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THE AMERICAN CHORAL FOUNDATION, INC.
SHELDON SOFFER, *Administrative Director*
130 West 56th Street,
New York, New York 10019
Phone (212) 246-3361

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The Performance of William Byrd's Church Music

I. MUSIC ACCEPTABLE IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH

by FREDERICK HUDSON

The most fascinating and complex period of the history of music in England is perhaps that of the Reformation, stretching from as early as Cardinal Wolsey's suppression of some of the smaller monasteries in 1528 through to the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. The life span of William Byrd, 1543–1623, covers a large part of this troublous period, yet he attained preeminence in the estimation of his contemporaries both as a composer and a performer while retaining a position of respect and honor in the eyes of the adherents of the Court and Reformed Church on the one hand and the old Catholic faith on the other. The object of this and a subsequent article is to consider Byrd's church music in the light of records and comments on performing style set out in contemporary writings and present-day literary criticism and attempt to apply these to two completely different categories of his musical output: first, the anthems, motets, and services that were composed for, or would at least be acceptable in, the worship of the Anglican Church, and second, the Ordinaries and Propers of the Mass as exemplified in his settings of the Mass for four, three, and five voices and the two books of *Gradualia*.

To achieve a greater sympathy and understanding for Byrd and his music under the prevailing political and religious stresses, we could well supplement our study with the autobiographies of Fr. William Weston[1] and Fr. John Gerard[2] as representing the outlook of the English Jesuit missionaries, together with the balanced assessment of Percy Scholes[3] of the opposing Puritan faction. A clear picture emerges. In his private life and with his whole spirit and soul Byrd was a sincere, devoted Catholic,

[1] [Father] *William Weston, The Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, translated from the Latin by Philip Caraman (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1955).

[2] [Father] *John Gerard, The Autobiography of an Elizabethan*, translated from the Latin by Philip Caraman (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green & Co., 1951).

[3] Percy A. Scholes, *The Puritans and Music in England and New England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934).

and yet, at the same time and with equal conviction, he was a loyal Englishman devoted to the sacred person of his Queen and the internal security of his country, to whom domestic and foreign subversive attempts would be abhorrent.

The main problems to be considered are which works were suitable for the Anglican Church, what the pitches of voices and instruments were in Byrd's time and how these should be interpreted in modern performance, and the extent to which instruments were combined with voices in church music or, indeed, whether instruments should be used at all.

In deciding which works were intended or suitable for the Anglican Church or the old Catholic rites (the latter were celebrated widely and frequently, though in secret), it is well to dispose of any clear-cut division through the use of English or Latin texts. In Edward VI's Act of Uniformity, repealed during the Marian reaction and reenacted by Elizabeth in April, 1559, Article of Religion No. 24 stated:

> It is a thing plainly repugnant to the Word of God . . . to have publick Prayer in the Church . . . in a tongue not understanded of the people.

The English language, then, was to be used for all liturgical services as set out in the *Book of Common Praier*, but this by no means precluded the use of settings of uncontroversial texts in Latin for extraliturgical music such as anthems and motets. Latin was part of the equipment of the educated and was certainly "understanded of the people" in the Chapel Royal, the royal peculiars, collegiate churches, and, with reservations, in the cathedrals. Elizabeth's *Prayer Book* of 1559 was, in fact, translated into Latin by Walter Haddon and published in 1560 (with a second edition in 1571) for use in the royal peculiars and the collegiate chapels of Oxford, Cambridge, Winchester, and Eton.[4] The monopoly granted by Elizabeth in 1575 gave Tallis and Byrd the sole right " . . . to imprint any and so many as they will of set songe or songes in partes, either in English, Latine, Frenche, Italian or other tongues that may serve for musicke either in Churche or chamber, or otherwise to be either plaid or soonge." The above evidence is sufficient to dispose of the fallacy that Latin was banned *per se* in the Anglican Church: the criteria for its use were understanding and the avoidance of "idolatry and superstition."

It follows that, besides Byrd's English anthems and services, we need to consider the possibility that the Latin motets in which the texts were not controversial were suitable even if not designed for Anglican use. Under this heading we may include the *Cantiones Sacrae*, 1575,

[4] Denis Stevens, *Tudor Church Music* (2nd ed., New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), p. 21. (A peculiar is a church or parish that is exempt from church jurisdiction of the territory in which it lies.)

dedicated to Elizabeth in the seventeenth year of her reign,[5] to which Tallis and Byrd each contributed seventeen motets, probably as a mark of appreciation for granting the monopoly for printing and importing music earlier that year. The two books of *Cantiones Sacrae*, dated 1589 and 1591, come into the same category. With the possible exception of *Salve, Regina* (1591, Nos. 6–7), the texts would not offend where Latin was acceptable in the Anglican service. It should be remembered that motets in honor of the Virgin were characteristic of the immediate pre-Reformation period and that Mariolatry and praise of the saints were especially abhorrent to the reformers. There is also the possibility that many of the Latin motets not published in his lifetime come into the Anglican category where the texts are acceptable.[6] On the other hand, certain of his works to an English text may well have been used for the private devotion of Anglicans and Catholics alike, as hinted at in " . . . for the recreation of all such as delight in Musicke" included in the title of his 1588 *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs*, the same supposition being put forward for the 1589 *Songs of Sundrie Natures*, the 1611 *Psalmes, Songs and Sonnets*, and the four numbers he contributed to Leighton's *Teares*, 1614.

The problems of pitch during this period and modern performing equivalents have vexed editors since the late nineteenth century. More recently much light has been shed on these problems and readers may share in this by following A. Mendel, "Pitch in the 16th and Early 17th Centuries";[7] H. K. Andrews, "Transposition of Byrd's Vocal Polyphony";[8] P. le Huray;[9] and D. Wulstan, "The Problem of Pitch in 16th Century English Vocal Music."[10] Some of the more important points which affect our study may be summarized as follows: Although Gustave Reese[11] discounts Tomkins's statement printed in the Tenbury copy of *Musica Deo Sacra* (organ part) that an organ pipe $2\frac{1}{2}'$ long sounds the note *f* (modern equivalent at $a' = 440$ c.p.s. would be between *g* and *a flat*, yet other contemporary evidence supports this. Nathaniel Tomkins[12] makes it clear that the Worcester Cathedral organ Dallam built in 1613–14 was scaled in pipes of the series $10'$, $5'$, $2\frac{1}{2}'$, and $1\frac{1}{4}'$ and that the

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[6] Listed in E. H. Fellowes, *William Byrd* (2nd ed., London: Oxford University Press, 1948) p. 252; list of those published in Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 80, and Peter le Huray, *Music and the Reformation in England, 1549–1660* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1967), p. 422; printed in *Tudor Church Music*, Vol. 9.

[7] *Musical Quarterly*, Vol. XXXIV, 1948.

[8] *Music & Letters*, Vol. XLIII, 1962.

[9] *Music and the Reformation in England, 1549–1660* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1967), pp. 112 ff.

[10] *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, Vol. XCIII, 1967, p. 97.

[11] *Music in the Renaissance* (New York: W. W. Norton; London: J. W. Dent, 1954), p. 813.

[12] Bodleian Library *Add. MS C 304a*, f. 141.

10′ open pipe had a diameter of $7\frac{1}{2}''$; at St. Paul's Cathedral the diameter was 8″. The specification of the organ at All Hallows, Barking, in 1519 was based on the longest pipe of 10′ and surviving early seventeenth-century specifications show that this was still applicable. There were, however, two different pitches in use in churches: "choir" pitch, which indicated the notation as written out for singers, and "organ" pitch, which indicated the names of the notes on the keyboard. When the bottom C  was depressed on the keyboard, in terms of choir pitch the ranks of pipes at Worcester produced the sounds:

10′ (Diapason) 5′ (Principal) $2\frac{1}{2}'$ (Fifteenth) $3\frac{3}{4}'$ (Twelfth)

Taking into account the now accepted transposition of a minor third up, the modern equivalents for a "normal" arrangement of clefs (see below) would be:

Further, we must take into account the system of transposition according to the type and placing of clefs on the staves in vocal music, termed variously *chiavi naturali* and *chiavette* or *chiavi trasportati*,[13] the first being termed simply "normal" by Wulstan,[14] who gives a helpful Table of Transpositions for the period *ca.* 1560 to 1625.

This table assumes with some justification that there is little or no difference between the pitch of secular vocal music then and now. Before jumping to hasty conclusions, however, the whole of Wulstan's article should be read in order to gain a balanced impression. In addition to observing historical truth in adopting the correct modern equivalent in pitch and transposition, there are also important aesthetic reasons for doing so, especially in trying to achieve the true vocal tone color according to the compass and tessitura of the original voice part. It must be admitted that church music of the period was sung by boys and men and that, when women sopranos and contraltos are substituted for boys and countertenors, choir directors and conductors have a case for using

[13] Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[14] *Op. cit.*, p. 102.

TABLE OF TRANSPOSITIONS

Name of Transposition	Interval of Transposition (to modern equivalent)	Clef of Bottom Part	Clef of Top Part (where applicable)
Normal	Up a minor third	Bass	C clef (in music for "meanes") Treble clef (in music for "trebles")
Stet	None	Bass	Treble (in secular music)
High	Down a tone	Baritone	—
Highest	Down a major third	Tenor	—
			—
Low	Up a fourth	Contrabass	—
Lowest	Up a minor sixth	Contrabass	—

the transposition suited to the greatest number of voices. Wulstan suggests that three- and four-part pieces having a small overall range can be transposed over a fairly wide margin.[15]

The evidence for the participation of the organ and other musical instruments in church services during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is overwhelming. Abundant references appear in *The Old Cheque-Book of the Chapel Royal, 1561–1744*[16] and *The King's Musick, 1460–1700*,[17] both of which are admirably expounded and supplemented from original sources by Walter Woodfill.[18] Solo organ playing, waxing and waning under extra-musical influences, can be traced from the time of Henry VIII to the virtuoso playing of Byrd and Bull at the end of the century. There are frequent *Old Cheque-Book* references to the organ being played before, during, and after the service, with special mention of the Offertory; for example, " . . . Dr. Bull was at the organ playing the Offertorye."[19] Byrd was sworn a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal on February 22, 1570, probably left Lincoln Cathedral to take up his new duties permanently in December, 1572, and on the title page of *Cantiones Sacrae*, 1575, he and Tallis describe themselves as " . . . *a privato Sacello*

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 109.
[16] Edited by E. F. Rimbault (London: Camden Society, 1872).
[17] Edited by H. C. de Lafontaine (London: Novello, 1909).
[18] *Musicians in English Society from Elizabeth to Charles I* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), pp. 135–197.
[19] *Op. cit.*, p. 150, Easter Communion, April 15, 1593.

generosis & Organistis" (Gentlemen and Organists of the King's private Chapel). Though not named in the *Old Cheque-Book* as organist, he undoubtedly took his turn with Tallis (and later with others) on a monthly roster in attendance on the Queen at Whitehall, Greenwich, Richmond, Windsor Castle, Hampton Court, and elsewhere during a royal progress. Actual records of his attendance are few, but in his petition to the Queen in 1577 he pleads " . . . by reason that by his daily attendance in your Majesty's said service . . . " he is prevented from teaching to the relief of himself and his family. He was present at the funeral of Elizabeth and the coronation of James I in 1603, and the funeral of James's consort, Queen Anne, in 1618, but for some time before the latter year he must have been virtually in retirement and probably in the same case as those referred to in an order of 1619, " . . . grown aged or taken with sickness, so that there is no expectation of their service."[20]

But solo organ playing was by no means the only function of the instrument in Byrd's lifetime, nor was its participation with voices limited to antiphonal use in settings of hymns, psalms, and canticles. The existence of the manuscript organ books at Durham, Peterhouse (Cambridge), St. Michael's College (Tenbury), Christ Church (Oxford), Ely, and The New York Public Library, dating mainly from the early seventeenth century and probably the few surviving of the many destroyed before and during the Commonwealth period, precludes any assumption of such exclusive use. These books cover a large part of the literature of church music of Elizabeth and James I, anthems and services alike, and amongst them supply the organ part (chiefly the outer parts with occasional indications of the middle parts sufficient to remind the organist of the texture), for almost the whole of Byrd's Anglican output collected in *Tudor Church Music*, Vol. 2. The organ books contain accompaniments written at organ pitch involving transposition at sight; others alternate between various transpositions indicated by changes of clef, while some are written out a fourth below or a fifth above choir pitch (thus allowing for the difference between organ and choir pitches mentioned above), occasionally with the cautionary note "play it as it stands" entered as a mnemonic.

The purpose of these organ books was obviously practical, and although certain writers have suggested that they were used only for rehearsals, the present writer is convinced that they were used to accompany the vocal forces in performance. In some of these books (for example, the Christ Church organ book *MS 1001*, containing nothing later than the works of Orlando Gibbons), the texture is not merely a transcription of the voice parts in short score, but introduces decorations

[20] Woodfill, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

and passing notes freely. According to views expressed at a meeting of the Royal Musical Association in London, May, 1900,[21] these organ books were held to be "arrangements" for solo performance, but, as will be submitted in a second article, this was typical of English opinion at this period of rediscovery and cannot be maintained in the light of historical evidence.

Documentation of Byrd's use of instruments in his verse anthems leaves us in no doubt. Solo singing in duet and trio sections, often of a florid, melismatic character, had been a feature of immediate pre-Reformation motet composition (e.g. Marbeck's motets a 5, *Domine Jesu Christe* and *Ave Dei Patris Filia, ca.*1540), but Byrd is the acknowledged pioneer and developer of the solo consort song and verse anthem. In the preface to *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs*, 1588, he says:

> . . . here are divers songs, which being originally made for Instruments to express the harmony, and one voice to pronounce the ditty, are now framed in all parts for voices to sing the same.

The 1588 set is thus an arrangement for vocal ensemble of previously composed solo consort songs, and performances in the original media are not only justifiable but desirable and even preferable. To quote J. A. Westrup:[22]

> . . . the sound of the string accompaniment can be ravishing and . . . a vocal ensemble creates the impression that all the parts are equal and tends to mask the melody. Such a performance also helps to foster the belief that singing by a number of voices without accompaniment is in some way "pure" and faithful to the spirit of the 16th century.

Next, in *Songs of Sundrie Natures*, 1589, Byrd clearly indicates the participation of four viols in his Christmas and Easter verse carols (*An earthly tree*, *From Virgin's womb*, and *Christ rising again*). Each of these is in two sections: in the first two the second section is a 4-part chorus; in the third carol both sections are the same with a solo duet alternating with a 5-part chorus. Fellowes allows that the viols or substitute organ may play throughout the chorus sections of *Christ rising again* as well as accompany the solo sections, but in the other two carols he prints "for rehearsal only" against the second section chorus.[23] The present assumption is that the viols (even together with discreet organ participation) should play throughout both sections. A verse anthem and New Year's carol were published in *Psalmes, Songs and Sonnets*, 1611 (*Have mercy upon me* and *O God that guides the cheerful sun*), both for solo voice, chorus, and

[21] Scholes, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
[22] *Music & Letters*, Vol. XXIV, 1943, p. 129.
[23] *English Madrigal School*, Vol. 15.

consort of viols; the viols accompany the solo sections and double the chorus parts, and an organ could be substituted or even used to "shadow" the whole ensemble. The verse anthems not published during his lifetime are for voices and organ, and the same combination applies to the *Great Service* and the *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis* of the *Second Service*. It would not be out of keeping with the spirit of the age to incorporate a string texture in these works as an alternative means of performance.

The instruments listed in the accounts of the musicians of the royal household at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign are substantially the same as at the end of Henry VIII's reign except that certain instruments like the rebec had become obsolete. The lists for the period of Byrd's royal service include viols, violins (many players came from Cremona, Venice, and other Italian centers), flutes, recorders, cornetts, sackbutts, shawms, hautboys, lutes, etc.[24] During the same period and through to the early seventeenth century there are copious references to the employment of cornetts and sackbutts in cathedral services, usually in a consort of two of each instrument, as these blended well with voices. Canterbury (as early as 1532), York, Worcester, and many others regularly used the city waits (town musicians), not only on feast days and special occasions, whereas Durham appears to have employed a consort of four players by the early seventeenth century.[25] Apparently English players were especially skilled in these instruments, probably because of their wide and constant use, and it is recorded that the Duke of Lorraine sent his chief cornett player over in 1604 to enlist recruits. When Elizabeth visited Oxford in 1566, Richard Stephens records that she " . . . entered into the church, and there abode, while the choir sang and played with cornetts *Te Deum*."[26] During her visit to Worcester in 1575 she attended two services, at both of which cornetts and sackbutts were used, and the account of the Sunday service includes " . . . a great and solemn noise of singing in the choir both by note and also playing with cornetts and sackbutts."[27] References in cathedral accounts to the use of viols are not so clear, but it would seem that it was part of the duties of choirmasters to teach boy choristers to play the viols and other instruments as part of their musical education. The Duke of Württemberg's secretary gives the following account of a Sunday service they attended on August 20, 1592 in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, a royal peculiar with an organization and privileges similar to those of the Chapel Royal:

> In this church his Highness listened for more than an hour to the beautiful music, the usual ceremonies and the English sermon. The music,

[24] *The Kings Musick, 1460–1700*, pp. 12 ff.; Woodfill, *op. cit.*, pp. 183 f.
[25] Kindly communicated by Mr. W. Roy Large.
[26] Stevens, *op. cit.*, p. 66 (British Museum *MS Harley 7033*).
[27] Woodfill, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

> especially the organ, was exquisitely played; for at times you could hear the sound of cornets, flutes, then fifes and other instruments; and there was likewise a little boy who sang so sweetly amongst it all, and threw such a charm over the music with his little tongue, that it was really wonderful to listen to him. In short, their ceremonies were very similar to the Papists, as above mentioned, with singing and all the rest. After the music, which lasted a long time, had ended, a minister or preacher ascended the pulpit and preached in English; and soon afterwards, it being noon, his Highness went to dinner.[28]

In the original publication (Tübingen, 1602) the secretary, Jacob Rathgeb, had described the little boy's singing as follows: "*Es sang auch ein kleines Knäblein so lieblich darein, und colorirt dermassen mit seinem Zünglein, dass es wundersam zu hören war*; le Huray suggests from the use of the verb *colorirt* that he may have ornamented his part.[29] This remarkable description is strong evidence for the use of mixed consorts of instruments in church music, and we may assume that their role was to combine with the choir and not purely instrumental. A further point that seems to have escaped comment so far is that Rathgeb twice mentions the fact that the sermon was in English. If the liturgy, prayers, and musical settings had been in English, there would seem to be little point in noting that the sermon was also in this language, and the corollary must be that the liturgy was not in English. We are then forced to the conclusion that it was in Latin and we may point to Walter Haddon's Latin translation of the *Book of Common Prayer* of 1560, or the second edition of 1571. Rathgeb's final observation that "their ceremonies were very similar to the Papists" strengthens this view. It is worth noting that John Baldwin, "a singing man of Windsor" (tenor), scribe of the manuscripts British Museum R.M.24.d.2. (1591), Christ Church *MSS 979–983*, and *My Ladye Nevell's Booke* (1951), sworn a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal on August 20, 1598, and a prime admirer of Byrd, was a member of this royal foundation and would consider the above record as the normal way of performing church music on Sundays, feast days, and special occasions.

The Old Cheque-Book has many references to the singing of anthems, two of which were performed at the Communion Service on August 19, 1604, when a peace treaty with Spain was concluded in the presence of James I and the Duke of Frias, Constable of Castille.[30] More important information is provided in the record of the christening of Princess Mary,

[28] William B. Rye, *England as Seen by Foreigners in the Days of Elizabeth and James I* (London, J. R. Smith, 1865), pp. 15 f.

