

Exotic Elements in Kapsberger's Jesuit Opera (Rome, 1622) Honoring Saints Ignatius and Francis Xavier¹

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Exoticism in Sacred Theater-Works

The concept of a religious-themed work for the stage—all-sung or indeed even all-spoken—may seem a bit strange to us.² Theater plays a modest role, at best, in many Sunday schools and houses of worship nowadays, and religious-themed plays are largely absent from the commercial theater and also from the active operatic repertoire. Only one opera based on a Bible story has been and remains today a major item in the repertoire—Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila*—and none on the life of a saint.³ But, before the

1 The author remains grateful to the late T. Frank Kennedy S. J., who kindly shared a copy of the manuscript of Kapsberger's opera and lent me the transcription that he made and that was the basis for the performances at Boston University and for the CD recording. David Pollack kindly located and summarized for me the Saburo article regarding Figure 1. I thank Victor Coelho, Roger Freitas, Father Kennedy, Patrick Macey (who kindly prepared the musical examples), and Margaret Murata for their extremely helpful comments on drafts of this article.

2 The central material in the present article—the discussion of Kapsberger's *Apotheosis*—was originally written for inclusion in my recent book *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). For reasons of space, it was condensed there into a single paragraph (p. 190) and an illustration from the 1991 staged performances at Boston College (p. 191). For coherence, the present article recapitulates some broader considerations from the sections of the book on sacred opera and other religious stage-works (pp. 187–91).

3 The ban, or near-ban, on biblical operas outside of religious institutions quickly became near-universal across Catholic Europe, sometimes also showing up in Protestant Germany and England. It waned only slightly in the nineteenth century. The few instances that were both successful in their own day and remain at least somewhat present in operatic life today are all from after 1800: e.g., Méhul's *Joseph* (1807—famous for one tenor aria in particular), Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto* (1818), Verdi's *Nabucco* (1842, about Nebuchadnezzar's persecution of the Hebrews, as told in Jeremiah), Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila* (1877, after the account in Judges), and Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* (1983). From 1800 on, operas began to risk putting clergy and church leaders on stage. Sometimes the attitude toward the church is even-handed or even appreciative (examples Verdi's *La forza del destino*, Puccini's *Suor Angelica*, and Poulenc's *Les dialogues des carmélites*),

advent of state-run (and largely secular) schooling, the education of children was almost entirely in the hands of the church. Spoken dramas—often containing at least a few vocal and dance numbers—and operas—after that genre was invented in the early 1600s—were valued for their efficacy in helping a school’s pupils learn religious stories, theological doctrines, moral values, music, rhetoric, and versification (in Latin and/or the vernacular).⁴ Such works were also performed in monasteries and Jesuit colleges and at gatherings of lay confraternities.

At the same time, church leaders often worked in close collaboration with government censors to keep not just Bible stories but any hint of religion out of the secular theater and opera house. Presumably, they feared that religious topics might be treated in a manner that was unacceptable to current doctrine. The clerics’ fear was consistent with an “antitheatrical prejudice” (the phrase is Jonas Barish’s) that had frequently been fostered by influential Western philosophers and religious authorities ever since the days of the ancient Greeks and that indeed has continued to reappear—from time to time—up to our own day, in the West and elsewhere. This wariness of the contagious power of on-stage representation has often led to attempts at stigmatizing public theater, actors, and, most of all, actresses and female opera singers.⁵

In particular, the composers and librettists of sacred operas—works that were mostly created for performance under religious or religio-educational auspices—seem to have hoped that a sacred topic, such as a biblical tale or saint’s life, would redeem opera from accusations of lewdness and triviality. Such stories also permitted the introduction of various exotic el-

but often the aim is clearly to attack religious prejudice and ecclesiastical authority. Notable examples of the latter include Halévy’s *La juive*, Meyerbeer’s *Les huguenots*, Verdi’s *Don Carlos* and *Aida*, and two twentieth-century works: Carlisle Floyd’s *Susannah* and Penderecki’s *Die Teufel von Loudun*. The theme of the cleric who strays sexually—a theme that tends to turn him into an Everyman faced with temptation—occurs in important operas, e.g., Verdi’s *Stiffelio* and Massenet’s *Manon* and *Thaïs*.

4 See T. Frank Kennedy, “Jesuit Opera in Seventeenth-Century Vienna” in *The Jesuits II: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O’Malley, S.J., et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 787–801. On dance in the French Jesuit college before the suppression of the Jesuit order in 1762, see Margaret G. McGowan, *L’art du ballet de cour en France, 1581–1643* (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1963), 205–27; and Judith Rock, *Terpsichore at Louis-le-Grand: Baroque Dance on the Jesuit Stage in Paris* (St. Louis MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).

5 Jonas Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1981).

ements: that is, elements of characterization, decor, and so on that emphasized the distantness and cultural difference of a locale that people at the time would have called “Oriental.”

All these impulses were evident in what is perhaps the best-documented case of a biblical stage work from the seventeenth century, namely a spoken drama, by Racine, with musical insertions. This play, *Esther*, was written to be performed by students at the convent-style girls' school that Mme. de Maintenon, mistress (and secret wife) of Louis XIV, ran for girls whose aristocratic families had fallen on hard times. The play, performed five times in 1689–90, included instrumental and choral numbers by Jean Moreau. The students were clothed in elaborate costumes decorated with “pearls and diamonds” from the royal treasury. The schoolgirls sang all the solo and choral parts, accompanied by instrumentalists from the royal court.⁶ The costumes were reportedly in “Oriental” style. Presumably they were modeled after drawings or actual specimens from current-day Persia or the “Holy Lands”—areas ruled in the seventeenth century largely by the Sassanid and Ottoman Empires—since little was known about clothing styles of biblical times.

