The melodies printed on early modern ballads have traditionally been seen as something of a muddle. The case in point has always been the tune ‘Damon and Pithias’ on A Newe Ballade of a Louer Extollinge his Ladye, published in 1568 by William Griffith (Figure 1).\(^1\) It is the first (and for several years the only) extant broadside ballad to include a notated tune. As the melody appears it is almost unsingable. It contains several tritones, and not for nothing is this interval known as ‘the devil in music’. The tune was for a long time seen as catastrophically incorrect music; just a pretty picture to liven up the broadside. ‘Mere claptrap jumble’, as William Chappell described it, ‘to take in the countryman’\(^2\). This article will outline the problems with the music on the ballad but, by then situating the song in the wider field of Tudor cheap print and music, it will suggest that A Newe Ballade of a Louer Extollinge his Ladye was one of a number of sixteenth-century musical anomalies which demonstrate entrepreneurial printers’ willingness to experiment with new products for emerging markets. By exploring some of these unusual pieces in their wider context rather than in isolation, it complicates our picture of Tudor musical culture. Some of the results are necessarily speculative, but the article seeks to open rather than close debate.

The broadside ballad genre, of which the Newe Ballade appears to be an example, was well-established by the 1560s. Its standard features included two columns of text in black-letter type printed on one side of a single sheet of paper. The text was often surrounded by a decorative border and the sheet sometimes contained illustrative woodcuts. Indeed, broadside ballads do seem to date back almost to the beginnings of English print. One early black-letter broadside, known as Verses on the seven virtues, has an estimated publication date of about 1500.\(^3\) Despite its narrow, flowered woodcuts dividing the page horizontally, separating one verse from the next, it is recognisable as a broadside ballad.

More familiar is An Elegy on the Death of Henry VII, published in 1509. A large woodcut of the king on his deathbed ornaments the head of the sheet, between the royal coat of arms and the
crowned Tudor rose, all surrounded by a floral border. Although there is substantial damage to the left-hand side of the sheet, it appears that the text is in two columns of black-letter font. At the end of each of the seven verses, a refrain laments that ‘…henry the seuenth alas alas lyeth dede’. Unfortunately, the top of the page is also missing, so it is impossible to know if the sheet once went by the loquacious title which was typical of these ballads, or if it also included a tune reference. By the mid-sixteenth century, ballad printing had settled into all these routines with varying degrees of conformity.

*A Newe Ballade of a Louer Extollinge his Ladye* conforms in all significant ways to these conventions, except for the notation. Among both the limited body of sixteenth-century, single-sheet, English printed music and the larger number of broadside ballads, therefore, *A Newe Ballade of a Louer Extollinge his Ladye* sticks out like the proverbial sore thumb. So Chappell’s account of mere claptrap jumble does not quite ring true. If the music on *A Newe Ballade of a Louer Extollinge his Ladye* were just a picture, why bother? It was too expensive and difficult to print music in the sixteenth century for Griffith to have thought the notation just made a pretty picture. A woodcut of two lovers would be more fitting and much easier to produce. The music must be there for a reason.

The melody seems to have been particularly up-to-the-minute during 1560s. The original lyrics for ‘Damon and Pithias’, beginning ‘Awake ye wofull wights’, appear to come from Richard Edwards’ 1564 play. They appear without a musical setting in a sixteenth-century poetic miscellany. In an Elizabethan manuscript part-book (British Library Harley 7578), the tune is used for the tenor line of a hymn, parodying the original words with the incipit ‘I woefull wretched wight’. In addition, the tune was also used for several printed songs. Alexander Lacy, a specialist in ballad printing, entered ‘a ballett intituled tow lamentable songes PITIHAS and DAMON’ in the Stationers’ Registers in 1565-6. The tune was used for ‘The Lamentation of a Woman Being Wrongfully Defamed’ in *A Handeful of Pleasant Delites* and a song beginning ‘Can my poore harte be still’ in
John Phillip’s play *Pacient Grissell*. Soon afterwards it was used for a song in Edmund Elviden’s *Historie of Pesistratus and Catanea*.9

It is true, however, that the music on the broadside is badly wrong. It contains unsingable intervals and gives no real sense of key or even mode. Despite the regularity of the double short metre lyrics, the lack of bar lines makes it feel as though the tune wanders formlessly.10 In short, it lacks both shape and structure, prompting speculation that it might be a ‘remnant of a style of singing hitherto unknown’.11 In fact, as several scholars have shown, the answer is much simpler. The tune is the victim of a misprint.

Andrew Sabol and, later, Nicholas Temperley, proposed that the C clef is on the wrong line. Rather than being on the bottom line of the stave, as it appears on the broadside, they suggested that it should be on the line above. That gives us a tune in the Dorian mode, similar to those in the manuscripts. It is also possible that the clef is correct but there are flats missing from the stave signature (a less likely solution given the manuscript evidence).