[29] Le Huray, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

[30] *Op. cit.*, p. 151; sequel in Rye, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

daughter of James I, on May 5, 1605 in the Chapel Royal at Greenwich. The service began with the organ playing during the assembly:

> When all were placed, then began an Anthem, shewing the dedication of the Royal Infant unto Almighty God by baptism (the Chorus whereof was filled with the help of musical instruments).

Another anthem ("of thanksgiving") was sung after the baptism, followed by the sounding of trumpets in the Lower Chapel and the playing of an Offertory (organ). The godparents made their offerings, " . . . then followed a full Anthem (*Sing joyfully*), in the singing whereof the . . . great gifts were . . . placed upon the Communion Table." At the end of the ceremony " . . . the Chapel and the Musicians joined together, making excellent harmony with full Anthems, which continued so doing until the Child came unto the nursery door."[31]

There is much food for thought in what the Clerk of the *Cheque-Book* has recorded. In the first anthem instruments were added to chorus voices: It is easy to assume that this was a verse anthem with alternating solo and chorus sections, the whole supported by the organ with other instruments filling out the chorus, but, in view of the description of the concluding full anthems in which the Gentlemen and Children of the Chapel were joined by the Musicians (presumably of the royal household), this is not necessarily true and we are bound to consider that instruments other than the organ participated in full anthems (and services) as well as in verse anthems, doubling and adding color to the voice parts. Two weeks later, Whitsunday, May 19, 1605, the Gentlemen and Children were present for the Thanksgiving after Child-birth or "Churching" of Queen Anne. A full anthem was sung before the sermon which was followed by "an Anthem for a Child," the organist played the Offertory while the Queen was escorted down to the Chapel, and " . . . when the King and Queen were so seated, then ended the offertory, and a full Anthem (beginning *Blessed art thou that fearest God*) was sung." It is not recorded that the Musicians were present, but the organ played each time there was movement, such as the presenting of gifts at the Table. The final anthem was " . . . of thanksgiving, prepared of purpose for the Churching."

Further points of interest are that the Clerk has named which anthem was sung in each of these two services. At the Christening the full anthem following the Offertory was *Sing joyfully* and one is tempted to point to the well-known setting of these words by Byrd.[32] The Clerk does not state that instruments joined in this anthem but, in view of the weight of evidence that can be produced supporting such a practice, it

[31] *Op. cit.*, pp. 167–69.
[32] Novello, Stainer & Bell, and *Tudor Church Music*, Vol. 2.

would be hard to ignore the possibility. In the Churching the Clerk names the full anthem after the Offertory as *Blessed art thou that fearest God*, and we may speculate that this was Byrd's *Blessed is he that fears the Lord*,[33] the text from Psalm 112 specially adapted for the occasion in honor of the Queen. If true, we have Byrd's authority for performing it as a consort song as well as in the 5-part vocal ensemble version of 1588, or we could use the organ as a substitute for the viols of the solo version.

The present writer urges that experimentation be carried out in the combination of stringed and/or wind instruments with voices in the anthems and services of Byrd and, by corollary, those of his English contemporaries. In *Sing joyfully*, for example, the organ could provide a *basso seguente* realization, but without pedals, as foundational background support (le Huray lists a probable specification of an English organ of this period and suggests registration combinations for various purposes),[34] and a consort selected from recorders, trombones, oboes, bassoons, etc., would add color and depth to the 6-part vocal texture. Instead of playing throughout, the instruments could be held in reserve for contrast at climaxes, as at the section "Blow up the trumpet in the new moon" and the concluding "For this is a statute for Israel."

It is not maintained that every cathedral enjoyed the same ideal performing conditions. The Chapel Royal was drawn from the finest singers, composers, and organists in England, and the Household Musicians from the finest players; the latter also attracted equally fine musicians from Italy and elsewhere while the cathedrals (with the exception of the privileged royal peculiars of Westminster, St. Paul's, and Windsor) were frequently under great financial difficulties to maintain their musical forces because of ever-increasing inflation and loss of revenue from houses, lands, etc., and undoubtedly the musical establishment and performing standards suffered where these conditions applied. It is also recognized that even in the Chapel Royal there would be a difference between the sumptuousness of music performed on Sundays, feast days, and special royal occasions compared with ordinary weekdays. The important point is that it is a totally false conception of the spirit and style of the period to perform English *a cappella* church music completely and invariably unaccompanied. Apart from the surviving manuscript organ books there are no instrumental parts for full anthems or services (though there are several manuscript books containing viol parts for verse anthems) and this is what one would expect for England as well as for the rest of Europe in the sixteenth century. The idea of naming specific orchestral instruments and providing independent parts for them emerged only gradually on the Continent after the turn of the century

[33] No. 8, *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs*, 1588.
[34] *Op. cit.*, pp. 113–14.

and was adopted even more slowly in England. When instruments were combined with chorus voices, they reinforced the vocal lines or substituted for them very much *ad libitum*.

One may speculate that the tone colors of the Chapel Royal service music during the last two decades of the sixteenth century were not so unlike those heard during the same period at St. Mark's, Venice, when Andrea and Giovanni Gabrieli occupied the organists' posts. Even though the music differed in style, form, and content, it seems likely that the same principles applied in the coloring of *cappella* and *tutti* sections and pieces by instruments at the unison or octave. M. C. Boyd devotes a chapter to musical relations with the Continent and lists the Italian music, mainly madrigals, printed in England from Yonge's first set of 1588 (*Musica Transalpina*) onwards.[35] The monopoly of printing music and music paper that Byrd shared with Tallis and later with Morley has been quoted frequently, but less prominence has been given to the sole right to import music that was part of the monopoly. This suggests that Byrd, directly or indirectly, would be aware of all music brought into the country from Italy and elsewhere (that is, music brought in legally) and be in a better position than anyone to absorb its style and contents. According to Baldwin's verses, 1591,[36] Byrd's fame had spread to Europe more than that of any other Englishman and, although one must allow for insular pride, he rates Byrd's music higher than that of Marenzio, de Monte (known to have corresponded with Byrd in 1583 and 1584), Lassus, Crequillon, de Rore, and Andreon (Adrian Willaert ?, Andrea Gabrieli ?), whom he quotes as examples of continental composers. Although there would be little practical use for continental Catholic church music in England except in secret celebrations of the old rites, yet Byrd, as a lifelong adherent of the Catholic faith, would have a greater interest in this field than his English contemporaries, and one may speculate that he kept in close touch with developments abroad through English Catholic refugee musicans and his contacts with visiting Jesuit missionaries (who by 1596 had increased to over 300 priests),[37] as well as through composers native to the Continent.

Another source of information open to him was his close association with the musicians of the royal household, many of whom were Italians. The outstanding example of such means of gaining knowledge of current styles and trends is Michael Praetorius who published his *Syntagma Musicum*, 1615–1619, at the end of his life without the benefit of a single visit to Italy. This most important work on performance practice of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries was compiled largely

[35] Morrison C. Boyd, *Elizabethan Music and Musical Criticism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940), pp. 205 ff.

[36] Quoted in Boyd, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

[37] Weston, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

through keeping in close and frequent touch with every major *Kapelle* and *Kapellmeister* in his own country, together with study and knowledge of the musical literature then current.

To conclude this first review of Byrd's sacred works, one may ask how far it is possible to observe historical truth in the performance of music of periods far removed from our own. Obviously one cannot turn the clock back and reproduce exact conditions and there must be some measure of compromise between the scholar and the practical musician. The present writer has experienced with pleasure opera performances at Drottningholm, near Stockholm, with its original baroque stage settings and machinery and where the ethos is enhanced by dressing conductor and orchestra in eighteenth-century costumes. Few of us can enjoy such conditions or go to such lengths but we may try to get nearer the spirit and style of our composer and his period by a greater knowledge and understanding of contemporary instruments and performing conditions and attempt to reproduce these by the best means at our disposal.

The author takes this opportunity to express gratitude to his friend and colleague, Mr. Percy A. Lovell, for reading the texts of this article and discussing the problems involved, and for making helpful suggestions.

Hugo Distler
A Twentieth Century Choral Master

by LARRY PALMER

The name of Hugo Distler, the young German composer who died by his own hand in war-dominated Berlin in 1942, appears with increasing frequency in articles and programs this side of the Atlantic. The continuing influence of his music in Germany and its growing popularity in America make the study of his unique and beautiful output a worthwhile objective for the choral musician, for by far the largest part of Distler's total creative effort was intended for choral ensembles.

Hugo Distler

His earliest published works, dating from the six years he spent as organist and choirmaster of the St. Jakobikirche in the North German city of Lübeck, were based on the Lutheran chorales that form the rich heritage of German Protestant church music. Among these works are motets (Op. 2, *Herzlich lieb hab' ich dich, O Herr*; Op. 6/II *Drei kleine Choralmotetten*), cantatas (Op. 4, *Kleine Adventsmusik*; Op. 6/I, *Christ, der*

du bist der helle Tag), an oratorio (Op. 10, *Die Weihnachtsgeschichte*), a Passion (Op. 7, *Choralpassion*), and a cycle of 3-part chorale settings and motets for the church year (Op. 5, *Der Jahrkreis*).

The musical language of these works might be described as neo-Renaissance; that is, the compositional technique employed is essentially linear and contrapuntal in nature. In this technique, Distler's fondness for the works of di Lasso, Lechner, and, above all, Schütz, is evident. Harmonically, however, the full palate of primarily diatonic harmonies is employed; the modes are also employed frequently, as befits the modal character of the Renaissance chorale melodies: the "tall tertian" harmonies of the impressionists are to be found—chords with ninths, elevenths, and thirteenths; cadences are often austere, with final chords in which the thirds are lacking. All of these devices—none of which is unusual in itself—are combined and employed with such effortless mastery and the lines are so eminently singable that, once encountered, Distler's style is unmistakable. No other twentieth-century composer has been so successful in coupling the polyphony of the past with the dissonant language of the 1930's. It is doubtless this sometimes mystical beauty, the ethereal quality of which can easily bring emotions to the surface, that prompted the comment in *Grove's Dictionary* that Distler is "the most strongly individual personality among the younger German church composers."

Perhaps most characteristic of all the features in Distler's music is its nervous, incessantly active rhythm. Contemporary with Olivier Messiaen, but certainly independent of the influence of the French composer, Distler developed striking and complex uses of minute subdivisions of the larger rhythmic units.

The charm of this music—its natural-sounding beauty among so much contemporary music that seems to strive for the ugliest or most shocking effects—must be the basis for the "Distler cult" which has grown to considerable proportions. Hugo Distler choruses exist in many German cities; his works are rarely absent from the programs of European choral festivals. In the spring of 1967 the German television network produced a documentary film entitled "Hugo Distler, a Creator of the New Church Music" in which the composer's associates, Professor Bruno Grusnick, now director of the *Distler-Archiv* in Lübeck, Professor Oskar Soehngen, vice-president of the German Lutheran Church, his teacher, Professor Hermann Grabner, professor emeritus of composition at the Conservatory in Leipzig, and his widow, Frau Waltraut Distler, now of Marquartstein in Bavaria, were the participants. In the spring of 1969 a two-day festival of Distler's music took place at St. John's Lutheran Church in Summit, New Jersey.

From what has been said up to this point, it may seem that the work of Distler is devoted entirely to church music. Until 1937 Hugo Distler

was primarily concerned with composing music for the church, but in that year severe pressure from the Nazis against the church in general and the Lübeck churches in particular led to the breakdown of his situation in northern Germany. He accepted a call to the *Württembergische Hochschule für Musik* in Stuttgart where he taught theory, composition, conducting, and directed the choir. From this point on, since he was no longer actively engaged in the practice of church music, his choral works were largely composed to secular texts. The *Neues Chorliederbuch*, Op. 16, consisted of eight separate volumes grouped into peasant songs, love songs, calendar sayings, and joyful songs—twenty-four compositions in all for mixed chorus (from 4 to 8 parts).

Also dating from the Stuttgart years is the monumental *Mörike-Chorliederbuch*, Op. 19, consisting of twenty-four compositions for mixed chorus (canons; 2-, 3-, 4-, 5-, and 6-part choruses); twelve for women's chorus (2-, 3-, and 4-part), and twelve for men's chorus (2-, 3-, and 4-part). Here the famous poems of the Swabian pastor, Eduard Mörike, familiar to us through the incomparable *Lieder* of Hugo Wolf, are given new and different life in choral guise by an artist who shares more with Wolf than his first name.

The outstanding success of Distler's school choir in performing these compositions at the Festival of German Choral Music in Graz, Austria (June, 1939), led to his appointment as Professor at the Berlin-Charlottenburg *Hochschule für Musik*. In late September, 1940, the family moved from Stuttgart to Berlin.

Here, with a schedule that became more and more overburdened, the young composer found little time to compose. Frustration of his talent, anguish over the steady progression of the war which at any time threatened not only to consume most or all of his students but even Distler himself, concern for his wife and three children as the bombings of the city were intensified—all led to a nervous breakdown, and on November 1, 1942 Hugo Distler committed suicide at the age of thirty-four.

Now, nearly three decades after his death, the possibilities of becoming familiar with his music have greatly increased. Recordings include a selection from the *Mörike Choral Songbook* (Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft), a selection of sacred choral works (Hugo Distler: *Geistliche Chormusik*—Cantate), and a recording of two motets from his Op. 12, as well as a composition by Heinz-Werner Zimmermann on a theme by Distler (Cantate). *The Christmas Story*, *Chorale Passion*, and selections from *Der Jahrkreis*, as well as the brilliant *Concerto for Harpsichord and Strings*, Op. 14, are all available on German recordings.

All of Distler's works after opus 4 are published by Bärenreiter, Kassel and Basel. Several English editions of choral works have been published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, which holds the American rights for the complete Distler catalogue.

The Choral Music of Kirke Mechem

by Donald B. Miller

> For our time, which seems to have fallen a helpless prey to evil and cynicism, how welcome were some kindly greatness, which should know what man needs and instead of offering him mocking sophisms, could give him serious advice in his necessities![1]

In critically describing the choral music of Kirke Mechem, our first inclination was to pursue a conventional method through analytical classification of material. From a thorough acquaintance with the composer's works, however, it becomes apparent that here indeed is a musician who denies contrivance and "mocking sophisms" and seeks truth. Kirke Mechem is conversant with all styles; a number of his works reflect Renaissance and Baroque principles. Yet this by no means implies that he is conventional—rather he is a composer "of his own time."

Mechem has written orchestral music, including two symphonies, chamber music, piano compositions, songs, and some eighty-five separate pieces for chorus with which this article is concerned. These choral works are grouped under twenty different opus numbers. In some cases opus numbers designate collections of independent works not connected with one another, such as the madrigals of opus 1, the motets of opus 2, the folk-song arrangements for men's chorus, opus 6, and the various pieces contained in opus 7.

Other choral pieces are published in the context of larger works although they can be performed separately as well. These include the choruses from *Tourist Time*, Op. 11, and those from *The Winged Joy*, Op. 22, the carols of *Seven Joys of Christmas*, Op. 25a (SSA) and Op. 25b (SATB), the catches and canons of *Epigrams and Epitaphs*, Op. 13, and of *Canon Law for Newlyweds*, Op. 28.

Only a few of the opus numbers represent extended works that cannot be divided into separate pieces. These range in length from the motet for double chorus and solo trumpet, *Sing Unto the Lord a New Song*, Op. 27, to *Zorobabel*, Op. 19, a 27-minute dramatic cantata that requires soloists and a chamber orchestra. Between these two compositions—judging from the point of view of length—stand the following other

[1] Thomas Mann, *Essays* (New York: Vintage Books, 1957), p. 47.

works: *Praise Him, Sun and Moon*, Op. 3b (a 6-part motet), *Forsake me not, O Lord*, Op. 23 (a memorial motet), and *The Shepherd and his Love*, Op. 30.

The fourth and largest group of the composer's choral compositions might be called "choral cycles"—works whose individual choruses are also published separately. They range from groups of two, such as the *Ballads for Christmas*, Op. 35, with guitar, to *Songs of Wisdom*, Op. 14, a 33-minute *a cappella* sequence of five recitatives and five motets. *In the Land of Morgenstern*, Op. 21, consists of three choruses; there are five in *The Winds of May*, Op. 17, as well as in *Five Centuries of Spring*, Op. 24.

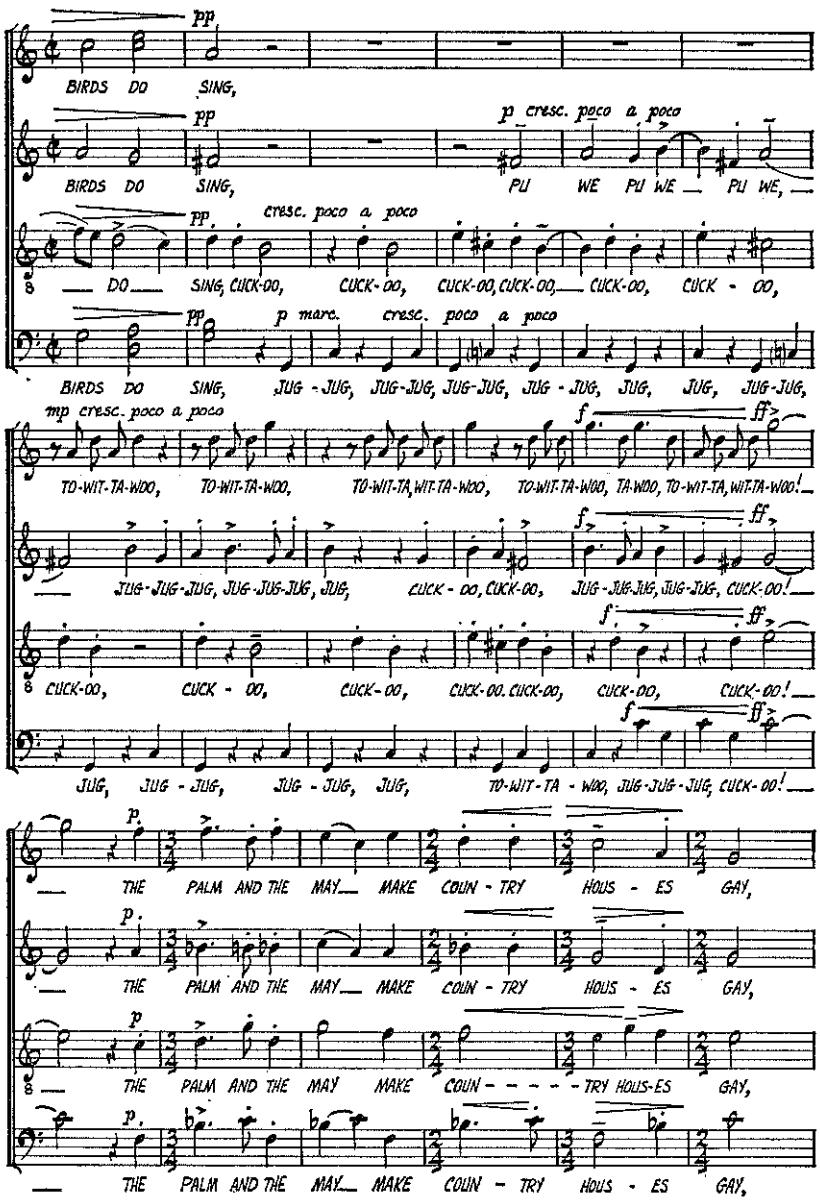
One of the most gratifying characteristics of Mechem's choral works is that the text invariably dictates the form. In his later writing Mechem acts as his own librettist. Most of the works in the second, third, and fourth groups mentioned above either tell a continuous story, carrying musical ideas from one piece to another, or they are arranged in some way that insures continuity of music or text. (This is doubtless due to the influence of the composer's literary background: his father, a brother, and a sister are writers, and the composer himself has been engaged in literary work.) Practical considerations of performance may have led him to the flexible form of the cycle (Mechem spent five years as a choral director). Some choirs have programmed the easier pieces of *The Winds of May* separately or as a group of three until they had mastered the more difficult ones. In recent years the composer has lent further individuality to various pieces within the cycles by giving each an appropriate accompaniment: woodwinds and percussion; piccolo and viola; guitar; winds, strings, and piano (in *Zorobabel*).