As for actual sacred operas, these were much composed and performed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Catholic lands (the Italian peninsula, the Habsburg Empire, and France) and also in certain German-speaking regions that had adopted Lutheranism. In their materials and manner, sacred operas tended to be more similar to mainstream (secular) operas than to works in any other all-sung genre. For example, unlike oratorios (the other major all-sung sacred dramatic genre), they employed stage sets, costumes, and stage movement and gestures. Sacred operas also tended to begin with an allegorical prologue: again, like secular operas and unlike oratorios. The sung text of a sacred opera could be either in Latin or in the vernacular.⁷

6 Jacques Prévot, *La première institutrice de France: Madame de Maintenon* (Paris: Belin, 1981), quoting from the official manuscript account of events at the Saint-Cyr school. Moreau's music for the Racine play is available in an edition (also containing the play's spoken text) by Anne Piéjus. Further, see Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 188–89; that book is a “prequel” to Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

7 Sacred opera may be regarded as comprising several related subgenres: see Carolyn Gianturco, “Opera sacra e opera morale: due ‘altri’ tipi di dramma musicale,” in *Il melodramma italiano in Italia e in Germania nell'età Barocca: atti*, ed. Alberto Colzani et al.

Sacred operas, like sacred dramas (such as Racine's *Esther*) and like many dramatically inclined oratorios (e.g., Handel's *Saul* and *Samson* and his one dramatic oratorio based on the life of a Christian saint: *Theodora*), often evoked territories in what might be called the ancient "Middle East": Canaan, Judaea, Egypt, the court of the Philistines, greater Syria and Turkey, even Persia or (in Handel's *Belshazzar*) the Babylonian capital of Nineveh.⁸ And, like works in those genres, a sacred opera often exoticized aspects of the distant location by emphasizing how different There was—in biblical times and in the current day—from Here.⁹ This emphasis on differentness is particularly clear in the prologue to what is today perhaps the best-known sacred opera: *David et Jonathas* (1688), by Marc-Antoine Charpentier. This French-language work was much performed in Jesuit colleges for decades—hence with men and/or boys taking all the roles—and is sometimes revived today (though often without staging, and often with women taking certain of the higher-lying roles, including that of the Woman of Endor and of the youngish Jonathan). The prologue, somewhat unusually, is not allegorical but rather enacts a biblical episode: the scene between King Saul and the Woman of Endor.¹⁰ The music for the latter's incantations lends to the proceedings a sense of exotic local color and—depending on how it is performed—more than a bit of weirdness.¹¹

(Como: Centro Ricerche dell'Antiquae Musicae Italicae Studiosi, 1995). A Latin or Italian sacred opera was often known as a *sacra rappresentazione*.

8 All available terms for this broad region are inherently problematic: options from the period included "the Holy Lands," the Levant, and "the Orient." The last of these is particularly ambiguous today, since it is often used to refer to East Asia. (See Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, xx–xi.)

9 Occasionally, a sacred opera could also target the Jews, a people living within Europe but considered unabsorbably foreign (and Eastern-derived). On one German-language instance of this, a 1679 work about the Maccabees (in which a Jew is excited to get hold of some pork sausages), see Jeanne Swack, "Anti-Semitism at the Opera: The Portrayal of Jews in the Singspiels of Reinhard Keiser," in *Musical Quarterly* 84 (2000): 389–416.

10 Her descriptor (*eshet ba-alat ov b'en-dor*) is often mistranslated as "the Witch of Endor." In the Bible text she is not a witch (as that word is generally used today and was used in the seventeenth century) but a medium or necromancer. The French libretto of Charpentier's opera calls her "une pythonisse," a term deriving from the Vulgate translation: "mulier habens pythonem"—a woman who has a python. (The erroneous rendering in the Vulgate was apparently influenced by the fact that ancient Greek and Latin writers mention that the oracle at Delphi was guarded by a python.)

11 Further on the prologue of *David et Jonathas*, see Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 190–91.

Kapsberger's Opera Honoring (and Featuring) Saints Ignatius and Francis

Much more thoroughly exotic in its concerns is a Latin-language sacred opera from Rome, 1622. Exotic, I should stress, in its concerns but not in its musical means: few exotic works use distinct exotic stylistic means before the advent of *alla turca* in the mid-eighteenth century.¹²

This remarkable work offers portrayals—from a determinedly Jesuit point of view—of four distant lands: Palestine, India, China, and Japan. It is a somewhat unusual sacred opera, in part because it incorporates various traditions from Jesuit sacred drama. Most immediately noticeable is that the singing characters do not engage in dialogue with one another but, rather, give report of themselves, often expressed in the third person. Yet, despite its idiosyncratic features—indeed, because of them—this unique, substantial, and rarely studied work is worth examining in some detail, especially as regards its portrayals of distant places and peoples.

Apotheosis sive Consecratio SS. Ignatii et Francisci Xaverii (The Apotheosis, or Consecration, of Saints Ignatius and Francis Xavier) was composed by Giovanni—or Johannes Hieronymus—Kapsberger, a Venetian of German parentage, better known today for his lute music. The *Apotheosis* was performed in the Aula Magna of the Jesuit College in Rome during the weeks-long events (March 1622) celebrating the canonization of the first two Jesuit saints.¹³ Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) and Francis Xavier (1506–52)—both Spanish-born—had been crucial figures in the worldwide spread of Christian doctrine: Ignatius as founder of the Jesuit order (who had missionized in Muslim-controlled Palestine), Francis Xavier as the first

12 The present article, therefore, makes use of a broad approach for explicating an exotic work, which I call the “All the Music in Full Context” Paradigm: see Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 41–71, or the opening sections of “A Broader View of Musical Exoticism,” *Journal of Musicology* 24, no. 4 (Fall 2007): 477–521; more fully formulated in Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 17–43.

13 An attractive recording of the work was released (with a late eighteenth-century sacred opera about Ignatius, by Domenico Zipoli, Martin Schmid, and anonymous, possibly indigenous South American musicians) as *The Jesuit Operas*, on Dorian 2-CDs DOR-93243. In the present article I adopt the division into “numbers” that is used for the tracks in the CD recording (first disc of the two-disc set, except for Act 5, which is on the second CD). For more details on the original production and the surrounding festivities, see Emilio Sala and Federico Marincola, “La musica nei drammi gesuitici: il caso dell’Apotheosis sive Consecratio Sanctorum Ignatii et Franciscii Xaverii (1622),” in *I Gesuiti e i primordi del teatro barocco in Europa*, ed. M. Chiabò and Federico Doglio (Rome: Torre d’Orfeo, 1995), 389–439.