Furthermore, the manuscripts also suggest that although the music on the broadside appears to be in duple time, it probably proceeds in triple time. The music for ‘Awake ye wofull wights’ includes lute accompaniment, which might explain the rests at the end of the lines on the broadside.12 The rests also place the tune safely in triple time, thereby making it much more reminiscent of popular triple-time ballad tunes.13 Although bar lines occur in the same places in both manuscript versions (at the end of each line of words), there is no indication that instrumental accompaniment was envisaged for the version in Harley 7578. Instead, it was intended as a three-man song. Furthermore, we know that some ballad tunes circulated in both duple and triple time versions.14 When sung in triple time, ‘Damon and Pithias’ resembles a standard ballad tune. In duple time, however, it is reminiscent of the tunes used for Sternhold and Hopkins’ metrical psalter, even down to the rests at the ends of the lines.
Indeed, the popularity of psalm singing increased dramatically during the mid-sixteenth century and the influence of such a major development in vocal music was felt across the musical spectrum. The lute setting of ‘Awake ye wofull wights’ includes instrumental passages, while the Tudor cleric William Forrest noted that courtly psalms were ‘Sung to the vyall, lute, treble or base’.15

Early four-part domestic settings of psalms found in manuscript are musically very similar to surviving popular, secular songs, perhaps because they were derived from existing dance melodies or popular tunes.16 For example, Miles Coverdale’s *Goostly Psalmes and Spiritual Songes*, containing 15 Lutheran-style metrical psalms with tunes, was published in 1535. It was intended for domestic singing, in order that its godly and educated audience might replace ‘All other balettes of fylthynes’ with more fitting pastimes.17 Archbishop Thomas Cranmer’s vernacular litanies, with music based on plainsong for the clerks and choirs to sing, appeared from Richard Grafton’s press in 1544, while Robert Crowley produced a complete psalter in 1549 which was printed with just one Gregorian psalm tone in four parts, which sufficed for all the psalms.18 The Gregorian psalm tones were intended for chanting many words and syllables on a single note, rather than providing a ‘melodic’ note for every syllable like the metrical psalms. Nevertheless, Crowley’s psalms were written in the fourteeners which would have been familiar to the mid-Tudor audience. For the first time, the psalms were available in a complete and accurate vernacular psalter with music, even if they only had one tune for the whole collection and this itself was more like old-fashioned chant than the fashionably tuneful metrical psalms.19 But none of these publications had any lasting impact.

Congregational psalm-singing, meanwhile, had been unknown at the beginning of Edward VI’s reign in 1547. A mere 20 years later, Sternhold and Hopkins’ *Whole Booke of Psalmes* had revolutionised the way that music was experienced in church. By 1573, the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter contained a complete edition of the psalms with 48 melodies, usually written in minims with semibreves at the beginning and end of each line. Furthermore, congregations were able to remember many of the tunes.20 Although a musically-literate singer could have flicked back in the book and followed the music, it is likely that most people learned the tunes by ear from the parish
clerk, fitting the alternative words to them, in much the same way that ballad tunes were learned and fitted to new words. This was easy because the majority of the psalms (131 of the 156 versions) were in ballad metre.\textsuperscript{21} It has four-line stanzas, usually with an ABCB rhyme scheme. The first and third lines have four accented syllables while the second and fourth have three.\textsuperscript{22} Regular, rhythmic patterns like these create repeated structures which can be broken down and placed in a hierarchy by the brain. These ‘chunks’ are easily stored in the long-term memory, giving a shape to the tune and words which singers find easier to remember.\textsuperscript{23} The benefits of this for an oral culture, where tunes were learned primarily by ear, are obvious.

At a conservative estimate, approximately 220,000 copies of \textit{The Whole Booke of Psalms} had been produced by the end of Elizabeth’s reign, more than one for each member of Tudor society.\textsuperscript{24} Over time, a few of the tunes in the \textit{Whole Booke of Psalmes} gained great popularity, while many more fell completely out of favour. By the end of the sixteenth century, they had been replaced by ‘common’ tunes, in the sense that they could be used ‘in common’ for any psalm in the same metre. These were substituted for the set tunes which English congregations found difficult to sing. The common tunes were much shorter, more tonal, and, generally, much more like the ballad melodies in circulation at the time.\textsuperscript{25} Knowing a few tunes well would have produced a more musically, emotionally, and spiritually satisfying experience than mumbling through a wide range of poorer tunes week after week. But the fact remains that the significance of the \textit{Whole Booke of Psalms} lies in the number of editions which were printed, especially in its early years. It stands as a testament to people’s willingness to adopt congregational psalm singing, unimaginable only twenty years before. People were now able to join in with the singing and sometimes extemporise harmony lines to fit the common psalm tunes.\textsuperscript{26}

Even where psalm tunes were newly composed, their popularity may have been down to their relatively short and simple melodies, while the nickname ‘Genevan jigs’, applied to the Sternhold and Hopkins psalms in the later sixteenth century, has prompted the suggestion that the English ‘may well have come to regard metrical psalms as a kind of folk music’.\textsuperscript{27} Moreover, the
Sternhold and Hopkins psalter was explicitly marketed to appeal to everyone just as ballads did, in an attempt to replace ballad-singing with a more godly pastime.²⁸