An especially interesting work is the madrigal cycle *Five Centuries of Spring*. Poems about spring by authors typical of their epoch were chosen from each century. Mechem adopted styles reminiscent of the periods involved, although with considerable harmonic freedom.

Spring (Thomas Nash, 1593), the first madrigal, is written in a form similar to Morley's ballets. A refrain (Ex. 1) serves as the fa-la section. Characteristic also of the sixteenth century is the liberal use of cross-relations, irregular barring, and alternation between homophony and imitative passages.

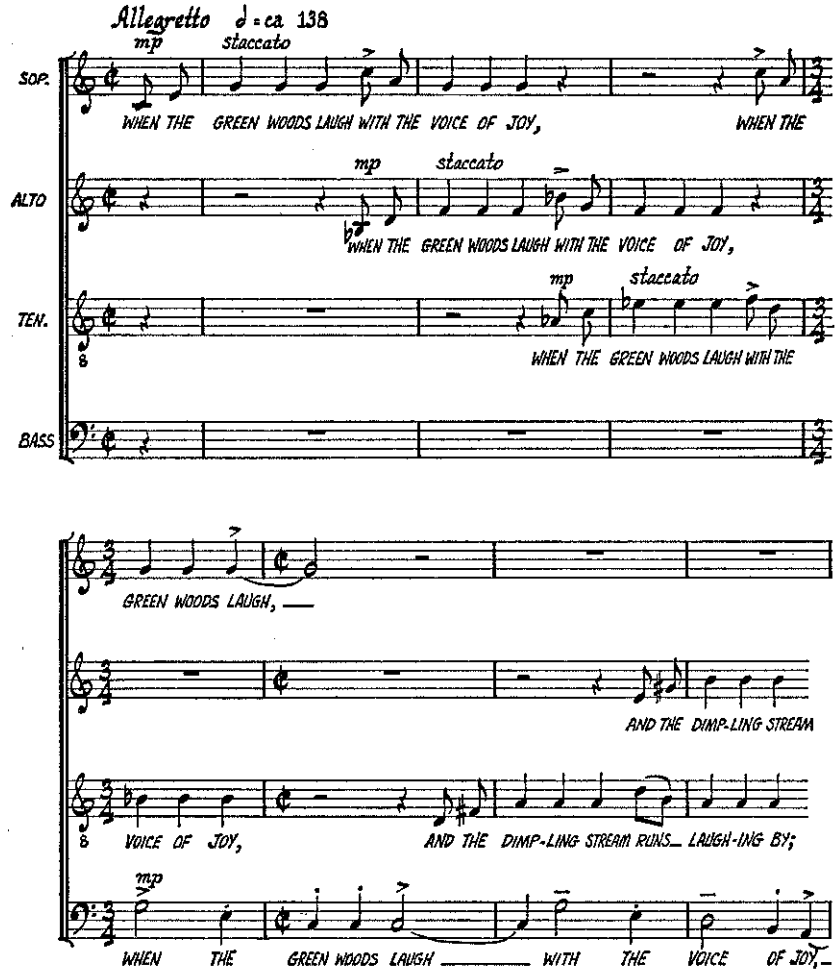
The second madrigal, *From you have I been absent* (Shakespeare, *Sonnet XCVIII*, 1609), is of a graver sort. The emphasis is on long melodic lines, with only an occasional interruption of the contrapuntal texture.

EXAMPLE 1



A strange and beautiful piece is the third madrigal, *Laughing song* (William Blake, 1789), with its polytonality and its sequential melodies (Ex. 2).

EXAMPLE 2



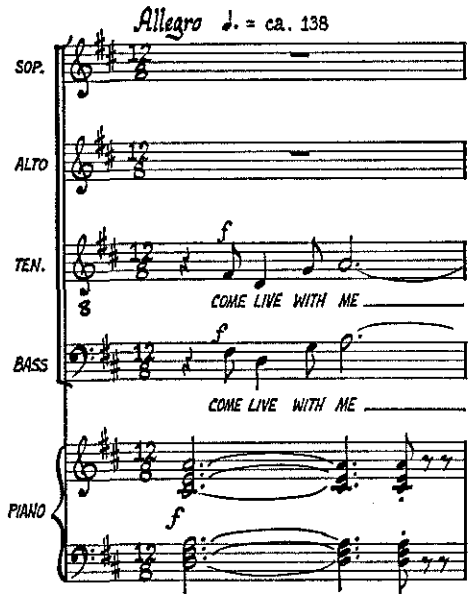
The fourth madrigal, *Loveliest of trees* (A. E. Housman, 1896), though exploring many tonal regions through the use of third relationships, marks a point of rest and reflection between the lively eighteenth century and the frantic twentieth.

The concluding madrigal, *Spring* (Edna St. Vincent Millay (1921), is profound in its twentieth-century mockery of preceding ages. Dissonance reaches the point of acidity. It ends the cycle with bitterness, and the fact that it is so negative in outlook is an eloquent comment on our own time and its interpretation by poet and composer.

One of the most original and successful of his text settings is *The Shepherd and His Love*. It uses Matlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd to His*

Love and Raleigh's *The Nymph's Reply*, written as an answer to Marlowe's poem. Here Mechem saw an opportunity to compose a battle of the sexes (with the practical bonus of enabling men's and women's groups to rehearse the work separately). The men's voices do twist the meaning of Raleigh's poem toward the end by subtly altering the order of the words written for the women's voices, thus bringing about a happy ending. (The piece was written as a wedding present!) The composer's dedication to a young couple casts some light on the playfulness of the text as well as on its musical treatment: "In every marriage . . . only one partner can be dominant. . . . But in the end . . . each must learn to be a tonic to the other." The piece opens on a superimposition of the dominant chord over the tonic (Ex. 3).

EXAMPLE 3

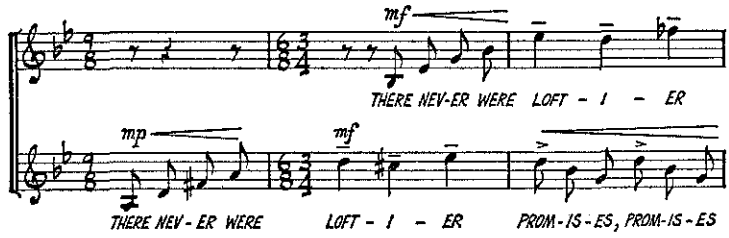


The Winged Joy (Cantata for Women's Chorus, 1–4 parts) is one of the most substantial works written for women's voices during the last decade. The Wheelock College Glee Club, Leo Collins, Director, commissioned the composition for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the college. This is probably the best example of Mechem's use of separate poems (all by women in this case) to tell a connected narrative, and of their further unification by musical means. The poems are arranged to tell "A Love Story in Seven Parts" (the subtitle). The obvious organizing device is the decrease of the number of voice parts from four to one as the heroine moves from passion to loneliness, with a corresponding

return to four parts as she gradually recovers her high spirits. Less obvious, but equally important, is the ascending key scheme of the final cadences: No. 1 ends in E minor; No. 2 in F major; No. 3 in G major; No. 4 in A major; No. 5 is based entirely on a non-tonal mirror-writing with a melody that moves repeatedly from A to B to C, ending on C; No. 6 ends in D minor; and No. 7 completes the ladder by concluding the cycle in E major.

There are many examples of chromatic modulations and enharmonic practice. Vocal tone clusters, as a result of linear planning, are quite common, and some of Mechem's writing tends to go well beyond the gravitational pull of functional harmony. No. 3 contains examples of interesting use of bi-metric ($\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{3}{4}$) and bi-tonal writing scored as a canon at the interval of a half step (Ex. 4). Three sea chanties (*What Shall We*

EXAMPLE 4



Do With the Drunken Sailor, *Roving*, and *Shenandoah*) are woven into No. 2. No. 4 reflects Baroque principles (a *passacaglia* with a recitative-like melody sung by the chorus in unison).

One of the most characteristic features of Mechem's work as a whole is humor. Occasionally it is broad farce or parody, as in the Morgenstern choruses and *Tourist Time*. More often it takes the form of gentle satire—a lively playing with the implications of the text. Nearly all the catches and canons are humorous, some with the joke not apparent until the parts are all put together (*An Old Lady of Tring* and *Since It Is Raining*). *Rules for behaviour, 1787*, Op. 7, No. 3, is an innocently satirical work that makes sport of the language and severity of an eighteenth-century set of rules governing "Children's behaviour at the meeting house" ("Walk decently . . . go not wantonly . . . shift not Seats, but continue in the Place where your Superiours order you").

Zorobabel, Op. 19, a dramatic cantata for mezzo-soprano, tenor, baritone, and bass soli, mixed chorus, string quintet, wind quintet, and piano, was originally entitled *The Victory of Zorobabel*. It was commissioned in 1962 by the Amphion Club, Berkeley, California. It may be performed with a chamber group and a small chorus or with a large

chorus, in which case the string ensemble should be augmented. A version with orchestral accompaniment is being prepared, with brass instruments taking over the role of the piano.

Mechem took his plot from *The Apocrypha* (I. Esdras, Chapters 3 and 4). Essentially, this plot involves a contest between three young men to name the mightiest power on earth. The "powers" are set in the following manner: "Wine" (baritone) is represented by a hilarious accompaniment in the winds; music of pomp and splendor (piano) characterizes "The King" (bass); sensuous string writing accompanies Zorobabel (tenor), whose singing glorifies women; and the concluding section, "Truth," is scored for the tutti forces, as are the choral sections throughout.

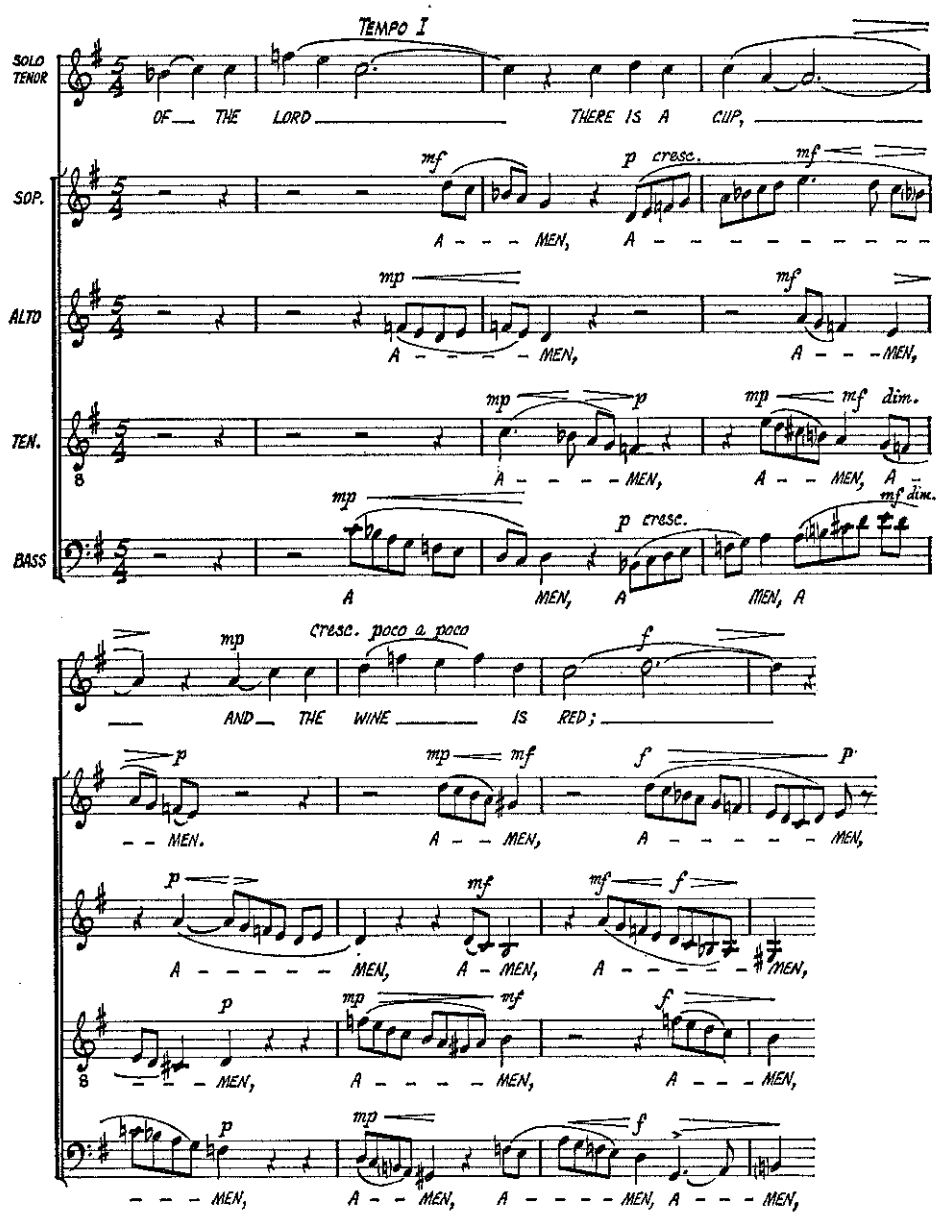
The "truth motive" that is first heard played by the oboe in the third bar runs throughout the work. (The score bears the motto, "In everything, a grain of truth.") This melodic fragment is made up almost entirely of perfect fourths and fifths and major seconds. Each of the three young men has his own characteristic theme, but sooner or later all include some form of this motive, indicating that there is some truth in what each singer has to present.

There are some touches of Handelian melody, Baroque recitative, and the obvious kind of oratorio word painting. The story of *Zorobabel*, a parable, is charming in its deliberate naïveté, and the composer must have felt that a similarly light touch was called for in the music. However, although the music is light, it never lacks cogency.

Songs of Wisdom, Op. 14, is an extended *a cappella* composition of great substance. It is called a sacred cantata and includes recitatives for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soli. Each recitative is taken from Ecclesiastes, whereas the choral parts (mixed chorus, women's chorus, and men's chorus) are arranged from various other books of the Old Testament. The recitatives suggest the style of plainsong. The five choruses (in motet style) comment upon, illuminate, and intensify the concept of each preceding recitative.

Songs of Wisdom is an intensively serious work. Both text and music reflect the idea that each man must search for the answers to life's great mysteries. The final section, "A Song of Praise," brings fragments of earlier portions back to a new, more affirmative text. This terminal movement is a rondo in which the second, third, and fourth episodes are related to each other thematically and rhythmically. A simple chorale-like passage ("I will bless the Lord; his truth endureth to all generations"), used at the beginning of the final movement and between its various sections, serves also to close the work, the soloists now soaring above the chorus with melismatic amen passages (Ex. 5).

EXAMPLE 5



The degree of difficulty of Mechem's choral music varies widely. Some of the rounds can be sung by children, but the Morgenstern choruses and several of the pieces from *Five Centuries of Spring* will prove to be taxing for even the best college groups. The bulk of the composer's music lies between these extremes. Most of his works can be sung by the

average college chorus and some have been performed widely by church choirs and high school groups.[2] All of them are clearly singer-oriented. During his student years Mechem spent a considerable amount of time singing in the various groups conducted by his teacher, Professor Harold C. Schmidt, at Stanford University. It was doubtless during this training period that he acquired a feeling for the importance of the individual melodic line, a predilection for lyrical text-settings, and a special interest in canons, catches, quodlibets, and choral counterpoint in general.

The decisive feature of Mechem's harmonic vocabulary is that it is not doctrinaire. Dissonances are resolved but not often in conventional progressions. Whereas a feeling of tonality is usually present, Mechem's particular interest in the music of the Renaissance causes him to carry purely intervallic thinking into dissonant or chromatic textures. There are many examples of his use of the church modes resulting from this interest and from the influence of Randall Thompson, his teacher at Harvard. In a similar manner, the style of Renaissance music has been influential in Mechem's free treatment of rhythm and meter.

Many general and specific characteristics have been mentioned in trying to describe the composer's style. It should be obvious that Mechem is critical in the selection of his text and that he is meticulous about setting the words in a manner that enables them to be clearly understood by the listener. The listener will also appreciate the ever-varying manner of declamation by which the composer's emphasis shifts from straightforward homophony and recitative to a complex polyphonic texture in which the development of purely musical ideas rules supreme.

[2] See the graded and annotated listing of Kirke Mechem's choral works published in the American Choral Foundation Research Memorandum Series, No. 85, June, 1969.

Choral Conductors Forum

THE PERFORMANCE OF MUSIC TRANSCRIBED WITH IRREGULARLY PLACED BAR-LINES

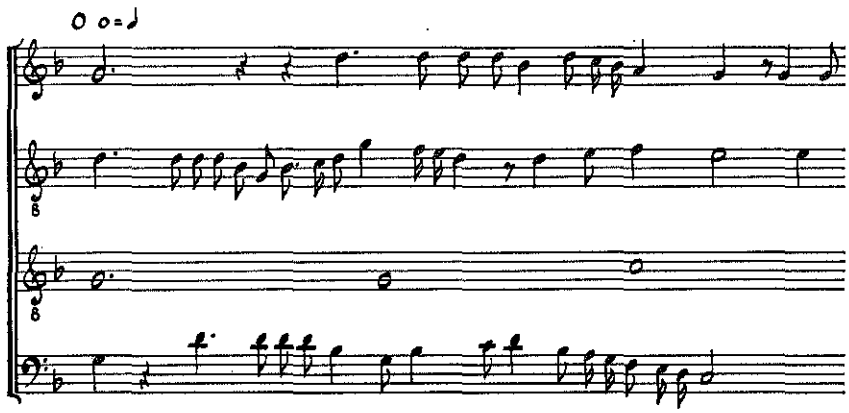
by JAMES THOMSON

Scholars who have transcribed into modern notation music written more than a few years before the seventeenth century are aware of the fact that metric patterns in Renaissance music can be rather complicated. It is no coincidence that music without bar-lines contained an almost limitless variety of metric combinations. Composers in those days were unrestricted—to an extent the modern performer often fails to appreciate—in their choice of combinations of metric patterns. Cadences were concealed by overlapping phrases and there were no symbols to induce performers to think in uniformly accented groups.

Neither the *tactus* nor the mensuration sign is necessarily an indication of actual use of metric combinations, for one can see 6/8, 3/4, 6/4, 3/2, 3 + 3 + 2/8, 3 + 3 + 2/4, 5/8, 7/8, etc.—in short, almost any conceivable metric grouping—occurring within a piece of which the mensuration sign might be C or ₵.[1] Furthermore, these groupings frequently overlap.

EXAMPLE 1a

Caron, *Missa Jesus autem transiens,* Credo

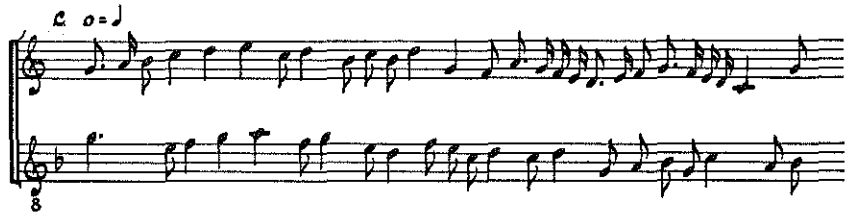


[1] See Curt Sachs, *Rhythm and Tempo* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1953), pp. 236, 241 f., and 250.