Figure 1. Devotional image of Saint Francis Xavier, with a caption in Japanese. Located in the Kobe City Museum, Japan. Francis is “speaking” his motto, “Satis est, D[omi]ne, satis est” (It is enough, Lord, it is enough). According to the online guidebook of the Kobe City Museum, this object is “presumed to have been painted by a Japanese painter trained in Western painting techniques. Made as a hanging scroll to be used as an object of worship.” The Japanese characters may be roughly translated as “Saint Francis Sacrament [of Penance]” (according to Saburo, “Kobe”). Image reproduced from Wikicommons.

Jesuit to convert people far across the sea. Indeed, Francis Xavier (Fig. 1) died at age 46 on Shangchuan (Sancian), an island off the coast of China, awaiting permission to preach on the mainland. His bones were eventually relocated to the Portuguese colony of Goa, on the western coast of India. In 1927, Pius XI would name him patron saint of all missionaries.¹⁴

Throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the stage plays of the Jesuits—some with music, some without—would invoke, for didactic and even evangelical reasons, the spread (or attempted spread) of Catholicism to distant parts.¹⁵ The 1622 *Apotheosis* was one of the earliest and surely one of the most elaborate of the Jesuit exotic spectacles. The original production in Rome involved costumes, sets, and stage machines. The libretto and score consisted of solo vocal numbers, choral numbers, choreographed danced numbers, and choreographed mock combats (an element deriving from the tournament tradition), all accompanied by instrumental music: basso continuo for most of the vocal solos, fuller orchestra for the *balli* and *combattimenti*. Long neglected, Kapsberger's *Apotheosis* has recently been the subject of several studies. It has also been performed and recorded, using an edition by T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. The work manages to suggest a wide range of events in time and space without quite defying the classical unities. Everything that the audience sees can be understood as taking place on a single day in Rome, namely the very day of the per-

14 D. E. Mungello notes that Jesuits (including the brilliant Matteo Ricci, who mastered the local language and brought a chiming clock and a harpsichord to the Chinese Emperor) were not the only, or even the most effective, Catholic missionaries in China over the next several centuries (*Great Encounter*, 12). On efforts at bringing Western music to East Asia, see François Picard, "L'implantation de la musique européenne en Asie orientale et ses développements" in *Musiques: Une encyclopédie pour le xxie siècle*, ed. Jean-Jacques Nattiez et al., vol. 5 (Arles: Actes Sud, 2007), 128–52.

15 Kapsberger apparently wrote the music for another all- or partly sung sacred drama with exotic overtones: *La vittoria del principe Vladislao in Valacchia* (Rome, 1625), performed in the presence of the pope and the crown prince of Poland (the future King Władysław IV Vasa). The text is by Giovanni Ciampoli. The plot is based on recent events: the Battle of Khotyn (or Chocim), 1621, at which Polish and Lithuanian troops blocked (for a time) the advance of the Ottoman army into Europe. The work contains a role for the prophet Mohammed (Macometto)—who, before the battle, comes to the young sultan Osman in a dream—and choral passages for Turks. Prince Władysław was an influential commander and successful strategist during the battle. The work's music is unfortunately lost; on this remarkable sacred drama, see Margaret Murata, "Classical Tragedy in the Early History of Opera in Rome," in *Early Music History* 4 (1984): 101–34. Further sacred stage works containing exotic elements are listed in Saverio Franchi with Orietta Sartori, *Drammaturgia romana: repertorio bibliografico cronologico dei testi drammatici pubblicati a Roma e nel Lazio, secolo XVII* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1997).

formance, although, in another sense, much in the work happens “out of time,” *sub specie aeternitatis*.¹⁶ The libretto was penned by Father Orazio Grassi, professor of mathematics at the Jesuit College of Rome.¹⁷ The singers and dancers were mostly boys from the Roman College; some castrati or other adult males may have taken prominent solos.

In a spoken prologue, Wisdom enjoins the students of the Jesuit college to put the opera on. (This was the only role taken by a woman in the work’s one modern revival, at Boston College on November 14, 16, and 17, 1991.)¹⁸ Over the subsequent five acts, ancient Romans—including two renowned architects—return to life in order to build a Roman-style temple, in which the memory and ongoing work of Ignatius and Francis Xavier are to be honored. Ancient Roman gladiators prepare to engage in public fights, while current-day peoples from around the world arrive to assist in the celebrations. Spain and Portugal are presented as colonizing powers that now abjure war. Together, they urge the “clarion”—i.e. trumpet—to call forth “war games filled with mocking sport” (*pugnas odiis edite ludicris*). This will permit humans to “conquer lands” merely in a symbolic manner: with “warlike leaps” of the fighters’ (dancers’) “time-beating feet” (no. 20;

16 Two assessments of the work—wildly divergent in their attitude toward Jesuit missionary work in the non-European world—were published in close succession in the late 1990s: see Victor Anand Coelho, “Kapsberger’s Apotheosis . . . of Francis Xavier (1622) and the Conquering of India,” in *The Work of Opera: Genre, Nationhood, and Sexual Difference*, ed. Richard Dellamora and Daniel Fischlin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 27–47; and T. Frank Kennedy, “*Candide* and a Boat,” in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts: 1540–1773* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 316–32, esp. 319–21, and 330. I am grateful to T. Frank Kennedy, S.J., for sharing with me his photocopies of the manuscript score and libretto of the *Apotheosis* opera (both now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris) and the performing score that was prepared under his direction. (I have consulted all of these in preparing Exs. 1 and 2. The manuscript libretto contains crucial elements—the spoken prologue and the stage directions—that were omitted from the libretto when it was printed in the 1991 program book and the Dorian recording.)

17 Grassi was largely responsible for technical aspects of a church then being built at the College to honor Saint Ignatius. It was completed in 1626, four years after the performance of Kapsberger’s *Apotheosis*. In 1623, a year after the *Apotheosis*, Grassi achieved a sort of immortality by writing a treatise that attacked Galileo’s astronomical theories and was in turn ridiculed by Galileo (in the latter’s *Il saggiatore*, 1623).

