Music and Spirituality

Edited by

Edward Foley

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William Harrison Taylor is an Associate Professor of History at Alabama State University, where he concentrates on the religious history of the Anglo-American world during the eighteenth-century. His publications include an edited book, *Faith and Slavery in the Presbyterian Diaspora* (Lehigh University Press, 2016) as well several articles including, "*'Let Every Christian Denomination Cheerfully Unite': The Origins of Presbyterian Interdenominationalism*", which have appeared in the *Journal of Religious History*, the *Journal of Southern Religion*, and *Religions*. Currently, he is working on a book project that explores the Presbyterian experience during the American Revolutionary Era.

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Music and Spirituality—Introduction

Edward Foley

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Across time and geography people have known the power of music for evoking the gods and acquiring spiritual insight. Whether arising as a textless chant by a single voice or a percussive auditory event for ritual dance, music in its various modes is a virtually ubiquitous companion to religious and spiritual practices. Not only a constant accompaniment to one's spiritual trek, musical compositions from the great oratorios of Handel to the soundtrack to the movie trilogy *Lord of the Rings* also serve as powerful metaphors and inspirations for that journey.

In previous research I have suggested that one of the reasons for the power of music in the spiritual realm is related to the very nature of sound [1,2], of which music is one of its most refined genres. This is based upon the presupposition that different senses provide different epistemic experiences. As a distinctive avenue to knowing, hearing enables the human imagination and thus the religious imagination to grasp and experience the transcendent in a unique and spiritually prized manner.

For example, sound experiences are by their very nature transitory. While a sculpture can sit in a museum or even outdoors for centuries without requiring anything to sustain its beauty, sound only exists if it is being produced in the present—either by live or reproduced sound production. A record, cassette, CD or even musical score is not "music" the way Michelangelo's (d. 1564) David is a sculpture. The great Tuscan artist carved David and then let it stand for over three centuries outside in Florence's public square without any substantive care. Maria Callas' (d. 1977) performance of "D'amor sull'ali rosee" from *Il Trovatore*, however, can only be experienced if you were present for a performance of it, or if someone plays a recording of the same in the here and now. Sound is an immersion in temporality.

Because of that, sound has an inherent dynamism about it. While using hammer and chisel on a piece of marble is certainly dynamic, once the piece is sculpted the dynamism emanating from the piece is all but muted, and the fundamental dynamic responsibility lies with the observers of the piece in the process of reception. Sound on the other hand embodies movement. While there are "light waves" they are much too fast for human's to perceive their movement. Sound waves, on the other hand, move at approximately 1120 feet per second at 15 degrees Celsius: slow enough to be perceived by human beings as moving.

Sound is also an experience of the intangible. Sculptors employ marble, painters oils or acrylics or water colors on canvas or wood or paper. No matter what the instrument—whether a double reed or the human voice or a magnificent pipe organ—the real stuff of sound is

controlled air. Whether that air is hammered into a melody by a Steinway grand or blasted into existence by a shofar, no one “sees” the air or ordinarily “smells” it or “feels” it. If you happen to be standing in front of a Heldentenor with bad breath you might get a whiff or feel the blast, but these do not go to the essence of sound production or music making. Sound and its refined sibling music are an exercise in the insubstantial and elusive.

I have further explored how sound could be considered a powerful form of engagement. Plato (d. 347 BCE) understood this, which is why he is sometimes considered the apostle of the visual. Plato did not trust sound, especially the sound of the epic poets, because he perceived that the listener could not separate her or himself from the sound event [3]. It is sound, the voice, the music, the beat, that prompts people to move: music videos without sound would entice few to dance.

Finally, sound is often perceived as an indicator of presence. When we heard a sound in the dark, a squeaky door, an unexplained rattle, the wind rustling through the leaves the human imagination not only wonders “what’s there” but more often “who’s there.” The acoustic disturbance is not only perceived as a gauge of animation and of “life” but also of human presence.

These attributes of sound can suggest some of the reasons why that refined manipulation of sound we call music is so often employed as a medium of transcendence and a language of spirituality. It’s elusive but dynamic impermanence evokes images of a divine spirit that sweeps in and through our lives, present but not containable. Its intangibility even in the human realm bodes well for its capacity to penetrate into the realm of gods and traverse the spirit world in its return trip bearing messages of solace or inspiration. Finally, its aptitude for invitation and genius for conjuring the potential for presence, renders sound and its cherished sibling music as acoustics symbols unparalleled in their talent for orientating the human spirit toward others and even the transcendent Other.

A final reflection on sound, spirituality and the human anatomy: it was the great Roman Catholic German theologian Karl Rahner (d. 1984) who posited—with the help of transcendental philosophy—that human beings were naturally inclined to be “hearers” of the Word ([4], 24ff). While that could be considered a religiously limited framework, particularly cued to the Abrahamic traditions with their emphasis on the divine Word mediated through humanly received and proclaimed texts, it also suggests something more universal. No matter what our religious or spiritual orientation, human beings are virtually always born with eye-lids, but no “ear-lids.” That is, we are born metaphorically open to sound, often identified as the first sense to develop [5] and the last to fade [6]. Employing metaphors from the Roman philosopher Boethius (d. 524 CE), we are not only born open to engage music of the body and instrumental but also the music of the “spheres” (*musica mundana*) [7] or, in my language, the music of transcendence and spirituality.

The spheres in which one can perceive a spiritual acoustic are manifold. My respected colleagues in this volume evoke some of that richness without in any way mapping or depleting the sonic galaxy. For example, sketching something of the broadness of this cosmic landscape, Peter Bannister engages the writings of Theodor Adorno and the compositions of Olivier

Messian. In this juxtaposition of challenging viewpoints and practices he demonstrates that religious composers can at once engage the radicality of modernistic perspectives and yet write powerful and expressive religious music. In a yet philosophical but even more explicitly theological vein, Maeve Louis Heaney employs Arvo Pärt's musical composition *Spiegel im Spiegel* as a case study for exploring to what extent a single piece of music has the capacity to mirror or transmit religious experience and even reveal God's presence. Also in a theological mode, Chiara Bertoglio explores both ancient and contemporary musical practices among Christians to explicate how they reflect, refract and reveal anew understandings of the central Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

Providing a particularly Eastern-Christian perspective, Ivan Moody draws our attention to the music of the Orthodox churches. Specifically he ponders the theological character of the liturgical music of the Orthodox churches in dialogue with ancient Christian writings of the "Church Fathers" to demonstrate how Orthodox understandings of theology are transmitted through the liturgical arts. Exercising his scholarship across decades and denominations Paul Westermeyer explicates how God's Word, from a Christian perspective, breaks through in music, regardless of the intention of the composer: a symbol of how the divine Word seeks out individuals even though they are not on a God-quest.

Innocent Smith also probes larger questions through a specific practice of the Roman Catholic Dominican religious order beginning in the 13th century. His focus is on the emergence and development of a form of western plainchant peculiar to the Dominican Order, with an eye toward how such chant contributed to the growth and preservation of the identity of the community of men and women who brought it to life. The Dominican theme continues with Michael O'Connor. Turning from sung plainchant, this author examines to what extent solo instrumental music—here the organ—was judged capable of conveying a specific religious meaning or communicating an appropriate textual message in an age of growing secularity.

Theologizing and re-theologizing out of his own Presbyterian tradition, William Harrison Taylor employs musical sources as a way to challenge a larger question: whether the dichotomy between theology and spirituality is sustainable, and how music might offer a bridge framework for healing this unnecessary and untenable breach. Turning to the practices of African American Baptists, Therese Smith shares the fruit of her field work at one Baptist congregation in Mississippi. In particular, she demonstrates how the essential presence of music throughout the religious service calls forth and sustains the perceived presence of the Holy Spirit in such an event.

In a decidedly more secular vein, Mark Duffett considers Elvis Presley as a performer of gospel music. He discerns how his performance of sacred music and his fans' reaction to that music is not easily categorized as sanctification or idolatry, but is a much more complex phenomenon, that may be better illuminated through Émile Durkheim's theory of religion.

In a final turn to the more empirical, Peter Atkins and Emery Schubert bring the social sciences to bear in examining to what extent "spiritual experiences" are intrinsic or extrinsic to the music itself. Their conclusions that the spiritual "comes to life" in music is both a helpful

insight and also a clarion call for more empirical work on the relationship between music and spiritual experiences.

This wondrous array of studies and reflections does not, of course, exhaust any discussion of the relationship between music and spirituality. On the other hand, it does provide a series of credible and notable "dots" that allow and invite you, the reader, to connect them each in your own way and, in the process, acquire new insights and appreciation for the musical-spiritual dynamic.

References and Notes

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The Offence of Beauty in Modern Western Art Music

Peter Bannister

Abstract: In recent decades, beauty has become a largely unfashionable, even offensive notion within art and philosophy. As Eastern Orthodox theologian, David Bentley Hart, has pointed out, this offence has a twofold sense. Firstly, the "beautiful" has been dismissed as philosophically insignificant in comparison to the "sublime" by an intellectual tradition tracing itself back to Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgment*. Secondly, the making of apparently beautiful art has, especially after the Shoah, frequently been regarded as ethically offensive in the face of suffering in the world. The present essay discusses how these two critiques of the beautiful find themselves reflected in twentieth and twenty-first century musical aesthetics, with particular reference to the writings of Theodor W. Adorno, and asks what solutions have been found by composers of Christian sacred music in the Western tradition confronted by this "taboo on beauty".

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1. Introduction: The End of Aesthetics?

Both in philosophy and in art, beauty, it would seem, is out of fashion. Indeed not only out of fashion but downright offensive to the contemporary Western mind. This seemingly strange observation is one of the main starting-points for Eastern Orthodox theologian, David Bentley Hart, in *The Beauty of the Infinite*, a thought-provoking and virtuosic exploration of the aesthetic dimension of Christian truth which has lost none of its force or relevance a decade after its publication in 2003.

A scouring of the philosophical landscape leads Hart to contend that the beauty of the world of sensory phenomena is predominantly treated with contemptuous dismissal in an age characterized by radically anti-metaphysical "narratives of the sublime", effectively demolished as a category worthy of serious thought. This, he asserts, reflects a philosophical tradition traceable back to the Enlightenment:

> "As it happens, beauty has fallen into considerable disfavor in modern philosophical discourse, having all but disappeared as a term in philosophical aesthetics. In part this is attributable to the eighteenth-century infatuation with Longinus's distinction between the beautiful and the sublime, one of whose unfortunate effects was to reduce the scope of the beautiful to that of the pretty, the merely decorative, or the inoffensively pleasant; in the climate of postmodern thought, whose humors are congenial to the sublime but generally corrosive of the beautiful, beauty's estate has diminished to one of mere negation, a spasm of illusory calm in the midst of being's sublimity, its 'infinite speed"' ([1], p. 15).

Hart points out that the *locus classicus* of the divorce between the beautiful and the sublime is Immanuel Kant's dissection of the experience of sublimity in his *Critique of Judgement* which sets the infinity of mental concepts over and against the finite reality of the phenomenal realm. The Kantian sublime radically breaks with the latter:

> "Unlike the beautiful, its manifestation is an intuition of the indeterminate, whether one encounters it in the incomprehensible vastitude of the 'mathematical sublime' or in the incomprehensible natural power of the 'dynamical sublime', though, in fact, the true sublime properly resides nowhere in the things of sensibility (which can only suggest it), but only in the mind, which discovers, even in the instant of its rapture, its own essential superiority over all of nature." ([1], p. 45)

For Hart, this line of thought has acquired particular force in postmodern authors such as Jean-François Lyotard, who sees Kant as heralding "the end of an aesthetics, that of the beautiful, in the name of the final destination of the mind, which is freedom" ([2], p. 136, quoted in [1], p. 47). Beauty is offensive to this philosophical current to the extent that it is at best an irrelevance, at worst an obstacle to reaching the philosopher's "final destination".

Going on to expose the essentially nihilistic, post-Nietzschean character of this supposed freedom, Hart's *Beauty of the Infinite* makes an impassioned defence of the persuasive, rhetorical dimension of the Christian message over against the postmodern refusal to countenance any kind of analogy between beauty, whether natural or artistic, and the infinitely beautiful Creator.

The second "offence of beauty" is perhaps less central to Hart's overall argumentation, but is stated no less explicitly in his preliminary remarks: with its implicit promise of transcendent healing of the broken world, beauty is viewed as a suspicious distraction from the violence of experience which demands more than a purely aesthetic response:

> "the marmorean repose of a child lately dead of meningitis might present a strikingly piquant tableau; Cambodian killing fields were often lushly flowered [...] Beauty seems to promise a reconciliation beyond the contradictions of the moment, one that perhaps places time's tragedies within a broader perspective of harmony and meaning, a balance between light and darkness; beauty appears to absolve being of its violences" ([1], p. 16).

Building in the remainder of the present essay on these perceptive remarks of Hart's, I would like to discuss how these two objections levelled against beauty by philosophy (and ethics) find themselves reflected in Western art-music in the late twentieth century (and perhaps to a lesser extent on into the twenty-first).

2. Abstraction and Rationalization

It might be argued that with the breakdown from just after 1900 onwards of the system of tonality which had held sway since the time of J.S. Bach, much modern music consciously broke loose from its traditional moorings in an unprecedented fashion. This is especially noticeable in radical works (by composers such as Pierre Boulez or Karlheinz Stockhausen) written in the decades immediately following the end of World War II. Avant-garde music distanced itself from its social roots by waging war on received notions of melody, tonal/modal harmony and musical phrasing or syntactical organization, thereby opposing analogies with song and language. Indeed, atonal music at its most uncompromising arguably goes further in also freeing itself via radical abstraction from the shackles of sensory perception, from the need to be comprehensible as an aural experience. Instead, aided by rationalizing mathematics, it strives for the freedom of Lyotard's "final destination of the mind", thus siding with the sublime against the sensorially beautiful in terms of the Kantian polarity discussed by David Bentley Hart.

With the abolition of all external referents, we have the logical end-point of the tradition of "absolute music" beginning with Beethoven and strikingly contemporaneous with German philosophical idealism, (as musicologist Daniel Chua has pointed out at length in his highly insightful and entertaining study entitled *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* [3]. Take for example the following very ambitious declaration dating from 1949 penned by France's leading apostle of twelve-tone music, the composer and conductor René Leibowitz, which I quote in order to give a taste of the sort of equation between music and philosophy which became prevalent in the post-war years. In case anyone thinks this kind of theorizing is, to quote one leading British music historian, nothing but "pretentious goobledegook" [4], it is worth pointing out that Leibowitz's seminal *Introduction à la musique de douze sons* was written in direct collaboration with none other than Jean-Paul Sartre. Focussing on the break with tonality in the works of Arnold Schoenberg, he claims that the modern composer effectively starts from zero, music being an expression of pure consciousness unaffected by any tonal system floating in the background and dictating the way in which elements of the music are shaped:

> "in discarding the tonal system, Schoenberg to some extent places himself outside any pre-established musical contingency […] Such an attitude of putting the musical world 'in parentheses' effectively corresponds to the act of phenomenological reduction as understood by Husserl […] for the twelve-tone composer there can be no question of an essence preceding existence; on the contrary, it is the object in existence [*l'existant*], entirely recreated with each new compositional effort, which constitutes its own essence as well as its own laws" ([5], pp. 101–04).

Music is by its very nature maybe the most "abstract" of the arts; the radicalization of such abstraction in instrumental music after 1945—overtly associated by Leibowitz and Sartre with existentialism—is a complex phenomenon. The implications of abstract art perhaps merit more attention than they have hitherto received on the part of theologians reading modernism's vision of the artistic endeavour as a "sign of the times", in terms of the perception of the artist no longer as a craftsman working with the material world of sound, but as a creator *ex nihilo*[1].

3. Adorno and the Taboo on Musical Beauty

As for the second objection to the musically "beautiful"—that of its falsehood in a world deprived of beauty, the key philosophical reference-point is the highly influential writings of Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno in relationship to the crisis of musical form after 1945. In the frequently polemical discussions concerning musical composition in the second half of the twentieth century, few names continue to arouse fiercer passions than that of Adorno, whether championed as the prophet of the avant-garde or reviled as an intolerant elitist guilty of a form of cultural terrorism, a misanthrope whose forbidding rhetoric succeeded in crippling music after World War II, "a kind of inverse Cassandra, fated to tell untruths but to be believed" [9]. His two-part *Philosophy of New Music* [10], perhaps the best-known articulation of Adorno's stern dialectical vision in which the essay *Schoenberg and Progress* has as its counterfoil *Stravinsky and the Restoration*, continues to polarize opinion 70 years after its publication and to function as a seemingly inescapable starting-point for any serious debate on musical modernism[2]. It is certainly the foundational text for a view of artistic progress as a "canon of prohibitions" ([10], p. 32), translated by the post-war generation of composers into a radical rupture with all past musical idioms. Famously epitomized by the statement of the young Pierre Boulez that composers who did not follow down Schoenberg's dodecaphonic road were "useless", post-serialism became the official idiom of the Western European avant-garde as

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[1] As Rowan Williams points out in his compelling *Grace and Necessity* [6], these implications were already intuited some decades earlier in the Thomist aesthetics of Jacques Maritain. See for example Maritain's discussion of the difference between the divine and the human creative process in *The Frontiers of Poetry* dating from 1927 [7]. Describing the search for abstract art with particular reference to tendencies within French artistic life after Mallarmé, he asserts that "To order contemporary art *to exist* as abstract art, discarding every condition determining its existence in the human subject, is to have it arrogate to itself the aseity [being un-derived] of God". ([7], p. 70). At the same time Maritain does not argue in favour of a utilitarian or merely representational view of art, recognizing that "Art itself [...] is in a way an inhuman virtue, a straining after a gratuitously creative activity, entirely absorbed in its mystery and its own laws of operation, refusing to subordinate itself either to the interests of men or to the evocation of what already exists. In short, the straining towards abstract act follows from the very essence of art, once beauty has awakened it to self-consciousness." ([7], p. 72). Although Maritain's thought and its place within the Catholic Intellectual Revival in France in the early twentieth century has lately been the object of excellent historical analysis on the part of Jesuit polymath Stephen Schloesser in his landmark study *Jazz Age Catholicism* [8], Maritain remains a largely neglected resource for contemporary reflection on artistic practice.

[2] Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music* is maybe even more frequently cited by writers sceptical of the project of the avant-garde than by its supporters: for two recent French examples see the discussions of Adorno in Benoît Duteurtre's *Requiem pour une avant-garde* [11] or composer Nicolas Bacri's *Notes étrangères: considérations paradoxales sur la musique d'aujourd'hui* [12].

typified by institutions such as the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music, where Adorno was a lecturer.

Basing its interpretation on an immanent method of criticism, *Schoenberg and Progress* focuses on the development of musical material as “sedimented spirit, preformed socially by human consciousness” ([10], p. 32), mirroring the historical process. In the grim context of 1941, the latter had in Adorno’s view had reached the point at which market forces on one hand and totalitarian repression on the other had effectively liquidated even the concept of the autonomous subject. Given this bleak reality of utter alienation, Adorno asserts the bankruptcy of all artistic images of harmony (on which the tonal system is predicated) as “unsustainable in the face of the catastrophe toward which reality is veering” ([10], p. 101). This goes far deeper than mere issues of style: for Adorno the whole notion of finished aesthetic form itself becomes untenable, as in the face of unspeakable human suffering artistic form as a structural image of reconciliation can only be equated with false consciousness, a weapon in the hands of the oppressors. For Adorno, radical negation is the only path left open: he chillingly concludes that all music’s “happiness is in the knowledge of unhappiness; all its beauty is in the denial of the semblance of the beautiful’ ([10], p. 102).

This is of course an unremittingly pessimistic outlook, in that Adorno is under no illusion that such art can be “successful” either in terms of securing an audience or even in creating coherent artworks. Despite the title of the first essay of the *Philosophy of New Music*, “*Schoenberg and Progress*”, to read Adorno as sanctioning the twelve-tone system of composition as *the* progressive method on which the future of music could be positively constructed is to misunderstand his dialectic. Although he became the uncontested principal theoretical reference of the avant-garde, he was simultaneously the first serious commentator to note the self-defeating tendency within the dodecaphonic compositional method. On one level, twelve-tone music represents total rational domination of the musical material, as the integrally organized work consumes everything via the row (the series of all twelve chromatic pitches) as *Grundgestalt*: ‘twelve-tone technique approaches the ideal of mastery as domination, whose boundlessness consists in the exclusion of whatever is heteronomous, of whatever is not integrated into the continuum of this technique’ ([10], p. 53).

Paradoxically, the effect of this “mastery” is not the liberation of the composer as was promised by the break with tonality (seen as “emancipation of the dissonance”). While Adorno clearly sees the expressionistic period of “heroic” free atonal works (roughly 1910–1923) in Schoenberg’s output as the pinnacle of his achievement, the systematic serialism which evolves from free atonality strangely leads not to increased freedom but to its opposite. With the abolition of any grammar of hierarchical relations between notes (in, for example, a chord), harmonic differentiation, the guiding principle behind the whole Germanic musical tradition dating back to Bach, becomes impossible and with it meaningful formal articulation in time and indeed expression itself. In striving for ultimate mastery, the composer as autonomous subject effectively relinquishes all power to shape the music, which is now completely opaque, alienated. All that is left is the basic arithmetic of the method, ‘a machine that fulfills no function: It simply stands there, an allegory of the “technical age”[3]. Yet, via a dialectical

[3] Here Adorno’s thought strikingly parallels Jacques Ellul’s concept of modern Western society as a totalizing *système technique*. Of particular relevance is Ellul’s penetrating analysis of art within a technological framework in *L’empire du non-sens: l’art et la société technicienne* [13].

sleight of hand of the type for which Adorno is (in)famous, it is precisely this failure to communicate which for him constitutes the 'truth-content' of New Music as it reveals the nature of historical reality itself, embracing aesthetic martyrdom in the process:

> "Today the alienation inherent in the consistency of artistic technique itself forms the content of the artwork. The shocks of the incomprehensible—which artistic technique in the age of its meaninglessness dispenses—reverse. They illuminate the meaningless world. New music sacrifices itself to this. It has taken all the darkness and guilt of the world on itself." ([10], p. 102).

The theological resonance of this final sentence is no accident; Adorno's thinking, like that of the Frankfurt School in general, has powerful undercurrents of Jewish Messianism. Charges of nihilism and misanthropy frequently levelled at Adorno would be justified were it not for a highly individual form of negative theology in constant operation in his writing. Although this is mostly implicit rather than overtly stated and easily missed given his prevalent tone of 'protest atheism', it surfaces most clearly in the closing passage of Adorno's *Minima moralia* of 1949:

> "The only philosophy which can be responsibly practised in the face of despair is the attempt to contemplate all things as they would present themselves from the standpoint of redemption. Knowledge has no light but that shed on the world by redemption: all else is reconstruction, mere technique. Perspectives must be fashioned that displace and estrange the world, reveal it to be, with its rifts and crevices, as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light"[4] ([14], p. 247).

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[4] This theme is profitably taken up in Jürgen Moltmann's *The Coming of God* [15], where Jewish thinkers are credited with an indispensable role in Christian eschatology's proper reappraisal of Jewish apocalyptic: "For the rebirth of Messianic thinking out of the catastrophe of Christian humanism in the First World War, we are indebted to Martin Buber, Ernst Bloch and Franz Rosenzweig, Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno [...] They brought reason into the Jewish and Christian hope and—even more important—hope into the reason that was self-sufficient and hence self-destroying. Out of the ruins of historical rationality they rescued hope as a theological category. Without their messianic thinking, eschatology today is literally unthinkable." ([15], p. 30). See also Moltmann's earlier discussion of Adorno and Horkheimer in *The Crucified God* ([16], pp. 294–95). John W. de Gruchy and Johann Baptist Metz are among other writers to have explored the theological potential in the work of the Frankfurt School.

Adorno's work of the 1940s can be read as a devastating critique of the failure of secular eschatologies of progress. The radically alienated artwork's meaninglessness reveals the world's need for redemption, that future beauty whose cruel absence in the present art refuses to palliate[5].

It is of course outside the scope of this article to chart the history of twentieth-century Western art music, but the decades immediately following 1945 were marked by the emergence of an avant-garde dogma which effectively based itself on the argument of "historical necessity" found in Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music*, but without its dialectical subtlety[6] or an understanding of the *via negativa* behind it. Music in the years after World War II would seek theoretical legitimacy by reference to philosophy, science, architecture (e.g., Xenakis) or even chance (John Cage), but certainly not beauty.

4. Sacred Music and New Tonality

The position of overtly religious composers in relation to this modernistic taboo against beauty is a complex issue. Naturally not all musical circles were equally affected by the debate, and tonal or modal music continued to be written for the church much as before by musicians who maintained their idiom unchanged. I have no wish whatsoever to belittle the contributions to the sacred musical repertoire of figures such as Maurice Duruflé, Vaughan Williams or Herbert Howells, all of whom produced substantial work after World War II, but my own interest in the context of this essay is in those composers who attempted to engage with modernism in its radicality whilst continuing to write expressive sacred music, sharing Rowan Williams's concern for "art which is intensely serious,

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5 This apophatic vision of course flies in the face of Schoenberg's own positive view of dodecaphonic technique as providing a unifying force for music endowed with the same level of structural power as tonality, a totalizing project which would assure German musical superiority for coming centuries. Adorno's analysis is underpinned by the belief that the immanent characteristics of artworks as objects take precedence over the intentions of their creators: he dismisses the naïve belief that an idiom historically derived from dissonance as the articulation of suffering or psychological collapse (as in a piece such as Schoenberg's *Erwartung*) could somehow be translated into an affirmative system harnessed to technological progress, which he in any case views with extreme scepticism. This is highly ironic in that here he arguably anticipates the dead-end of a great deal of music written after 1945, where the technique of the Second Viennese School, in itself intimately linked with and shaped by a certain philosophical and cultural Central European climate) was adopted as an international "language" and therefore lay itself open to the criticism of reification as a mere self-legitimating style divorced from any deeper meaning, thereby degenerating into the antithesis of artistic freedom—conformism:

"What the attentive ear discovered is distorted into a trumped-up system in which the criteria of compositional right and wrong are to be abstractly verified. This explains the readiness of so many young musicians—especially in the United States, where the sustaining experiences of twelve-tone technique are wanting—to write in the 'twelve-tone system' and their elation at the invention of a surrogate for tonality, as if freedom were aesthetically intolerable and needed to be furtively replaced by a new compliancy" ([10], p. 55).

6 This is not altogether surprising given that Adorno's writing presupposes an acquaintance with the categories of German philosophical thought with which the majority of composers are unfamiliar (even Pierre Boulez has admitted that as a young man with limited philosophical baggage he felt intimidated by Adorno). For a clear and penetrating discussion of the central Adornian issues concerning music, see Max Paddison's *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* [17]. A detailed but far more difficult exegesis of the *Philosophy of New Music* can be found in David Roberts' *Art and Enlightenment: Aesthetic Theory after Adorno* [18].

unconsoling, and unafraid of the complexity of a world that the secularist too can recognize". ([6], p. 170).

As early as the end of the 1950s, dissatisfaction with the postserial idiom had begun to set in within the avant-garde as composers such as György Ligeti began to look for ways out of the aporia already indicated in the *Philosophy of New Music*, sensing that the strict application of twelve-tone technique had become a compositional straightjacket. On a technical level, experience led many to the conclusion that the possibilities of totally chromatic material had been exhausted and could only generate nondescript, identikit modernist musical objects, while philosophically it seems obvious that Adorno's call to artistic martyrdom through the embracing of a non-communicative language was an understandable response of self-immolation in the face of the extreme horror of the Third Reich and could never be translated into a general principle or long-term strategy.

The next three decades were to see spectacular defections from the serialist camp as the desire both for beauty in a more positive sense and self-expression reasserted themselves. In the cases of Arvo Pärt, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki and John Taverner, all interestingly working independently of one another, the break with the dodecaphonic idiom went hand-in-hand with the development of a new type of sacred music sometimes referred to somewhat pejoratively as "holy minimalism". Other composers such as Einojuhani Rautavaara, Alfred Schnittke in his later years and (in my view somewhat more problematically) Krzysztof Penderecki sought to write in a more lyrical style with tonal elements.

Critical opinion remains divided as to the artistic quality and significance of what has been termed New Tonality. Consonance is certainly no longer an offence in the postmodern musical climate, but whether this in itself constitutes genuine beauty is another issue. For some, the return to diatonic material is a liberation which demonstrates that the project of the avant-garde was, to mis-appropriate an Adornian phrase, "an experiment with a negative outcome". Others charge musical postmodernism with vacuity; the simple deployment of tonal chords, while not necessarily sounding "false" as Adorno claimed in 1941, does not necessarily guarantee any sort of "truth-content" or, to put it less polemically, carry any real artistic conviction. According to this viewpoint, which essentially repeats the critique of neo-classicism found in the second part of the *Philosophy of New Music* entitled *Stravinsky and the Restoration*, tonality—like the bourgeois society which generated it—is irrevocably lost and all attempts to restore it doomed to failure. Indeed, as with other art-forms, it seems that some postmodern composers, of whom Gustav Mahler was maybe the first in another age, anticipate this criticism by flaunting banality and meaninglessness as elements of style (though without Mahler's metaphysical nostalgia).

It is hard to refute the suggestion that the scarring of humanity and our planet is such that beauty, for which tonal harmony is both a metaphor and a potential medium, cannot simply be taken for granted as artistic subject-matter; a true appreciation of the natural and human world is indissociable from a lament both over social injustice and the negative effect of post-Enlightenment culture's domination of nature. In this context it is worth emphasizing that the so-called "holy minimalists" all reverted to consonant music subsequent to a participation in the avant-garde, whether European

(Pärt, Górecki, Taverner) or in the American environment influenced by John Cage[7]. Whether consciously or unconsciously, their music's refusal to participate in the continuation of an essentially Germanic artistic teleology would seem to endorse the Adornian critique of the Enlightenment as a dead end, while of course rejecting the Hegelian conceptual apparatus on which that critique still relies. It would be a crude simplification to reduce the work of these composers to a common agenda, but they share a concern to obviate the pessimistic *fin de partie* (the reference to Beckett is wholly intentional) of Western art-music in its postserial form by a *ressourcement* that is either geographical (non-Western elements in Reich, Johnson) and/or historical (the allusions to music pre-dating the enlightenment in Pärt, Gorecki and Taverner). At the same time they resist the nihilism of the post-Nietzschean, "anything goes" variant of postmodernism, whose collages of universally available historical and stylistic idioms communicate "pure affirmation" without any attempt to construe meaning.

Minimalism constitutes one potent exit strategy from the crisis of musical modernism. Its spiritual achievements of minimalism are considerable, examples being the shattering austerity of Arvo Pärt's *Kanon Pokojanen* (Liturgy of Repentance, 1997), where radical musical simplicity and self-emptying penitence fuse to stunning effect, or the granitic *Beatus Vir* (1979) of Górecki [8]. The facile charge that the return to the simplest of tonal/modal means is an escapist abdication from contemporary social reality moreover ignores the fact that both composers just mentioned were actively involved in resistance to Eastern Bloc Communism. Just as ill-founded are the accusations of musical vacuity; given that many minimal works are overtly devotional in nature and are not conceived as exercises in the demonstration of technical ability for the benefit of music critics, the negative judgements emanating from some quarters of the musical establishment ought perhaps not to be surprising[9]. Indeed, the conscious "poverty" of means employed may be seen as articulating an important message; minimalism's very strength would appear to derive from a radical paring down of the material and an implicit critique of the hubris of much of the Western tradition's search for subjective expression in art.

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7 Although their work does not feature so frequently in discussions of sacred music, here I would include Steve Reich and Tom Johnson, whose output includes the imposing and theologically engaged *Bonhoeffer Oratorio* (1988–1992) and the monumental Zen-influenced cycle *Organ and Silence* (2000).

8 Górecki's most successful work is arguably not the highly moving but somewhat one-dimensional *Third Symphony* (especially when to my taste spiritualized out of its rugged, earthbound context in the polished bestselling recording conducted by David Zinman with Dawn Upshaw) but the wider-ranging "Copernicus" symphony Op. 31 of a few years earlier which combines elements both of Górecki's modernist and minimalist periods.

9 I doubt whether Pärt, Górecki or Taverner would be unduly concerned at allegations of musical fideism; although I would not like to assert clear categorical boundaries in this respect, the primary aim of their works would appear to be worship rather than theological reflection or apologetics.

The question nevertheless arises as to what other options may be open to Judeo-Christian composers in search of means of contemporary expression who wish to avoid an unreflecting conservatism while going beyond the effective but necessarily narrow focus of the minimalists? It is here that I would argue that the trajectory of Olivier Messiaen provides material for potentially fruitful reflection.

5. Olivier Messiaen

Olivier Messiaen's early style is one of the most immediately recognizable of any twentieth-century composer, not least because he himself was so explicit about its constituent elements. By the time of the publication of his *Technique de mon langage musical* in 1944, the compendium of his technical devices was already well-defined (his celebrated *modes à transposition limitée*, use of so-called Hindu and Greek rhythms...). Messiaen had evolved a highly personal and controversial idiom which shocked some by its modernity, while offending others by its unabashed harmonic voluptuousness, the latter including the young Pierre Boulez, who famously described the first extracts from Messiaen's *Turangalîla-symphonie* to be performed as 'brothel music' (*musique de bordel*) at their première in 1948.

Although somewhat allergic to philosophical jargon and remote from the Central European intellectual tradition both analyzed and personified by Adorno, Messiaen found himself at the centre of French post-war aesthetic debates both as a composer and a pedagogue. As a teacher at the Paris Conservatoire, his class became the spawning-ground for many of the leading avant-garde composers of the generation after 1945, although Messiaen himself taught analysis rather than composition and (unlike the highly partisan Leibowitz) refrained from aligning himself with any movement. His own pieces from the years following the completion of *Turangalîla*, certainly bear the marks of the aesthetic debates of the time. Although nowhere in his pedagogical writings[10] or commentaries on his own music is an overt adhesion to the "taboo on beauty" to be found, it is striking that Messiaen's works from the period 1949–1951 (notably the *Quatre Etudes de rhythme* for piano and the two large organ works *Messe de la Pentecôte* and above all the *Livre d'orgue*) see him move in the direction of increasing abstraction and intellectualization typical of the epoch. Messiaen's unashamed hallmark tonic and "added sixth" chords of his music up until *Turangalîla*, provocatively affirmative to the point of kitsch, are banished in favour of an austere linearity; although there is a subsequent loosening of this idiom in Messiaen's remaining works of the 1950s, it is not until the mid-1960s (with *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum* and *La Transfiguration*) that Messiaen reintegrates certain elements of his luxuriant earlier style into his compositional language.

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[10] Curiously, Jean Boivin's *La Classe de Messiaen* [19] suggests that Messiaen as a teacher was not untouched by the repressive attitude found in doctrinaire avant-garde circles towards melodic writing and "forbidden" intervals (pointing out the appearance of octaves in his pupil's compositions, for example, or advising his student Akira Tamba in 1963 that "There are currently two ways of approaching contemporary music: one must either go through twelve-tone technique or *musique concrète*, so choose" ([19], pp. 379–80). A charitable interpretation would be that Messiaen's comments reveal a realistic pedagogical concern for the acceptance of the younger composers' work in a rigid musical climate, rather than a statement concerning the aesthetic validity of the styles in question.

There has been much speculation as to the reasons behind these stylistic shifts; less charitable critics have sometimes claimed that Messiaen's turn away from aural beauty to cerebral serial rigour was either a case of naïve pandering to fashion or a cynical act of self-preservation in the face of the dogmatic revolutionary zeal of his pupils. This interpretation is not as fanciful as it might seem: in comments of later years, Messiaen distanced himself from twelve-tone works such as the *Modes de valeurs et d'intensités*, which he came to regard as emotionally frigid intellectual exercises. There is for example a hint of earnestness as well as jest in his gently self-deprecating comments on the *Livre d'orgue*, whose recourse to serialism he later described as "a sacrifice to the idols of the twentieth century"[11] ([20], pp. 226–28). However, there is no doubting the seriousness of his engagement with the techniques of modernism; a balanced appreciation ought justly to emphasize both Messiaen's openness to new musical currents and his unrelenting desire to harness exploration to an underlying Christian purpose which keeps his abstraction in check. Even in the most dryly abstruse and least accessible passages of the *Livre d'orgue*, he attempts to relate his chosen musical devices to theological concepts such as the "incomprehension surrounding the mystery of the Holy Trinity" ([20], p. 181). Moreover, he clearly and crucially maintains the dividing-line between the type of speculation invited by the imagery of the Old Testament prophets (as in Ezekiel's vision of *Les yeux dans les roues*) and speculation for its own sake as a demonstration of the conceptual power of the human mind. Messiaen is certainly attracted by the sublime, as for example indicated by the title of the 3rd movement of the *Livre d'orgue, Les mains de l'abîme*. His response to the abyss, however, is not that of Kant's *Critique*: the overwhelming of the senses does not lead to an awareness of the conceptual superiority of the mind but to a sense of holy fear. The sublime and the beautiful are for Messiaen not divorced but rather indissolubly linked, as a quotation of Rilke's 1st Duino Elegy in his compositional treatise makes clear in relation to his reading of the Biblical prophets:

> "The beautiful is that degree of the awesome which we can still bear ... *we can admire it, for it scorns to destroy us ... Every angel is terrifying* [...] The divine visions of the Prophets have this terrifying beauty. Terrifying, searing and at the same time pacifying. They leave us overwhelmed while communicating to us something of their peaceful force" ([20], p. 181)[12].

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[11] See Peter Bannister, "Messiaen as preacher and evangelist in the context of European modernism." ([21], pp. 29–39).

[12] Translation and italicization (quote from Rilke) mine.

Equally central to Messiaen's thinking is the inseparability of artistic beauty and that of creation. For Adorno any reference to the natural realm on the part of art had been essentially rendered impossible on account of the self-legitimating appeal to nature by totalitarianism[13] (both in its Fascist and Socialist Realist variants); bolstered by an unshakable Catholic theology and helped by geographical distance Messiaen obviates this problem by ignoring the whole trajectory of the Austro-German tradition and its concomitant view of music as the expression of subjectivity. This does not however mean that he seeks a return to the tonal system as objectively beautiful; the grammatical organization of tonality he (correctly) perceives as a social and historical construct that should not be preserved at all costs. Instead, he anchors his music in two natural phenomena whose objectivity cannot be contested. The first is *la résonance*, *i.e.*, the overtone series. This is part of creation and cannot be superseded by man-made strategies which ignore the physical properties of sound, its existence as aural reality. At a time when for many composers written notation of music had become a question of transcribing abstract thought, Messiaen's historical position is somewhat atypical in this regard[14].

