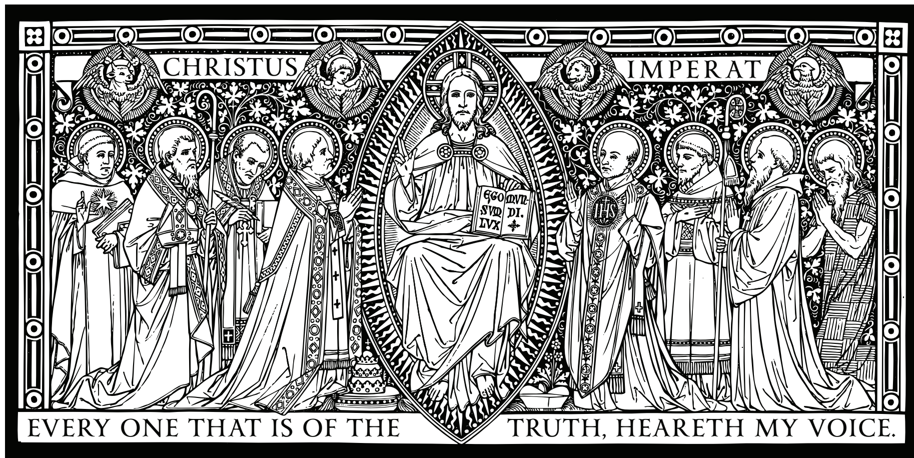

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Editoral

Liturgical Beauty

Clarity about the affective and metaphysical aspects of beauty helps us understand better how to effectuate beauty in the sacred liturgy and to know its purpose therein.

by William Mahrt

It is important to have a clear idea of what beauty is and its role in the liturgy. The excellent article of Michael Dickson below provides a penetrating view of the beauty of music that is completely consistent with my own.

St. Thomas Aquinas gives two classic definitions of beauty; first, "id quod visum placet" (that which when seen pleases); and second, "splendor formæ" (the shining forth of the form). The one has an affective character and pertains to the receiver of the beauty; the other has a metaphysical and cognitive character and pertains to objective beauty. These two descriptions are, however, not in conflict, but are the opposite sides of the same coin; they are mutually supportive.

"Splendor formæ" has to do with order, but the perception of great order is greatly pleasing and conducive to a sense of the transcendent. This perception integrates the cognitive and the affective; the perception of beauty is immediate and intuitive, even though study can enhance it.

Beauty is traditionally seen as one of a trio of transcendentals: truth, beauty, and goodness; it forms a kind of glue for the other two. Hans Urs von Balthasar has characterized the role of beauty among these transcendentals: without beauty, the truth does not persuade, without it the good does not compel. He describes the transcendent character of beauty:

> The assumption throughout is that the world of the beautiful originally belongs to man, and that it is he who determines its content and boundaries. The native country of the beautiful would thus be the world, or at most, "Being" itself, but only in so far as Being is not divine but "creaturely." In scholastic terms, therefore, we would say that beauty is an attribute of "predicated" and not "transcendental being." In this event, the decision has implicitly been taken that beauty is not a "transcendental" like oneness, truth, and goodness, or what amounts to the same thing, that beauty need not be predicated of God in its proper sense. But if beauty is conceived of transcendentally, then its definition must be derived from God

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> himself. Furthermore, what we know to be most proper to God—his self-revelation in history and in the Incarnation—must now become for us the very apex and archetype of beauty in the world, whether men see it or not."

This is particularly important for sacred music, which is, according to Pope Pius XII, an integral part of the liturgy. When we hear a fine piece of classical music, say a string quartet of Beethoven, we focus upon the beauty of the work; we experience it as an utterance of Beethoven or of the quartet playing it, and our pleasure derives from our perception of the work. But when we hear a Gregorian gradual in the liturgy, the music invites us to focus beyond itself and upon a truly transcendent object. We experience it as an utterance from a Divine Source, not a merely human composer, and it draws us to that Divine Source. The experience of its splendor formæ fulfills its liturgical purpose, and yet the perception of this kind of order can be very pleasing. But the pleasure is that of contemplation, not of mere edification. It is the pleasure of participating in something eternal and transcendent.

The splendor formæ of an integral act of worship shows forth the intrinsic nature and purpose of liturgy; if this is done "beautifully," it is possible that we can enter into it willingly, even enthusiastically, since the beauty of the liturgy makes it desirable. How this is done beautifully depends mainly upon the employment of the proper liturgical music, especially Gregorian chant. And then how this employment makes the liturgy beautiful depends upon the skillful and insightful performance of the music, always with a thought to its transcendent purpose.

The splendor formæ of an integral act of worship shows forth the intrinsic nature and purpose of liturgy.

The beauty of Gregorian chant resides in several characteristics. A principal one is its texts: the Propers of the Mass constitute a magnificent cycle of hundreds of texts, mostly from the Psalms, ordered through the seasons, so that each Sunday and feast day is expressed through a distinct set of proper texts, varying from day to day, but also more generally from season to season. The magnificence of this cycle is not immediately apparent, but upon repetition its greatness becomes gradually more and more significant. I have often heard from a new member of my choir, who began to sing the whole cycle of Sunday and feast-day propers, and after a year a light bulb came on: "This is where I came in a year ago."

The music is obviously a principal factor in the beauty of the liturgy. Pope Pius X was responsible for the revival of Gregorian chant in the first half of the twentieth century; his Motu Proprio *Tra le sollecitudine* is well known for two pithy criteria for liturgical music. First of all, he gave three characteristics of music for the liturgy, generally summarized as sacred, beautiful,

and universal. Actually, his second criteria (beauty) is expressed more precisely: "bontà delle forme" (excellence of forms [plural]).[1] I take the multiplicity of forms to mean the variety of Gregorian forms, which express a variety of liturgical functions. An introit accompanies a procession, and its musical form projects a sense of motion. A gradual follows upon a lesson, and its musical form conveys a sense of recollection, eliciting meditation upon the message of the lesson. The tones for the lessons themselves epitomize the very different characters of the kinds of lesson—prophesy, epistle, and gospel. Likewise the kind of prayers, collects, preface, and the Lord's Prayer, have distinctive tones that express a hierarchy of importance.

Second of all, he set Gregorian chant as the paradigm of these qualities, saying that in judging a work of sacred music

> the more closely a composition for church approaches in its movement, inspiration and savor the Gregorian form, the more sacred and liturgical it becomes; and the more out of harmony it is with that supreme model, the less worthy it is of the temple.[2]

This resemblance is not a literal one, but one in which it resembles the functioning of chant in the liturgy, "movement, inspiration, and savor."

Pope John Paul II expressed this intimate relation of music to liturgical action:

> Liturgical music must meet the specific prerequisites of the Liturgy: full adherence to the text it presents, synchronization with the time and moment in the Liturgy for which it is intended, appropriately reflecting the gestures proposed by the rite. The various moments in the Liturgy require a musical expression of their own. From time to time this must fittingly bring out the nature proper to a specific rite, now proclaiming God's marvels, now expressing praise, supplication or even sorrow for the experience of human suffering which, however, faith opens to the prospect of Christian hope.[3]

An aspect of the beauty of the Liturgy of the Word is the cycle of lessons, especially the gospels. From Sunday to Sunday, the history of salvation is narrated, particularly in the parables and miracles of Jesus. These narrations are familiar, but their repetition constitutes a renewal of the story, a celebration of it that never becomes old. For this reason, I have always advocated the singing of the

An aspect of the beauty of the Liturgy of the Word is the cycle of lessons, especially the gospels.

[1]Pope St. Pius X, Motu Proprio, *Tra le sollecitudine* (November 22, 1903), ¶2.

[2]Ibid., ¶3.

[3]Pope St. John Paul II, *Chirograph for the Centenary of the Motu Proprio* Tra Le sollecitudini *on Sacred Music* (November 22, 2003), ¶5.

lessons, especially the gospel. Their sacredness is thereby enhanced and their legendary character celebrated. It is often said that reading the lessons provides members of the congregation the opportunity for participation in the liturgy. I contend that the proper participation of the congregation in the liturgy is to hear the lessons and take them to heart. The reading of the lessons requires a knowledge of scripture and of the proper style of the reading of a sacred text. Who has not heard amateurish reading of lessons, including the mispronunciation of biblical names, especially those from the Old Testament? The reading of the lessons is a ministry that requires knowledge and skill and should not be delegated to amateurs, since it is a significant element of the beauty of the liturgy.

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is the high point of the beauty of the Mass. Here the congregation witnesses the miracle of the consecration of the Body and Blood of the Savior and is drawn into the contemplation of its transcendence. The transcendence of the moment is a crucial element of the participation of the congregation. Here the ordinary form differs from the extraordinary, in that the words of the Eucharistic Prayer are spoken aloud in the ordinary form, while they are silent in the extraordinary one. The blessed silence of the Roman Canon in the extraordinary form conveys its sacredness, and very often at these Masses the total silence is palpable; all have been engaged in attending the central mystery of the Mass. In the ordinary form, it is crucial that the Eucharistic Prayer not be hammered out or delivered in an arbitrary way. One priest who celebrates our Gregorian Mass in Palo Alto says the Canon in a *quasi sotto voce,* clearly audible, but also clearly in a sacred style. It is possible to sing the Eucharistic Prayer, and this can lift it out of the conversational tone too often heard there. This is the point that the individual worshiper joins in the Sacrifice of Christ, a crucial moment whose sacrality should not be compromised. The beauty of the chants which follow the Eucharistic Prayer lead each person to the communion, which should be a consummation of the share in Christ's Sacrifice, which is the most beautiful thing one can do.

In this perspective the beauty of the liturgy can draw one into the transcendence of the liturgical action, and engage the worshipper in the most transcendent act possible on this earth. For this we need the most transcendent music.

In this perspective the beauty of the liturgy can draw one into the transcendence of the liturgical action, and engage the worshipper in the most transcendent act possible on this earth. For this we need the most transcendent music. ❖

Articles

Three Ways to Direct Gregorian Chant

Building on one's natural expressivity and musicianship is the foundation for more sophisticated and detailed conducting of chant.

by Dom Mark Bachmann, O.S.B.

cholas starting to sing the Mass chants are inevitably confronted by the problem: how should the chant be directed? In some blessed situations the schola director is not only a trained musician, but trained in the direction of chant, in which case there is little or no problem. It is probable, though, that this idyllic situation comes about rather rarely. This article proposes to those less fortunate scholas who do not have a director trained in chant direction, or those with a director with less formal musical training, how to move forward and get past the obstacle that learning to direct the chant presents. It sets out three possible ways of assuming the job of directing a schola, beginning with the simplest and most natural way.

Indeed, the problem of direction of the chant comes up eventually. Two or three can sing together "by instinct" and get away without one having to take an evident role of director. But as the chants become more elaborate and the ensemble increases in number, the need becomes felt to have some kind of direction which assures the unity of the ensemble. And this stands to reason: in any ordered multitude, there has to be one leading. One observes this, for example, in a brass band, a football team, or a country. In fact, in these examples we can even see several levels of hierarchy. For example, in the football team you have the quarterback calling the plays, but from time to time the coach—the one ultimately responsible for winning or losing the game—sends in someone to call a play. The same is true everywhere: the service at a restaurant, a group of firefighters, in the family—wherever. A musical concert provides an excellent and enlightening example. At the end of the performance, the audience applauds; and who takes the bow but the conductor? And then he graciously presents the orchestra or the choir for the audience to manifest their appreciation. This makes clear that the conductor and audience (and choir

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and orchestra, for that matter) tacitly recognize that the excellence of the performance comes firstly from the conductor.

So a schola needs a leader: who should it be? Well, if we look at animal packs, we notice that the most natural leader is the strongest one in the pack. And in the case of a choir this can happen in two ways: either the one who assumes the direction has the best, most trained voice, or he is the best musician. Both cases are comprehensible. What a schola needs is a voice to give a lead which the others can follow. In smaller ensembles of less than, say, ten, one good voice can give a definite and sufficient lead. In bigger ensembles, however, one voice will probably not suffice to impose itself over the rest.

Again, what is required in a leader is that he know the way. If the leader has no idea how the chant—this chant—is to be sung, he is going to be of little help to the group. So it is very understandable that the "musician," the one who is most familiar with the chant, is the one who assumes the directing role in the schola. Moreover, it is reasonable that he try to lead otherwise than by his voice. A visual kind of direction, as by gesture, can "cut through" the chorale's performance all the easier since it does not have to compete with it on the level of sound. Otherwise, we find ourselves in the same situation as considered in the last paragraph, where one singer has to sing over the rest, or at least lead by means of his or her voice. Need we remark that the two ways can be happily combined, if, say, the musician director has a good voice. In this way he will be leading via two mediums (auditory and visual) rather than one (just visual). The only pitfall here is for the director to lean too much on his voice, to the detriment of his concentration on the music and the overall effect.

There are several places in a chant where the direction shows itself to be particularly needed. A good start makes a great difference. Hence some hand or head indication will have to show the precise moment when all singers begin the piece. Likewise, the effectiveness of a chant depends on a neat and tidy end to the piece, and this unity can be fostered again by a gesture from the leader of the group, cutting off the sound.

First Method of Direction: Expressive Hand Gestures

Once, I asked an accomplished musician and director of chant how it is possible to direct the chant without any definite method. Without hesitation he pointed out that I used my hands to support what I meant to express when I posed my question. Indeed, I had not noticed that at all. He said that he found the way I used my hands rather expressive.

Indeed, the expressive role of the hands in speech, though not essential, can be important. Some people use their hands minimally as a means of expression. Some nationalities and cultures are notoriously dependent on them. One thinks of the Italian criminal who complained he couldn't answer charges because his hands were tied behind his back! Moreover, treatises on the oratorical art, that of making speeches, have always referred to the use of the hands as a means of supporting the delivery. Back in the times of the ancient Greeks, there was even a whole system of signs indicating the movement of the hands in relation to the inflection of the voice. In this system the hand was invariably raised higher as the voice rose to a higher intensity.

Now if we apply this "natural" method to directing the chant, we are better inspired not to think too much about how and what is the most appropriate manner to express the musical nuances. On the contrary, the natural expressiveness should be left to come out spontaneously, just as if you were speaking. Even though the result will necessarily be personal, nonetheless, it will likely not be incomprehensible. Indeed, it will be effective to the very extent that it is natural. Just as the hands add some expression to the words of an explanation or question, so the hands express naturally what the director is thinking about how the chant should be sung.

It is plain that this method leaves the conductor to intervene as much or as little as he sees fit, and in whatever manner he pleases—he could just content himself with waving his graduale for example. To this natural method should be connected what we said about starting and closing pieces. But there are other starting and stopping points: for example, the pause at each full bar and the start after that pause. The coordination there could be assisted by a gesture from the leader.

Then there are the passages where increase and decrease of volume are called for. Crescendo can be indicated by an increased vivacity of the leader's gesture (which of course means that the gesture has a greater amplitude), just as if while speaking emphatically, our gestures would tend to become more emphatic. Coupled naturally with the emphatic gesture, the leader's voice and face will show an increase of energy and expectation for those who are attentive. On the other hand, decrescendo will be naturally indicated by a calming of the leader's facial expression, and gesture (along with correspondingly decreased amplitude in his gestures). These remarks need hardly be made: we only do so in order to show some areas in which a spontaneous directing of the chant will manifest itself.

Right away we might observe a weakness in this natural method, which of itself lends itself to punctual and perhaps even jerky gestures. Gregorian chant is not meant to be sung staccato, or like stairs. On the contrary, legato is the rule, and legato is better expressed by a continuous gesture, as anyone can observe in the traditional manner for conducting classical music. This prompts a second method, aimed partially at remedying this weakness.

Second Method of Direction: Circular Gestures

Another method of spontaneous direction derives from the method just discussed. Although the hand gesture remains spontaneous, the circle is taken as the general and indeed unique shape of the gesture. Evidently, this leaves room for crescendo (larger circles) and decrescendo (smaller circles), for accelerando (speeding up your gesture = making full circle in less time) and ritardando (slowing the gesture = taking more time to complete your circle); all the facial and general expressions are left open for the director. This method has the further advantage over the previous one in that it gives the hand always something to do, a movement that can be repeated indefinitely as long as the chant lasts. This gives the director a sense of or a "hold" on his singers. A continuous rapport is maintained with them, rather than the punctual, momentary contact through discrete gestures of the previous approach. The difference between the first and second methods is like the dif-

ference between kicking a log from time to time to keep the movement going versus rolling a log by constant application of force. Again, this first method could be compared to the second in terms of the way our watches tell the time these days. Some are digital and thus give the impression that time is a series of distinct elements, one second, then another, etc. In reality, time is continuous, and this fundamental aspect is better represented by the second hands of the old-style watches which are constantly moving.

A question might sum up what has been said about spontaneous direction of the chant: how good can one expect to get at this kind of natural expression for the purpose of directing a schola? One might recall here the case of musical improvisation. Some come to improvisation with a definite talent. But the best of these raw talents are always found to imitate, quasi-instinctively, what the masters do by art and study. This stands to reason if art is based on nature. There may be some who do very well at indicating what they want to their schola just by expressive gestures: they know what they want to do musically, and they can "connect" with their singers. Again, they are doing nothing more than using their hands or other available expressive means to convey their idea, in supplement to the voice and the music in the singers' hands. And it should be remembered that it is the result that is all-important here. A director's technique can hardly be criticized if it obtains from his or her schola beautiful chant. Moreover, one can presume that in most cases there will have been a prior practice session in which the leader could express his ideas verbally, so that the expressive gestures would be referring to these words.

Perhaps a more relevant remark is that, regardless of the skill of the direction, your schola will concretely *have been directed*, led, united by the gestures. How can the unity and level of performance but be thus enhanced?