Although it is known that some early psalms took their tunes from popular songs, it remains a moot point whether this influenced the metre of the psalms. While the name of their poetic measure has become associated with ballads, it is in fact difficult to find an example of a ballad in ballad metre before the metrical psalms became popular. This suggests that the psalms’ popularity influenced the development of ballads. One of the earliest secular songs in ballad metre is found in Richard Sheale’s collection. In historyes off olde to rede comprises a strong narrative arc spanning 55 verses. The song is a first-person account of the murder in May 1556 of Edmund West by George, the son of Lord Darcy, as the result of an ongoing family feud. West was returning with his brother, Lewis, from the Whit Monday fair at Rotherham to their cousin’s home in Aughton, when they ‘fonde them selvis on every syde / with enymes besett’. The Wests had with them only a dozen yeomen, while the Darcy brothers were attended ‘with men thre skore’. After a pitched battle, Edmund ‘was felde, and deyde ryght neare’.²⁹ News of the murder reached London, where Henry Machyn recorded it in his diary on 25 May (albeit mistakenly ascribing the murder to Dacre’s son rather than Darcy’s).³⁰ The song therefore described a newsworthy event in some detail, appealing to its audience by using an eye-witness account in the manner of a folk song.

Another song in ballad metre from this period, though, has more similarities to the psalms. A man ys blest that lyves in rest is also found in manuscript rather than print, but it is a secular parody of the first psalm.³¹ It is just possible that, in some cases, psalms took the measure from pre-existing ballad tunes that were used for contrafacta but then dropped out of the ballad repertoire altogether. After all, the Lutheran church appropriated ballad tunes for its psalms specifically because they were both familiar and popular. If a similar process took place in England, this would provide another reason for ballads to designate psalm tunes for their melodies—they were simply carrying out the process of appropriation in reverse. Albeit that the psalm tunes were most likely to have been newly-composed for the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, with balladeers simply doing
what they did best by cashing in on the popularity of the psalms, it is still true that the origins of many sixteenth-century psalm tunes ‘remain a mystery’. A popular tune was too good an opportunity for balladeers to miss, no matter what its source.

What is more, the music A Newe Ballade of a Louer Extollinge his Ladye might not be correct, but it is certainly an attempt at providing the tune, not the random sequence of notes we might expect if it were merely an enticing picture to hoodwink a musically-illiterate purchaser. Griffith was clearly trying to provide the melody, even if it was flawed. It is possible that Griffith simply could not make sense of the music he was handed. Perhaps he could not read the notation himself. Moreover, there is no reason to think that any mistakes had to be Griffith’s. Given that even in Add. MS 15117, a {C} mensuration sign was indicated when the music actually proceeds in {C-dot}, it is possible that whoever wrote out the music made the mistake and Griffith simply copied what he was given, without realising its limitations. This would hardly be unusual, as Tudor printed music, and the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter in particular, was littered with musico-typographical errors despite being used to teach basic music literacy.

Nevertheless, in Griffith’s case, the typographical error raises a more important issue than incompetence: the printer’s experimentation and entrepreneurism. Broadside ballads were, after all, part of a wider cultural field which included sacred and secular music for different numbers of voices, both accompanied and unaccompanied. Surviving secular songs from the period include incomplete part-songs in larger collections, such as the luxury set of part-song books, *XX Songes*, of which only the bassus volume survives. Similarly, a three-part song, *Tyme to Pas with Goodly Sport*, is now believed to have been published by John Rastell as early as 1519-20. A few single-sheet part-songs have also been found, probably dating from the 1520 and 30s, including *As power and wytt* and *Saunce Remedy*. They look provocatively like broadside ballads, with black-letter type in two columns and woodcut borders. They are not broadside ballads as we know them, though. After all, broadside ballads are narrative songs with a single melody line, not three or four-part songs. But
maybe it is time to redefine the broadside ballad more simply: as a popular song published on a broadside.

Our attempts to define the ballad are bedevilled by its very malleability. Opening up the genre to a more inclusive characterisation might help us in a number of ways. Just because a ballad had a single-line melody, there was nothing to stop people extemporising harmony lines in performance. Single-sheet part-songs such as Saunce Remedy, meanwhile, were published with an eye to amateur music-makers who were also interested in sharing their music with others.38 Urban literacy rates were rising, especially among the newly affluent middling sorts. Another explanation might lie in the popularity of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter itself. It was ‘the greatest bestseller of all’ in early modern England and, not only did it contain musical notation, it was used to teach music too.39 As a result, printers such as the Rastells began to experiment. Not everyone could afford to buy a set of part-books, even if mass-production through printing perhaps reduced the cost somewhat. A single sheet was more affordable and could therefore be purchased by a wider cross-section of society. Furthermore, it might represent something more ephemeral that could be purchased on the spur of the moment and enjoyed fleetingly, rather than the more significant and long-term investment in a songbook. This sort of entrepreneurial activity presumably did not reap large rewards, the market being niche after all, but it seems to have been worth a try.