The second natural phenomenon is birdsong, which Messiaen regards as ontologically prior to human music—it is ornithology which allows him, starting with a series of works in the 1950s exclusively (and perhaps at first somewhat monotonously) based on birdsong, to avoid the aporia of the avant-garde and the whole issue of the crisis of subjective expression[15]. Messiaen's language may not be to all tastes, but posterity would appear to have vindicated his aesthetic position: of all

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[13] An awareness of this political background helps to understand the occasional excesses of Adorno's polemical style as exemplified by his seemingly unjustified and mis-directed tirade *Glosse über Sibelius* written for the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* in 1938. Although it is difficult to detect any unsavoury political undertones in the admittedly nationalistic compositions of the by-then ageing Finnish composer, it is not hard to see why the Nazis would have been interested in co-opting his pantheistic symphonic music in the service of their own Nordic pagan mythology. For Adorno the link between nature-worship and Fascist regression is explicit: "Sibelius's supporters scream in chorus: nature is all, nature is all. Great Pan, and where necessary blood and earth (*Blut und Boden*), step up into the picture." An example of the avant-garde's view of the illegitimacy of appeals to nature—and by implication the evocation of natural beauty—can be found in an article for *Die Reihe*, a journal associated with the Darmstadt school, written by Herbert Eimert in 1957: "In the recent past, nothing was more in vogue than 'Nature"'; not its secondary version, dominated by the supra-natural authority of the artist (as is sometimes understood in our milieu) but primal, pseudo-ontological nature decorated with Orphism, where one finds grouped together the categories of race, people, blood and soil. This hijacking of nature is perhaps one of the reasons why art can no longer be brought back to nature. What despotism wants is not reason and order, but the "return to nature", or, to speak like Günther Anders; "the little word *Nature* is the one favoured by terror." (Cited Esteban Buch, *Figures politiques de la technique sérielle* ([22], pp. 213–26. Translation mine.)

[14] Writing in the 1960s in a far more genial tone than two decades earlier, Adorno himself commented on the negative consequences of the "disempowerment of the living, listening act as the authentic constituent of music" ([23], p. 657).

[15] It is interesting to note that, writing in 1961, Antoine Goléa—who was Messiaen's translator in Darmstadt—interpreted the latter's insistence on the superiority of natural to human music as an expression of pessimism concerning humanity stemming from the personal difficulties in Messiaen's life in the 1950s, most notably the mental disintegration of his first wife Claire Delbos (see Antoine Goléa, *Rencontres avec Olivier Messiaen* ([24], pp. 234–35).

the major composers associated with the musical vanguard in Western Europe in the second half of the 20th century, Messiaen is maybe the only one to have been able to appeal consciously to beauty with impunity.

With the gradual thawing of the ideological climate from the 1960s onwards—as the trauma of the experience of the Second World War receded—it is understandable that several composers of Messiaen's generation (Lutosławski and Dutilleux being prime examples) should have moved towards greater lyricism in their later work. Interestingly, for Messiaen, unlike the somewhat younger 'holy minimalists', this does not represent a dialectical movement away from modernism and conditioned by it as its negative image. Instead Messiaen's late masterpieces display an extremely individual combination of modernist techniques with the harmonic affirmation of his early works, a synthesis which arguably leads to some of Messiaen's greatest achievements such as the opera *St François d'Assise*. This inclusive attitude finds a parallel in his Thomist standpoint on the relationship between space-time and eternity as articulated in 1945 in his commentary on the last of the *Trois petites liturgies* (*Psalmodie de l'Ubiquité par l'amour*): 'The words: "Succession is simultaneity for you' express ... the composer's desire to escape time with its barriers and divisions"[16].

Messiaen's thought is not dialectical but holistic. As all times (and places) are present to God, all possible epochs and styles are available as raw material to the composer, without exclusion. Messiaen's "theological rainbow" (*arc-en-ciel théologique*) seems to have a space for anything and everything from plainchant to Einstein's theory of relativity: for him there is no incompatibility between raiding the latest astronomical research as well as the neumes of ancient Gregorian chant for inspiration. Messiaen's music, rooted in a positive eschatological vision of the New Heavens and the New Earth, remains teleological, but in a completely different sense both from that of the unthinking secular belief in progress and that of Adorno's dystopian vision. Messiaen does not simply abandon modernism to its fate, but rather looks through and beyond it.

6. Adorno or Messiaen?

For all the difficulties and limitations of his arguments[17], Adorno's consistent refusal to resolve dissonance prematurely (both in art and in thought itself) is surely a significant one for any attempt to hold artistic apophasis and cataphasis in proper tension. An understanding, though not necessarily an acceptance of the post-war taboo on beauty can help to bring Christian artists back to a genuinely Biblical vision in which concealment and revelation, cross and resurrection are inseparable.

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[16] In Brigitte Massin, *Olivier Messiaen; une poétique du merveilleux* ([25], pp. 164–65).

[17] Critics have not been slow to disqualify Adorno's musical aesthetics on the grounds of their over-reliance on a Hegelian view of history and an ethnocentric refusal to acknowledge socio-historical contexts other than that of Central Europe (exemplified by his spectacular mistaken judgement on jazz). Post-colonial theory in particular has exposed the element of domination in the Adornian conceptual framework, somewhat ironically given that suspicion towards meta-narratives is one of the cornerstones of his project and one of its most successful aspects. This does not however in my view invalidate Adorno's analysis of his own tradition; nor should it be concluded that his method cannot necessarily be applied to other traditions given appropriate adaptation.

As he himself often admitted, Olivier Messiaen naturally tended towards being a "theologian of glory"[18]. The titles of his early compositions such as *L'Apparition de l'Eglise éternelle* and *L'Ascension* plainly bear this out. The ability to express a *theologia crucis* in music was one that Messiaen had to learn and which went against his artistic grain. It was perhaps precisely by engaging, albeit idiosyncratically, with the negativity of the avant-garde and the sometimes barren asceticism of the 1950s, allowing his language to be temporarily purged of the joyous sonorities and harmonic lushness of his earlier idiom, that Messiaen was subsequently able to re-integrate both the timeless natural beauty of birdsong and the humanly conceived beauty of tonal harmony into an expanded idiom able to embrace the stigmata of St Francis[19] and the darkness of Golgotha[20]. employing the full panoply of techniques developed by modernism and somehow "evangelizing" them.

Without wishing to make a qualitative comparison between styles, Messiaen's music at its best suggests that the drastic reduction of compositional means found in minimalism may not be the only way forward for the aspiring composer of sacred music for our times, and that something of the project of modernity—indeed maybe a great deal—can still be redeemed once its undoubted technical discoveries are divested of their more dubious philosophical pretensions. To return to our starting-point, Messiaen's attempt to saving modernity from itself relies, at least in part, on insisting that the *aural* basis of music, its sensory beauty, is no mere epiphenomenon to be jettisoned in the quest for immaterial absolutes, but rather has value in and of itself, by virtue of its identity as part of Divine creation. Messiaen's unfashionable emphasis on the significance of the beautiful in intimating Divine transcendence suggests that the beautiful and the sublime should be viewed in a "both-and" rather than an "either-or" relationship. After all, it is worth recalling that the ultimate Biblical promise is not merely the sublimity of a new Heaven but also the imperishable beauty of a new Earth (Revelation 21).

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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[18] An excellent if limited treatment of this aspect of Messiaen's output can be found in Jean-François Labie's *Le Visage du Christ dans la musique des XIXe et Xxe siècles* [26].

[19] It is perhaps significant that the orchestral prelude to the section of *St François d'Assise* entitled *Les Stigmates* is a very rare instance in Messiaen's later works of the employment of total serialism to depict an atmosphere of anguish and foreboding.

[20] Exemplified by the movement entitled *Les Ténèbres* from Messiaen's monumental cycle for organ *Livre du Saint-Sacrément*, in which the composer unusually uses cluster techniques to convey the physical and spiritual darkness of the crucifixion.

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Can Music “Mirror” God? A Theological-Hermeneutical Exploration of Music in the Light of Arvo Pärt’s *Spiegel im Spiegel*

Maeve Louise Heaney

Abstract: A theological exploration of the potential of non-liturgical instrumental music for the transmission of religious Christian faith experience, based on a hermeneutical tool drawn from Jean-Jacques Nattiez as applied to Arvo Pärt’s *Spiegel im Spiegel.* The article explores musical composition, reception, as well as the piece of music in itself, to discover common traits and keys to understanding its “meaning”, and relate it to current thought and development in theology; in particular to themes of creativity, theological aesthetics, the Ascension, the artistic vocation and meaning-making in contemporary culture, through music and films.

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1. Introduction: Can Music be “Spiritual”?

Instead of “starting anywhere”, as John Cage might advise, let’s start at the end: I invite the reader to listen to a recording of Arvo Pärt’s *Spiegel im Spiegel* [1] (Mirror in the Mirror), before, or during the reading of this article, and to sit for a while with whatever it touches, provokes, or mirrors in you. Each listening to any piece of music, recorded or live, is a new moment of “reception” and therefore of meaning-making [2]. It may lead you to agree or disagree with what is written here, but at the very least it may help you echo with and “understand” it, and in any case, in the context of reflecting on Music and Spirituality, it allows us to enter into our theme through the doorway of experience and to allow that experience to colour, challenge or enrich our theoretical reflections.

What is it about a piece of music that leads it to be recorded in twelve different versions (*cf.* [3,4], p. 32) and used in or as the soundtrack of fourteen films, (and counting) [5]? Is it already a “classic”, in Gadamarian philosophical or theological terms, or is it too soon to pass judgement? Can we even decipher the reasons behind its “success”, and if, in fact, such proliferation of (also) commercial use implies musical quality or rather commodification hinting at the lack thereof [6]? Is the explicitly spiritual and religious inspiration of its composer relevant, making it more “religious” or “Christian” than other music or should we leave that source aside in our reflection? And how do we even begin to answer these questions?

Alongside the general popularity and growing interest in the person and music of Arvo Pärt, there is an increasing volume of scholarly interest and research being published (of particular interest are [7], and the already cited [4]. In relation to the chosen piece of music, *Spiegel im Spiegel*, and its use in film, an excellent recent study is [8] as it brings together approaches from musicological and film studies). This last study covers a vast range of topics, from biography, through musical

theory and musicology to themes of meaning and spirituality. I draw from these sources with the specific aim of identifying and bridging with theological principles and notions which can help orientate and better guide us through the ongoing encounter of Spirituality (in my case, Christian) and the Arts. I am neither a musicologist nor a semiotician, but I am convinced of their importance in a theological understanding of music [9], and hence of the need to collaborate with those who are experts in these fields new to us, challenging as this may be. Music is a powerful symbolic form which I believe can and does enrich human living and mediate the Christian faith experience, perhaps not as an explicit, "complete and computed" proclamation of the kerygma, but as part, or carrier, or even at times as a form of "development" of the same [10]. However, in order to grasp how, we need to take it "on its own terms", rather than trying to "make it fit" into verbal or linguistic paradigms, and open to learning methods of approaching music that can help us do so, and perhaps to recognise the positions or presuppositions underlying our opinions on music and the variety of ways in which a piece of music can be approached.

Why is this important? What are the concerns that underlie this article on music's capacity to reveal God's presence, as exemplified by a hermeneutical exploration of *Spiegel im Spiegel*? Firstly, the basic and essential one of the Church's relationship with and need to understand culture, as an ongoing "first step" in the dialogue between both; one of theology's tasks is to constantly take that step. Secondly, the conviction that God *is* present in culture, and that much of our work is to learn to discover that Triune presence, in the many concrete ways that open us to it. And thirdly that music is one of these ways, and this particular piece of music can help us access and understand that. Why is a hermeneutical approach important? Because many of the challenges facing theology and spirituality in our world now are about understanding and interpretation, which in the words of Lawrence Kramer, finds itself "caught between the extremes of resurgent dogmatism and overambitious empiricism" ([11], p. 3). Hermeneutics is a mediator between these two, so although understanding music in itself is already something, it has more to offer, and will enrich in turn our very comprehension of interpretation and meaning:

> Nothing is more meaningful than music…not in spite of our clumsiness at saying what it means to us…but because that clumsiness takes us to the very heart of what meaning is… If anything can vindicate meaning, music can, and if it can't, nothing can ([11], p. 7).

So, the underlying thesis that these pages seek to unfold is the following: music can "mirror" the presence of God, but/and a careful hermeneutical approach to how that happens can help both spirituality, music and theology grow and expand our understanding of revelation and our access to it.

2. Tripartition Theory as Applied to *Spiegel im Spiegel*

For that reason, this reflection will be framed by a hermeneutical tool found in the work of musicologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez [12]. His thought is a tremendous resource for spirituality and theology for the understanding of musical meaning, because not only is he aware of the threefold dimension of any act of human expression common to hermeneutics ("author", "text" and "reader") as applied to music: "composer", "piece of music" and "audience", but in recognition of the complexity

of musical performance and meaning, he includes the on-going making of meaning that happens in every arrangement and performance, and organises the variety of ways in which one can receive or "comprehend" music accordingly (*cf.* [13], pp. 3–53). His approach, known as the Tripartition Theory, or Method, draws from the work of Jean Molino and applies it to musical analysis, developing six possible approaches to understanding music that unfold when the three hermeneutical standpoints of literary criticism mentioned above are applied to musical analysis. He uses the names "poietic processes" for the compositional and creative elements in music (in recognition that this includes composer/s and performers), "trace" for the piece of music itself [14] and "esthesics" [15] for the process of reception. These six approaches depend on whether one:

1. analyses solely the piece of music in itself, or "trace" [*Immanent Analysis*];
2. moves from an analysis of the piece of music towards an understanding of the compositional process/processes [*Inductive Poietics*];
3. moves from what is known of the poietic processes of the composer or performer to understand the meaning in a piece of music [*Deductive or External Poietics*];
4. moves from an analysis of the music to how it could (or should) be heard [*Inductive Esthesics*];
5. focuses on how it is received or perceived by those who listen to it [*External Esthesics*];
6. combines all the above, which is, of course, the most complete form of interpretation (*cf.* [16], pp. 140–42])!

The beauty of this method, above and beyond its obvious thoroughness, is that it calls us to an awareness of the presuppositions that colour our opinions and appreciation of music, and in the quest for a fuller, more truthful understanding of meaning [17], does not allow us to remain complacently or at least unquestioningly in any given position. Why is such diversity or complexity necessary or helpful, when a more simple threefold approach suffices in literary criticism? Because the non-discursive and non-referential nature of music means its meaning is not linguistic, and therefore less easily discernible. Although all communication, including the verbal or discursive can be ambivalent or ambiguous, music is both freer and more embodied, and therefore although we "feel" it more viscerally (I contend), precisely *what* we are feeling or experiencing, and *why*, is harder to pinpoint—therein its strength and its challenge. And the need to be careful and thorough about where we draw our conclusions from when we pronounce a word on the spiritual or theological meaning of music.

My choice of Nattiez as a framework is due to the comprehensive nature of his work and its provision of a hermeneutical "tool"—a method—as opposed to the equally necessary defence of hermeneutics. There are other musicologists who take important hermeneutical approaches to musical analysis and criticism: Rose Rosengard Subotnik's work in challenging structural listening as the sole mode of accessing musical meaning was ground breaking (*cf.* [18], pp. 148–76) and animates even now reflection on a variety of approaches to musical scholarship [19]. Susan McClary's work is paradigmatic in expanding a hermeneutic approach to music and introducing feministic perspectives to musicology [20]. And the aforementioned book by Lawrence Kramer offers the best defence of hermeneutics, including but not limited to, musical hermeneutics that I have found ([11], pp. 1–19). However, hermeneutics as a way of proceeding is widely accepted in theology—what is

new is the knowledge of how to approach music in that way, for which I believe Nattiez's tripartitional method is exceptionally suited. Despite explicit recognition of the need for interdisciplinary collaboration and its potential to enrich theology, too often theologians have little time or capacity to *actually* appreciate and integrate musicological perspectives. I would hope that a concentrated focus on this particular approach bridging hermeneutics with musicological studies, applied to a particular piece of music, could prove to be an accessible and beneficial entrance point.

Within this framework, without aiming to be comprehensive, the article will explore aspects of Arvo Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel* ("Mirror in the Mirror") as the particular focus of exploration. The reason behind the choice of music, apart from the obvious one of it being a personal favourite, lies in all three hermeneutical viewpoints: the music is interesting in both style and execution, the composer is explicitly religious in his inspiration and states (without imposing) it, and its reception, omnipresent outside the liturgical and even religious realms. It is also one of those that has attracted more scholarly analysis [21,22]. At each point I will bring the music into dialogue with authors or theological notions that can help its understanding.

In order to understand this approach in relation to *Spiegel im Spiegel*, we need to distinguish:

- *The Trace:* Leaving aside the composer and people's opinion of his intentionality, we simply look at analyses of *Spiegel im Spiegel* itself (*immanent analysis*). Where conclusions are drawn from an analysis about the process of composition and meaning of the composer, we are dealing with the second approach (*Inductive Poietics*); whereas when the expectation is that this analysis orientate, or even dictate what people could or should hear, it is the fourth (*inductive esthesics*);
- *The Composer*: What did the composer intend with and in this music? What does Arvo Pärt think it "means"? Or/and what do those who know him say about his intended meaning? Does what *Spiegel im Spiegel* provokes in us have something to do with who he is, or how he composes? (*deductive or external poietics*) [23];
- *Reception*: We can look at how the music has been or is being received, including both critical reviews and the opinions of "fans" who are musically "untrained" (*external esthesics*). The importance of its use in films, for example, and how it is received therein, would fit here, and I will, in fact, focus on its use in film. We will tackle the difficulties and benefits of this decision at that point.

The focus guiding our explorations is that marked by the title: whether and in what way this music can "mirror", or evoke for us the Presence of the divine—or conversely, facilitate our being present to God, and this outside or beyond the realm of the liturgy. Is something of the God revealed in and through Christ accessible in the music, as it is written? Does the spirituality of the composer filter through to those listening, whether or not they share the same beliefs? How does the way in which this music has been received in contemporary culture speak to these questions, and if so, can we draw conclusions about music in general? Although attempting to be as open and critical as possible, my own intuition is twofold: unless we wish to dissect and divide human living, our interiority has to somehow be expressed and accessible in all we do and create, and music is an exceptionally powerful symbolic form; and that God is "more omnipresent" (an oxymoron, I know) than we are aware of,

and at work long before ever being identified or named. The fact that this piece music is instrumental and therefore devoid of explicit conceptual meaning (beyond the title), as well as the fact that its reception has been largely extra-liturgical, is an aid in exploring this hypothesis.

As will be clear, the choice of a hermeneutical approach recognises and seeks to honour the contextual and multifaceted nature of our experience of music and our apprehension of meaning in life, all of which, however, must not impede our seeking it. It also has something to say, or mirrors the complexity of Christian living itself, and therein lies the one of the riches of theology's engagement with musical meaning. In relation to any given piece of music, one can be composer, performer, or listener, or all three at the same time—the experience is different, even when the same music is played. As well as this, it is an experience that is "acted out", "performed". Kramer speaks of meaning as "performed" rather than discovered ([11], p. 12). Christian faith is more than the range of doctrines many denominations profess each Sunday in the creed, because any one of these essential truths of our faith can be experienced in a number of ways—from different perspectives. Trinitarian faith allows us to experience life as welcomed by the presence of a God that is family, or as instrumental in welcoming others to that presence; faith can enable us to experience ourselves as children or as sharing in a parenthood that is human-divine. Faith is embodied and enacted—the words we pronounce can come alive in and through us as we perform them. Understanding the multi-faceted nature of music can help us to somehow grasp that complexity, or as we shall see, even experience it.

2.1. Spiegel im Spiegel: The Music

In order to base our reflections on the piece itself and the musical genre it belongs to, we will start with "the trace". It is probably worthwhile mentioning that as a new form of music, there is much debate, not only around its meaning, exemplified in those exalting its "transcendent" or "sacred" tones and those who consider it "simple" or "flat" (*cf.* [22], p. 65), but even among those extoling its worth, the issue of how to analyse it remains a challenge [24,25].

Spiegel im Spiegel, depending on the speed it is played at, is a nine or ten minute long piece of chamber music for violin and piano (although it can be played an octave lower by a cello) and has been adapted for other instruments such as clarinet, alto-flute, horn and double bass. It is instrumental, and therefore the only textual reference it has is the title: *Mirror in the Mirror*. It is the last work that Pärt completed before leaving Estonia, considered one of the earlier pieces of his renowned tintinnabuli style [26]. Much has been written about this style of composition, created by Pärt in the mid seventies and for which he has become renowned, so that a comprehensive description of what it implies and the positions surrounding it exceed the limits of this article, but by way of introduction, it is a deceptively simple style consisting of a combination of what Paul Hillier calls "the horizontal and vertical manifestations of pitch" ([7], p. 90); that is to say, melody and the type of "harmony", or better said, sound that emerges by the interaction of both. Two voices blend together: triadic arpeggios, repeatedly unfolding the major triad (Do-Mi-Sol), and a melodic line, which moves diatonically (along the tonal scale) in stepwise motion (*cf.* [7], p. 93).

The style has been coined "holy minimalism" by many, in reference to both its links with minimalist music as a musical style and the religious inspiration of its composer. Above and beyond the

connotations of these names, "minimal" seems a good description of the music, which is carefully built, and moves slowly, silence and space being equally important to its development. Kaire Maimets-Volt integrates this dimension of silence, making it perhaps the most complete linguistic description for our purposes:

> In short tintinnabuli is a peculiar kind of stringent diatonic polyphony, created from tonal material outside the paradigm of functional harmony, and built on strictly defined principles around three essential elements: (1) the triad which rotates; (2) the linear melodic line which moves in stepwise fashion; and (3) silence which is used as musically creative element ([8], p. 10).

So the overriding quality of this music is what one could call its "harmony-made-melody". *Spiegel im Spiegel* is a melodic-harmonic whole—"the harmonic framework tilted sideways to form a musical line" ([7], p. 90), an open melody consisting, precisely in the unfolding of its harmony. "In principle these two parts join to form an inseparable whole—a twofold single entity" ([8], p. 58). This is reflected by the nomenclature theorists use to analyse the music: "M-voice" (for melody) and "T-Voice" (for triad) as opposed to melody and harmony.

It seems to me that it is precisely this harmonic space that opens in tintinnabuli music that makes it so apt for spiritual interpretation, and specifically one involving open space and presence. The relationship of the arts to time and space is an ongoing theme in theology. Jeremey Begbie's development of music's relationship to time is well-known [27]. Before him, Bernard Lonergan related different art forms to dimensions of time and space: painting, sculpture and architecture to space, and music to time, respectively [28]. Music is temporal—it implies time to play, listen and experience it, but perhaps the strongest aspect of human life that music affects and makes us aware of is our bodies and therefore how we experience the space we're in, the way we exist and move in space. Now it seems to me that there are types of music that accentuate more our corporality, invading our sensorial space with rhythms or harmonies that awaken us, literally, by stimulating and moving us physically, (one of the reasons that jogging and iPod culture work together so well?). And that there are other types of music that somehow do the opposite: they slow us down; they stretch our awareness of ourselves, those around us and the world we inhabit, precisely because of their "emptiness". We wonder what's coming next, and wait for it; we become more aware of the other notes and their relationship to each other, precisely because there are so few, rather like being in a room with one other person as opposed to a crowd: attention is heightened. Musical semiotics identify relation and integration (in comparison to definition) as one of the characteristics that differentiate music from verbal communication: music works with relationships and tensions "between" notes—one always understood in relation and curving towards the other, be it in melody or harmony. A genre or style of music whose main focus is precisely in a "harmonic melody" could be expected to facilitate or engender a heightened awareness of our presence in relation to the world and each other ([9], pp. 120–27; [29]). Could we not suggest a musical parallel to negative theology's conviction that no matter how much we say about the divine, there is always more we will never be able to express, so let us start in that more humble and truthful humble space…which

God inhabits more easily than our words; or at least more silently. After all, the empty tomb is a "sign" of the resurrection of the body, as we shall see later.

Let us look at *Spiegel im Spiegel* itself. Tintinnabuli music has had more than one manifestation or stage of development. Hillier identifies three: the first works of the later 1970s and early 1980s, those of the mid-1980s to early 1990s, and finally the mid-1990s to the present time. However, the compositions always circle "around the same basic set of images and never entirely quitting the basic tenets of the tintinnabuli aesthetic established in the 1970s" [30]. In this article we focus on a piece from the earlier period, composed in the 1970s. *Spiegel im Spiegel* itself is written in F major, and the tonic note or root (F) is maintained in arpeggios by the piano, around which the violin constructs a melody circling the third (A) as its centre, to which it always returns. Cizmic notes that although "Pärt places his composition squarely within the tonal world" he refuses "the hierarchical and teleological conventions of functional tonality" ([22], p. 69). That is the case here: in the melody, although F is the base note of tonal music, and therefore the tonic note, Pärt gives more emphasis to another note, taking the third as the centre-point of the melody, to which he constantly returns at the end of each musical "phrase", creating what I can only describe as an open, or stretched harmonic space, since it is neither dissonant, nor unfinished, but "stretched", and that in being so, it seems to "leave space" in which we can *feel* or *experience* something.

For a full theoretical analysis of the music, I refer to the excellent and thorough presentations available in that field to be found in both Cizmic ([22], pp. 68–71), her exploration of its use alongside pieces by Shostakovich and Góreck [31], and Maimets-Volt ([8], pp. 64–68), showing several convergences despite the diversity of their analytical aims. Cizmic contains insightful elements of both *inductive poietics* and *inductive esthesics*. Based on an *immanent analysis* of the score, she questions two anthropological and epistemological presuppositions that condition, albeit often implicitly, positive and negative evaluations of his music (and music in general): a neoplatonic Augustinian model and an autonomous modernist one. She recognizes in the music an opening of time and space:

> The pacing—the unwaveringly slow speed and rhythmic tempo—provides *time and space* for a listener to focus in on a single note *and experience it*, its overtones, and any sort of nuance (such as vibrato or lack thereof) that the performer chooses to enact, before hearing it slide on to the next note ([22], p. 105; [32]).

This opening can create "a static state of being" underlining the experience of time and endurance ([31], pp. 31–32; [33]).

Maimets-Volt offers two different analyses: the first based on the field of musicological cognition, suggesting meaning within *Spiegel im Spiegel* as a piece of concert music (*inductive esthesics*). The second is based on its reception in films and using analysis based of film study and cultural semiotics, which we will look at in the section on reception. In the former, she focuses on the overall perceived "sound" of tintinnabuli music, including the score but not limited to it, which she defines as the "complex acoustic phenomenon depending on compositional and performance features, yet irrespective of a particular instrumental/vocal timbre" that makes tintinnabuli music "immediately recognizable for listeners" ([8], p. 56). In the words of Hillier: "a sound which

appears hauntingly simple, though it stirs complex emotions, and is immediately recognizable" [34]. She explores its emotional meaning, recognizing that, although the relation between music and emotion is not the only one of importance, it is one of the overriding aspects of human living that has been consistently explored in musicology. Some of the musical attributes of *Spiegel im Spiegel* that she identifies are the following:

- major mode, clear modal centre (although firmly tonal, not necessarily grounded in the tonic);
- steady pulse, regular meter;
- perceived speed: slow—yet the piece is metrically/temporally layered, featuring smooth flowing motion;
- prevailing register space: middle and a melodic range;
- small pitch level variation within one voice;
- homogeneous, viscous and resonant sonic texture, constant sound (no silences filled with overtones);
- smooth (legato) articulation ([8], pp. 64–6).

Following the analytical tools of Gabrielsson and Lindström ([35], pp. 235–42), she associates these musical features with the following discrete emotions, albeit in terms of possibility (what it *may* evoke), and not necessity (See Table 1), and contrasts this with what is said or commented on in its reception, within which she notes that some reactions are more "expected" than others. She also points out the poetic nature of its description. In the following chart, I take her findings on both (analytical tools and features gathered from commentaries on its reception), and organise them according to Nattiez's tripartitional method.

Table 1. Inductive Esthesics and Free Commentary.

Inductive Esthesics		**Free Commentary [actual]**
Immanent Analysis	**Esthesics [expected]**	
Major tone	happiness/joy, expressions of gracefulness, sereneness, and solemnity.	Floating; Luminous and slow; exquisite; beautiful; a sad and simple idyll; longbreathed; dreamy aura; "an extension in time and space" concentric/centripetal movement transitional/ascending movement sweeping, chorale-like arches spreads itself out more and more. It thus gives rise to a new architectonic configuration like a meditation chapel, stimulates reflection, prayer or the desire for redemption.
Narrow melodic pitch range	Expressions of sadness, dignity, (pitch) range sentimentality, tranquility, delicateness, and triumphantness; stepwise motion may suggest dullness	
Small pitch variation	disgust, anger, fear, or boredom	
Round envelope (slow tone attack and decay)	tenderness, sadness, fear, disgust, boredom, and potency.	

I have some reservations about even such carefully suggested correlations between musical attributes and emotions, due to the complexity of human emotion and the contextual nature of our making of meaning in culture. However, that emotion and meaning are correlated is undeniable, and her attempt to integrate both musical analysis, anticipated reception/esthesics and free commentary, in the awareness that she is speaking mainly to western cultural sensibility, is thorough, to say the least [36].

2.2. Reception: Spiegel im Spiegel in the Public Domain

An acute attention to the performative and contextual aspects of Pärt's music supplies a window on the spectrum of values that early tintinnabuli pieces offer listeners ([22], p. 76).

We move to the perspective of *external esthesics*: what does the reception of Pärt's music say about the music itself? Before we do so, a word on the importance of reception and *where* we look to in order to perceive it. There is a basic theological truth that affirms that the People of God have been gifted with an indefectible guarantee of divine presence through the Spirit poured out into our hearts, which the Church has long identified and honoured as the *sensus fidelium*: an inner sense, or taste for the things of God and their right understanding. With due attention to processes of discernment and calling on the diversity of roles in all things Christian and ecclesial, this basic Christian principle calls us to listen to the Spirit, wherever she may blow [37]. As a consequence, without excluding the voices of those we deem experts, we need also to listen to the ground-swell, of popular opinion and fandom, even our own [38]! So when we look at the reception of any given piece of music, we look to the experts and to the general public. In relation to the music of Arvo Pärt, this is already being done [39]. As our own window in this article I have decided to look at *Spiegel im Spiegel*'s use in film, and in particular Mike Nichols 2001 *Wit* [40], based on the 1998 Pulitzer Prize winning play of the same title by Margaret Edson, albeit drawing some small references from Tom Tykfer's 2002 *Heaven* [41].

I am aware that this brings another complex, multi-media artistic form into the arena, with the analytical demands that this implies and which the space of this article must postpone for further development, yet the fact remains that for many people, it is, in reality, through film that they first meet Arvo Pärt's music, and even more importantly, due to the non-referential and non-representational nature of music's symbolic form, it is, in a sense, another way of accessing the meaning people make of it, both by the director and the public [42]. As such it has something to offer us. How this music is thematically placed and paired is not indifferent to what *Spiegel im Spiegel mirrors* for contemporary western culture. Maimets-Volts, drawing on Dean Duncan's thesis on the benefits of looking at "serious" music through the lens of film [43], specifically presents the use of Arvo Part's music in film as a helpful way to access what she calls "complex meaning categories" such as "sacred" or "transcendent", or what Philip Tagg calls the "paramusical [44] field of connotation" meaning, which canonical musicological discourse tends to avoid, but which serious attention to its reception can help us access ([8], pp. 16–17). It is a form of *external esthesics* and the particularity and clarity to be found in this approach to musical meaning may be an aid to contemporary theological reflection in avoiding the generalisations that often plague commentary on music. It also obeys the incarnational principle of our access to the universal being through the particular,

recognised also in studies on interpretation as the capacity of the concrete to give us access to the universal ([11], p. 18).

So what can we discover in these films? Once again, I would invite the reader to preface his reading of this section with some experiential entry points: 4 scenes in *Wit* have *Spiegel im Spiegel* as part of their "soundscape" [45], as well as playing us out during the final credits. It is not necessary to repeat the attentive and thorough analysis already presented elsewhere (*cf*. [8], pp. 146–58), but suffice it to say the film narrates the journey of 48 year-old professor Vivian Bearing (played by Emma Thompson) through terminal cancer to death. Dr. Bearing is an intense and demanding John Donne scholar, and the first appearance of this music in the film comes at minute (0:06:27), while listening to the equally rigorous professor E. M. Ashford (played by Eileen Atkins)'s explanation of John's Donne's "Death be not Proud". The point of the explanation is the importance of right punctuation:

> *Gardner's edition of the Holy Sonnets returns to the Westmoreland manuscript source of 1610. Not for sentimental reasons, I assure you, but because Helen Gardner is a scholar: "and death shall be no more, (comma) death thou shalt die. Nothing but a breath, a comma separates death from life everlasting. Very simple really. With the original punctuation restored, death is no longer something to act out on a stage, with exclamation points. Death is a comma, a pause. This way, the uncompromising way, one learns something from the poem, life death, soul, past present, not insuperable barriers, not semi colons, just a comma….*

The second time it appears is as part of a soliloquy of Vivian (who often "breaks the fourth wall to address the 'audience'") on the passing of time (0:28:11):

> *Do not forget that you are seeing the most interesting aspects of my tenure as an in-patient receiving experimental chemotherapy of advanced metastatic ovarian cancer. But as I am a scholar I feel obliged to document what it is like here most of the time between the dramatic climaxes. In truth, it is like this: "You cannot imagine how time can be so still...It hangs. It weighs. And yet there is so little of it. It goes so slowly. And yet it is so scarce. If I were writing this scene it would last a full 15 minutes. I would lie here and you would sit there... Not to worry: Brevity is the soul of wit.*

The third time the music appears at (1:17:30), considered by some to be the centre of the film, it accompanies a movingly human and compassionate re-encounter between the suffering professor Ashford and Vivian, just before she dies, in which Ashford sits beside her on the bed and reads, not Donne's metaphysical poetry, but rather a child's story: *The Runaway Bunny* (by Margaret Wise Brown and Clement Hurd), a little "allegory of the soul" and leaves her, ("Time to go"), now sleeping peacefully, with a kiss and the words of Shakespeare: "And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

Finally, the voice of Vivian reciting John Donne's "Death Be Not Proud" is the over-voice in the final scene of her, dead, in the hospital bed, and continues through the credits.

So the underlying themes are those of life, suffering, death, time, eternity, truth, humanity, compassion…to name the most obvious. And the film is masterfully done [46]. The music

accompanies tragic themes without being melodramatic or sentimental ([22], p. 74; [47]). It seems to open a space and time in which to experience "something" which in this case is eloquently verbalised through the poetry of Donne. In saying this I do not wish to present the soundscape of these scenes as the ultimate key to understanding *Spiegel im Spiegel*'s meaning, nor to claim that the sense this film gives it (and it gives the film) is the "right" one, but rather to illustrate the potential of this music to accompany and highlight these kinds of themes. It is not an isolated instance. Without going into such detail, Tom Tykfer's *Heaven* deals with themes of redemption, forgiveness, justice and even, albeit implicitly, ascension and heaven, with a similar use of *Spiegel im Spiegel* and another early tintinnabuli piece: *Für Alina*. In *Heaven, Mirror in the Mirror* appears non-diagetically [48] as the backdrop to our main character's "confession" and forgiveness. The common denominator seems to be the music's capacity, not so much to reflect the emotions of the characters, or provoke emotion in the audience, but rather to "slow down time" and open a space in which we can *feel* or experience at a deeper and freer level. It exemplifies Kutter Callaway's description of the shift in contemporary film music from "predetermined emotionality to an invitation to feel" ([49], pp. 18–26).

Maimets-Volt talks of tintinnabuli music as used in film as opening a "sphere of beyond", or even "third presence" ([8], pp. 132–35; 170–73). By this she means a "gaze from a transcendental sphere" ([8], p. 172), a timeless sphere beyond space and time (*cf*. [8], p. 135). She attributes this to the way in which the music is situated in the film—thematic, rather than compositional-technical and takes it quite far, understanding this space as one of "eternal values", albeit not necessarily understood in an explicitly religious sense. Pärt's compositions:

> create and belong to a sphere of eternal spiritual values or ideals … [such as] humanity/humaneness, empathy, mercy, compassion, goodness/ kindness […] categories of the sacred, spiritual, and transcendental present in this sphere—though not necessarily in an ecclesiastical sense ([8], p. 172).

Whether or not one agrees that this capacity is inherent to the music, or rather that its combination with depth of thought in narrative, gifted acting, directing, and producing, it seems to me that something of its potential is witnessed to in this, and other films, both from the way they are integrated in the films' soundscapes and its reception by the general public: it opens us to the sense of a presence which is neither that of the actors and their understanding of the narrative, nor the viewers. Without stating that the music explicitly mediates divine presence, or even values we attribute to God, it creates space to negotiate between the human realm and that which is "Other", the awareness of questions that although not easily answered, are not impossible either; "inhabited" space, (if only by those few notes/bells) that is not desolate, and yet still space.

"Third" is an interesting word with theological resonances of perfection and a Trinitarian. Cultural studies and education refer to "third space" as an "in-between" space on the boundary to navigate between different forms of understanding [50], or between clearly defined cultures in hybrid situations; a place that bridges, converses and transforms [51]. From a theological perspective, Trinitarian theology has long appreciated the need for a "Third" to open up relationships, and there are many liminal and boundary situations in Christian faith: God and humanity; Christian faith,

other faiths, and the ever increasing “nones”; not to mention the muddled up world we carry inside, where doubt and faith cohabit peacefully or otherwise. In the fast-paced world we live in, where finding the “space” to “reflect, rest and reset” [52] in-between activities is challenging, music such as *Spiegel im Spiegel* is proving useful for that “third presence”. The question of what could be “happening” theologically in that open space is one I will come back to in the final moment of this article. First, let us turn to the composer.

2.3. “Behind the Mirror”: Poietic and Performance Processes in Spiegel im Spiegel

Much has been made of Pärt’s explicit religious background and inspiration in relation to Orthodox Christianity, but also of his unwillingness to tie the meaning or truth of any given piece to his own understanding of it. However, the question remains: is the religious connotation given to his music due to the person of the composer, whose inspiration is common knowledge? Or is it something inherent in the music itself? The bell-like sound and repetition, for example, can evoke associations of a religious nature. In an article continuing her reflection on Pärt’s tintinnabuli music, Maimets-Volt, while presenting an analysis of the effect of the sound of his music in its listeners, still explicitly suggests that there is remarkable convergence between what the composer intended and its listeners perceive or experience ([53], pp. 56–57).

In relation to the piece of music in question, I have found no specific reference by Pärt to his inspiration behind or meaning of *Spiegel im Spiegel*, apart from some rather clear instructions on its performance:

> According to British violinist Daniel Hope, Pärt gave him the following instructions for performing *Spiegel im Spiegel*: “The sound should be cold, not warm, otherwise it could drift into sentimentality. Please do not use vibrato… the piece needs a different approach…it is a kind of perpetuum mobile for piano… the tempo will depend upon your bow speed. Otherwise I have very little to say” (Quoted in [8], p. 66; [54]).

It would appear that at least this invitation to restraint in regard to sentiment as transmitted by a specific way of playing (vibrato) has carried over into its reception. About the use of this piece of music in film, or indeed his film music in general, Pärt has spoken little and indeed shown little interest ([8], p. 10). Despite, or even because of the lack of commentary on its meaning, some light can and should be drawn from his approach to and understanding of the style within which it is situated: his *tintinnabuli* work. By way of background, although this is the work he is currently famous for, his early career lead him from neoclassical, through serialism and collage techniques, until in the 70’s after what has been called his “silence” in musical composition (in the sense of producing new, finished pieces), he emerged with this approach to composition. Immediate influences on the tintinnabuli style are his conversion to the Russian Orthodox Church, and in particular its mystical/contemplative (hesychastic) tradition and the art of icon painting. In musical terms, the specific influence was the Russian tradition of bell ringing at Orthodox churches, (from whence the name—tintinnabuli) [55]. Other known influences are early music, including Gregorian chant, early polyphony, medieval and renaissance music.

So what does this music “mean” to Pärt? Why this time of withdrawal and new form of creative musical expression? In seeking the answers, care must be taken to separate Pärt’s own words and position on the meaning of his music from the opinions of those who write about him, and albeit recognizing that much of what is written *does* reflect his own position, constraints of space lead me to limit myself here to what Pärt himself has said [56–58].