Finally, a concluding remark before we turn to the next method of direction—namely the expressive importance of the director's torso, that is, the chest area. Generally, good conductors stand up very straight, which makes sense if they are rousing themselves to the best of their ability and endeavoring to prompt singers to the best they are capable of. The chest area also expresses the breathing pattern of the conductor. It is recommended that the conductor of singers breathe with his singers, that is, that he give the lead and the example of where to breathe He should perhaps also show how to breathe, namely deeply. Evidently that means that the conductor will have to be singing along, or at least humming.

Anyone who has tried the second method will remark that there is a certain rhythmic regularity that necessarily establishes itself between the successive circular gestures. Take two directors directing the same piece by this second method. It will become apparent that the circles traced out by each of them will just about coincide—not necessarily in size, but in time. And more particularly, the bottommost part of the circle will coincide. Why is this? Because there is such a thing as a downbeat, even in chant, and a musician naturally feels it, expressing it by reaching the bottommost part of his circle at the downbeat.

The Third Method: Arsis and Thesis

If the first two methods can be described

as the "natural" method in two stages, this third method enters into the artificial in the sense that it proceeds more systematically: first with an analysis, then with a synthesis, which is the direction itself.

First Stage: Analysis

The Gregorian melody can be seen as a kind of "shape" or curve described by the melody, such that what we call the "high notes" are located toward the peaks of the curve, and the "low notes" are in the valleys. The dynamics follow generally the climbs and falls of the curve such that the highest intensity would be found approximately at the summit of the piece, ebbing out and coming to its lowest intensity at the end of the piece. Thus, we have the following "classic" shape of a Gregorian piece (greatly simplified):

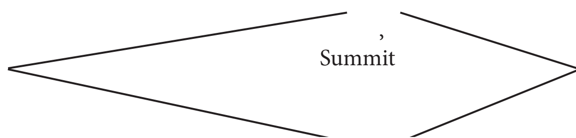

Figure 1. The line of intensity of a piece climaxes at a summit and falls off from there.

The analysis consists of "chopping up" the melody into handy, manageable handfuls and to assess the slope—upward or downward—of the melody so as to describe its development in terms of a climb to a summit and then a fall back to its resting place, on the final note of the piece. The dividing into segments is effectuated by means of the downbeat. We have noted above the existence of a downbeat even in Gregorian chant. This is because Gregorian chant is indeed music, and an essential element of music is rhythm, and rhythm cannot be described otherwise than in terms of upbeats and downbeats. Hence all music supposes a downbeat.

The first task of the analysis is to mark the downbeat each time it occurs in the Gregorian melody. This operation will effectively divide the piece into segments of two or three beats each. These are the manageable segments we were looking for in our analysis.

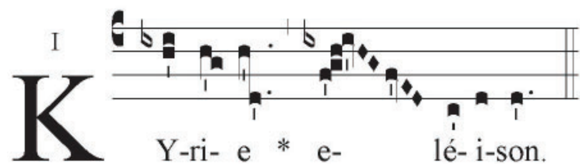

Figure 2. First invocation of Kyrie XI with all the ictus marked. The ictus are the vertical traits under the notes. They mark the downbeat.

In the above example, each vertical trait (called *ictus* in technical terminology) under a note marks the "fall" or downbeat of the rhythm. The rules for determining the place of the downbeat or ictus can be found in the manuals of the "old Solesmes" method.[1] Since this article means only to give an outline of the various methods, the details of the placing of the ictus must be left aside here.

The next step in the analysis is to look at the slope of each of the segments of the piece thus divided up: is it upwards or downwards? Is it steep or gentle? Thus,

[1]For example, Theodore Marier, *Gregorian Chant Practicum* (Washington, D.C.: Centre for Ward Method Studies, 1990), or Saint Gregory Schola, *Laus in Ecclesia*, vol. 1 (Flavigny-sur-Ozerain: Traditions monastiques, 2016), English tr. (Hulbert, Okla.: Clear Creek Abbey, 2017). Refer to the entry "Ictus" in the index.

we get an idea of the contribution of that segment to the "shape" of the whole piece. This amounts to saying that each sloped segment, when pieced back together, constitutes a description or an outline of the musical (melodic and intensive) development of the whole piece.

To describe the upward or downward tendency of the melody's shape we will refer back to the ancient Greeks' terminology for the dance. The two basic elements of the body's movement in the dance consists of, first, a leap into the air, which they called "arsis," and then a touching back down on the ground, which they called "thesis." From this basic image of a leap into the air followed by a falling back to the ground, we perceive the qualitative differences between these two elements. The arsis obviously connotes energy, a kind of striving, by its leap into the air. The thesis suggests a relaxation, even a dying out, or a letting go. Thus, we would naturally describe an increase of energy as manifested in the climbs in the melody as "arsic," while the relaxing of the energy characterized by a downslope would be qualified as "thetic."

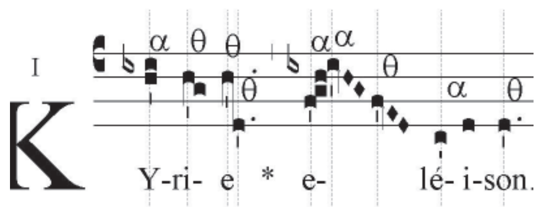

Figure 3. Kyrie XI divided into segments (dotted lines), each segment assigned an arsic (α) or thetic (θ) character.

In the above example, the arsic segments[2] are marked with the Greek letter alpha: α; and the thetic segments with a Greek theta: θ.

With that we have completed the analysis. The result is a step-by-step analysis of the development of the musical piece in terms of a succession of arses and theses.

Second Phase: Synthesis

But an analysis is not done for itself; anyone who takes apart a machine, does not leave it in its separate parts, but reassembles the machine after fixing the faulty part if necessary. Likewise here, this analysis serves as a plan enabling one to describe in terms of hand gestures[3] the musical, or more precisely the rhythmical, development of the melody.

Thus, the arses are described as loops or circles made by the hand:

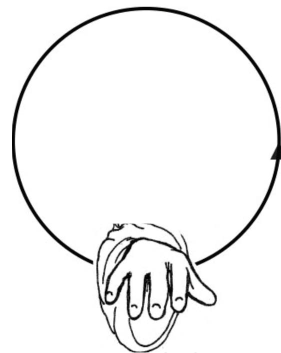

Figure 4. Right hand describing a circle.

[2]The technical term for a segment of two or three notes set off by successive ictus is *composite pulse*. Thus, a composite pulse can be composed of two notes, and then it is called a *binary composite pulse*; if composed of three notes, it is called a *ternary composite pulse*.

[3]Called "chironomy," from the Greek *chiro*, hand; and *nomos*, law—thus chironomy is the law or rule of the hand.

The theses are expressed as an undulation traced out by the hand and arm movement:

Figure 5. Undulation movement described by the right hand.

And so, the succession of arses and theses can be described by a hand gesture:

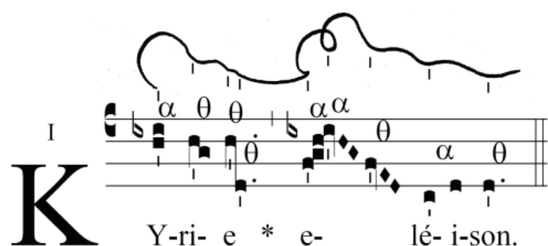

Figure 6. Kyrie XI, with ictus, chironomy, and arses and theses marked.

There is one further major nuance added to the hand gesture that must be added. The chironomy unfolds in either the arsic field or the thetic field. These fields are delineated by a vertical line passing through the center of the director's body, such that, supposing he is directing with his right hand, the arsic field will be located to the left of his belly button, the thetic field to the right. With this further addition we can conceive of arses (loops) made in the arsic field, or in the thetic field and vice versa. Moreover, it would be possible for one arsic loop to be more arsic than another, because it is made farther toward the left; or a more thetic gesture, farther toward the right.

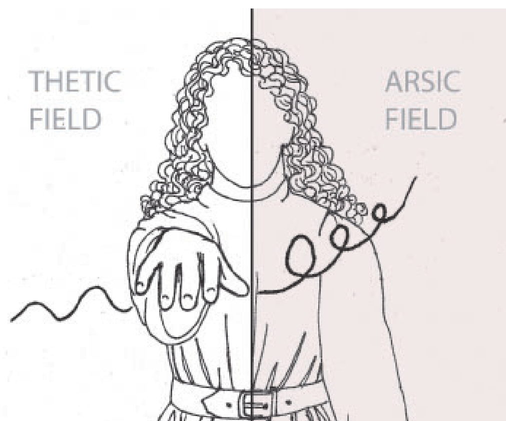

Figure 7. Arsic and thetic fields, with a succession of arses and theses.

The net result of this process of rhythmic analysis and synthesis is quite simply the direction of your schola. Those hand gestures effectively describe how the melody progresses, and thus gives a lead to the singers following the direction. Again, we can remark that all the bodily and facial expressions of the conductor are in no way excluded by this method of direction; rather, they are added on to nuance his or her direction.

The above analysis and synthesis may seem involved and complicated. It is indeed so for one approaching it for the first time. But experience shows that having put out the effort needed to assimilate the method, chironomy becomes a habit and can become greatly perfected, a little like the conducting of the great orchestral conductors. In other words, the effort put into learning the method pays off in terms of greater precision and assurance of the direction.

Conclusion

Three methods for directing a schola have been laid before the reader. Unquestionably, the easiest and the most natural is the first, which consists of spontaneous hand and bodily gestures encouraging on the singers and indicating to the singers the appropriate nuance at a given time.

A second method, consisting in a circular hand movement, builds on the first and is almost as easily accessible. The interesting feature of the circle movement is that it manifests the fact that Gregorian chant, though a very spiritual kind of music (far removed, for example, from the drum beat of primitive tribal dance), nevertheless has a downbeat: the bottom of the circle traced by different conductors will coincide.

This insight enables a further development which constitutes our third method, whereby the segments marked off by the downbeats are distinguished into "climbing" segments (α) or "falling" segments (θ), which permits a rhythmic description of the development of the melody. Otherwise expressed, it is a series of commands to the singers: of "strive" at the arses, and "let go" on the theses. This permits an outline of the shape of the melody to be described by hand gestures, thus allowing the conductor always to be leading his chorale forward with his hand. As admitted above, this method has the disadvantage of being less immediately accessible inasmuch as it requires instruction, study and work. But for someone who loves the chant, or who is concerned that his or her schola do justice to it as music, the effort will be worthwhile. Besides, analysis and synthesis cannot but give a deeper insight and appreciation for the music of the chant.

One could even conceive of a return from method three to method one. All the contrivances of study and analysis having been profoundly assimilated, they can, as it were, be cast aside and the chant master no longer concerns himself with anything other than his spontaneous inclinations, indicating these with a mere wave of his book or a raising of an eyebrow. It would be appropriate, though, to point out that this kind of mastery is only attained by persevering study and application.

Here is one last point, perhaps the most important one, should the reader have followed us up to now. It is that the three methods are quite evidently not mutually exclusive. The aim of this short essay was to show how one builds upon the other. The practical conclusion is that there is absolutely no reason to hesitate about starting to direct your schola. Start simply, launching the piece and ending it. Then gradually, building on experience, you attempt a continuous direction by means of circles. If time permits and you are so drawn, you can delve into the third method so as to perfect your direction and increase your appreciation of the chant's structure. The net benefit of direction is unity in the execution and more nuanced expression, both of which are direct contributors to the beauty of the chant. ❖

Our Musical Stars

What are beautiful musics that illuminate our musical sky?

by Dom Jacques-Marie Guilmard, O.S.B.

ince I was very young, I was surrounded by music and in particular by singing: Mozart, Rossini, but also *Faust,* operettas, and the scout songs of my older brothers. When I was ten, after having read in *Spirou* a short biography of the violinist Jacques Thibaud, who had recently died, I asked for a violin for Christmas. I listened to Georges Thill singing *Orpheus* by Gluck on an old 78 rpm. I remember recordings of Maria Callas—in particular her recital at the Paris Opera in 1958. Singing and violin were my usual diet, and I was like a "bird who sang all the time." Later, once I had entered the monastery, I continued to sing constantly, "in the regular office hours and at other times." And so, in 1970, a retreat at Solesmes oriented my life toward praise of God in its liturgical framework. The Lord led me in another direction, and I realized that it is better to sing of God's mercy here on earth rather than teaching mathematics, as I had previously done.

To find new stars is a bit much, for beauty in sound is everywhere. Since the beginning of time, music is everywhere—the less good, the good, and the sublime. But isn't all good music sublime if I listen to it? And so, a piece of music well played is the most beautiful music in the world in the moment that I hear it. Otherwise, it is because I listen poorly. Often, one does not know how to take real pleasure in what one hears. New stars! But our tastes change, and so much the better. And so, our stars also change. This is why instead of speaking of new musical stars, I will rather speak about the voice, about chant—Gregorian chant—according to new principles.

★ First, **the human voice**. It takes first place in the world of sound. Even instrumentalists try to imitate it. "With much voice!" said the Russian opera singer Chaliapin. Callas at the height of her glory, or even with a tired voice singing *Rosinda* by Cavalli, *Carmen*, or *Traviata*: in them there was so much vibration of her soul. And these music-hall singers with ragged voices singing mediocre refrains but ones that do not leave us indifferent: Edith Piaf. The voice of a friend, the voice of a father! The silent voice of conscience but one that is sonorous and which pushes us to do well.

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- ★ **Song as action**. Song provides an inner force that can speak in a new way that is ecstatic and penetrating. Song interiorizes and amplifies all that the text can hide, making resonate the deepest feelings present in the singer. It is the incarnation, and the entire body becomes the mediator, bringing the text to touch the tip of the soul. The song is sublimated by the beauty it creates and which surrounds the text with joy, grandeur, even sacredness.

- ★ **Song as sound**. Song exteriorizes the meaning of the words for the sake of the hearers, who receive it and share it. But as it is bathed in beauty, it charms the listener. No one can remain indifferent because it touches man in his entirety: soul and body, within himself and in his exterior relations, be they spatial or social, putting them in unity and harmony, that is to say, unity joined to beauty and pleasure.

- ★ **Song as *canticum novum***. A song is a new creation each time it appears. The melody might be centuries old, but it is a new song as soon as one voice, moved by the heart of a man or a woman, rises and breaks the silence to fill the space. If a beautiful song does not seem new to us it is because we are not listening to it as we should. The most beautiful music is that which I am hearing now. However, there are some more beautiful still—those that I sing myself (at least if I have an artistic sense). Some chants seem to be better made to be sung and others to be heard.

- ★ Among songs, how can we ignore the great **French art melodies**—for example *Les nuits d'été* (Summer Nights) or the *Death of Ophelia* by Berlioz, as well as many pieces by Fauré, Chausson, or Ravel?

- ★ **There is also the voice of the violin**, the instrument closest to the human voice. I have always loved the bowing in the playing of David Oïstrakh—"a prince among men,"—as well as some sublime passages from Beethoven and the tormented sounds of Bartok or the Belgium violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. Nobility, humanity. Violinists are very attached to the sonatas and to the solo partitas of Bach—and we never tire of their richness. And single-movement dances composed in completely equal sixteenth notes: this music never ends and the arpeggios go from the bass to the treble filling all the space in between. Music is, then, everywhere without end.

- ★ Beyond the works that elevate human beauty, there is the **Gregorian chant** of the church. The Gregorian chant is the word, the sentence, the prayer, having become song. I love to insist on the divine psalmody of which we will never tire. For those who accept to enter it fully, psalmodic prayer is an easy and quick school of song, of prayer, and of beauty. Psalmody is a simple and universal song which unites all Christians who sing psalms—those in the past, in the present, and in the future. It is a way to prepare for what we will do in heaven: "eternally singing the mercies of the Lord." Psalmody is

fitting for every age, every situation, every spiritual orientation. Each person finds strength and nurture there. I say again, it is like a universal prayer. In psalmody, the soul marvels tirelessly before the works of God. The voice always experiences the new joys of singing the glory of God; this is a *canticum novum* become prayer.

- ★ **The rhythm of Gregorian Chant** fascinates me. It is full of suppleness with no measure, but a living succession of alternations with infinite *accelerandi* and holdings back. One doesn't hear that in any other music, even that composed after Stravinsky.

- ★ **The Hymns**, which do not belong exactly to the Gregorian repertoire, are sometimes magnificent, both for the mystical text and for the melody. I can never forget *Urbs Jerusalem* (Celestial Jerusalem), for the dedication of a church, in which the melodic rhymes are always simple and at the same time marvelous.

- ★ **Certain large works**. I remember the gradual *Hæc dies quam fecit* (for Thursday in the Easter octave) which expresses the joy of Easter, and is marked by the suffering of the cross. At Christmas, this joy is completely free—that of the birth of the Savior. Here at Easter, the Resurrection is the work of the cross. This liturgy gives us here a sublime example of a new song—a *canticum novum par excellence*, for God has completely renewed the motifs of our song.