Likewise, it seems that by the mid-1560s, the vogue for metrical psalm-singing had caught hold and secular music was embracing a similar style of music. It is surely not stretching the imagination too far to wonder if their popularity inspired printers and balladeers to capitalise on the psalms’ success. John Hall’s The Courte of Vertue, published in 1565 as a moralised version of The Court of Venus, includes music for tenor which moves in minims and semibreves in a similar manner to the tunes of the Sternhold and Hopkins psalms.40 Only three fragments of The Court of Venus itself survive, but they are each from different editions which between them span almost 30 years from c. 1537 to c. 1564.41 They contain no music, but, again, the enduring popularity of the volume
demonstrates that there was a significant market for popular songbooks as well as psalms. The existence of *The Courte of Vertue* suggests that by 1565, Thomas Marsh saw a market for a book of secular, if godly, songs with printed music aimed at just the same sort of musically-literate people who enjoyed domestic psalm-singing, and perhaps, the godly ballads of the broadside market. Like many other forms of print, the psalms started life as an expensive, elite genre, whose main market would have been the minority who could afford to buy the substantial volumes in which they appeared. Sternhold and Hopkins took metrical psalms to the masses, through a volume that was purchased by churches and shared amongst congregations. The tunes became more familiar as they were appropriated by less refined audiences.

As well as the novelty and popularity of psalm-singing from the 1560s onwards, there are other reasons why the psalm tunes were particularly suitable for certain types of broadside songs, most notably the Elizabethan thanksgiving songs. Among its prefaces, *The Whole Booke of Psalmes* included ‘A Treatise made by Athanasius the great’ which advised singing individual psalms for specific purposes. It set out ways in which specific psalms or groups of psalms could be used as spiritual exercises ‘capable of reforming the disordered movements of the soul through speaking, acting, and singing’. The *Whole Booke of Psalmes* included Athanasius’ table, indicating ‘which Psalms ye shall use for prayer, which for thankesgeuing, which for rehearsal of Gods wonderful actes, to the praise of his name. Also ye may se in them how God hath holpen his chosen people from time, to tyme, and never forsoke them’. Athanasius’ table was followed, in some Elizabethan copies of the psalter, by a new list of ‘The use of the rest of the Psalmes not comprehended in the former table of Athanasius’, which dealt with matters which were directly relevant to the sixteenth century Protestant ascendancy. By imitating the actions of the divine through the use of the psalms, the soul might experience revelatory knowledge both of its own state and that of Christ. Through this process the soul might be reformed in God’s image. In short, the *Whole Booke of Psalmes* actively encouraged the singer to meditate on the psalms and apply them to their own situation. It also associated those tunes with particular meanings.
It was then but a short step to paraphrase those psalms, or to contrafact the tunes with words that might reflect topical issues. This can be seen in the popular thanksgiving songs set to psalm tunes—for example those celebrating the anniversary of Elizabeth I’s accession, or her victory over the northern rebels in 1569-70. John Awdelay’s *A godly ditty or prayer to be song vnto God for the preservation of his Church, our Queene and realme* was to be sung to the eight-line tune of the 137th Psalm, ‘When as we sat in Babylon’.45 Athanasius recommended that Psalm 137 be sung ‘If thou be captiuated with straunge cogitations, and hast perceiued thy self to be led out of the way, and are sorie therfore, cease from henceforth, and staying there where thou perceyuedst thy selfe to sinne, syt and mourne also, as the people did’.46 *A godly ditty or prayer* elided the events of the Northern Rebellion, in which the rebels had entered Durham and re-established Mass in the cathedral, with the Babylonian occupation of Jerusalem.47 Awdelay stressed the need for Elizabeth’s subjects to remain loyal to their queen:

Defend O God our gracious Queene,

From Pope Rebel, and all:

And as by her thy woorkes be seene,

So let thy wrath now fall

Vpon all those that vexe thy truth,

Our Queene, our Realme and state:

And let their vicious prankes of ruth

Light vpon their own pate.48

Even though congregational singing was in its infancy, songs such as this were being sung in churches across London as a means of unifying the queen’s loyal subjects against the rebels.49 They demonstrate the breakdown of cultural barriers. There is no indication that parish clerks and parishioners saw any intrinsic issue with singing essentially secular songs in church at times of national emergency. Godly and loyal they might have been, but sacred they were not. Metrical
psalms started life as private, domestic devotions and had made the move into church; now, during
the Northern Rebellion which threatened the safety and security of the realm, contrafacta on those
psalms were doing much the same thing. Indeed, it was this same Northern Rebellion which
apparently initiated widespread spontaneous celebrations to mark Elizabeth’s Accession Day, 17
November, a practice which had been visible up until that point only in certain areas such as London
and Worcester.\textsuperscript{50}