Tonal Music and Composition born from within:

The intention behind this withdrawal is described by the composer as the quest for what would be the roots of tonal music and his own integrated way of composing, *born from within* rather than in the imitation of other styles ([7], p. 91; [30]).

> I build with the most primitive materials—with the triad, with one specific tonality” ([58], p. 120).

The importance of silence for Pärt is paramount:

> Before one says something, perhaps it is better to say nothing. My music has emerged only after I have been silent for quite some time, literally silent. For me, “silent” means the “nothing” from which God created the world. Ideally, a silent pause is something sacred…

He relates this silence to love:

> If someone approaches silence with love, then this might give birth to music. A composer must often wait a long time for his music. This kind of sublime anticipation is exactly the kind of pause that I value so greatly ([3], p. 35).

He explicitly relates the triad in his music to bells:

> “The three notes of a triad are like bells. And that is why I called it tintinnabulation.”

Composing is a very conscious a spiritual quest:

> Tintinnabulation is an area I sometimes wander into when I am searching for answers—in my life, my music, my work. In my dark hours, I have the certain feeling that everything outside this one thing has no meaning. The complex and many-faceted only confuses me, and I must search for unity [59].

This unity or oneness as a source of comfort:

> “This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me” ([7], p. 87).

This process, although “*hard work”*, does not aim at complexity, but rather *the constant effort to identify, simplify and reduce*:

> It seems, however, that this unknown territory is sooner reached by way of reduction than by growing complexity. Reduction certainly doesn’t mean simplification, but it is the way … to the most intense concentration on the essence of things ([60], p. 2).

> "The capability to select is important, and the urge for it. The reduction to a minimum, the ability to reduce fractions—that was the strength of all great composers" ([58], p. 114).

There is discipline and craft to his composing—the aim is to work towards the nucleus of a piece, its core. This can take time, and yet, composing is a necessity to him:

> For me it's like breathing in and out. It's my life… [C]an I exist without composing, my soul and my spirit? Music is already my language. My music can be my inner secret, even my confession… Most important for me: that I cannot say in a few thousand sentences what I can say in a few notes (*cf*. [58], p. 113).

He is very explicit about the religious significance of the style of music he has created:

> "Religion influences everything. Not just music, but everything" ([57], p. 132).

Not only in its inspiration but also its meaning:

> Pärt described to me his view that the M-voice (melodic line) always signifies the subjective world, the daily egoistic life of sin and suffering; the T-voice (triad underlying, meanwhile, is the objective realm of forgiveness. The M-voice may appear to wander, but is always held firmly by the T-voice." This can be likened to the eternal dualism of body and spirit, earth and heaven; but the two voices are in reality one voice, a twofold singly entity ([7], p. 96).

Centrality of the words and text are central to his composing:

> "The words are very important to me, they define the music…the construction of the music is based on the construction of the text" ([58], p. 123).

In relation to the theological themes that inspire his thought and linked with what we have come across in our exploration: On time and eternity:

> "Time and timelessness are connected. This instant and eternity are struggling within us. And this is the cause of all our contradictions, our obstinacy, our narrowmindedness, our faith and our grief" ([58], p. 112).

On space and place:

> In this depth, we are all so similar that we could recognize ourselves in any other person … I am very much tempted to see this beautiful and neat Ur-substance, this precious island in the inner seclusion of our soul, as the "place" where, over 2000 years ago, we were told that the Kingdom of God would be—inside us…And so, I keep trying to stay on the path that searches for this passionately longed-for "magic island", where all people (and for me, all sounds) can live together in love" ([61], p. 49).

So if we try and read these words in the light of Nattiez's framework and ask the question: what could or should the listener hear of what the composer "meant" in its composition, in one sense, we can say: nothing; for although Pärt is very clear about his own inspiration and processes, and even about the meaning *he* gives tintinnabuli, he does not suggest that what he means is what the listener

should hear (*cf.* [58], p. 111). However, we have much information of what he experiences and how he understands his music, and *external esthesics* invites us to ask how much of what the composer intended can be heard? Perhaps the best way to gather the disperse threads could be in visual form, simply to see the convergences that are emerging.

The convergence and interaction is significant, even accepting that culture conditions how we receive everything, music included. I will not try to tie down further how this interaction "happens; for the moment it is enough to recognise and be aware of the multitude of connections: silence—focus and experience, time and timelessness—extended in time and space, simplification—holy minimalism. For the purpose of this article, what remains is to pull the threads further on how theology could understand this whole dynamic. The table below (Table 2) tried to do just that, guided by Nattiez's methodology:

Table 2. *Spiegel im Spiegel*—Poietic, immanent and esthesic approaches [62].

Arvo Pärt's Poietic Processes in Tintinnabuli	**Immanent Analysis of *Spiegel im Spiegel***	**Reception of *Spiegel im Spiegel***
Method 6: Bringing together Poietic, Immanent and Esthesic Approaches		
Film Music—little interest;	12 versions in 14 different films;	classical masterpieces given over to soundtrack clichés;
Cold sound, not warm, otherwise it could drift into sentimentality. Please do not use vibrato…[*Spiegel im Spiegel* performance];	prevailing register space: middle; small pitch level variation within one voice; homogeneous, viscous and resonant sonic texture, constant sound (no silences filled with overtones): smooth (legato) articulation.	Emotional neutraliaty and distantiation; Luminous and slow; exquisite; beautiful; a sad and simple idyll; longbreathed; dreamy aura; restrained tenderness; languorous and incantatory;
Quest for the roots of tonal music triad related to bells: Oneness as comfort;	Tonal but modal major mode, clear (modal) centre; Open harmony; combination of the horizontal and vertical manifestations of pitch; diatonic polyphony; Harmonic melody—melodic harmony;	Themes of life, death, compassion and forgiveness, war, suffering, the Holocaust, terminal illness, terrorism, and 9/11;
Relationship time and timelessness the tempo depends on bow speed	Fixed rhythmic ordering within each phrase/pacing—the unwaveringly slow speed and rhythmic tempo; steady pulse, regular meter; perceived speed: slow—yet metrically/temporally layered, featuring smooth flowing motion;	Timeless; an extension in time and space; concentric/centripetal movement—transitional/ascending movement;

Table 2. *Cont.*

Arvo Pärt's Poietic Processes in Tintinnabuli	Immanent Analysis of *Spiegel im Spiegel*	Reception of *Spiegel im Spiegel*
Importance of discipline and craft; own integrated way of composing: conscious spiritual quest; *simplify and reduce*;	strictly defined principles;	paths to transcendence; Religiousness—"holy minimalism"; sweeping, chorale-like arches new architectonic configuration; meditation chapel; stimulates reflection, prayer;
Space as God/the Kingdom in the inner seclusion of our soul;Heaven and earth—body and spirit;	"sphere of beyond", "third presence".	Floating; spirals of inner reflections;
Otherwise I have very little to say Silence; Silence related to love;	Silence	Provides time and space for a listener to focus in on a single note and experience it;

3. Echoes in Christian Theology: Gathering Insights

My guiding words in this section are verbs (albeit "passive" or rather reflective ones): mirroring and echoing. *Spiegel im Spiegel* mirrors something to us, not least the very potential of music to mediate something to human life. And theology at its best echoes something of the truth of who God is and what it is to believe, not because truth is weak, but because its strength lies also in that it is ever beyond our full comprehension, and knowing that keeps things in perspective: any insight will always be subject to growth and/or correction. So what theological echoes do we hear, having come this far in our reflections? I will frame these concluding thoughts in the threefold structure we have been working with.

3.1. The (Third) Presence of Christ in Music

As will have become clear by now, in the writing of this article the key words that have emerged are space and presence—the *power* of empty space; the power of *music* that does not impose or control what we feel, but creates a space that invites us in. As mentioned above, it evokes the memory of that part of Apologetics that used to present the empty tomb as a "proof" of the resurrection. We no longer speak of "proof" in that way, of course, but the empty tomb is still an important part of resurrection theology, as a sign and message about the embodied nature of Jesus' life, and our own. There is something powerful and evocative in the thought that emptiness could be or facilitate the presence of someone—that the *lack* of one body could *mean*, or *make present*, a different, transformed one. It seems to me that this is *one* way in which music, and specifically Avro Pärt's *Spiegel im Spiegel* works. It opens a space for us to experience another, "Third" Presence. We already noted music's effect on how we inhabit the world, drawing on Speelman's musical semiotics. Is there a doctrinal, revealed truth that relates to this experience? The one which could underlie some of what we touch there is that of the continuing presence of the Incarnated Body of Christ in our world, which paradoxically is inaugurated by (and could even be understood as a kind of "flip-side of the coin" to) the Ascension. This truth, essential to the life of the early Church but rather peripheral to ours

today, is somehow alien or distant to us precisely because of the different way in which we inhabit the universe and "imagine" heaven, where Jesus (presumably) has "gone". And yet for a pre-Copernican world, the risen and ascended body of Christ was still "within our reach", as it is still within ours. Space is not empty, when we can bear to let it breathe the Presence of the One in whom we live, move and have our being (Act 17:28).

The past ten years has seen research into the doctrine of the Ascension and its corresponding doctrine of the mystical body of Christ intensify and deepen [63]. Groundbreaking in this regard is the recent work of a recent approach to theology at King's College, London by Oliver Davies, Paul Janz and Clemens Sedmak, called Transformation Theology [64]. Of particular note is the mutuality they underline between the Ascension and Body of Christ, by which they challenge the implicit or explicit "substitution" of the post-Paschal humanity of Christ by the Spirit, re-situating the same as the "life/breath" of the risen and ascended body of Christ. Hence, current theological exploration of our embodied lives in Christ [65], both personal and as community/society touch upon this truth, albeit implicitly, however it may be named or described: Transformation Theology, the Body of Christ, the Mystical Body of Christ, Immanent Transcendence or God's inspiriting presence ([49], pp. 139–48), the dispersed body of Christ ([66], pp. 168–69), the fourfold bodily expression that popular music works through (physical, social, symbolic and metaphorical) ([66], pp. 57–72), or the Ascension of our lord to Heaven. I have no evidence (apart from the film's title!) to suggest Tykfer was thinking along these lines, but in the last scene of the *Heaven*, they "ascend" ever upwards. We cannot hear the music,

> "…yet the reason why we, the viewers, cannot hear it, is because in the end we are left behind with an earthbound point of view (confirmed by the last shot of witnessing the *ascent* of the helicopter), while the protagonists are completing their *ascension* into heaven" ([8], p. 108).

In any case, the question is left open as to the couple's fate, and it is unlikely that Heaven is "upwards". Interestingly, Pärt himself speaks of a different direction in his own seeking: the space we may well need to find may not be up, but down here and inward, in the "inner seclusion of our soul", and that of each person, that Pärt seeks in and through music. Contemporary understanding of where God inhabits our world (*i.e.*, heaven) is as much about interiority as anywhere else.

3.2. Reception: The Power of What is not "Said" and The Development of Doctrine

The fact is that music can and does offer meaning and space for many people. George Steiner calls music the "un-written theology" ([67], p. 218) of many who do not relate to a particular creed or religion. Interestingly and in some sense confirming this fact, *Spiegel im Spiegel* has no explicit creed attached to it and despite the depth of human meaning to be found in some of the films it has become a part of, they're not explicitly religious or Christian films. They are saturated with meaning, but it is implicit meaning. I left the "soundscape" of *Wit* differently to how I entered it. In putting name to the values she intuits in tintinnabuli music, Maimets-Volt underlines their human origin, and admits it may seem "paltry", in comparison with the positive revelation of the all-knowing deity Revelation prescribes to" ([8], p. 172). But is that not harsh? Is God who lets his sun shine…

(*cf*. Mt 5:38–48) not more generous than that? Could it be OK to leave space, without words, at times, and know that the divine Spirit is at work anyway? How can a film, or a piece of music, which says nothing about God, transmit God, before or even without, an explication to that effect? Rahner, in a beautiful short piece called "Prayer for Creative Thinkers", in which he simply asks God for more of them, at the service of the Word, states explicitly that

> they do not need to be constantly bringing you into everything they say. They must make mention of you by name only when they are filled with the spirit of the purest happiness or the deepest pain. For the rest let them honour you with their silence ([68], pp. 131–32).

Why is non-explicit ok? Because God is not a word, and divine presence cannot be "held" in a word, alone: Because we can hold together, quite happily, a deep desire that God be known, and an awareness that God is "in the room", quietly, *un-recognized as yet,* but moving and effective. That God is not (yet) recognized, or professed does not mean that God is not there, holding us while the Spirit inspirits? Tom Beaudoin's theology of Generation X describes them/us as a generation who are distrustful of institutional religion, consider experience sacred and find spirituality in suffering, and speak of faith and ambiguity" [69]. If that is the case, then we need forums and means to rediscover trust and the bridge to Christ's presence: room to move and sense that God can be found in suffering, useless beauty, interconnectedness, inter-subjective meaning, interpretative space as opposed to commentary, and "hard-won clarity". And one way in which God inhabits is precisely through music.

Not only is this something those alienated for institutionalized religion may need, but also those who have never left. Music not only enriches us *towards* faith (*preambula fidei*), but also within it. It can awaken in us those areas that are dormant, or complacent, or simply untouched. Our theology of faith needs to account for the embodied and affective dimensions of life in a more comprehensive way—and perhaps therein lies the strength music has which words don't, "even a few thousand of them". We leave the "soundscape" of *Wit* differently to how we enter. Our thought is stretched with what could be called deeper, thicker and fresher concepts [70], which will enrich not only our experience but also our doctrinal understanding. I think of the notion of "the development of doctrine" also in those terms, less as an accumulation of new concepts and more in the depth with which we experience and therefore understand them. Again, as noted in the above reflection, music comes to our aid in this.

3.3. A "Third Way" for Contemporary Culture: Creative Thought

This leads us back to our final viewpoint: the composer and the poietic processes. The theme of the creative process is one that in recent years, from many different (sometimes opposing) angles is emerging in writings on theology and spirituality. For our purposes, there is a useful notion (in poetic continuity with our theme of "thirds") in the thought of Italian theologian and musician, Pierangelo Sequeri which can shed light, in his writing on what he calls a "third way" (*terza via*), within which "creative thought" is invited to have a leading role. One of the concerns underlying Sequeri's work is the separation and division in the history of Western theology and spirituality

between the world of art and that of Religion, and its effect on the spiritual quality of culture [71], from whence he explores the theological potential of music. Interestingly, in an extensive study on the history of western music [72,73], his stance is not that music fills in and substitutes the spiritual in the wake of religion, but rather that music is the art that resists the division most:

> "The prophecy of Nietzsche—"Art raises its head where the religions withdraw", has not been very listened to in music" ([73], p. 11).

This, according to Sequeri, is precisely because the history of music in the West has been moved by the very idea that music is able to initiate us into immediate contact with the divine, and the quest to represent or interpret it. However, the basic fact remains—these worlds have separated and that bodes ill for the spiritual quality of both. Sequeri identifies a possible way forward in the role of artists and talent: a "third way" in which creative thought emerges as the "director" of the encounter between the sacred and art. In his words:

> Music struggles with the sacred, and the sacred is experienced in art, on the territory of an encounter whose direction is entrusted to *creative thought:* not only destined for prayer, nor necessarily a stranger to religiosity ([72], p. 508).

The point of interest here is the last phrase—a place common to those who profess a religious faith and those who may not. This is precisely the space much of Arvo Pärt's music, including *Spiegel im Spiegel*, inhabits. Sequeri calls for:

> a new unprejudiced opening to the universe of artistic creation" in which it is not a time for tightening and defining things, but rather for "the liberation of a more evangelical generosity on the part of believers who are convinced and dotted with talent—*capable even to draw with them the interest of the world around them* ([74], pp. 28–29).

From what we have presented on how Pärt describes what it means to him to compose, I suggest his understanding and response to that creative calling opens precisely the kind of path Sequeri is talking about. Two aspects in particular seem significant:

- the depth of awareness and explicit clarity about the source of his music-making—the search for Oneness, for peace, for the space within that inhabits every soul—is held together with a serene non-imposition on others of meaning that he inspires his work.
- the amount of hard work, effort and freedom in finding and maintaining his own voice in music, rooted in his quest for God. There is a deep and integrated faithfulness in how he lives out his musical vocation that seems to me to be a space in which God's creative Spirit can touch ours.

Finally, coming back to the initial questions we began with about the potential of music to mirror, or transmit religious experience: from a fully theological perspective and without expecting it to be understood in the same terms for those who do not share that faith and world-view—if the space one inhabits and draws inspiration and music from is an experience of the Divine in whom we live, move and have our being, then surely some of that breath of life and love passes through (as with all love experiences), in the most human-divine way possible, to those who listen? Or even

further: revelation tells us that God is present, always; faith is the doorway that opens our eyes to discover and experience that presence. Perhaps the space that is opened by this music somehow draws or gathers people into that place inhabited by God's Spirit, with whom, for a time, we amicably, even if unknowingly, make three tents and dwell for a while.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References and Notes

1. Arvo Pärt. *Spiegel im Spiegel*. New York: Universal Edition, 1978, UE13360. Although there have been over twelve versions recorded, including a rock and a bluegrass one, I suggest perhaps including in your choice at least one of the original versions for piano and violin or piano and cello.
2. The initial form of this article was a paper for a panel session at the 2013 Annual Conference of the American Academy of Religion in Baltimore, organized as a joint session of the Music and Religion Group with the Religion, Film, and Visual Culture Group, called *Hearing Images: Film, Music, Meaning-Making, and Lived Religion*. The exceptional nature of this session and its success, among other things, lay in the space created between panellists for live music, at times accompanied by film.
3. Jeffers Engelhardt. "Perspectives on Arvo Pärt after 1980." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt.* Edited by Andrew Shenton. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 29–48.
4. Andrew Shenton, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt.* Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
5. Some of these films are: *Mother Night* (Keith Gordon, USA, 1996); *La chambre des officiers* (François Dupeyron, France, 2001); *Wit* (Mike Nichols, USA, 2001); *Gerry* (Gus van Sant, USA/Argentina/Jordan, 2002); *Heaven* (Tom Tykwer, Germany/Italy/USA/France/UK, 2002); *Saenghwal ŭ i palgyŏn* (On the Occasion of Remembering the Turning Gate) (Hong Sang-Soo, South Korea, 2002); *Swept Away* (Guy Ritchie, UK/Italy, 2002); *Ten Minutes Older: The Cello / Segment: Dans le noir du temps* (Jean-Luc Godard, UK/Germany/France, 2002); *Depuis qu'Otar est parti* (Julie Bertucelli, France/Belgium, 2003); *Soldados de Salamina* (Fernando Trueba, Spain, 2004); *Elegy* (Isabel Coixet, USA 2008); *Gravity* (Alfonso Cuarón, USA, 2013); *About Time* (Richard Curtis, UK, 2013); *The East* (Zal Batmanglij, UK, 2013).

6. I am gathering not only general Adornian questions around musical consumption, but ones which are raised in relation to Pärt music with frequency, even by the composer himself.
7. Paul Hillier. *Arvo Pärt (Oxford Studies of Composers)*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
8. Kaire Maimets-Volt. "Mediating the "Idea of One": Arvo Pärt's Pre-Existing Film Music." Ph.D. Dissertation, Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre, 6 May 2009.
9. For a fuller presentation of my approach to music in theology, *cf.* Maeve Louise Heaney. *Music as Theology: What Says about the Word (Princeton Theological Monograph Series).* Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2012.
10. I am referring to the theological notion of "development of doctrine", made famous by John Henry Newman and integrated into theological discourse ever since, to which I will come back further on.
11. Lawrence Kramer. *Interpreting Music.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
12. Born in France in 1945, Nattiez is a musicologist and ethnomusicologist at the Université de Montreal, Canada.
13. Jean-Jacques Nattiez. "Musical Semiology: Beyond Structuralism, after Postmodernism." In *The Battle of Chronos and Orpheus: Essays in Applied Musical Semiology*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004.
14. For Nattiez this necessarily implies a musical analysis of the score, understood as descriptive rather than prescriptive, in the sense that performances can and will vary, or "change" the music, but only in the score do we have a "fixed text". I think we need to find an alternative or complementary approach to understanding some contemporary music, due to the nature of certain styles of musical composition and annotation.
15. A neologism taken by Nattiez from Paul Valéry referring to the faculty of perception.
16. Jean-Jacques Nattiez. *Music and Discourse: Towards a Semiology of Music*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987.
17. In his words: "[S]ome interpretations are more valid, indeed more true (let us not be afraid of that word!) than others". *Cf.* ([13], p. 39).
18. Although first published in 1988, its fuller version can be found in Rose R. Subotnik. "Toward a Deconstruction of Structural Listening: A Critique of Schoenberg, Adorno and Stravinsky." In *Deconstructive Variations: Music and Reason in Western Society*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minneappolis Press, 1996.
19. Andrew Dell'Antonio. *Beyond Structural Listening? Postmodern Modes of Hearing*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
20. Susan McClary. *Feminine Endings, Music Gender and Sexuality*. Minneapolis: Regents of the University of Minnesota, 1991.
21. *Spiegel im Spiegel* seems to be one of the more frequently mentioned works of Pärt in recent scholarship, appearing in seven of the nine chapters of the recently published *Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt*. It is one of two pieces that the aforementioned book by Maimets-Volt focuses on.

22. Maria Cizmic. “Transcending the Icon: Spirituality and Postmodernism in Arvo Pärt’s Tabula Rasa and Spiegel im Spiegel.” *Twentieth-Century Music* 5, no. 1 (2008): 45–78.
23. Geoffrey Turner’s presentation of Pärt’s work in “Sounds of Transcendence.” *Cross Currents 45*, no. 1, Spring 1995, 62–67, seems to be an example of this kind of approach.
24. The chapter of Thomas Robinson on this theme, for example, explains the adequacy or otherwise of various current methods in relation to this new and distinctive form of composition.
25. Thomas Robinson. “Analysing Pärt.” In *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt.* Edited by Andrew Shenton. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 76–110.
26. *Tintinnabuli*, or “tintinnabulation” is taken from the Latin word for “small tinkling bell”: *tintinnabulum*, and only received its name (drawn from one of its inspirations in the sound of bells) after the technique had been created.
27. Jeremy Begbie. *Theology, Music and Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
28. The context in which he does so is interesting: *Topics on Education*—the implication being that our apprehension and understanding of art has something to do with what and how we know. For Lonergan—Experience is the first step of all knowledge, as presented in Bernard Lonergan. *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education (Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 10)*. Edited by Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993, pp. 208–32.
29. In these pages I explore more fully the significance of the harmonic space created between notes in music in relation to how we inhabit the world, drawing on the musical semiotics of Willem Marie Speelman.
30. Paul Hillier. *Tintinnabuli*. Booklet notes to CD *Arvo Pärt: A Tribute*. Paris: Harmonia Mundi, 2005, HMU 907407.
31. Maria Cizmic. “Of Bodies and Narratives: Musical Representations of Pain and Illness in HBO’s Wit.” In *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music*. Edited by Joseph Straus and Neil Lerner. New York: Routledge, 2006, pp. 23–40.
32. My emphasis.
33. This conclusion is drawn from her analysis of the use of *Spiegel im Spiegel* in the film *Wit*, which we will explore further.
34. The particularity the musical sound of Pärt’s tintinnabuli music, which makes it “immediately recognisable” is emphasised by Maimets-Volt’s and forms the basis of her analysis.
35. Alf Gabrielsson, and Erik Lindström. “The influence of musical structure on emotional expression.” In *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research.* Edited by Patrick N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
36. Worth mentioning in this regard, is Susan McClary’s work in *Conventional Wisdom*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001, in which she argues that the relationship between music and meaning/emotion is a socially constructed and agreed upon one, and therefore, albeit recognising its limits, can be understood as a well established convention, and analaysed as such.
37. This is a theme of current interest in theology. One resource is the excellent work of Orm Rush in *The Eyes of Faith: The Sense of the Faithful and the Church’s Reception of Revelation.* Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2012.

38. Tom Beaudoin's writing on the theological importance of taking what fans say seriously, in "The Ethics of Characterizing Popular Faith: Scholarship and Fandom." In *Witness to Dispossession: The Vocation of a Post-Modern Theologian.* Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008.
39. The aforementioned *Cambridge Companion*, fruit of several conferences in recent years on Pärt's work and influence has several chapters on aspects of this theme. Laura Dolp, analyses how from the beginning, ECM's tenacious and comprehensive marketing strategy has sought to promote Pärt's music to an increasingly varied audience, up to and including its use in Fahrenheit 9/11 in "Pärt in the marketplace." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt.* Edited by Andrew Shenton. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 177–92. Jeffers Engelhardt looks at his influence on other musicians of various genres (including rock and bluegrass!) in [3], pp. 29–48; and Robert Sholl, unfolding themes of mourning, death and enchantment and embodiment, identifies it as a "Soundtrack of our Age" in "Arvo Pärt and Spirituality". In *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt.* Edited by Andrew Shenton. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 140–58.
40. Margeret Edson. *Wit* [film]. Directed by Mike Nichols. New York: Avenue Pictures/HBO, 2001.
41. Krzysztof Kieślowski and Krzysztof Piesiewicz. *Heaven* [film]. Directed by Tom Tykwer. Santa Monica: Mirage Enterprises, 2002.
42. However, I recognise that a focussed study on the intentionality behind the use of this music by the director and producers of the films, impossible in this space and therefore postponed for further exploration, would enrich and complete this approach.
43. Dean Duncan. *Charms that Soothe: Classical Music and the Narrative Film*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2003, p. 14.
44. By "paramusical" meaning she is referring to those metaphorical or even metaphysical values, or experiences we seem to access through music, which are not accessible to musical analysis and therefore often avoided by musicologists.
45. I use the word "soundscape" with the meaning offered in Kutter Callaway research which was one of the elements at the root of the aforementioned AAR panel: music and narrative form a whole in which one enriches the other. The cinematic experience is a multi-sensorial one as an intrinsic aspect of its "narrative".
46. It won the 2001 Humanitas Prize and Peabody Awards, as well as the Berlin International Film Festival Special Prize of the Ecumenical Jury.
47. Cizmic, commenting on the power of *Spiegel im Spiegel*'s use in this film, relates it also to the actual documentation of Arvo Pärt's music in aiding AIDS patients as they faced their death: "In a late twentieth century Western context, Pärt's early tintinnabuli works are heard as expressions of continuity that resonate with representations and experiences of illness".
48. A term referring to music that is not part of the script internal to the narrative.
49. Kutter Callaway. *Scoring Transcendence: Contemporary Film Music as Religious Experience*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013, pp. 18–26.

50. Elizabeth Birr Moje, Kathryn Mcintosh Ciechanowski, Kathrine Kramer, Lindsay Ellis, Rosario Carrillo, and Tehani Collazo. "Working toward third space in content area literature: An examination of everyday funds of knowledge and Discourse." *Reading Research Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2004): 38–70.
51. Jennifer Elsden-Clifton, and Kathy Jordan. "The potential of on-line lectures: Reaping the rewards of "Third spaces"." *Studies in Learning, Evaluation, Innovation and Development* 8, no. 1 (2011): 14–25.
52. Adam Frazer. *The Third Space*. Sydney: Random House, 2012.
53. Kaire Maimets-Volt. "Arvo Pärt's Tintinnabuli Music in Film." *Music and the Moving Image* 6, no. 1 (2013): 55–71.
54. The link between the "space left" for the audience's own experience as noted previously seems to find at least some link to the composer's intentionality here.
55. For a fuller explanation of the roots and significance of the bells to tintinnabuli music, *cf.* Marguerite Bostonia. "Bells as Inspiration for Tintinnabuli." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt.* Edited by Andrew Shenton. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 128–39.
56. By way of resources for a better understanding of both the person and music of Arvo Pärt, Paul Hilliers aforementioned book draws much from his personal contact and musical involvement with the composer, although it is also coloured with personal opinion and commentary which at times seem to overstep Pärt's own understanding of his music.
57. Jamie McCarthy, and Arvo Pärt. "An Interview with Arvo Pärt." *The Musical Times* 130, no. 1753 (1989): 130–33.
58. Andrew Shenton. "Arvo Pärt in His Own Words." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt.* Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 111–27.
59. Wolfgang Sandner. *Program Notes for Arvo Pärt's Tabula Rasa*. Translated by Anne Cattaneo. ECM New Series 1275, 1984, compact disc.
60. Andrew Shenton. "The Essential and Phenomenal Arvo Pärt." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt.* Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 1–9.
61. Leopold Brauneiss. "Musical archetypes: The basic elements of the tintinnabuli style." In *The Cambridge Companion to Arvo Pärt.* Edited by Andrew Shenton. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. 49–75.
62. This figure is a development of one offered by Nattiez himself in ([16], p. 140), and reproduced with permission in ([9], p. 95).
63. The most recent seems to be a forthcoming book by Anthony J. Kelly. *Upwards: Faith, Church, and the Ascension of Christ.* Collegeville, MI: Liturgical Press, 2014.
64. I came across their work while seeking a paradigm for the understanding of music, composition and spirituality. This is part of the thesis presented in [9]. Repeating it here is unavoidable if it is true.
65. By way of example, in recent years the theme of our embodiment and the corporality of Christ has been ever more frequent in the American Academy of Religion annual conferences.

66. Clive Marsh, and Vaughan S. Roberts. *Personal Jesus: How Popular Music Shapes Our Souls*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Publishing, 2012.
67. George Steiner. *Real Presences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
68. Karl Rahner. “Prayer for Creative Thinkers.” In *Theological Investigations 8*. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1971, pp. 130–32.
69. Tom Beaudoin. *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1998.
70. Clemens Sedmak. “The Disruptive Power of World hunger.” In *Transformation Theology. Church in the World.* Edited by Oliver Davies, Paul D. Janz and Clemens Sedmak. Edinburgh: T&T Clark International, 2007, p. 117.
71. Pierangelo Sequeri. “In realtà che cosa possiamo pensare tutti insieme quando diciamo “vita spirituale” e spiritualità?” In *Sensibili allo Spirito, Umanesimo Religioso e Ordine degli Affetti.* Milano: Glossa, 2001, p. 4. (In Italian). “In reality, what can we all think together when we say “spiritual life” and “spirituality”?” [Translation mine].
72. Pierangelo Sequeri. *Musica e Mistica. Percorsi Nella Storia Occidentale delle Pratiche Estetiche e Religiose*. Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2005. (In Italian).
73. Pierangelo Sequeri. *La Risonanza del Sublime. L'idea spirituale della musica in Occidente*. Roma: Studium, 2008. (In Italian).
74. Pierangelo Sequeri. “Coscienza Cristiana, Ethos della Fede e Canone Pubblico.” In *A Misura di Vangelo.* Edited by Marco Vergottini. Cinisello Balsamo: San Paolo, 2003. (In Italian).

A Perfect Chord: Trinity in Music, Music in the Trinity

Chiara Bertoglio

Abstract: The doctrine of God's Triunity is at the core of Christian faith; this article presents a theological survey of how it has been understood in a musical way during the Christian era. The role of music as a participation in the liturgy of mutual love eternally experienced in the Trinity is first analyzed, with references to the Church Fathers and to modern/contemporary theologians. Later, the three main forms of congregational singing are taken into account (*i.e.*, monody, polyphony and harmony), pointing out how each has been seen in turn as a symbol of the Trinity's love.

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1. Introduction

The French composer Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992), who was an ornithologist as well as a theologian, used to say that his music aimed at transmitting *theological truths* (quoted in [1], p. 21). Thus, he linked together the contemplative aspect that can be art's best and greatest result with an aspect of reflection and higher comprehension (rational and aware) of the Christian mystery. In this article, we will be moving from this concept to ask some questions: Can music help us to "say" and to "understand" something of the ineffable and unattainable mystery of the Trinity? If yes, how? During the two thousand years of Christianity in music, how were the Trinitarian subjects treated by musicians?

In many cases, it will be necessary to refer to concepts which are typical of the theory of music, of music analysis and musicology. Indeed, throughout the History of Music, it was usual for composers to entrust their message to different interpretive levels: from the simple "emotional" level to the evocation of a "feeling", from the use of symbologies and onomatopoeias which everybody could understand, to the application of compositional strategies of a noteworthy complexity and refinement. It is self-evident, therefore, that a subject which is both as fundamental and demanding as that of the Trinity has required all of their artistic resources, often encouraging a very refined compositional style whose full appreciation is only possible to specialists. At the same time, many composers of the past had a belief, which is less and less frequently found nowadays, *i.e.*, that the value of their work was primarily in its generative intention and in its intrinsic correspondence with the mystery it aimed at expressing.

As a consequence, the fact that not all hearers could have understood the "how" and the "why" of certain compositional decisions (whose very existence would have passed unnoticed by many) was a result not only foreseen, but often wanted by the composers themselves. Within the framework of a Christian belief, a work can act as an instrument of Grace even if the hearer is not aware of how it operates. Therefore, Christian composers could (and can) believe that a salvific message encoded within the score can reach the hearers' soul even if they do not realize how and why it is encrypted. Bach's works are a paradigmatic example of this approach: although we cannot expound this subject

sufficiently here, it should be mentioned that Bach realized an exceptional theological and mystical exegesis of the Trinitarian dogmas in many of his works, such as the *Klavierübung III* or the *B-minor Mass*—to name but two—as well as in several works which were not explicitly “sacred” (*cf.* also [2], p. 142ff.).

2. The Liturgy of Trinitarian Love

In order to consider the connection of music with the Trinity, we must focus first on the role of liturgical music within the Trinity and between the Triune God and the Church (as well as humankind). Besides liturgical music, we should not omit consideration of sacred music, and eventually the non-sacred music in its most beautiful, highest and truest significance.

This subject was frequently treated by the Church Fathers, and has been later resumed, in recent years, by some great theologians. In the meantime, this subject was treated more often in practice by music and liturgy, and less frequently in theory and speculation.

For Clemens of Alexandria, man is the “musical instrument” of the Logos, who made him “harmonious” through the Holy Spirit: so that the divine harmony may resound in him, that he may receive and worship the Word, and that the Spirit may “blow” him, similar to a pipe, giving him life and making him an instrument of praise ([3], p. 326; [4], p. 91; *cf.* [5], p. 25). Being the divine image of the Logos, moreover, man participates in the Trinitarian communion when he becomes an instrument of the Logos’ praise to the Father ([3], p. 326; [4], p. 643. The Trinitarian interpretation is supported by [6], p. 118, and [7], p. 114); for Clemens, the divine Word is “the only instrument of peace, the only Logos through whom we honor God” (in [8], vol. VIII, p. 443).

Augustine’s viewpoint was different but complementing: “In that supreme triad is the source of all things, and the most perfect beauty, and wholly blissful delight” ([9], p. 215; *cf.* [10], pp. 124, 134). It is not surprising that a reflection on beauty and the Trinity was particularly interesting for the Bishop of Hippo, whose writings “testify upon a double concern: for beauty and for Trinitarian theology” ([10], p. 124). Being a form of creation, albeit a human one, for Augustine musical composition is somehow a participation in the Father’s creative activity: “The Father is the origin of all being, and therefore the origin of all beautiful-being as well”, as Tscholl summarizes it ([10], p. 125)[1]. When music becomes liturgy, worship, prayer or contemplation, it becomes an act of thanksgiving, realized through the Son in the Spirit, as John Chrysostom seems to suggest in pages of exquisite beauty, where dance is a further element of praise within Trinitarian communion (*Hom. I,1, In illud. Vidi Dominum*: [8], vol. LVI, p. 98).

Chrysostom expounds further on the Trinitarian concept of human music as praise for God: “Music is a heavenly invention; if man is a musician, he is so for a revelation of the Holy Spirit.” ([8], vol. LVI, p. 98). These are challenging words: “a revelation of the Holy Spirit” is a definition normally reserved for things other than music.

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[1] Also the 15th-century philosopher John Ireland used the musical metaphor to symbolise God’s creative activity and his relationship with creation; they were comparable, in his opinion, to those between a composer and his musical work (*cf.* [11], p. 66; *cf.* however [12], p. 233).

In recent times, these subjects have been interestingly treated by Christian theologians. Ratzinger underlines the Trinitarian value of liturgical music. Since it has a verbal text, it is rooted within the Easter Mystery, and in the divine revelation given to us by Scripture: "There is a clear sovereignty of the word, which is a higher mode of preaching. [...] To refer to the *Logos* means, therefore, to refer primarily to the word" ([13], pp. 44–45). In consequence, it participates both in the mystery of Christ's *kenosis* and in the Easter joy; moreover, it is a gift of the Spirit of Love in his action, in communion with the Logos ([13], p. 45).

Hart analyses what Bach's music reveals about his creative activity and process to make it a symbol of the divine creativity in a Trinitarian sense. Bach's music demonstrates the possibility of a diversity intrinsic to unity ([14], pp. 282–85), of a creation which implies acceptance (*cf.* [15], chapter 5), of the virtual boundlessness of thematic development ([16], p. 469) and of the simultaneous presence of radical openness with an equally radical consistency: although no first-time hearer can anticipate how a work by Bach will progress and develop, nonetheless it strikes us for the impression of cogency and consequentiality we feel (*cf.* [14], p. 277). According to Hart, awareness of these realities can lead us to a deeper "Trinitarian" understanding of Creation: its variety and diversity are the "logical" consequence of the inherence of diversity to divine Triunity. The Creation is not reducible to an abstract plan, but is rather a gift of love; finally, the seeming unlimitedness of Creation's possible development is a testimony of the infinity of the Trinitarian love.

Commenting upon Hart's statements, Begbie observes that they mirror a vision of the creature/Creator relationship as "a cosmos that reflects and shares in the life and love of a Triune God." ([17], p. 137). Furthermore, as Horne points out, it is precisely within a *Trinitarian* concept of creation that human creativity is not in competition with that of God, but rather a participation in communion with it ([18], p. 8ff). Through the Incarnation, the eternal dialogue of Father and Son is transferred into the world of created matter; artistic creation, being a creative response to the creating love, becomes necessary, even unavoidable, in the Spirit.

Also for Jenson, Trinitarian communion is "a song", within which man is "driven", and in which, by Grace, he is called to participate. It is not for a simple love for decoration that the Church promotes beauty in preaching and liturgy: "A congregation singing a hymn of praise to the Father is doubling the Son's praise, and the surge of rhythm and melody is the surge of the Spirit's glorification of the Father and the Son" ([19], p. 235)[2].

Indeed, liturgy is primarily to receive God in one's personal and communitarian life (*cf.* Rev. 3:20). In consequence, the dimension of relationship with God (and through this, with the ecclesial and human community), becomes almost a *cantus firmus* unifying the different modes of realization of liturgy itself. Regardless of the difference in Christian confessions, musical styles, historic periods or geographical collocations, it is always the Spirit who is the true *cantus firmus* of liturgical action, as he directly and constantly arouses the Church's praise ([4], p. 109).

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[2] This concept is also present in Hildegard von Bingen. She expounds on the subject, particularly as it concerns the human participation in the Trinity's liturgy of love. For her, music is a primary gift of God, essentially connected with the life-giving Spirit. Through sin, mankind loses the possibility of "tuning itself" with the cosmic praise of the "spirits" (*cf.* [20], lines 99–101, 68–69, 71–75, 84–94).

Liturgy is therefore rooted in, built upon, and caused by God's love, the reciprocal love of Father and Son. The presence of this *cantus*, thus, is not only an element of union among the different forms of liturgy and prayer, but also a vehicle through which liturgy itself is inserted within the Trinity's dynamic of reciprocal love and praise.