Several excerpts from the music of Caron, a contemporary of Ockeghem, are shown in Examples 1a, 1b, and 1c. If one attempts to

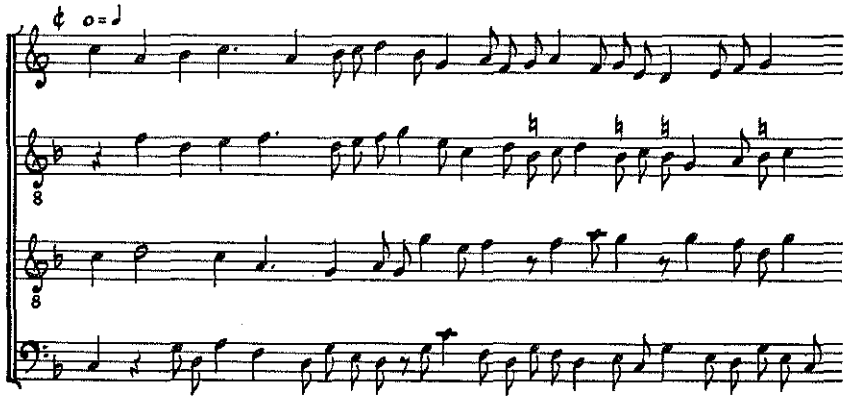
EXAMPLE 1b

Caron, *Missa L'Homme armé*, Domine Fili



EXAMPLE 1c

Caron, *Hélas!*



group the notes as they seem to fit naturally into metric combinations, one cannot possibly be satisfied with drawing bar-lines through the score at regularly recurring points. It is apparent that certain groups of notes appear in imitation or in canon, and overlap in such a way that they cannot be subjected to regular barring without false metric accents arising. In the uninterrupted lines of Renaissance vocal music this problem was not present. In modern transcriptions, to be logically, musically, and historically satisfying, some method of barring should be used so that the manifold recurring metric patterns may be clearly seen by the reader and performer and clearly heard when the music is presented.[2]

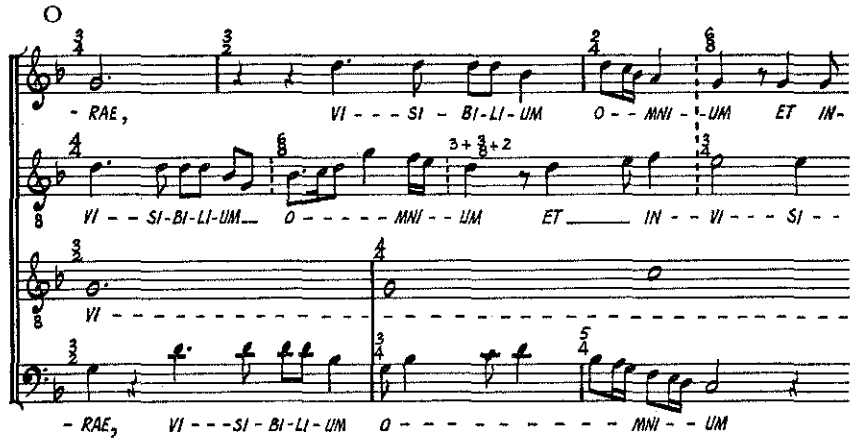
Naturally, present-day editors might disagree as to how the groupings should be made, but by the same token fifteenth-century performers might also have had different ideas about these unbarred groupings in singing or playing the same parts. The main point the present writer

[2] Several aspects of this problem have been discussed by Denis Stevens in "Problems of Editing and Publishing Old Music", *Report of the Eighth Congress of the International Musicological Society* (Kassel, Basel, London, New York, 1961), Vol. I—Papers, pp. 150–158. See also Vol. II—Reports, pp. 101–104.

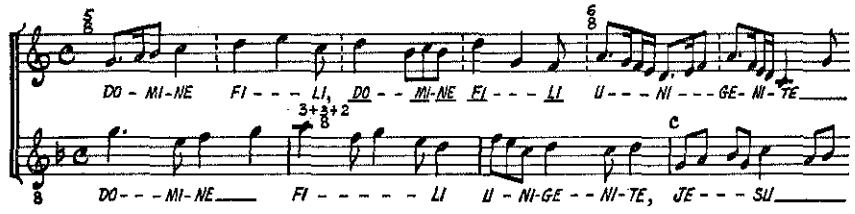
wishes to make is that to transcribe this kind of music with solid bar-lines drawn through or between the staves at regular intervals, in accordance with the mensuration sign, will distort or destroy rather than reveal the beauty and complexity of the polyphonic texture. Nor does the often applied use of a small vertical stroke—the *Mensurstrich*—solve the problem because even the best modern singers so accustomed to emphasizing the first note of every measure, "have trouble getting over the hump of the bar-line," as John Reeves White, former director of the New York Pro Musica, expressed it to the author recently. I believe that a method of irregular barring is the only way to avoid the difficulty.

For the excerpts quoted above, the solutions shown in Examples 2a, 2b, and 2c are suggested: bar-lines are solid when they coincide with those resulting from the mensuration signs in the source and dotted whenever they occur elsewhere; and this distinction between solid and dotted bar-lines was an essential aspect of the editing process.[3] The bar-

EXAMPLE 2a

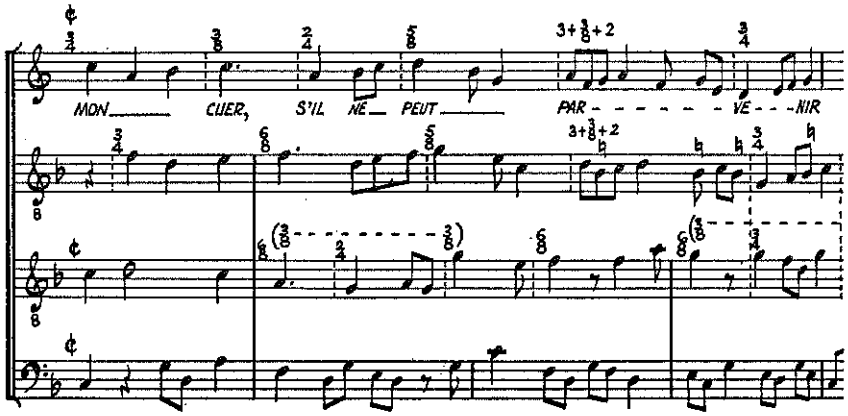


EXAMPLE 2b



[3] This method was devised and used in the transcription of the complete works of Caron forming Vol. II of the author's dissertation, *The Works of Caron, A Study in Fifteenth-Century Style*, New York University, 1959, published on microfilm, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, 1960. The complete works of Caron as edited by the author are in the process of publication by the Institute of Medieval Music.

EXAMPLE 2c



lines are used as a means of showing where stresses may rightfully occur—thus, there are no undesirable "syncopations." Internal time-signatures will help the performer to see quickly and consistently the rhythmic groupings suggested by the editor and will help the listener to grasp them.

A very similar method was employed by Otto Gombosi, the main differences being that he used dotted bar-lines to facilitate orientation within longer units and did not provide internal time-signatures in the vocal parts. As a result, many of the recurring rhythmic patterns are still not readily apparent to reader or performer. The method used by M. van Crevel in his Obrecht editions does not emphasize the presence of the recurring patterns; however, for a performance from these editions the patterns may be marked so that the singers (or players doubling the vocal parts) can give due emphasis to them. Both methods avoid the undesirable feature of superimposing a rigid meter that totally obscures the flexibility of the rhythmic counterpoint. Both of them can be interpreted by the conductor in the manner described in the following paragraphs.

One may object to transcriptions with irregular barring for the reason that it would make it impossible for the conductor to employ a regular beat; thus, the edition might give the appearance of a score merely to be looked at, not to be performed. However, we are obviously not dealing with "paper music," impossible to perform—all we need is to find a method of conducting that will keep the performers together and still make it possible for them to convey the rhythmic flexibility of the polyphonic texture in their singing or playing. We know that in the Renaissance one member of a performing group provided synchronization by raising and lowering his hand or arm according to the *tactus*. This was at a moderate tempo, and an appropriate subdivision into

various note-groups was determined by each performer. Thus, the diverse metric groupings emerged naturally, creating cross rhythms or metric counterpoint in many places.

The author suggests that in the performance of this kind of music today we use what would amount to a fractionally divided *tactus*, indicated by the conductor without any stress or emphasis on any given beat. This may be done easily if the conductor merely establishes and maintains a rate of speed, holding his baton upright and moving it from side to side—rather than up and down—in the manner of a metronome (to avoid the connotation of stress). Thus, he will beat a constantly flowing succession of small rhythmic units selected as the shortest convenient common factor for the metric groupings of the piece being performed. The choice of the beat unit would depend on the relation between the notes of the transcription and those of the source, but in many cases it might be equal to the eighth-note in transcription. According to this method a performer would merely follow the proper number of beat units for any long notes or for any metric grouping in his part. For example, if we use the eighth-note as the beat unit, in the upper line of Example 2b five beat units would be assigned to each of the first four measures and six to each of the two following; in the lower voice, the 4/4 measures would each be assigned the same number of beat units as the measures of 3+3+2/8, but the performers would observe a difference in emphasis. In Example 2c the rhythm of the canon between the two upper voices, with its changing spacing, would have a good chance of being clearly heard. In a passage like this, especially, irregular barring has the advantage that corresponding notes in the voices involved always occur at the same places within respective measures, and thus always receive the same emphasis, whereas with normal barring the metric counterpoint would be distorted and the transcription would be less logical and less musical.[4]

The author first tried this method of conducting a number of years ago while teaching at a liberal arts college for women. More recently, and while this article was in preparation, further experiments were made in rehearsals of three different vocal groups with three different conductors. In these cases the results were nearly the same: at first, confusion; then, as the singers became accustomed to the unfamiliar technique, they were able to count beat units with sufficient accuracy to be able to sing through an opening *Kyrie*, for instance, without stopping, in less than an hour of rehearsal. They were then able to continue reading the following *Christe* and second *Kyrie* with even less trouble; in fact, by the time each

[4] Dr. White also told me that for a performance of Ockeghem's *Missa Prolatorionum* he conducted successfully by using an up-and-down motion of the baton in a frequency of beats comparable to that suggested above.

rehearsal was over there was general agreement that pitch problems arising from modal progressions and the shifting accidentals of *musica ficta* were causing much more difficulty than the rhythm.

In one of these cases the conductor made the beat units audible by tapping lightly with the baton. We suggest that this procedure be followed during the early stages of rehearsing works that are barred as described above. When the new piece becomes familiar to the performers, the silent motion of the baton will suffice again. At all times the left hand of the conductor may be used in the customary manner.

Admittedly, it would be ideal if modern singers could perform music of the Renaissance from individual parts without any bar-lines. We make concessions to modern practice by using score notation and modern clefs, thus changing the appearance of the music on paper, but we should not impair its appearance in sound. The use of irregularly placed bar-lines is actually another concession and it is one way to show the metric variety contained in the music. To object to this method as too confusing would mean in effect to imply that modern singers and conductors are less capable than those of the Renaissance—entirely illogical in view of the many excellent performances of very complicated contemporary choral music. Performing music transcribed with irregularly placed bar-lines requires merely that the ability of modern singers and conductors be applied in a somewhat different way; if this is done with understanding, this technique, too, will become familiar to them.

Choral Music in the Liturgy

A JOYLESS NOISE?

by JACK GOTTLIEB

In a recent booklet entitled *Children's Letters to God*, there is the following request:[1]

Dear God:
Church is alright, but you could use better music. I hope this does not hurt your feeling. Can you write some new songs?

Your friend, Barry

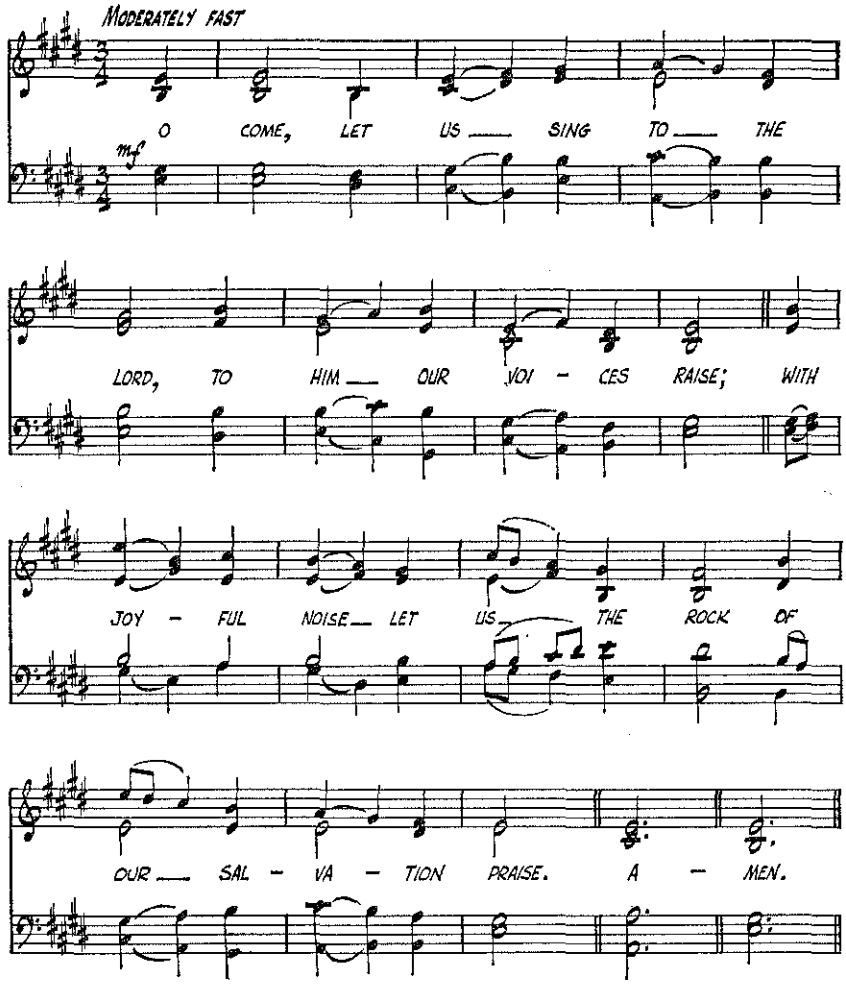
Well, I cannot speak for God, but perhaps I can help Barry anyhow—or at least suggest the causes of his disenchantment.

I would tell him first of all that, strange as it may seem, composers are probably the least culpable for this state of affairs; that in fact, they are generally *uninterested* in writing for any liturgy. I suppose this can be traced partially to the existing preponderance of control over the implementation of sacred music by those who are not necessarily musicians themselves. There are numerous psalm settings, for instance, which may or may not have been uninspired in their original form, but which have been made less inspired—if not completely intolerable—by noncompositional interference throughout the passage of time. This is true in all three major western faiths, as we will see in the following sets of comparison.

For example, if Barry is asked to "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord", as in Psalm 95, he usually settles for some explosion of joy from a Protestant Hymnal like the following:[2]

[1] *Children's Letters to God*, compiled by Eric Marshall and Stuart Hample (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966).

[2] *The Hymnal* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1950), No. 49.



The square rhythm and plodding chords hardly jibe with the exhortation of the psalmist. What is more, the awkward prosody of the psalm adaptation seems contrived. However, such a prosody is patterned after what is known as Common Meter—that is, a regular recurring group of 8.6.8.6. syllables in each phrase. There are numerous other texts that fall into the same scansion category. Therefore, all of them could potentially be set to that same melody; and in fact several of them have been so treated. One of these, a paraphrase of Psalm 90, starts:

"O God, our help in ages past, (8)
Our hope for years to come, (6)
Our shelter from the stormy blast, (8)
And our eternal home." (6)

—*Isaac Watts*, 1719

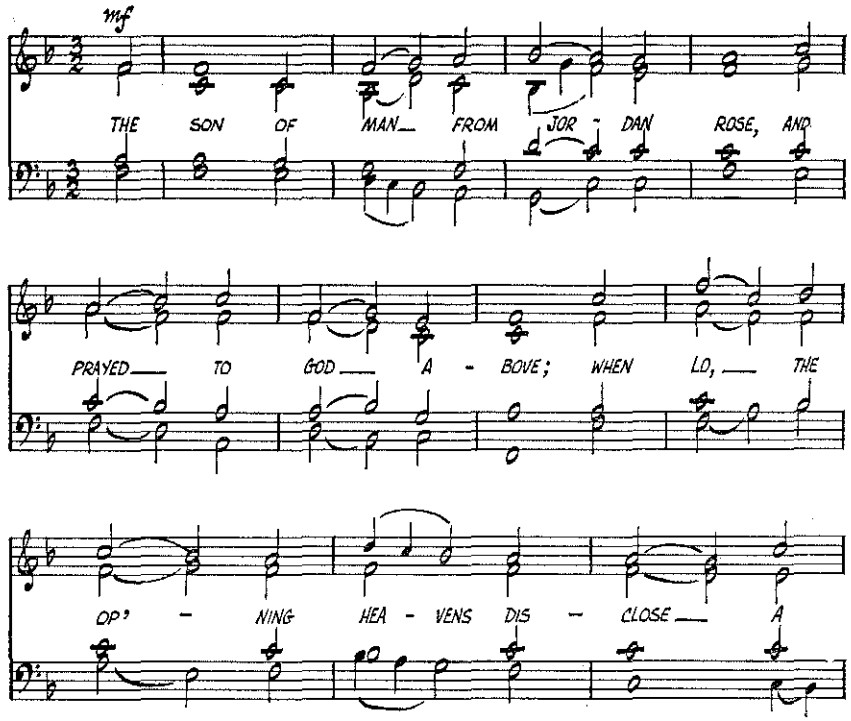
Another, a communion hymn, begins:

"O God unseen yet ever near,
Thy presence may we feel;
And thus inspired with holy fear,
Before Thine altar kneel."
—*E. Osler*, 1836

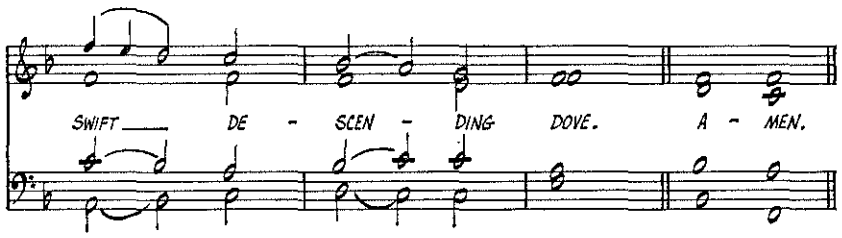
There are, of course, other tunes which will accommodate these 8.6.8.6. Common Meter poems. Thus there is a choice to be made between a set of similarly constructed melodies (Group A) and a set of similarly formed words (Group B). One selects from each group, like a Chinese dinner for two, and obviously some words will mix better with a given melody than will others.

The melody of our example dates from at least 1749, at which time it was included in a Dublin collection of Hymns and Sacred Poems. Even earlier it was a folk song entitled *The Cameronian Cat*. However successful the paraphrase of Psalm 95 might be in its own right, in my opinion *this* melody is foreign to it—with neither the immortal words nor the charming music any the better off for it. We may conclude, then, that it is an editor, not a composer, who makes such decisions.