It seems more than a coincidence that later Elizabethan Accession Days were marked by
secular psalms with sacred overtones, just as the Northern Rebellion had been. These simple songs
drew on a social culture of singing in groups. Tunes were shared (and could carry their own
meanings) and words could be constantly updated. The combination of words, music and inherent
meanings in these songs seems to have satisfied the needs of the regime, the printers and the
people to provide music which brought people together through an evocative, shared musical
experience. This was a successful crossover genre—an experiment that worked—using familiar tunes
and simple words to bring people together in praise and thanksgiving for the combination of a
merciful God and a godly queen. One of the earliest was John Pyttes’ \textit{A Prayer and Also a
Thankesgiuing vnto God for His Great Mercy}, published for Elizabeth’s Accession Day in 1577 by
Christopher Barker. Like Awdelay’s \textit{A godly ditty or prayer}, this song was set to a suitable psalm tune
from Sternhold and Hopkins: it was to be sung to the tune of the 81\textsuperscript{st} Psalm. Nicholas Temperley
noted that this tune was in a lively, triple metre and was reminiscent of earlier carols and court
songs, while Katherine Butler added that its use of repetition and sequence helped to make it
especially memorable.\textsuperscript{51} Nevertheless, it might also have been chosen because the Athanasonic
treatise on the use and purpose of the psalms recommended that this psalm in particular should be
sung ‘If againe thou wilt synge of the wonderous workes of God gyuing God thankes’.\textsuperscript{52} Likewise, it
suggested that ‘If thou wilt sing to the Lorde in solemnitie call together the seruauntes of God and
sing the 81. and the 95. Psalm’.\textsuperscript{53} Both recommendations were relevant to a song which celebrated
God’s ‘good giftes, bestowed on vs, this ninetene yeres now long, / And for our Queen Elizabeth, which so long time hath been, / through thy good prouidence O Lord, our good & gracious Queen’.

Pyttes was an old hand at conjuring new words to old tunes. On 23 March 1559, his A prayer or supplication made vnto God by a yonge man indicated the ‘epigraph’, or theme, of Psalm 119. Its publication predated the The Whole Booke of Psalms, which contained Athanasius’ recommendation that the 119th psalm promoted obedience and cogitation on Christ’s suffering, but the parallels were anyway abundantly clear, since the psalm ruminates at length on the need to eschew sin, submit to God’s will, and speak up for one’s faith even in times of trial. Pyttes’s syllable count and stress is irregular. This suggests that, rather than being sung to a metrical psalm tune, it was intended to be intoned in the manner of a Gregorian psalm. He begged forgiveness for English sins, particularly bewailing the people’s failure to embrace Protestantism fully under Edward VI:

Thou dyddest thy worde plentyfully sowe abrode
Euen vnto vs lorde of tyme very late
But we were to vnthankfull, all with one accorde
Therefore thou dyddest, o lorde, it away take

Although the final verse beseeched God to ‘kepe and preserue Elysabeth our Quene / That she may thy worde now set abrode’, this feels like an addendum. A prayer or supplication made vnto God was published less than 6 months into Elizabeth’s reign, prior to the passing of the Act of Uniformity which set out the order of prayer in the newly re-Protestantized Church of England and while its form was still in flux. In spring 1559, parliament discussed the return of supremacy over the church to Elizabeth. The Act of Supremacy was passed on 22 March. As Easter was rapidly approaching and there was not enough time to organise a new form of worship, Elizabeth’s March 22 proclamation also enforced the radically-Protestant Edwardian statute which ordered everyone to take communion in both kinds, as had been ordained by the Acts of the Apostles. The emphasis on trial and suffering for one’s faith throughout A prayer or supplication made vnto God suggests that it was
actually written during Mary I’s reign, and only published when it was safe to do so under Elizabeth, perhaps with the intent of encouraging people to pray for a godly settlement to the religious problem through its refrain: ‘Wherein hath a yonge man O Lorde to reioyce, / But in thy worde: therefore put I forth my voyce’.

The Elizabethan thanksgiving songs were cheap and popular, in that they required no musical training to sing and were printed on single-sheet broadsides in the same way as ballads. Using the familiar tunes from Sternhold and Hopkins, they were not quite ballads in the traditional sense of the word, but the overlap of the genres here is clear: they used simple, demotic language; they were based on strong themes; and they relied on the oral dissemination of tunes, although those tunes were derived from a new and different source – the church. Combining these features, the songs appealed across society from the educated elite to the illiterate poor. This period coincided, of course, with what appears to be an exponential growth in the broadside ballad trade, which held a similarly wide appeal. Many of these ballads styled themselves as ‘godly’, and many more combined didactic messages of providence, judgement and morality with topical stories to titillate singers and persuade people to buy. While there is some evidence to suggest that (for the self-styled godly at least) these cultures had diverged by the seventeenth century, the mid-sixteenth century witnessed the zenith of the godly ballad. Though they contained only a limited amount of theologically accurate teaching, they found an audience among those who wanted to fuse recreation with an appearance of piety. What they did not do, however, was include musical notation on the printed sheets.

It was where the links to the psalm tunes were less explicit or familiar that musical notation became important. Abel Jeffes printed William Patten’s Ann: Foelicissimi Regni Reginae Elizabeth: XXVI in 1583 (Figure 2). The music and lyrics were based on a psalm but the piece included printed notation because it did not use a standard Sternhold and Hopkins tune. Jeffes followed this in 1586 with R. Thacker’s A godlie Dittie to be song for the preseruation of the Queenes most excellent
Maiesties raigne, another broadside with music. This is another fascinating enigma. John Milsom argued that this was the lone survivor of a multi-sheet part-song, similar to those printed by the Rastells in the 1520s and 30s, while it is possible that the surviving tenor line could have been sung with or without the other parts. Not all the music is original. The refrain is taken from the 81st psalm, and Kathryn Butler suggested that Thacker was a Norwich wait who used the psalm tune refrain to encourage audience participation in their song. There is, however, another possibility. The rests in the music are similar to those in A Newe Ballade of a Louer Extollinge his Ladye, where they might allow for instrumental accompaniment. If it were sung by the Norwich waits, they might also have played an accompaniment. Furthermore, none of these explanations is mutually exclusive, pointing to a lack of musical boundaries combined with a high level of adaptability. Then as now, musicians (professional and amateur alike) simply adapted their songs to the resources that were available and the ability of the performers. These songs were designed to appeal to people who enjoyed psalm-singing, either in groups or as solo songs. Although they could be sung alone, these thanksgiving songs lent themselves to group performance on instruments or voices, encouraging sociability among families and friends while retaining a godly and reserved demeanour. They also made cheap and cheerful souvenirs of festive occasions.