18 The prologue is not spoken on the subsequent CD recording (details below, after the Bibliography), but its substance is summarized in the booklet. In the recording (1998–99), some prominent singing roles are taken by women; a mixed chorus is used (as it was in 1991). In 1991, male and female dancers also participated, and instrumental interludes were added (dances and *sinfonie* by Kapsberger), performed likewise by a mix of men and women.

the dancers comply in a *ballo*, no. 21). Delegations from countries on the Jesuit evangelical itinerary—Palestine, India, China, and Japan—likewise turn up. The four non-European lands have much to announce to the other delegations (and the opera audience) because Palestine had been the scene of missionary travels by Ignatius and because Francis had led missions to the other three lands.¹⁹ At the end of the work, statues of the two saints are installed, and, as the spirits of Ignatius and Francis sing from Heaven, the gathered nations—with current-day (Christian) Rome taking the lead—set fire to the temple.

The work's elaborate visual effects and stage maneuvers are now mostly lost to memory, though we can set our imagination loose while listening to the work's one available recording and examining closely a remarkable and little-known visual document: three detailed images, showing costumes and stage action, that were published within a year of the first performance (Figs. 2–5).²⁰ Perhaps more problematic, for today's listeners, is an element that *is* present: the singers' and chorus's sung words, which convey messages more similar to ones found in contemplative or "moral" oratorios than in operas of the day. The representative individual or group (e.g., chorus representing "China's retinue") announces and describes himself or themselves, generally in the third person—as if viewing his, her, or their own story from outside.²¹ Sometimes the characters retell,

19 Francis Xavier had, in life, traveled to India (converting many in Goa), Ceylon, Japan, and an island near China, to seek converts and build missions. Ignatius, before him, had made a perilous and momentous trip to the Holy Land to visit the sites associated with Jesus's life, death, and resurrection. The musical aspects of the various Jesuit missions themselves are beginning to be explored: see, for example, T. Frank Kennedy, "An Integrated Perspective: Music and Art in the Jesuit Reductions of Paraguay," in *The Jesuit Tradition in Education and Missions: A 450-Year Perspective*, ed. Christopher Chapple (Scranton PA: University of Scranton Press, 1993), 215–29 (contrasting the utterly Italianate works by Zipoli that were written and performed in Latin America with the carvings of Indian-faced angels on a Trinidad church).

20 Three etchings of the stage set, including the final destruction of the temple, were published by Johann Friedrich Greuter in 1623 "at the request" of his father Matthaeus (*ad istanza di Matteo Greuter*). They are reproduced here (Figs. 2–5) for the first time in any discussion of Kapsberger's opera. The full sheet (but without enlarged details) is also reproduced, and briefly described, in Simonetta Tozzi, *Incisioni barocche [nel Museo di Roma] de feste e avvenimenti: Giorni d'allegrezza* (Rome: Gangemi, 2002), 168 and 170–71.

21 Women were among the thousands converted on non-European soil by one or another of the two saints. Characters bearing such names as "Palestina" (a feminine noun, and described as a female slave) and "Japan" ("Giappone," a masculine noun) should be understood as representing Christian converts of both sexes from those regions.



Figure 2. Etching by Johann Friedrich Greuter, son of the renowned engraver Matthaeus Greuter. *Ritratto, & Argomento dell'Apoteose, o consagracione de' Santi Ignatio Loiola, e Francesco Saverio. Rappresentata nel Collegio Romano, nelle feste della loro Canonizatione, l'anno M, DC, XXII* (Portrait [i.e., visual souvenir] and Argument [i.e., plot summary] of the Apotheosis, or Consecration, of Saints Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier, Performed in the Roman College, during the Celebrations of Their Canonization in the Year 1622). Dated 1623, i.e., some months after the first performance of the *Apotheosis*. (Roma, Sovrintendenza Capitolina, Museo di Roma; inv. GS 62; reproduced by permission.) The bottom half of the sheet contains a prose summary, in Italian, of the spoken prologue and the opera's five acts. Superscript symbols identify the individual characters shown in the three images on the top half.



Figure 3. Greuter's first image, showing the prologue and the beginning of Act 1. A) Wisdom, enthroned on a cloud, before descending to the stage to speak the prologue; B) Wisdom departing on another cloud at the end of the Prologue; C) Rome arriving in a chariot pulled by white horses and accompanied by sixteen Roman youths and the "noble architect Metagenes"; and D) the nearly instantaneous building of a temple such as the ancient Romans dedicated to their "false gods."