3. The Harmony of Creation, the Harmony of the Creator

In Greek theory and 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 the Creator (*cf.* Wisdom 19:18), whose Triune nature is the perfect expression of harmony and the model of all created harmony. In the wake of Pythagorean physics and philosophy, in the ancient world an interval's degree of consonance was in proportion to the simplicity of their frequency ratio (thus the octave, 2:1, and the fifth, 3:2, were extremely consonant, whereas the third and the sixth were not).

From the one side, Augustine points out that rhythm and measure (which are the fruits of the Logos' divine wisdom) are fundamental for music ([10], p. 53; [21], p. 45). From the other, concordance and harmony, both in music and in creation, are icons of the perfect concord realized in Trinitarian life ([22], p. 235; [23], p. 9). Summarizing the history of liturgical music, Ratzinger underlines the deep communion between Logos and Spirit: "The mathematics of the universe […] 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. […] The *Logos* Himself is the great artist, in whom all works of art [and] the beauty of the universe have their origin" [24]. This concept has something in common with Balthasar's, for whom music allows us to draw on the logic of creation, or, better, to the Logos through Whom the universe exists ([25], p. 47).

Returning to the time when these concepts were defined, in the Middle Ages a special mention is reserved for John Scotus Eriugena, who proposed an analogy between the harmony of the cosmos and musical harmony, with a reference to what has been often interpreted as polyphony (in [26], vol. 122, pp. 637–38; cf. [27]). It can be said that the idea according to which musical harmony (in the broadest sense) mirrors the harmony of the cosmos is a consequence of what we are discussing here: *i.e.*, that the Trinitarian harmony/polyphony is the model of all musical harmony/polyphony; and that music, in turn, may symbolize it much less inadequately than other languages.

Monodic Christian singing thus becomes a powerful experiential icon and a vehicle of communion with Trinitarian life; it unifies and creates, both in image and in act, a concord, which is apparent in sounds but is generated in souls. This is the viewpoint of Hildegard von Bingen, for whom the creation's accomplishment is the resonance of the harmony of human praise in God. Creation thus finds its authentic and deep meaning when there is harmony between humankind and cosmos, whereas man finds his sense (*i.e.*, that of a creature similar to God) through the harmony between his own praise and that of the angels. Music touches the listener, awakening his nostalgia for the heavenly fatherland. Listening to a "symphony" (a "concord" music) generates a resonance in men, since "anima hominis symphonia in se habet et symphonizans est" ([28], p. 13, 202 *etc.*) and "symphonalis est anima" ([20], line 141; *cf.* [29]).

For Hildegard, the re-establishment of the "symphony" is a gift of Grace as well as the result of human efforts: the musical "sym-phony" is, at the same time, an image as well as an operating reality of the soul's concord. In the life of her monastic community, she states, this "symphony" of the voices is a "process": voices "tuning" with each other and with the angels praise, hears "tuning" with each other in the reciprocal communion, and in communion with creation and with God (*cf.* [29], pp. 4–5; *cf.* [20], lines 126–28). This concept was also held by the 13th-century poet Pierre de Peckham: for him there was an analogy between the "concord" vibration of three harp strings and the Trinity (*cf.* [30], p. 53).

4. God: The Lord of Time

In the 14th century, the extraordinary development of written polyphonic sacred music begins, producing works of immense contrapuntal complexity, composed at first in the Flanders and Burgundy, and later throughout Europe[3]. Here, the connections between music theory and theology emerge both at the level of polyphony *in se* and that concerning its technical requirements: in order to coordinate the evolution of melodic lines whose degree of complexity and reciprocal liberty was ever increasing, it became necessary to notate, codify and organize the musical tempo, through the introduction of the notions of *color* and *talea*.

The rhythmic theory of the late Middle Ages had been elaborated by the School of Notre Dame through the creation of rhythmical "modes", inspired by the melodic modes, which were based on different subdivisions of one (or two) ternary tempo units (*cf.* [31], p. 56. As concerns mode III, however, *cf.* [32], pp. 319–20). Notwithstanding this, according to Walter de Odington, a monk from Evesham by Worcester, the first *organa* (sacred two-part works) frequently adopted binary rhythms; however, he believed that the later establishment of a system of ternary subdivisions was indebted to the idea of three being the perfect number, in homage to the Trinity (quoted in [33], vol. 1, p. 235; *cf.* [34], p. 96). Historical research has shown that, contrary to Odington's belief, the first *organa* were unmeasured, and that their rhythmical organization was determined by the prosodic and metrical structure of the sung text). Reference to the Trinity in ternary rhythmic subdivisions is particularly clear in Johannes de Anagnia's treatise on the mensuration system ([35], especially pp. 16–24 and

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[3] A few very short terminological and aesthetical clarifications. By "polyphony" we mean the simultaneous production of two or more melodic lines, the "voices", with their own independent consistency, which combine with one another according to contrapuntal laws. "Imitation" is the quotation of a voice's motif or musical phrase by another, with a temporal gap. When the quotation is literal, with all intervals identical to the original and by complete sections, we have a "canon". Many polyphonic works are on *cantus firmus*. This is a melody, often taken from the Gregorian repertoire, which is performed, in long notes, by one of the voice, and to which all the others relate. It is, so to say, the foundation of the contrapuntal building. The polyphony's "dimension" is prevailingly "horizontal", in reference to the graphic/notational conventions, precisely since the aesthetic evaluation of a contrapuntal work takes into account, *in primis*, both the lines' beauty and their interplay on the "long distance"; on the other hand, harmony is rather "vertical" and proceeds by instants. Polyphonic processes allow the coexistence of intervals which can sometimes be very dissonant, but which are not felt as disagreeable since the relative independence of the parts is perceived as a "guarantee" of their eventual ending on consonant intervals: it is a symbolic game of anticipation, similar to the narrative schemes of comedy or whodunit criminal novels.

39). It was Philippe de Vitry who later codified and generalized a rhythmic system which favored the "perfect" ternary subdivisions to that of the binary: perfect or imperfect *modes*, depending on the kind of *longa*; perfect or imperfect *tempi*, following the division of the *brevis*; "major" (perfect) and "minor" *prolationes* depending on the *semibrevis*' subdivision.

As summarised by Reese, within the process of the theoretical codification of musical rhythm, the nature of rhythm nature began to be understood as ternary, closely linked to the concept of perfection ([36], pp. 302–03). The thirteenth-century theorist Franco of Cologne (doc. 1250–1280), whose *Ars Cantus Mensurabilis* (*cf.* [33], vol. 1, pp. 117ff.) enjoyed an immense success during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, established that the *longa perfecta* was the principal tempo unit; this view contrasted with that of Johannes de Garlandia, for whom the *longa perfecta* was a composite unit, made of a *longa imperfecta* and a *brevis*. Since then, as Busse Berger maintains, "the ternary division of the perfect long, which he associated with the Holy Trinity, was to become the basic mensuration unit in French music theory" ([37], p. 632). The ternary subdivision thus becomes a "theologized" tempo (Rainoldi), in consequence of the reference to the Trinity ([4], p. 268). Similarly, Blankenburg states that the proportions of *color* and *talea* in the isorhythmic motets of the Ars Nova were conceived as the microcosmic image of the macrocosmic order established by God ([38], col. 1973; *cf.* Johannes de Muris, in [39], pp. 67 and 71).

The ternary nature of music is thus molded upon the Trinitarian model: although a similar concept was not always expressed in similar words, as Leaver points out ([40], p. 98), the common interpretation of the Patristic texts on this subject was in conformity with the synthesis made by Johannes de Muris.

5. A "Polyphonic" God

The musical concept of polyphony is adopted by Cunningham ([41], especially p. 127ff.) as a paradigm of and an overall frame for all attempts to approximate and partially comprehend the Trinitarian mystery. Moreover, it also proves itself fruitful with regard to different (although related and derived) relationships, as that between God and man, or those among human beings within a community, and particularly within the Church. In polyphonic music, for Cunningham, being one and being three is not a violation of the principle of non-contradiction: relationality (between sounds or between people) is the natural dimension of music. Moreover, polyphony's "chief attribute is simultaneous, non-excluding difference: that is, more than one note is played at a time, and none of these notes is so dominant that it renders another mute" ([41], p. 128).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer significantly used the musical image of the counterpoint between *cantus firmus* and higher parts as a metaphor of our love for creation and Creator: our love for God is the basic melody, "to which the other melodies of life provide the counterpoint" ([42], p. 192). As Cunningham points out, this is not a casual juxtaposition of sounds, but a "relationship among various melodies" ([41], p. 130). For Balthasar, creation is like a symphony, composed and conducted by God, where plurality is a gift (and not a defect), provided that there is the availability to "tune oneself symphonically with the other" for the purpose of a transcendent unity ([43], pp. 7–8). This metaphor is carried further by Balthasar to introduce a genuinely Trinitarian argument: it is impossible to

"comprehend", in the word's deepest sense, the mystery of Christ if we try to "grasp" it, to reduce it to a merely earthily dimension ([43], pp. 11–12)[4].

The contrapuntal technique of the canon has a deeply theological value as well, and it was often deliberately used by composers in this sense. Since the canon's *comes*, *i.e.*, the second part, is rigorously derived from the *dux*, it is properly "generated" by the former, and not "created" by the composer: therefore, this process is particularly suitable for musical depictions of the Son, especially within the liturgical *Credo*[5]. Using a retrograde or inverse *comes*, moreover, is a poignant symbol for the Son, who is an image, a "mirror" of the Father[6].

Polyphony thus becomes a significant icon of the Trinity, as a few examples (taken from among the innumerable one could mention) will show. The first two are taken from two versions of the *Duo Seraphim*[7], composed respectively (1567–1643) by Claudio Monteverdi and Francisco Guerrero (1528–1599). In Monteverdi, the words "et hi tres" are set into music on the same triadic chord, in three parts, whereas in the immediately following words ("unum sunt"), the three parts join together in unison on the G (*cf.* [48]) (see Figure 1 below).

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[4] Milbank, quoting often from Augustine's *De Musica*, uses the idea of polyphony, applying it to the believing community, whose objective is "a consensus that is only in and through the inter-relations of the community itself, and a consensus that moves and 'changes': a *concentus musicus*" ([44], p. 227).

[5] In my opinion, a number of passages from the sacred repertoire could be interpreted within this framework: cf. the "genitum, non factum" in the *Missa Ecce Ancilla Domini/Beata es Maria* by Guillaume Dufay; the same passage in the *Missa Hercules Dux Ferrariae* by Josquin Desprez; the "Filium Dei unigenitum" in the *Missa Sine Nomine n. 2* by Johannes Tinctoris; *etc*. Bach's solution is particularly interesting: in the *Credo* of his B-minor Mass, the text *"genitum, non factum, […] per quem omnia facta sunt"* is set by Bach as an imitation, a "quasi-canon". The choice is particularly significant: the idea of canon brings to mind the concept of "generation" of the *comes* by the *dux* (and not of "creation" by the composer), whereas the liberties taken by Bach represent the distinction of the Son's person from that of the Father (*cf.* [45,46], especially pp. 81–83).

[6] Cf., for example, the doxology of Heinrich Schütz's Psalm 100 (SWV 36), of which I propose the following personal interpretation. It begins with an evocation of the three Persons: the two choirs, four-part each, are scored at first for one part each (in echo) when the Father is mentioned. A second voice enters when the Son is evoked, building a counterpoint by contrary motion with the upper voice, giving the idea that the Son is the Father's "image" ("mirror"). In the third period, dedicated to the Spirit, a third voice is inserted, with a triad repeated thrice and followed by a vocalise suggesting the Spirit's "hovering" over the waters. It is therefore meaningful that Schütz suggests here a path that can be summarised as monody, polyphony and harmony: all of these are symbols of Trinitarian love. Similarly to Bach, on the other hand, Messiaen modifies the mirror-like quotation in his *Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité*. Although the verbal texts preceding the *Méditations V* and *VII* suggest that the Son's theme is an inversion of the Father's ("comme deux regards qui se croisent"), nevertheless, as Bruhn points out, the differences between the original and its supposed inversion suggest the differences between the two Persons. These were pointed out, among the others, by St. Thomas—one of Messiaen's favourite authors—and therefore their musical "signifiers" cannot be merely the mirror of each other (*cf.* [47], p. 110).

[7] This is one of the Trinitarian texts *par excellence* among those set to music in Western culture. This is inspired by Isaiah's vision (Is 6:1–4). Monteverdi's version is part of his *Vespro della Beata Vergine Maria* (1610).

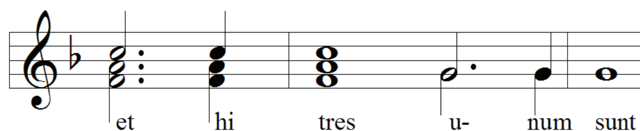

Figure 1. Claudio Monteverdi, *Vespro della Beata Vergine*, 1610, “Duo Seraphim.”

Guerrero’s *Duo Seraphim* is in turn one of the most surprising and revealing symbolic representations of the Trinity in music. The words “tres sunt” are set onto an octave and a fifth, which were commonly used by many composers in a symbolic fashion; the three divine Persons’ names are proposed in a highly suggestive musical illustration. “Pater”, “et Verbum”, “et Spiritus Sanctus” are sung by the different choirs: the first choir prolongs its concluding triad, which thus remains while the second choir sings “et Verbum” starting on the same chord. Therefore, it is as if the triad representing the Father (although, being a *triad*, it already alludes to the whole Trinity…) generated the second choir: their distinction is clear (the first choir keeps sustaining its own chord, which is therefore heard as freely existing), as is their perfect concord.

Another extremely effective solution is the one immediately following, on the words “et hi tres unum sunt”. Here the different choirs alternate and take turns in singing the same triad. The same sound (the same chord) is heard as if coming from different points of the space, as if brought into life by the preceding choir: the result is similar to a phenomenon of enhanced echo (a sound coming from a point, which is reflected and “regenerated” by its contact with an obstacle).

Although space limits prevent a deep treatment of this subject, the symbolic use of polyphony in instrumental works in a Trinitarian sense is worth mentioning. In detail: the possibility of performing several melodic lines at a time, and its common liturgical use, made the organ a particularly fitting symbol for such representations. From the iconographic viewpoint, this symbology was used by, among others, Athanasius Kircher and Jan van Eyck. As concerns Kirchner, Figure XXIII of his *Musurgia Universalis* (1650) represents a gigantic organ. It is composed of three (and three) large groups of pipes, each counting seven elements, whereas the visible registers are three and three at both sides of the keyboard. The most curious element, however, is the keyboard itself. As perhaps even the non-musicians may know, piano and organ keyboards’ octaves include seven white keys and five black ones, which are divided into two groups of two and three keys respectively. Kircher’s organ, instead, has only groups of three black keys, forming (with the white ones), a series of “octaves” of seven semitones (4 + 3) instead of the “normal”, “human” twelve (4 × 3) semitones. As Kerala Snyder suggests, the concept underlying the idea of making this instrument practically unusable could be the idea of “consecrating [putting aside] this organ for God”, especially since the text below says: “Sic ludit in orbe terrarum aeterna Dei sapientia”. Similarly, the scroll over the organ titles the image as “Harmonia nascentis mundi”. Actually, the organ is surmounted by six circles, representing the six days of divine creation. Air, in small clouds, comes out from the organ pipes: possibly to symbolise the effusion of the Spirit. The instrument is playing at full volume: probably referring to humankind as creation’s accomplishment ([49], vol. 2, p. 367; *cf.* [50], pp. 1–2).

As regards Jan van Eyck, it has been observed that the keys pressed down by the angel who plays the organ in the polyptych on the adoration of the Mystic Lamb are C/G and E. Incidentally, this open

harmony corresponds very strictly both to the series of the harmonic sounds and to the concept of the triad as a Trinitarian metaphor, with the Father being symbolized by the root, the Son by the fifth and the Spirit by the third. Moreover, according to Brand Philip, the central image of the polyptych's upper section represents the Trinity: the painter's reference thus becomes particularly poignant (*cf.* [51], p. 54). Centuries later, Albert Schweitzer saw in the physical structure of organ itself (*i.e.*, in the *Hauptwerk*, *Rückpositiv* and *Schwellwerk*) a Trinitarian icon ([52], p. 69).

It is however not an exclusive prerogative of the organ: an instrumental three-part polyphonic writing symbolising the Trinity is found, for example, in several piano work by Charles Tournemire (in the *Douze Prélude-Poèmes* for the piano, especially nos. 9–12) and Olivier Messiaen.[8]

6. A "Harmonious" God

Already during the Ars-Nova period, the interval of third starts to appear among the allowed consonances, probably in consequence of the influence of British music: at first as passage note (*i.e.*, as a non-consonant, or not totally consonant interval, which could be tolerated between two consonant notes), and later as an "imperfect" consonance ([36], p. 321). It was not before the 16th century, however, that the concept of "triad chord" was established[9]. It is perhaps interesting to consider here the German theorist Johannes Lippius (1585–1612), who perfectly summarized the concept of his time, as the result of the progressive intensifying of an awareness coming from the preceding centuries[10]. For Lippius, the triad ("trias harmonica perfecta") is "imago et umbra magni mysterii divinæ solum adorandæ Unitrinitatis" ([55]; *cf.* [56], pp. 40–49). This same concept has been developed in recent times by Paolo Venturino in a series of deep, fruitful and thought-provoking observations on the Trinitarian symbolism of the triad ([57], pp. 67ff; *cf.* [58])[11].

The triad[12] is the fundamental element of classical Western harmony, as it is the chord that summarizes and defines the whole key. This chord is based on the first six harmonics, forming intervals of fifth and (major) third with the tonic. According to many Renaissance theorists, the number six represented the days of creation; the three notes of the chord referred to the Creator. It was therefore an icon of the "heavenly harmony sounding in perpetuity in the ear of God" ([61], p. 124).

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8 For example, in the *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant-Jésus*, (e.g., no. 1, *Regard du Père;* in the *Regard du Fils sur le Fils etc.*); among the organ works, *cf.* the last movement of *Les Corps Glorieux* (1939), "Le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité", and, obviously, the *Méditations sur le Mystère de la Sainte Trinité*. *cf.* [53].

9 Up until then, actually, the three notes forming the triad were not conceived as a self-standing "harmonic" entity proper, but rather as the juxtaposition of two consonant harmonic intervals (*cf.* [54], p. 188).

10 He was the first to formalise the concept of chord inversion, according to which the chords "C-E-G", "E-G-C" and "G-C-E" are three versions of the same triad.

11 The argument maintained by Venturino is part of a wider discussion, aiming at demonstrating the presence and the theological value of a particular temperament of keyboard instrument created by Johann Sebastian Bach. According to Venturino, the composer ciphered his tuning system in the autograph title-page of the *Well-Tempered Keyboard* I (1722). We are omitting here, in a simplistic way, the complex acoustic/mathematical implications of Venturino's argument; however, it is interesting to quote here some of his statements concerning the Trinitarian values of the triad.

12 On this subject, *cf.* also [58–60].

It may be pertinent to consider here the educational and catechetic value of the observations on the Trinitarian analogies of the tonal system, as pointed out by John Butt. For him, "practical" music had the function of transmitting moral and religious values and principles; to this end, the possibilities offered by the speculation on the Trinitarian image of tonality were particularly fruitful. According to Butt, theologians who had musical knowledge immediately linked the emergence of the "new" tonal system with the concept of Trinity. He continues by highlighting that the natural phenomenon of the harmonic sounds could appear to be almost "scientific evidence" of Luther's theory, according to which music is a gift of God. During the dedication of an organ, in 1631, the sermon of G. Friccius stated this point in a very clear and evident fashion ([62], p. 35, quoted in [63], p. 39).

From the acoustic and psychoacoustic viewpoint, the feeling of stasis, calm, solidity and safety aroused by the perfect chord make it particularly suitable for symbolizing acoustically the divine reality, which is immutable, eternal and solemn. Beethoven himself chose to use the triad for the words "Deum de Deo", "Deo vero" and "Et vitam venturi saeculi" within the *Credo* of his *Missa solemnis* (*cf.* [64], p. 684).

It is worth mentioning that Andreas Werckmeister, who developed a famous temperament bearing his name to the present day, had an allegoric and symbolic concept of tuning. The speculative appendix "Von der Allegorischen und Moralischen Musik" in his treatise *Musicæ Mathematicæ* maintains that God, who is ineffable (*unbegreifflich*) and hidden (*verborgen*) is revealed not only through Scripture but also through nature and art. For Werckmeister, therefore, the scale's notes represent allegories of the creation as well as of the days of God's creative activity; moreover, their functions symbolize the Trinity ([65], p. 141; *cf.* [4], p. 417).

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 Kepler: together with Mersennes and Kircher, he wrote one of the most important Baroque treatises on this subject [66,67].

These were the years of music's establishment as an autonomous source of transcendent and cosmic symbolic meanings. In the early Baroque era, music took its symbolism mostly from its connection with verbal language: music "illustrated", also through numerology, the words' meaning and significance. Later, 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 ([68], col. 1974–76).

Concepts similar to this are found throughout the history of philosophy, theology and music theory. For Kircher, God could be defined as the "great *Harmostés*" ([49], vol. 2, p. 462). The Greek term's semantic value is much greater than "governor" or "ruler", by which it is commonly translated. Indeed, it contains a reference to "harmony, to him who rules in the reciprocal consent of the parts involved" ([69], p. 28, fn. 44). In his treatise, Kircher perfectly represents the concept of his contemporaries, of a "world ordained according to number and mathematics in a theological perspective. The harmony of spheres, that of musical sounds and that among body, senses and souls—although referring to different fields of knowledge—all refer to the perfection of the Creator's work" ([69], p. 28; *cf.* [4], pp. 374–75).

Kircher's thought will prove influential in the Baroque era, although sometimes they will be used as an *ex-post* justification for the increasingly important (and independent) role of music, even within

liturgy, rather than as a genuine reflection on the theology of music ([4], p. 384; *cf.* [70], pp. 17–18). Nonetheless, even keeping a due "distance" and establishing precise and well-defined layers of thought and reflection, the harmonic metaphor has such potentialities and has been so constantly exploited in the last four centuries that it is necessary to consider it attentively (*cf.* [2], pp. 152ff.; [60], especially §§29–50).

The triad consists of three notes, all equally indispensable, and is also the space where both the height and the hierarchy of all the other notes of the scale are defined. The three notes of the triad built on the tonic have different functions, but are all in relation to each other, as well as with the entire tonal space. The root is the generating element of both the chord and the key: although it is a specific, particular and individual note, it has already in itself a relationship, a musical fecundity, which is represented by the series of harmonic sounds. The tonic does not contain the scale only potentially, but in act. At the same time, the tonic cannot be conceived only as a simple mathematical set, of which the other notes are merely the elements: the tonic "gives life" to a world of sounds living in it.

The tonic represents, furthermore, the resting point and the centre of gravity in the key; it is the note towards which all tonal movements are oriented. At the same time, the tonic plays this role of tonal basis both as a single note (e.g., the C) and as the perfect chord, *i.e.*, in interaction with the remaining notes of the triad: they are implicit in the tonic's function even when they are not actually heard[13].

The chord's fifth has a different function. According to Venturino, it could represent the Son: in its traditional name of "dominant", it depicts man, "who stands up, walks straight, is raised onto the cross of life, but also in the Transfiguration and Ascension" ([57], p. 67). It may also allude to Christ's five wounds or the human being *tout court*, with their five extremities (two arms, two legs and the head). The "dominant" is in turn the origin of the other great chord, which is named after it and represents tension in its constituent relationship with the tonic. Although it has a sense of its own, it inexorably tends towards the triad. The note generating it thus becomes a "mediator" between the tonic's world of stillness and the dynamism of the remaining notes of the scale. The fifth grade can generate, moreover, the chords of dominant seventh and ninth: in the latter case, the root of the chord (*i.e.*, the fifth grade of the scale, which is part of the triad as well) "generates" a chord made of all the notes not included in the triad. Therefore, it relates the whole tonal "world" of the tonic with the tonic itself.

The third grade of the scale (mediant), finally, is what makes the triad a true chord. Its presence immediately qualifies the major or minor key. It is, so to say, the note, which gives warmth and life to the triad. A void fifth would be doubtlessly consonant, but still, static and without communication with the external world; the third gives it a personality and a color.

The interaction among the notes of the triad would refer, in turn, to the intra-Trinitarian relationships: "The dominant and the third are in turn harmonics of the tonic. Thus they derive from the Father, but the Father would not be *revealed* without them, being a sterile tonic, a *motor*

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[13] In other words, if a single C can conclude as a tonic a work in C-major, its being in a relationship with the E and the G will be implicit even if the E and G are omitted. They are present both in the listeners' memory and also, actually, among the harmonics of the C.

immobilis, as Aristotle said. Dominant and third reveal the Father: the former with the vital and sacrificial raising, but also with the following realization of glory; […] the latter with the fulfillment of *taste* (Love, the Spirit) […] which leads from the tonic to the dominant/Son" ([57], p. 54). A clarification is now necessary. A discourse on musical harmony is rich, complex and fascinating; one on the Trinity is, for obvious reasons, infinitely richer, more complex and fascinating; and it is possible to attempt suggestive comparisons between these two worlds; nevertheless, in my opinion, the experiential aspect (so crucial for both) can reveal, much more than any speculation, the "truth" of a relationship.

In other words, musical harmony is certainly a "symbol" for certain aspects of Trinitarian life; but it is also an actual creature of the Trinity, a created reality donated by God to humankind. The parallelism thus is not simply a figurative analogy, but becomes, here too, a relationship. Similarly, it is much more fruitful, in my opinion, to "perceive" how musical harmony can be a shadow of the Trinity's harmony, instead of reducing this "proximity of beauty" to a merely mechanic equivalence. Obviously, if the *minutiae* of a theological discourse on the Trinity have often enflamed the doctrinal debate, with the progressive definition of the dogma and the establishment of an appropriate linguistic framework, the same cannot be said of the musical language, whose precision and conceptual meaningfulness are totally different: it is only within a framework of faith and worship that the "Trinitarian" meaning or implication of music can be lived, experienced and transmitted (cf. however [2], pp. 154–55).

We can, therefore, realize that many of the tonic's functions can be assimilated to some of the Father's attributes, *in primis* as concerns the generative function of the tonic in both the triad and the whole tonal space. It would be much more problematic to apply a hierarchic structure to the Trinitarian relationships in consequence of the observations on the harmonic sounds, as it is obviously impossible to reduce the Trinity to an acoustic phenomenon. It is similarly fascinating to see a symbol of the Son's double nature in the pivotal function of the dominant. Within the triad, we can say that tonic and dominant "look at each other", are in direct relationship, which is both dialectic and concordant. It is therefore rather easy to see, in this polarity, a symbol of the Son as the Father's image, and as the One who constantly "looks at" him. Thus, the fifth grade, giving life (within the space determined by the tonic) to the dominant chord, is part both of the "still" and self-sufficient world of the triad, and of the world gravitating around it: a world which, to use Augustine's famous sentence, "is restless until it rests" in God. It is similarly "easy" to recognise in the quality brought by the third to the triad a symbol of the Spirit's action, which gives color and life to the relationship between tonic and dominant, thus preventing the simple interval of fifth from remaining a closed and non communicative reality.

These are all possible images, and, probably, they have a certain validity besides their merely suggestive value. However, as a musician I must say that the concept of musical harmony as a symbol of divine harmony, when actually heard, is much more beautiful and richer than what is simply deducible from the similarities above. There is a genuinely experiential "communicativeness" that strikes us as a revelation of beauty when we "perceive" that "there is something of God", a trace of a divine and Trinitarian reality, in the stupendous richness of a fruitful, warm and vibrating harmonic movement that we may experience while listening to three singers with perfect intonation. I apologize to my readers for the very personal quality of such impressions, but I think it important to attempt to communicate them; and this is impossible without a direct experience. Indeed, one feels

an intellectual, symbolic, rational fascination in the possibility of a timid reasoning on the Trinity through the aural reality of harmony; however, there is a much higher, stronger and realer fascination in the transcendence of this same discourse, above all theoretical and mental associations, and within a reality of beauty speaking to the heart, much more than to rational speculation.

Moreover, if different vocal parts (e.g., three voices singing a triad) have a truly good intonation, and are sung by people acquainted with listening to another's voice, and to uniforming their timbre to each other's, the aural result will be the closest human symbol for a perfect communion. The resulting sound will have an immediately communicable character of unity, of harmony, and, as it were, of individuality as well; at the same time, it is possible to discern and distinguish the simultaneous presence of different human voices. It is precisely their being in a reciprocal "relationship" (*i.e.*, to tune oneself to the other's voice) that creates their consonance, the overall musical reality, which cannot be reduced to the sum of each individual's contribution.

From an acoustic viewpoint, moreover, if different voices are singing a triad with a perfect intonation, the harmonics shared by the different voices will be very numerous. Thus, they will be intensified and strengthened, becoming clearly perceptible to an attentive listener: the merging of sounds thus produces a stunning effect, in which the revelation of the harmonic sounds is almost an acoustic "gift", something resulting from the perfection of intonation, characterizing the chord itself unmistakably, unequivocally and inimitably. In other words, a simple chord C-E-G, sung by three voices in perfect intonation, is an acoustically "living" reality, a "generative" reality, which produces and arouses its own sounds. All singers produce their own harmonics together with their own root; but the harmonics resulting from the melting of their voices will not simply be the sum of those produced by each individual voice, as their interaction produces very peculiar sonorities, which cannot be ascribed to any of the individual singers.

It is noteworthy, here, to point out the strong symbolic value of the "human" component of the voices' harmony. This reality, which is irreducible to the sum of its components, this sound which generates other sounds, can result only and exclusively from a "community" listening to itself. The generation of that wealth of harmonics is impossible unless all singers listen with the utmost attention to what their neighbor is singing. As a musician, I remember being very impressed by an interview with of one of the King's Singers, who said: "The way of singing we learnt when children remained within us until now, and it is a very British sound. Emphasis is not put on vocal technique in order to produce […] the vibration of the whole body. On the contrary, our aim is to blend perfectly and delicately our voice with that of the others, exactly as we did when children" [71]. In Christian terms, this is a perfect metaphor of the communion realized through the reception of the other, the openness and the hearing, and through charity, the intra-Trinitarian bound *par excellence*. The intra-Trinitarian dynamics are compared to a chord of voices by Jenson as well: he uses the musical metaphor as a very concrete symbol rather than as a simple poetic imagery. The reciprocal exchange between the three divine Persons is a "singing" exchange, in Jenson's words; the eternal dialogue between Father, Son and Spirit becomes beauty since it is total harmony and has no other goal besides itself [72]. Thus, to quote Edwards, Heaven, the "society in the highest degree happy" is made of souls who express "their love, their joy, and the inward concord and harmony and spiritual beauty […] by sweetly singing to each other" ([73], p. 619). The beauty of a redeemed Creation is

therefore in the reciprocal concord "between one mind and another, and between all their minds and Christ Jesus […], and among the persons of the Trinity, the supreme harmony of all!" ([74], p. 329, no. 182).

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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The Seraphim above: Some Perspectives on the Theology of Orthodox Church Music

Ivan Moody

Abstract: Some outstanding contributions notwithstanding, much recent scholarship in Western European languages concerning art and the sacred has been quite prolific but has generally avoided discussion of specifically liturgical music, a particular problem when dealing with the sacred music of the Orthodox Church. The present discussion aims at establishing some bases for furthering this discussion, drawing not only on recent commentators but especially commentary on the question of liturgical singing by the Fathers of the Church.

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In recent years, a considerable number of books and articles in the English language dealing with art and the sacred from a Christian perspective have been published. Amongst the authors concerned with this theme are Jeremy Begbie [1], Daniel Chua [2], Richard Harries [3], Graham Howes [4], Catherine Pickstock [5], Philip Sherrard [6] and Patrick Sherry [7]. These publications have brought many useful and stimulating insights to the discussion of ways in which the arts may manifest the sacred and have served a crucial purpose in raising the level of that discussion both in artistic and theological terms.

Daniel Chua, for instance, in his essay "Music as the Mouthpiece of Theology" writes that,

> "If music is an integral part of what it is to be human, then it ought to reflect something of the image of God in which we are made. If part of the *imago Dei* is the relationship of love that lies at the heart of the Trinity, then perhaps music can open up a way of thinking about how we relate to the world and to God in a manner where love, rather than reason, dominates. After all, music is inherently relational, both internally in the way its notes are put together and externally in the way in which it is used to communicate in everyday life." ([2], p. 161).

This kind of observation might well give rise to a fascinating and deep theological analysis of music and its purpose in Christian life, but, in fact, none of the above-mentioned authors deal at any appreciable length with the question of the huge bodies of music actually intended for liturgical use, with the exception of that of J. S. Bach. There is discussion of the work of visual artists down the ages, from Duccio to Chagall, frequent mention of the icon, and analysis of the philosophical context for approaching the sacred in art and, especially in the work of Sherrard, the only Orthodox writer listed above, a genuine working towards the establishment of a mystagogy of artistic creation, but there is no real attempt to discover how, for example, Byzantine, Znamenny or Gregorian chant, Aquitainian polyphony, the Masses of Palestrina, the three-part polyphonic music of Georgia or the myriad composed settings of the Divine Liturgy from late 19th and early 20th century Russia, to take

a few examples, might embody or transmit the sacred in their respective liturgical contexts. Chua, indeed, is quite clear that in discussing "music as a mouthpiece for theology", he wishes theology to "articulate the difference while engaging with the modern and postmodern world" ([2], p. 161), and while one might similarly wish liturgical chant to engage with the modern and postmodern world, if it is to do so, it must first be understood as music transmitting theology, which is what it was designed to do.

While, at the same time, magisterial research into this area has been undertaken by authors directly concerned with the praxis of the liturgy, such as Edward Foley, Anthony Ruff and Joseph Swain, and while there is naturally material available in the languages of countries of Orthodox tradition [8,9] (though even this does not strike one as abundant), the only substantial pieces of writing in a Western European language dealing at any length with the subject in a specifically Orthodox context of which the present writer is aware is the remarkable study by Hilkka Seppälä [10], which offers a strong Biblical and patristic grounding for the study of the subject, but which does not enter into questions of a practical nature (*i.e.*, specifically those of musical style), and Nicolas Lossky's monograph from 2003 [11], which does. Even here, however, in a work whose first chapter is entitled "Music and Nicaea II", the author feels obliged to begin with conciliar definitions and regulations regarding icons, and then to explain why he has done so, before moving on to "Liturgy and Theology". Only afterwards, in his third chapter, does he discuss "Music and Theology", which contains valuable, if general, insights, and then proceeds to a discussion of the possibilities and limitations of the situation as he understood it in France and elsewhere at the time of writing. Ironically, his final chapter is entitled "Instead of a conclusion: Silence" and, apart from Lossky and a very few others excepted, it is, within the Western traditions of theological and philosophical (and aesthetic) discussion, silence that we find on this topic.

This lacuna in the literature is, I consider, curious. It is as though musical works created outside the liturgical context might offer more material for examination, in that they "transcend" in some way the category of music simply by being concerned with matters theological, whereas a corpus of chant written for liturgical use is merely functional. The writer Jeanette Wintersen perhaps comes close to an answer when she says, with regard to paintings,

> "Canonising pictures is one way of killing them. When the sense of familiarity becomes too great, history, popularity, association, all crowd in between the viewer and the picture and block it out. Not only pictures suffer like this, all the arts suffer like this." ([12], p. 12).

And one can see the justice of this observation. But yet again, she is discussing categories of art that, while they may include the sacred, also include much that is outside it—she is discussing public perception of art *qua* art, not "functional" art such as is the case with icons or liturgical chant.

Can such a view, then, possibly be correct? Could it really be the case that concert music might speak more directly of the sacred than music designed specifically for the words of the liturgy, sung in liturgical time and space? I suggest that while in one sense this could be true (and the success of paraliturgical music such as that by the late Sir John Tavener, Arvo Pärt, James MacMillan and others could be seen as supporting such a view), given modern (or postmodern) man's general dissociation

from the sacred and frequent embarrassment at any expression of it, and the possibility of hiding the sacred, so to speak, within the philosophical framework of a concert work, it cannot possibly be true as a general rule. If it were so, liturgical music would long ago have been seen to be of no spiritual use and the Church would scarcely have become so involved in the question of precisely what that music should be, whether through the decrees of an Ecumenical Council, say, local edicts, or such councils as those of Trent and Vatican II. As it is, the ecclesial communities that employ a given corpus of chant in their liturgical lives are numerous, and the discussion surrounding the propriety of one kind of liturgical music or another so vigorous, that it is clear that here is an area—one might say the *essential* area—of sacred music that cries out for such analysis and discussion but has not, generally speaking, received it.

It seems therefore appropriate to quote at this point from the introduction to a remarkable course on the theology of church music devised by Archpriest Michael Fortounatto, at present available only in French but in the process of translation by the present author. He begins thus:

> "Liturgical music, like the icon, is only found in actual liturgy and in the Christian home, that is, the manifestation of the Kingdom in the church. Its impact on the faithful is immediate. It does not seem to be a mediator between the sung word and its reception by the listener. Music that resonates may thus be compared to a stained glass window which filters and colours, but does not halt, the daylight. Its emotional impact is sometimes considerable.
>
> One should not be mistaken, however. Music is the work of mankind, and as such, it can also be subject to the fall, be made opaque, ugly and become a screen. We shall discuss later the conditions of its transparency. But, *a priori*, at its birth and in the perfection of its creation by an omnipotent God, music is pure by definition, even though perfectible in the use to which it is put by man." ([13], p. 1).

Immediately, we have here a potential definition of what liturgical music is, and therefore of the way in which it differs from any other kind of music, whether any other kind of music may interact with theology or not.

"Music as a physical phenomenon", continues Fr Michael, "unlike the icon, disappears after having sounded. Written scores, recordings on disc, concerts, are only mirrors that we use for its study. In analysis, the researcher depends on this physical witness, and above all on tradition, that is in the memory he retains of the services as a whole, and of which he is the witness and inheritor" ([13], p. 1).

While the comparison of physical phenomena is not new, the author here touches on another crucial aspect of liturgical music, that of the role of memory and, by extension, tradition. Though there is some parallel in ethnomusicology for this, the sense in which the term "tradition" is understood here is, in fact, in other than strictly musical terms, very different, and simultaneously remarkably vivifying and remarkably dangerous—vivifying because it allows the eternal renewal of the possibility of creation and spiritual life, and dangerous because that very same possibility can lead to fossilization or spiritual death.

The heart of the matter is in what Fr Michael says next:

> "The theological study of chant in its organic union with the Biblical and patristic word passes initially through an intuitive path with the aim of tracing the axes of theological examination, hypotheses which must subsequently be confirmed by a more formal analysis with the aid of precise musicological criteria established at the outset. The theological character of liturgical chant obviously derives from its intimate association with the sung word, just as the word takes its theological character from the thought that expresses the Orthodox faith. Everything, in creation, may become a vehicle for theology; man and the universe are called to be transfigured." ([13], p. 1).

It is, nevertheless, a matter of historical fact that the Church has not agreed in all places and at all times about what kind of music genuinely has a "theological character" [14]. The Fathers of the Church are clear, in general, about what music should *not* be, and about what music is capable of, but it remains the case that discerning with any precision what kind of music might meet with Patristic approval is not always easy. In that case, how might we begin to find, or construct a theology of liturgical chant? What might constitute such a theology? Why, indeed, is it necessary?

