

*Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña: Musical Performance as an Agent of Harmony*

The majority of early modern Spanish dramatists consistently employed music in their dramatic texts; however, scholars credit Lope de Vega as the playwright who cultivated and normalized the ways in which early modern authors incorporated musical interventions in the *comedia*. His utilization of musical intercalations, either in their entirety or in fragments, was always guided by the dramatic situation and the conventions of decorum and theatrical verisimilitude. As a result, he interpolated music in theatrical works in a manner that corresponded perfectly with its use in the early modern world, creating scenes reflecting daily life. According to Ann Livermore, Lope de Vega “is exact in his use of dances, old and contemporary, and a vast amount of information about the music-making of his time is to be gathered from the text of his plays” (146). His use of songs in his dramatic texts not only illustrates his understanding of musical activity in the early modern world, but also highlights his knowledge of musical philosophy. Scholars tend to focus solely on Calderón de la Barca when discussing musical humanism and the neoplatonic notion of harmony in early modern Spanish theater. By doing so, they may well underestimate the integral role that harmony plays in Lope de Vega’s theatrical works. This paper will examine and clarify the connection between musical performance and the early modern notions of music in Lope de Vega’s *Peribáñez y el Comendador de Ocaña*, demonstrating its function as an agent of harmony to highlight and engage the social themes and preoccupations of the early modern world.