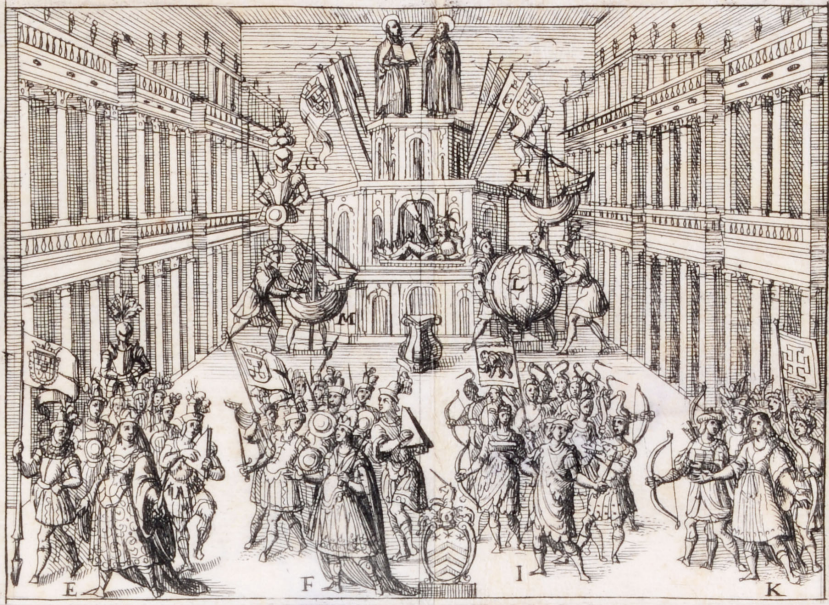


Figure 4. Greuter's second image, showing the rest of Act 1 and all of Act 2. E and F) Spain and Portugal, each accompanied by seventeen youths (who are here shown singing, dancing, and holding swords); G) a "trophy" of arms such as Spain has used in war; H) the Portuguese ship that brought Saint Francis to India; I) India, wearing a feathered headdress more typical of New World natives, and surrounded by seventeen Indian youths, each carrying a bow and arrows and wearing on his head what is described as an actual, though presumably stuffed (*non finto, ma vero, e reale*), purple-colored bird from the region; K) a disheveled Palestine, with her own native youths, who carry bows and arrows and are dressed in Turkish fashion; L) a globe, formed by the Indians' bows; M) a ship offered to Saint Ignatius by the Palestinian contingent; and Z) statues of the two saints, made from incense brought by the representatives of Palestine. (There is no J.)



Figure 5. Greuter's third image, showing Acts 3–5. N) France, offering to Ignatius the River Seine (letter O, represented by the river god Neptune); P) Japan with its squadron, offering Francis a crown from their land (letter Q) and palm fronds, in memory of the "great number of martyrs of this new Church"; R) Italy, offering Francis flowers and herbs; S) China, bringing him cloths of silk; T) the Chinese warriors create with their shields an image—near-circular—of the Great Wall that protects their realm from that of the Tartars; V) the Italian warriors create with their shields an image of the leaping flames indicating the heavenly protection—stronger than China's Great Wall—that they receive from Ignatius along the road to Heaven; X) Rome and its provinces arrive with flames to set the temple afire. The portion of the image marked "&" [i.e., ampersand] shows the conflagration, which is followed by an earthquake. The portion marked with a Christian cross shows Heaven opening; the two saints are seen offering their protection to the Holy Church and to its "great Shepherd," Pope Gregory XV. After which, "Heaven closes, and all ends with festive song." (There is neither U nor W.)

or half-poetically allude to, anecdotes from their own region's encounter with Ignatius or Francis Xavier. Intense verbal images recur, often applied in contrasting ways. For example, fire or *ignis*—the presumed root of the name Ignatius—is invoked as, among other things, “the infernal flames of lascivious love.” Similarly, a solo for the singer representing France reports that Ignatius once dunked a sexually uncontrollable man in the river Seine in order to cool his burning desires. (The river is shown in Fig. 5, letter N.) Yet fire is sometimes equated with devotion to Christian virtue, which spreads worldwide through a beneficent contagion: “Touched by the fire of Ignatius, impure fire is removed” (no. 67).²² At the work's end, fire devours the ancient temple, thereby cleansing the world of paganism and announcing the triumph of Catholicism and its missionary work.

A remarkable passage involving two choral groups (or singing-and-dancing groups) similarly illustrates a basic Jesuit message (nos. 85–86). The Chinese retinue declares that China's “long walls” protect its “vast realms,” and the Italian retinue argues in response that the “vigor of [Ignatius's] guiding flame” protects the Italian people even “more bravely” (than the Great Wall protects the Chinese). These choral statements alternate with dances in which the Chinese represent the Great Wall with their shields (Fig. 5, letter T) and the Italians hold their shields aloft—and perhaps raise and lower them, or jump into the air with them—to suggest the leaping flames of Christian belief (Fig. 5, letter V).²³

Japan and India Sing

As the “Great Wall” episode suggests, the anecdotes told by the various countries—whether as solos or choruses—are often specific to the given

22 T. Frank Kennedy, CD booklet in *The Jesuit Operas* (Dorian DOR-93243, 2 compact discs), 18–21 (and nos. 63, 65, and 67), plus printed synopsis. The CD booklet states that Kennedy's synopsis was “translated from the original synopsis of 1622.” The wording of Kennedy's synopsis seems to derive from, but is somewhat fuller than, that of the Italian-language plot summary given here in Fig. 2 (below Greuter's three images). Kennedy's synopsis first appeared in the program book for the 1991 performances, where it was described as an “adaption of the original synopsis of 1622.”

23 Kennedy, *Jesuit Operas* CD booklet, 15.

region. A solo for a singer representing Japan explains that Francis Xavier—or, presumably, his spirit now in Heaven—tamed a sea storm that was impeding the arrival in Rome of the Japanese contingent. (Japan and its squadron are shown carrying, somewhat oddly, palm fronds: see Fig. 5, letter P.) The librettist, by praising the Spanish cleric as “learned in the ways of the sea” (no. 60), may be alluding to legends about miracles that Francis accomplished during his sea voyages (such as making salt water drinkable for the sailors). Still, the wording implies something more: namely, that he—apparently representing European technological expertise—gave crucial seafaring advice to the helpless Japanese.²⁴ In one sense, this is a somewhat accurate reflection of the fact that Japanese shogunates had no big sailing ships until the mid-sixteenth century, when they began building them after having encountered the Dutch and other ship-borne traders. In another sense, though, the implication is utterly misleading and perhaps insulting. After all, the island nation had long ago mastered the waves with more modest-sized vessels—and had regularly prevailed in naval struggles against China and Korea.

The singer named “Japan” also proclaims that the country’s fields, formerly barren and briar-covered, now “flourish for heaven” because Francis Xavier’s blood has watered the ground (no. 68). This should be taken metaphorically—as reference to Christian conversions—rather than as agricultural statistic. Yet the triumphalist (Eurocentric and Christian-centric) imagery is again undermined by historical fact. Beginning in 1614, the Tokugawa shogunate had forbidden the dissemination of all Christian literature. In 1617, it had put four Christian missionaries to death. In 1622 (the year of the *Apotheosis* opera), it would kill another fifty-five Christian missionaries and local converts.²⁵ By around 1650, the seed that Francis Xavier and his fellows had sown at great pains and personal risk and that, by some accounts, had produced “a Christian community [in Japan] approaching half a million” would be reduced to “a small underground sect.” Christianity would continue to have a minimal existence in Japan for the

24 Francis’s shipboard miracles are detailed on silver plates now decorating his tomb in Goa, according to http://gogoa.net/the_tomb_of_st_francis_xavier.htm.