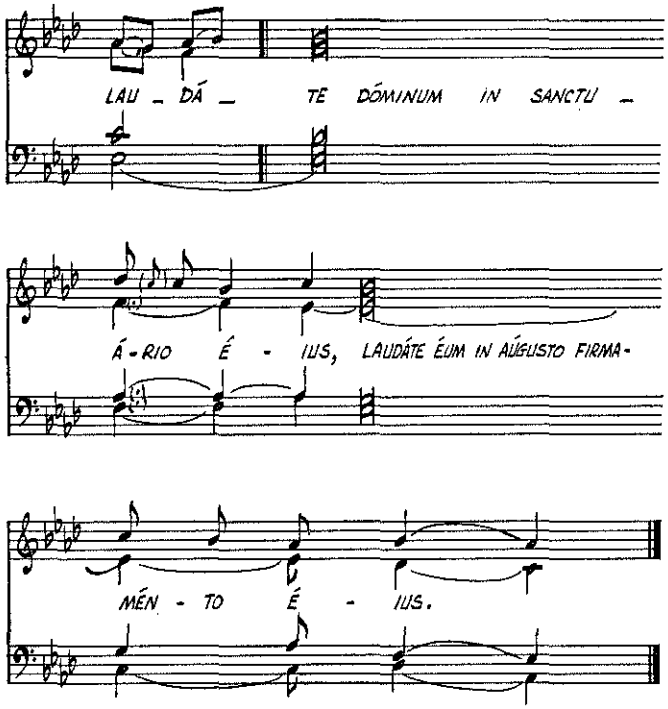
Now surely there must be some Common Meter poem more appropriate to the melodic contour and spirit of this melody; and, indeed, there is at least one. You will notice how the implications of "up and down" directions in the following text coincide with the music:[3]



[3] *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), Hymn 487, p. 422.



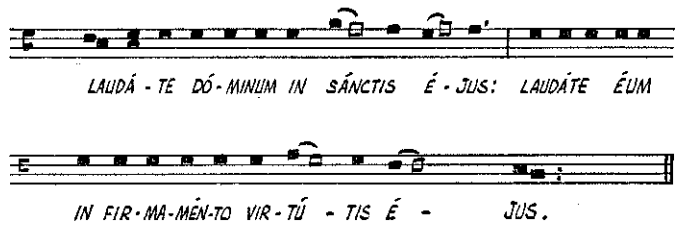
Our friend Barry might also be unhappy when he is asked, in Psalm 150, to "Praise the Lord in His sanctuary, with horn, with timbrel, with dance and loud-sounding cymbals . . ." as in this psalm tone setting in a Catholic Hymnal:[4]



The *Liber Usualis* (the "Usual Book", a compendium of ancient Roman chant), however, reveals something else for the same psalm tone. Not only are the Latin words somewhat different, but there is just the melody itself, unharmonized, with a more interesting final cadence (although this cadence, i.e. the end of the phrase, is just another

[4] *Pius X School Hymnal* (Boston: McLaughlin & Reilly, 1953), Hymn 145.

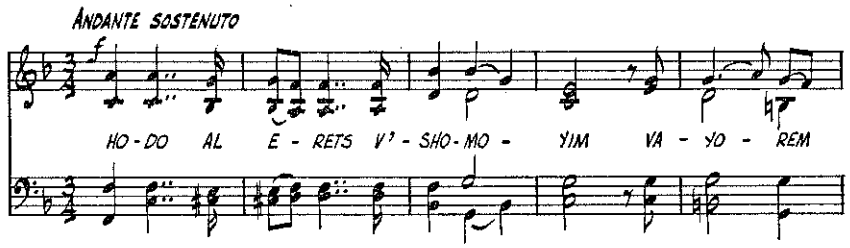
form of the psalm tone, having no bearing on the argument):[5]



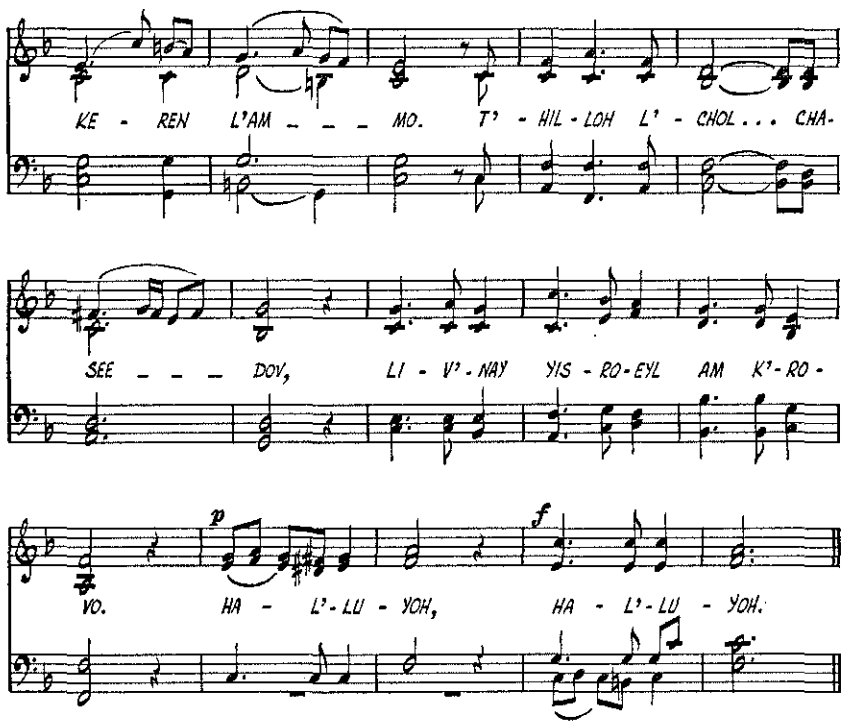
The Latin of this *Liber* version is based on the Vulgate, while the Hymnal example uses the 1945 translation. Thus in the Hymnal we find that newer words have been imposed on older music. (Perhaps this chaos of translations will eventually be cleared up through present Protestant-Catholic joint efforts to achieve uniformity in Bible translation.)

The original chant obviously took performance of the psalm into consideration, while the later edition stretches the melodic line out of proportion and thereby weakens the impact of actual singing. Like the Protestant example, it is a matter of contour. For example, *sanctuario* (5 syllables in the Hymnal) replaces *sanctis* (2 syllables in the *Liber*) and so forth. To make matters worse, it is a delicate matter, if not an anachronism, to *harmonize* music that was first conceived only in monophonic terms. Still, if we grant the validity of this, the chords in the Hymnal are unconvincing. Of all things, there is a I 6/4 chord right at the outset! As any first-year harmony student knows, such a position of a chord rightly belongs at the end of a phrase.

Finally, Barry could also discover instances of musical tampering in the synagogue. For instance, in Psalm 148, which ends: "His glory is above the earth and heaven", and so on, a Jewish Hymnal presents a kind of Alma Mater anthem:[6]



[5] *Liber Usualis* (New York: Desclée & Co., 1963), p. 1804.
[6] *Union Hymnal* (New York: The Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1946), p. 471.

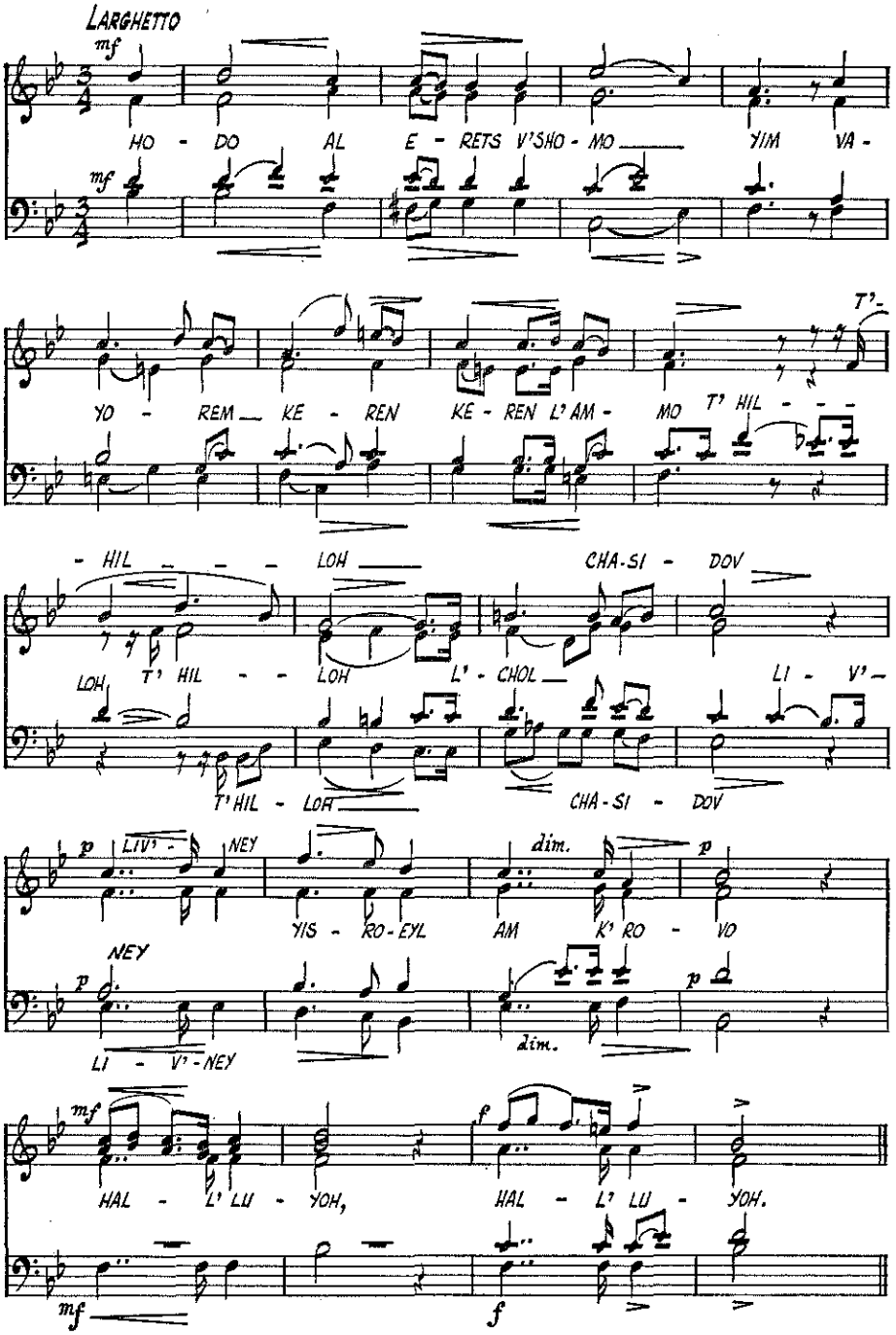


Unlike the other two cases, we know this psalm setting to be the work of a specific composer: Salomon Sulzer (1804–1890). Turning to an authentic edition of Sulzer's works, there is a significant revelation. Not only are the key, tempo, expression marks, dynamics and inner voice lines quite different, but they also transform the Alma Mater aspect into something closer to a genuine paean. This is clearly confirmed by the contrapuntal imitations in the authentic version which have been conveniently eradicated in the later so-called "improvement"—improved for the sake of congregational participation, perhaps, but at the expense of real musical worth.

The composition belongs to the same historical period as a genre of Viennese church music,[7] which in retrospect we may find deficient. In its day, however, it made good bourgeois sense. Here is Sulzer's original intention:[8]

[7] The opening phrase is reminiscent of Franck's *Panis Angelicus!*

[8] Salomon Sulzer, *Schir Zion* (New York: Sacred Music Press, 1954), Vol. 6, p. 104, No. 115.

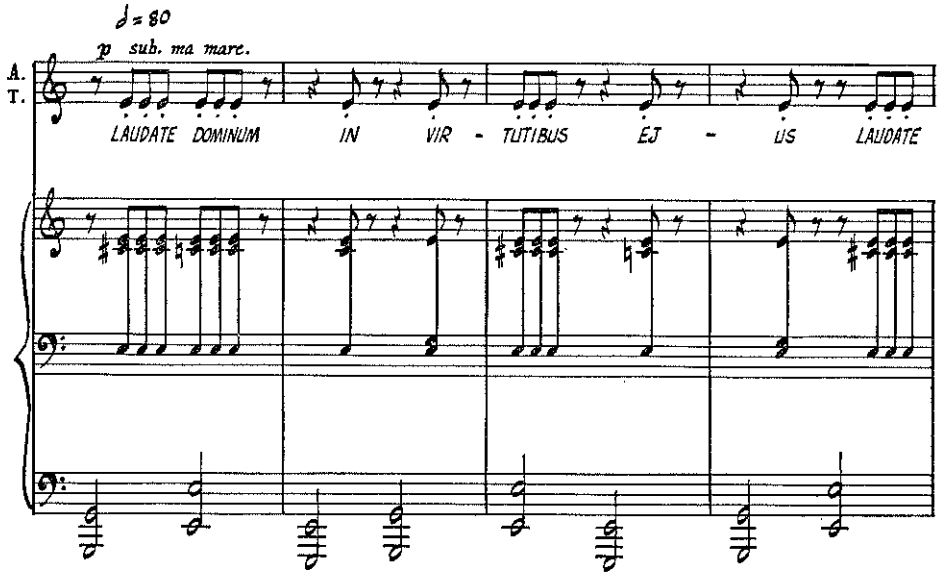


And so we find again that a meddler has come along to "beautify" vintage stock. Who are these Mr. Fixits? Invariably they are the "Hymnologists" in the publication business, those who are not wholly

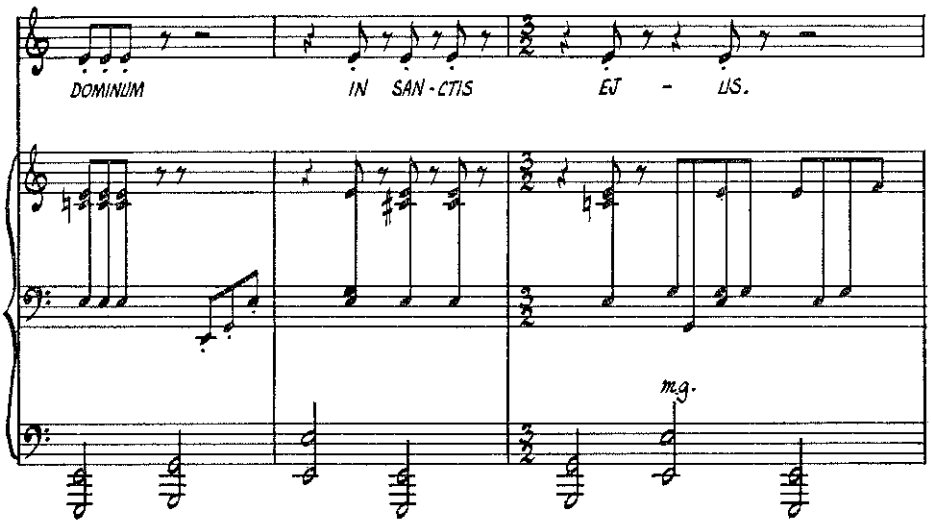
(and that might be spelt the other way) composers, the "Editors" who reduce words and music to a common denominator of supposed practicability. The result has often been a lifeless musical sameness throughout the western liturgies in which prayers of praise, as well as those of petition or contrition, are sometimes barely distinguishable one from the other. The settings emerge sounding bland and treacly, frequently crowned by the halo-heading of *Andante Religioso*.

Beyond the false sense of piety and sentimentality that such editing tends to foster, the composer's apparent fear of being rhythmically vital and sensitive to the expression of joyful words, is also much in evidence. Certainly this is related to the early abandonment of instruments in the liturgy in favor of the organ. But, again, those in control "direct" the composer to maintain the criterion of "that which is tried and true and beloved by our congregations." In this case it is probably the clergy that must be held accountable for its inhibiting control over artistic innovation. So the composer is left looking for greener pastures. These lie, of course, in the concert hall where his psalm compositions are first conceived with orchestra in mind and only secondarily for keyboard or practical liturgical use.

The way Stravinsky sets Psalm 150 (the same text we examined before in the Catholic examples) in his *Symphony of Psalms* is one illustration. Though Stravinsky's means are as austere as the plain-chant example—sometimes using just unison choral declamation—he achieves greater fidelity to the text through simple syncopation:[9]



[9] Igor Stravinsky, *Symphony of Psalms* (New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1948), piano-vocal score, pp. 22–23, No. 8.



But this and other rhythmically dynamic psalm settings arouse the indignation of church elders or, at the least, raise incredulous eyebrows. The usual accusation is that such stuff belongs to the concert stage or should be relegated to the popular theater. To point out that the religious institution was one of the earliest forms of the theater (which is not necessarily a form of entertainment) is a lost cause. For comes the Sabbath, it is time to push in the special button for devotions. No room for "popular" music here!

Is it any wonder that few accomplished composers of our era write liturgical music? When they do, they usually play safe and aim toward the one "congregation" they know best: secular subscribers. Of course this was not always the situation. Composers through the seventeenth century wrote only for the greater glory of God, regardless of form. But with the rise to prominence of instrumental forces, the music of the last two hundred years has not been focused on the choir. Because of historical conditioning, contemporary composers have anyhow had relatively little to do with large vocal forms.

Ironically, the ecclesiastical position is that the more sedate and meditative liturgical music is, the holier it becomes. Indeed, religious *ecstasy* has come to mean total involvement with the divine, directed inwardly. In the world of the soul, rhythmic verve, with its concomitant drive into the dance, is forbidden fruit.

> What has happened, therefore, is a complete reversal of the idea of Spirituality, in which music plays an essential part, since it is now expected to do just the opposite of what it was asked to do before. Instead of exciting, it now has to calm men's spirits. Whereas before its function was to take hold of them and project them violently beyond reality into spheres

> of divine possession, in its new role it has to insinuate itself and become the "music of silence," effacing itself in order to create an atmosphere conducive to meditation and reflection: background music, of which one might almost say, as of the music in certain films, that the less one is conscious of it the better it is.[10]

Both music and the worship-experience have suffered in the long run. Important composers, with much to say, simply reject liturgical commissions, and congregants are increasingly bored with the predictability of their choir's contributions—although they still dearly love their own "Old Hundredths"; that is, the hymns they themselves sing.

The time is ripe for change. We are living in an age of transition in which it is likely that the artist could gain from involvement with contemporary liturgy as much as organized religion needs him. The Catholic church is most aware of this; but with the move to sweep away Latin in favor of the vernacular, I wonder if a composer is not now faced with an unexpected new set of problems. For language, more than anything else, shapes the character of vocal music. Since Latin tends to give equal stress to all syllables (the so-called *spondee*) the church music of the past has had a special weight and grandeur. In what direction would it develop in terms of mostly English or Spanish prayers? I believe that something very precious is being lost in the transition.

Hebrew is based on accented final and penultimate syllables, motivating music of a marked *iambic* shape that is linked to the Jewish folk gesture. English, however, is an eclectic idiom and so its music is also wide in range. Therefore, Catholic and Jewish music, converted from Latin and Hebrew into English, could be too much of a good thing, leading to the loss of individuality and utter assimilation.

In other words, original texts must not be glossed over. On the contrary, not enough concentrated attention has been paid to them from the musician's point of view. A closer examination of the Psalms offers rich possibilities for composition. First there are the kinds of parallelisms found therein: the stating of an idea in more than one way, the contrasting of opposing ideas, and the building up of an idea through a chain effect—all of which suggest musical forms. Then the study of the original Hebrew also bears musical fruit: *mizmor* (translated as "song") could mean that an accompaniment is required, whereas the word *shir* (also meaning "song") might be for unaccompanied voice—especially when these words are examined in context. The word *selah* could mean a pause or fermata. *Maḥol* implies a kind of dance. There is the great variety of instruments mentioned: *neginot*, *alamot*, *kinnor*, *minnim*, *shofar*, *nebel*, *tof*, *tzilzelim*, *ḥatzotzrah*—the Temple's joyful noise of strings, harps, trumpets, drums, cymbals, bells, oboes, and flutes.

[10] Jacques Chailley, *40,000 Years of Music* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1964), p. 67.

