 2: 23), *Don Quijote*’s reference to the Marqués de Mantua (1: 10), and Sancho’s mention of the *Romance of Calainos* (2: 9). The three invented outright by Cervantes include two by Altisidora accompanied by the harp (2: 44, 57) and one by *Don Quijote* about knights, ladies, and love (2: 46). The appearance of Cardenio (1: 23, 24) may acknowledge 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*.

¹⁷The *Cancionero de romances* (Antwerp, 1500) originally contained 156 *romances* before being reedited and published several times in the second half of the century. It is also known as the *Romancero de Amberes*.

¹⁸The *Romance de Calainos* is found in the *Romancero general*.

¹⁹The *vihuela* books provided instruction on how to play certain musical parts correctly to enhance the voice parts, thus providing an understanding of how music and poetry were entwined (Navarette 770). The seven books are Luis Milán’s *Libro de música de vihuela de mano intitulado El Maestro* (Valencia, 1536); Luis de Narvaéz’s *Los seys libros del Delphin de música* (Valladolid, 1538); Alonso Mudarra’s *Tres libros de música en cifra para vihuela* (Sevilla, 1546); Enriquez de Valderrábano’s *Libro de música de vihuela intitulado Silva de Sirenas* (Valladolid, 1547); Diego Pisador’s *Libro de música de vihuela* (Salamanca, 1552); Miguel de Fuenllana’s *Libro de música para vihuela, intitulado Orphénica lyra* (Seville, 1554); and Esteban Daza’s *Libro de música en cifras para vihuela intitulado El Parnaso* (Valladolid, 1576).

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