To answer the last question first, such a theology is necessary if we believe that the liturgy is a place, a time, of encounter with Christ, if we believe that it is in fact the Kingdom of God manifest upon earth in which the faithful participate fully, as "kings, priests and prophets in a new creation" ([15], p. 38). Such a liturgy clearly cannot be simply a collection of personal impressions, personal interpretations—this is precisely why the fourth-century Council of Laodicea, in its 59th canon, had to rule that "privately composed psalms" *(idiotikoi psalmoi*) might no longer be written—but must instead be subject to the Church's accumulated wisdom ("Tradition") as expressed in the Old and New Testaments and their interpretation through the Church, explained and set down in the canons of the Ecumenical and other Councils. Such a view necessarily implied the regulation of music. If the psalms and hymns officially approved by the Church as transmitting authentic dogma, as revealing Christ and the history of salvation to man, are to be sung, to what music should they be sung? How can that music be regulated so that it is appropriate to the theological weight of the words it is setting? As Nicholas Lossky put it,

> "If one takes seriously the consequences of the Incarnation, 'real and not imaginary, of the Word of God', as stated in the definition of Nicaea II, then all liturgical art must reflect the reality of this new creation—or, at the very least, must not contradict it. Indeed, the definition of Nicaea II speaks of art 'which is in accordance with the narrative of the Gospel' (…) Liturgical art should of necessity participate in this preaching (of the Gospel), be at service, be one with it, be in harmony with it" ([15], p. 39).

Nobody today, of course, can come to a conclusion as to how the music of the Church first sounded or what its guiding principles were beyond the very little mentioned in the New Testament. The earliest documentation we have is that of the Fathers of the Church and the prescriptions of the Councils, and to these we shall return in detail.

Secondly, returning to the two earlier questions but also in continuation of the response to the third, the first places to seek for sources of a theology of chant are obviously the earliest. If we leave aside references in the Psalms, the Book of Revelation, Acts and the tantalizing but bare references in

the Gospels (notably the reference to "singing a hymn" (*ὑμνήσαντες*) in the accounts of the Last Supper according Sts. Matthew and Mark), and St Paul's injunction to sing "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (*λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς (ἐν) ψαλμοῖς, καὶ ὕμνοις, καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς*; Ephesians 5:19 and also Colossians 3:16), it is clear that we need to have recourse to the writings of the early Church Fathers. Patristic writings on music rarely give any genuinely musical clues, discussing as they do the nature of the allusions in the Psalms to the instruments of now-defunct Temple liturgy, and the moral value of music. St Basil's Homily on the First Psalm, for example, is barely related to anything that we might now recognize as liturgical music; it gives, rather, the impression of a discussion of some kind of para-liturgical music, accompanied by a psaltery—the discussion is, in the end, about the text rather than any potentially musical realization of it. St John Chrysostom talks more specifically about music and its spiritual effects—whether positive or negative—but his musical discussion is thoroughly of the classical Greek type, and references to the singing of psalms have more to do with home churches, showing no concern with anything resembling what we would now describe as Christian liturgy.

However, while patristic commentary may not tell us anything about the *sound* of the music to be heard at the time, the *image* of song is so pervasive, and so frequently used in connection with moral and spiritual commentary that it is clear that any attempt at constructing a theology of chant must begin with these writings. Bearing that in mind, I recall here Fr Michael Fortounatto's observation that, "…chant has its existence only in prayer addressed to God in all places of His dominion; in this it expresses the praise and supplication of the believer, searching for the divine presence; in blessing God, man aspires to holiness and draws near to his Creator; in this sense, the chant that accompanies prayer may be qualified as HOLY" ([13], p. 2).

In the search for corroboration of this, one might begin with the bishop and martyr St Methodios of Olympus (d. 311). His *Symposium, or On Virginity (Symposion e peri hagneias)* is modelled on Plato's *Symposium*, ten virgins discoursing at a feast on the virtues of Christian chastity. The text is full of natural and musical images, and it ends with a metrical hymn in honour of Christ the Bridegroom. In the third discourse, Thalia gives an interpretation of Psalm 40, a psalm replete with images of song. She says,

> "Now, those who sing the Gospel to senseless people seem to sing the Lord's song in a strange land, of which Christ is not the husbandman; but those who have put on and shone in the most pure and bright, and mingled and pious and becoming, ornament of virginity, and are found barren and unproductive of unsettled and grievous passions, do not sing the song in a strange land; because they are not borne thither by their hopes, nor do they stick fast in the lusts of their mortal bodies, nor do they take a low view of the meaning of the commandments, but well and nobly, with a lofty disposition, they have regard to the promises which are above, thirsting for heaven as a congenial abode, whence God, approving their dispositions, promises with an oath to give them choice honours, appointing and establishing them 'above His chief joy'." [16].

Allegorical though the commentary be, it is striking in its insistence of the Gospel being not only "sung", but sung well—with a "lofty disposition". Such an allegory would, of course, be impossible without the actual existence of singing that was considered good and uplifting.

St Gregory the Theologian (329–395), discusses the relationship between the Holy Spirit and singing. In describing the necessity of God's providence, he says that "the choir would stop…without its conductor" ([17], p. 53), and the Apostolic Constitutions, from the late 4th century, speak of the Seraphim singing with the Cherubim, the angels singing in yet another way and human beings using yet another means of expression: "(…) and the Seraphim, with the six-winged Cherubim, singing with unceasing voices the triumphal hymn, cry out: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Sabaoth. His brightness fills the whole earth", and the other orders of angels cry: "Blessed is the glory of the Lord from His place", while Israel, the Church on earth, following the example of the heavenly powers, sings "with brave heart and eager mind (2 Macc. 1:3)" ([10], p. 53; [18], cols. 1987, 1029). Indeed, Hilkka Seppälä, who devotes an entire chapter to angels as teachers of church singing in her study, points out that the Seraphim are "almost always presented as the most important among the singing groups (of the ranks of angels)" ([10], p. 57) and St Basil the Great (330–379), in *On the Holy Spirit*, points out that the Seraphim themselves are taught by the Holy Spirit, like a coryphaeus (*κορυφαῖος*, originally the leader of the chorus in Attic drama), and we in turn imitate the celestial liturgy on earth, with the thrice-holy hymn:

> "For [life] so to abide [without the Spirit] were as likely as that an army should maintain its discipline in the absence of its commander, or a chorus its harmony without the guidance of the coryphaeus. How could the Seraphim cry 'Holy, Holy, Holy', were they not taught by the Spirit how often true religion requires them to lift their voice in this ascription of glory? Do 'all His angels' and 'all His hosts' praise God?" [19].

St Ephrem the Syrian (d. 373), prolific author of hymns, was fully aware of the seductive effect of pagan music, and effectively baptized it by copying its rhythms. He wrote extensively of the effect of psalmody on the soul and was in no doubt of its power. In his *On Psalmody*, he says the following:

> "But let us (…) speak of repentance and the coming judgement. For we should always meditate on these things, because the day of the Lord is coming like a thief in the night. Therefore by night and day, look to your last hour and meditate on the law of the Lord day and night. Say many things to God and few to humans. If you stretch out your hand to work, let your mouth sing psalms and your mind pray. Let psalmody be continually on your mouth, for when God is being named he puts the demons to flight and sanctifies the singer.
>
> Psalmody is calm of soul, author of peace. Psalmody is convenor of friendship, union of the separated, reconciliation of enemies. Psalmody attracts the help of the Angels, is a weapon in night-time fears, repose of the day's toils, safety for infants, adornment for the old, consolation for the elderly, most fitting embellishment for women. It make deserts into homes, market places sober. It is the ABC for beginners, progress for the more advanced, confirmation for the perfect, the voice of the Church. It makes festivals radiant; it creates mourning that is in accordance with God, for psalmody draws tears

> even from a heart of stone. Psalmody is the work of the Angels, the commonwealth of heaven, spiritual incense. Psalmody is enlightenment of souls, sanctification of bodies.
>
> Let us, brethren, never stop making psalmody our meditation, both at home and on the road, both sleeping and waking, speaking to ourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. Psalmody is the joy of those who love God. It banishes idle chatter, brings laughter to an end, reminds us of the judgement, rouses the soul towards God, joins the choir of the Angels. Where there is psalmody with compunction, there God is, with the Angels. Where the songs of the opponent are, there is God's wrath, and 'woe!' is the reward of laughter. Where sacred books and readings are, there are the joy of the just and the salvation of the listeners. Where there are harps and dances, there is the darkening of men and women, and a festival of the Devil.
>
> O the wicked cunning and contrivance of the Devil! How he trips each one through craft, and deceives them and persuades them to do evil as though it were good! Today they decide to chant, tomorrow they dance with enthusiasm. Today they are Christians, tomorrow heathens. Today of good repute, tomorrow pagans. Today servants of Christ, tomorrow rebels against God. Do not be deceived. No one can be servant of two lords, as it is written. You cannot serve God and dance with the Devil." [20].

The sheer *power* of music is clearly recognized in St Ephrem's words; and if psalmody is "the work of the angels", it is obvious that it must be regulated in such a way that on man's lips it may indeed become angelic. But one might also call to mind here Fr Michael Fortounatto's point that "…one of the reasons for the existence of the liturgical art that is chant is the teaching of the faith, the Christian mission; this is why liturgical chant must be qualified as APOSTOLIC" ([13], p. 2): St Ephrem's activity consisted precisely in the teaching of the faith, the Christian faith, and was therefore nothing if not apostolic.

St John Chrysostom also described the angelic singing, in the following words:

> "How do I understand that words proceed into deeds? (…) from the fact that imitating the angelic choir, and endless hymnology is offered to God (…). Above, the armies of angels praise while below the people are standing in the choir of the church and imitating their praise. The Seraphim above cry the thrice-holy hymn and the people below raise the same hymn." [21].

St Basil reinforces the point that singers on earth should imitate the singing of the angels, and emphasizes its very concrete results:

> "What is more blessed than to imitate the chorus of the angels here on earth; to arise for prayer at the very break of day and honour the Creator with hymns and songs; and then when the sun shines brightly to turn to our work, and, with prayer as an ever-present companion, to season our tasks with hymns as if with salt? For the consolation of hymns favours the soul with a state of happiness and freedom from care." [22].

Psalmody is viewed, then, as a very direct, physical means of spiritual purification, as a path to a state of blessedness. St Athanasios the Great wrote that through singing psalms, "the turbulence and

roughness and disorder in the soul are smoothed away and sadness is overcome" ([23], p. 100). He also notes that those who sing psalmody properly "psalmodize not only with their tongue, but also with their mind, and benefit greatly not only themselves but also those who desire to listen to them. Thus the blessed David, chanting in this way to Saul, himself pleased God, and banished the turbulent and mad passion of Saul, and rendered his soul calm" ([23], p. 100). Similarly, Evagrios of Pontos notes that "Psalmody, long-suffering and compassion stop the agitation of anger" ([24], p. 34).

It is clear, however, that imitation of angelic song, the kind of chanting capable of putting the passions to sleep and stilling the intemperance of the body, cannot be lightly undertaken: such chanting requires attentiveness and humility. The 75th Canon of the Synod in Trullo (691–692) states that "those whose office it is to chant in churches…offer the psalmody to God, Who is the observer of secrets, with great attention and contrition". St John Chrysostom, in reference to St Paul's injunction to sing to God "with psalms, with hymns, with spiritual songs" (Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16), also insists that such singing is to be done with spiritual attentiveness, "For this constitutes singing to God–the other is merely singing to the air" ([21], p. 101).

Such instructions make clear the kind of attitude necessary for the prayerful rendition of psalmody, and given its importance in the understanding of these Church Fathers, it is obvious that its regulation and prescription would become a matter to be dealt with by the Councils of the Church. Here are the prescriptions from Canon LXXV of the Council in Trullo (Quinisext), held in 692:

> "We will that those whose office it is to sing in the churches do not use undisciplined vociferations, nor force nature to shouting, nor adopt any of those modes which are incongruous and unsuitable for the church: but that they offer the psalmody to God, who is the observer of secrets, with great attention and compunction. For the Sacred Oracle taught that the Sons of Israel were to be pious." ([25], p. 398).

These make it evident that a correct spiritual disposition is necessary for the correct chanting of psalms and hymns. What is not so evident, however, is precisely what might have constituted at this period "undisciplined vociferations" or "shouting". The entire question of style, of what might be considered liturgically appropriate in any given time and place, is one that complicates the interpretation of such prescriptions in no uncertain manner. In this context, it is instructive to read what Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote in an extremely perceptive essay on the problems of liturgical music. He said that,

> "…the Fathers of the Church (…) regarded the musical riches of the Old Testament and Graeco-Roman culture as a part of the sensible, material world which was to be overcome in the spiritual world of Christianity. They understood spiritualisation to mean dematerialisation and hence understood it in a manner which more or less borders on iconoclasm. That is theology's historical mortgage in the question of ecclesiastical art, and it is a mortgage which comes to the fore over and over again during the course of history." [26].

While it is acknowledged in his paper that the continuation of this story is far from as simple as this statement regarding the Fathers of the Church would appear to imply, the then-Cardinal Ratzinger nevertheless places those Fathers, in such a statement, within a philosophical framework that has

little to do with what is today considered to be Orthodox tradition. It is clearly possible to regard the new Christian musical world, as it were, as one that had overcome the "sensible, material world", but the reinvention of music at the hands of St Ephrem the Syrian would suffice as an example to contradict any claim of near-iconoclasm. It is precisely the Fathers' understanding of the Incarnation, and therefore the necessity for incarnate art and incarnate music, that militates against such an assertion. Rather, it is a recognition of the reality of the negative aspects of the physical realm that lead the Fathers to propose, as did St John Chrysostom, that

> "Nothing so uplifts the mind, giving it wings and freeing it from the earth, releasing it from the prison of the body, affecting it with love of wisdom, and causing it to scorn all things pertaining to this life, as modulated melody and the divine chant composed of number" ([27], II:13).

It is also fundamental to view such statements against the background of pagan music, and the Fathers' perception of this as an accompaniment to debauchery and licentiousness. We can thus understand what underlies the observation of Bishop Jacob of Serugh when he said of St Ephrem the Syrian that he

> "saw that women were silent from praise
> and in his wisdom he decided it was right that they should sing out;
> so just as Moses gave timbrels to the young girls,
> thus did this discerning man compose hymns for virgins.
> As he stood among the sisters it was his delight
> to stir these chaste women into songs of praise;
> he was like an eagle perched among the doves
> as he taught them to sing new songs of praise with pure utterance" ([28], p. 234).

It is clear from this that "dematerialization" was not the object the "new songs of praise", sung with "pure utterance". The physicality of those new songs was intended to combat the physicality of the songs of the pagans. An observation by Joseph McKinnon is relevant here: in speaking of early Egyptian monasticism, he notes that Palladius (d. 425), in the *Lausiac History*, "gives us a hint of what the private weekday office might have been like at Nitria in Lower Egypt: 'one who stands there at about the ninth hour can hear the psalmody issuing forth from each cell, so that he imagines himself to be high above, in paradise'" ([29], p. 507). McKinnon then goes on to say, however, that, "Of course, what sounded heavenly to Palladius might, by narrowly musical standards, have been cacophonous, with each monk chanting in his own way and in his own time. But even the most secularly inclined of moderns should be able to imagine themselves stirred by the religious resonance of such a scene; and, more to the point, the chanting of certain individual monks might itself have manifested a kind of unselfconscious beauty" ([29], p. 507).

This is remarkable on two counts: firstly, because it recognizes the absolutely incarnate quality of the singing—a religious "cacophony" could be nothing other than incarnate, a physical experience–and secondly, because it introduces the idea of "unselfconscious beauty", a formulation that summarizes magnificently the way in which an incarnate liturgical singing must surely be expected to sound.

Quite specific and unusually direct instruction concerning singing may be seen, rather earlier, in the writings of Niceta of Remesiana. Niceta was appointed bishop of Remesiana (now Bela Palanka, Serbia) in about 370. In his "On the Benefit of Psalmody", described by its translator James McKinnon as "a remarkable summary of the early Christian doctrine on ecclesiastical song", Niceta refers to the Canticle of the Three Youths in the Furnace, as found in the Book of Daniel, and observes:

> "You have it here on biblical authority that the three praised the Lord together 'as if from one voice', just as all of us must exhibit the same intention and the same sounding melody as if from a single voice. Those, however, who are not able to blend and adapt themselves to the others, ought better to sing in a subdued voice than to create a great clamour; and thus will they fulfil their liturgical obligation and avoid disrupting the singing community. For it is not given to all to possess a supple and pleasant voice" ([27], p. 21).

Through apophatic theology, the inadequacy of the human intellect and human language to express the fullness of truth is continually proclaimed, and the writings of such as Nikiphoros the Hesychast bear (paradoxically eloquent) witness to this ([30]). It is precisely "human language" that is transcended in the extraordinarily elabo rate chants composed by St John Koukouzeles for the all-night vigils at the Great Lavra on Mount Athos, which employ a wide vocal range, dramatic leaps, dazzling melodic sequences and, crucially, the wordless vocalizing that is the *kratema*, characterized by Alexander Lingas as "institutionalized pentecostalism" ([31], p. 163)[1]. Words, liturgically authorized and doctrinally authoritative though they may be, have, in effect, given way to awe-struck, interior silence.

When we turn to later theological approaches on the question of the theology of sacred music, we come up against the twin difficulties of linguistic barriers and the calamity of the advent of communism. These meant that the wave of spiritual revival, including the rediscovery of Byzantine icon styles and earlier repertories of monophonic chant, evident at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, particularly in Russia, did not have an immediate opportunity to make an impact in the West. In addition, the radical reforms enacted in the Roman Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council meant that, in any case, there would have been little point of contact with Orthodox liturgical aesthetics.

The subject of liturgical music, its aesthetics and its theology, was, nevertheless, one of lively debate in 19th century Russia. From one of the *Letters to a Beginner* by the Abbess Thaisia of Leushino, we can gain an eminently practical view of what was expected of the church singer. She frames her advice with the words: "What a wonderful and great gift–the gift of a voice and the ability to sing! They were given to us for this, that with them we might both glorify the Lord ourselves, and incite others to do the same" ([32], p. 56)[2]. The letter continues to expound in depth upon the nature of singing:

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[1] The term *kratema* comes from *kratein*, "to hold", and refers to the holding, or prolongation, of a liturgical chant melody. The term *terirem* is also found, referring to the nonsense syllables "te-ri-rem" that were the text of the *kratemata*, whether as independent compositions or sections of other chants.

[2] I am very grateful to Sydney Freedman for drawing my attention to this source.

> "The singing of the chanter passes over to the hearts of those who are praying; if the singing proceeds from the heart, it meets the heart of the listener and so influences him that it is able to rouse him to prayer, to incite reverence even in those minutes when the heart itself is distracted and hard. Often it happens that those who enter the church without any eagerness toward prayer, from compulsion or from propriety, begin to pray fervently and tearfully, and leave the church in quite another frame of mind, in a spirit of tender feeling and repentance. Such a revival is produced in them by the magnificent service and fine singing. And, conversely, often it happens that those who enter the church with the intention to pray from the soul, to pour out before the Lord their sorrowful soul, when they hear scattered, careless singing and reading, themselves little by little become distracted, and instead of profit they find harm, they receive no consolation and, having been tempted by the conduct of the singers, involuntarily fall into the sin of condemnation.
>
> Strive with all your strength to concentrate attentively on the words which you pronounce; pronounce them in such a manner that they come from the depth of your soul, which is singing together with your lips. Then the sounds of the vivifying current of your hymn will pour into the souls of those who hear them, and these souls, being raised from the earthly to the heavenly, having laid aside all earthly care, will receive the King of Glory Who is borne in triumph by the Angelic Hosts." ([32], p. 57).

Such an approach is clearly deeply imbued with patristic wisdom, in its reiteration of the idea that the singer's disposition and attentiveness affects the sound emitted, the psalmodizing, and the idea that chanting is a preparation for entering into the holy, for the reception of Christ.

The veneration of earlier repertoire, at least in its spirit, is seen in the following comments on the music of Kastal'sky by the critic Ivan Lipaev in 1898:

> "In church music (Kastal'sky) is a type of Vasnetsov. One would like to hear his arrangements and compositions under the arches of the Kievan St Vladimir Cathedral, *so permeated are they with incorporeity and asceticism,* so dissimilar are they to the extravagance of a lone individual, sounding more like an echo of a composition by an entire people…Listening to his works, it seems at times that they have burst into this world of their own accord, without will and effort on the composer's part. It appears that (Kastal'sky) has wholly mastered the inner essence of ancient singing; his instinct has not misled him." ([33], p. 221)[3].

In the light of this, it is interesting to note what Kastal'sky himself had to say about the composition of church music, in an article entitled "My Musical Career and My Thoughts on Church Music":

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[3] The reference to Vasnetsov is to Viktor Mikhailovich Vasnetsov (1848–1926), a painter who synthesized modern painting techniques with nationalistic subjects and iconography, and painted most of the frescos and icons of the neo-Byzantine St Vladimir Cathedral in Kiev.

> "And style?...Our original church tunes when laid out chorally lose all their individuality; what distinction they have when sung in unison as they were by the old-believers, and how insipid they are in the conventional four-part arrangements of our classics, on which we have prided ourselves for nearly a hundred years: it is essential but… spurious." ([34], pp. 237–38).
>
> "The future of our creative work for the Church can also be merely surmised, but I feel what its real task should be. I am convinced that it lies in the idealisation of authentic church melodies, the transformation of them into something musically elevated, mighty in its expressiveness and near to the Russian heart in its typically national quality. (…) I should like to have music which could be heard nowhere except in a church, and which would be as distinct from secular music as church vestments are from the dress of the laity." ([34], p. 245).

It is quite clear in such writing that, though the intention is to return to "indigenous church melodies", and in spite of Lipaev's characterization of Kastal'sky's style as incorporeal and ascetic, the motivation is emotional and nationalistic, rather than grounded in liturgical theology.

In the later 20th Century, however, as part of a wider revival of theological writing, by Orthodox authors from various countries, including Greece, Romania, Russia, France, Great Britain and the USA, and aided by serious attempts at systematic translation into western languages (notably French, English, German and Finnish), it has become evident that not only has an Orthodox understanding of theology and the way in which it is transmitted through the liturgical arts never lost its depth or its roots in Church tradition, but that it is at the same time able to adapt to new circumstances, and has become, on that account, of great interest to Western theologians. To return to the words of Fr Michael Fortounatto for a final time, "Liturgical chant is the creation of the Church in each local historical tradition. And since the Church is built up of a body around its bishop in every place of its incarnation, chant may thus also be said to be CATHOLIC in its constituent elements, in the image of the Church" ([13], p. 2).

However, while writing on icons and the theology of icons, in the wake of the contributions of such authors as Vladimir Lossky, Leonid Ouspensky and Paul Evdokimov has blossomed, recent commentary on the theology of Orthodox chant has, as I noted at the beginning of this essay, proved far more difficult to come by; it is significant, for example, that the *Cambridge Companion to Orthodox Christian Theology* (2008) makes not a single mention of music. Theology has, so to speak, been left to the practitioners of church music, whose objective is to sing with "the seraphim above", and while this is as it should be in that music is an incarnate expression of theology, there is no reason that the Church should be simultaneously bereft of commentary thereon; indeed, this is essential in that an understanding of the theology of church music should be a prerequisite for any composer working in this field. Indeed, the hugely increased availability of Orthodox church music throughout the world, the constant and continuing discussions concerning the most appropriate styles of music for worship within the Orthodox Church itself, and the vigorous outpouring of new liturgical music from composers whose views on this vary enormously, make the acquisition of such an understanding a matter of urgency.

With the work of the scholars from outside Orthodox tradition I mentioned at the beginning of this article, such as Chua, Harries and Sherry, to which one might add substantial books by John Dillenberger [35] and Richard Viladesau [36], the small amount of writing that has come from inside the Orthodox tradition (Philip Sherrard, Hilkka Seppälä, Nicolas Lossky and, very particularly, Fr Michael Fortounatto), and the vast treasury of material left to us by the Fathers of the Church, it is with increasing optimism that one may look forward to Orthodoxy reclaiming this ground and reflecting in genuine depth on the theological richness of its various traditions of sacred music.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Music and Spirituality: Reflections from a Western Christian Perspective

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Abstract: Music and spirituality in a Christian view start with faith in the Word of God in response to the initiative of God who, as personal being through the Word revealed in Christ, seeks out persons even when they do not seek God. This mystery finds its goal in what is beyond expression in music from a variety of musical styles and syntaxes, from various times and places, in praise and prayer, and in relation to all of life. Matters like memory, health, emotion, time, silence, and community are involved. Paradoxes and a dark side are noted.

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1. Double Paradox

Anthony Ruff begins a book on sacred music with the assertion that music is powerful ([1], p. 4). Quoting Edward Foley that "from time immemorial, the belief has persisted that music contains power to alter the moods and actions of gods and people" [2], he notes that philosophers have attributed powers and ethical influences to certain modes and that modern empirical evidence has gauged the physiological effects of music. Susan Palo Cherwien has delineated some of these ([3], pp. 3–8). Ruff wonders if "our reactions to music are "innate or learned" ([1], p. 5) and quotes Nicholas Wolterstorff who, though some might challenge his assessment as he works with a larger swath of aesthetic stimuli, says that "the extent of intercultural agreement on these matters is astonishing" [4]. Ruff continues by pointing to music's communicative, communal, and ritual character. If only one of these characteristics were true, music and spirituality would still be connected; with all four it is no wonder that the connection has been so common. This does not make the connection easy to define. As John Bowden says, "That *de facto* [music] has a place [in relation to spirituality] may be hard to dispute; to define that place more closely verges on the impossible" [5]. This article is one person's tiny vignette about what verges on the impossible.

For the Christian church, the connection has been especially interesting because, in the Christian vision, God creates and addresses humanity. Music's power and other capacities live with the rest of the creation under God, not as magic controls in human hands. The connection is still more interesting because it involves a double paradox. The dictionary defines "spirituality" as relating to the immaterial and incorporeal as opposed to the material and physical. Christians who confess God as spirit and taking flesh in Christ embrace both the immaterial and the material. Music itself comprehends the same embrace: what is perceived as intangible or immaterial sound consists of physical vibrations heard through material bodies that pulsate. This double paradox lies at the heart of music and spirituality for Christianity. Susan Palo Cherwien summarizes it when she says that "singing hymns to worship God . . . unites body with spirit" [6].

2. Sorting Things Out

2.1. Word of God

Louis Bouyer in his *Introduction to Spirituality* helpfully leads into our topic. He explains how Christian spirituality is not a ratiocinative set of logical judgments by which one figures out paradoxes like this any more than it "drowns in sentimental musing" [7]. Christian spirituality, he says, is the "awareness of a spiritual reality . . . that goes beyond the consciousness of the individual" ([7], p. 4), that realizes God is revealed in the person of Christ ([7], p. 6), and that starts with faith in the Word of God ([7], p. 7) in response to the "gratuitous, free, sovereign initiative of God" who seeks us even when we do not seek God ([7], p. 9).

2.2. Musical Outcome

Bouyer then explains the musical outcome. God as personal being par excellence addresses human beings ([7], p. 5) in the way one becomes a person, through speech ([7], p. 8). The divine Word of the Bible, definitively proclaimed and enfleshed in Christ, continues through the Spirit as the living Word of God in Christ's body the church into which the believer is incorporated ([7], pp. 8–13). This Word of God is proclaimed in the church in "a succession of living experiences" ([7], p. 33) through its reading and hearing. These call for "sacred song" in celebration, adoration and proclamation in the world to the glory of God ([7], p. 41). Every meditation of the Word and every contemplation of this Mystery "finds its goal in what is beyond expression."

> The "jubilus"—that is, the musical vocalization of the "a" of the Alleluia—this, and this alone, can finally translate the ecstasy of the believing soul in the face of revealed truth, truth which is ultimately not an idea but a Person. . . . ([7], p. 43). Faith in this Word, which leads to its musical vocalization, is neither a cold judgment nor the expression of artificially elaborated sentiments. It is the exultation of our whole being, ravished in the contemplation of the Mystery discovered in the Word . . . which is essentially the gift of God [as the one] Who gives [and] is given ([7], p. 42).

2.3. Common Themes

Bouyer's is a "catholic" posture, but God as person (in the Christian vision a Trinity of three persons) who addresses human persons through the Word is a theme that accompanies virtually all Christian streams. In Philip Pfatteicher's words, "Spirituality is, first of all, always a response" [8]. Though there are minority reports, the musical outcome in celebration, adoration, and proclamation is also ubiquitous and helps to understand why the church has so consistently sung Psalms and Canticles, what stands behind Colossians 3:16 ("Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."), why the service of the Word has generated such a hymnic feast, why the celebration of the Lord's Supper has exploded into the singing of the *Sanctus* ("Holy, holy, holy . . . blessed is the one who come in the name of the Lord"), and why the earliest singers in the church were lectors who sang the readings [9].

2.4. Words and Music

It immediately becomes apparent that words that bear the Word of God are of central importance. Augustine defined a hymn as praise to God that is sung. Such singing of words about the Word ties words and music together closely. For Martin Luther it means music is next to the Word of God. Luther sensed that music is from the

> sphere of miraculous audible things—like the Gospel [and] is a unique gift of God's creation [that] comes to us in the same way the Word of God does, namely, mediated by the voice [10].

Because of this close relationship between words and music [11], their distinction can be missed so that the meaning of words can be construed as if it were music. Poetry, of course, is musical or proto-musical or may even be called music because of its mellifluous ordering of sounds in time, but what we are dealing with here as music is the crafting and limiting of the vast raw material of creation's many sounds into forms that have the elements of specific rhythms, pitches, and tone colors, with or without texts. If the distinction between words and music is not observed, half of our topic is obliterated.

Jonathan Linman helps to avoid this confusion by noting what belongs to music in its intimate association with spirituality. Quoting the ancient saying, attributed to Augustine, "The one who sings prays twice" (sometimes given as "The one who sings *well* prays twice" or "Whoever sings [to God in worship] prays twice" [12]), he notes that music deepens the life of prayer as the "embodied qualities of music making carry the Word into ourselves and employ multiple dimensions of our physicality and experience." Music "involves memory" as it links "certain texts and tunes." By means of various styles music "can carry us in our imaginations and experiences to the ends of the earth such that we grow in appreciation for the gift of cultural diversity" and grasp a "sense of the rich tapestry [of the] human family" [13]. To Bouyer's celebration, adoration, and proclamation we can now add Linman's prayer, memory, and a communal tapestry related to the whole human family.

2.5. Music and Proclamation

Luther emphasized the first cluster: celebration, adoration, and proclamation. He saw music as a gift of God ([14], pp. 321, 324) that proclaims the Word of God [15]. Once people know what God has done for them in Christ, said Luther, they "must gladly and willingly sing" [16]. God's gift of language combined with song was given so that we "should praise God . . . by proclaiming the [Word of God] through music" ([14], p. 323). Here praise, proclamation, celebration, and adoration all run together on a musical circuit of sound. What is perceived as incorporeal sound takes flesh in vibrating human bodies. They praise and adore the unseen God enfleshed in Christ as the Holy Spirit impels the singing of words that carry the Word of God by and through Christ's body the church. Walter Brueggemann adds another aspect of praise, a potent one. He says that

> in the liturgy . . . the praise of Israel—or more broadly the human vocation of praise—is to maintain and transform the world, [that it is] world-making . . . through human activity which God has authorized and in which God is known to be present [17].

2.6. Music and Prayer

The embodied characteristic of music is also present when prayer is emphasized. Augustine, if he is responsible for "The one who sings prays twice," pointed there to the embodied deepening. So did John Calvin, who, like Luther, thought that singing was "peculiarly created to tell and proclaim the praise of God," but saw its chief use tied to public prayer in the assembly of believers [18]. Following Paul in Colossians 3:16, he regarded music as mutually edifying. When tempered to a fitting gravity he perceived it not only as lending "dignity and grace to sacred actions," but as having "the greatest value in kindling our hearts to a true zeal and eagerness to pray" [19]. John and Charles Wesley pointed in the same direction. As Carlton Young says, they "paraphrased the religion of the heart into song" [20]. S T Kimbrough identified "this union of music and poetry as Lyrical theology'" [20].

2.7. Memory, Health, Emotion, and Time

Memory, as Linman says, links texts and tunes. A certain melody recalls a certain text because the two were associated at some point, perhaps a critical one, in a person's life. Melodies also relate for many faithful churchgoers to Christian themes as in the church's liturgical year—some to Advent, others to Christmas (Christmas carols are the most obvious example), or Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost.

Music bears a relation to memory in other ways. When members of a church visit an old person who can hardly speak, they may be surprised if they start a hymn and find the person singing it with them as if wholeness were suddenly restored [21]. Health is involved here ([3], pp. 9–12), not only for individuals but also for assemblies of believers [22]. Hearty congregational song is a sign of a healthy people. So is healthy emotion, to which music also relates.

The emotional piece is a tricky one because virtually every musical venue in our period ties music almost exclusively to emotion, often in superficial ways. The two are related, as Leonard Meyer has shown [23], or, as Don and Emily Saliers say,

> Because music is so close to human emotion and feeling, and, because faith is a matter of both the head and the heart, it leads us again and again into the realm of spirituality ([24], p. 17).

Meyer's and Saliers' insights need thoughtful consideration. (Their thought is more careful than much pervasive superficial talk about this topic.) However, one of the greatest twentieth century composers, Igor Stravinsky, also deserves thoughtful consideration and gives us pause about the unquestioned presupposition that links music with emotions. Stravinsky said that music was "essentially powerless to *express* anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, a psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature, *etc*. . . ." ([25], p. 53). He thought it was a "misunderstanding" to search in music for "something that is not there" ([25], p. 162) and that looking in music for "emotions such as joy, grief, sadness, an image of nature, a subject for daydreams, or—still better—oblivion from 'everyday life'" is searching for "a drug—'dope'" ([25], pp. 162–63). For Stravinsky music's ability to express something is "an illusion and not reality" ([25], p. 53). His central point has to do with humanity and time:

> The phenomenon of music is given to us with the sole purpose of establishing an order in things, including, and particularly, the coordination between *man* and *time*. To be put into practice, its indispensable and single requirement is construction. Construction once completed, this order has been attained, and there is nothing more to be said ([25], p. 54).

What we see here are two spiritualities in relation to music. One emphasizes emotion; the other emphasizes music's relationship to time. This becomes more obvious when music without text is considered.

In the centuries following the New Testament, the church excised musical instruments from its assemblies because of instruments' association with idolatry and immorality [26–28]. That decision still stands in the Eastern Orthodox Church and points to the centrality of texted music sung by congregations and choirs. In the Western Church, the decision stood for the first millennium. After that organs and then other instruments were welcomed. Reformed communities in the sixteenth century and for several centuries thereafter reinstated the restriction, adding choirs to it. They largely have now embraced instruments and choirs with most of the Western church.

What then is happening when instruments play music without voices singing texts? If the music is built on a tune associated with a text like a hymn, the text will be referenced in the memory bank. If there are or are not such associations, whether music involves texts or not, it relates to time and to the time of worship as I explain in *The Heart of the Matter*.

> . . . music spins itself out in time just the same as worship does. Music accompanies processions [as] the processional nature of the pilgrim people on the move takes place in time. Music articulates that time. . . Beyond that music articulates worship itself [in the] pace and shape and flow of a service [29].

That is, music articulates worship in relation to human life in time. That is why we sing the Psalms, which are about all of life's heights and depths before God. As Don and Emily Saliers comment,

> Music is the temporal art par excellence . . . music is by its very nature ephemeral. It sounds within a *now* that vanishes. Our present moments are fleeting. Yet music mysteriously connects the time past with the *now* and with what is to come . . . The very flow of life is given back to us in music that can touch that deeply in our bodies and souls ([24], p. 54).

2.8. Community

The historic sense of Christianity about spirituality and music is communal. The Christian understanding of God is Trinitarian. God's being as three-in-one is communal: "Father, Son, and Spirit are persons whose communal life is God," says Robert Jenson ([30], p. 226). In his view "God is *beauty*. . . . And the harmony of discourse taken for itself is its beauty; more precisely, its music" ([30], p. 234). God, says Jenson, "is a great *fugue*. There is nothing so capacious as a fugue" ([30], p. 236). That is, God is "roomy," and can decide to make room for others. "The opening of that room is the act of creation" ([30], p. 226) in which human beings are

> taken into the triune singing . . . as the proclamation and prayer of the church regularly bursts into beauty. . . A congregation singing a hymn of praise to the Father is doubling the Son's praise, and the surge of rhythm and melody is the surge of the Spirit's glorification of the Father and the Son ([30], p. 235).

This community of God's very being which expresses itself in creation yields the community of the body of Christ that sings together. Individuals and their songs always exist in connection with the whole. As Bouyer points out, even the anchoritic monk needs and gravitates to the community ([7], pp. 207–10). The same is true for any solitary Christians, whether monks or not. Spirituality can clearly be separated from its Christian sense as among those who say, "I'm spiritual but not Christian [or] not religious [or] not related to a religious institution," but this is a civil religious or "common syncretistic" [31] instinct and not a Christian one.

As to the music that an individual or the community uses, its essence is what living believers sing. Something recorded and therefore frozen is not living. It is a dead artifact. Its use by individuals or even groups as they work or run or play may have a certain spirituality attached to it, but the essence of Christian song is alive with all the imperfections of life lived in time. In addition, the music that the individual or the community uses cannot be dependent on technology where, to quote Joseph Swain, microphone and amplifier have become "weapons of mass destruction"([32], p. 57). Worship is primal and requires living people who sing, not the "deadening" of "forced spontaneity" ([32], p. 166).

Community is also related to Linman's realization that various styles of music can lead us beyond our parochial times and places to appreciate the "rich tapestry [of the] human family" ([13], p. 66). For this leading to work out with constructive integrity, longstanding parochial expressions cannot be denied. That denial brings with it a denial of one's own identity. The song of the believers' time and place has to be affirmed along with the song of the other believers' times and places into a new song that brings the other two new songs in Christ ("new" here does not mean literally new, though it may encompass that meaning [33]) into collaborative interplay, just as neighborly relationships always do.

The danger of "spiritual tourism" has to be acknowledged and avoided in this encounter. Christopher Pramuk says, "Rather than probing the roots of our own spiritual or cultural malaise," using other spiritualities and their outcomes can too easily become a "self-centered way to retrieve something of our own lost innocence" in which "we as outsiders control or selectively plunder" another culture without inviting "our transformation and conversion" [34].

2.9. Beyond Human Expression

The embodying character, which paradoxically in Bouyer's words "finds its goal in what is beyond expression," moves from human sound to beyond the human trajectory. George Herbert says of church music,

> But if I travel in your company, You know the way to heavens doore [35].

And Joseph Gelineau says that "in the celebration of the church's worship the point at issue is not 'music-making,' but entry by means of the art of music, into the salvific mystery" which "only by its beauty can signify the sacred" ([36], p. 10). Beauty, as with Jenson, enters this conversation too. It is

a characteristic of the documents on which Gelineau relies, among them the *motu proprio*, *Tra le sollecitudini*, of Pius X in 1903. Pius, like Calvin, says music is for the glory of God and the edification of the faithful, but adds this:

> It helps to increase the beauty and splendor of the ceremonies of the Church, and since its chief duty is to clothe the liturgical text, which is presented to the understanding of the faithful, with suitable melody, its object is to make the text more efficacious, so that the faithful through this means may be more roused to devotion, and better disposed to gather to themselves the fruits of grace which come from the celebration of the sacred mysteries [37].

When Francis Williamson sought to understand such descriptions, he analyzed them like this.