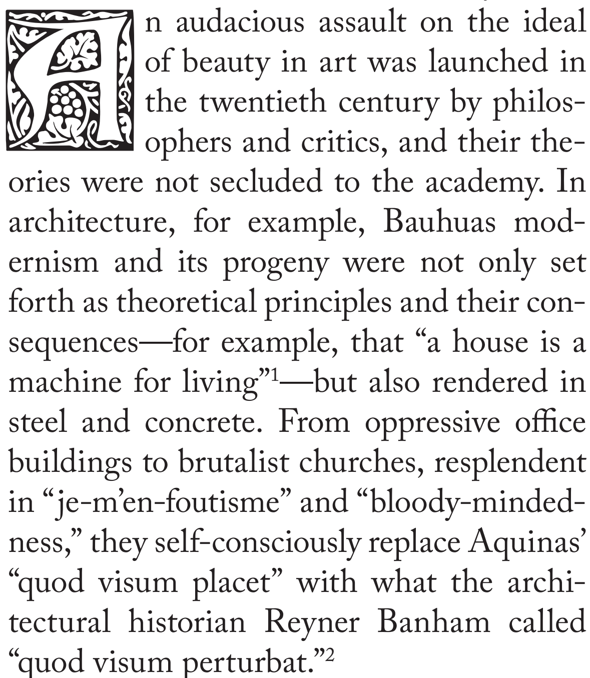
One understands that the newness inherent in Gregorian chant does not allow me to savor it in the form of a recording. The magic of the voice, the sublime voice of the Gregorian chant of the church, is in its liturgical context as "the Word made flesh." ❖

The Great Theory of Beauty, and Sacred Music

The classical explanations of beauty offer a framewok within which reasonable aesthetic judgments can be made, while still allowing for a reasonable broadmindedness about musical beauty.

by Michael Dickson

The Abandonment of Beauty



An audacious assault on the ideal of beauty in art was launched in the twentieth century by philosophers and critics, and their theories were not secluded to the academy. In architecture, for example, Bauhuas modernism and its progeny were not only set forth as theoretical principles and their consequences—for example, that "a house is a machine for living"[1]—but also rendered in steel and concrete. From oppressive office buildings to brutalist churches, resplendent in "je-m'en-foutisme" and "bloody-mindedness," they self-consciously replace Aquinas' "quod visum placet" with what the architectural historian Reyner Banham called "quod visum perturbat."[2]

Musical beauty did not escape the assault, with attitudes ranging from disregard to scorn.[3] For example, the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard celebrates what he takes to be "the end of an aesthetics, that of the beautiful, in the name of the final destination of the mind, which is freedom."[4] A decidedly more hostile attitude towards traditional beauty is expressed by the German philosopher Theodor Adorno, who writes that the "new music" of his day (by which he means twelve-tone serial music) "sacrifices itself" to meaninglessness.

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[1]"Une maison est une machine à habiter." Le Corbusier, *Urbanisme* (Paris: G. Crès, 1924), p. 219.

[2]The quoted phrases in this sentence are taken from Reyner Banham, "The New Brutalism," *The Architectural Review* (December 1955), 354–361. The phrase "*quod visum placet*" (that which, being seen, pleases) is paraphrased from *Summa Theologiæ* I.5.4. The original text reads "pulchra enim dicuntur quæ visa placent" (for the beautiful is said to be that which, being seen, pleases). Banham's "quod visum perturbat" may be translated "that which, being seen, disturbs," a phrase by which he characterized brutalist architecture with, it appears, some form of approval.

[3]For more detail, see, for example, David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2003).

[4]Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, tr. G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1988), p. 136.

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> It has taken all the darkness and guilt of the world on itself. All its happiness is in the knowledge of unhappiness; all its beauty is in denial of the semblance of the beautiful.[5]

One might understand and even forgive Adorno, gripped as he was by the evils perpetrated through two world wars. But we need not follow him, nor indeed the considerably less-extreme opponents of beauty in music. However, neither can we simply brush them off. It might be true that, unlike oppressive factories and churches, the "first fruits" of the rejection of musical beauty can be easily ignored by most people. At the same time, the theoretical movement that produced these fruits is derived from an earlier departure from traditional theories of beauty. Alas, we musicians (and listeners) do suffer the consequences of that departure, and not only when we are bullied into performing or programming music that is, as violist and commentator Miles Hoffman describes it, "stubbornly aggressive, even hostile."[6] We would do well, therefore, to understand this departure, and more importantly, to understand the traditional theory of beauty from which modern musical aesthetics departs. Such understanding can inform and thereby enhance our efforts to promote and produce excellent sacred music in the liturgy, both by providing a positive guide and by alerting us to seductive errors.

The "Great Theory" of Beauty

The departure from the traditional theory of beauty may appear subtle; it does not always take the extreme form that we see in the mid-twentieth century, even if that extremity be its logical conclusion. For example, Jerold Levinson, who has contributed much to philosophy of music, allows (as Adorno apparently does not) that some beautiful music is good music. In doing so, he adopts a widespread characterization of beauty in general as that which affords "pleasure in the perceiving or beholding,"[7] a phrase that appears (but only *appears*) to comport with Aquinas. The departure—explored more carefully below, begins to become apparent when, with specific reference to music, Levinson describes the musically beautiful as that which "seduces, charms, and gently conquers us."[8]

Levinson describes the musically beautiful as that which "seduces, charms, and gently conquers us."

[5]*Theodor Adorno, Philosophy of New Music* [1949], tr. R. Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2006*),* p. 102.

[6]Miles Hoffman, "Music's Missing Magic," *Wilson Quarterly* (Spring 2005), 28–38. Hoffman is, more specifically, characterizing the demand that composers of atonal music make on listeners to "endure dissonance at great length and without let-up."

[7]Jerrold Levinson, "Musical Beauty," *Teorema: Revista Internacional de Filosofía*, 31 (2012), 127–135. Levinson takes himself to be endorsing a commonly held view, and in support of that stance cites an encyclopedia article (see his note 1) that offers much the same view. I think he is correct that the view is widely shared.

[8]Ibid.

If musical beauty is understood in this manner, then Levinson is clearly correct that good music need not be beautiful—there is plenty of excellent music that does not (as least not typically) conquer the listener with seduction and charm. The *Adagio* of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* might have that effect on listeners, but the *Presto Agitato* is more likely to excite, not seduce and charm. And yet the sonata as a whole is, as Levinson would agree, good (if, perhaps, over-exposed) music.

Hence, from the point of view of tradition which holds that art in general, and music in particular, aims at beauty, this conception of beauty as "what is seductive and charming when perceived" is overly narrow. As Levinson himself shows convincingly, it severs the connection between beauty and goodness, so that beauty has become close to irrelevant to our understanding and evaluation of music. Beauty is just another "way that music can sound," alongside sounding ferocious or plaintive or lighthearted—and has lost its capacity to explain what makes good music good. One practical upshot is that beauty, thus conceived, is no longer a guide to quality.

More specifically, although Levinson's (widely-shared) conception may *appear* to derive directly from Aquinas' dictum "quod visum placet," it departs from that traditional view in two crucial ways. First, as mentioned, the contemporary notion involves an overly narrow conception of aesthetic pleasure, essentially replacing Aquinas' "placet" [pleases] with something like "delectat" [attracts, delights, charms]. Second, the contemporary notion takes "placet" (or "delectat") as *definitive* of beauty, whereas Aquinas' formula indicates a characteristic *effect* of beauty, not a definition.

Aquinas is drawing on a Western philosophical tradition that begins with ancient Greek philosophers and continues—developing, but not radically changing—through the Middle Ages and beyond. In the early days of that tradition, two primary thoughts about the nature of beauty predominate and co-exist. The first is that beauty consists of some sort of proportion or harmony. One thinks, initially, of the Pythagorean tradition, and its fascination with the descriptive and explanatory power of number, particularly as regards sound. For example, Pythagoras himself is said to have both discovered and been struck by the numerical relations that characterize musical intervals. Greek and Roman authors, notably Plato and St. Augustine, adopted something like this Pythagorean understanding of beauty—not only in music, but also generally. St. Augustine, for example, writes that "in *all* the arts, it is harmony ["convenientia," i.e., harmony, symmetry, suitableness] that pleases, and by which all things beautiful are made [preserved as] one [a unity]." This idea of beauty as a kind of numerical proportion or harmony has often been extended to other domains. One could mention any of thousands of works, from Vitruvius' ancient treatise on architecture to contemporary studies of perceived facial beauty.

A second traditional thought about beauty is often attributed to the neo-Platonist philosopher Plotinus, who takes up the Pythagorean idea, and argues that it applies only to complex things. It takes at least two parts in order for there to be a "proportion" between them. Even in the case of some complex things, argues Plotinus, beauty does not always consist in numerical proportion. He is, in essence, doubting

that proportion can explain all instances of beauty, asking: "What due proportion is to be found in beautiful ways of living, or laws, or learning, or science?"[9] Instead, regarding material things (and we may include sound), Plotinus proposes that "a body [i.e., a material thing] becomes beautiful through communion with the thought flowing from the Divine."[10] In other words, it is beautiful insofar as it exhibits or conveys a divine idea. Plotinus offers a helpful analogy.

> How does the one skilled in building, finding the outer house to match the inner idea of the house, declare it to be beautiful? Is it not that the outer house, if separated from the stones [i.e., considering just its form], makes visible the inner idea, being itself undivided, [but] distributed into the bulk of outer matter, into many?[11]

He goes on to extend this thought to immaterial things, but the point as stated here is good enough for our purposes. The beauty of the house (generally, of any physical thing) consists in its exhibiting a unified idea, the idea of the skilled builder (or architect) in the diversity of its (physical) materials.

Plotinus' account comes to be described by the word "claritas" [clarity, brilliance]. It will be important to remember, however, that the thought behind this term is that the beautiful thing somehow clearly exhibits or conveys an idea. Moreover, although Plotinus motivates his view by calling the Pythagorean view into question, tradition does not quite follow him. Instead, both views are adopted, and evolve into what the intellectual historian Władysław Tatarkiewicz called the "Great Theory" of beauty.[12]

The Great Theory can be found throughout the Western intellectual tradition right up until the theory's decline beginning in the eighteenth century.

The Great Theory can be found throughout the Western intellectual tradition right up until the theory's decline beginning in the eighteenth century.[13] For example, Pseudo-Dionysius, the unknown author of the influential treatise *On Divine Names*, says that beauty consists in "suitableness and splendor."[14]

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[9]Plotinus, *Enneads* 1.6.1, author's translation. Ultimately Plotinus *does* allow that there could be *some* form of proportion in such things, but not the right kind to explain their beauty.

[10]Ibid., 1.6.2.

[11]Ibid., 1.6.3.

[12]Władysław Tatarkiewicz, "The Great Theory of Beauty and Its Decline," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* 31 (1972), 165–180.

[13]This decline is documented by Tatarkiewicz, op. cit.

[14]Pseudo-Dionysius, *On Divine Names*, 4.7, au-

Following authorities such as St. Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius, later medieval authors further cultivated the Great Theory, stated succinctly by Aquinas. In his commentary on pseudo-Dionysius' *Divine Names*, Aquinas uses the standard terminology of proportion or harmony ("consonantia"), and clarity or brilliance ("claritas") in his account (what Aquinas calls the "ratio") of beauty. What might be considered the most inclusive and perhaps mature form of the Great Theory is quickly summarized in the *Summa Theologiæ*, in a brief side-note about beauty, where Aquinas says that beauty has three requirements. The second and third (in his order of exposition) are repeated from the ancient sources that we've already mentioned, while the first appears to have emerged out of earlier medieval theorizing, perhaps beginning with St. Augustine's observation that harmony creates unity. St. Thomas writes:

What might be considered the most inclusive and perhaps mature form of the Great Theory is quickly summarized in the Summa Theologiæ.

> Three things are required for beauty: first, integrity or perfection, for things that are diminished are for that reason ugly; and second, due proportion, or consonance; and last clarity, whence things that have brilliant color are said to be beautiful.[15]

Before we turn specifically to musical beauty, we need to accomplish two tasks: some elaboration of these three components of the Great Theory, and a reconsideration of the formula "quod visum placet."

Proportion. The natural thought about proportion is that it refers to obvious arithmetic or geometric relations, and especially to forms of symmetry. Indeed, many types of artifacts, and even many natural kinds, are generally found to be more beautiful when they exhibit those relations. One's mind immediately turns to use of the Golden Ratio in architecture and painting, or the widespread appearance of that same ratio, often in the form of the Fibonacci sequence, in natural objects ranging from sunflowers to nautilus shells, or the whole-number ratios that characterize standard musical harmonies.

However, these examples, as spectacular and important as they are, are not the whole story, for at least two reasons. First, we are just playing at numerology until we understand *why* such numerical and geometric proportions convey beauty. (Indeed,

thor's translation. The terms are 'εὐαρμοστία' and 'ἀγλαία'. In Greek, the former term naturally brings to mind "[εὐ]αρμονία"—"ἁρμονία" means "harmony", "εὐαρμονία" would be a coined term, but clearly enough meaning "good harmony."

[15] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiæ*, I.39.8, author's translation.

Plotinus may be read as, in part, making exactly this point.) The accounts that we need are likely to be domain-specific, and while there are interesting speculations to be made in the domain of music, such speculations are beyond the scope of this discussion.

The second reason that numerical and geometric ratio is not the end of the account of proportion is that the concept of "due proportion" includes more than explicitly numerical ratio. Imagine, for example, a fugue in which one of the parts dominates the others. Such a composition would fail, as a fugue, precisely because the parts are "out of balance," i.e., disproportionate. Imagine (or recall) a choir in which the voice of a single tenor pierces the air above all others—the problem, again, is a lack of due proportion. Examples are easily multiplied.

Proportion is thus important for beauty in several respects. Saying exactly what they are, and exactly what "good proportion" amounts to—what is "due proportion" in a fugue, or in a Renaissance mass, for example?—is a task for theorists and practitioners of the various arts.

Clarity. As for proportion, there are at least two aspects of "clarity" that are relevant to beauty. In his brief account of the Great Theory, Aquinas alludes to one of them, namely, the capacity of clarity to have an impact, to command attention. Here Aquinas gives the example of bright color (also found in Plotinus). In order for our account to be *general*, we must *not* suppose that "impact" is in all cases produced by the kind of jolt or effusion that one might associate with bright colors or bright trumpets. Rather, we might say that the beautiful is *striking*, perhaps in the manner of the brightness of a field of sunflowers or a chorus of trumpets, but equally so in the manner of the serene and muted tones of a Japanese garden or a plaintive oboe. The clarity of the beautiful thus makes the beautiful thing *impressive*, i.e., it *makes an impression*.

This more general understanding of clarity leads naturally to the second aspect of clarity, emphasized by the Platonic tradition, namely, clarity as the exhibition—one might say "exposition," or even "revelation"—of an idea. This aspect of clarity naturally follows the first. If the beautiful makes an impression on us, then there is something, some idea, that it impresses on us. In the case of natural objects, the idea is just the idea of the thing itself. The tradition is united on this point: all natural things are, as God's creation, potentially beautiful, and are actually beautiful insofar as they exhibit (or expose, or reveal) God's intention, that is, God's idea of "what the thing is." Artifacts, too, can exhibit an idea, the designer's or maker's idea, as Plotinus illustrated with the example of the builder's judgment of the beauty of a house.

Integrity. For the third element of beauty, integrity, Aquinas helpfully offers the alternative term "perfection" which, in this context, does not mean "a state of being unable to be improved," but rather "a quality that contributes to making a thing what it is." The point is that the beautiful thing is a *whole*, not missing relevant or available perfections, but also not exhibiting irrelevant or incongruous features. A sunflower that is missing half of its petals is not a beautiful *sunflower*, which is not to say that it might not be beautiful in some other manner, but it is not beautiful *in the manner that a sunflower is*. The same goes

for a sunflower painted purple, inasmuch as the purple color obscures the true "what it is" of the sunflower. Lacking certain perfections of a sunflower, in both cases, it fails the test of integrity—it is no longer "what a sunflower is," or at least not as well, as perfect, as it could be.

Here we need to offer a correction to a mistake often found in discussions of the Great Theory. For natural objects, integrity means just what the example of the sunflower suggests—a thing is "more perfect," and in that way more beautiful, the greater extent to which it exhibits the features of the type of thing that it is. It is tempting to conclude that, for example, a painting of an imperfect natural object, or one that represents the object incompletely or obscurely in some manner, cannot be beautiful. This conclusion is a grave mistake. What matters for the painting is its integrity *as a painting*. It should have the perfections definitive of the kind of thing that it is, namely, a painting. For example, a lack of photographic realism in a painting does not make it imperfect. In this regard, examples abound, from Byzantine icons to the works of Picasso. In the realm of music, the point is even clearer—after all, most music is not representational (in the relevant sense) in the first place.

But what "kind of thing" *is* a work of art? Here we enter difficult territory, to which we shall return later. The difficulty arises from the fact that a painting (and indeed any work of art) is an artifact, not a natural object. Like Plotinus' builder, the painter is the *cause* of the "what it is" of the painting, or as Aquinas puts it, the "artificial form." Here the term "artificial" refers to the fact that the painting as an artifact is the kind of thing that it is (a landscape painting, let's say) through the operation of artistic activity, not natural processes.[16]

But what "kind of thing" is a work of art?

Hence the difficulty. If the integrity of an artifact is ultimately derived from the intention of the artisan, then must we say that beauty, at least insofar as it depends on integrity, is nothing more than a matter of the intention of the artist? What if Plotinus' builder designed a malformed house (or a brutalist church)? Would the plan, perfectly executed, produce an artifact that has "integrity" in the sense relevant to beauty? Or consider the performance of some banal musical piece. If the performance masterfully realizes the plan of the piece, must we say that it has the same degree of integrity, *as music*, as an excellent performance of a Palestrina mass? And surely not the same degree of beauty! We shall return to this question in the final section, for it is one of the more pressing *practical* questions concerning beauty that we face.

Our brief discussion of the components of the Great Theory should make it clear

[16]Aquinas' account of artifacts (i.e., objects made through intentional human activity rather than natural processes) is difficult and its interpretation controversial. For our purposes, it is sufficient to point out that in whatever sense artifacts have a "what it is to be that sort of artifact"—an "artifical form" as he says—its origin lies in human intention. See Michael Rota, "Substance and Artifact in Thomas Aquinas," *History of Philosophy Quarterly,* 21 (2004), 241–259.

that tradition rejects the contemporary idea that beauty is a matter of how the beautiful thing makes one feel or, as Levinson describes, is a matter of seduction and charm. However, it would be silly and negligent to deny that we typically *do* feel a certain way in the presence of beauty. Is that feeling not part of the account? And what are we to make of Aquinas' dictum that the beautiful is "quod visum placet?"