Tradition gives us an orchestra, not just an organ (and how much *that* sound, especially since the nineteenth century, is to be censured for its role in shaping the history of liturgical music!). Tradition even supplies us with justification for involving dance movement in houses of worship. In addition to David's dance around the Holy Ark or Miriam's dance at the Red Sea, it is startling to discover that *Yom Kippur*, the Jewish Day of Atonement, and the most solemn holy day, actually was a festive occasion in antiquity, replete with dancing and betrothal announcements. Another kind of exploration into tradition shows that the earliest surviving Roman Missals contain a much wider selection of verses from which to choose for Introits, Offertories, and Communion Psalms in specific masses—not just the few that are in vogue today.

Therefore, to the objection that certain music is liturgically untenable because it does not adhere to traditional modes of thought, the question must be raised: whose tradition? Your grandfather's, or your more remote ancestor's? Tradition is not something intractable and fossilized. Rather it is like a bank: one borrows from it, but pays back with interest. Furthermore, tradition is not to be confused with culture; i.e. an African or Argentinian folk mass (the *Missa Luba* or *Misa Criolla*) is not any the less valid just because it does not employ plainchant. And the same might be said of the so-called jazz masses in the United States, despite the recent prohibition by the Vatican.

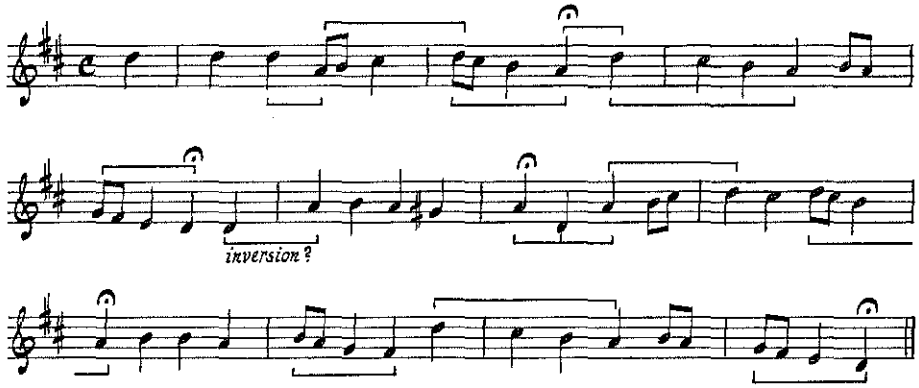
The liturgical music of the future will undoubtedly be the mirror of ages past. In this respect it will parallel recent developments in serious music-at-large: a rejection of nineteenth-century methods and a search for new perspectives and roots in ancient, medieval, and Renaissance music, and especially in music of the orient.

How can this future be assured? Ideally, a *secular* professional school could be the agency to raise the standards and to clear away the debris of past accretions, thereby improving general quality. An impartial school not exclusively affiliated with the practice of one faith, and therefore centered about the study of comparative liturgical practices, would allow for an equitable distribution of emphasis. Continual focus on one religious expression alone, as in certain seminaries, tends to lead to a kind of inbreeding and stagnation, musically speaking. But in an impartial school, the mutual exposure of the participants to each other's rites and traditions would help to revitalize the individual expression of each. Original sources would be investigated, differences and mutualities would be evaluated, thus supplying new vistas on already familiar materials. This wide-open intermingling at the school level would then be bound to affect congregational procedure at the community level.

Such a school would also seek other methods of music education.

All music students, for example, are familiar with the Bach chorale style in their harmonic studies. Indeed, they are sated with it. But rarely has an attempt been made to apply any other style of harmonization to a Lutheran tune. I would like to offer a theory in which perhaps more appropriate contemporary harmonic directions might be found in the melodic dictates of a given melody, while still being faithful to the vast *terra cognita* of tradition.

A simple examination of the well-known *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God*, as one possibility, uncovers the interval of the fourth as its main building stone, especially in its interior scalar melodic spans:



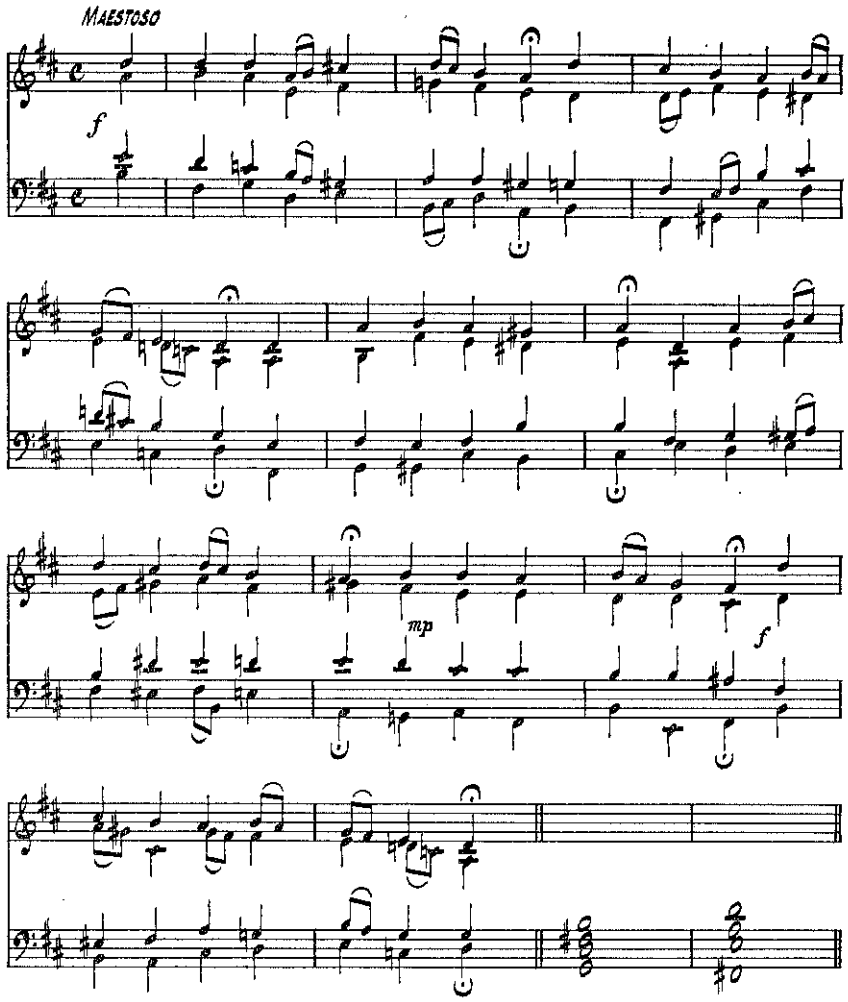
Therefore, vertical pile-ups of these bricks of fourths:  are thoroughly consistent with the melody, both in theory and expression. I have made a stab at it in the way illustrated on the next page.[11]

The same approach could be applied to modal harmonic settings of plain-chant or Hebraic Biblical cantillation, when this kind of monophony is used either as source material for large-scale works, or as a simple guide in worship services.

In our imaginary school, the following areas of study could be instituted:

1. Musicological research into liturgical music by the actual application of historical forms and methods to the contemporary idiom.
2 One course in a liturgical music other than the immediate field of concern: Gregorian and Cantorial chant study and their relevance today, cantillation settings in English, modal harmony, crash program studies in languages, the sources of prayer texts, bibliographies.
3. Psalm and hymn composition: comparison of texts (translations), structural analysis, examination of various versions, model congregational readings, topography of prayer book pages, history of the Psalter.

[11] Stravinsky's parody of this chorale in *L'Histoire du Soldat* shows still another approach.



4. The so-called "Exotica": Holy Rollers, Gospel Singers, Revivalists, Chassidim, Hindu and other oriental traditions including the Yemenite and Islamic. A look into related subject matter such as jazz services and folk masses.
5. Particular attention to liturgical masterworks by contemporary composers.
6. An analysis of the peripheral roles of the organ, in terms of compositional possibilities and improvisation devices, lesser known registrations and problems of physical construction.
7. A serious evaluation of the possible use of *other* instruments in the liturgy; Biblical precedents and references.

Ultimately the school could become a central clearing house, suggesting reorientations for individual churches and synagogues.

That the urgent need for an overhaul and reevaluation of liturgical music exists cannot be denied. That it must first be approached from the composer's point of view and second from the theologian's is, I feel, essential. That this will flourish in a free-wheeling arena, unafraid of novelty, but realistically aware of responsibility, is patently evident. Only then will the joyless noise heard in so many of our services turn into a roar of affirmation. Perhaps there will be less talk of "God is dead" when the music becomes alive again and we can all be helped toward a renewal of faith.

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Choral Performances

Washington—Any resemblance between the Biblical story of Moses in Egypt and Gioacchino Rossini's sacred opera, *Mosè in Egitto*, large dollops of which were heard in a concert version in May, 1970 at the Washington Cathedral, is strictly coincidental.

There was, you see, Amenophis, the son of Pharaoh (yes, that's right), who is in love with Anais, Moses' niece. You didn't know that he had a niece? Well, she's the daughter of Mary, who is Moses' sister. You can readily appreciate the bind Amenophis finds himself in when he is forced to choose between loyalty to Egypt and his love for Anais, who is going with the departing Israelites. And Anais, too, has her troubles in choosing between the commandments of God and Moses and her lover. It all gets very complicated and, even with a scorecard in my hand, I found it difficult to tell just who was who and what was what. Fuzzy diction (and an absolute minimum of fluency in Italian on my part) didn't help to clarify things either.

The production by Paul Callaway and the Cathedral Choral Society, assisted by an excellent group of soloists, was not what one might call the last word in authenticity. If Leonard Ellinwood's blessedly lucid program note, aptly entitled "Moses (*ca.* 1400 B.C.) and Rossini (1792–1868), or, what happens when an ancient patriarch gets mixed up with Italian opera," is accurate, then what we were experiencing was a truncated version of the Italian translation of a French revision in four acts of the original three-act Italian version lacking the first act, if you get what I mean.

I don't know why Callaway chose to dispense with Act I or why he used the Italian translation of the French translation in preference to the Italian original, which still gets exhumed every now and then for an oratorio-type performance. Furthermore, I'm not even sure that I care, or that it much matters. Even minus an act, the performance wasn't over until 11 o'clock, and 150 minutes of Rossini is enough for one evening. And the story really isn't essential either.

It was great fun if you didn't insist on regarding *Mosè* as an undying holy masterpiece which one blasphemed by altering it. The music was Rossini of the horse-race, of the silent movie era, of the theme music for "Hi-yo Silver" at its exhilarating best. The catchy tunes bubble like

water in a mountain spring, the feet keep time as the drum gets soundly thwacked, and the big chorus makes an absolutely glorious noise.

It would be easy to lavish superlatives on the first-rate cast assembled by Callaway. Simon Estes was in wonderful voice as Mosè, the best I have heard from this gifted singer. Frances Yeend's Sinais started out a little slowly, but she was soon dominating every scene in which she appeared. Anastasios Vrenios, cruelly taxed by the high tessitura of Amenophis, responded to the challenge nobly. Dominic Cossa's Pharaoh was properly regal. Karen Armstrong (Anais) did beautifully with her big Act IV aria. Howard Hensel (Aaron), Margery Clifford (Mary), Philip Booth (Osiris), and Edward Jackson (Auphis) all did exceptionally well. The orchestra (the Washington National Symphony) and chorus sounded magnificent.

In view of the other liberties taken with the score, it is really a bit churlish to complain about the lack of ornamentation in the arias. I merely chronicle that, with a few honorable exceptions, the vocal lines were chaste rather than florid.

—Irving Lowens

Detroit—The two rival factions of the defunct Bach at Cranbrook series were to have staged competing 1970 music festivals, but a shortage of money wiped out the series scheduled at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial. Only Cranbrook Festival '70, which has supplanted the Bach series at Christ Church Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, opened as scheduled.

Kenneth Jewell led the Chorale that bears his name and the Cranbrook Festival Orchestra, an ensemble of Detroit Symphony musicians past and present. The big difference in this festival was, of course, the programming. Bach yielded top billing to Mozart and Haydn. Any doubts that the Cranbrook Festival could make the switch to the new program format were conclusively dispelled at the closing concert by a stirring and profoundly moving performance of Mozart's monumental, yet highly personalized *C Minor Mass*. Like Schubert's *C Major Symphony* Mozart's *C Minor Mass* is deservedly subtitled "The Great." Although Mozart never quite got around to finishing it, he completed enough to enable it to stand as a marvel of coexistence between intimate, sublime lyricism and grandiose splendor.

That chorus, orchestra, and soloists should have projected its outgoing sections persuasively was no surprise. That the work's introspective dimension also emerged came as an exhilarating extra. Surely the story of the Cranbrook Festival's success is the story of Jewell's growth as a conductor. Formerly he had relied primarily on precision and muscle; now he has gained enough confidence to ease up and still maintain a sense of tension, and his performances are capable of shining and breathing deeply as well.

The soloists, as usual, came from the ranks of the chorus. Soprano Carolyn Grimes, whose full, gleaming, liquid top notes have enhanced many Jewell Chorale performances, first undertook Vivaldi's striking *Laudate pueri*, a nine-section setting of Psalm 112, in the afternoon concert. Once past some initial dryness, she produced a string of brilliant top notes, although the ornamentations were somewhat beyond her. But her singing of the "Et incarnatus est" in the Mozart Mass was the single most impressive piece of vocalism in the festival. Here her tones were perfectly centered, even more brilliant and expressive, and she made the trills sound easy. Mrs. Grimes's colleagues produced some remarkably sung solos, too, especially contralto Barbara Windham in the Mozart and soprano Irene Edinger in the sturdy, forward moving afternoon concert performance of Bach's Cantata No. 140, *Wachet auf*.

Jewell's choice of Haydn's *Mass No. 7 in C Major* as the featured work at the May 1 concert was particularly gratifying, too, Haydn's late masses are almost all magnificent masterpieces, but they aren't performed as often as they are praised in print, and the "Paukenmesse" is especially exalted, intense, and warmly human, with a depth of emotion that surpasses even its purely sonic splendors. The power and grandeur of this mass were handsomely advanced, and the Chorale's famous "spit-and-polish" precision was at times agreeably subordinated to a more pliant, resilient tone, and the phrasing was less clipped and more supple.

But despite the progress he is making as an orchestral conductor, Jewell occasionally had trouble clarifying instrumental details as he maintained momentum. The prominent timpani parts in the *Kyrie* and *Agnus Dei* were muffled, and balances often tipped in the strings' favor during fast passages. The solo singing from soprano Grace Pfeifer, contralto Karen Guettler, tenor Eric Freudigman, and bass Carroll Strickland was glorious and accounted for most of the performance's thrilling moments. Miss Pfeifer's fresh, free-floating soprano tones were especially impressive and Mr. Strickland sang his "Miserere" solo grippingly.

* * *

One of the great music traditions in Michigan centers around the University of Michigan's annual May Festivals in Ann Arbor. The University Choral Union, a chorus of approximately 300 students and townspeople, has been heard at these Festivals since 1894 and the Philadelphia Orchestra has participated since 1936. In 1970 the two ensembles performed five concerts at Ann Arbor's acoustically excellent Hill Auditorium.

Conductor Eugene Ormandy opened the Festival with Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* ("Resurrection") and the full membership of the Choral Union was on hand for the choral lines that accompany the transforma-

tion from despair to affirmation in the final movement. The soloists were Evelyn Mandac, a Philippine soprano with a fresh sounding, beautifully placed voice, and Birgit Finnila, a Swedish contralto.

At the final concert the University Choral Union's so-called "Small Chorus" of eighty voices gave a good account of itself in Beethoven's *Choral Fantasia*, with Ormandy on the podium and Rudolf Serkin the pianist. This work tends to be glibly written off as little more than a sketch for the final movement of Beethoven's "Choral" Symphony, which it is, but it stands up handsomely on its own. Serkin's ruggedness and electricity at the keyboard sparked a tremendously exciting performance. There was strength and sensitivity in Ormandy's accompaniment, and the work of the vocal soloists in the *Fantasia*—soprano Benita Valente, mezzo-soprano Mary Burgess, contralto Barbara Hilbish, tenors John Humphrey and Waldie Anderson, and baritone Leslie Guinn—contributed mightily to the success of the performance.

In the afternoon concert conductor Thor Johnson set Debussy's ethereal little cantata, *La Damoiselle élue*, against the outgoing splendors of Bach's *Magnificat*. Johnson invariably produces remarkable results with minimal rehearsal time and this was the story on the afternoon of April 26. The soloists were again impressive, especially Misses Finnila and Valente. Miss Finnila contributed rich, creamy tones, and Miss Valente's "white" soprano with its minimum of vibrato sat well in the Bach. Both were impressive in the Debussy as well.

The Philadelphia first-desk men performed superbly in the Bach. The Small Chorus, with its new director, Donald Bryant, providing an alert harpsichord continuo, sang vibrantly and clearly. Hewing this smaller ensemble out of the 300-voice Choral Union was a good idea, and the Women's Chorus of forty-nine voices was largely responsible for the exquisite realization of the Debussy. On the April 24 program, which this reviewer did not attend, the Choral Union was heard in Poulenc's *Stabat Mater* and Alan Stout's *Prologue*.

—Jay Carr

Cincinnati—Wilfred Josephs is a 42-year-old English composer whose *Requiem*, a large-scale setting of the Hebrew Kaddish for baritone solo, chorus, string quintet, and orchestra, made a deep impression when Max Rudolf and the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra gave it American premiere performances in Cincinnati and New York early in 1967. It was a natural next step for Cincinnati to commission a new choral work from Josephs for its May Festival, founded in 1873 and now an annual event. The work that resulted—*Mortales*, Op. 62—was given its world premiere during the 1970 festival's closing weekend in Cincinnati's recently refurbished Music Hall. Easily overshadowing the works of Hans Werner

Henze and Peter Mennin that came out of the last two festival commissions in 1968 and 1969, it turned out to represent a new stride in a major composer's powers of communication and organization.

The challenge facing recipients of May Festival commissions is that of making fertile use, over a time-scale of less than half an hour, of the large children's and adults' choruses gathered along with the Cincinnati Symphony for the occasion. Josephs' radical and ingenious solution has been to write music whose overall complexity is the product of a combination of simple elements. Thus he gives each constituent group among the forces involved material that is well within its powers of preparation, while the total effect when the elements are put together avoids any, suggestion of "writing down" to accommodate the needs of inexperienced performers. The task was clearly a congenial one for a composer with a strikingly personal style who has, so to speak, gone through the serial method and come out on the other side: Josephs studied in Paris with Max Deutsch, himself a Schoenberg pupil, but the music he now writes combines cellular structural techniques with a liberal admixture of tonal implications, occasionally incorporating a carefully controlled use of aleatory procedures for special and always ungimmicky effects.

The texts of *Mortales*, assembled from a variety of sources, all relate in one way or another to man's mortality—his glorious potential and the limits that cut it short. They are arranged in three movements, each of which possesses a central musical idea, simple yet memorable, that gives it a strongly individual character.

The first movement—a brisk, tumultuously colorful setting of Blake's *To Spring*—expresses the concept of rebirth after the manner of a jigsaw puzzle: each musical fragment in turn is "put down" in the course of a gradually augmenting series of statements. Once put down, it stays down, so that after a beginning of fleet, flashing images, the total pictures is not seen until the end.

In the second movement, eerie percussion sounds introduce a solo baritone who sings Shelley's *Ozymandias*. At the words "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair" additional children's choruses stationed in the gallery join the stage groups in whispered repetitions of the name "Ozymandias"—a wonderfully mysterious effect.

The idea out of which the concluding Passacaglia grows is even simpler in essence. It is a superb and unforgettable tune in subtle 7/4 time, pregnant with rich harmonic ambiguities, to the "Adieu, farewell Earth's bliss" section of *Summer's Last Will and Testament* by the sixteenth-century poet Thomas Nashe. Drawing on other sources that range from a modern children's song and a ninth-century German fragment about the end of the world to Martin Luther's famous declaration "Here I stand! I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen," this move-

ment completes the emotional arc of a work that begins with spring and hope and ends in bleak despair.