Likewise, a similar market might be imagined for Richard Beeard’s A Godly Psalme of Marye Queene, printed by William Griffith soon after Mary I’s accession in 1553 (Figure 3). It is not a broadside, but a relatively cheap twelve-page pamphlet including music in four parts. The medius and contratenor voices face the tenor and bassus. The tune is in the tenor and the first verse is underlaid in each voice. Its 44 verses are written in common, or ballad, metre. A Godly Psalme is similar to the Sternhold and Hopkins psalm tunes in that most of the lines are bookended with semibreves, even where they begin with unstressed minims. In some ways, though, it is quite different. It takes more skill to sing, because the parts do not move homophonically throughout. In this respect A Godly Psalme is similar in style to early verse anthems such as those by Richard
Farrant, or pieces such as those found in the Lumley and Wanley part-books, although it is rather shorter at only four lines per verse and has strophic rather than through-composed music.65

*An Godly Psalme of Marye Queen* is an interesting combination of ballad and psalm. Musically, it is not a ballad in the normal sense of the word, having as it does music in four parts. But the lyrics are similar to those of a standard broadside ballad, consisting of a strong narrative combined with descriptive background material. Their style is reminiscent of the broadside ballads published in the wake of Mary’s accession to the throne. These stressed her legitimacy and right to inherit the throne of England.66  Beeard first described God’s mercy in preventing the success of the Duke of Northumberland’s coup against Mary I, which aimed to set his daughter in law Lady Jane Grey on the throne. The psalm then turned its attention to Mary’s accession, presenting it as the result of God’s divine favour and grace. Beeard suggested that godly men’s hearts ‘oney seeke that ryghtwysenesse / And equitie may raygne’, so God had answered their prayers in granting Mary’s rightful succession:

The lawful, iust, and rightuouse,

Of England, head, and Queene:

To bee the true enheritoure,

As hathe her brother beene.

Mary’s right to inherit was spelled out in simple terms. It came from her ‘her byrth, descending from / Her godly father streight’ as ‘eldest sister right / Vnto oure soueraigne Lord, / Kynge Edward late the syxt by name’. Beeard was confident that Mary ‘No doubt wil strongly buyld vpon / Her brothers good fondacion’, commanding that Mary ‘buyld the house, and fortresse vp / Of trew religion’ on the ‘ground worke hee hathe layde him selfe’. The final verses of the psalm were given over to praising the queen and praying that she would be protected by God. *A Godly Psalme of Marye Queene* is followed by a shorter work which combines metrical versions of Psalms 145, 146, and 148.
Beeard was a Protestant who became rector of St-Mary-at-Hill. There were close connections between St-Mary-at-Hill and the royal court throughout the first half of the sixteenth century. A group of singing-men, musicians, and playwrights are linked to the church by a manuscript collection of songs, play fragments, instrumental music, and poetry assimilated in the 1550s. The group included William Mundy, composer of one of the most spectacular vocal works of the mid-sixteenth-century, the *Vox Patris Caelestis*; playwright and balladeer, John Heywood; composer, John Redford; as well as Richard Edwards, author of *Damon and Pithias*. The text of *Vox Patris* was written by William Forrest, who claimed to be Mary I’s chaplain, and Milsom argues that the six-voice antiphon was written for Mary’s coronation pageant on 30 September 1553, possibly being sung by the choristers of St-Mary-at-Hill. Forrest also published *A New Ballade of the Marigolde* after Mary’s accession, which praised the queen for her many virtues. The fact that the broadside did not refer to a tune might not be as much of a hindrance as it first appears. Only a minority of broadside ballads in this period include a tune reference. They were sold not only from bookstalls around St Paul’s, which was itself one of the stops on the pre-coronation procession, but also by travelling chapmen and balladeers. The face-to-face interaction of seller and purchaser suggests that you learned unnamed tune from the salesman. Otherwise, you simply put the lyrics to any tune that fitted (of which there would be many, given the song’s regular stress count) or made one up. Since this broadside looks like a ballad, sounds like a ballad, and claims to be a ballad, it seems safe to assume that a ballad is just what it is. Forrest was, after all, a friend of John Heywood, who wrote at least two ballads in support of the Marian regime. Furthermore, Forrest claimed to be a musician. An autobiographical poem described how, one Christmas, he was employed to supply ‘songe and Organs’ for the festivities.