A similar issue arises in discussions of the closely related concept of the good. The good may be understood in terms of perfection. For example, a good sunflower has the perfections of a sunflower, and a good tractor the perfections of a tractor. But until one recognizes the relationship between *desire* and the good, i.e., that in some sense, to be good is to be desirable, the story is incomplete in a crucial manner. In his discussion of the good in the *Summa*, Aquinas raises this issue also about beauty, and here introduces his dictum (I.5.4; see note 2). Commentators sometimes refer to it as Aquinas' "definition" of beauty, but we must be careful. It is clear in Aquinas' commentary on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* that the corresponding definition of the good as "that which all desire" (one might say, "quod visum appetitur"[17]) is a definition in the sense of specifying the characteristic and proper *effect* of a thing. Aquinas' statement about beauty is explicitly offered in parallel to that definition of the good, and must therefore be understood in the same manner, not as providing an *account of what beauty requires* (that task has already been handled by the Great Theory), but as stating the characteristic and proper *effect* of beautiful things—namely, to please upon being perceived.

This observation is important, because if we were to take "pleasing upon being perceived" as our *account* of beauty, then we could very quickly be pushed to the view (common enough) that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." That view that is incompatible with the aim of the Great Theory to provide a non-subjectivist account of beauty. At the same time, our account must not ignore the *affective* dimension of beauty, just as an account of the good must not ignore its capacity to cause desire.

In fact, the affective power of beauty is directly tied to its objective features as given by the Great Theory. The most important theoretical observation about the sentiment caused by beauty is that experiencing it is not a matter of passive reception. The perception involved in the experience of beauty is a kind of cognitive *activity*. For example, speaking of the Great Theory, St. Augustine says that the elements of beauty are "perceived not by the eye of the flesh, nor by any such sense, but by the mind

The affective power of beauty is directly tied to its objective features as given by the Great Theory.

[17]In his commentary on Chapter 1, Aquinas summarizes Aristotle's point: "bonum esse id quod omnia appetunt" (par. 9).

having understood."[18] Augustine's word for "perceived" is "conspicitur," which carries also the sense of careful attentiveness, or admiration.[19] Aquinas, too, is explicit on this matter. Indeed, he is so confident that "being pleased" is the result of cognitive (rather than perceptive) activity that he puts the point the other way around: one reason we know that beauty is characteristically *pleasing* is that—unlike goodness, which concerns the appetite—beauty concerns the *cognitive* power of apprehension. In other words, while the Great Theory elucidates the *causes* of beauty, the experience of beauty, the "being pleased" that occurs upon perception of the beautiful, involves the *apprehension* of those causes.

Of course, the causes must be present in the first place in order to be apprehended. Here, there is a good analogy with knowledge—we are all familiar with having the *feeling* of certainty that is associated with knowledge, while lacking true knowledge, as well as with failing to come to know, even when the truth is before us. So too, one may have the feelings characteristic of the perception of beauty even in the absence of the requirements of beauty, as well as fail to apprehend them when they are before us.

We are broaching some important practical questions. How do we cultivate the capacity for such apprehension in ourselves? In others? How do we explain it to ourselves? To others? How do we correct for errors in ourselves? In others? In the light of the Great Theory, let us (begin to) address such questions by considering specifically *musical* beauty.

Musical Beauty

The three components of the Great Theory naturally raise three closely related questions about musical beauty. What constitutes "due proportion" in music? What kinds of ideas can be conveyed by music, and how can the music convey them with clarity? What makes a piece of music "the kind of thing that it is?"

What kinds of ideas can be conveyed by music, and how can the music convey them with clarity?

One way to approach these questions is to take the third, concerning integrity, as fundamental. The primary observation concerning it has already been mentioned: musical pieces are works of art, not of nature. As such, their essence, their "what it is," is not a matter of nature but of artistic conception.

Given the philosophical habits of our

[18] *De Vera Religione*, par. 55. The full original text is: "Porro ipsa vera æqualitas ac similitudo, atque ipsa vera et prima unitas, non oculis carneis, neque ullo tali sensu, sed menta intellecta conspicitur." See earlier in par. 55 for why the more common "convenientia" of the Great Theory is glossed by Augustine here as "æqualitas ac similitude."

[19] This point raises the issue, which we cannot address here, of the moral danger involved in the creation and perception of beauty, especially beautiful sacred music. It is very easy to misdirect or misunderstand the attentiveness and admiration that can be involved in the perception of beauty.

age, it would be easy to follow this observation with a retreat to the notion that all power to determine standards of beauty rests in authorial intent. If you intend to make "an object suitable for sitting," my critique of your chair as failing to meet the standards of a bed are off the mark.

While such a critique would indeed be off the mark, handing the standards of beauty over to authorial intent is a grave mistake, and not only because it (once again) pushes us towards the cliff of futile relativism. It involves a failure of understanding of the communal nature of music. Like language (and indeed, one might argue, furniture-making), music is essentially social. The "what it is" of a musical piece is inextricably bound to musical practices, which happen in musical communities.

This notion of musical practices (and the communities in which they occur) is borrowed from the work of the philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre:

> By a "practice" I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity.[20]

Performing music, including the various activities that go along with it (teaching, listening, critiquing, and so on) is precisely the kind of activity MacIntyre has in mind, here. Particularly important for us is the point that musical practices are partly *defined* by the standards of successful practice. Paraphrasing MacIntyre's account, performing a musical piece involves trying achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to and partially definitive of performing a musical piece.

More specifically, musical practices define structures and substructures within which music happens not by accident, but by definition. At a high level of abstraction we find structures such as the structure of tones in the contemporary Western chromatic scale.[21] Within that structure are finer-grained structures, such as the Greek modes, the medieval church modes, the modern major and minor scales, and many others. Similar points could

More specifically, musical practices define structures and substructures within which music happens not by accident, but by definition.

[20]Alisdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1985), p. 187. MacIntyre refines the concept in later work, but this account is sufficient here.

[21]Already this structure is complex and somewhat difficult to specify, and itself has evolved in various communally instigated ways. Consider, for example, the musical needs addressed by equally tempered keyboard instruments.

be made about rhythm. The matter again becomes technical and intricate, but the idea is the same—temporal structures, described by concepts such as regulation, beat, and meter, create a space in which the rhythmic aspects of musical performances take place.

Such structures may be further specified, and thus characterize more specific musical practices, sometimes associated with "genres,"[22] from Gregorian chant to 1980s punk rock to African Maringa to Indian raga. The characterization itself—that is, the identification of standards of excellence—occurs within the practices, largely implicitly, as a result of the activities of practitioners (singing, playing, composing, teaching, listening). The most important fact about such characterization, for our purposes, is that it is given in terms of criteria for excellence. Just as we characterize a "chair" in terms of conditions for success (it affords a comfortable sitting posture, it is durable, etc.), so also we characterize "a musical piece" (and its performance) in terms of conditions for its excellence. Indeed, although theoreticians can formulate explicit characterizations *post hoc*, it would be more accurate to say that these conditions for excellence are simply *constitutive* of the practice. If you are not trying to compose a fugue that has the particular excellences of a fugue, then you just are not trying to compose a fugue.

These practices thus help to specify musical "integrity" and in doing so, they prompt answers to the other questions about beauty.[23] What constitutes "due proportion" in music is given by, and one learns to apprehend or judge it within, a musical practice. A listener who is unaccustomed to West African drumming is likely to hear its polyrhythmic and polymetric patterns as a more or less random jumble of sounds. A similar remark applies to Gregorian chant.[24] In other words, both what *constitutes* due proportion, and the ability to *discern or apprehend* it, is to be referred to this notion of a musical practice, from which we get ideas about "what sort of thing" a musical piece, and its performance, might and ought to be.

The structures and super-structures of a musical practice *also* afford the possibility of

The structures and super-structures of a musical practice also *afford the possibility of musical meaning, and therefore the possibility of conveying a musical idea.*

musical meaning, and therefore the possibility of conveying a musical idea. Readers

[22]We shall sidestep the thorny issue of what, exactly, constitutes a "genre." The term is used in a variety of ways by musicologists and others. The basic point is, it is hoped, clear enough.

[23]The three questions with which this section began are deeply interdependent; we could have begun with any of them and approached the others from there.

[24]It is reasonable to speculate that children are adept at appreciating and learning to sing chant for the same reason that they are adept at learning languages.

of this journal need not be told of the ways in which music can create meaning through the creation of expectation, tension, release, surprise, and so on. We need only notice that these possibilities are afforded by musical practices.

Consequences for Sacred Music

The requirements of musical beauty—proportion, clarity, integrity—are thus given by musical practices. In a sense, they *must* be, because musical pieces are, like houses, artifacts, and thus their "what it is" is given by human activity rather than nature. Moreover, like language, music takes place in communities, and its particular excellences are thus determined by (indeed, are partially constitutive of) the musical practices of those communities.

But if the standards of musical beauty are derived from the musical practices of communities, what can we say about the need for beauty in sacred music? What can we say about the consequences, if any, of the Great Theory for how we should satisfy that need?[25] As we have developed it, the Great Theory does avoid the tyranny of individual taste. The theory *denies* that "what is beautiful" is "what seems beautiful to me." Indeed, even members of the relevant community sometimes fail to discern according to the standards of beauty that arise from that community's musical practices. The Great Theory thus *rejects* the modern view that what is thought to be beautiful (by me) is, *ipso facto*, beautiful ("for me"). However, it accepts, and must accept, that standards of beauty arise from practices; and there are, manifestly, many communities of musical practice. But then have we merely substituted the tyranny of the community for the tyranny of the individual? What, if anything, may be said about the substantive consequences of the Great Theory for how to achieve beauty in sacred music?

The lesson to learn, here, is not that the standard of beauty is spongy or toothless. While the Great Theory as we have expounded it does not sanction a simplistic appeal to "what is beautiful everywhere and in all circumstances," the consequences of the Great Theory for sacred music are nonetheless far-reaching, and require careful elucidation. Here we shall consider five of them by briefly reflecting on some observations about the Great Theory.

The first observation has already been made, but bears emphasis: What matters are practices, not persons. The Great Theory of musical beauty is thus not that anything goes. In particular it explicitly opposes a commonly expressed aim of contemporary artists to "reject all form" or "exist outside the confines of any practice," both of which are phrases not uncommonly found on placards in museums of art, album jackets, and programs. Of course, practices can evolve, but successful evolution occurs in response to the internal standards of excellence within the practice (which is how brilliant innovations can be seen as such).

The second observation is that the Great Theory can be applied both narrowly and broadly. Narrowly applied to specific pieces, it concerns the proportion, clarity, and integrity of musical pieces as such and as

[25]The present discussion assumes that sacred music ought to be beautiful. This assumption is not universally shared. A recent article in this journal addresses it at some length. See Theodore Krasnicki, "Liturgical Music, Transcendental Beauty, and Theosis: Reflections after Fifty Years of the Novus Ordo," *Sacred Music*, 147, no. 4 (Winter 2020), 7–35.

determined by the practice within which the piece exists as a musical piece. However, while analytically helpful, that concern is ultimately overly narrow because musical practices exist in communities in which other types of practice (including, but not limited to, other artistic practices) also exist. Therefore, one ought to consider the elements of beauty (proportion, clarity, and integrity) within this broader context. Indeed, inasmuch as the participants in the musical practice are participants in the community as a whole, the *overall* beauty of music can and should be considered with respect to the practices of the community as a whole.

One recurrent issue, here, concerns common associations and representations within a community. In many cases, especially in representational art, it can be difficult (bordering on impossible) for members of a community to consider art isolated from common associations or representational practices of the community. Art may thus meet narrow standards of beauty, and yet be ugly with respect to the full set of relevant standards of the community.

For example, brutalist churches may perceived as oppressive and ugly. One might argue that those who perceive them in this way simply have not worked hard enough at honing their capacity to appreciate architectural modernism—they are not sufficiently embedded within that practice. Perhaps the narrow problem does lie there, but the more relevant problem, in modern Western societies at least, is that brutalist buildings look like the worst sort of prisons.[26] Music is especially prone to such associations—a bride processing to *Hail to the Chief* is participating in a joke, not a wedding, and the music, while (perhaps) beautiful in its proper context, is ugly in *that* context, and is so because of (though not solely because of[27]) its associations in our society.

As the previous example makes clear, we must also consider the practice within which the music occurs. For our purposes, the most obvious example is the liturgical context, where beauty in the broad sense involves a kind of appropriateness or due proportion as regards the relationship between the music and the liturgical action. For example, in the ordinaries, the Gregorian Kyrie nearly always contains long melismas at the end of "Kyrie" and "Christe," whereas the Gloria is largely syllabic. The whys and wherefores of these features of the chants are not important, here.[28] The general point is that they can be understood as a kind of "due proportion," and thus contributing to the beauty of the music in the broad sense.

The third observation is that there is no reason, within the Great Theory, to expect that all artistic practices are on a par with respect to the potential for their artworks to be beautiful. Although we haven't explored this point here, beauty comes in degrees,

[26]In fact, at least part of the problem in this case is that brutalism explicitly rejects the idea of adornment in the first place (which is why its buildings can remind one of prisons), but here is not the place to consider that matter in detail.

[27]There are other problems here which we set aside. They would become clear by considering this same example in the context of our subsequent observations, an exercise that we leave to the reader.

[28]Detailed considerations of this sort *are* important, just not for present purposes. See, for example, William Mahrt, *The Musical Shape of the Liturgy* (Richmond, Va.: Church Music Association of America, 2011).

and one reason it does is that different practices may differ in the depth and breadth of resources available for the clear expression of musical ideas, and thus the depth and breadth of their capacity to be beautiful. In short, although practices and the activities associated with them are always complex to some degree, they may be more or less so. There are only so many ways that one can play a sequence of three or four power chords on a guitar, and thus a musical practice—such as 1980s punk rock—that largely limits itself in such a fashion will thereby potentially be limited in the range and complexity of the ideas that can be exhibited within that practice, and thus the depth and breadth with which its music can exhibit the features of beauty.

The fourth observation, closely related to the second and third, is that the possibility of beauty (within a practice) does not entail the possibility to convey or comport with *all* ideas, and therefore, not necessarily the *right* ideas for the purpose of the sacred liturgy. 1980s punk uses sounds, structures, and rhythms that, at least in our society and in the context of our musical practices, comports well with its cultural stance, which included a rejection of consumerism and certain kinds of authority, as well as an embracing of "DIY" and activism in the form of "direct action." It does not comport well with plaintive prayer, or contemplation, for example.

Our fifth and final observation is that the Great Theory, as expounded here, is not incompatible with the idea that music also has some degree of "natural meaning." It may be that some music—independently of the communities in which it occurs—is naturally (or at least widely and cross-culturally taken to be) aggressive, or plaintive, for example. If so, then the appropriateness of these natural meanings will be important to consider in the choice of sacred music as well.

Conclusion

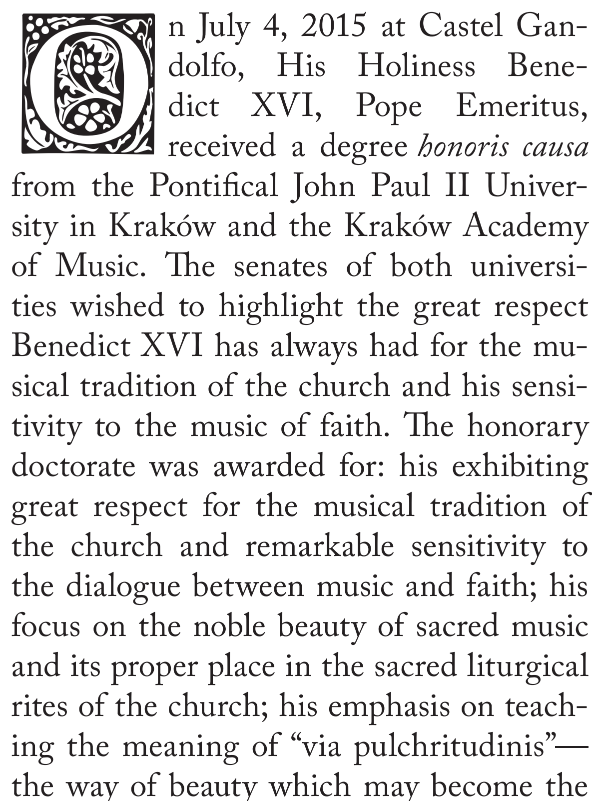
The account that we've been exploring, if only in a very preliminary way, is at least potentially in some ways permissive, and in other ways rather conservative. It affords reasonable judgments, and reasonable broad-mindedness, about musical beauty, while not implying that "anything goes," nor that all musical practices are equally capable of producing good music, nor that all good music is good in all contexts—specifically for our purposes the context of the sacred liturgy. While it is tempting merely to assert, with authority, that the work of Victoria is beautiful and the work of another composer is not, the Great Theory demands more of us. Fortunately, it also provides a framework within which to understand and pursue truly beautiful sacred music. ❖

Fortunately, [the Great Theory] also provides a framework within which to understand and pursue truly beautiful sacred music.

Theology of Music in the Light of the Thoughts of Joseph Ratzinger – Benedict XVI

Ratzinger's reflections on music explore the biblical tradition and its origins in antiquity as a foundation of European culture. However, biblical faith shows that it is not only we who search for God, but God himself comes to reveal himself to people and show them the ways by which he may be reached. One of them is "the way of beauty" ("via pulchritudinis").

by Fr. Jacek Bramorski



On July 4, 2015 at Castel Gandolfo, His Holiness Benedict XVI, Pope Emeritus, received a degree *honoris causa* from the Pontifical John Paul II University in Kraków and the Kraków Academy of Music. The senates of both universities wished to highlight the great respect Benedict XVI has always had for the musical tradition of the church and his sensitivity to the music of faith. The honorary doctorate was awarded for: his exhibiting great respect for the musical tradition of the church and remarkable sensitivity to the dialogue between music and faith; his focus on the noble beauty of sacred music and its proper place in the sacred liturgical rites of the church; his emphasis on teaching the meaning of "via pulchritudinis"—the way of beauty which may become the way to get to know and worship God by modern man; and his pursuit of the truth which gives strength to the Christian faith in times of spiritual turmoil, as well as tireless energy to restore the spiritual dimension in Europe.[1]

In his profound theological reflection, Ratzinger emphasized that music, as the expression of the creative activity of a human being, is a complex reality which can be considered along different dimensions. The biblical perspective and theological reflection allow us to see in it not only one of the disciplines of art but also the moral reality. Through music, people improve not only themselves but the communities in which

[1]See Robert Tyrała, "Benedykt XVI doktorem honoris causa Akademii Muzycznej i Uniwersytetu Papieskiego Jana Pawła II w Krakowie," *Pro Musica Sacra*, 13 (2015), 9–37.