It is, perhaps, a rather daunting work for children to sing. But somehow Ohio in the spring of 1970, with its schools abruptly shut down in the aftermath of Kent State, seemed an appropriate place to speak of the evanescence of youth and of the forces that destroy life in its prime, and the fashion in which Josephs sets forth his vision is masterly. *Mortales* is full of the sap of music. It is the kind of work that reminds us of the the timelessness inherent in such seemingly outdated commodities as "melody" and "inspiration." They are not out of date—they are only in short supply; and here they flourish again, along with brilliantly applied modern techniques, in a work of dazzling eloquence.

If the creative outcome of the 1970 May Festival was a stirring one, it was, unfortunately, impossible to be correspondingly encouraged by the performance. Julius Rudel, who has now taken over the music directorship from Max Rudolf, barely took the trouble to rehearse *Mortales* and conducted it in a way that suggested that he had only a nodding acquaintance with the score. He did not even bother to place the extra children's voices at the back of the hall as directed, preferring the easier course of putting them at the sides of the stage and thereby largely destroying the effect of one of the work's great moments. Baritone Dominic Cossa, the other soloists, the orchestra, and the choruses did noble work under the circumstances, but with these resources a much greater impression could have been made by a conductor who really cared.

—Bernard Jacobson

Atlanta—In the three and a half years that Robert Shaw has served as music director of the Atlanta Symphony, the community has heard more fine choral-orchestral works than in the preceding dozen years. None has had a greater audience impact than Penderecki's *Passion of Our Lord According to St. Luke*, which Shaw conducted in the spring of 1970. Indeed, no contemporary piece involving so-called avant-garde techniques has ever evoked such affirmative reaction here within my memory.

Since Atlanta's audience is usually no more receptive than most to new music, it is of some interest to define in just what ways the *St. Luke Passion* can be regarded as "advanced" music. Penderecki's closest link with the avant-garde is his use of pure sound, which he handles with variety and imagination. The *St. Luke* has thumps and shouts of indefinite pitch, glissandos and clusters, whispers, whistles, and occasional aleatory passages. Of true serial writing there is little or none. It has been suggested that the Passacaglia, which has a text from the *Improperia* and is based on the B–A–C–H acrostic, is serial; but it does not sound so and a cursory examination of the score seemed to reveal more relationship to Baroque ostinato technique than to modern serialism.

Penderecki, then, does not follow the "Webern style as practiced and promulgated at Darmstadt" (his own words); his use of sound relates him to electronic experiments, but he does not use electronic means. Otherwise, his eclecticism seems to exclude nothing that can serve his purpose. The structure of the *St. Luke Passion* clearly and admittedly derives from Bach and tribute is paid in the use of the B–A–C–H motive. Plainsong is an influence in the melodic character, as is "Palestrina-style" counterpoint. There are reminiscences of Stravinsky, Schoenberg *Sprechstimme*, and a host of other contemporary devices. Nothing is new except the mixture, which is both fascinating and original. It deserves a much more detailed analysis than it has yet been given.

For the audience, of course, "The style is not what counts" (again Penderecki's words). The highly dramatic, even theatrical effects ensure some direct reaction, but the audience response to the quieter, more meditative portions was also immediate. By whatever means, Penderecki has succeeded in articulating the universal human tragedy of bigotry, hate, and violence in contemporary musical terms that are understandable to an average contemporary audience.

Part of the success was certainly the direct result of an outstanding performance. Shaw, of course, has a long and intimate involvement with Bach's Passions; and his experience with a wide variety of contemporary music, which has made up a surprisingly large portion of his symphonic repertory here, is now considerable. These factors, plus his well-known mastery of choral tone, perhaps uniquely equipped him to penetrate to the heart of this work.

The chorus, which is divided into three separated choirs, was furnished by the Florida State University Singers and Chamber Choir, both groups directed by Joseph Flummerfelt. The formidable problems of pitch and rhythm were handled with deceptive ease, and the tone was consistently free and warm. The Atlanta Boy Choir, directed by Fletcher Wolfe, sang with the dependable musicianship and sweet clarity of tone that have made it a favorite in this community.

It would be hard to imagine a finer group of soloists. Andrzej Hiolski, baritone, sang in the first performance of the work in 1966 and has sung in most of them since, including both recordings. His authority in the role and his expressive insight are likely to be the standards for years to come. Bethany Beardslee's phenomenal accuracy in avant-garde vocal music is now almost taken for granted, but on this occasion there was reason to be equally grateful for the intensity of her delivery and her interpretive involvement. Ara Berberian handled the relatively small bass role with his customary technical and dramatic skill. Peter Harrower, himself a singer of distinction, took the speaking role of the Evangelist and delivered the Latin text with admirable clarity and without a trace of mannerism.

Whether or not Penderecki's eclecticism will mark the beginning of a new international style in choral music is a matter on which prophecy is futile. What can safely be said now is that the *St. Luke Passion*, as a thoroughly modern work in the best sense of the word, communicates strongly to the audience on the deepest and most serious of subjects For these times, that is significance enough.

—Chappell White

Los Angeles—To judge from the Glendale Symphony concert at the Pavilion on April 18, 1970, Carmen Dragon would seem to take a rather prim view of lust. His program joined Carl Orff's boisterous *Carmina Burana* with the exuberance of Dvorak's *Carnival Overture* and the sensuous ecstasy of the Prelude and "Liebestod" from Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.

Dragon's conducting of this music tended towards unswerving, predominantly quick tempi, periodically interspersed with bluntly sentimental ritards. The excellent musicians who comprise the Glendale ensemble responded as best they could. Both the Dvorak and the Wagner received rough, bland, straightforward readings—although in the latter the cellos got rather painfully garbled twice near the beginning.

At times during the second and third parts of *Carmina Burana* the performance took on a kind of jaunty insouciance. But generally Orff's deliberately extroverted contrasts were blurred. The Southern California Mormon Choir—apparently undaunted by an AGMA picket line before the concert or by the presumed doctrinal impropriety of their voicing such lascivious sentiments—sang enthusiastically. Unfortunately, however, Dragon's tempi led to frequently muddied ensemble—of both chorus and orchestra—and the chorus fell victim to unashamedly American accents, false entrances, unhomogeneous tone and insecure intonation.

Claudia Cummings, the soprano in the Orff, has an attractive enough vocal quality, although she lacked the requisite ease for her climactic moment. Donald Barnum forced his pleasant lyric baritone mercilessly, and had continual pitch problems, particularly in falsetto. Don Clarke's tenor sounded quavery and broken.

The "informational picket line" set up by the American Guild of Musical Artists was in protest of the use of an amateur chorus by the Glendale Symphony. Comprised of approximately seventy-five members of the local union, it included chorus directors Roger Wagner and H. Vincent Mitzelfelt, as well as Terry Howell, one of the two originally-scheduled male soloists, both AGMA members who had withdrawn from the performance two weeks previously. *Carmina Burana* was preceded by extensive remarks from Dragon and Paul Galleher, president of the symphony's board. They introduced sixty visiting Navajo children,

by day, year by year, unostentatious in demeanor, the tradition of choral music is maintained and faculties are developed that in due course may also be more publicly presented.

* * *

It is being recognized more and more that certain kinds of music require particular acoustical settings. In the summer of 1970 Roger Norrington, his Heinrich Schütz Choir, and the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble gave a program of "Schütz in the Round" (by such labels do we now popularize the Baroque) in St. Paul's Cathedral. Here the choirs (voices and instruments) were equidistantly disposed around the edges of the space beneath the great dome. Norrington is a first-rate organizer (under these special circumstances gifts other than those normally proper to a conductor are called for) and the unanimity of his large and scattered forces was impressive. Any program that includes the Michaelmas motet *Es erhub sich ein Streit* (the text of which was brilliantly dealt with by several generations of Saxon and Thuringian composers), *Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen* (with its wide range of emotional overtones and premonitions of Brahms), and *Herr, unser Herrscher* (a tremendous act of praise couched in broad terms reminding us of the extent of Handel's debt to his German predecessors) is, of course, to be highly appreciated. This program attracted a large audience.

In connection with "Schütz in the Round" *et al.* it is perhaps worth remarking on the new (or perhaps not so new) heresy. In such cases one does not, as is sometimes suggested, hear the music in its *Ur*-form. This is in contradistinction to the Lichfield occasion where, as near as makes no difference, one does. Schütz's singers, whether in Dresden or in Bückeburg, were far fewer than Norrington's. This, together with the fact that his churches were more compact, made for a clearer texture. His brass instruments were better attuned to vocal sonorities and, therefore, less individualistic than those in current use, while "interpretation," of necessity, was a good deal less evident.

The performance at St. Paul's was part of the by now annual Festival of the City of London. This was preceded in the spring by the English Bach Festival—also an annual event. By an irreproachably logical lack of logic the Bach Festival in 1970 was to a large extent focused on Beethoven. (We missed the link, however, that would have been provided by the inclusion of some music by C. G. Neefe—a worthy composer in his own right—who took the good news, so to speak, from Leipzig to Bonn.)

The opening concert of the Bach–Beethoven Festival in the Queen Elizabeth Hall contained those rarities, the Funeral and Accession cantatas composed by Beethoven in 1790, which in their several ways

point to both *Fidelio* and the *Ninth Symphony* (of which, by the way, we heard impressive performances at Halle, Germany, during the Handel Festival!). The Festival concluded with the *Mass in C* (a truly Viennese work) and *Christus am Ölberge* performed by the London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra in Westminster Abbey. In St. Paul's Cathedral the acoustical amplification of Schütz was tolerable—even romantically impressive; Beethoven in the Abbey was ill at ease, and so was the choir. In more comfortable days it was suggested that Beethoven did not understand Christ. One might think after hearing this dramatic, troubled piece that the character of the Man of Sorrows was one that he understood better than most.

—Percy Young

Report from Germany

Hamburg—All under the direction of Wilhelm Brückner-Rüggeberg, the Hamburg Symphony, the *Lehrergesangverein*, and an excellent group of soloists fulfilled a duty of honor by resurrecting a long neglected work by one of their city's famous sons—Mendelssohn's *St. Paul.*

Written when Mendelssohn was twenty-five, the oratorio had been widely hailed after its Düsseldorf premiere in 1836 but was later overshadowed by his other work in the same genre, *Elijah* (first performance in Birmingham, 1846). Practically forgotten by the turn of the century, it was even banned from German concert halls in 1933.

A fresh view of the work reveals various qualities not entirely in its favor: the echo of Handel arias and choruses is all too often apparent; the interspersed chorales show a somewhat sentimental harmonization; and the figures of St. Paul and St. Stephen are benign but slightly pompous. Yet the orchestral writing (including twelve brass parts) serves throughout to lend color and poignancy to the score. It gives depth to the *accompagnati*, impetus to the arias, and grandeur to the chorales. The crowd choruses lack harmonic eloquence, but the choral fugues are marked by a bright vocal idiom, especially "But our God abideth in Heaven" (with a *cantus firmus* sung by boys' voices), and the dance-like choral finale in which the fugal texture of the chorus is enhanced by that of the orchestra. The Hamburg revival (shortening the work to a duration of two hours and twenty minutes) stressed the clarity of the part writing and the work's orchestral élan.

* * *

Dvorak's *Stabat Mater* was rescued from oblivion by performances in two churches on the outskirts of Hamburg. Written in 1877 as Op. 58 for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra (including a large complement of brasses), the work combines a traditional Slavic church idiom with

Wagnerian chromaticism. The brief verses, composed with consistent sensitivity to the text and vocal performance are at times song-like, with finely balanced melodic lines. The arias are filled with glowing intensity; in the choruses expressive melodic gestures alternate with graceful dance rhythms. Various combinations of men's and women's voices enliven the solo scenes. Dynamic and harmonic contrasts intensify a declamatory style that often approaches the operatic. Ekkehard Richter and Ulrich Baudach and their *Kantorei* ensembles indeed imbued the work with new life.

* * *

Rose Kirn, the young church music director at St. George's in Hamburg recently presented Mozart's unfinished *Mass in C Minor* of 1783 (K. 427) with her choir. Whereas Alois Schmitt in his Breitkopf edition of 1901 replaced the missing parts of the *Credo* with excerpts from various other church works by Mozart and some of his own editorial additions, Miss Kirn used corresponding portions of the *C Major Mass* of 1776 (K. 262). These proved to be much more compatible with the total structure; in fact, they seemed more appropriate than the existing bravura soprano parts that Mozart had written for his wife Constanze. However, to adapt the text of the missing *Agnus Dei* to the music of the *Kyrie*—following Schmitt's example—remained an unsatisfactory solution.

* * *

A meeting of North German federated church choirs took place in Stade near Hamburg in observance of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the federation's founding. The two-day meeting was focused on the oratorio *Christus* composed by Walter Kraft in Lübeck in 1944 but barred from performance during the Nazi regime. This longest of all *a cappella* works is in seven major sections. The first four were performed by three choirs at St. Wilhadi's, an early Gothic church, and Kraft's style of writing follows early Gothic models although elements from later periods are effectively interwoven.

Kraft himself conducted the small—almost soloistic—central chorus which, following natural word accents, presents the biblical text in triadic chords, boldly and often enharmonically combined. Another small chorus presents a commentary upon the action in passages of agile part-writing while chorales and passages suggesting crowd choruses are given to a larger group singing in massive organ-like sound. The meeting of so many choruses from different places turned Stade into a city of singing congregations.

—Rudolf Maack

Recent Books

JESUITS AND MUSIC (Volume I): A Study of the Musicians Connected with the German College in Rome During the 17th Century and of Their Activities in Northern Europe, by Thomas D. Culley, S.J. *Sources and Studies for the History of the Jesuits*, Volume II. St. Louis, Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1970 (401 pp., cloth $9.90; paper $8.10; leather $11.40).

Professor Culley's book is an exhaustive study of the documentation relating to musical personnel and activities at the Jesuits' German College in Rome from 1573 to 1674. It is only indirectly concerned with the scores originating and performed there; no music examples appear in the work. However, it offers the student of the period a fully fleshed out account of the milieu within which some of the greatest choral works of the western tradition were conceived and executed, thus offering in addition a far richer understanding of certain aspects of the early and mid-baroque.

As students of music know, the German College was the chosen home of Giacomo Carissimi, a home to which the master of Latin oratorio was deeply loyal and from which he never departed, despite recurrent and obstinate attempts on the part of distant courts and churches to acquire his services. Of the fruits to be expected from Professor Culley's work, one would certainly be the further elucidation of Carissimi's relationship with the college, the discussion of unpublished documents relating to him, and so forth. This is generously offered, and the reader will find correspondence and archival information not hitherto available. But a second product, perhaps worthy of more emphasis here, is also to be expected, and is more directly suggested by the title. This is the further elucidation of the tradition as a whole—the tradition that drew Carissimi to the college and gave him reason to stay until his death in 1674. In concluding his work, Professor Culley points out:

> . . . in one sense Carissimi's debt to the college was even greater than that of the college to him. In becoming *maestro di cappella* there, he entered into a musical tradition which was not only excellent then, but had been recognized as such throughout Europe for some years before he was born.

The more general result, the detailing of this tradition as a whole, is what makes Professor Culley's book so invaluable. To the studious choir director or the chorister wishing to delve more deeply into the

music of the period (still being performed with great regularity), the almost day-by-day recounting of the institution's musical growth will bring many familiar echoes as it tells of the various aspirations, problems of policy and personality, financial difficulties, academic conflicts, and other pertinent issues which not only affected the German College then but affect every established choral group today.

The book is organized chronologically into three chapters, with an extremely valuable appendix of documents—110 pages in length—and a thorough bibliography and index of persons. The chapters discuss three periods of the College's history: 1573–1600, 1600–1634, and 1634–1674. The first was the period when, given a new fiscal and constitutional lease on life by Pope Gregory XIII, the College inaugurated its liturgical and musical programs under the leadership of Michele Lauretano, rector from 1573 to 1587. Professor Culley establishes the debt which the program's later fame owed to Lauretano's initiative. The second period considers the rectorship of Bernardino Castorio, "finder" of Carissimi, dedicated patron of the art, and at once a committed servant and past master of ecclesiastical organization. The third period ends with the death of Carissimi.

In each section of the book, detailed, separate, lengthy, and very generously documented consideration is given to the *maestri di cappella*, the singers, the organists and their instrument, the nature and role of curriculum, the musical training program, and performance practice. General summaries of the college's reputation and influence during the given period conclude each chapter.

The quantity of unpublished documents, relating not only to Carissimi but to other well-known musicians of the time, and to performance practice, deserves explicit recommendation. Professor Culley's ingenuity in utilizing the archives of Rome is obviously equal to that of past clerks in compiling and confusing them. Another value of his work is the pervasive detail which forestalls summary and demands that attention be directed to the book itself. A reading of this admirably organized, vast mass of information will result in a thorough understanding of the formative center that yielded generations of men whose musicianship spread the dramatic innovations of the early baroque across the mountains from Italy to the rest of the European continent. Those who do not know why the German College drew men like Charpentier, Schütz, and Kerll to its doors and scores need to read it.

The value of publications dealing with this sort of institutional history has been confirmed time and again, although it is still demonstrated all too infrequently. Studies such as Sachse's, of the Ephrata Cloister, or Messiter's, of Trinity Church, New York, are of special significance to those who wish to continue and expand the choral tradition intelligently. It is impossible to achieve a complete understanding

of that tradition without the regional, local, and institutional histories it demands. The time is ripe, since the major figures have been studied—if not exhaustively, at least amply. Carissimi is a good example. And perhaps the near future will offer us more works which, like Professor Culley's, will help to place those figures in the context from which they arose.

By offering this work, Professor Culley has served the two traditions of his own choice exceptionally well. As a Jesuit, he has revealed anew to that Society the nature of its past achievement, and it is to be hoped that his work will stimulate renewed dedication of the institutional kind so necessary to the art. As a member of the musical community, he has shed new light on the scores and deepened our understanding of works that are still very much with us. His book deserves a place on the shelves of any college or research music library.

—Raoul Orceyre, Jr.

THE SINGER AND HIS ART, by Aksel Schiøtz. New York, Evanston, London: Harper & Row, 1970 (xvi+214 pp., $6.95).

Many books have been written about the singer, the vocal art, voice production, song interpretation, etc. Some of these books take a dry, pedantic approach to the subject, while others are so personally symbolic to the author that the true meaning is obscured in verbiage.

Aksel Schiøtz in *The Singer and His Art* (with a preface by Gerald Moore) has produced a book that is technical without being dull, and intensely personal without being obscure.

This Danish artist, well-known for his concert and opera appearances as well as for his recordings, was stricken with a serious illness before he was to have begun an American concert tour several years ago. The aftereffects of this illness caused him to relearn his vocal art and to rediscover his singing voice. Mr. Schiøtz turned a would-be tragedy into a personal triumph, for one wonders if this fine book would have been possible without the convalescent period required after this illness. Thoughts about the art of singing were brought into sharp focus and crystallized into this volume.

The first section concerns the functioning of the voice. No "method" is described in this section as Mr. Schiøtz believes that the "'one and only method of singing' is a delusion." But basic principles are discussed—good, practical advice to *any* singer, be he student or seasoned professional.

Most of the book is taken up with detailed comments on the art song, a field in which the author is probably best known. After a short section on the songs of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, Mr. Schiøtz

discusses in detail the songs of Schubert and Schumann with particular emphases on the cycles (*Die schöne Müllerin*, *Winterreise* and *Dichterliebe*, *Frauenliebe und -leben*. Examples from Brahms, Wolf, Mahler, and Strauss complete the section on German *Lieder*. French *mélodies* (Fauré to Poulenc) and English songs (Dowland to Britten) close this fascinating and informative part of the book. Discussions of the moods of various songs, metronome indications and variety in styles constitute Mr. Schiøtz's analyses.