25 For a variety of scholarly explanations of this 1622 “Great Martyrdom” (as it is known in Catholic tradition) and of some earlier executions and torturings (1587, 1597) of Iberian- and Japanese-born Jesuits and some Japanese laypersons, see Andrew C. Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542–1742* (Maryknoll NY: Orbis Books, 1994), 75–76, 98–99.

next two hundred years, when the country—having stopped building big ships—ceased trading abroad and became for more than two hundred years the “closed land” of Asia.²⁶

A vocal solo for India (no. 29) likewise uses a kind of harvest image (pearl-fishing) in its appreciation of Francis Xavier’s special powers. (The singer portraying India and its chorus of young warriors are seen in Fig. 4 at letter I. Their draped costumes seem freely imagined. The lead singer’s feathered crown may have been inspired by headdresses of another kind of “Indian”: the natives of the New World. The others each wear an entire native bird on their heads.) Here the singer alludes to struggles between two imperial powers—the Portuguese and the Mughals—over the natural resources and labor of the Indian subcontinent.

On the altars of Francis let the young people of India amass gifts of pearls, [which are] ennobled by their birth in the rich [waters of the] Pontus. . . . Since Xavier, precious in our world, ordered that these pearls, riches stolen from their native shore, . . . be returned [to India], he was deserving of a very great gift.²⁷

T. Frank Kennedy, in his adaptation of the opera’s *argomento*, explains that the words refer to “the time [that] the trade of the Indians was miraculously restored at Xavier’s intercession.”²⁸ Kennedy’s laconic wording of 1991—like that of the 1622 libretto—was perhaps meant to be tactful. To be truer to history, though, the description needs to be greatly expanded, for it leaves unmentioned the dynasty that had been ruling India since 1526: the Mughals. The first of the Mughal rulers was Babur, great-grandson of the renowned Timur Leng (known in English as Tamburlaine). Ba-

26 Ross, *Vision*, 115–16.

27 Kennedy, *Jesuit Operas* CD booklet, 15. Here and elsewhere, I have slightly reworked the translation by T. Frank Kennedy, S.J. The geographical term “Pontus” was used in a variety of ways by the Greeks, Romans, and Byzantine empires. Its primary reference was the Black Sea, hence the lands to the south and east of it (including Turkey and Armenia). The location is perhaps best known today through Racine’s 1673 tragedy *Mithridate* and (based on Racine, nearly a century later) *Mitridate, re di Ponto* (K. 87, 1771), an opera by the fourteen-year-old Mozart about the region’s last emperor, Mithridates VI Eupator. There may be some confusion in the *Apotheosis* libretto between the southeast coast of India (where Francis Xavier did preach and make many converts) and the Persian Gulf, perhaps because pearl diving was a major part of the local economy in both locations.

28 Kennedy, *Jesuit Operas* CD booklet, 8.

bur's arrival echoed, and extended, Timur's plundering of Delhi in 1398. The "Moors"—as Francis Xavier called the Mughals in a letter of 1542 to Ignatius—had "mistreated and persecuted" the Paravas, a people living on the southeast coast that faces Ceylon (today's Sri Lanka); more specifically, those "Moors" had "seized their ships, with which they [the Paravas] gained their livelihood." The Portuguese Lord Governor of India, Martim Afonso de Sousa then arrived "with a fleet in person against the Moor . . . [and] slew a great number of them and put them all to flight." The Governor gave the fishing boats back to the Christians and to other poor fishermen. For this, Francis Xavier's letter continues, the Portuguese, and God, were much thanked by the Paravas.²⁹

India's vocal solo in Kapsberger's opera focuses entirely on the positive outcome of this episode: the local population had their livelihood directly restored by Francis Xavier and thus (the libretto expects us to understand) by the pope, as God's personal representative on earth. Neither the libretto nor the prose scenario mentions the identity of the assailants (the Mughals), and neither makes any mention of Portugal, which throughout the sixteenth century was engaged in a military occupation of India (a country lacking modern means of warfare and transport). Perhaps the aim was to avoid offending any government or its representatives. The net effect, though, was to convey, in an ostensibly religious context, the message that distant peoples are inherently docile and require intervention on their behalf by anyone coming in the name of God (as understood by Christian doctrine).

David R. M. Irving has observed, "at no time [in this sacred opera] is there any mention of colonial expansion in the Americas and the Philippines—which provided the Jesuit order with material means for worldwide access, transport and international development—nor representations of the peoples of these territories."³⁰ Presumably the reason for this is that the work was meant to celebrate Saints Ignatius and Francis, not to retell the broader missionizing effort that followed in their wake.

Other strategic silences within the work cannot be so readily defended. Official Jesuit histories tell us that Francis Xavier and other missionar-

29 Letter from Francis Xavier to Ignatius of Loyola, October 1542, in Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times*. trans. M. Joseph Costelloe, vol. 2 (Rome, Jesuit Historical Institute, 1973–1982), 302.

30 David R. M. Irving, "Jesuit Opera," in *Early Music* 33 (2005): 358–59.

ies—notably the vicar general, Miguel Vaz—had at various times pleaded with their patron, King João III of Portugal, to put a halt to various notably un-Christian actions of the Portuguese colonizers. These accounts mentioned that soldiers and merchants were—with the assistance or passive approval of the governors—pillaging local resources, maintaining a gambling den in Goa, and consorting with native women (despite having, in many cases, wives waiting for them in Portugal). In particular, Vaz reported that the colonizers had “retained all the tyrannies of the Moors [i.e., Mughal rulers]” and had even “discovered new methods for despoiling and oppressing the people.” Some of the “clergy were very anxious to be stationed there, not however to preach the faith, but to engage in trade.”³¹ All this, though well-attested in the Jesuits’ own official documents, finds no echo in the oratorio’s passages about India and Ceylon, where it could have added moments of tension—and occasions for more images of fire (righteous anger by church officials and principled colonial administrators)—that a music- and drama-loving audience might have found welcome, and religiously inspiring. But a dramatization of the tension between religious idealism, on the one hand, and the human propensity for such sins as lust and greed, on the other—a tension that has been widely recognized and discussed across the centuries, not least by Christian theologians—would surely have undercut the desired message on this occasion, namely the virtues of missionizing among the heathen.