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they live. Underestimating the theological and moral character of music is one of the reasons for misunderstanding an important aspect of the Christian life, which is being open to the religious and cultural dimensions of beauty. Depriving music of its reference to transcendence leads to a lack of a social sense of responsibility for this great spiritual heritage of mankind. The consequence of such an attitude is treating music only as a "beautiful addition" to human existence. Limiting the understanding of music to only aesthetics creates the danger of reducing it to the narrow circle of "art for the sake of art." Thus, deprived of a spiritual foundation, musical creativity is not capable of leading a human being to an experience of the *sacrum*.

In the face of these challenges, the purpose of the present study is to consider the theological aspects of music in light of the thought of Joseph Ratzinger—Benedict XVI.[2] Confirming the validity of the undertaken subject is the fact that presenting musical creativity as an ethical reality nowadays has clear anthropological and cultural references. A contemporary man experiences moral and spiritual loss resulting, first of all, from the lack of a sense of God and the loss of sensitivity to beauty, as well as the influence of intellectual trends and cultural changes connected with post-modernism, the dictatorship of relativism, and secular processes. Due to this, it is the role of the church to help the person find the unity between goodness, truth, and beauty. Thanks to this, he will strengthen the feeling of his own dignity resulting from his likeness to the creator, from which the vocation to imitate him by artistic creativity, is born.

The Source of a Theology of Music in Classical Greece

Joseph Ratzinger is an heir to the wonderful ancient tradition of the philosophy of music. Starting with Pythagoras, through Plato and Aristotle, the ancient theory of musical "ethos" stressed the particular meaning of music from the ethical perspective, both in the personal, as well as in the social and political dimensions. Music is a fundamental part of Greek "paideia" in the classical period. The Ancient Greek doctrine of "ethos" attributed ethical powers to music and claimed that music could affect

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character. With this ideal of music as a tool for moral education, music was incorporated into much of daily life.

A doctrine of Pythagoras postulated that the harmonious relationships among the planets was governed by their proportionate speeds of revolution and by their fixed distance from the earth. Belief was

[2]See also Jacek Bramorski, *Pieśń nowa człowieka nowego. Teologiczno-moralne aspekty muzyki w świetle myśli J. Ratzingera—Benedykta XVI* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Akademii Muzycznej, 2012).

in a universe ordered by the same numerical proportions that produced musical harmonies. From this theory, Pythagoras drew the belief that the soul was a kind of harmony made up of blending and combining of opposites. The effect of Pythagoras' ideas can be seen in the theories of Damon who developed the first extensive theory of musical ethos. He named and catalogued a set of modal scales, describing their notes, rhythms, and qualities.

The ancient vision of the ethical sense of music became close to the Christian presentation of this issue. The concept of musical ethos, characteristic of the ancient philosophy, influenced the shape of the theology of music in the centuries that followed. In *The Spirit of the Liturgy* Joseph Ratzinger wrote that

> it was especially St. Augustine who tried to connect this characteristic view of the Christian liturgy with the world view of Greco-Roman antiquity. In his early work *On Music* he is still completely dependent on the Pythagorean theory of music. According to Pythagoras, the cosmos was constructed mathematically, a great edifice of numbers. . . . For the Pythagoreans, this mathematical order of the universe ("cosmos" means "order"!) was identical with the essence of beauty itself. Beauty comes from meaningful inner order. And for them this beauty was not only optical but also musical. . . . The beauty of music depends on its conformity to the rhythmic and harmonic laws of the universe. The more that human music adapts itself to the musical laws of the universe, the more beautiful it will be.[3]

Joseph Ratzinger orients the philosophy of music towards theology. *Harmonia mundi* is an ancient philosophical concept that regards proportions in the movements of celestial bodies as a form of music. In Greek philosophy, since music is an expression of order and harmony, it is analogous with the harmony of nature, and is sympathetic with it. For Christians, the harmony of creation mirrors its creator. For St. Augustine, concordance and harmony, both in music and in creation, are icons of the perfect concord realized in the divine life. In the Middle Ages, a special mention is reserved for St. Hildegard von Bingen, for whom creation's accomplishment is the resonance of the harmony of human praise of God. The connection between the order of creation, the order of numbers, and that of musical composition which is to be found throughout Western thought for centuries was developed in the Baroque era by important theorists, among whom was Johannes Kepler. It was the form of music itself, with its internal order, which made it part of the cosmic harmony and, therefore, a mirror of divine wisdom. The Western musical tradition has indeed displayed that "cosmic character" which Joseph Ratzinger considers appropriate for celebration of the liturgy. He expounded a cosmological vision of worship. The music of the church is the divine praise of the Logos in the cosmos. As a recent historian of the relation between music, theology, and cosmology, he has demonstrated the Pythagorean account of music as a revelation of the divine order of creation. Thus the merging of the classical into the Christian world is not dismantled.

Ratzinger demonstrates that philosophical and theological views of music must

[3]Joseph Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), p. 88.

remain in respective dialogue with each other. He notes that

> the mathematics of the universe does not exist by itself, nor, as people now came to see, can it be explained by stellar deities. It has a deeper foundation: the mind of the Creator. It comes from the Logos, in whom, so to speak, the archetypes of the world's order are contained. The Logos, through the Spirit, fashions the material world according to these archetypes. In virtue of his work in creation, the Logos is, therefore, called the "art of God" ("ars"="technē"!). The Logos himself is the great artist, in whom all works of art—the beauty of the universe—have their origin. To sing with the universe means, then, to follow the track of the Logos and to come close to him. All true human art is an assimilation to the artist, to Christ, to the mind of the Creator. The idea of the music of the cosmos, of singing with the angels, leads back again to the relation of art to "logos," but now it is broadened and deepened in the context of the cosmos. Yes, it is the cosmic context that gives art in the liturgy both its measure and its scope. A merely subjective "creativity" is no match for the vast compass of the cosmos and for the message of its beauty. When a man conforms to the measure of the universe, his freedom is not diminished but expanded to a new horizon.[4]

For Ratzinger, the most conspicuous ancient thought about music is the doctrine of ethos, which describes the effects of sound on human behavior and therefore its moral influence. Plato, in his writings, has attributed great importance to the music and defined its particular place in his society. In fact, the rules he established for music are valid for every time and culture. In this way, Plato's rules have been compared with the main rules governing the musical culture of the Western Church. The influence

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of music on a human being has been investigated for ages. Music fulfilled the essential function in the life of Greek "polis," especially in educating the youth according to the noble ideal of "kalokagathia."[5] In this way it exemplified the indispensable

[4]Ibid., 89.

[5]Werner Jaeger summarizes it as "the chilvalrous ideal of the complete human personality, harmonious in mind and body, foursquare in battle and speech, song and action." *Paideia, The Ideals of Greek Culture*, tr. Gilbert Highet (New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. 13. [Ed.]

element of ancient "paideia," constituting the moral character of a human being and enabling him to contemplate beauty.

The study of the nature and use of music in Greek culture reveals the roots of the doctrine of ethos. Greek philosophers believed in the ethical influence of music. Aristotle, in his *Politics*, explains how different kinds of music, imitating specific feelings (anger, kindness, love), can affect a human being with the same kind of feelings. Therefore, Aristotle says, someone who listens to the wrong kind of music will grow into a bad person, and vice-versa. He recommended the right kind of music in the education of young citizens. Aristotle agreed that the power of music to portray ethos came from imitation. He even proceeded further to say that the elements of music (rhythm, melody, dance) were in themselves natural imitations of human character, emotion, and action. Aristotle declared that music was also useful for entertainment and the purgation of emotions. Accepting all of the modes was also useful for Aristotle's theory that music could be used to purge the emotions, a function he called "katharsis."

The study of the nature and use of music in Greek culture reveals the roots of the doctrine of ethos.

Ancient thinkers—and especially Aristotle—underlined the meaning of music in relaxation as the inner "revival" of a human being. Music took an important place in the Aristotelian concept among the four disciplines constituting the basis of education (grammar, gymnastics, drawing, and music). The first three disciplines were not subordinated to some activity or useful purpose, but instead taught the human being how to relax in a decent way. Music was not common entertainment but instead characterized the attitude of "diagogé," in which pleasure joined beauty in an ethical sense. In Roman culture, it was expressed by the Latin term "otium" indicating, first of all, the freedom of planning one's time. In ancient thought the understanding of relaxation supplied by music ("otium musicum") did not restrict itself to recreational dimension only but referred to the deeper spiritual sense since music led the human being to contemplation of beauty.

According to Ratzinger, that conviction was undertaken in the thought of the church fathers, especially St. Augustine. The Bishop of Hippo used it in the dialogue *De Musica* as the philosopical discipline which constitutes the basic condition of contemplation by clearing the mind and providing moral edification.[6] Medieval theology also comprehended music not only as the aesthetic form of entertainment but, first of all, as the expression of cosmic *harmonia mundi*, finding its reflection in the spirituality of a person. Music, as one of the

[6]See Jessica Wiskus, "On Music, Order, and Memory: Investigating Augustine's Descriptive Method in the Confessions," *Open Theology*, 6, no. 1 (2020), pp. 274-287; John MacInnis, "Augustine's De Musica in the 21st Century Music Classroom," *Religions* 6 (2015), 211–20.

means of inner revival ("recreatio"), leads the human person to contemplation ("contemplatio")—in other words, to an attitude of admiration for the mystery of God. Such an understanding of music reveals its theological dimension as *via pulchritudinis*.

> Ratzinger notes that the courage and force of the ancient philosopher's thought does not lose its timelessness. It shows us—the people of the twenty-first century—that we cannot limit the work of education to the practical and technical aspect only. In passing over the higher abilities of the soul, one will not achieve the proper aim of education, which is the moral goodness and integrity of a man.

Ratzinger notes that the courage and force of the ancient philosopher's thought does not lose its timelessness.

Biblical Basis for the Theological Dimension of Music

Joseph Ratzinger's theological reflection on the multifaceted issues of Christian *musica sacra* searches, first of all, the biblical tradition which, besides the heritage of antiquity, lies at the foundation of the European culture. One may often find fragments in the pages of scripture in which the inspired authors expressed unusually rich theological and moral substance in a poetic and musical way. This "musical" plot accompanies the whole history of salvation, in which—since the moment of creation through the consecutive stages of history, marked by the everyday struggle between good and evil—the human being looks continually for God. However biblical faith shows that it is not only we who search for God, but God himself comes to reveal himself to people and show them the ways by which they may reach him.

Ratzinger's thought is based on the biblical and patristic categories of "the new song" and "the new human being." He notes that

> liturgical singing is established in the midst of this great historical tension. For Israel, the event of salvation in the Red Sea will always be the main reason for praising God, the basic theme of the songs it sings before God. For Christians, the Resurrection of Christ is the true Exodus. He has stridden through the Red Sea of death itself, descended into the world of shadows, and smashed open the prison door. . . . These were causes for singing Moses' song anew and proved that God is not a God of the past, but of the present and future. Of course, while singing the song, they realized it was only provisional, and so they longed for the definitive new song, for the salvation that would no longer be followed by a moment of anguish but would be a song of praise. The man who believes in the Resurrection of Christ

> really does know what definitive salvation is. He realizes that Christians, who find themselves in the "New Covenant," now sing an altogether new song, which is truly and definitively new in view of the wholly new thing that has taken place in the resurrection of Christ.[7]

Christ came to the world in a particular cultural moment when ancient thought was no longer able to offer man creative vision, existential hope, and perspectives for the future. The light of the ancient world was dying and the concept of musical ethos was becoming more archaic with it. The man living at the decline of antiquity was a skeptical, tired agnostic who no longer believed in anything. Christ ushered in the epoch of "the new man," born of "water and Spirit" (John 3:1–21). The ancient belief about the moral impact of music was read by the fathers of the church from the perspective of the symbolism of "the new song" and "the new man." Musical ethos of "the new man" found its expression in "the new song" of the church, which at the very beginning expressed the deepest content of faith in "psalms, hymns and songs full of spirit" (Eph. 5:19). Therefore music was not only "an addition" to an ethical message, reflecting the theology of the first centuries of Christianity. In this respect, the evidence of the New Covenant is, first of all, the canticles Magnificat, Benedictus, and Nunc Dimittis (Luke 1:46–56; 67–80; 2:29–32). Added to this are the presentation of music by St. Paul as a charism (see 1 Cor. 14:26) and the underlining of its eschatological dimension in the Gospels and the Book of Revelation (see Rev. 14:2–3).

[7]Ratzinger, *Spirit of the Liturgy*, 80–81.

Faith in Christ, fundamental for redemption, made Christians enter "the new covenant" and desire to sing "the new song."[8] Referring to the thought of St. Augustine,[9] Ratzinger notes that "the new song of the new man" is an inherent element of the Christian moral life, showing "the novelty" of the life of a man saved by Christ as one of the basic ideas of the New Testament. This "new song" became definitely and truly "new" in connection with the new event, which was achieved with the Lord's Resurrection. This "new song" accompanies the church over the span of history as an expression of trustworthy hope of "the new people." The "novelty" of the existence of a Christian as a gift of the Resurrected is, at the same time, a moral task for continual struggle to preserve the Gospel "novelty" of Christ's disciples' faith. The evidence for this struggle, lasting over two thousand years, is the reflection undertaken by the shepherds of the church and theologians over the function of music in liturgy and in Christian life. Every day, theology raises concern for the "song of the church" not to lose "the novelty" coming from the redeeming work of Christ. That is why the fathers of the church, popes, and councils cared continually for the quality of "the new song," not restricting it to the artistic and eschatological dimensions only, but reaching deeper to the spiritual and moral layer of "the new man."

The utmost beauty leads us to God and saves the world in Jesus Christ. All human

[8]See Calvin R. Stapert, *A New Song for an Old World: Musical Thought in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2007), pp. 180–193.

[9]See St. Augustine, *Sermo* 336, 1, in *Patrologia Latina*, 38, p. 1472.

expectations find fulfillment in him as the Incarnated Word. It is the fruit of the mysterious working of grace which transforms and makes the hearts of the faithful holy. The Bible is the record of the ethos of the man of the faith, who pilgrimages through earthliness, pursuing a realization of God's plans in the eschatological perspective. It is reflected—expressed in numerous "musical" fragments of the scriptures—which constitute a sort of polyphonic analysis of the subject of "the new song" sung to the glory of God, the creator and savior.

According to Ratzinger, the biblical perspective allows the ability to specify basic trends in theological reflection on music.

According to Ratzinger, the biblical perspective allows the ability to specify basic trends in theological reflection on music. Recollecting the ancient concept of *harmonia mundi*, he outlined with impressive momentum the cosmic character of church music, in which heaven joins the earth, and the singing of angels with the singing of people, so as to admire God the creator in one "new song." Referring to the ancient "logos" theory, Ratzinger presented it as the expression of human longing for the possibility of a dialogue with the absolute. The eternal "Logos" receives the face of a human being, full of love, in Jesus Christ when "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Christ sends the Holy Spirit to lead the Christian to "all truth" (John 16:13), which allows us to discover the excellence of divine beauty reflected in music. The Holy Spirit enables this beauty to express itself in the life of the church as the mystical body of Christ. Participating in the beauty of divine life becomes possible thanks to the liturgy, in which "the new song" of the people of God, pilgrimaging to the eternal home in heaven, resounds continually. The above aspects indicate the basic theological and aesthetic characteristics of music as sacral.

Ratzinger's theology of music is the manifestation of profound wisdom and the experience of sanctity. Not only does he know what liturgy and music are but who is also a true apostle in this field. Magnificent and pure Western music has developed as an answer to the encounter with God who embodies himself in liturgy, in the person of Jesus Christ. This music is the expression of Christian truth. The analyses carried out in the course of the work demonstrate that theological reflection on sacred music allows us to discover a particular kind of art of "the new man" in it. From this perspective, musical creativity is realized under the influence of the dynamic of theological virtues, becoming the fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit. Thanks to this, an artist moved by love, through the act of contemplation, pursues a free and conscious way to discover the excellence of beauty in the work he creates. This beauty leads him to

God, who is beauty in the utmost sense. Artistic activity belongs then to the sphere of Christian morality since the work is not the aim but the means of human striving to meet God. In this way, ethics and aesthetics are not on opposed but constitute two dimensions of the same reality of a human being who, creating the work of art, cannot forget that his life is also a masterpiece which must not be wasted. Such an assumption constitutes the essence of an artist musician's ethos.

Sacred Music as *Via Pulchritudinis*

St. John Paul II wrote that "in a certain sense, beauty is the visible form of the good, just as the good is the metaphysical condition of beauty."[10] In the language of metaphysics, truth, beauty, and goodness are among the "transcendentals." Any reality participates in being, and ultimately in the being of God. That reality is true, good, and beautiful. God himself is beautiful. St. Augustine calls God "the beauty of all beauties."[11] Therefore one of the ways which people may reach God is the "way of beauty" ("via pulchritudinis").

Joseph Ratzinger has always been a man who deeply appreciates the theological dimension of beauty. In an interview given in 1985, Ratzinger remarked that "a theologian who does not love art, poetry, music, and nature can be dangerous since blindness and deafness toward the beautiful are not incidental: they are necessarily reflected in his theology."[12] The theological dimensions of art and beauty are two other points of departure for his reflections. He has emphasized that the *via pulchritudinis* constitutes a privileged path by which to advance the New Evangelization. In a dechristianized society, Ratzinger believes that recourse to the universal language of beauty is indispensable if today's evangelist is to compellingly present the Gospel to would-be believers.[13]

Ratzinger remarked that "a theologian who does not love art, poetry, music, and nature can be dangerous since blindness and deafness toward the beautiful are not incidental.