Nevertheless, the coronation procession was a civic event and was organised by the civic authorities, not court officials. On this basis, local musicians probably provided much of the music. Given that two polyphonic works were performed as part of the pageants, it is possible that Beeard’s *Godly Psalme* was another of the pieces written for the coronation celebrations which took place
along the route that led from the Tower of London to Westminster. At Leadenhall there was a ‘pagant hangyd with cloth of gold, and the goodlyst playng with all maner of musyssoners’, whilst at Cornhill, three children dressed as Grace, Virtue, and Nature knelt in turn as the queen passed by and ‘every one of them sung certayn verses of gratefyeng the quene’. Milsom suggests that the ‘dyverse staves’ which were sung ‘At the scholehouse in Palles church’ were those of the Vox Patris. He might have added the comment that ‘she stayed a goode while and gave dilligent ere to their song’: the Vox Patris takes around twenty minutes to perform. Mary’s cortege then moved to the other end of St Paul’s, ‘next to the Deane of Paules gate, where the Queresters of Paules playde on Vials, and song’. From here, she proceeded to Ludgate, where there were ‘minstreles playing and singing’. She then visited another pageant at the Conduit in Fleet Street, ‘wher was also diverse as well children as men, synging songes of rejoycing as she cam’. Is it conceivable that this was Richard Beeard’s Godly Psalme of Marye Queene? Possibly, since unlike the minstreles’ song, there is no indication of accompanied singing, while as a four-part song, the Godly Psalme would indeed require children and men’s voices. This much, at least, will probably never be anything more than speculation, but it might explain the existence of this rather strange piece of relatively cheap print. Where Forrest and Mundy’s Vox Patris required well-trained choristers for performance, Beeard’s contribution to celebrating Mary’s accession did not necessitate such a high standard of musical ability. Its publication seems to represent a crossover genre, designed to appeal to people who enjoyed singing sophisticated domestic four-part psalms and verse anthems but who also enjoyed more demotic songs. For those who could not sing the psalm, it would have made an interesting souvenir.

Given that William Griffith was the printer for both these anomalous works, it is worth considering whether what we see here is an entrepreneurial printer experimenting with new markets, in much the same way that the Rastells had done a generation before. The Stationers’ Company copy register begins in 1558, but the entries are sporadic until the mid-1560s. Even then it is incomplete: many of the ballads which survive from this period are not registered, making it
difficult to assess how many items were actually produced (Tessa Watt suggested a minimum of 600,000 copies of 3000 ballads were in circulation between 1550 and 1600, positing that the true figure could have been three or four million). Nevertheless, despite their limitations, the Stationers’ Registers can be used to help us understand what was published, and to investigate what was profitable, because registering a copy acted as an early form of copyright. 1636 individual items appear in the Stationers’ Company registers in the period 1557-1571 alone. Of these, 680 are known to be ballads—more than any other single type of item in the registers—while some of the 283 undefined items are probably also ballads. This suggests that ballads were easy to copy, or even prone to being copied, and more so than other forms of print. These items were lucrative and worth protecting.

A Godly Psalme of Marye Queene might also help to explain why A Newe Ballade of a Lover Extolling his Ladye included musical notation when the Thanksgiving songs did not. For one thing, Griffith had access to musical type. But Griffith was clearly a printer who had a particular interest in popular musical genres. He registered at least 115 items with the Stationers’ Company between 1558 and 1571, when there is a gap in the copy register. Of these, 70% are known to have been ballads. A Newe Ballade of a Louer Extollinge his Ladye does not seem to have been registered, while, of course, the Godly Psalme was printed before the registers began. His output of ballads suggests that he knew what was likely to sell. A Godly Psalme of Marye Queen can therefore be seen as an attempt to cash in on the accession of the first woman to rule England in her own right, and, like The Courte of Vertue, was presumably aimed at those musically-literate people who had begun to enjoy singing psalms with their family and friends at home. Even sung in parts, these psalm-style pieces were not as difficult to sing as complicated polyphony. Moreover, if all you do is take out the tune from the harmony, they are simpler still. Adding four-part music to a pamphlet does not necessarily mean that everyone who bought it would use it. It could have been sung in harmony or unison, recited or read internally, or simply kept as a souvenir.
Songs of all types were predicated on a culture of face-to-face transmission, so there was little point in the effort and expense of printing tunes on ballads and broadsides. Be they psalm tunes or ballad melodies, songs relied on the audience knowing the tune, or learning it from someone who did. Meanwhile, Griffith might have thought that it was worthwhile printing 'Damon and Pithias' for musically-literate amateur performers, such as those who had bought A Godly Psalme of Marye Queen, or those who were learning to read music through the Sternhold and Hopkins psalter, thereby potentially widening the market for his broadside. A Newe Ballade of a Louer Extollinge his Ladye might therefore represent an experiment to see if there was a market for songs with simple musical notation. What is more, as a single broadside, it was affordable sheet music for a tune which was absolutely a la mode. Obviously, the typographical error with the clef would have been a flaw, but it would not have rendered the experiment useless. After all, if we can solve the problem with the music, there is no reason to think that contemporary buyers could not, especially given that they probably had some idea of how it was meant to go. Furthermore, if it were sold by balladeers, it is likely that they would have performed the song as well as selling it. On the other hand, by making it difficult for novice readers to make sense of the music, the flaw might have contributed to the apparently short-lived nature of the genre!