> The phrase, "to enhance the word" [clothe the liturgical text], is not to interpret the word in a meaningful sense so much as to clothe the word with beauty and sacral character. Ultimately even this word becomes mute because it is secondary to the act of sacrifice and communion. The climax of adoration in the Presence is silence, symbolic of final peace [38].

Or, in Gelineau's words,

> Music can never reveal to us the whole of its mystery until it has become silent and no more sounds reach our ears. For the praise of heaven, pure love, will have no further need for the art of sound ([36], p. 27).

Not all Christians see music moving to silent music as pure love or peace. I heard Walter Bouman on more than one occasion say that in the praise of heaven there will be no need for preaching, but there will be song. Christopher Page suggests that Tertullian, Irenaeus, and Saint John would concur, that while

> the baser functions of the body will pass away in the blessed state, the higher ones will remain. . . In contrast to labour with the hands, eating, drinking, and the exertions of coitus, the use of the voice is one of the principal continuities between the states of bodily life on either side of the grave ([9], p. 49).

2.10. Silence

Silence enters this discussion not only as music's end, but as its beginning. Augustine can be understood to view the music we hear as coming from a spiritual model, from the music of silence [39]. Joseph Ratzinger, before he became Pope Benedict XVI, in a discussion relying on Philipp Harnoncourt [40], said this:

> Faith comes from listening to God's word. But wherever God's word is translated into human words there remains a surplus of the unspoken and unspeakable which calls us to silence—into a silence that in the end lets the unspeakable become song and also calls on all the voices of the cosmos for help so that the unspoken may become audible. This means that church music, coming

from the Word and the silence perceived in it, always presupposes a new listening to the whole richness of the Logos [41].

2.11. The Absence of Music

Silence can be construed less positively as the avoidance or absence of music because music and spirituality are seen as unrelated or not positively related. The monk Pambo is reported to have seen no contrition in singing and to have compared it to the lowing of cattle [42]. Ulrich Zwingli, though the best musician of the sixteenth century reformers, thought the true song was to be found in "our hearts" and that music in church was "mumbling and murmuring" [43]. For him, the paradox of music and spirituality does not exist because "material things could not participate in the holy [since] Spirit and flesh contradict each other" [44]. Zwingli removed music from the church altogether so that silence would give people an ear for the Word of God alone—that is, without music, and he tied music to play (which may be perceived as its own form of spirituality). Anabaptists made the same move [45]. English Baptists like John Smyth also shut out music from worship unless it was improvised on the spot because they asked, "Whither meter, Rithme, & tune, be not quenching the Spirit" [46]. Benjamin Keach at first agreed, but changed his mind and "repaired the breach" for Baptists [47]. Quakers have centered down to the inner light where they find that in holy silence seen as "Holy Obedience" they come upon God [48].

Hildegard of Bingen, who thought "all creation is a single hymn in praise of God" [49], strongly reversed the notion of the absence of music as a good thing. For her, the paradoxes posed by music and spirituality are alive and well. When an interdict on singing was issued against her community, she said this:

> And I heard a voice coming from the Living Light concerning the various kinds of praises, about which David speaks in the psalm . . . "Let every spirit praise the Lord" (Ps. 150:3, 6). These words are outward, visible things to teach us about inward things. Thus the material composition and the quality of these instruments instruct us how we ought to give form to the praise of the Creator and turn all the convictions of our inner being to the same ([50], pp. 81–82).

She objected strenuously to the interdict because she regarded the absence of music as the devil's work. It is the devil who

> never ceases from confounding confession and the sweet beauty of both divine praise and spiritual hymns, eradicating them through wicked suggestions, impure thoughts, or various distractions from the heart of man and even from the mouth of the Church itself, wherever he can, through dissension, scandal, or unjust oppression ([50], p. 83). So she instructed the prelates to exercise the greatest vigilance to clear the air by full and thorough discussion of the justification for such actions before your verdict closes the mouths of any church singing praises to God . . . ([50], p. 83).

It is no accident that in her morality play Ordo Virtutum, in a "clear contrast with the musicality of the Virtues," it is only

> the Devil [who] cannot sing; he can barely speak mellifluously. The Ordo calls for the Devil to speak in a voice that is strepitus (grating, shouting, growling) ([50], p. 110).

2.12. The Dark Side

Augustine delighted in the sound of music but knew it could be an idolatrous form of gratifying the flesh if it overtook the meaning of the words that were being sung. He vacillated between its value and its danger, finally endorsing its use as long as the text was not obscured [51]. Luther knew that music, the "gift of nature and art," could be "prostituted" by "perverted minds . . . with their erotic rantings" ([14], p. 324). Calvin was especially cognizant of music's danger and thought music tied to bad words distilled "venom and corruption . . . to the depths of the heart" [52].

Anne Morris notes that ethical and theological cautions of this sort have largely been forgotten [53]. Though she realizes that "music can undoubtedly be a force for good," she is acutely aware that "we ignore music's potential for harm at our peril" ([54], p. 204). She presents three case studies, the first about music used to affect emotion at a funeral, the second about music used for propaganda in the Third Reich, and the third about music used as an instrument of "no-touch torture" ([54], pp. 205–15). In all three cases music does not grow out of an interior spiritual center but is imposed from the outside as a tool of control.

In many of its current societal manifestations music is regarded as an emotional manipulator. Morris speaks with a voice of historic Christian concern in a context where music is often identified with the culture's commercial presupposition that music is a way to sell things, attract people, and keep institutions afloat by amassing enough revenue.

Parts of the church have bought into this perspective and have engaged in "worship wars" that have taught people to attack one another based on musical styles. This abrogates the first commandment by focusing on musical idols, not on God. It is not the way Christians have historically understood God, nor the way many churches still today understand God, as in every generation they stand against the culture. The church, when it follows the culture's use of music as a tool to sell things, relates music to words like "evangelism" and "mission" which, for all the good that may be intended, are often euphemisms for the power, control, and manipulation that Morris addresses. Spirituality in Bouyer's historic Christian sense is not at issue here and may also help to explain why people like C. S. Lewis in an earlier time regarded hymns as the gang songs of the church [55].

2.13. Musical Styles and Syntax

The musical outcome of spirituality to which Bouyer points is not the vocalization on the "a" of the Alleluia in a theoretical sense. That it takes sounding form means it takes form in actual musical styles and syntaxes. Various spiritualities lead not to one style or syntax, but to multiple ones. Here are a few thoughts about that.

2.13.1. Praise and Proclamation

The exuberant leaps in Hildegard's music express her spirituality of praise and proclamation. So does the exuberant proclamatory punch at the beginnings of phrases in the chorales spawned by Luther's reforms, responding to the thrust of the Word of God that addresses humanity.

2.13.2. Prayer

Pius X in his *motu proprio* sees Gregorian chant and the polyphony of Palestrina as ideals [56]. Gelineau follows with "Gelineau psalmody" [57]. Gelineau introduced the Taizé community to Jacques Berthier "as someone who could compose short repetitive songs that have become famous as 'Taizé music'" [58]. These are all examples of music related to prayer via forms of chant.

Calvin in sixteenth century Geneva spawned Genevan psalm tunes composed by Louis Bourgeois. Calvin regarded chant as a foreign tongue, so it was off limits as were choirs and instruments. Tunes for metrical psalms were the music of choice.

While chant and Genevan psalm tunes may not appear to have very much in common, they both have pulls from the ends of the musical lines that respond to the teleological tug of prayer and contrast with the prophetic push at the beginning of chorales. Genevan psalm tunes also distinguish themselves from chorale tunes in that they have short notes nestled between long ones in conjunct motion. The cyclical, repetitive forms from Taizé add a timeless component. (See the next point.)

2.13.3. Community

When community is emphasized a rich supply of syntaxes is employed as "global" music from Latin America, Asia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and the Iona Community [59]—along with black spirituals, shape note music, and European models—comes together in American "mainstream" practice. The global repertory opens congregations to spiritualities that stand outside of their own and helps them avoid the idolatry that can so easily beset groups that live to themselves. As Michael Hawn says, it can be liberating. It also poses a different spirituality from much Western "mainstream" practice. A "classic Western hymn," even with a tune that repeats, is narrative, "going somewhere" ([59], p. 225). Global cyclic structures engage congregations in a "more timeless experience" ([59], p. 234).

2.13.4. An Anglican Perspective

Alastair Cassels-Brown says that

> The link between music and Anglican spirituality . . . is simple: Anglican spirituality is rooted in the Church's liturgical life. Liturgical music serves two purposes; it is an offering of praise in the context of the liturgy and it enhances the liturgy ([60], p. 121).

He points out that the music of the Anglican Church is varied and—in a concentrated way representative of the whole church, though he does not say that—moves from simple congregational settings for parishes to elaborate choral anthems for cathedrals ([60], p. 121).

While the link between Anglican spirituality and music may be simple in theory, it quickly becomes obvious that it is complex in practice as differences of opinion about how to point Anglican

chant are discussed ([60], pp. 121–25), as four high and higher purposes of the music are defined: from keeping a congregation together to raising "people's spirits to a new level—poetical or mystical—because its wings carry us up into timelessness" ([60], p. 125), as hymnody is seen to be eclectic ([60], pp. 126–27), and as music that is "sensuous and pseudoromantic" is not regarded as "bringing devotion to the devout" or "satisfying an uplifting experience" ([60], p. 131).

2.13.5. *Laudi Spirituali*

Popular non-liturgical Italian spiritual lauds in the Middle Ages and Renaissance are best characterized as devotional, stemming from the praise of Francis of Assisi's "Canticle of the Sun" in the early thirteenth century, and related to works of mercy, missionary endeavors, and penitence. Dean L. Root says that "profane songs were to be replaced by godly ones." Their themes were "the Virgin, the birth, Passion and Resurrection of Christ, the saints, including St. Francis, the Holy Spirit, The Divine Love and the approach of death." He describes them musically as "related to the Italian ballata, the French virelai and the English carol," with small range, conjunct motion, in major keys, monophonic, and syllabic ([61], p. 537). Deciding what their rhythm may have been is, as usual, "problematic" ([61], p. 540). They proceeded in semi-professional, professional, polyphonic, homophonic, and macaronic directions, sometimes with instruments and accompanying dance, and with influences on plays and the development of the oratorio [62].

2.13.6. An Afro-American Perspective

The "American Dilemma" [63] of blacks in a white culture, with the underlying horrors of slavery and all the inequities and injustices of an evil system, paradoxically as perhaps with all oppression, created remarkable music, in this case the African American spiritual and the musical results like jazz that it spawned. Beginning as a congregational medium in praise houses away from the master's house, this music combined African and American syntaxes in "a wild, weird, plaintive, sad, and sorrowful" beauty ([64], p. 44) with double meanings that "expressed the faith of the people, but also provided signals for the time and place of the next 'underground railroad train' which could lead them out of bondage into freedom" ([64], p. 45). More than that, the music contained what Theophus H. Smith calls "style-switching," a term he borrows from the social linguist Morton Marks ([65], pp. 387–88). He calls this both black and white, European and African, and refers to W.E.B. Dubois' "double consciousness." "The change in style," he says, "is generating a ritual event, namely spirit possession," with "trance-associated features" and "signals of transcendence" ([65], p. 388).

Smith notes "two other aspects of black music that convey spiritual dynamics: call-and-response [which he also calls antiphony] and improvisation" ([65], p. 389). These, he says, in their participatory character, created "sustained drama and spiritual intensity" with a "state of high religious ecstasy" ([65], p. 389). And they in turn led to "matters of theory and practice" ([65], p. 390). That is, the great black musicians like Louis Armstrong and "Duke" Ellington in their playing by ear found the score "inadequate for their purposes . . . Crucial for black spirituality in its aesthetic manifestations is this 'will to transformation'" ([65], p. 391).

2.13.7. Lament

The Psalms of the Old Testament, which undergird Christian singing are full of laments, and the word “psalm” itself means a “song sung to the harp.” The priestly class of Temple singers called Levites were likely deputed in part to sing laments ([66], p. 105), and the functions of the vocalizations related to laments all have resonant musical or proto-musical characteristics: to call or raise the voice, to cry, to groan or scream or moan, to shout and yell, and to cry for help ([67], pp. 16–18). However, for Israel, whose spirituality informs Christian spirituality, “life (meaning life in its fullness) . . . is virtually synonymous with praise” ([68], p. 6), laments move to praise ([68], pp. 2, 7, and throughout), and lament has the capacity to strike one dumb ([68], p. 177). This means the musical outcome of lament can be both wild and muted.

When one deals with spirituality and music, therefore, it is probably not surprising that lament is not front-and-center. It is there, to be sure, but always pressing with less than ordered proto-musical wails or just under the surface with quietly repressed sobs. It finds ordered liturgical communal and individual expression as a people lives through its horrors and gives shape and meaning to them in the light of God’s grace which drives to praise.

2.13.8. Music after the Second Vatican Council in the Twentieth Century

The Second Vatican Council affirmed the same ideals (chant and Palestrina) that Pius X affirmed, but it also, along with many Protestant bodies, affirmed a move toward enculturation—a move that included the vernacular instead of Latin and with vernacular popular musical styles. This set in motion a dispute within the Roman Catholic Church which has yet to be resolved [69] and which has been and still is being played out in parallel forms across Protestant churches.

At its best, this dispute has not been a dispute, but has yielded a wide musical feast of old and new (or what may seem both old and new) in which congregations and choirs sing a remarkably wide range of styles that grow out of a potently ecumenical and “catholic” spirituality. It stands before God, revels in the kaleidoscopic richness of the church’s heritage, and lets Word and sacraments lead musically where they will. Congregations with this perspective often sing around Word, font, and table together in one single weekly Sunday gathering like the Eastern Orthodox Church. There are exceptions where congregations sponsor multiple services in different styles, but still live together in peace toward the world they are called to serve.

At its worst, this dispute has bitterly pitted congregations against themselves and against one another in “traditional” and “alternative” services. In Roman Catholic versions, Latin masses with Gregorian chant are lined up against vernacular ones in “popular” musical styles with arguments about the validity of hymns. In Protestant versions, “traditional” musical styles are set against “popular” ones with the curiosities that some “alternative” services are more “traditional” in their structures than “traditional” ones, and that none of the music called “contemporary” employs tone clusters, aleatory or twelve tone techniques, or similar contemporary characteristics. Warring spiritualities may be seen to drive this dispute, but they sometimes, in Morris’s words, seem to have travelled to the dark side, abandoning spirituality altogether.

2.14. Spirituality and Musicians

A note needs to be included about musicians themselves. Christopher Page points to the "spirituality and erudition a ninth century cantor might possess" (including hospitality in that context) ([9], pp. 352–53). Timothy Tikker has discussed organ playing as a spiritual discipline [70], and Luther Seminary MSM student Andrew Birling played "An Organist's Evensong," which was a profoundly congregational service while at the same time highlighting the organist's spirituality. The cover of Birling's program gave a visual cue. It printed the painting "Evensong" by the nineteenth century painter John Melhuish Strudwick, which pictures an organ, organist, and singers in the church making music at Evensong [71]. Some of the most profound spirituality has been exhibited by church musicians throughout the church's history in connection with their musical craft and its practice.

Its practice has included composition—much of it. As Swain says, "For centuries now the church has owned a repertory of masterworks that is by far the greatest of any institution, nation, people, or religion in the world" ([32], p. 6). That repertory includes the exquisite ethereal craft of Palestrina, the cantatas of J.S. Bach whom Robert Shaw said may be the "single greatest creative genius" of the Western world [72], the *B Minor Mass*, which Shaw suggested may be Bach's "greatest achievement" [72], the music of the catholic mystic Olivier Messiaen, and in some accounts what stands alongside or outside the Christian stream, such as Franz Schubert's *An die Musik*, which Bowden ranks "among the world's greatest prayers of thanksgiving" ([5], p. 272).

Masterworks are not the only compositional part of the church's repertory. The congregational piece has little-known or anonymous composers of remarkable miniatures that include black spirituals, shape-note tunes, chorale tunes, Genevan psalm tunes, nineteenth century Anglican ones, chant tunes, service music, and a host of similar pieces in multiple styles from multiple ethnicities.

3. Conclusion: Another Paradox

The nature of the repertoire is not a simple matter, however. Though Johannes Brahms knew as much or more about the Bible than most clergy, and though Ralph Vaughan Williams edited *The English Hymnal* (1906) and wrote fine hymn tunes, these two are among the church's composers who regarded themselves as agnostics or atheists. In his *German Requiem*, Brahms included a potent setting of "But yet the Lord's word endureth forevermore," and Vaughan Williams compellingly set "O taste and see how gracious the Lord is; blest is the man that trusteth in him." These are but two examples from many such pieces that the church loves and sings with faithful devotion in service music at worship and welcomes in oratorios. What are we to make of this? Is it possible for an authentic spirituality to be expressed in music by composers who presumably do not possess it?

Whether they possess it or not is a mystery. They may be put off by the church's hypocrisy, refuse therefore to express any spirituality publically, internally find it present, and express it in their music. That cannot be determined. It is a secret matter in the heart of the composer, conscious or unconscious. As far as the music itself is concerned, however, the question is irrelevant. The church decided long ago that Donatism is wrong and that the immorality, non-belief, heresy, or whatever of the clergy does not affect the truth of the Word they preach or the validity of the sacraments at which they preside. Similarly, spirituality or its absence in composers does not affect the validity of their

compositions. Whether they secretly in their composing are making a confessional statement is also irrelevant. That is, spirituality in the Christian vision transcends human cognitive capacities, and what human beings compose takes on a life of its own apart from the intentions of the person who composed it.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Dominican Chant and Dominican Identity

Innocent Smith

Abstract: The Order of Preachers possesses a venerable chant tradition that dates back to the thirteenth century. This essay describes Dominican chant, showing how it developed as a consequence of the attitudes to the liturgy expressed in the Ancient Constitutions of the Order of Preachers. These constitutions stressed that the liturgy was to be performed with careful attention to bodily posture, with a succinctness and brevity that would allow time for study and preaching, and with gradations of solemnity that would express the inner hierarchy of parts of the liturgy and of the liturgical year. After the initial development of the repertoire, Dominican chant has gone through periods of decline and revival, which are briefly traced in this article together with a consideration of the place of the chant in the contemporary practice of the Order. Throughout the last eight centuries, the chant of the Order of Preachers has played an important role in the inculcation and preservation of Dominican identity within the Order and in the lives of individual friars and sisters.

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1. Introduction

Dominican chant is a dialect of the Latin liturgical chant repertoire popularly known as Gregorian chant[1]. When St. Dominic (1170–1221), a canon regular from Osma in Spain, founded the Order of Preachers in 1216, he established a mode of life that balanced liturgical prayer, monastic observance, and academic study as a preparation for and mode of sustaining the apostolic ministry of preaching. Unlike many earlier forms of monastic life that emphasized stability of place, St. Dominic envisaged a form of life in which friars could easily travel from priory to priory and from church to church in order to carry out their preaching activity more effectively. In addition, St. Dominic instituted a mode of governance (perhaps modeled in certain respects on the Order of Cîteaux founded in the previous century) in which friars from local communities would participate in a representative form of centralized governance by means of Provincial and General Chapters and by means of visitations in which superiors of the Order could inspect the mode of life of local communities in order to ensure a flourishing of communal and apostolic life. Over the course of the 13th century, the mobility of the friars led to the recognition of a need for a standardized form of the liturgy that could be used by friars in different communities in the midst of the tremendous liturgical diversity then present in the Catholic world. In the early 13th century, the followers of St. Dominic gradually began to compile a repertoire of liturgical chants that was subsequently standardized in the mid-13th century and which has continued to develop and expand over the eight centuries of the Order's existence. These Dominican chants often share their texts with the broader Roman rite but often feature melodic

[1] For a broad overview of Latin liturgical chant, see [1], especially the consideration of various repertoires and reforms of Latin chant in pp. 524–621.

variations from the broader repertoire. Today, these variant melodies may still be sung in celebrations of the Mass and Liturgy of the Hours in the contemporary Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite. In this essay, brief and succinct consideration will be given to the distinctive aspects and history of the Dominican chant repertoire.

2. Dominican Chant and the Body

For the early Dominicans, chant was an integral aspect of divine worship. According to Humbert of Romans, a thirteenth century Dominican who exercised a profound influence on the development of the Dominican liturgical tradition, divine worship requires a profound unity of heart, mouth, and body ([2], p. 160)[2]. Thus, a complete consideration of Dominican chant must consider not only the words or the melodies that are sung by the mouth, but also the preparation of the heart and the posture of the body.

Despite the association of Gregorian chant with monks floating in the air singing ethereal melodies conjured up for many today due to the success of the 1994 *Chant* album of the Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos, chant for Dominicans has always been understood as being fundamentally *embodied*. It is striking that the first chapter of the Dominican *Constitutiones antiquae*, adapted from the Constitutions of Premontré and compiled over the period from 1217–1235, already specifies certain bodily postures for the singing of various types of chant: for instance, a profound bow is made while singing the *Gloria Patri* and when listening to the priest sing the collect at the Mass and Office, as well as during the final verses of the hymns of the office, the *Suscipe deprecationem nostram* of the *Gloria*, the *Homo factus est* of the Creed, and so forth; the brothers genuflect while singing the opening sections of the *Salve sancta parens* (Officium/Introit antiphon) and *Veni sancte Spiritus* (sequence); further, one side of the choir stands during the first psalm while the other sits, and then sits while the second side stands, in alternation ([5], pp. 313–14). These regulations indicate that from the earliest days of the Order there was a well-established liturgical custom in which chant was integrated into a system of postures that were carefully collated with the liturgical action at hand[3]. In his *Commentary on the Constitutions*, Humbert of Romans offers extensive explanations of the significance of the posture of the body during the different chants ([2], pp. 160–71). Throughout its history, the Order has retained this fundamental link of chant and bodily posture[4].

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[2] Humbert of Romans (c. 1200–1277) administered a standardization of the Dominican liturgy while serving as the fifth *Magister ordinis* [Master of the Order] from 1254–1263. After his resignation as Master, Humbert continued to have a profound influence on the development of various aspects of the Dominican life through his commentaries on the Constitutions of the Order of Preachers and the Rule of St. Augustine and his writings on the duties of various friars in the Order. On Humbert's life and significance, see [3]. A more recent, though as yet unpublished, critical edition of Humbert's *Expositio* may be found in [4].

[3] In the late 13th century, a text known as the "Nine Ways of Prayer of St. Dominic" associated various liturgical postures with the private prayer of St. Dominic, offering an example for Dominicans who wished to imitate these prayer postures of their founder; see [6]. For further considerations on the body and gesture in the Middle Ages, see [7].

[4] For a contemporary application of these principles, see the guidelines concerning posture at Mass and Office indicated in [8], pp. lxxix–lxxxiv.

For the medieval Dominicans, chant was understood to play an important role in the cultivation of personal devotion on the part of those participating in communal worship. According to the Dominican friar St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1224–1274), the use of the body and the voice in divine worship helps arouse devotion in the heart [*mens* or *affectus*] of the worshipper[5], and allows one to serve God "with everything that he has from God, that is, not only with the mind [*mente*], but also with the body [*corpore*]"[6]. For Thomas, "it was fittingly instituted that chant should be used in the divine praises, that the souls of the weak might be more incited to devotion"[7], although he makes an important distinction for Dominicans by nothing that "it is a more noble mode to lead men to devotion by teaching and preaching than through chant."[8]

Another aspect of the relationship of chant and the body is the Dominican emphasis on strong or virile singing ([2], p. 105). St. Dominic was known for his strong and clear voice; in choir, he would walk from one side to the other, exhorting the brothers to sing with a strong voice, and while on journeys would frequently sing liturgical hymns such as the *Ave Maris Stella* and *Veni Creator Spiritus* ([12], p. 140). Paradoxically, St. Dominic's strong singing would also lead him to tears: he was also known to prefer to celebrate the Sung High Mass when he could find a suitable church, and when he would celebrate Mass, tears would often run down his face ([12], pp. 124, 162). We may also recall that St. Thomas Aquinas was given the gift of tears while praying the liturgy, particularly during the chanting of the *Media vita* (*Nunc dimitis* antiphon) [13].

3. The *Constitutiones Antiquae* and Dominican Chant

The fourth chapter of the first distinction of the *Constitutiones antiquae* contains succinct articulations of four other aspects of the Dominican attitude to chant:

"Our brothers ought to hear Matins and Mass and all the canonical hours together, and they ought to eat together, unless otherwise the prelate wishes to dispense anyone. All the hours in the church should be said briefly and succinctly, lest the brothers should lose devotion or be at all impeded in their study. We say that this is to be done such that in the middle of the verse a *metrum* with a pause should be preserved, not by extending the voice at the pause or at the end of the verse,

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5 Thomas Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 81, a. 7, response: "Et ideo in divino cultu necesse est aliquibus corporalibus uti, ut eis, quasi signis quibusdam, mens hominis excitetur ad spirituales actus, quibus Deo coniungitur"; *cf.* ST II-II, q. 91, a. 1, response: "Proficit etiam laus oris ad hoc quod aliorum affectus provocetur in Deum."

6 Thomas Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 83, a. 12, response: "[S]ecundum totum illud quod ex Deo habet, idest non solum mente, sed etiam corpore."

7 Thomas Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 91, a. 2, response: "[S]alubriter fuit institutum ut in divinas laudes cantus assumerentur, ut animi infirmorum magis provocarentur ad devotionem."

8 Thomas Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 91, a. 2, ad 3: "[N]obilior modus est provocandi homines ad devotionem per doctrinam et praedicationem quam per cantum." For further reflections on the relationship between liturgical solemnity and devotion in Thomas Aquinas, see [9]. For a detailed treatment on Aquinas's appreciation of various aspects of the medieval liturgy and his place within the medieval liturgical commentatorial tradition, see [10,11].

but, as was said, they should be ended briefly and succinctly. However, this should be observed to a greater or lesser extent according to the season." ([5], p. 316)[9].

3.1. Communal Dimensions of Dominican Chant

First, the constitutions make it clear that the celebration of the liturgy is a communal task. This has dramatic repercussions for the context and the way in which the chants are sung. Most notably, the repertoire is divided amongst a wide range of brothers, which required that no one be lazy in choir ([2], p. 159).

The most important role was that of the cantor, who according to Humbert, was to be diligent and solicitous in all things that pertained to the office, correcting the brothers in a manly way when necessary and making hand gestures when the rhythm of the chant was notably confused ([2], p. 159; [14], p. 244). Humbert remarks that the cantor was to be obeyed by all the brothers, but somewhat wryly remarks that this applied only to those things which pertain to his office! ([2], p. 159). The cantor was also to correct visiting clerics who did not observe the pauses or melodies correctly ([14], p. 242). The cantor was assisted by the *succentor* in various tasks, but who had the right to correct the cantor in chapter, if not in choir ([14], pp. 245–46). In addition to instructing and correcting the brothers regarding the chant, the cantor had the duty of preparing the *tabula*, a list of assignments for the performance of different elements of the liturgy that was sung on Saturdays to alert the brothers to their upcoming duties for the week ([14], pp. 240–41). From the exemplar tabula provided in the medieval Dominican *Martyrology*, we can get a sense of the division of the parts of the liturgy within the community: different brothers may be assigned for each of the readings and responsories, for the invitatory, for the responsories of the hours other than matins, and so forth [15][10].

Despite the emphasis on the communal participation in the liturgy, the first sentence of chapter four of the *Constitutiones antiquae* makes it clear that that an individual may sometimes be legitimately absent from the choral office. Humbert points out that those who have certain official duties may sometimes be absent, as well as lay brothers who may instead hear the Mass "sine nota" ([2], p. 78). In another context, Humbert points out that on certain occasions the office may be performed "sine nota", *i.e.*, without singing, pointing out that "chant is not of the substance of the canonical hours to which we are bound" ([2], p. 82)[11]. Humbert acknowledged that smaller communities might legitimately celebrate the office without singing the full melodies (*cf.* [2], p. 102). These sources

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[9] "Matutinas et missam et omnes horas canonicas simul audiant fratres nostri et simul comedant, nisi cum aliquibus prelatus aliter dispensare voluerit. Hore omnes in ecclesia breviter et succincte taliter dicantur, ne fratres devotionem amittant et eorum studium minime impediatur. Quod ita dicimus esse faciendum, ut in medio versus metrum cum pausa servetur, non protrahendo vocem in pausa vel in fine versus, sed, sicut dictum est, breviter et succincte terminetur. Hoc tamen magis et minus pro tempore observetur."

[10] Cf. Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L1, f. 14; London, British Library ms. add. 23935, fols. 48v–49r. The *Martyrology* provided for the daily chapter meetings in which brief accounts of the saints were read and at which some communal business was conducted.

[11] "Cantus non est de substantia horarum canonicarum ad quas tenemur."

indicate that chant was understood by the early Dominicans to be a normative aspect of Dominican life, but not absolutely binding in every circumstance.

3.2. "Breviter et Succincte"

The *Constitutiones antiquae* ordered that the liturgy be sung "briefly and succinctly" (*breviter et succincte*) so that the devotion of the brothers should not become lax, and that their study might be minimally impeded. According to Humbert of Romans, study was not to be preferred to prayer as such, but to overly prolix prayer ([2], p. 97). Thomas Aquinas writes within this tradition when he states that liturgical prayer should not last such a long time that the devotion of the participants would grow slack in their devotion.[12] Humbert offers several reasons why a shorter office is better than a longer one, the first of which is that otherwise the choir would be evacuated as many would seek occasions of staying away based on this prolixity! ([2], pp. 85–86).

This emphasis on brevity led to one of the most distinctive characteristics of Dominican chant: the Dominican versions of chants often have one or two notes in places where other traditions have three or more, and omit certain melodic repetitions that appear in other chant traditions ([16], pp. 199–207). A comparison of the chant manuscripts from before and after the revision of Humbert of Romans shows that these abbreviations were a self-conscious development on the part of the early friars ([16], pp. 327–29). In some cases, however, Dominican versions of chants can be more ornate than versions sung in other chant traditions, for instance in the case of the Dominican setting of the Passion sung on Palm Sunday and Good Friday or the *Exultet* of Holy Saturday. In addition to the length of the melodies, there are clear indications that the early Dominicans self-consciously sang the chants in a way faster than many of their contemporaries[13].

3.3. Pauses in Dominican Chant

Despite the emphasis on singing *breviter et succincte*, brevity was not meant to lead to sloppiness or irreverence. The constitutions also ordered that pauses were to be made in the middle of verses of the psalms which were nevertheless to be ended briefly and succinctly. According to Humbert, pauses were to be made in the middle of psalms to prevent confusion, although it is clear from his writings that the length and position of the pauses were a matter of some confusion ([2], pp. 98, 102, 159; [14], pp. 242–44). Humbert distinguishes between a *pausa brevis* and a *pausa maior* that are made during the recitation of the psalms ([2], p. 101). He points out, however, that these brief and major pauses are not only made in psalms and canticles but also in hymns, in chants such as the *Gloria in excelsis*, the *Credo in Deum*, and the *Te Deum laudamus*—indeed, "in everything that is chanted" ([2], p. 102). Humbert explains that it is expedient to use "virgulas transversales"

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[12] Thomas Aquinas, ST II-II, q. 83, a. 14.

[13] Humbert of Romans contrasts the Dominican mode of singing to that of "certain religious": "non nimis morose, sicut faciunt quidam religiosi" ([2], p. 97). Although it is not clear exactly which groups of religious are intended by this "quidam," it may perhaps include groups such as the Carthusians who thought the monk's duty was "to lament rather than to sing" (see [17]).

[vertical bars] to note the location of pauses in books, which he mentions is done already in certain churches ([2], 102–03; [18]).

3.4. Gradations in Solemnity

Finally, the constitutions decree that the length of the pauses is observed "magis et minus pro tempore". Humbert explains that on solemn feast days, the office is sung with longer pauses within the psalms; this is possible because on those days the friars are not as occupied with study, and thus have more leisure to sing the office in a more solemn manner ([2], p. 110). In addition, however, the more solemn melodies add to the devotion of the faithful, and point to the great future feast in which our praise will be continuous and most devout ([2], p. 111). The variation of the length of pauses within the psalms referred to here is related to a systematic form of melodic solemnity that may be discerned also in other aspects of the Dominican liturgy. In the melodies assigned for various texts used on several ranks of feasts, such as the Ordinary of the Mass or the hymns of the Common of Saints, a gradated solemnity may be observed that distinguishes a major feast from a lesser one or a ferial day. For instance, the hymn *Te lucis* is sung on every day outside of Lent to a variety of melodies based on the rank of the feast; on a *totum duplex* feast, there is a very ornate melody, on a *duplex* feast there is a slightly simpler melody, and so forth.[14] The same text is sung on ferial days to a very simple melody. The same phenomenon may be observed in the settings for the *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei*, and *Ite missa est*.

A related aspect of solemnity is articulated by the thirteenth-century Dominican Jerome of Moravia in chapter twenty-four of the *Tractatus de Musica*: in composing new melodies for feasts, Jerome suggests that the *Magnificat* antiphons should be composed according to a set of principles that lead to the most beautiful type of chant, whereas the other antiphons may be composed in a less beautiful manner ([20], pp. 161–66)[15]. Thus, within a particular set of chants for a feast there are some that are of greater solemnity than others. This distinction also seems to be implicit in the more solemn melodies assigned for the Mass, where the Gradual, Alleluia, and Offertory melodies are almost always considerably more ornate than those of the introit and communion antiphons. Like many repertoires of Latin chant, the Dominican system of progressive solemnity thus includes both variations based on the rank of a feast, and variations based on the importance of a particular liturgical element.

4. History of the Dominican Chant Repertoire

According to Humbert of Romans, in the beginning years of the Order a great diversity of liturgical practice was found in the Order, at some point a single office was compiled for the sake of uniformity in practice for the highly mobile community ([2], p. 152). In the 1240s, four friars

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[14] In the medieval Dominican liturgy, there were was a range of six ranks for feast days: *Totum duplex, Duplex, Semiduplex, Simplex, Trium lectionum, Memoria*; for a discussion of the origins and meanings of these terms, see ([19], pp. 78–83).

[15] On the background of Jerome, see [21]. For an English translation of the *Tractatus,* undertaken from the 1935 critical edition by Simon M. Cserba, see [22].

from the provinces of France, England, Lombardy, and Germany were commissioned to coordinate the liturgical books used in the various provinces; their work was approved by several chapters, but was not widely accepted within the Order. Several liturgical manuscripts remain which represent the musical practice of the Order before and during the time of the four friars ([16], pp. 37–40)[16]. These early manuscripts are less influenced by the Cistercian chant reform than the manuscripts from the revision of Humbert of Romans ([16], p. 328; [23]).

In 1254, the newly elected *Magister ordinis* Humbert of Romans was commissioned to prepare a final revision that eventually met with acceptance throughout the Order. The exemplars of Humbert's revision contained fourteen books, including the *Antiphonale* (chants for the Divine Office), the *Graduale* (chants for the Mass), and the *Processionarium* (chants for liturgical processions), which were the principal chant volumes ([19]; [24]; [25], pp. 359–65). In addition to the unified exemplar copies, individual volumes of the repertoire of Humbert are found in a variety of formats; the chants of the Mass, for instance, were copied both in the form of individual Graduals and within notated Missals. When new feasts were added to the Dominican liturgy, for instance Thomas' liturgy for the Feast of Corpus Christi (belatedly adopted by the Order in the early 14th century ([26], pp. 183–85)), they would often inserted within earlier manuscripts. Aside from the offices composed in the 13th century for the first two canonized Dominican saints, Dominic and Peter Martyr, the two most significant liturgical offices of the later Middle Ages were those of Catherine of Siena and Vincent Ferrer [27].

Manuscripts of Dominican chant continued to be widely produced through the 16th century, and were even occasionally made in later centuries. With the advent of the printing press, Dominican liturgical books were printed as early as the end of the 15th century, and by the early 16th century printed chant books, including psalters, graduals, and processionals, began to be widely produced ([28], pp. 181–93; [29]). Chant editions continued to be produced in the 17th century and in the early part of the 18th century a nearly exhaustive set of Dominican chant books were produced at Paris. After the turmoil of the French revolution, a new set of books began to be produced by the French Dominican Pie Bernard, O.P., first on the basis of late medieval sources and towards the end of the 19th century based on a 13th century codex which was taken to be one of the exemplar copies of the revision of Humbert of Romans [30]. Influenced by the chant revival at Solesmes, Bernard devised a new rhythmic notation that was officially used by the Order from 1890 until 1965 [31]. In the 20th century, further volumes were produced based on the 13th century texts. At the impetus of Dominique Delalande, O.P., the Order decided in the 1960s to adopt a modified version of the Solesmes rhythmic markings in place of the notation devised by Bernard, but the widespread adoption of the vernacular in the late 1960s meant that a full set of volumes with the new notation never appeared [32].

Since the adoption of the revised Roman rites by the Order beginning in 1968, chants from the Order's liturgical heritage have continued to be sung to varying extents in Dominican communities in accord with the provisions of the 1982 *Proprium Officiorum Ordinis Prædicatorum* and the 1985 *Missale et Lectionarium*, which assign chants from the Dominican chant tradition for various

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[16] The most important chant manuscripts before the reform of Humbert are Rome, Bibl. Vat. lat. 10773 (gradual), Malibu, CA, Getty Museum, Ludwig V 5 (noted missal), and Rome, Santa Sabina XIV L2 (noted breviary).

liturgical feasts of the year and call for the preparation of new editions of the chants of the Order[17]. In recent years, several audio recordings have been made that represent various approaches to the Dominican chant repertoire[18]. In the last decade, scans of most of the 19th and 20th-century editions of the Dominican chant have become available on the Internet, and new editions of the Dominican chant repertoire have been prepared for liturgical use in various provinces of the Order according to the Ordinary Form of the Roman Rite.

5. Conclusions

The Order of Preacher's attitude to chant was already articulated in the early 13th-century *Constitutiones antiquae*. The fundamental characteristics of this attitude are recognition of an integral link between chant and the body, an emphasis on communal celebration of the liturgy that allows for the absence of individuals, a practice of performing chants briefly and succinctly, and a sophisticated sensitivity to gradations of solemnity. These attitudes led to the development of a distinct chant repertoire in the mid-13th century as an expression of these fundamental approaches. The Order is the cause, and the chant repertoire is the effect. However, once the repertoire is formed, it in turn helps form a Dominican identity for individuals who enter the Order.

A related phenomenon may be observed in the case of individual Dominicans who are venerated as saints. Their mode of life and their specific path to holiness was partially formed by their liturgical life. Each of the Dominican saints sang the petition that Christ might "deign to place us among your saints and your elect" (*nos collocare digneris inter sanctos et electos tuos*) in the Lenten antiphon *O Rex gloriose,* and now they themselves are among the saints that their successors in the Order are referring to when they sing this chant. Similarly, after the canonization of St. Dominic, the Order began to sing the request that Dominic would "join us to the blessed" (nos junge beatis) in the O Lumen. The text and melody of the chants have remained the same, but the referent of "saints" or "blessed" is continually growing as the Order progresses through history, giving those who sing it at a later date a sense of confidence that the life they are living may in fact help them to become saints. Further, just as individual Dominican saints and blesseds have received special charisms or gifts from the Holy Spirit for the sake of undertaking unusual tasks or for offering an extraordinary witness of sanctity, these distinctive elements of their lives are in turn put forward as exemplars for their successors in the Order in the antiphons and other chants of the saint's feast that describe the lives of the saints. Thus, the liturgy helps to form a Dominican saint, and the liturgy composed in honor of that saint helps to form other Dominicans.