[10]St. John Paul II, *Letter to Artists* (April 4, 1999), ¶3.

11St. Augustine, *Confessions*, 3, 6, 10 in *Patrologia Latina,* 32, p. 687.

[12]Joseph Ratzinger, *The Ratzinger Report: An Interview with Vittorio Messori* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press 1985), p. 130.

[13]See Joseph Ratzinger, *The Feeling of Things, the Contemplation of Beauty. Message to the Communion and Liberation Meeting at Rimini*, August 24–30, 2002 <http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20020824_ratzinger-cl-rimini_en.html>; Matthew J. Ramage, "Pope Benedict XVI's Theology of Beauty and the New Evangelization,"

Running through all of his teachings on music was Ratzinger's theology of beauty. Beauty was seen as fundamental to faith and to the perception of truth. Furthermore, he saw beauty as the finest expression of faith, hope, and love. He believes that sensitivity to beauty is indispensable for realizing that man is created in the image of God. Benedict XVI emphasizes that God is "the supreme Beauty,"[14] adding in the *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* that God is "the surpassing, invisible Beauty of Truth and Love."[15] For Ratzinger, Christ will be both the greatest personal earthly beauty as well as the one who is "the most handsome of men" (Ps. 45:3). This is the beauty of Christ after he has walked the way of the Cross, been crucified, died, and has risen. The search for all beauty finds its culmination in the beauty of Christ who takes even suffering and death upon himself in order to transform them into the glory of the resurrection.[16]

Inspired by the thought of Benedict XVI, the document of the Pontifical Council for Culture notes that

> beauty transcends the aesthetics and finds its archetype in God. The contemplation of Christ in the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption is the living source from which the Christian artist takes inspiration to speak of the mystery of God and the mystery of man saved in Jesus Christ. . . . Works of art inspired by the Christian faith . . . possess an enormous potential pertinent to contemporary needs that remain unaltered by the times that pass. . . . With the language of beauty, Christian artwork not only transmits the message of the artist, but also the truth of the mystery of God meditated by a person who reads it to us, not to glorify himself but to glorify the Source.[17]

Emphasizing the importance of music as a "way of beauty," Ratzinger also shows the contemporary threats to the theological sense of music.

Homiletic and Pastoral Review (January 29, 2015) <https://www.hprweb.com/2015/01/pope-benedict-xvis-theology-of-beauty-and-the-new-evangelization/>.

[14]Benedict XVI, *General Audience*, August 31, 2011 <http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict xvi/en/audiences/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20110831.html> (accessed March 11, 2021).

[15]*Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church*, ¶526 <https://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html >.

[16]See Andrzej Proniewski, "Joseph Ratzinger's Philosophical Theology of the Person," *Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej,* 17, no. 3 (2018), 232–233.

[17]Pontifical Council for Culture, *The Via Pulchritudinis: Privileged Pathway for Evangelisation and* Dialogue <https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/cultr/documents/rc_pc_cultr_doc_20060327_plenary-assembly_final-document_en.html>.

Pop culture is geared towards quantity, production, and success—not personal development.

Beauty is seen as fundamental to faith and to the perception of truth. The *Via pulchritudinis* as the way of beauty in sacred music is the finest expression of faith, hope, and love.

Emphasizing the importance of music as a "way of beauty," Ratzinger also shows the contemporary threats to the theological sense of music. In his reflections on what is wrong with sacred music today, he notes that it has become a product that can be industrially manufactured. Pop culture is geared towards quantity, production, and success—not personal development. It is a culture of the measurable and the marketable, not a culture pursuing truth, beauty, and goodness.[18] Ratzinger remarked that "one shudders at the lacklustre face of the post-conciliar liturgy as it has become, or one is bored with its banality and its lack of artistic standards."[19] He has declared that the trivialization of the faith by following the trends of pop culture "is not a new inculturation, but the denial of its culture and prostitution with the non-culture."[20]

Analyzing contemporary cultural challenges, Ratzinger warns against the influence of the dictatorship of relativism, secular processes, and post-modernism. These intellectual currents cause moral and spiritual confusion in man who loses consciousness of the unity between goodness, truth, and beauty. Secular processes are one of the reasons of the contemporary cultural crisis. They influence many aspects of lives of individuals and of society, and this influence is reflected in the sphere of art. Artistic activity is not only a picture of human existence, but also an expression of longing and desire for what exceeds worldliness. Great masterpieces, in spite of being created many centuries ago, confirm this; they do not cease to delight us since their creators were inspired by the beauty of the Christian faith. The contemporary departure from God takes different forms, from secularization (which radically denies supernatural reality) to desecularization with its "new spirituality" (being quite often an indefinite spiritualism in a New Age style). From this perspective, sacred music, instead of surrendering to the pressure of secularization, should find its new identity as an important element of the New Evangelization. Music as *via pulchritudinis* is a way for the church to continue to fulfill its evangelizing mission for modern man who so often loses his way to God. It will then become for us an experience full of hope, through which human life receives from the mystery of Christ's redeeming love.

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[18]See Tracey Rowland, "Joseph Ratzinger as Doctor of Incarnate Beauty," *Church, Communication and Culture*, 5, no. 2 (2020), 244.

[19]Joseph Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), p. 100.

[20]Joseph Ratzinger, *A New Song for the Lord: Faith in Christ and Liturgy Today* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), p. 109.

"What is music really? Whence does it come and toward what does it tend?"

In his *Letter to Artists* St. John Paul II called for a new dialogue of faith and culture between the church and art, underlining their reciprocal needs and richness.[21] This thought is continued by Benedict XVI who appreciates the importance of the evangelization of culture, especially with regard to music. Outlining the basic elements of the church musician's ethos, he identifies the musician's work not only as a profession, but first of all as a calling. To enable the musician to experience his artistic and personal identity in the right way, it is important for him to accept both the attitude of contemplation in the face of beauty of faith, as well as readiness to give witness. Benedict XVI paid attention to this, naming artists "witnesses of the beauty of faith" (*pulchritudinis fidei testis*) and calling them to participate in the church mission, especially when they create works of art directly connected with the liturgical activities of the church.[22]

Benedict XVI is a particular witness to the beauty of faith. The Pope Emeritus expressed this witness in the lecture delivered on July 4, 2015 on the occasion of receiving an honorary doctorate. In that lecture he posed the fundamental question: "What is music really? Whence does it come and toward what does it tend?" He posited three *loci* from which music arises. The Pope Emeritus said:

> One of the first sources is the experience of love. When men are seized by love, a new dimension of being opens in them, a new grandeur and breadth of reality, and it also drives one to express oneself in a new way. Poetry, singing and music in general stem from this being struck, by this opening of oneself to a new dimension of life.
>
> A second origin of music is the experience of sadness, being touched by death, by sorrow, and by the abysses of existence. Opened also in this case, in an opposite direction, are new dimensions of reality that can no longer find answers in discourses alone.
>
> Finally, the third place of origin of music is the encounter with the divine, which from the beginning is part of what defines the human. All the more so here in which the totally other and the totally great is present, which arouses in man new ways of expressing himself. Perhaps, it is possible to affirm that in reality also in the other two ambits—love and death—the divine mystery touches us and, in this sense, it is the being touched by God that, overall, constitutes the origin of music. I find it moving to observe how, for instance, in the Psalms singing is no longer enough for men—

[21]St. John Paul II, *Letter to Artists*, April 4, 1999, ¶¶10–13.

[22]Benedict XVI, "Witnesses to the Beauty of Faith. Message for the 17th Public Meeting of the Pontifical Academies, November 21, 2012," *L'Osservatore Romano—Weekly Edition in English*, November 28, 2012, p. 5.

> an appeal is made to all the instruments: reawakened is the hidden music of creation, its mysterious language. With the Psalter, in which the two motives of love and death also operate, we find directly the origin of sacred music of the church of God. It can be said that the quality of the music depends on the purity and the grandeur of the encounter with the divine, with the experience of love and of pain. The more pure and true this experience is, the more pure and great also is the music that is born and develops from it.[23]

Conclusion

The present study on the fundamental ideas in Joseph Ratzinger's—Benedict XVI's theology of music demonstrates that this theology contributes to a large range of theological topics. Ratzinger's theology of music is original and creative. He develops his reflection on the basis of the ancient, biblical, and patristic sources. Although he refers to ancient and early Christian ideas when developing his concept of the theology of music, his work on this subject refers consistently to contemporary theology, philosophy, and culture.

Ratzinger's theology of music is original and creative.

However, the vision of Christian life as "the new song" should find fuller reflection in pastoral ministry, such that a change in the mentality of the faithful is made. This change consists in viewing, to a greater degree, the timelessness and timeliness of the theological and existential meaning of church music. How exactly to accomplish this requires further reflection. Undoubtedly, psychological and sociological analyses showing the influence of church music on shaping human attitudes on participation in liturgy would be helpful to pastoral work. There are also the spiritual dimension and interpersonal relations to consider. It would also be beneficial to undertake a study of the role of church music in education, especially catechesis.

A Christian as "the new man" sings "the new song." It is an expression of love as the foundation of a "new life." "The new song" is the song of life and not only the specific form or style of music. This song requires from us deep inner harmony, as well as a conformity between the faith, acts, and words, which unite in artistic expression. It then becomes a way to God, a *via pulchritudinis.* This is why Christians do not stop intoning "the new song" in the community of the church which, through the hardships of pilgrimage, will finally lead mankind to "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1), where we will be able to rejoice in looking at the beauty of the divine face. ❖

[23]"Pope Benedict's Words After Receiving Honorary Doctorate in Castel Gandolfo," *Zenit*, July 6, 2015 <https://zenit.org/2015/07/06/pope-benedict-s-words-after-receiving-honorary-doctorate-in-castel-gandolfo/>.

Repertory

Repertoire: A Hymn for St. Joseph

A search for classical polyphonic repertoire featuring St. Joseph yields a fruitful find in the work of Bernabei.

By Aaron James

n his encyclical letter *Patris Corde*, Pope Francis proclaimed a year of St. Joseph lasting from December 8, 2020 to December 8, 2021. This official recognition honors a beloved saint with a central place in the Catholic faith, but it also presents a quandary for church musicians: there is hardly any music for St. Joseph in the tradition of Latin chant and sacred polyphony. Most of the chants for St. Joseph's feast day are taken from the Common of the Saints and thus do not mention the saint's name specifically; you will find no motets in St. Joseph's honor among the works of canonical composers like Byrd or Palestrina.[1] This musical heritage seems meager indeed, especially in comparison to the long history of Marian liturgical music.

The lack of readily available resources for church musicians is a result of the late historical development of devotion to St. Joseph; this saint simply did not occupy a large role in the consciousness of medieval and early modern Catholicism, and so only in recent centuries have composers written music for his feast day. However, with some effort the enterprising choir director can find pieces to honor this popular saint. One possible source of repertoire is the large treasury of settings of *Veritas mea*, the offertory for St. Joseph's feast day (also widely used for other saints' feasts). This text has been set by Palestrina in his *Offertoria* of 1593, and by the twentieth-century composer George Malcolm, in an ingratiating piece that has been recorded by the choir of Westminster Cathedral; a short version of *Veritas mea* was once attributed to the young Mozart under the catalogue number K. 157, but is in fact the work of Johann Joseph Fux. A simple three-part setting of *Veritas mea* can be found in Oreste Ravanello's *Secunda Anthologia Vocalis*, widely used by choirs in the early twentieth century. Perhaps the most unusual version of this text is the setting by Guillaume du Fay, included as part of his *Missa Sancti Antonii de Padua* and written for the extraordinary

[1]Of the Mass propers for St. Joseph's feast day (March 19), only the Communion (*Ioseph fili David*) mentions the saint by name; the rest belong to the Common of Confessors. A set of chanted propers more specifically crafted for St. Joseph can be found in the feast of St. Joseph the Worker (May 1), as celebrated in the Extraordinary Form; these chants are neo-Gregorian compositions, some newly composed for this feast and others written in the nineteenth century for earlier feasts of St. Joseph. These chants have been widely criticized, and all but the Alleluias have been removed from the 1974 *Graduale Romanum*.

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voicing of ABBB (alto or high tenor with three basses). These settings vary in difficulty and accessibility, but the settings by Malcolm and Ravanello are certainly within the reach of amateur parish choirs.

By far the greatest number of compositions for St. Joseph, however, are based on the text of the Vespers hymn for his feast day, *Te Joseph celebrent*. The author of this text is not known for certain: the hymn first appeared in the Roman Breviary in 1671, likely under the influence of the Carmelites who were especially influential in promoting devotion to St. Joseph during this period. The most likely candidate to have written the hymn text is the Spanish Carmelite priest Juan Escollar (or Juan de la Concepción), who is named as the author of the entire Carmelite office for St. Joseph, presumably including the new hymns, in a biography of 1681.[2] The text of the hymn describes the appearance of an angel to St. Joseph, the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt, and the finding of Christ in the temple:

Te, Joseph, celebrant agmina coelitum,
Te cuncti resonent christiadum chori,
Qui clarus meritis, junctus es inclytae
Casto foedere Virgini.

Almo cum tumidam germini conjugem
Admirans, dubio tangeris anxius,
Afflatu superi Flaminis Angelus
Conceptum puerum docet.

Tu natum Dominum stringis, ad exteras
Ægypti profugum tu sequeris plagas;
Amissum Solymis quæris, et invenis,
Miscens gaudia fletibus.

Post mortem reliquos sors pia consecrat
Palmamque emeritus gloria suscipit;
Tu vivens, superis par, frueris Deo,
Mira sorte beatior.

Nobis, summa Trias, parce precantibus,
Da, Joseph meritis, sidera scandere,
Ut tandem liceat nos tibi perpetim
Gratum promere canticum. Amen.

Let the choirs of angels sing your praises, Joseph, and all the choirs of the Christian world make your name resound, to honor you for your unique merits and for your union in chaste wedlock with the glorious Virgin.

When you were astonished at your wife being pregnant with her loving Child, and doubt and anxiety filled your soul, an angel told you that the Child was conceived by the breath of the heavenly Spirit.

You took your Lord in your arms at His birth and waited on his direction on the journey into exile in far-off Egypt. You searched Jerusalem for him when he was missing, and on finding Him your tears of sorrow became tears of joy.

A loving providence puts other men in God's presence when they are dead and glory is the welcome for those who win the palm of victory. But through a more wonderful act of providence you were more fortunate, for in your life here below you enjoyed God's presence, the equal of those in heaven.

Mighty God, three in one, spare us, your suppliants. Grant through Joseph's merits that we enter heaven where we may then unceasingly sing in Your honour our hymns of joy and gratitude.[3]

[2]See Joseph Connelly, *Hymns of the Roman Liturgy* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1957), pp. 182–183.

[3]Translation from Connelly, *Hymns of the Roman Liturgy*, 183.

Among the first generation of composers to set this hymn was Giuseppe Antonio Bernabei (1649–1732), a member of a family of Roman musicians who served for most of his life as capellmeister to the ducal court of Bavaria in Munich. Much of Bernabei's wide compositional output has been forgotten—operas, oratorios, chamber music—but a few of his sacred works have survived at the fringes of the choral repertoire since their rediscovery in the nineteenth century.[4] Here we witness a composer deeply indebted to the *stile antico* of Palestrina and his contemporaries, but willing to use the greater harmonic richness of the Baroque for his expressive ends: in his Masses and Magnificats, frequent sevenths and ninth chords and abundant suspensions produce a lush and evocative musical language.[5] With the limited market for this sort of choral music, it has never been made available by commercial music publishers, but the recent digitization of European library collections has made many original manuscript collections of Bernabei's works available to anyone with an Internet connection.

[4]Several Masses, two Marian antiphons, and a setting of *O sacrum convivium* by Bernabei were printed in the influential *Sammlung ausgezeichneter Kompositionen für der Kirche*, ed. Stephan Lück (Trier: Leistenschneider, 1859), 2 vols. This anthology, with its subsequent expansions and revisions, introduced much of the Renaissance repertoire that would be widely printed by later publishers of sacred music; the Masses featured here, including Palestrina's *Iste confessor, Æterna Christi munera*, and *Papae Marcelli*, Victoria's *O quam gloriosum* and the Masses of Lotti, Canniciari, and Casciolini, remain the most widely sung of Renaissance Masses among Catholic church choirs.

[5]My editions of Bernabei's eight Magnificats are available at cpdl.org.

Bernabei's collection of hymns can be found in a manuscript in Brussels, originally owned by the influential music theorist and pedagogue François-Joseph Fétis.[6] The manuscript includes twenty-four hymns for the liturgical year, including such well-known Vespers hymns as *Ave maris stella, Conditor alme siderum*, and *Veni Creator Spiritus*. Typically, Bernabei provides polyphony for two verses of the hymn, often the first and last verse, with the remaining verses being sung in chant. The musical texture is kept quite simple, with each verse of polyphony fairly short; these are shorter and more modest compositions than the better-known hymn settings by Palestrina or Victoria, adding musical interest to the Office of Vespers without unduly lengthening the liturgy.

The manuscript of Bernabei's hymns does not include any chant, only the polyphony: the singers were expected to have a chant book at hand for the missing verses of the hymn. This presents a challenge to the editor, because unlike *Veni Creator* or *Conditor alme siderum*, *Te Joseph celebrent* has been associated with numerous entirely different tunes in modern chant books. Most of the commonly used twentieth-century chant books provide a mode-I chant melody for *Te Joseph celebrent* that obviously does not match the tonality of Bernabei's music. For this edition, I have supplied the chant incipit and verses of *Te Joseph celebrent* from a chant book contemporary with Bernabei and published in nearby Augsburg.[7] This mode

[6]Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, MS Mus. Fétis 1825.