A single piece of music such as A Newe Ballade of a Lover Extolling his Ladye does not exist in isolation. Instead, it was one element of a burgeoning culture of musical literacy, an increased and increasing market for print of all types and cheap print in particular, and a society in which community singing developed from recreational songs through godly ballads to congregational psalms. For the most part, sixteenth-century audiences were not concerned with classifying music by genre, hence our difficulty in doing so for them. The most significant issue, as far as they were concerned, was a practical one: whether or not it could be sung without musical training. While there was a ready market for broadside ballads, there was a significant amount of interest new musical genres. This perhaps encouraged experimentation. Of course, it is possible that many more sheets like A Newe Ballade of a Lover Extolling his Ladye were printed and they simply have not
survived, but, if this were the case, one wonders why more of them perished than comparable classes of broadside ballads without music. While absence of evidence is not in itself evidence of absence, it seems likely that what we see here is a cheap print equivalent of the survival of the fittest: if broadside songs with music were even half as popular as the standard broadside ballad without, presumably more printers would have invested in them. These songs, too, would have found a niche market of collectors, whose activities would have preserved more examples for future generations. Instead, it is more probable that these were works which tested the musical waters, perhaps not unique but surely unusual, and that those waters were found not to sustain this variety of musical life. In the end, the culture of learning by ear was too strong.Musical notation never became standard fare for broadside songs because their simple tunes were easy to remember, whether or not the singer were able to read music.


2 J. Lilly, A Collection of Seventy-Nine Black Letter Ballads and Broadsides (London, 1867), 278.


5 Andrew J. Sabol, ‘Two Unpublished Stage Songs for the “Aery of Children”‘, Renaissance News, XIII (1960), 224, fn. 7. In personal correspondence, John Milsom speculated that Richard Edwards could have used an existing popular tune for his words.

7 LBL, Harley MS 7578, 95v-97v.


13 John Milsom, personal correspondence.

14 Hyde, Singing the News, 64-6, 107 & 123.

15 William Forrest, LBL, Royal MS 17, Axxi, quoted in Lily B. Campbell, Divine Poetry and Drama in Sixteenth-Century England (Cambridge, 1961), 44.


17 Miles Coverdale, Goostly psalmes and spirituall songes... (London, 1535), STC (2nd ed.) / 879:22, i.

18 Temperley, Music of the English Parish Church, I (Cambridge, 1979), 12; Robert Crowley, The Psalter of Dauid... (London: 1549), STC (2nd ed.) / 2725.


21 Nicholas Temperley, Howard Slenk, Jan Luth et al, ‘Psalms, Metrical’ in Grove Music Online


22 Bill Gahan, ‘The Ballad Measure in Print’, English Broadside Ballad Archive (2007),


23 See Bob Snyder, Music and Memory: an Introduction (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 234. Vocal melodies are easier to remember than instrumental ones, partly due to their ‘use of a biologically significant timbre’: see Michael Weiss, Sandra Trehub and E. Glenn Schellenberg, ‘Something in the Way She Sings: Enhanced Memory for Vocal Melodies’, Psychological Science, 23 (2012), 1077.


26 Temperley, Music of the English Parish Church, I, 74-5.

27 Ian Green, Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England (Oxford, 2000), 549.


31 Tudor Songs and Ballads, 36.

32 Duguid, Metrical Psalmody in Print and Practice, 24.

33 I am grateful to John Milsom for suggesting this line of thinking.


23


39 Green, *Print and Protestantism*, 3. Although Arten notes that the *Whole Booke of Psalms* was littered with musico-typographical errors, she points out that it contained pedagogical features to teach musical notation which suggests that the book stimulated attempts to read the music it contained (Arten, ‘Pedagogical Failure’).


44 Kolbet, ‘Athanasius, the Psalms, and the Reformation of the Self’, 93.


49 Jonathan Willis, *Church Music and Protestantism in Post-Reformation England: Discourses, Sites and Identities* (Farnham, 2010), 112.


52 Sternhold et al, *whole booke of Psalmes*, +viii.

53 Ibid., Aiv.


57 Butler, ‘Creating Harmonious Subjects?’, 276-7. In addition to the broadside songs identified here and by Butler, a verse paraphrase of Psalm 87, described as ‘A Balet’ by its author, the Yorkshire clergyman, Sir Peter Hartforth, can be found in manuscript (LBL Cotton Vespasian XXV, f. 153).


59 Ibid., and critiqued in Green, *Print and Protestantism* 471-2; see also Hyde, *Singing the News*, 99-103.

60 Butler, ‘Creating Harmonious Subjects?’, 291-94.


65 LBL, Royal App. 74-7 (Lumley Part-Books); OBL, MSS Mus. Sch. E.420 (Wanley Part-Books).


73 Milsom, ‘William Mundy’s “Vox Patris Caelestis”’, 22.

74 These locations have been marked on the *Agas Map of Early Modern London*, <https://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/agas.htm?locIds=CORN2|FENC1|FLEE2|FLEE6|FLEE8|GRAC1|GREA1|LEAD1|LEAD2|LITT2|LUDG1|STBE3|STPA2|STPA3|TEMP1|TOWE5|WEST1> [accessed March 2018].


77 Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, 11.

78 Hyde, *Singing the News*, 29.