In this essay, we have explored the distinctive attitudes to chant expressed by the early Dominicans and considered the development of the chant repertoire as a practical expression of these principles. Throughout the last eight centuries, the chant of the Order of Preachers has played an important

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[17] See in particular the section "Cantus gregorianus et aliae formae cantus" in the "Adnotationes complementares" of [8], §§24–27, pp. 15–16.

[18] Cf. Choeur Des Frères Dominicains De La Province De France, dir. André Gouzes, *Chant Grégorien—Liturgie Dominicaine* (1994). Friars of the Holy Trinity Convent in Cracow, *Veni Lumen Cordium* (1990); *Alma redemptoris* (1991); *Requiem* (1991); *In Epiphania Domini* (1997); *In Nativitate Domini* (2000).

role in the inculcation and preservation of Dominican identity within the Order and in the lives of individual friars and sisters. Further research remains to be undertaken to establish a better sense of the distinctiveness and commonality of the Dominican chant repertoire with respect to other dialects or repertoires of Latin chant, such as those used by the Franciscans, the Cistercians, and the various local churches and cathedrals of the Christian world in the middle ages. Nevertheless, the Dominican chant repertoire is a subject of great importance on account of the influence it has wielded throughout history in the formation of Dominican saints and theologians.

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An earlier version of this essay appeared in German as [33]. All translations of Latin texts are my own.

Abbreviation

ST: Summa Theologiae.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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The Liturgical Use of the Organ in the Sixteenth Century: the Judgments of Cajetan and the Dominican Order

Michael O'Connor

Abstract: This paper explores the liturgical use of the organ in the sixteenth century according to the judgments of Tommaso de Vio, Cajetan (1469–1534) and the Dominicans. In particular, it asks the question: In worship, is solo organ music capable of conveying a specific meaning or a particular text (as seemed to be expected in alternatim practice)? The Dominican sources show an increasingly skeptical attitude, with a consequent tendency to limit the organ's role in worship. The implication of this study is that organ alternatim did not fall out of favor (with the Dominicans at least) because it failed to carry out the job it was given in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but because it could not do the new job is was given in the sixteenth century. Organ alternatim made sense in a gothic worldview, but less so under the influence of renaissance humanism. While these Dominicans accepted the use of the organ, they did so with great concern at the potential influx of secular music into worship, since secular melodies and rhythms, even without their original words, bring multiple inappropriate associations. To remedy this, various strategies were used to harness instrumental music to text.

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1. Introduction

The book of blessings issued by the French Catholic Bishops in 1988 includes a rite for the blessing of an organ. The rite begins with an unaccompanied hymn, readings, and prayers, after which the celebrant blesses and incenses the organ, which has yet to play a note. The next section is entitled, "Le chant de l'orgue" ([1], p. 339): while all remain silent, the celebrant calls on the organ to "awake and intone the praise of God, Creator and Father." The organist is instructed to respond with an improvisation that illustrates this invitation. Subsequent invitations ask the organ to extol Jesus Christ, to sing [of] the Holy Spirit, and to proclaim glory to the Trinity; again the organist improvises in response. Both the invitations and the improvisations rest on the assumption that the organ is capable of producing music that *means something*, that conveys *specific ideas*, even *textual content*. The organ is expected to sing, analogously to the way a human being sings, and those who hear are expected to understand and be edified. This is not a new view; indeed, it is one with a long and controversial history. For some, music has a "secret kinship" with the affections of the soul, so even un-texted music can serve a devotional purpose; for others, the sole job of all sacred music is to pour sacred words into the ears of the faithful—without a text, music is nothing but sound, fleeting and ephemeral ([2], pp. 33–37). My aim in this paper is to explore one specific contribution to this discussion: the liturgical use of the organ in the sixteenth century according to the judgments of Tommaso de Vio (1469–1534), known as Cajetan (from his birth

place, Gaeta), and the contemporary regulations of the order to which he belonged, the Order of Preachers, or Dominicans.

There are several specific advantages to this focus. First, during this period, the question is a live one, on account of humanist theories of language and Reformation attitudes to worship. Second, as we shall see shortly, liturgical organ music at this time was usually closely allied to specific texts. This makes it a particularly instructive testing ground for examining the relationship between words and music. In addition, third, in Cajetan, we encounter one of the most interesting and influential thinkers of his time. Tommaso de Vio led a long and active life of scholarly, controversial, pastoral, and diplomatic activities. The best known of these are his defense of the papacy against the conciliarists (1511–12) [3], his attempt to discipline the young Augustinian friar Martin Luther (Augsburg, 1518) [4], his lengthy commentary on each part of Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* (1507, 1511, 1517, 1520) [5], and the commentaries on the Bible produced during the final decade of his life [6]. Cajetan also played a significant role in the administration of his order though the first decades of the sixteenth century, a period of intense intellectual and spiritual renewal for the Dominicans. In June 1501, he was called to Rome to take up the post of Procurator General, the order's representative in its dealings with the papacy and the Roman curia. At the General Chapter in 1508, he was elected Master General. After he was made a cardinal in 1517 (and bishop), a new Master General was elected at the General Chapter of 1518. Toward the end of his life, Cajetan was given the role of Cardinal Protector of the Order ([7], pp. 31–33). During Cajetan's lifetime, and particularly during the period of his generalate, the Dominican order established important ground rules with respect to liturgical organ music [8]. Taken together, Cajetan's writings and the Dominican regulations provide a consistent point of view.

This paper will consider the question: *In worship, is solo organ music capable of conveying a specific meaning or a particular text (as is assumed in the French rite of blessing)?* Broadly, speaking, what the various Dominican sources show is an increasingly sceptical attitude, with a consequent tendency to limit the organ's role in worship. Of course, this paper is about the *thinking* of certain churchmen about certain musical performance practices (described briefly in the following section); it is not a study of the details of such practices, for which a different set of sources would need to be scrutinized; from the repetition of a number of prohibitions, we can assume that there was a significant distance between the thinking and the practice.

2. Alternatim

For many centuries, the liturgical recitation of longer chants and psalms entailed the distribution of text among two sets of forces: in some cases, a cantor would sing the odd-numbered verses, while the rest of the choir would sing the even-numbered verses. In other cases, the left side of the choir would alternate with the right. Here "choir" typically means a monastic community present in the choir stalls, as distinct both from cantors (who led the singing) and from the "people" (in the nave of the church). For a monk or nun, "joining in" with the liturgy required the verbal enunciation of no more than half the text; the individual was part of a greater whole, a single voice formed of many different voices. On special occasions, one half could be sung in vocal polyphony (perhaps improvised by experiences cantors) [9]. This was one of a number of ways in which the liturgy was made more

elaborate, more festive, more richly symbolic to mark the important days in the calendar—together with special sermons, vestments, candles, processions, and the like. By the fourteenth century, the practice had arisen of employing the organ as one of the alternating partners in the chant, again to add to the dignity of festal days. The organ would "sing" half the text, and the choir would sing the other half in alternation[1]. All of the various performance practices described above are known as *alternatim*; in this article, I shall be concentrating on the alternation of organ and choir. For example, in the Magnificat, the Gospel canticle for Vespers (Evening Prayer), the organ would play the first "verset," the singers would sing the second, then the organ would play the third, and so on, as follows:

Organ:	1. Magnificat anima mea Dominum.
Singers:	2. Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo.
Organ:	3. Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae: Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.
Singers:	4. Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est: et sanctum nomen eius.
Organ:	5. Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenie timentibus eum.
Singers:	6. Fecit potentiam in brachio suo: dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.
Organ:	7. Deposuit potentes de sede; et exaltavit humiles.
Singers:	8. Esurientes implevit bonis: et divites dimisit inanes.
Organ:	9. Suscepit Israel, puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae.
Singers:	10. Sicit locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula.
Organ:	11. Gloria Patri et Filio et Spiritui Sancto,
Singers:	12. Sicut erat in principio et nunc et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

The organ versets would be based on the music that would have been sung had the singers sung the whole chant as they did on less solemn days. Often this music is found in slow sustained notes in the left hand of the score (*i.e.*, a *cantus firmus*), accompanied by more intricate counterpoint in the right hand. It was normal practice for the organ to take the first verset, thereby establishing the pitch and mode ahead of the singers' entry in verse two[2]. In organ alternatim, then, about half of the text is not actually sung aloud, but is conveyed solely by the sound of the organ. It was understood, at least initially, that the text was not "missing": it was "sung" by the organ, in a manner proper to the organ, and it was identified by the associated chant tone or melody, and from the context of performance. A chant such as the Kyrie eleison, with a simple repetitive text, would be easy enough to follow; longer chants, especially hymns sung only once a year, would prove more difficult.

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[1] It is possible that Dante has just such a form of singing in mind at the end of Purgatorio IX, 139–145: "Io mi rivolsi attento al primo tuono, /e 'Te Deum laudamus' mi parea/udire in voce mista al dolce suono. /Tale imagine a punto mi rendea/ciò ch'io udiva, qual prender si suole/quando a cantar con organi si stea; /ch'or sì or no s'intendon le parole". (In Longfellow's translation: "At the first thunder-peal I turned attentive/And *Te Deum laudamus* seemed to hear/In voices mingled with sweet melody. /Exactly such an image rendered me/That which I heard, as we are wont to catch, /When people singing with the organ stand; /For now we hear, and now hear not, the words.")

[2] This was less functionally important for canticles (such as the Magnificat) and psalms which would normally be framed by an antiphon, which would establish the mode for the chants that followed. In practice, on solemn days antiphons might be played on the organ (see below).

The earliest surviving sources of alternatim organ music date from the end of the fourteenth century. The Faenza Codex (early fifteenth century), includes versets for the Kyrie and Gloria, and five sets of versets for the Magnificat. Although there is a paucity of sources for the fifteenth century, the stature of the music published by Marco Antonio Cavazzoni (c. 1485–post 1569) in the early sixteenth century demonstrates to at least one scholar that there had been "a remarkable development" in Italian organ composition in the interim ([10], p. 149). Cavazzoni's work first appears in the earliest printed volume of Italian organ music (an anonymous collection of keyboard arrangements of songs), published in Rome in 1517 [11]. In 1523, his own collection of secular and sacred pieces appeared in print [12]. Pope Adrian VI commended this book as a most agreeable way to learn to praise God with the organ[3]. Cavazzoni's son Girolamo (c. 1525–post 1577), the more celebrated composer, published three "organ masses" in the 1540s (sets of versets for the whole mass) as well as Magnificats and hymns in alternatim [13]. Similar sets of masses were composed by Claudio Merulo, Andrea Gabrieli and others [14].

The principle behind alternatim could even be extended to the point where whole chants were played on the organ alone. For example, it was not uncommon for the organ to take full responsibility for the offertory chant, the Gloria in excelsis, and even the Creed. On solemn occasions, the organ would also accompany specific ritual actions such as entrances and exits. It is possible that many of the otherwise unspecified pieces in these collections (e.g., numerous "ricercars") would have been used in this way. The organ also provided music for the "elevation," the moment at mass when the consecrated bread and wine, now the body and blood of Christ, were raised by the priest to be adored by the people.

The music published by Cavazzoni and others would provide only a fraction of what was needed for the annual cycle of Sunday and festal services. The majority of the music would have been improvised by the organist, making more or less use of the chant melodies as a basis, perhaps using the published settings as models to be imitated ([15], p. 140). Music adapted from secular sources was clearly used, judging by criticisms this practice received ([16], p. 233)[4].

By the early sixteenth century, then, the liturgical use of the organ on Sundays and feast days was well-established; much of its use was in alternatim, most often improvised; organists made use of chant melodies and psalm tones, but also drew on secular melodies.

3. Cajetan

There are passing remarks on music, instruments, and singing scattered throughout Cajetan's works. Extended remarks on the organ can be found in two places: the first is his commentary on the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas, in the portion written between the end of December 1511 and February 1517 ([5], vol. IX, pp. 296–97). The second is his *Summula Peccatorum*, an alphabetic manual providing advice for priests on almost every conceivable sin from A to Z, completed in 1523 [18]. The remarks on organ playing, as with many other sections in the *Summula*, are

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3 "[...] quo commodius homines Deum in organis laudare discere possint" ([12], p. 78).

4 Banchieri's *L'Organo suonarino* of 1605 may represent a slightly later practice but is nonetheless instructive in its assumptions in this regard, see [17], pp. 56–61.

recycled from material in Cajetan's earlier work: in fewer than 350 words, the section in the *Summula* restates the main arguments and conclusions that the *Summa* commentary developed in over 1200 words. In both sources, Cajetan's purpose is a pastoral one, to guide priests in the care of souls and to help them deal with cases of conscience. It is possible therefore to read Cajetan's comments as a guide to the sins of musicians [19]. In this article, I will be focusing on the theological and musicological underpinning that supports the moral guidelines.

The text of Aquinas that occasions Cajetan's remarks in the *Summa* commentary concerns the praise of God (II-II, 91, 1–2)[5]. Whether God should be praised aloud, and whether God should be praised aloud with singing ([5], IX, pp. 294–96; [20], pp. 162–67). Aquinas answers in the affirmative in both cases. Cajetan begins his remarks by reiterating the foundation on which Aquinas presents his case: exterior acts of religion (such a preaching, singing, gestures) are all intended to serve the interior acts of devotion and prayer. Singers do not sing "directly" to God, but sing in order to arouse their own interior devotion and the devotion of others. It is this interior devotion which is directed to God. For Cajetan, the use of music in worship can only be justified insofar as it performs this task: to employ music in worship as if it were directly beneficial to God is to miss the point; to employ music in worship for the delight or pleasure of those who hear it (as distinct from their devotion) it is to lead them into temptation.

Looking to Augustine, Aquinas sees music in worship as a concession: he concluded that music was profitably introduced into divine worship so that the "souls of the faint-hearted may be more incited to devotion" (II-II, 91, 2, resp.; [20], p. 166). However, he draws the line at musical instruments. According to Aristotle, instruments move the soul to pleasure rather than fostering good interior dispositions. They are therefore to be excluded from worship. Aquinas claims that instruments were only permitted in Old Testament worship because the people were so hard and carnal ("durus et carnalis") that they needed such means to arouse their devotion.

In his commentary on this passage, Cajetan says nothing about singing and its use in worship; and while he reiterates Aquinas's point about devotion, the bulk of his comments are directed to a new question, not dealt with by Aquinas, concerning the organ. Times have changed: Aquinas did not deal with the use of the organ in worship because, says Cajetan (erroneously), the Church did not use organs in Aquinas's day—and this remains the case in papal liturgies. In addition, while he agrees that an attentive reading of Aquinas's argument would still, strictly speaking, exclude organs from worship, Cajetan pleads for tolerance: since people have grown so distant from divine worship, the use of organs in worship might attract them to participate.[6] His enthusiasm is muted, however: this medicine should not be used in such a way that it does harm to the healthy or diminishes their devotion. He clearly wonders whether the good it brings justifies the risks. In the *Summula*, he is more pithy: although it is a new practice, it is permissible for the fleshly and the imperfect[7]. In other words, Cajetan uses the same scheme of thought as Aquinas, but he makes more concessions, extending the boundary line to admit the organ. However, it is still a boundary line.

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5 The *Summa Theologiae* is cited part, question, article (and, where necessary, objection, response, *etc*).

6 "[...] propter nimiam elongationem hominum a divino cultu, ut vel sic allecti divinis intersint" ([5], IX, p. 296a).

7 "[...] licitus tamen est pro carnalibus adhuc fidelibus et imperfectis" ([18], p. 437).

The rest of his remarks concern what remains beyond the boundary, *i.e.*, musical practices that are not to be admitted into divine worship. He asks: may organists play "secular vanities" during divine worship? In reply he notes opposing points of view: at one extreme, some say that it is always irreverent to do so and is therefore always mortally sinful. Cajetan finds this position too absolute, remarking that not every failing in church music constitutes a mortal sin. At the other extreme, he notes the view of those who argue that music has no meaning of its own: the same tune can be used in a vain purpose by one person and a spiritual purpose by someone else; or a melody can be sung to a wicked text by one person and a spiritual text by another. Cajetan rejects this extreme position with the claim that there can never be complete abstraction of meaning such that any and all musical sounds could be admitted into worship[8]. Here he alludes to a text from Jerome cited by Aquinas: Jerome lambasts those who "make the church resound with theatrical measures and airs" (II-II, 91, 2, obj. 2; [20], p. 165). For Cajetan, some kinds of music are so marked by their associations that they cannot be "refitted" and made suitable for use in worship[9]. In this context, Cajetan explicitly mentions songs on worldly or amorous themes; we might assume that his list would also include music used for dancing, hunting, or battle. If these melodies are played on the organ during divine worship, minds may be distracted to vain things, even to unchaste thoughts. Furthermore, since the playing of the organ is a part of the divine worship itself (not an adjunct, or peripheral activity), what the organ offers is offered in the name of the whole Church; therefore, it must offer only what is fitting.

Unlike Plato, who banished specific musical modes from his ideal Republic because they fostered the wrong kind of behavior, Cajetan does not offer an argument based on the intrinsic character of the music itself. Indeed, insofar as this Platonic/Pythagorean tradition is preserved in Aquinas, Cajetan ignores it. His concern is not with the cosmic or psychic resonance of the music as such, but with the meaning it brings with it: What does it *say*? What would it mean *if it were expressed in words*?[10] And this meaning is generated not through "purely" musical structures but through extrinsic associations. Cajetan would seem to agree with musicologist Nicholas Cook, that "pure music" is a fiction. "The real thing unites itself promiscuously with any other media that are available" ([21], p. 92): the "meaning" of a melody or harmonic progression or rhythm emerges from a history of interaction with lyrics, instruments, theatres, taverns, and so on. Even if the organist is well-intentioned and the music is chosen solely on account of its musical virtue[11], and seeming adaptability to worship in itself, the unsuitable associations still disqualify it. As a last resort, Cajetan appeals to the law, noting that the text of Jerome cited by Aquinas had found its way into

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[8] "Ad evidentiam huius, oportet vitare ambo extrema. Ne scilicet tanti faciamus abstractionem soni a materia ut omnis sonus aeque admitti dignus sit in ecclesia" ([5], IX, p. 296a).

[9] "[...] ratione usus vel eventus potest ibi esse peccatum. Ratione usu, si accommodatus communiter est talis sonus ad materiam dedecentem sacra: quoniam idem est de tali sono iudicum quod est de cantu theatrali aut tragoedico, qui propter talem usum prohibiti sunt in ecclesia. Ratione vero eventus, si communiter ex tali sono excitantur auditorum animi ad mala vel vana" ([5], IX, 297b).

[10] "A gravissimo tamen peccato, et forte mortali sacrilegii, non excusatur qui ex intentione inter divina immiscet talia mundana quae, si verbis exprimeret ibidem, nullus excusaret a mortali" ([5], IX, p. 297a).

[11] "[...] ex sola intentione soni talis propter suam consonantiam" ([5], IX, p. 297b).

canon law: therefore, since secular songs are banned from worship, so, by extension, are secular melodies [22].

This provides the first answer to the question of this paper, an answer in the affirmative: *solo organ music is indeed capable of conveying a particular meaning or text*. There is a palpable concern that the associations of secular music are so powerfully eloquent that they cannot be overcome or redirected by a new context (*i.e*., worship of God): the risk of distraction, irreverence, and sacrilege remains too great.

4. Dominicans

Cajetan's comments discussed so far were not the work of a private scholar but a public theologian—a senior member of his order and an adviser to popes. The matters he dealt with in his *Summa* commentary and *Summula* were repeatedly addressed by the Dominicans when they came together to set the direction for their order in General Chapters. The rulings of these Chapters provide occasional but consistent attention to musical matters.

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, there is a repeated stress on standardization and decorum. The Chapter of 1501 (Rome) required the singing of the divine office to be distinct and devout, as well as brief and succinct. The brethren are reminded that their tradition is to sing without extensive melismas and other vocal elaborations. This section concludes with a flourish: When the divine office is meant to be sung and can be sung, then let it be sung ([23], p. 4). According to the Chapter of 1505 (Milan), in public worship, the tone is to be set by the officiating minister, who begins the office slowly, with devotion and maturity, and a moderated voice. Once again, the brethren are instructed to sing in a distinct manner, respecting the pauses between lines, not prolonging the final notes of phrases, with each verse following on just as the previous one finishes ([23], p. 28). These two chapters promote a simple, uncluttered liturgy, with all texts clearly and distinctly enunciated.

The matter of alternatim is taken up explicitly at the General Chapter of 1515, held in Naples, during Cajetan's generalate. The Chapter briefly sets out regulations for those convents where the organ is played ([23], p. 136). The first regulation prohibits the playing of secular vanities. The reason is that the organ is now ("hodie") part of the solemnity of divine worship; to admit anything profane or vain is to commit the sin of superstition (*i.e*., worshipping God but improperly). In addition, since the singing of secular songs in church is clearly prohibited, so must the playing of secular music also be prohibited—even if they both are refitted with a sacred theme[12]. The formulation of this regulation is very reminiscent of Cajetan's *Summa* commentary examined above. As was noted there, Cajetan composed his commentary on this part of Aquinas's *Summa* between 1512 and 1517. There are 189 questions in this part, and the music question, number 91, is about halfway through. Cajetan was occupied with many concerns at this time (including the Fifth Lateran Council, 1512–1517), so his work rate on the commentary may not have been steady; nevertheless, he may well have been working on this part of the commentary around the time of the Chapter. Without further detailed investigation, we can only speculate which came first, the *Summa* commentary or

[12] "[...] licet utrumque possit ad sacram applicari materiam" ([23], p. 136).

the Chapter regulations. In any case, with this first point, the Chapter concurs with Cajetan's affirmative answer to our question: *solo organ music is indeed capable of conveying a particular text*, in this case, the original meaning of secular songs. For this reason, secular music may not be played and cannot be made playable on the organ in worship.

However, the Chapter takes up a less certain position with three further regulations, each of which establishes a new discipline in choir. First, if in alternatim performance, the verset played by the organist is one during which the friars would normally bow (such as the "Gloria Patri" at the end of every psalm and canticle—see verset 11 of the Magnificat, above), then the cantor shall speak the text aloud slowly, thus providing an effective cue for all to bow together[13]. Second, when an antiphon is to be played on the organ, the text is to be recited by the cantor, again in a clear, deliberate voice, on behalf of the whole choir, so that all hear it calmly together[14]. And third, when a hymn or canticle commences with an organ verset (as was customary), the cantor is nevertheless to begin the first line of that verset before the organ proceeds. This is so that the people understand the song that is beginning, and that their devotion may be thereby aroused[15]. In this instance, "the people" refers not to the friars themselves in the choir stalls, but the congregation in the nave, in attendance for a major service on a Sunday or feast day.

These new disciplines serve as remedies to an implied lack of textual clarity in the organ versets. Since the instrumental music does not speak audibly enough, it must be complemented by the more articulate human voice. This is rather like a musical equivalent of a technique used in silent film: to complete the viewers' understanding of a silent movie, panels of text are provided to convey elements of the storyline (known as "narrative intertitles") and elements of dialogue, which viewers can see being spoken, but cannot hear ("dialogue intertitles") [24]. These Dominican regulations create something like dialogue intertitles, projecting the verbal text that listeners know is being performed by the organ but which they cannot actually hear or understand.

Furthermore, the final regulation amounts to a small but significant additional adjustment: as was noted above, the organ usually took the first verse, in order to establish the pitch and mode for the singers; this new regulation asks that the cantor sing the usual intonation, in order to indicate the text that is to be sung. Only then will the organ continue with the first verset. In this way, a practical musical benefit, designed to facilitate the steady flow of liturgical rhythm, is sacrificed for the "dialogue intertitle" designed to foster greater intelligibility and therefore greater devotion.

With these three regulations, the Chapter gives a somewhat different answer to our question: *solo organ music might be capable of conveying a particular text, but not sufficiently to ensure the required coordination of gesture in choir, nor to enable understanding among the people in attendance.* Because the organ alone cannot be relied upon to enunciate the assigned text, a human voice is required to supply what is now understood as the "missing" text. The invention of intertitles, during the period of Cajetan's leadership of the Dominican order, demonstrates two

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[13] "[...] cantor sine nota, alta voce et morose dicat illa, et dum a cantore dicuntur, omnes inclinent; et hoc ut simul et uniformiter fiant inclinationes ab omnibus" ([23], p. 136).

[14] "[...] cantor alta voce et morose illud dicat in persona totius chori, et hoc ut quietius omnes simul audient" ([23], p. 136).

[15] "[...] et hoc pro devotione populi, ut intelligens, quod inchoatur, assurgat" ([23], p. 136).

things: that instrumental music was being judged according to its rhetorical precision, and that it was found wanting.

Subsequent General Chapters refine the regulations for the practice of alternatim, but always along the same lines. In 1523, the Valladolid Chapter ruled that the Creed must always be sung in its entirety; it may never be played alone by the organ or in alternatim, however solemn the occasion. Why is the Creed singled out in this way? According to the Chapter: so that the faith, which should be professed openly and preached to the people, may not be concealed under the playing of organs[16]. This is the clearest statement yet of the insufficiencies of the organ: its music hides or obscures the text for which it is responsible. The same 1523 Chapter also ruled that the Gloria in excelsis should not be played entirely by the organ when the people are in attendance. Preferably it should be sung by the choir, or at least performed in alternatim. The Gloria in excelsis and the Creed would be used on Sundays and major feast days throughout the year; other regulations relate to chants that occur perhaps only once or twice in the church's year and whose texts would therefore be less well-known. The chapter insists on a reduced role for the organ: in the case of sequences (hymns attached to specific days in the calendar), these must be entirely sung. In the case of antiphons (the cycle of scripture verses that frame canticles such as the Magnificat), these must also be sung throughout, with one exception: on those solemn occasions when the antiphon is repeated before and after the canticle, one of the iterations, but only one, may be assigned to the organ ([23], p. 184). In other words, all of the less familiar text must be sung aloud.

At the Chapter of Lyons in 1536, the restrictions on the Gloria in excelsis are further tightened: while again banning the complete performance of the chant by the organ alone, the Chapter also requires that, if it is to be sung alternatim, then intertitles are to be provided—the organ's versets are to be supplied aloud by one of the brethren in a distinct and intelligible voice so that all in choir can hear[17]. There are two things to note here: first, the concern is no longer simply with the people, but with the choir, the friars themselves, hearing the full text. Second, the Gloria in excelsis is sung at almost every Sunday and feast day Mass and so would be much more familiar than sequences and antiphons. However, so weak is the eloquence of the organ that even here intertitles are deemed essential.

The singing of the Creed in its entirety, without any playing of the organ, is reaffirmed by General Chapter in 1542 and 1546 (both Rome), in 1551 (Salamanca), in 1561 (Avignon) and 1574 (Barcelona) ([23], pp. 294, 306, 323; [25], pp. 33, 171). The reason for the repetition seems to be that the regulation was ignored: the organ masses of Girolamo Cavazzoni (1543), and Claudio Merulo (1568) mentioned above, were not alone in providing music for the alternatim performance of the Creed; alternatim settings of the Creed only disappear in the early seventeenth century ([16], p. 233).

By the middle of the sixteenth century, Dominican thinking on instrumental liturgical music is clear: the priority is verbal intelligibility (which fosters devotion), and any practice that obscures this goal is to be curtailed or severely restricted. The trajectory shows an increasing anxiety that

[16] "[...] ne fidem quam profiteri palam tenemur et populo praedicare, sub modulis organorum videamur occultari" ([23], p. 184).

[17] "Versiculus vero organi ab uno frater distincte et intelligibiliter audiente choro dicatur" ([23], p. 261).

memory, context, ritual, and routine cannot fill the lacuna caused by organ alternatim: the words themselves must be enunciated out loud.

Musical issues were discussed at the Council of Trent (1545–1563), including the use of secular music, and music that obscured text, but the decrees of the Council contain very little of detail. As Craig Monson has shown, the Council of Trent "offered a structural impetus in an ongoing process of renewal and reform, in which music was also swept along, but with minimal specific directives" ([26], p. 403; also [27]). The specific directives of the Dominicans seemed to have been in step with the general trend, as can be seen from the *Caerimoniale Episcoporum*, issued in 1600 as part of the revision of liturgical books mandated at Trent [28]. This book contains the liturgical norms for the services presided at by a bishop. It therefore proposes a style of liturgy that meets the dignity of the office but which also might serve as a model for other acts of worship. In a section on the use of the organ, the *Caerimoniale* echoes all of the principles mentioned thus far, enshrining them in a form now applicable throughout the Catholic Church. Regarding what I have been calling intertitles, it takes two further steps. First, where there are gestures to be coordinated (for example, during the final doxology verses of hymns, where a bow is customary), then these versets are simply reassigned to the choir, even if the choir has sung the previous verset (as in the example of the Magnificat, above, where all bow during verset 11). In other words, rather than buttress the organ's inadequate articulation with an intertitle (as the Dominicans had proposed as early as 1515), that verset is simply taken from the organ and assigned wholly to singers. This makes the cue for the collective gesture much clearer, not least because it would align with the practice used at the daily round of liturgies when the organ was not played. Second, the *Caerimoniale* not only recommends a blanket use of intertitles in all instances of alternatim, but says that it would be praiseworthy if a cantor, in a clear voice, *sings* the text along with the organ.[18] Here the trajectory seen in the Dominican legislation reaches a resting place, and the outcome is something musically and liturgically quite different from organ alternatim. The organ continues to add solemnity to worship, but we no longer find any trace of the idea that the organ alone can be trusted with text. Instead, the organ is deemed incapable of presenting the text in any acceptable way; it must be supplemented, not only by a spoken intertitle to articulate what is partially hidden, but by a more complete and verbal musicality: instrumental music has undergone a redemptive transformation into vocal music; Higginbottom rightly concludes that this practice "undermines the very notion of alternatim organ music" ([15], p. 141).

5. The Singing Organ?

I have presented an overview of positions taken regarding liturgical organ music by Cajetan and his Dominican confreres in the first part of the sixteenth century. Stepping back from the detail, I would like to offer a couple of reflections.

[18] "[...] sed advertendum erit, ut, quandocumque per organum figuratur aliquid cantari, seu responderi alternatim versiculis hymnorum, aut canticorum, ab aliquo de choro intelligibili voce pronuntietur id, quod ab organo respondendum est. Et laudabile esset, ut aliquis cantor coniunctum cum organo voce clara idem cantaret" ([28], pp. 51–52).

5.1. Wordless Music and Words

In 1576, Dominican friar Juan de Palencia published a new edition of his order's *Ordinarium*, the book describing liturgical ceremonies [29]. Although he offers explanatory annotations on some of rubrics, he makes no claims for innovation in this work, but states that these are the opinions of the "older Fathers" ([30], p. 282). Juan mentions the regulations concerning the organ given by the various General Chapters and remarks that though the use of the organ in church is a new thing ("nova res"), it is now found in all churches. This is for two reasons: to give the choir some relief, and to add greater solemnity to worship[19]. However, as we have seen, by Juan's day, the organ was actually expected to do more than this: it was expected to sing words—and not just a few general ideas, but around half of the words that would otherwise be sung by the choir and the people. Early in the sixteenth century, the organ's role began to be seen almost exclusively in logocentric terms, standing or falling on the basis of its ability to convey text. Sixteenth-century churchmen reasoned that, if the people do not understand what is being sung (whether by the organ, or by voices in polyphony), then their devotion suffers. Once the paradigm of verbal intelligibility was established, it is no wonder that organ alternatim was viewed as inadequate (as also were vocal polyphony and melismatic chant). In addition, what of the Latin language? Surely that too was an obstacle to intelligibility and therefore to devotion? Cajetan had already aired these more radical possibilities in his 1528 commentary on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Echoing Erasmus, he claims Paul's authority for the use of the vernacular in worship: where prayers are said publicly, in the hearing of the people, it would contribute more to the building up of the Church if they were said in the language common to all[20]. And when Paul says that he would rather speak five words "with his mind" (*i.e.*, intelligibly) than ten thousand words in tongues, Cajetan uses the occasion to complain about those kinds of music where text is assigned to the organ, or is obscured by the music of many voices. On balance, he says that it would be better to have no music at all than to have an unintelligible cacophony[21].

Aquinas had shown a little more latitude: he noted that when singers sing a sacred text with devotion, they are stirred to further devotion by the "hidden correspondences" between the music and the affections of their spirit. It is as if the text harnesses the potential in the music to arouse greater devotion within them. In addition, even though the people might not understand what the singers are singing, if they understand that it is sung with devotion, then their devotion is aroused

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[19] "Sed iam in omnibus ecclesiis habentur ad levamen chori et maiorem solemnitatem divini officii" ([29], p. 128).

[20] On 1 Cor 14.17: "Ex hac Pauli doctrina habetur quod melius ad aedificationem ecclesiae est orationes publicas quae audiente populo dicuntur, dici lingua communi clericis et populo, quam dici latine" ([31], p. 137a). Wegman provides the original and an English translation of Erasmus's annotation on the same passage, which Cajetan knew ([2], pp. 161–65).

[21] On 1 Cor 14.19: "Unde discere debemus eligibilius esse ut in Ecclesia dicantur divina (horae scilicet canonicae et Missae) intelligibiliter sine melodia musica, quam sic ut non intelligi possint, qualiter sunt tam particulae quae sonis commituntur organorum, quam quas cantus reddit imperceptibiles, vel multitudine clamoris occupantis, vel qualitate cantus notas magis, quam verba concinentis. Haec enim omnia magis extranea sunt quam decem millia verborum in lingua" ([31], p. 137a–b).

in turn (II-II, 91, 2, ad 5; [20], p. 167). Aquinas certainly appreciates the importance of text in worship. However, he also recognizes the power of music itself to act on the spirit, in the context of worship, even where words are obscured.

5.2. Wordless Music and Worldly Music

As noted above, the sources I have been examining actually provide two conflicting answers to the question of meaning in solo organ music. On the one hand, Cajetan and the Dominican Chapters are clear that secular melodies inevitably carry with them the echo of their texts and/or earlier usage and so will subvert the devout participation of worshippers. For this reason, secular songs are excluded from worship by law, and by extension, so are secular melodies—in other words, when playing a secular melody or rhythm, the organ cannot help but sing the secular song. On the other hand, when sacred melodies are played on the organ, they cannot be relied on to convey their assigned liturgical texts effectively enough to ensure the devout participation of worshippers. For this reason, various tactics are proposed to remedy the inarticulateness of the organ, or replace it all together—in other words, the organ cannot sing the sacred song clearly enough. The expectations are both inconsistent and unequal: the churchmen wanted to exclude *every trace* of secular distraction from worship, however fleeting, but they wanted the *full content* of the sacred texts to be realized in the act of worship. From the secular melodies, they feared even a minimum of provocation to lascivious thoughts; from the sacred melodies they expected a maximum of meaning arousing devotion[22].

As we saw above, the Dominicans' determined ban of secular music is not based on purely musical qualities, but on the associations a piece of music brings with it. Such an extrinsic point of view might have yielded a less absolute judgement on secular melody: since the essential properties of musical modes do not change very much over time, clear and abiding directives could be given concerning certain modes and certain rhythms. However, the extrinsic associations of a melody can and do change; if associations can be acquired, they can be lost too. The frottole of Bartolomeo Tromboncino, adapted for organ solo and published in 1517, may have scandalized or titillated churchgoers in the 1520s (had they been played in church), but by the 1820s few people would be able to recall their texts, or even feel in their rhythms the traces of carnal desire. For this reason, one might imagine the Dominicans adjusting their judgment from an absolute ban to a conditional ban, depending on the likelihood of the associations enduring. However, this is not forthcoming: instrumental music remains a weak point, a back door, which must always be guarded lest the world and the flesh find an easy way in. Such a view would struggle to accommodate evidence that venerable elements of the sacred rites had in fact made their way into worship from "outside"—such as the phrase "Kyrie eleison," ("Lord have mercy") which "is not originally a

[22] This is not the only issue on which these reformers were inconsistent: the sources examined in this article do not question the practice of reciting parts of the Mass silently, particularly the central Eucharistic Prayer, or Canon of the Mass. For centuries it had been the custom for this prayer to be said out of the hearing of the people, and this custom is reaffirmed by General Chapter (Salamanca, 1551, [23], p. 321, and Rome 1569, despite practice to the contrary, [25], p. 90), as well as by the Council of Trent (Decree on the Sacrifice of the Mass, 1562). This is another sign that these reformers were not solely concerned with verbal audibility and intelligibility.

Christian prayer at all but rather an acclamation employed in pagan worship, adopted in the cult of the Roman emperor” ([32], p. 335).

6. Conclusions

The implication of this study is that organ alternatim did not fall out of favor because it failed to carry out the job it was given in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but because it could not do the new job is was given in the sixteenth century. Organ alternatim made sense in a world that included gothic architecture, stained glass, symbolic vestments and gestures ([15], p. 133; [33], pp. 82–83, 132–33). Under the influence of renaissance humanism, its job-description changed[23]. In summary, there are four things we can say about the sixteenth-century Dominicans and their judgement on the liturgical use of the organ. First, they accepted it. This sets them apart from Aquinas, who believed that instruments were not apt for use in worship, “for fear of seeming to imitate the Jews” (II-II, 91, 2, obj. 4; [20], p. 165). Second, they restated a centuries-old aversion to secular music in worship, but did so with a more intense protectiveness of the purity of worship. It is as though the organ is a Trojan horse that might conceal within its belly a host of distractions and worldly temptations. Third, when trying to grasp the “meaning” of organ music, they did not employ the essentialism of the Platonic-Pythagorean tradition, but assumed a more extrinsic view: that the meaning of a melody or rhythm is determined by the associations it brings with it, its familiar lyrics and former uses. This shifts the focus somewhat from the music *in itself* to the music *as it is known* by listeners, and it makes music’s meaning unpredictable and fluid. Fourth, in the light of this indeterminacy, the Dominicans sought to police the meaning of organ music by requiring that it be hand-cuffed to text—by the remedial use of what I have called dialogue intertitles. As I said at the outset, the focus of this paper is a particular way of thinking about organ music, not the actual and varied practices of organists. The extent to which performance practice was actually modified in the light of these instructions is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, the repetition of certain instructions, and the evidence of published sources, suggest that a stubborn gap remained between the ideal, enshrined in laws and exhortations, and the practice.

This cluster of ideas finds echoes today: organ alternatim has modern heirs in the practice of organists to improvise on well-known hymn tunes, or of instrumental ensembles to continue playing variations on a song after all the verses have been sung. The concessions also continue: certain electronic and percussion instruments are used to draw young people into church who would, it is argued, otherwise stay away. The tactic I have described as intertitles also endures, in various contexts: at Anglican Evensong, the officiant will introduce the choral anthem by title and composer, and read at least the first few lines of its text, especially if it is to be sung in Latin; in many churches, printed worship aids are provided with all the words of the service, to aid participation; and the organ blessing cited at the beginning of this article gives the clearest example of instrumental music being charged with conveying verbal meaning. All such announcements, titles, and

[23] For relevant discussion and theological analysis of the broader context, see [34], especially chapter 2. For modern discussions of musical meaning, see [35,36], and [37], chapter 3.

explanations have to be handled with great care if they are not to break the ritual flow or capsize the liturgy ([38], pp. 152–53).