[7]*Antiphonarium Romanum de tempore et sanctis ad normam Breviarii Romani ex decreto SS. Concilii Tridentini* (Augsburg: Uzschneider, 1695).

III chant melody matches the tonality of Bernabei's music, and a comparison of the chant with the polyphony shows that Bernabei is paraphrasing the melody of this chant in his tenor line. Since *Te Joseph celebrent* was a newly composed hymn during Bernabei's life, it is not surprising that it did not yet have a stable association with a particular tune; the compilers of the late seventeenth-century antiphonaries seem to have repurposed an existing tune used for the hymn *Sanctorum meritis* from the Common of Martyrs.[8]

Bernabei's hymn collection includes an organ part, in the form of a bass line with figured-bass symbols. This organ part does not add any new harmony; it simply duplicates the choral parts to provide additional support, so an organist not comfortable with playing from figured bass can produce the same effect by playing along with the choir parts (reading all four voices, or the three lower parts for a slightly more discreet accompaniment).[9] The piece can also be sung a cappella to good effect, since no harmony is lost when the organ part is omitted.

With verses 1 and 5 in polyphony and the three middle verses in chant, the piece can be sung in various ways, using different voice parts on the chanted verses. If the piece is sung as an offertory or communion piece at Mass, a longer version of the piece might be desired: one way of extending the music would be to repeat verse 1 as a refrain in between the chanted verses. This is particularly effective with *Te Joseph celebrent* since the first verse offers praise to St. Joseph in general terms, with the middle verses describing particular episodes in the saint's life. These options for alternatim performance give this piece many possible functions, making it a useful addition to the repertoire and a fine introduction to a little-known composer of sacred music. ❖

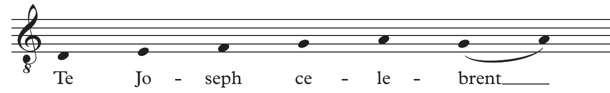
[8]The tune used by Bernabei can be found as an alternate tune for *Sanctorum meritis* in several modern chant books; e.g., the *Liber Usualis*, ed. by the Benedictines of Solesmes (Turnhout: Desclée, 1961), p. 1159.

[9]I have made no attempt to regularize the notation of the continuo part, beyond correcting two obvious errors; thus, there are occasional first-inversion chords not marked with a "6" figure.

Te Joseph celebrent

B-Br Mus. Fétis 1825, fols. 111v-115r

Giuseppe Antonio Bernabei
ed. Aaron James



Cantus: Ag - mi-na coe - li-tum, te cunc-ti re - so-nent Chri-sti - a-dum cho - ri, qui cla-rus me - ri-tis junc-tus es

Altus: Ag - mi-na coe - li-tum, te cunc-ti re - so-nent Chri-sti - a-dum cho - ri, qui cla-rus me - ri-tis jun - ctus es

Tenore: Ag - mi-na coe - li-tum, te cunc-ti re - so-nent Chri-sti - a-dum cho - ri, qui cla-rus me - ri-tis jun - ctus es

Bassus: Ag - mi-na coe - li-tum, te cunc-ti re - so-nent Chri-sti - a-dum cho - ri, qui cla-rus me - ri-tis jun - ctus es

Organo: 6 6 7 ♯6 ♯3 6 6 5

11

C.: in - cli-tae, jun - ctus es in - cli-tae cas - to, cas - to foe - de-

A.: in - cli-tae, jun - ctus es in - cli-tae cas - to foe - de-re vir - -

T.: in - cli-tae, jun - ctus es in - cli-tae cas - to foe - de-re vir - gi -

B.: in - cli-tae, jun - ctus es in - cli-tae cas - to foe - de-re vir - -

Org.: ♯ 6 6

17

C. re vir - gi - ni, cas - to foe - de - re vir - - - gi - ni.

A. - gi - ni, cas - to foe - de - re, cas - to foe - de - re___ vir - gi - ni.

T. -ni, vir - gi - ni, cas - to foe - de - re vir - - - gi - ni.

B. - gi - ni, cas - to foe - de - re vir - gi - ni.

Org. ♯ 5 6 ♯ 6 5 6 6 9 8

2. Al - mo cum tu - mi - dam_ ger - mi - ne con - ju - gem ad - mi - rans, du - bi - o tan - ge - ris an - xi - us
3. Tu na - tum Do - mi - num_ strin - gis, ad ex - te - ras Ae - gyp - ti pro - fu - gum tu se - que - ris___ pla - gas:
4. Post mor - tem re - li - quos_ mors pi - a con - se - crat: Pal - mam - que e me - ri - tos glo - ri - a su - sci - pit,

af - fla - tu su - pe - ri fla - mi - nis an - ge - lus, con - cep - tum___ pu - e - rum do - cet.
a___ mis - sum So - ly - mis, quae - ris et in - ve - nis, mi - scens gau - di - a fle - ti - bus.
tu___ vi - vens, su - pe - ris par, fru - e - ris___ De - o, mi - ra for - te be - a - ti - or.

24

C. 5. No - bis sum - ma Tri - as, no - bis sum - ma Tri - as par - ce pre - can - ti - bus, da Jo - seph me - ri - tis,

A. 5. No - bis sum - ma Tri - as, no - bis sum - ma Tri - as par - ce pre - can - ti - bus, da Jo - seph me - ri - tis,

T. 5. No - bis sum - ma Tri - as, no - bis sum - ma_ Tri - as par - ce pre - can - ti - bus, da Jo - seph me - ri - tis,

B. 5. No - bis sum - ma Tri - as, no - bis sum - ma Tri - as, par - ce pre - can - ti - bus,

Org. 6 5 4 ♭3 ♯6 ♭ 6/5 5/4 6/3 ♯6 ♭ 6 5 5 ♯6 6

34

C. da Jo-seph me-ri tis si-de-ra scan-de-re, ut tan-dem li-ce-at nos ti-bi per-pe-tim, nos ti-bi per-pe-tim

A. da Jo-seph me-ri-tis si-de ra___ scan-de-re, ut tan-dem li-ce-at nos ti-bi per-pe-tim, nos ti-bi per-pe-tim

T. da Jo-seph me-ri-tis si-de ra___ scan-de-re, ut tan-dem li-ce-at nos ti-bi per-pe-tim, nos ti-bi per-pe-tim

B. da Jo-seph me-ri-tis si-de ra___ scan-de-re, ut tan-dem li-ce-at nos ti-bi per-pe-tim, nos ti-bi per-pe-tim

Org.

6 5 6 ♭ ♯ 7 6 ♯ 6 6 5 6 ♯

45

C. gra-tum pro-me-re can - - - - - ti-cum, gra-tum

A. gra - tum pro-me-re can - - - - - ti-cum, gra-tum

T. gra - tum pro-me-re, pro-me-re can - ti-cum,

B. gra - tum pro-me-re, pro-me-re can - ti-cum, gra-tum

Org.

6 ♭ 6 ♯ 5 6 ♯ 6 ♯4

50

C. pro-me-re can - - - - - ti-cum. A - - men.

A. pro-me-re, pro-me-re can - ti - cum. A - - men.

T. gra-tum pro-me-re___ can - ti-cum. A - - men.

B. pro-me-re can - - - - - ti-cum. A - - men.

Org.

6 ♯6

Interview

Interview with Paul Jernberg

Reverence is an essential virtue for human flourishing.

By Mary Jane Ballou

aul F. Jernberg is a contemporary American composer and educator based in western Massachusetts. His Mass of St. Philip Neri was recorded in 2014 by the Schola Cantorum of St. Peter the Apostle, directed by J. Michael Thompson. He has been a faculty member at Trivium in Lancaster, Massachusetts as well as other schools, and has served as a choir director in several churches.

Now living in Lancaster, Massachusetts, he devotes himself full-time to composition and the work of the Magnificat Institute. The Song of the Longing Heart, a documentary by French producer-director Francois Lespes, was recently broadcast on EWTN and is available on YouTube. The hour-long film introduces the places where Jernberg has lived and worked.

Readers can also learn more about Paul Jernberg at his web site (pauljernberg.com) as well as that of the Magnificat Institute of Sacred Music (magnificatinstitute.org). A search on YouTube will provide fine examples of his compositions.

Sacred Music journal is delighted that he was able to spare the time to converse with Mary Jane Ballou via Zoom and email about his ideals and work in the world of Roman Catholic sacred music in our time.

Mary Jane Ballou (MJB): *What is your vision for restoring reverence to the Ordinary Form of the Roman rite?*

Paul Jernberg (PJ): The virtue of reverence is essential to the harmonious life of any person, family, or culture, and the lack of this virtue is one of the greatest ills of our contemporary society. This irreverence towards persons, natural law, sacred traditions, and towards our creator, and an increasing orientation toward self-worship, have not only had devastating effects on our culture, but have also permeated the life and worship of the Catholic Church.

For a Christian (by which I mean Catholic as well as all who believe in Christ and seek to follow him), the restoration of reverence includes—but also goes beyond—the recuperation of this natural virtue. Authentic Christian reverence is infused with the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love; it is brought to a new depth, breadth, and height by the indwelling Holy Spirit and its fruits.

Mary Jane Ballou is a musician in Jacksonville, Florida. She has served as a music director in large and small churches, as well as small women's ensembles. Dr. Ballou has been active in the Church Music Association of America and is a regular contributor to the CMAA's Sacred Music journal.

While I do believe that sacred music has an important role to play in the restoration of this reverence, I think we first need to identify a more fundamental and essential step, however obvious it might seem, to the restoration of faith and virtue. This step is the ever-deepening conversion and transformation of each one of us, as we grow in our awareness of the goodness of God and our own radical poverty before him. Such a deep conversion of one person is more powerful than the most brilliant plans with the most abundant resources to implement them. And as we look at the scriptures and church history, we can see how this seemingly naive strategy has been used again and again to turn the world upside down: the twelve apostles, Mary Magdalene, Saul transformed to St. Paul, Felicity and Perpetua, Ephrem the Syrian, Francis of Assisi, Philip Neri, Teresa of Avila, Don Bosco, Thérèse of Lisieux, and countless others.

Once we have understood this ongoing conversion to be our starting point each day, then I think we can also speak of how sacred music can be an effective means of evangelization, and an effective means of promoting reverence throughout the church and our world. For there is a mysterious power in music, and particularly in Catholic sacred music, to speak not only to our emotions and to our intellect, but also to the depths of our heart and its dispositions. In order for this power to be fully unleashed, Catholic sacred music must be faithful to church teaching, and guided by fundamental principles such as:

- Having deep roots in our sacred music traditions, which have their origin in Christ and have been passed down and developed through the apostles and their successors throughout church history. This means discovering, preserving, and cultivating our heritage of chant and polyphony, and understanding it from the perspective of prayer and liturgical worship. But it also means being open to new inspirations and organic growth, so as to resonate with our contemporaries in a worthy and holy way, and thus to draw them into the light of Christ.
- Singing and playing our sacred music with skill and musicianship. This does not necessarily require professional training, but it does require diligence and accountability. As such, it applies just as much in the most humble of circumstances as well as in the most exalted. It also means that we take a realistic approach to the strengths and weaknesses of our singers and musicians, so as to operate, stretch, and grow within these parameters. Any liturgical music done poorly, or with mediocrity, tends to be a distraction rather than the source of edification and bringing glory to God which it is intended to be.
- Bringing to our music a prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit and his gifts. The tasks of the Catholic church musician—to draw people into the mystery of the Mass, to help them to grow in faith, hope, and charity (i.e., their edification), and however humbly to reveal the glory of God—these are things which far surpass our natural capacities. But we discover that in faithfully invoking the Holy Spirit, and in growing in our vocation over the years, there is a power—the "fire of Love"—that is at work, lifting our

> best efforts to a fruitfulness which we could never attain on our own.

MJB: *Tell us about your musical journey and your realization that your real vocation was in sacred music.*

PJ: My musical journey has in one sense been the continuation of a journey begun long ago by my forebears in Sweden, whose musical gifts were lovingly passed on in our family from one generation to the next up until the present. I first became aware of this through my paternal grandparents, both of whom were fine musicians. My grandmother was a concert violinist whose soul was filled with an intense sensitivity to musical beauty, joined to a deep faith in God. She continued to perform until the last days of her life in the late 1960s, and her radiant presence in my life has had a profound influence, both spiritually and musically.

My first musical "career" was primarily as a pianist, in which I began studies as a young child in Chicago (in the 1950s) and continued through college, then performing as a soloist and accompanist for almost two decades. Pursuing the opportunity to live and work in Sweden (1983–1993), this career blossomed and expanded to include composition and some choral directing. In all these musical endeavors, I had a strong sense that whatever talents I had were a gracious gift from God, and therefore that they should somehow be used prayerfully and with gratitude, for the greater glory of God.

Looking back, I am deeply grateful for the great breadth and depth of musical knowledge and skills which I garnered from all these studies and experiences. However, my final years in Sweden opened a new chapter in which two encounters were to bring a deeper and clearer focus to my life and work.

First, I spent the better part of two years living near a Franciscan friary outside of Gothenburg, where I was able to join the friars regularly in their daily Mass, Divine Office, and community life. This allowed me to discover the inestimable treasure of the Catholic faith, and of the sacred chant traditions which have been such an integral and grace-filled part of the practice of this Faith.

Second, I began to visit the l'Arche community in Trosly-Breuil, France, which brought together people with intellectual disabilities, their helpers, and friends from all walks of life. Here again, Christ was clearly at the center, the Catholic faith was lived and taught with fidelity and depth, and the hidden gifts of the handicapped persons revealed the beauty of the Beatitudes in an extraordinary way. I was called upon to help with liturgical music for Masses, and for a pilgrimage of Faith and Light (an international affiliate of l'Arche) to Lourdes.

And now I need to try to make a very long story short, in describing how these latter two encounters somehow helped clarify the subsequent direction of my life. I was received into the Catholic Church in February 1992. While aspiring to be a good steward of the spiritual and musical gifts I had received from the Franciscans and from l'Arche, I was not sure how much this desire could be combined with meeting the financial needs of my family. And so when my wife (whom I had met at l'Arche) and I moved back to Chicago in 1993, we seriously considered a number of different career possibilities which I might pursue. But when I was offered a position as parish music director and teacher in Chicago's inner city, we had a strong sense of

this being a providential opportunity, and gladly accepted it. Since then I have continued in this "double vocation" as a Catholic church musician and educator, with gratitude and joy.

MJB: *How would you characterize your own compositional style?*

PJ: It's a challenge for me to find a satisfying answer to this question, just as I imagine it would be for many other composers as well. Perhaps this is because an artist by nature thrives upon the freedom to adapt and grow, and to explore new ideas which through their beauty can surprise, delight, and edify others. Having said this, there always need to be certain stylistic parameters in order for such freedom and growth to flourish. I do not see myself as creating such parameters, but rather as having received them from a long immersion in Gregorian chant, Renaissance polyphony, and Byzantine harmonized chant. Here are some of them:

- As in all three of the above models, melody and rhythm must be at the service of the sacred texts, rather than imposing their character upon these texts.
- Flowing from the above, the music must always be oriented to the human voice as the primary instrument, even when discreet accompaniment is appropriate.
- Melodies must be graceful, usually staying within a rather modest range of intervals.
- Regarding harmonization, I generally follow certain principles inherent in the Byzantine chant traditions, which I have found to resonate deeply today with people from many different cultural backgrounds. While I love our Western sacred polyphony as a treasure to be preserved and cultivated in the Mass (which we do), I find that the homophonic nature of the Byzantine traditions has a modest beauty and power which is particularly appropriate for the evangelization of our contemporary world.
- The music must always be like a sacred icon, pointing away from itself to transcendent realities, rather than drawing attention to the brilliance of the artist. For me, it's important to distinguish this "iconographic" nature of sacred music from the wonderful technical sophistication and genius which are appropriate to the great art music (classical music) traditions.

MJB: *Anyone who has heard the* Mass of St. Philip Neri *knows how lovely it is. Is it accessible to parish-level choirs?*

PJ: In my own parish experience, and through the feedback we have received from many parishes in the U.S. and abroad, it seems that it has been thoroughly accessible for parish choirs, very often with a gentle organ accompaniment. It lends itself to adaptation for whatever voices are available, whether that means unison, two part, three part or full SATB singing. Its melodies have also been easily sung and learned by heart by congregations.

MJB: *Isn't* a cappella *music too difficult for most choirs?*

PJ: First, I'd say that unaccompanied singing—including the ability to sing in harmonized parts—corresponds to an innate

musical gift that the great majority of human beings possess, and which simply needs to be unlocked and developed by a proper education. The Ward method of musical instruction provides a great model of how this can be accomplished in children and adults of all talent levels and backgrounds. And so when starting from scratch, it has been my experience that most singers, and thus most choirs, are certainly capable of singing *a cappella* repertoire.

The difficulty comes when singers have developed deeply ingrained habits of depending upon instrumental accompaniment as a necessary support for their singing. When this happens long enough—as is the case in many of our choirs today—a person's auditory system, vocal mechanism, and psychology have made corresponding adaptations that can be very challenging to re-educate.

And so, as long as we are providing the necessary formation for children and adults, the possibilities for *a cappella* singing are virtually limitless. But with those who for a long time have adapted their ears and voices to accompanied singing, we must adjust our expectations and goals accordingly.

MJB: *What about singing by the congregation? Is there a role for the "people in the pews"?*

PJ: A resounding "Yes!"—but with at least a few important qualifications . . . First, both the words and music which are sung must correspond to the transcendent dignity of the Mass and be oriented toward the sacred texts of the liturgy itself. Without these qualities, and without this focus, we risk losing our awareness of the fact that the Mass is a divine *gift,* handed down from Christ, the apostles, and their successors from generation to generation. Second, the music must be accessible and "durable" so that the congregation can learn it rather easily and sing it repeatedly over many years without fatigue or irritation. Third, the value of congregational singing cannot be measured by its volume, artistry, or emotional effects; rather, it needs to be oriented, in freedom, toward that worship in "spirit and truth" to which we are called by Christ.