Oratorio (Handel to Penderecki) and opera (Mozart to Strauss) are discussed. Mr. Schiøtz has the ability to express his ideas of style in these fields with clarity, brevity and wit. (In discussing the bass arias in *Messiah*, he states: "A very flexible, cello-like bass voice is needed. The bass coloraturas must be sung with elegance and lightness, otherwise they will sound like an elephant dance.") Mr. Schiøtz makes incisive remarks about the singer's preparation for an operatic role, and he concentrates on the differing singing styles in works by Mozart, Verdi, and Wagner.

The remainder of the text in this volume is brief, but it is full of valuable information to the singer about the teacher, coach, and accompanist; recital programming ("The important thing, however, is that for a couple of hours you have to keep your audience voluntarily captive, whatever the conditions. A well-constructed program is the best fare you can offer."); translations, diction, the audience, and last, but not least, the critics ("Artist and critic should fight for the same causes and not be adversaries.").

Three appendices are included: International Phonetic Symbols, Recommended Listening, and a List of Aksel Schiøtz Recordings. Every singer should have *The Singer and His Art*; in fact, its audience should include anyone who is in any way concerned with vocal music.

—Louie L. White

Recent Records

ETON CHOIRBOOK (Volume 2): The Purcell Consort of Voices, Choristers of All Saints, Margaret Street, Grayston Burgess. Argo ZRG 557 stereo.

Most of the ancient music now coming into, shall I say, re-circulation, has been available and well-known to scholars for years, even centuries; only a tiny quantity of wholly "new" (or newly identified) music turns up as time goes on, to expand the known. And yet—suddenly, as styles and preferences change, there are periods of practical rediscovery when paper music once again becomes living music. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, via Mendelssohn, signalized one well-known period of the sort. The music of such composers as Telemann, and the revival of dozens and dozens of Haydn symphonies, mark a more recent dramatic change, bringing formerly obscure music into the mainstream of our listening. Now it is the music of the earlier "Golden Ages"—extending back as far as recorded notation and musicological skill can carry us—that is becoming a part of the listening and performing repertory wherever musically literate people congregate.

The Eton Choirbook is not exactly a brand new discovery. But the music, *in performance*, treated with all the respect and dignity accorded to later greats such as Byrd, Palestrina, Lassus, and Victoria, is for most of us a new experience. In this superb recording that experience is truly soul-shaking. Were there such obscure English geniuses as these—Lambe, Browne, Fawkyner, Wylkynson, Nesbett, Cornysh—composing such grand tapestries of musical sound, so rich and complex in ornament, so massively structured in five or six parts, so astonishingly elaborate in rhythm, only a half-century or a little more before the great Elizabeth I? It is music wholly unlike the much more familiar Elizabethan and Jacobean church music, reminiscent of contemporary work on the continent by Josquin and his followers, but of a uniquely more elaborate texture and a somewhat "antique" sound, for that time, which marks it just as clearly British as the sound of Byrd and Tallis in a later generation. It makes superb listening (in a good performance)—this brilliant English music—and in performance it is an exciting and unique experience, as those who have tried it already know, for it is built on a kind of long-breathed vocalizing, highly asymmetric in rhythm and almost free of word shapes, the antithesis of the later styles so closely

based on imitation via word-derived motival ideas alternating with "familiar style" homophonic word statements.

In these recordings the ensemble is typically present-day British, that unlikely combination of robustly mature male voices (including the peculiar middle-aged countertenors so familiar in British church music!) topped off in the highest parts by the thin, angelic sound of British boy sopranos. But, characteristically, this "mix" of vocal tone can produce the most unexpectedly perfect blending when the performance is a fine one. The final chords in some of these pieces are positively hair-raising. What is most striking about this absolutely superb singing is the way in which the long lines are held in motion, flowing with hardly a sense of breathing, for a cumulative tension of extraordinary impact. I can only compare the effect, somewhat lamely, to that grand sweep we sometimes achieve in the slow movements of Beethoven's late quartets or the *Ninth Symphony*.

Of the composers here represented, John Browne, as the notes suggest, is the most impressive (though William Cornysh is the most familiar name). But over and beyond these individuals is the unanimity of a style and a school in an advanced stage of development—a culmination. It was a culmination soon swept away by new styles but, more significantly, by the Reformation and the intense disapproval of such music on the part of the new Anglican church under young Edward VI and the Elizabeth whose laws effectively banned it from any further use.

JOSQUIN DES PREZ: *Missa Ave Maris Stella*; *Four Motets* (*Tu solus, qui facis mirabilia, Mittit ad virginem, Absalon fili mi, Salve Regina*). University of Illinois Chamber Choir, George Hunter. Nonesuch H-71216 stereo.

Odd—this is first-rate Josquin singing, and yet no listener familiar with the international choral scene could mistake it for other than an American performance. There is that somewhat white tone color and the ever-present edge of metallic tension characteristic of American performances (instrumental too); there is the choral enthusiasm that occasionally breaks into athletic robustness (ah *never* in a German or British choir!), and the tell-tale presence of a few muscle-bound professionals to bolster up the youthful college blend, their over-rich tones like knotty lumps in a smooth rope of sound. . . .

No matter, for with musical intelligence one can do wonders with this material as well as with most other sorts, and there is plenty of intelligence here. The music is beautifully phrased, the lines sustained, the word shapes given reverent priority, and the dynamics shaped by the musical sense without arbitrary dramatics. The choir is unusual—for an American group—in that the "pro" voices are heard largely in the lower parts—the basses and lower tenors—while the women's voices are wonderfully pure and perfectly blended as well as lively and intelligent.

(In many choirs the big voices appear in the ladies' sections.) Pitch and ensemble are excellent throughout. The recording is good but the sound is overly dry—no doubt for lack of a handy European cathedral in Illinois.

Tu solus is a homophonic statement, beautifully phrased to bring out the words. *Absalon*, a very late work, is written for extremely low voices; Mr. Hunter ingeniously uses a discreet string bass to render possible the performance of the bottom part, which gets down to a low B flat. In *Salve Regina* he makes use of a single trombone to bring out the *cantus firmus*.

For some reason, the Mass (on Side 1) tends to be somewhat boisterous in its more rapid passages—less well-controlled than the motets on Side 2. Nevertheless, it is an excellent performance, accomplishing the difficult feat of keeping the lang span of Mass music interesting and varied in the listening, without distortions of style.

VICTORIA: *Requiem Mass Sex Vocibus* (1605); *Four Motets* (*Gaudent in coelis, O magnum mysterium, Ave Maria, Ascendens Christus*). Choir of St. John's College, Cambridge, George Guest. Argo ZRG 570 stereo.

British renderings of Victoria often make him sound as British as Byrd—not this one. The St. John's College Choir is well furnished with big, rich, lower voices, particularly in the bass department, and the choir boys are rather overbalanced even though they, too, make sounds richer than the usual English hooty tone color. The choir is definitely bass-heavy (at least as recorded here) and of a very ornate, Baroque lushness, not inappropriate for Victoria.

The singing is expressive enough and carefully modulated in dynamics for an impressive outward sound. But—for an important British choir—there is not enough of that transcendent musicality which often glorifies British sacred singing. Portions of the very late *Requiem Mass* do, indeed, soar to Victorian heights and the Mass is the finest portion of this recording. But the constant presence of unblended heavy solo voices, the gelatinously wobbly texture thereby imparted to all the louder parts of the music, and a somewhat dragging tempo all contribute to an impression of overfussiness—all, in relative terms, of course, on a high plane. The Spanish mysteriousness and awe implicit in the music is very properly realized.

The well-known Alec Robertson writes the excellent liner notes and contributes what is surely an unintended mistake. If I guess rightly, he did not hear the recording itself but was merely given a list of the works. He writes "The *Ave Maria* (1572) . . . is for four voices and is the most familiar of the composer's two settings—the other one is for eight voices." The work on the record *is* the other one—it is, very audibly,

for double chorus. One of the hazards of the recorded performance! All of us who write liner notes fight to hear the actual performance before writing, but logistics rarely allow it. Pressings are not available before deadline, they always tell us. Argo please take note.

BRAHMS: *The Complete Quartets for Four Voices and Piano,* Op. 31, Op. 63, Op. 92, Op. 112, Nos. 1 and 2. Gregg Smith Singers. Everest 3249 Stereo.

Even in the relatively short time since Brahms, the quality of singing has changed so much—not to mention the social functions of vocal music—that today it is not at all easy to realize in actual sound the rich harmonies and counterpoint of these Brahms works for four solo voices and piano. As we know from the more familiar *Liebeslieder* waltzes, the vocal quartet as Brahms wrote it is unsuited to big operatic voices and surprisingly well suited to smaller, informal choral ensembles. The same applies, on a more sophisticated level, to the dozen works performed in this survey—sung by solo voices, in spite of the ascription to the Gregg Smith Singers, well-known for their choral work.

Although these performers are earnest and their performance is dedicated and fully appreciative of the lushly Romantic expression of the music, their ensemble is so shaky as to be aurally non-existent in the more complex passages, and in the rapid modulatory passages they often lose track of the harmonic sense altogether, even with the piano's well-tempered assistance. The musical meaning is there but the listener must work hard to extract it by, so to speak, deduction. Hardly the Brahms intent.

The most endearing singer, rightly, is the soprano, who has a lovely and accurate voice that is used well, aside from some unsuitable upward-sliding attacks, à la Puccini. The contralto is somewhat inaudible (but this is partly Brahms's fault—his alto parts are often overwhelmed by soprano and tenor); the bass is big, oratorio-style, wholly unblending. The tenor is the most unfortunate musical element—a painfully strained voice, singing the high tessitura, not meltingly, but in a sort of physical agony, always on the edge of disaster and frequently out of tune. The pianist is competent but cool; the singers do better in terms of feeling, if not in ensemble.

There is no doubt that these works, variously, are suited to choral treatment on an intimate scale, though, as always in Brahms, the quality of the tenor line is crucial—it must be both relaxed and expressively shaped in the Romantic manner. In spite of its physical limitations, the recording does serve to project the music, and it can serve as an aid in determining the possibilities for choral performance in terms of local choir capabilities. In any case, one would choose perhaps three or four for concert use—a dozen is too much of a Romantic muchness! (But it

is useful to have them in a collection on one record, even so.) At present this is the only recording of the music.

Note that the *Zigeunerlieder* of Op. 103 and the four more in Op. 112 are not included in this "complete" survey, perhaps because they are nominally choral; the distinction is very nearly academic in practical terms; they are often sung by a vocal quartet with piano accompaniment.

—Edward Tatnall Canby

Recent Scores

The scores listed in this column were selected from material received by the publications editor. Single copies are available for perusal from THE AMERICAN CHORAL FOUNDATION'S *reference library.*

THE AMP CONTEMPORARY CHORAL COLLECTION. SATB. Associated Music Publishers, N.Y. (147 p., 2.50; all works in this collection are available separately from the publisher)

AVSHALOMOV, JACOB. Wonders. SATB. Words by William Blake. Duchess Music Corp. (MCA Music, sole selling agent). (32 p., .75)

BARBER, SAMUEL. To be Sung on The Water, Op. 42, No. 2. SATB. G. Schirmer, N.Y. (10 p., .30)

——. Twelfth Night, Op. 42, No. 1. SATB. G. Schirmer, N.Y. (11 p., .30)

BERGER, JEAN. A Set Of Songs. For equal voices and piano duet. Summy-Birchard Co., Evanston, Ill. (15 p., 1.25)

BRADLEY, KARL, arr. 20th Century Choral Music. SATB. G. Schirmer, N.Y. (145 p., 2.00)

BRAHMS, JOHANNES. Two Sacred Songs, Op. 37. Ed. by Maynard Klein. SSAA. G. Schirmer, N.Y. (8 p., .25)

BRITTEN, BENJAMIN. The Oxen. A Carol. SA. Farber Music Ltd. (G. Schirmer, N.Y., sole selling agent). (7 p., .25)

——. A Wealden Trio. The Song of the Women. SSA. Farber Music Ltd. (G. Schirmer, N.Y., sole selling agent). (4 p., .25)

——. Sweet Was The Song. SSAA. Farber Music Ltd. (G. Schirmer, N.Y., sole selling agent). (7 p., .25)

——. The Sycamore Song. SATB. Farber Music Ltd. (G. Schirmer, N.Y., sole selling agent). (4 p., .25)

BRUCKNER, ANTON. Psalm 150 (Praise Ye The Lord). English adaptation by Maynard Klein. SATB, piano. G. Schirmer, N.Y. (27 p., .75)

CARMINES, AL. America The Beautiful. Arr. by Jacques C. Rizzo. SATB, piano. Caaz Music Co. (Chappell & Co., N.Y., administrator). (15 p., .40)

CHAMBERS, ROBERT, ed. and arr. Sing To The Lord. 18 Anthems. SAB. Boosey and Hawkes, N.Y. (68 p., 1.50)

COATES, JR., JOHN, arr. Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Thyme. Old English Song. SATB, piano. Shawnee Press, Inc., Delaware Gap, Pa. (7 p., .30)

CONTEMPORARY SETTINGS OF PSALM TEXTS. SATB. Associated Music Publishers, Inc., N.Y. (102 p., 2.00)

DAVYE, JOHN J. The Spirit Of The Lord Is Upon Me. SATB. Fostco Music Press (Mark Foster Music Co., Marquette, Michigan, sole selling agent). (8 p., .35)

EVANS, RODERICK. Festival Alleluia (Of All Created Things). SATB, piano. Choral Art Publications, N.Y. (11 p., .30)

FAURÉ, GABRIEL. Cantique de Jean Racine (A Song of Praise), Op. 11. SATB, piano. J. Fischer & Bro., Glen Rock, N.J. (20 p., .50)

HAYDN, JOSEPH. The Old Man (Der Greis). SATB (Eng./Ger.) Associated Music Publishers, Inc., N.Y. (8 p., .30)

INGEGNERI, MARC ANTONIO. Tenebrae Factae Sunt (Darkness Was O'er The Earth). Ed. by Maynard Klein. SATB. G. Schirmer, N.Y. (7 p., .25)

KAY, ULYSSES. The Birds, for women's chorus and piano: The Great Black Crow. SA. (10 p., .35); The Skylark. SA. (8 p., .30); The Peacock. SSA. (8 p., .30); The Throstle. SA. (8 p., .30); Answer To A

Child's Question. SA. (6 p., .30). Duchess Music Corp. (MCA Music, N.Y., sole selling agent).

KODÁLY, ZOLTÁN. The Te Deum of Sándor Sik. Trans. by Geoffry Russel-Smith. SATB. Boosey & Hawkes, N.Y. (8 p., .30)

KUBIK, GAIL. A Christmas Offering. SATB. Boosey & Hawkes, N.Y. (28 p., 1.00)

KRAUS, EGON ed. More European Madrigals. Trans. by Maria Pelikan. SATB. G. Schirmer, N.Y. (78 p., 2.00)

PARKER, ALICE, arr. The Croppy Boy. Irish Folk Song. SATB, harp or piano. Lawson-Gould (G. Schirmer, N.Y., sole selling agent). (7 p., .30)

——. The Minstrel Boy. Irish Folk Song. SATB, harp or piano. Lawson-Gould (G. Schirmer, N.Y., sole selling agent). (7 p., .30)

——. My Gentle Harp. Irish Folk Song. SATB, harp or piano. Lawson-Gould (G. Schirmer, N.Y., sole selling agent). (7. p., .30)

——. Sing, Sing. Irish Folk Song. SATB, harp or piano. Lawson-Gould (G. Schirmer, N.Y., sole selling agent). (10 p., .30)

PELZ, WALTER L. Day of Rejoicing. SATB, trumpet and organ. Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. (8 p., .30)

PERGOLESI, GIOVANNI. Hallelujah Amen. Adapted by Walter Ehret. SATB, piano or organ. Theodore Presser Co., Bryn Mawr, Pa. (15 p., .35)

PFAUTSCH, LLOYD, Arr. Sing To The Newborn King. French Carol. SATB, piccolo, 2 trumpets and drum. Lawson-Gould (G. Schirmer, N.Y., sole selling agent). (10 p., .30)

PISTON, WALTER. O Sing Unto The Lord A New Song. From Psalm and Prayer of David. SATB and seven instruments. Associated Music Publishers, N.Y. (Choral Score 16 p., .35; complete vocal score and set of instrumental parts available from the publishers)

——. Bow Down Thine Ear, O Lord. SATB and seven instruments. Associated Music Publishers, N.Y. (Choral Score 16 p., .35; complete vocal score and set of instrumental parts available from the publishers)

ROREM, NED. Letters From Paris. SATB and small orchestra. Boosey & Hawkes, N.Y. (Choral Score 65 p., 3.00; orchestral material available on rental from the publishers)

SCHEIDT, SAMUEL. Make Ye A Joyful Noise Unto God. Ed. by Walter Ehret. SATB, piano or organ (3 trumpets, 2 trombones, optional). Theodore Presser, Bryn Mawr, Pa. (22 p., .50)

SCHUBERT, FRANZ. Prayer For Peace from "Stabat Mater." Arr. by Maynard Klein. SSAATTBB. G. Schirmer, N.Y. (8 p., .25)

STEVENS, HALSEY. God Is My Strong Salvation. SATB. Marko Press (Mark Foster Music Co., Marquette, Michigan, sole selling agent). (4 p., . 25)

——. Te Deum. SATB, brass, tympani, organ. Marko Press (Mark Foster Music Co., Marquette, Michigan, sole selling agent). (Score 31 p., 3.50; Choir Parts .65; Instrumental Parts (per set) 9.00)

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS, RALPH. For All The Saints. Arr. by Robert Shaw. SAB. G. Schirmer, N.Y. (4 p., .25)

WERNER, GREGOR JOSEPH. Te Deum. Arr. by Imre Sulyok. SATB and orchestra. Verlag Doblinger, Wien. (Full Score 34 p., 5.00; set of parts 6.00; strings, each .75; organ 1.50)

ZES, TIKEY. Two Greek Folk Songs. SATB, piano. Shawnee Press Inc., Delaware Water Gap, Pa. (15 p., .35)

—Richard Jackson

The Authors

JAY CARR is drama and music critic for *The Detroit News*.

JACK GOTTLIEB, whose comprehensive study of Leonard Bernstein's choral music appeared in the *American Choral Review*, Vol. X, No. 4, Summer, 1968, is Music Director at Temple Israel, St. Louis, Missouri.

FREDERICK HUDSON, distinguished English scholar, teaches at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

BERNARD JACOBSON is music critic for the *Chicago Daily News*.

IRVING LOWENS is music critic for the *Washington Evening* and *Sunday Star*.

RUDOLF MAACK, who has been active as a music critic for the Hamburg press for more than forty years, is a regular contributor of reports from Germany.

DONALD B. MILLER is Director of Choral Activities at Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, New York.

RAOUL ORCEYRE, JR., is an editor on the staff of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., New York publishers.

LARRY PALMER is Associate Professor of Harpsichord and Organ in the Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas. He is the author of *Hugo Distler and His Church Music*, released in 1967 by Concordia Publishing House.

JOHN ROCKWELL is a staff writer on music for the *Los Angeles Times*.

JAMES THOMSON is Chairman of the Department of Music History and Literature at West Chester State College in Pennsylvania. The first volume of his edition of the works of Caron has just been published by the Institute of Medieval Music.

CHAPPELL WHITE is Visiting Professor of Music at the University of Georgia at Athens and music critic for *The Atlanta Journal*.

LOUIE L. WHITE is a member of the faculty and conductor of the chorus at the Newark College of Rutgers University.

PERCY YOUNG, British author and composer, is a regular contributor of reports from England.

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