Exoticism and the Style Question: Biblical Palestine and Current-Day Arab Youths

Kapsberger and Grassi’s *Apotheosis* does manage to describe one country—Palestine—with great vividness, presumably because a painfully dramatic

31 Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier* 2:503–04 (quotations are from Schurhammer’s lengthy paraphrase of a letter from Miguel Vaz, ca. January 1545) and 2:542–44; cf. George Davison Winius, *The Black Legend of Portuguese India: Diogo do Couto, His Contemporaries and the Soldado Prático: A Contribution to the Study of Political Corruption in the Empires of Early Modern Europe*. Xavier Centre of Historical Research Studies Series 3 (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1985). The damage done by the Portuguese in Brazil, during roughly the same years, was more extreme. By the mid-sixteenth century, the settlers had worked the native population to death on the plantations, killed them accidentally by their foreign microbes, or scared them off into the forests, and were beginning to ship over Africans by the thousands to replace them.

story relevant to the locale was central to Christian belief. A disheveled female slave enters (Fig. 4, letter K). Or, rather, she is described by the various characters (including herself) as entering. The listener quickly learns from this slave, named "Palestine," that Jerusalem—which is to say the city's Jewish population during and after New Testament times—was punished by God for the region's complicity in the death of His beloved Son:

India: Who with such wretchedly unkempt hair burdens our faces with tears? . . .

Palestine: She is Jerusalem, once worthy of veneration with the blessed trappings of power, who nevertheless was poorly trained (by too favorable a fortune) to bear so great a disaster. Once defiled by so great a slaughter's crime, Jerusalem now learns to bear a harsh yoke on its chained neck. Few ashes survive from so great a city. . . .

Palestine's retinue (four-part chorus): Whether Ignatius delights in chaste births, or monuments of great slaughter, here Ignatius stood, where the red rocks preserve the sacred blood.³²

T. Frank Kennedy claims that in Palestine's first solo (no. 30, including the remarks about Jerusalem just quoted) "the vocal line obviously manifests an eastern sound, suitable to the portrayal of Palestine."³³ But such a search for touches of local color is demonstrably anachronistic, being based on ways that musical exoticism would occasionally operate in eighteenth-century operas by Rameau or Mozart and become normative in operas yet another century later by Bizet and Puccini. In reality, as one might well expect, Kapsberger's vocal line here does not differ in style from the vocal lines that he composed for, say, the singers representing "Rome" or "France" nor from those that Monteverdi or Cavalli composed for various non-exotic characters from Greek or Roman myth and history (such as gods, emperors, and warriors) or abstractions that were equally non-exotic (such as Honor and Envy).³⁴

32 Kennedy, *Jesuit Operas* CD booklet, 15–16, act 1, musical nos. 29, 30, 36.

33 Kennedy, *Jesuit Operas* CD booklet, 3.

34 The music director of the work's one recording assigns the continuo part to a lute. The solution feels appropriate, recalling at once David's harp—a touch of eastern-ness?—

A Festschrift for Kerala J. Snyder

31
India
sol - ve - re cul - tus Quae ta - men pas - sis mi - se - re ca - pil - lis

b.c.
4-#3 # # (6) 4-#3

36
Var - get as - pec - tus la - cri - mo - sa nos - tros? Fa - re quae no - bis

7-6 # #

40
a - des. Va - de tan - ti ve - na do - lo - ris.

(6) (6) 7-6 #

1
Palestine
Nul - la cui spar - sum si - ne le - ge cri - nem Co - git in - tex - tis pre - ti - o - sa gem - mis

5
Vit - ta, nec cur - vo di - a - de - ma fron - tem im - pli - cat au - ro. Il - la si nes - cis

#

10
Sa - ly - ma est, be - a - tis Im - pe - ri quon - dam ve - ne - ran - da re - bus Haec ta - men ven - tis

(6) # # # 4-#3 # #

Example 1. Kapsberger, *Apotheosis sive Consecratio SS. Ignatii et Francisci*: Act 2, nos. 29–30, dissonant vocal line against bass, and then emphasis on *magnae* (how great was the bloody slaughter of the Jerusalemites, as punishment for allowing Christ to be killed).

Palestine
 Tu Pa-les-ti-nos Pa-ter ae-quus au-di Il-le si-ter-ras prae-ter om-nes
 b.c.
 (b) (4)
 5
 An-gu-lus ti-bi ri-sit ma-di-di-que sac-ro san-gui-ne col-les.
 # # 4-#3

Example 2. Kapsberger, *Apotheosis*, Act 2, no. 45: the singer portraying Palestine asks God—with strikingly lament-like dissonance—to hear the prayers of the inhabitants of that land even though they mocked the Lord.

Nonetheless, non-exotic music can, in its own ways, combine with words to convey perceptions of a distant region.³⁵ In the present case, the libretto lets us know that the Jewish population of the Holy Land (in 1622) is a pitiful remnant of a glorious past, that it is impoverished, and that it is groaning under the weight of a “harsh yoke” as punishment for having spilled “sacred blood.” The punishment in question is clearly the occupation of Jerusalem, first by the Romans and more recently by various Muslim forces (primarily the Ottomans and the Mamlukes). The crime of spilling “sacred blood” is an allusion to Gospel reports that the Jewish authorities handed Jesus over to the Romans for execution. Kapsberger carefully contrives to emphasize the message (see Ex. 1). Minor-mode descending lines lament Jerusalem’s current bedraggled state, not least by creating repeated dissonances against a long-held A-minor chord in the continuo. A sudden thrust upward to the word “magnae” in the phrase “caedis heu magnae scelerae impiata” (the crime of so *great* a slaughter) dramatizes the enormity of Jerusalem’s guilt.