With these things in mind, singing by those in the pews can become a powerful means of bringing glory to God, and edification to the faithful. When we begin to get a taste of this in our liturgies, we can understand better the way in which St. Augustine was drawn to the church by its singing, and the reason why St. Paul so strongly urged believers to exercise this gift. I love the passage in which he writes to the church in Ephesus—and in which he speaks to us today: "be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart" (Eph. 5:18–19).

MJB: *How widely dispersed is your music? Does it only work in English?*

PJ: My liturgical settings are presently being sung in many parishes throughout the U.S. and Canada, as well as in far away places such as the U.K., New Zealand, and Sweden. While most of these have been composed for English texts of the Mass and Divine Office, I have also composed quite a few settings for Latin, Spanish, and Swedish liturgical texts. As a general rule, it doesn't work to "transfer" a setting from one language to another; each language

has its own particular character which requires a fresh approach to the composition of music that will fit it well.

In fact, I find this challenge to be a most rewarding adventure. We are about to publish my *Missa Parva,* a setting of the Latin Ordinary of the Mass, and hope to publish my *Misa del Camino,* a setting of the Spanish Ordinary, by the end of this summer.

MJB: *Your music seems to blend chant and polyphony with an Eastern Orthodox flavor. What are your thoughts about traditional Gregorian Chant and Latin?*

PJ: Gregorian chant and classical polyphony are the indispensable foundation of our work as church musicians in the Roman rite, and Latin is the predominant language to which these forms are intimately united. And so I believe that the discovery, preservation, and cultivation of these forms, along with this language, is a vital element of any authentic renewal of Roman Catholic sacred music—just as the documents of Vatican II state clearly!

At the same time, compelled by the love of Christ, we are faced with the task of reaching the vast majority of Catholics who have now for quite some time been severed from these forms and this language. This requires us to find new ways to reach them "where they are" so as to draw them, step by step, into the fulfillment of the purpose of these forms, which is the glorification of God, and the sanctification and edification of the faithful.

While there is a tension between these two principles—of having deep roots in our great Latin traditions and being open to new inspirations that can reach ordinary people today—I believe that both of these are vital components of a faithful renewal of sacred music.

MJB: *Now that the Extraordinary Form Mass seems more available, do you have plans to compose for the traditional Mass?*

PJ: In approaching the TLM with reverence, my first aspiration is to continue to explore more fully the inexhaustible riches of chant and polyphony which have developed as an integral part of this form. And as a general rule, it seems that those Catholics who are committed to this traditional form of the Mass are not so much in need of new repertoire; they are often drawn to this form, at least in part, by its very antiquity and stability.

And so in approaching the extraordinary-form Mass as a church musician, I think that the most important areas for potential growth would be more in the second and third points of those essential qualities mentioned above: in cultivating the many facets of musicianship, and in deepening that conversion and spirituality which all of us are called to pursue throughout our lives.

But this doesn't exclude the possibility of my composing for the Traditional Latin Mass at some point, and I certainly admire those other composers who have done so in recent years.

MJB: *Please tell our readers about the present activities and the future plans for the Magnificat Institute of Sacred Music.*

PJ: The first goal of our Magnificat Institute is simply to be a faithful participant in the great movement—of which the CMAA has been at the forefront—which has for

so many decades embraced these principles and fought to restore them. However, I would also say that our particular contribution to this movement does have its own unique subsidiary vision. This is our emphasis on finding new inspired ways to reach the vast numbers of Catholics (most of whom participate in the ordinary-form Mass, the Mass of Paul VI) who have not yet been reached by organizations such the CMAA. There is a great barrier between those who have discovered the "hidden treasure" of our great living heritage of sacred music, and those who have been effectively alienated from it.

Some of these ways include:

- the publication of new compositions which aspire to be a holy and worthy "bridge" between our patrimony and contemporary culture, as *Musicam Sacram* called for.
- Liturgies and concerts, with the participation of our Cor Unum Chorale, which allow people to glimpse the glory of our living traditions of sacred music, and how they are eminently fitting and accessible for the Mass today.
- Videos and recordings of such liturgies, made available through CDs/DVDs, YouTube, and other social media.
- SATB practice tracks for much of the music we have published and/or recorded.
- Blogs and podcasts, dealing with many of the philosophical and practical issues faced by priests and church musicians in "typical" parishes.

During this past year of Covid social distancing, I have had the opportunity to focus more on the completion of new compositions and arrangements (including many for three- or four-part men's choir), and the preparation of many previous compositions for publication. Along with this, our goal has been to steadily increase our storehouse of resources for parishes, which can be accessed through our websites at magnificatinstitute.org and pauljernberg.com. As mentioned earlier, this includes music scores, recordings, videos, blogs, podcasts, and SATB practice tracks.

We have also continued a regular "Young Composers' Forum" in which, through virtual meetings with musicians from around the country and abroad (from as far away as Ecuador and China), we explore the many vital aspects of composing music for the Catholic liturgy.

And as we await the lifting of church and choral restrictions, we eagerly look forward to resume rehearsals with our Cor Unum Chorale (with a total of more than 130 singers), so as to prepare for upcoming sung liturgies.

Beyond all this, we also have begun to offer consulting services for parishes and communities who are looking for support in the renewal of their sacred music programs. In this we feel honored to assist parishes with abundant resources, as well as those in the humblest of circumstances.

Thanks so much, Mary Jane, for allowing me to share these thoughts with your readers. It has been a blessing for me to be associated with and to receive so much from the CMAA over these past twenty plus years. And I would ask all of you to pray for us at Magnificat Institute: that we might fulfill well the little role entrusted to us, at the service of the great movement of musical and spiritual renewal in which we are all striving. ❖

Book Review

The Priest's Chants and Recitatives at the Altar by Rev. Carlo Rossini, Mus.D., 1942. Reprint, Kansas City, Mo.: Romanitas Press, 2020. Pp. xvii + 115. $13.75 (softcover), $8.00 (PDF edition).

By Fr. David Friel

irst published in 1942, this book is a concise guide to singing the Roman rite rightly. Originally intended to introduce seminarians to those portions of the Mass and Divine Office that are chanted by the priest, the book's usefulness remains undiminished in the twenty-first century, both as an aid to seminarians and as a primer for priests whose seminary musical training did not fully prepare them for their liturgical ministry. It is providential and unsurprising, therefore, that this volume has recently returned to print.

The author, who served for many years as director of music at St. Paul's Cathedral in Pittsburgh, was an authority on the theological, historical, and practical dimensions of Roman Catholic music, as well as a prolific composer. This book is an example of his practical efforts to improve the quality of ecclesiastical chant. Its chief aim is to explain the structure and proper execution of the "recitatives" mentioned in the title—those chants, proper to the priest, that utilize simple melodies in order to facilitate a clear, but solemn declamation of the liturgical texts (xvii).

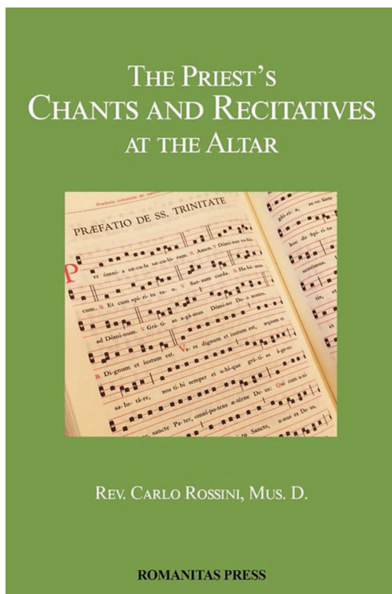
This book is a concise guide to singing the Roman rite rightly.

Rossini begins with an illuminating introduction to the nuances of notation, accentuation, pronunciation, and vocal expression in plainchant (xi–xvii). Next, he addresses the various portions of High Mass either intoned or sung as a recitative by the priest, including the Asperges me, Gloria, orations, epistle, gospel, preface, Pater noster, Pax Domini, and Ite, missa

Fr. David M. Friel, S.T.D., serves as vocation director for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

est (1–37). Thereafter, the chants unique to the Requiem Mass and graveside service are described (38–42). The next section addresses the priest's chants at the Divine Office, using Vespers as a model (43–57), followed by a brief consideration of chants for extra-liturgical services (e.g., Veni Creator Spiritus, Te Deum, Litany of Saints, Forty Hours, rogation days, and benediction) (58–65). Another major section of the book is devoted to the chants of Holy Week, beginning with Palm Sunday (66–83). Finally, the author provides a substantial appendix featuring fully notated versions of the solemn and ferial prefaces for various feasts (86–101) along with a fascinating collection of excerpts from Pope St. Pius X and Pope Pius XI on Latin pronunciation and legislation regarding church choirs (103–110).

At no point does Rossini appear willing to settle for technical accuracy in the rendering of the chants; he strives, rather, to teach the reader how to chant confidently and beautifully.



Among the numerous features that make this book a pleasure to recommend, its succinct thoroughness stands out. Rossini does not waste words, but neither does he gloss over important details. His writing is notable, also, for its clarity, which makes the book accessible to anyone who possesses a basic familiarity with the Roman liturgy. The author gives particular attention to the chanting of the preface and the Pater noster, which he notes are "the most beautiful and most important" (16) of the priest's chants. At no point does Rossini appear willing to settle for technical accuracy in the rendering of the chants; he strives, rather, to teach the reader how to chant confidently and beautifully. Although Rossini draws on a great breadth of theological and liturgical knowledge, it is his practicality, born of long experience, that most distinguishes this work. After presenting the standard intonation for the Asperges me, for example, he notes that two other intonations may also be used, but only "after an understanding with the organist and the choir" (1). Every organist who has ever been surprised by the legitimate, but unexpected

choice of a priest celebrant will appreciate this candid word of caution.

One important criticism of this volume—though not one that obliterates its value—is that it is truly a reprint of the 1942 edition and, therefore, has not been revised so as to correspond with the subsequent rubrical changes in the *Missale Romanum* (1962) and in the ceremonies of Holy Week (1955). As the reprinter notes (iii), however, only a little familiarity with these rubrical changes is required to recognize the parts of Rossini's work that need adjustment. Some readers will also be disappointed that Rossini sometimes provides detailed instructions for chanting only the most common tones, to the neglect of *ad libitum* options. In the case of the orations, for example, Rossini carefully outlines the solemn, semi-solemn, and ferial tones (5–10), but he omits the *antiquior* tones, acknowledging them only by means of a brief footnote (p. 10, n. 1). Similarly, Rossini relegates the *antiquior* gospel tone (p. 15, n. 2), the *solemnior* preface tone (p. 19, n. 1), and the solemn intonations of the four Marian anthems (p. 48, n. 1) to cursory footnotes. These omissions, undoubtedly made in the interest of brevity, stand in contrast to the general completeness of the volume.

This reprint will prove immediately useful to seminarians interested in learning how to chant the priest's parts of the Mass and Divine Office. Many priests would also benefit from the book, either learning their parts for the first time or seeking greater proficiency and artistry in chanting them. Although Rossini writes with what is now called the extraordinary form in mind, the principles he outlines are applicable, in many respects, also to the ordinary form. Directors of music in seminaries could use this book both as a tool for their own professional development and as an aid in instructing seminarians. Particularly in seminary settings, the PDF edition could serve as a textbook that is low-cost yet high-reward.

This is a practical book, not a theological treatise or an apologia for sung liturgy, but it is nevertheless clearly the fruit of the author's passion for church music. After warning against artificiality, exaggeration, and affectation in the singing of Gregorian chant, Rossini concludes his "hints for a good rendition of plainchant" (xii–xvi) with a strong, spiritual admonition (printed in majuscule): "PRAY WHILE YOU SING" (xvi). It is to be hoped that this reprint will, indeed, assist a new generation of priests in chanting the liturgy correctly, skillfully, and prayerfully. ❖

Directors of music in seminaries could use this book both as a tool for their own professional development and as an aid in instructing seminarians.

Last Word

The Western Sickness

by Kurt Poterack

In the most recent issue of the academic journal *Antiphon* (vol. 25, no. 2), there is an essay by Dr. Lynne Boughton entitled "An Imagined Past: Initiation, Liturgical Secrecy, and Mass of the Catechumens." The author makes the fascinating claim that the widely held notion that in the early Church catechumens attended Mass—but were dismissed before the eucharistic part of the liturgy—has no basis in historical fact. Following up on this, she also argues that the very division of the Mass into *The Liturgy of the Word* and *The Liturgy of the Eucharist*—a virtual article of faith among modern liturgical thinkers—is an invention of scholars. This too, she claims, can be found in no historical document. Now this is a pretty daring assertion and is bound to ruffle a number of feathers—and not just among those of a liberal outlook. In one part of her essay, Professor Boughton says something else very interesting. She refers to the modern liturgical scholarly consensus against which she argues, writing that "[this] consensus . . . is accepted by secular and confessional thinkers and unites liturgically traditional and liturgically progressive Catholics." What on earth is she talking about?

I do not know for sure but will offer my interpretation. First, however, I need to speak about the "Western Sickness."

What is this sickness? It is that, contrary to the views of many Eastern Rite Christians, many Latin Rite Catholics couldn't give two figs about the liturgy—except as a place to go to receive communion, say a few private prayers, and fulfill their Sunday obligation. While there is a popular myth among the Orthodox that, because one is in the presence of the Eternal, a believer does not age during the liturgy, many Latin Catholics are busy checking their watches.

Of course, I exaggerate—but only a bit. Here is my opinion as to how this "sickness" came about. It starts with the Scholastic tendency to view sacraments largely in terms of validity. This would include viewing the Mass primarily in terms of what is necessary for a valid consecration (e.g., matter and form). Then, the rest of the liturgy starts being viewed as "ceremonial." Now, for quite some time the ceremonial is revered and untouched. In a traditional society this is the way people view ceremonial, especially religious ceremonial – with considerable reverence. However, at a certain point (perhaps due to the influence of the Enlightenment), ceremonial

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becomes *mere* ceremonial. Reform-minded theoreticians start thinking about, and arguing for, the change of this "mere ceremonial" for various reasons—either *ressourcement* ("the early church had these great practices which we must reintroduce"), or *aggiornamento* ("we must change the ceremonial to appeal to modern man"). Whatever the intent of the reformers, the result has been this: a time traveler from the fifteenth century would have trouble recognizing many modern Roman-Rite parish Masses as being of the Roman Rite. While on the other hand, going back five hundred years in the opposite direction, the same time traveler would have no problem feeling at home at a tenth-century Mass of the Roman Rite, despite minor differences. (This is, of course, only one of the problems.) Now how does this unite liberal and conservative Catholics? The answer is simple. The liberals wanted change and they got it about fifty years ago. They will defend to the death their ongoing project of liturgical tinkering. In fact, for them, *ressourcement* often blends into *aggiornamento* in practice. Thus, the big push for the *versus populum* position may have originally been about a revival of what was sincerely thought to have been an ancient practice—something that has pretty much been scholarly debunked by now. However, it quickly became "Mass facing the people," in which the priest mugged, joked, and charmed his way through the Mass, like a modern-day game show host before an audience. Many conservatives, on the other hand, don't really care too much about the liturgy, as long as it is valid and, perhaps, not too indecorous. They will defend to the death the *authority* that promulgated the changes. ("You fusspots! It's still a valid Mass. Get with the program! And besides, how dare you criticize Vatican II!) They play right into the liberals' hands. This odd alliance may explain some of the seemingly contradictory players behind *Traditionis Custodes*—if some of the reports are correct.

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Now, what is the proper approach? In a fascinating essay on the *New Liturgical Movement* blog, Gregory DiPippo argues that

> one of the most important reforms of the Council of Trent was the abolition of a very common and long-standing abuse known as "plurality of benefice," or "pluralism" for short. The history of this abuse, and how it was *not* remedied by the previous ecumenical council, Lateran V, is, I think, something quite instructive for us today.

He explains how, Lateran V correctly diagnosed the problem of bishops holding multiple church offices but, in the end, simply recommended that they be limited to no more than four benefices. So, a man could theoretically be bishop of four different dioceses at the same time, according to the Fifth Lateran Council. Mr. DiPippo continues:

> Likewise, it is perfectly possible that Vatican II correctly identified a problem within the Church, the then-current state of its liturgical life, without correctly identifying the solution to that problem. Indeed, it is perfectly possible for said council to have correctly identified the problem and offered as a solution the exact opposite of what was needed to solve it. (*Of course, no two councils or the events that follow them are exactly alike, and so we must here once again note that the post-Conciliar reform is what it is in large measure because it rejected what Vatican II had said about the liturgy.*) And it is perfectly possible to say this without denying the legitimacy of Vatican II as an ecumenical council.

Now, the passage which I highlighted is very important, as I also concur with Mr. DiPippo that much of what went wrong liturgically, was in how the council's reform was implemented. Still, as long as a liturgical scholar is respectful in his (or *her*) criticisms, these criticisms should no more be met with the reply, "You're being disobedient to Vatican II!" than a sixteenth-century scholar recommending the total abolition of pluralism before Trent should have been met with, "You're being disobedient to Lateran V! How dare you! Stop it!" The "Western Sickness" is something that Vatican II correctly diagnosed. Let us give credit where credit is due. To what extent the "treatment" has been successful, however, is a legitimate matter for concern. So, I think certain conservatives (including high-ranking prelates) need to be asked to please acknowledge that the sickness is real and still present *and* that certain "non-traditional medicines"—ironically, like the "traditionalist" movement—actually seem to be working. (When young people are willing to march hundreds of miles for a Mass, as with the Chartres pilgrimage, this is a *good* thing. Not something to be derided or explained away.) Liberals, on the other hand, need to acknowledge that their "program of reform" of the past fifty years, may not be working as they had promised and, to the extent that it turned the Mass into an "experimental plaything," it is seriously wrong and needs to end. ❖

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