A solo for Palestine later in Act 2 (musical no. 45) makes the same point, and more emphatically. This effective minor-mode lament includes a brief tortured moment for the voice (Ex. 2), as if now expressing deep

and melancholy lute songs by, say, John Dowland (1563–1626). But Kennedy’s remark about an “eastern sound” implies that eastern-ness is inherent in Kapsberger’s pitches and rhythms, which it is not.

35 This point is central to the “All the Music in Full Context” Paradigm (see discussions cited in n. 11 above).

empathy for those in the Holy Land whose ancestors, according to the New Testament account, mocked Jesus: “Heavenly Father, justly hear the Palestinians [i.e., inhabitants of Palestine], even if that corner of the world with its hills moist with sacred blood has ridiculed you more than other lands [tibi propter omnes . . . risit].”³⁶ The musical phrase emphasizes the Jews’ pain by a suspension on the high E-flat against a G-minor chord in the accompaniment—a suspension that is then resolved by a dramatic downward leap of a diminished fourth. It would be a mistake, however, to view this passage solely as a comment on “the Jews.” A longstanding hermeneutic tradition in ecclesiastical writings had encouraged Christians to identify with—so as to learn from the errors of—various kinds of sinners and infidels, including the inhabitants of the Holy Land who rejected the Savior.³⁷

Arab Muslims, not Jews, are the explicit topic of a separate short solo for Palestine (no. 32), and the music is quite a contrast: a strophic, up-tempo tune that Kapsberger himself later published to an Italian text in his fourth book (1623) of *villanelle*.³⁸ Kapsberger’s cheerful, strongly patterned tune and “walking-bass” line support well the singer’s call to young Arabs (or, as the libretto puts it with characteristic metaphorical exuberance, “youths” who are themselves the “blessed harvest of Arabia”) to hurry from their “Palestinian fields” and bring with them “pious incense” so that Ignatius’s altar may glow forever with a flame “redolent of goods from Sheba.”³⁹ In musical terms, Christian conversion has turned these toiling young Bedouins and other Arabs of the Holy Land into endearing, fleetly stepping Neapolitans. Indeed, immediately after this solo, the soloists representing India and Palestine vie to sing ever more cheerful numbers in praise of Ignatius’s and Francis’s pious wanderings, and they urge the assembled company—as the singers representing Spain and Portugal had urged it before—to join in mock battles, instrumental music, and “dancing leaps” (Nos. 33–39).

36 Kennedy, *Jesuit Operas* CD booklet, 15, 18. The words about listening to the residents of the Holy Land are *Palestinos . . . aequus audi*.

37 Further, see Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 198–201.

38 Kennedy, *Jesuit Operas* CD booklet, 3.

39 Kennedy, *Jesuit Operas* CD booklet, 16.

The Marionette Factor

The words of these solos by the representative of Palestine manifest a variety of exoticism that may be more powerful for being left largely implicit. That is, they characterize a distant people through a European-Christian lens that refuses almost to recognize the existence, much less consider the merits, of the cultures and religions with which it is coming into contact.

True, Kapsberger's *Apotheosis* as a whole offers much praise for local resources and products—such as Arabian incense, Indian pearls, Chinese silks, and Japanese “green palm trees” (perhaps a confusion with the native flora of Taiwan and Indonesia; see Fig. 5)—and stresses that the representatives, when engaging in mock combat, are each dressed “in the battle-gear of his fatherland.”⁴⁰ But it gives no hint that the various peoples also have beliefs and customary behaviors that may be worth noting, much less admiring or, for that matter, combating.⁴¹ Through all their many speeches, the representatives of the various countries end up seeming like differently dressed marionettes, all conveying a single uniform message. Though the message must have been inspiring to the numerous Catholic notables who gathered in Rome to hear and see Kapsberger and Grossi's *Apotheosis* in 1622—and perhaps to many of the Jesuit collegians and schoolboys who performed it—the repetitiousness of that message and the lack of dramatic specificity gave the work little chance of a continuing existence thereafter in more standard (non-ecclesiastical) venues.⁴²

Another non-liturgical religious genre, dramatic oratorio, would soon grant distant peoples more distinctive voices than was possible in Kapsberger's operatic celebration of two Jesuit saints. Numerous oratorios would undertake to, in some sense, let characters or groups (choruses) from the non-Western world “have their say” in a highly public genre. Dramatic oratorios tend to be full-length (lasting from one to several hours), with a compelling plot-line, and with stage directions that were sometimes printed in the libretto for the audience to imagine. But the voice of these cul-

40 “palmas” (nos. 68 and 71) and “armis . . . patriis” (Act 5, track 28).

41 See the broader, and broadly similar, findings of Basil Guy, “Ad majorem Societatis gloriam: Jesuit Perspectives on Chinese Mores in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Exoticism in the Enlightenment*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (Manchester UK: Manchester University Press, 1990), 66–85.

42 The work was performed five times in Rome. The *Apotheosis*—or some other work celebrating St. Francis Xavier—was apparently performed in Goa (Coelho, “Kapsberger's,” 42–44).

tural Others in oratorio was of course still fully determined by the librettist and composer: Europeans who often had little knowledge of or interest in the people and locale in question. In the dramatic oratorios of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, therefore, the marionette factor would continue to be a powerful, and complicating, one.⁴³

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43 See Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 90–97, and *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*, 192–207. In Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, the marionette effect is strongly present, but so is a countervailing theme: anti-imperialism (*Musical Exoticism*, 202–13, 352–53).

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SPECIAL ISSUE: "Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth": Music and Sound in the Ministries of Early Modern Jesuits. Guest editor: Daniele V. Filippi.

RECORDING

The Jesuit Operas, a 2-CD set consisting of Kirnberger's *Apotheosis* plus a collectively written late eighteenth-century sacred opera, *San Ignacio*, by Domenico Zipoli, Martin Schmid, and anonymous (possibly indigenous) South American musicians. Ensemble Abendmusik and vocal soloists, including Ellen Hargis, John Elwes, and Randall Wong. Musical director, James David Christie. Dorian DOR-93243.