For most critics of organ alternatim, and instrumental music more generally, its crime is that it obscures the words. Defenders of instrumental music seldom rebut this accusation: judged on the criterion of verbal intelligibility, instrumental music will always fall short. Instead, instrumental music is defended for its own non-verbal eloquence, a properly musical eloquence, which is able to offer something that complements verbal intelligibility: sonorous beauty, ritual solemnity, emotional appeal, and its own unique means of shaping a disparate crowd of people into a worshipping assembly.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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"To Sing with the Spirit:" Psalms, Hymns and the Spirituality of Late Eighteen Century American Presbyterians

William Harrison Taylor

Abstract: This paper contends that the contemporary discussion among theologians regarding the relationship between theology and spirituality can offer new insight into the eighteenth century religious world. This theological discussion has wrestled with, among other things, the questions of whether theology and spirituality are mutually exclusive and what exactly their relationship looks like. Resoundingly, theologians such as Alister McGrath, J. I. Packer, and Sandra Schneiders have concluded that any separation of the two represents a false dichotomy within Christianity. Accordingly, Christians are called to "the quest for a fulfilled and authentic Christian existence, involving the bringing together of the fundamental ideas of Christianity and the whole experience of living on the basis of, and within, the scope of the Christian faith." Sound theology, then, necessitates living by the Spirit and *vice versa*. The benefit of this theological position for religious history lies in its reevaluation of the common categorization of Christians as either theologically or spiritually focused. By heeding the call of contemporary theologians and blurring these lines of distinction, historians can afford eighteen century American Christians the chance to better define themselves. Considered in this light, the actions of the Presbyterians, for instance, are freed from the manipulative "social control" framework as one of the "establishmentarian" churches. Instead, the Presbyterians reveal characteristics generally reserved for the democratically charged "sectarians," such as a robust spiritual life compelled by music.

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In 1793, the events of the ecclesiastical trial of the reverend Adam Rankin spilled over from the Presbytery of Transylvania to the public sphere. This ordeal had plagued the regional ruling body since 1789 and, when all was seemingly finished, the dismissed Rankin brought his case to the American reading public. When the presbytery followed Rankin into the public sphere, they brought numerous witnesses including the respected Samuel Blair and David "Father" Rice. Rankin opposed the psalms and hymns of Dr. Isaac Watts to the extent that he deemed any who supported them as rank deists and he refused to either officiate or share communion with the offenders. This happened to include most of Rankin's fellow ministers in the Transylvania Presbytery and the overarching Synod of Philadelphia and New York. What was equally troubling for the ruling body was that Rankin was also reported to have gotten these disturbing directives by divine revelation. Rankin allegedly stated, "That the divine being had raised him up as an instrument to overthrow the use of Dr. Watts' psalmody in the church, and that he would live to see the day, that he himself would do it ([1], p. 4)." However, it was only after Rankin began "forming separate societies" during the four year disciplinary process, that the presbytery finally dismissed him "not merely for the things proved against him, at his trial, but for these, his schismatical proceedings deposed him ([1], p. 14)."

Sensitive to both the church's position in the public sphere and the tumultuous spirit psalmody could arouse, the presbytery thoroughly countered Rankin's accusations and defended their decision to remove him from the ministry.

For a modern audience, this episode has a tendency to appear satirical or worse, indicative of the unenlightened activities of the nation's religious forbearers. Yet, Adam Rankin's story is not the solitary thread in this Presbyterian narrative, and it is far from the first, with other tales dating as far back as 1753. Also, without delving too far into what C. S. Lewis called, "chronological snobbery," it will suffice to say that the modern American religious world is still pestered by problems of music ([2], pp. 206–07). However, the problems encountered both now and in the eighteenth century, largely relate to music's role in Christian spirituality. Interestingly, and keeping in view the anachronistic dangers, the contemporary discussion among theologians can offer new insight into the eighteenth century religious world. This current scholarship, sparked by the popularly renewed emphasis on Christian spirituality within churches, has wrestled with, among other things, the questions of whether theology and spirituality are mutually exclusive and what exactly their relationship looks like. Resoundingly, theologians such as Alister McGrath, J. I. Packer, and Sandra Schneiders have concluded that any separation of the two represents a false dichotomy within Christianity [3–6]. Accordingly, Christians are called to "the quest for a fulfilled and authentic Christian existence, involving the bringing together of the fundamental ideas of Christianity and the whole experience of living on the basis of and within the scope of the Christian faith ([3], p. 2)." Sound theology, then, necessitates living by the Spirit and *vice versa*.

It is, in part, the contention of this paper that this theological understanding offers invaluable insight to religious historians. This is not to say that historians have overlooked either the doctrinally driven or the spirituality driven Christians. Any cursory examination of the literature will show otherwise. The historiography of the late eighteenth century American religious world, for example, is well stocked with excellent studies of all denominations from the more established to the more democratically oriented. No, the benefit of this theological position for religious history lies in its reevaluation of these common categorizations of Christians as either theologically or spiritually focused. By heeding the call of contemporary theologians and blurring these lines of distinction, historians can afford eighteen century American Christians the chance to better define themselves. Considered in this light, the actions of the Presbyterians, such as those of the Rankin episode, are freed from the manipulative "social control" framework as one of the "establishmentarian" churches.

Instead, the Presbyterians reveal a more complex Christian spirituality comprised of characteristics generally reserved for the democratically charged "sectarian" churches, such as a robust spiritual life compelled by music [7–12][1].

The role that music played in the development of the eighteenth century Presbyterian Church's spirituality is, in part, revealed in the many controversies surrounding music that troubled the denomination at this time. The concern of psalmody is first noted in the minutes of the Synod of New York in 1753 when the ruling body was introduced to the problem tearing at the congregation in New York City[2]. In particular, the issue revolved around whether it was appropriate to sing from Dr. Isaac Watt's *Psalms of David Imitated* during congregational worship. Watt's version was markedly different from the 1650 version crafted by Francis Rouse, which had been favored among the Scottish Presbyterians and among their own American forefathers. Change was not a problem in and of itself, especially not in a New Light congregation, but Dr. Watts' work was seen as a human interpretation of divine songs, as opposed to the translation of the psalms the church had enjoyed previously. At the heart of this crisis then was not a narrow-minded problem with semantics but, rather what was seen as a fundamental issue of spiritual motivation—whether Watts' work was of the Holy Spirit.

To address this problem the synod enlisted some of their best ministers in the persons of Samuel Finley, Charles Beatty and Samuel Davies ([13], p. 252)[3]. Quickly, the committee engaged the situation and presented their recommendation to the synod and to the New York congregation. Since the church had been only using the Watts version before the crisis, the committee suggested that the church continue to sing Watts' psalms "lest the animosities in the congregation should be more inflamed, but they most earnestly recommend moderation, forbearance, and condescension to both parties, till such time as by the use of proper measures, they shall come to an agreement among themselves ([13], p. 252)." Peace, it seemed, was restored, but it proved short-lived. Two years later, in 1755, the same congregation brought the case again before the synod, and as the number of

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1 Some scholars use the terms "Standing Order" and "Religious Newcomers" in place of, respectively, "Establishmentarianism" and "Sectarian." Much of the religious history focused on the late eighteenth-century forward can be divided into two schools of thought that center on the "social control" hypothesis. Those who support this argument contend that this period is marked predominantly by the clergymen trying to retain their control over the common person. Although the "social control" thesis was *the* historical interpretation for a number of years, recent historians, such as Nathan Hatch in his *Democratization of American Christianity* have attempted to counter it by rewriting the history of the Second Great Awakening. As a result, churches during this period fall into one of two categories: the "religious newcomers"—the Methodists, Baptists, Mormons, African American Christians and the Christian Churches—and the "Standing Order"—the Congregationalists, Presbyterians or Anglicans. For these historians the "religious newcomers," inspired by the democratic impulses of American Revolution, were the true catalysts for the Second Great Awakening as their egalitarian principles sparked the Christianization of Americans, the Democratization of American Christianity, and the Democratization of America in general.

2 Between 1740 and 1758 the American Presbyterian Church was divided into two synods, the Old Light Synod of Philadelphia and the New Light Synod of New York. In 1758 the church was reunited under the Synod of New York and Philadelphia.

3 Not only did all three ministers serve key roles in the various ruling bodies of the Presbyterian Church, but both Samuel Finley and Samuel Davies also served as President of the College of New Jersey (now known as Princeton).

members wishing to sing the "Scotch version" had noticeable increased, the synod decided that "the Scotch version be used equally with the other in the stated public worship on the Lord's days." Again, the ruling body reminded the church that "mutual forbearance and condescension in such cases, is a duty which Christians owe to one another, and is necessary to preserve the peace of society ([13], p. 267)."

When the Synod of New York reconvened in May 1756 it was met with yet another letter from the congregation, but this time the tone had changed. In their decision, the ruling body noted the paper "contains insulting and even threatening expressions, and insinuations of partiality and dishonesty, together with several demands proposed in a very disrespectful manner, and with an air of contempt." No doubt finding it difficult to muster Christian charity, the synod bluntly wrote to the congregation that "the singing of Dr. Watt's version of the Psalms" was permissible and that it was the "conduct of the congregation" in this matter that had prompted the ruling body to act "for the sake of their peace." Because this situation had spiraled out of control and threatened the fabric of the church, the ruling body "determine that this judgment shall be finally decisive as to this affair ([13], pp. 274–75)." Perhaps the ruling body suspected the specter of Watts' spirituality would further haunt the denomination, but for the moment it had been subdued. As troublesome as this affair was for the synod, it demonstrated that Presbyterians were fiercely concerned with what motivated them during their divine worship, and although they brought different methods, both believed they were driven by the Spirit.

After seven years, psalmody reared its troublesome head again in 1763, but by this time the Synod of New York had reunited with the Synod of Philadelphia to form the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. Despite the union, there were still clear tensions between the Old Lights and the New Lights within the denomination and highly charged issues, like that of psalmody, had the potential to rend the church anew. Fortunately, when the matter was raised in 1763 it was in the form of a question from an unnamed congregation, which relieved some of the pressure on the ruling body. Instead of creating a committee, the synod uncharacteristically, placed the responsibility on all the representatives therein to read Watts' psalms and reach a conclusion. However, until a decision had been reached the ruling body wrote, "The Synod have no objection to the uses of the said imitation by such ministers and congregations as incline to use it, until the matter of psalmody be further considered." This consideration would last two years and "after much discourse on the subject" in 1765, the "Synod judged it best . . . only to declare that they look on the inspired Psalms of Scripture, to be proper matter to be sung in Divine worship, according to their original design and the practice of the Christian churches, yet will not forbid those to use the imitation of them whose judgment and inclination lead them to do so ([13], pp. 331, 338 and 335)." Psalmody alone was still the rule for public worship, and following the precedent set in 1756, no version was adopted or championed over the other because both versions of "the said Psalms are orthodox, and no particular version is of Divine authority ([13], p. 275)." Orthodoxy decided their fate, which meant the question of Watts' became a question of Christian liberty, and in that arena the ruling body claimed no authority.

The Presbyterian understanding of orthodoxy, including the concept of Christian liberty, was grounded firmly within the seventeenth-century Westminster Confession of Faith. Contrary to the fashion of the eighteenth-century Anglo-American religious world to downplay, to the point of

avoidance, doctrinal and creedal distinctions, the American Presbyterians repeatedly confirmed, although not always unanimously, their adherence to the work of the Westminster Divines. Accordingly, the Presbyterians believed that "God alone is Lord of the Conscience, and hath left it free from the Doctrines and Commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his Word . . . . So that, to believe such Doctrines, or to obey such Commands out of conscience, is to betray true Liberty of Conscience ([14], p. 35)." For the Presbyterian leadership the issue of psalmody was an issue of Christian liberty, and as such they could not constrain the consciences of their congregations. It was only by respecting and preserving this liberty that Christians could properly relate to fulfill their divine purpose and the Presbyterians had no interest in further hindering the cause of Christ.

The clear assertion of Christian liberty by the synod in 1763 brought eight years of silence on the issue of psalmody, but like the dreaded smallpox outbreaks, the threat of the next crisis hung over every new year. When the Second Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia submitted questions concerning the use of Watts' in 1773, the synod created a committee which included both the influential Dr. John Witherspoon and Dr. John Rodgers. Acting quickly, the committee again recommended that previous synod decisions be upheld "which countenance congregations in determining this matter according to their own choice." Because this was an issue of Christian liberty both the committee and the full synod stated that "they cannot make any order to forbid the congregations to continue the practice" and that "the Synod on this occasion think proper earnestly to recommend to both parties peace and harmony, and to forbear all harsh sentiments and expressions, and in particular that neither of them intimate that either of the versions in question is unfit to be sung in Christian worship ([13], pp. 448–49)."

In the following years, concerns of psalmody were replaced by those of war. In 1785, in the midst of post-war rebuilding, a motion was passed calling for the synod "to take the assistance of all the versions [of the psalms] in our power, and compose for us a version more suitable to our circumstances and taste than any we yet have ([13], pp. 513–14)." A new committee was formed comprised of Dr. Patrick Alison, Dr. Robert Davidson, Dr. John Ewing, Mr. Samuel Blair, and Mr. Timothy Jones. After two years of work, the synod approved the committee's suggestion that the recently edited and expanded version of Watts' psalms by Joel Barlow become the recommended version to "be sung in the churches and families under their care ([13], p. 535)." Again, the synod clarified that this was their recommendation, and not an order. Whether the ruling body was prompted to act by rumors of renewed controversy is unclear, but what is certain, is that the 1787 decision came too late to avoid the Abingdon riot.

Reports of the uprising within one of their presbyteries reached the synod in 1787 and they were greatly distressed to "find one source of uneasiness in addition to what had been mentioned in their country, and among themselves, was about psalmody." This question of spirituality had moved beyond a war of words and had manifested itself in physical conflict. To be sure, there were also other issues motivating the riot, such as the "political differences in that part of the country," but the danger related to psalmody had undeniably increased. The synod pleaded with the Abingdon churches, "in a spirit of Christian love, to forgive one another, and bury in oblivion all that had passed." In a pastoral letter to all of their churches across America, the ruling body emphatically stated, "the Synod do highly disapprove of, and condemn all such tumultuous and riotous

proceedings." Taking advantage of this opportunity they reiterated that all congregations had right to choose which psalms they sung and "they are far from disapproving of Rouse's version, commonly called the Old Psalms." "[E]ither may be used by the churches," the synod wrote, "as each congregation may judge most for their peace and edification." And as they believed this still to be an issue of Christian liberty they "therefore highly disapprove of public, severe, and unchristian censures being passed upon either of the systems of psalmody, and recommend it to all ministers in those parts of the Church, to be more tender and charitable on these heads ([13], p. 537)."

When the aforementioned troubles surrounding Adam Rankin surfaced in 1789 and continued to 1793, the various ruling bodies, including both the Presbytery of Transylvania and the newly formed General Assembly[4] were remarkably patient. The General Assembly implored Rankin "and endeavored to relieve his mind from the difficulty he appears to labour under." Yet still he charged the ruling body with "a great and pernicious error, in the public worship of God, by disusing Rouse's versification of David's Psalms, and adopting in the room of it, Watt's imitation." Attempting to respect Rankin's liberty of conscience the General Assembly "only recommend to him that exercise of Christian charity towards those who differ from him in their views on this matter, which is exercised towards himself; and that he be carefully guarded against disturbing the peace of the Church on his head ([15], p. 182)." His failure here and his efforts to foster dissension within the denomination forced the presbytery to dismiss him.

Yet, if the dangers were as real as the series of events from 1753 to 1789 indicates, it begs the question of why the Presbyterian leadership held their position regarding psalmody and continued to tolerate the intolerant in their midst. In part, the answer can be found by applying the arguments of historians such as J. C. D. Clark and James Bell, that Americans were chiefly concerned with preserving orthodoxy even if that meant war, as they argue, or not violating the doctrine of Christian liberty as shown here [16,17]. However, there is more to glean. Also tied to their notion of orthodoxy was the necessity of singing praises to God. This formed an unmistakable part of divine worship for Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Knox and the Westminster Divines; all of whom laid the foundation for what the eighteenth century American Presbyterians believed. Well known were the stories of Protestants whose tongues were severed to keep them from singing the psalms on route to and while they burned at the stake ([18], pp. 35–39). If those tales were not evidence enough, the American Presbyterians could rely on their own recent history to illustrate the tremendous power of music. Its capacity to inspire, fortify and edify Christians far outweighed the potential dangers it might arouse.

Disputed psalmody was not the only ghost to disturb the Presbyterian peace. During the 1750's both the Old Light and New Light synods came to see themselves as divinely tormented for their earlier schism. Richard Treat wrote, on behalf of the Synod of New York, "We have been warned and chastised, first more gently, then more terribly; but not returning to him that smites us, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. Judgment yet proceeds, the prospect becomes darker and darker, and all things respecting us are loudly alarming ([13], p. 276)." Their divine punishment was the French and Indian War, and it pushed the factions towards reconciliation, which

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[4] The new national ruling body, the General Assembly, was the result of a massive restructuring of the Presbyterian Church in 1788.

was realized in 1758. Central and intertwining themes of this reunion were the church's interdenominational mission and its efforts to "take heed *to our Doctrine*, that it be not only orthodox, but evangelical and spiritual, tending to awaken the Secure to a suitable Concern for their Salvation and to instruct and encourage sincere Christians." They were determined to not only work more charitably with each other within the church, but also with all the various Christian denominations that comprised the body of Christ. This was a vow to consider themselves and their actions as a part of the body of Christ ([13], pp. 285–88). The Presbyterians were submitting themselves to their fellow believers. As Christians they were equals and dependent on one another for success.

Music was one of the primary tools the Presbyterians relied on to fulfill these reunion goals, especially those of interdenominationalism. Exemplary of this spirit was the reverend Samuel Buell, who befriended and championed the first Native American to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church, Samson Occom. While petitioning in the colonies for money, books, and hymns to support Occom's mission among the Oneida, Buell used his gift for song to inspire his fellow colonists to contribute. In a letter to a potential patron, which was eventually published, Buell's excitement over the cooperative and missionary possibilities prompted the minister to end his letter with a song:

> King Jesus reigns, and spreads his glorious Fame, The savage Nations know, and trust his Name; Triumph ye Saints! Ye Angels strike the Lyre! In everlasting Praise, let all conspire ([19], p. xv)!

Buell quickly apologized, "Dear Sir, I forget myself, the pleasing Theme has transported me beyond the Limits I had prescribed to my Mind," but the joy that this Presbyterian felt was obvious and it is no small matter that he chose to express himself through song. It was his "hope . . . that we shall see Christians, though in some lesser Matters of differing Opinions, agreeing harmoniously in this truly generous, interesting and important Work, contributing liberally toward promoting the Propagation of the glad Tidings of Salvation among the *Heathen* ([19], pp. xiv–xxv)." Even when not singing, Buell called on musical imagery to prick the consciences of his audience when he describes the cooperation as "harmoniously."

Buell was not alone in this regard. In 1774, Samson Occom joined those employing music for the benefit of Christendom when he published, *A Choice Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs; Intended for the Edification of sincere Christians, of all Denominations* [20]. Occom had observed the "great Engagedness, in these Colonies, to cultivate Psalmody," and he felt compelled to encourage "the Duty of Christians to learn the Songs of Zion." Drawing largely from the writings of the Apostle Paul, the Presbyterian cautioned that simply singing was not enough. Christians had "to sing with the Spirit" or otherwise, beautiful or not, "it is like the Sound of a musical Instrument without Life ([20], p. 3)." When properly performed "the Songs of Zion, when they are sung with the Spirit of the Gospel, are very comforting, refreshing, and edifying to the Children of God." Further still, such singing was "pleasing to God, and destructive to the Kingdom of Satan." This was his motivation, he explained, to collect "a Number of choice Hymns, Psalms, and spiritual Songs, from a Number of Authors of different Denominations of Christians, that every Christian may be suited." He concluded his prefatory address with his hope that this collection of "cordial Hymns" would "comfort you in your weary Pilgrimage; I hope they will assist and strengthen you through the

various Changes of this Life, till you all safely arrive in the general Assembly Above, and Church the First-Born, where you shall have no more need of these imperfect Hymns; but shall perfectly join the Songs of Moses and the Lamb ([20], p. 4).”

In 1787, the reverend George Duffield expressed similar sentiments on behalf of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia. As the elected clerk he crafted the prefatory address for their recommended version of the psalms [21]. Despite the numerous negative examples he could have drawn from to explain the ruling body’s venture into psalmody, Duffield instead emphasized the benefits to spirituality the music could foster. It was well known “by the best judges of the sacred text,” he wrote, “that the Book of Psalms, in its original dress is a collection of the most elevated and sublime Compositions that are to be found in any language.” Many translations, however, had encountered difficulties in both keeping the original “piety, dignity, and poetic excellence” and infusing “the bright discoveries of the Gospel.” Duffield reassured that “this has been happily executed by the learned and pious Dr. Watts, and the Psalms which he omitted have been supplied by Mr. Barlow, nearly in the same spirit and stile.” More than this, he claimed, the psalms “have been carefully altered, so as to render the Composition better adapted to the circumstances of Christians in every country.” According to the Presbyterian leadership, all Christians, not just Presbyterians, would benefit from these psalms as they encouraged “understanding and devotion, and thereby continue the elevation and improvement of the Christian temper ([21], p. iii).”

As the denomination worked more closely with other churches, a growing concern about doctrinal purity emerged. In some cases, instead of emphasizing their common Christianity while retaining their inherited doctrinal positions, the Presbyterians adopted the specific beliefs of the other churches. Once again the Presbyterian leadership relied on music. In a unique attempt to inspire, exhort and edify their members, the Presbytery of Charleston moved beyond the traditional boundaries of the psalms and compiled and published hymns for their “public and private worship ([22], p. 1).” Among the myriad of songs, there are clear efforts to reiterate key Reformed beliefs, such as: “The Divinity of the Son,” “The Trinity,” “Acceptable Worship,” “The Natural Depravity of Man,” “The Necessity of a Saviour,” “The Influences of the Spirit Experienced,” and “Submission to Fatherly Chastisements.” Yet within their midst were hymns devoted to love and one in particular reveals the continued Presbyterian pursuit of interdenominationalism—Hymn 151 or “Christian Unity.”

1. Let party names no moreThe Christian world o’erspread;Gentile and Jew, and bond and free, Are one in Christ their head.
2. Among the saints on earth Let mutual love be found; Heirs of the same inheritance, With mutual blessings crown’d.
3. Let envy, child of hell, Be banish’d far away; Those should in strictest friendship dwell, Who the same Lord obey.
4. Thus will the church below Resemble that above; Where streams of pleasure ever flow, And ev’ry heart is love ([22], p. 123).

Although the ruling body wished to maintain the doctrinal integrity of the church they deemed it equally important to reaffirm their interdenominational hopes; these pursuits had to co-exist.

The following year, in the swampy and remote Washington City the reverend John Campbell was called to supply the sermon that would precede a concert held in the newborn capital ([23], pp. 371–74). He accepted and welcomed the chance to engage a public audience that extended well beyond his typical congregation. Using James 5:13 as his scriptural basis, Campbell addressed the topic of "Sacred Music," and he began by applauding his audience. Those in attendance had "a divine warrant for the part you are to act on this occasion; and permit me to congratulate you on the propriety of your conduct in recognizing a law of Christianity." Washington City was filled with opportunities "for criminal festivity and mirth," but "you nobly chuse the more rational, but unfashionable, mode of expressing cheerfulness, by a course of harmonious praise to the King of Saints ([24], p. 4)." This Campbell noted, was one of the great dangers of music. Its divine origin meant it was powerful and while it could inspire "devotion and rapture," music could also be "forced to speak the language of guilty passion, and serve at the altar of impure love ([24], p. 11)." Still, this was not to be taken as a call to abolish music. The book of Revelations, Campbell stated, made their duties as Christians quite clear: "we have not only a representation of the church triumphant, celebrating the praise of her Redeemer, but also of the church on earth, taking up the joyful theme, and imitating her jubilant strains; so that it is impossible for us to mistake our duty when we have such illustrious models, and so plain an example for our imitation." As for the dangers of abuse, godly music held a solution in that it "possesses a surprising power over that black groupe of depraved passions that agitate the breast of man: Malice, envy, rage, anger, and a thirst of revenge, those demons that ravage the empire of the heart, and aim at desolating the globe, die away before the sacred magic of sound ([24], pp. 23 and 21)."

Like Samson Occom before him, Campbell was delighted in the revival of sacred music that he witnessed among Americans. However, the minister warned, this zeal needed to be tempered with knowledge and so he appealed to "the Apostle's conclusion, 'I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with understanding also ([24], p. 24)." "Musical sounds" Campbell noted, "should breathe the same passionate language with the poetry, paint the same scenes and passions, and in short, echo its very spirit to the soul; but this will never be done by the spruce sopperies, and laboured conceits, of the fashionable music. Nothing can be more improper, than the introduction of such compositions into the harmony of the church ([24], p. 31)"[5]. As a counterpoint to this modern distraction, he presented the ancient Israelites whose harmony "was less complex than ours; its combinations were more simple and artless; and its expression more lively, forcible, and passionate. Theirs was the harmony of nature; ours is that of art." The Israelites also served as a caution against a popular holdover from an illiterate age, the practice of "lining out." As Campbell lamented, this was "when the whole service is interrupted till the chief musician reads, or rather doefully cants, out the line," but "what edification can be expected?" Both extremes had to be avoided, because they tended to "insult God, and are unprofitable to yourselves." As simple as the Israelite harmonies were, they fostered rather than

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5 Campbell continues to assault modern musical novelties, such as "fugueing tunes," that were being introduced to divine worship. He states bluntly, "that man's taste must be strangely depraved, who can relish the performance." In them, he claimed, "no attention is paid to emphasis, cadence, or pronunciation; the ear is cloyed with endless repetition, or confused by a crowed of different words or sentences, assailing it at once." Found on page 30.

impeded the glorification of God and the fortification of fellow believers, Campbell observed, by "lighting up a flame of sacred passion in the soul ([24], pp. 16 and 37)."

Among other things, the stories of John P. Campbell and the Presbytery of Charleston illustrate that by the beginning of the nineteenth century many Presbyterians were moving away from the exclusive use of psalms during corporate worship. Whether this was a result of the ruling body's consistent claim that all orthodox psalms were permissible is unclear. But what is clear is that the Presbyterians embraced hymns and spiritual songs in their churches with the same spirit that had shaped their psalmody. As Jonathan Freeman told the Hudson Presbytery in September of 1801, Christians must "sing unto the Lord a *new song* ([25], p. 9)." The minister was quick to note that he did not wish to abolish the psalms, because they were "in a remote sense, *the word of Christ*." However, Freeman argued that Christians should also "celebrate the praises of God in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs which are derived from the gospel of Christ." It only made sense, Freeman contended, "We preach Christ crucified, we pray in his name, and Christ should be the theme of our spiritual songs ([25], pp. 5, 16)." No element of public worship was to exclude Christ.

Although he was convinced that his fellow Presbyterians needed to seriously consider adopting both the psalms and hymns of Dr. Watts, he did not assume the solution would be best for all Christians. Keeping with the Presbyterian traditions of interdenominationalism, Christian edification, and Christian liberty, he told the ruling body, "We have no authority to meddle with any church out of our own bounds. They have a right to adopt any version they judge expedient. And if every denomination of Christians would pursue this line of conduct, there would not be so many disputes, and divisions among the professed disciples of Christ ([25], p. 26)." Strikingly similar to the language used by synods and assemblies past, Freeman reveals the continued embodiment of those beliefs. To that end, he hoped that his audience, both reading and listening, would not "be led, by the inchanted chord of implicit faith, to embrace what I have advanced upon this subject." Instead, he called them to challenge his opinion and "if other Christians differ, in judgment from me, I have no objection. Let every one act agreeably to scripture, and the dictates of an enlightened, unprejudiced, and good conscience." His sermon, he concluded, was offered for the same reason he suggested a more robust system of worship songs, "to promote his [Christ's] glory and spiritual kingdom ([25], p. 30)."

In 1802, the Presbyterian General Assembly adopted a system of psalmody and hymnody edited and revised by the Congregationalist Timothy Dwight ([15], p. 182). This interdenominational venture combined the psalms of Dr. Watts with those of Dwight and even included hymns collected from the various corners of Christendom which were written by those who appreciated "the sacred magic of sound." Although this decision was warmly welcomed by Presbyterians such as Freeman, Campbell and Occom, and it resembled the efforts made by the more democratically oriented churches in their midst, it should not be viewed as a moment of transformation for the Presbyterian Church into the ranks of the "religious newcomers." Recent scholarship has correctly contended that the Presbyterians were not enticed by experimentations with egalitarianism, and as a result the "sectarian" category does not fit the church well. The same is true for the traditional "establishmentarian" grouping as the Presbyterian story is more complex than that of a reactionary hegemonic power desperate to maintain control. Relying on the arguments of contemporary theologians,

a fresh examination of the Presbyterian experience with psalmody and hymnody reveals a more nuanced Christianity that embraced both spirituality and theological integrity. The subsequent view of eighteenth-century American Presbyterians is one of Christians nurturing their faith through singing, struggling to strengthen the bonds between denominations, respecting Christian liberty in and outside of their church, and preserving orthodoxy. For the Presbyterians, at least, this story illustrates that the familiar historical "establishmentarian/sectarian" model will not suffice, and it strongly suggests a re-examination of the paradigm altogether.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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“There Is a Higher Height in the Lord”: Music, Worship, and Communication with God

Therese Smith

Abstract: Music is so vital in the services of African American Baptist churches that there are few moments in the service when music—either congregational or choral singing, or instrumental music of some sort—is not being performed. Sustained as an auditory or imagined presence, music acts almost as a timbral membrane for the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the service. The Holy Spirit is physically manifested (inspiration by the Holy Spirit) in the church membership, predominantly (if not exclusively) in a musical context. In order to ground the general in the particular, I will give detailed consideration to two musical instances or events from the Sunday morning service at Clear Creek Missionary Baptist Church on 4 November 2012, contextualising those within a broader context.

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1. Introduction

Music is vital in the services of African American Baptist churches. There are few moments in the service when music—either congregational or choral singing, or instrumental music of some sort—is not being performed; in fact, especially in southern churches, the whole service may be underpinned by a coherent tonal system (often, but not exclusively, predicated on 3rd and 5th relations of closely related tonal centres). Much of the “impromptu” music within a service—chanted prayers, lined hymns, or “called up” hymns, for example—is spontaneously introduced by a member of the congregation, one of the deacons, or a minister. Yet even when such music follows a relatively extended period devoid of any music, its tonal centre is not arbitrary, but is generally closely related to the preceding music. Thus one can argue, as I do here, when music is sustained in this way as an auditory or imagined presence, it functions as almost a timbral membrane for the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the service. While this is not necessarily the case in all, or even most, African American churches, it is the case at Clear Creek Missionary Baptist Church (hereafter M.B.C.) in Mississippi, the community where I conducted my most intensive fieldwork in the 1980s and early 1990s, and to which I returned in the 2010s. It was also the case at services of the Tallahatchie-Oxford Missionary Baptist (hereafter T.O.M.B.) District Association in the 1980s and 1990s, when some twenty or so local churches came together on fifth Sundays. At the time, many of these small local churches had only part-time pastors (engaged for first and third Sundays, or alternately, second and fourth Sundays), and so lacked a pastor for the infrequent fifth Sundays in a month which occur about three or four times per year, depending on how the Sundays fall in a given calendar year. Thus the T.O.M.B. District Association churches would meet for services at the large Project Centre on the outskirts of Oxford, on the fifth Sundays.

2. Clear Creek M.B.C

Clear Creek M.B.C. is, in many ways, a typical, Southern, African American, fundamentalist and evangelical church. While not all members of Clear Creek M.B.C. would embrace the labels fundamentalist and evangelical, they stress that they believe in Biblical inerrancy, and that they are an evangelical church. It is worth stating, however, that as Southern historian Charles Reagan Wilson has remarked "Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism are two quite distinct categories, although believers frequently hold both concepts. […] Evangelicals and Fundamentalists in the South share the belief that right behavior is essential to 'being religious'" ([1], p. 9). If fundamentalism is, therefore, frequently defined as militantly anti-modernist Protestantism, this is not how these congregations define it, and it is within the context of their definitions that I situate explication here.

Embedded in the seemingly simple identification of Clear Creek outlined in the previous paragraph (as typical, Southern, African American, fundamentalist and evangelical), is a plethora of historically documented facts, statistics, and assumptions, ranging from definitions of the nature of Southern religion—meaning "of the American South"—to the statistical and numerical supremacy of the (several) Baptist denominations, to assumptions about what constitutes a "typical" African American church. Each of these labels must be examined as they simultaneously delineate identities and resonate with the social and cultural spaces that surround them.

3. African American Christianity

While it is true that African American Christianity has its origins in the Christianity of the colonists, this is not to say that African American Christianity or religious expression is but an imitation of what might be termed Anglo American antecedents or counterparts. As explored by Black theologians in the 1960s and 1970s in particular [2–5][1], African American Christianity is itself a unique expression, developed by the slaves and carried by their descendants into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The musical expressions that African Americans used to encode and express that interpretation of the Christian message were similarly reinterpreted to encapsulate a comprehension and elucidation of life that is uniquely African American.

I have chosen Christianity as the religion of study for the reasons stated above, but also because, as a consequence of distinct cultural and historical configurations, it is the religion where the exegesis of cultural transfer and reinterpretation is most concretely documented [6,7], and because the majority of contemporary African Americans who profess affiliation with an organised religion nominate Christianity. Similarly, I have chosen the Baptist church as the specific locus of study because it was one of the foremost denominations in the evangelisation of the slaves and their descendants, and because it holds today the largest African American membership of any Christian denomination [8–11]. In order to ground the discussion in the particular, rather than confine it to generalities, I will refer to my field recordings of services from fieldwork that I conducted in such churches in Mississippi in the 1980s and 1990s ([12], pp. 169–205), and re-contextualise these with

[1] This is not, of course, to imply that Black theological production has attenuated since that time but, simply, that in terms of academic scholarship, this was a new departure that had particular impact in the 1960s and 1970s.

field recordings from my fieldwork in 2012. Comparison over time is, of course, an intriguing possibility in this instance but, as I have explored the earlier services quite extensively in my 2004 monograph [12], the reader is referred there (and to the accompanying CD) for detail about those. For this article, therefore, I will ground discussion in 2012.

A number of critically important factors confound fruitful comparison in this article across the decades. Most critically, perhaps, Clear Creek M.B.C. has a new, full-time, and very different pastor (see heading 7 for more detail on this). Similarly, while some key officers of the church have remained, others (Deacon Lee Earl Robinson, and Deacon Sam Jones, for example) have moved on. Both the church membership and the church building have increased roughly fourfold in size, so that this is no longer the small, primarily familial church it once was, but a large evangelical church. It is still true, however, that when I attended service in 2012, I and the couple with whom I was staying (who graciously offered to drive me out to service, as I no longer have a valid American driver's licence) were the only white people in attendance. The "parent" Clear Creek Southern Baptist Church (organised 12 August 1834 by settlers from Virginia and the Carolinas) from which the African American population split in 1877, is but a few hundred yards up the road from Clear Creek M.B.C., and maintains a white congregation (see heading 7, below, for further detail).

4. The American South

The American South (and most particularly the states of the Deep South) is a deeply religious, and more specifically Protestant, domain. Nine out of ten Southerners identify themselves as Christian, Protestant specifically, (only six out of ten non-Southerners, by contrast, thus identify themselves) and more than half of those as Baptist ([1], p.13). But if Southerners identify themselves as primarily Christian, that Christianity is fractured more along racial than along denominational lines. As Charles Reagan Wilson has remarked:

> Sunday morning […] still is the most segregated time in the South. Blacks attend separate churches from whites—the National Baptist convention, not the Southern Baptist Convention; the African Methodist Episcopal Church, not the United Methodist Church; the Church of God in Christ, not the Church of God. Black churches are historic, deeply rooted in a separate black religious tradition ([1], p. 11).

Or, as David Wills has remarked: "The gap between the races […] remains one of the foundational realities of our national religious life […] one of the crucial, central themes in the religious history of the United States" ([13], p. 20). Thus, as soon as we approach the religious arena, we are confronted with contested space, for there is not simply the separation between secular and sacred space but, particularly amongst Baptist congregations, racially designated space.

5. African American Church Congregations

I have stated that Clear Creek M.B.C. is, in many ways, a typical, Southern, African American church, but what constitutes a typical, African American church of this nature is, of course, an even more complex issue (for more detailed discussion of this topic see [12], pp. 29–31). The depiction of the Black church as a monolith that emerged from the literature of Black theology of the 1960s and

1970s, (for a variety of core readings on this topic, see [14]) was challenged in the 1990s especially, by scholars of African American religion such as Milton J. Sernett [4], Hans A. Baer and Merrill Singer [5,6], scholars who sought to stress the variety of the African American religious experience. There persists, nonetheless, amongst both academics and local congregations, an acute awareness of momentous differences between black and white worship styles [7–10]. Moreover, Baptist congregations (which comprise the largest numbers of African American Christians in the United States) tend, probably more than any other non-racially designated denomination, to constitute themselves almost exclusively along racial lines.[2]

It remains to be emphasised, moreover, that Baptist associations or conventions are themselves constituted along racial lines: thus, the Southern Baptist Convention consists almost exclusively of white congregations, whereas the two National Baptist Conventions (Incorporated and Unincorporated) consist almost exclusively of black congregations.[3] As the first formal organizations where black people could congregate freely and exert some control over their lives, black churches have historically maintained their separateness from white churches. In the tradition of Richard Allen (1760–1831), who famously walked out of the St. George Methodist Episcopal Church in Philadelphia, PA in 1792, and established the first Black independent church—the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church—so the members of Clear Creek M.B.C. split with their parent Clear Creek Southern Baptist church in 1877.

6. The Religious Context: The African American Baptist Service

Because I have given detailed consideration to the typical structure of African American Baptist church services as manifest at Clear Creek M.B.C. elsewhere ([12], pp. 61–84), a brief summary will suffice here. Typically a Sunday morning service at an African American Baptist church, the main service of the week (some churches also hold Sunday evening services but, in my experience, these are not generally as well attended), begins at about 11 a.m., and has an expected duration of between

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[2] The Baptists were the most successful denomination in converting slaves to Christianity for a variety of reasons, but not least their early evangelical efforts, and the Baptist emphasis on congregational autonomy, which had tremendous appeal for oppressed African Americans. From about 1700, it is clear that many slaveholders in the South were organising (or at least tolerating) religious instruction and places of worship for the slaves. The first specifically Black Baptist church in America was organized at Silver Bluff, across the Savannah River from Augusta, Georgia, in 1773, and other churches soon followed, most of them Baptist or Methodist. The Providence Baptist Association of Ohio, the first black Baptist group, was formed in 1836, followed by the first attempt at national organization in 1880 with the creation of the Foreign Mission Baptist Convention at Montgomery, Alabama. The American National Baptist Convention was organized in St. Louis, Missouri in 1886, the Baptist National Educational Convention was founded in the District of Columbia in 1893. All three conventions were merged into the National Baptist Convention of America in Atlanta in 1895 ([10], pp. 43–44).

[3] In 1915 the National Baptist Convention of America split into two (still separate) conventions: the National Baptist Convention of America "unincorporated" *i.e.*, not under the laws of the District of Columbia), and the National Baptist Convention of the U.S.A., Inc., "incorporated" ([10], pp. 43–44). Of the more than twenty pages devoted to a (very brief) history of the Baptists, and description of the various Baptist associations and conventions in this text, a single two-page section is headed "Black Baptists".

ninety minutes and two to three hours[4]. Churches generally print up (or buy in) bulletins that give some information on the church, details of the pastor, church officers, weekly schedule of services, the Church Covenant (perhaps) and an anticipated order of the particular service. The service may include, or be preceded by, the Devotion, which is usually led by the deacons and consists of alternating spontaneous prayers and songs. A “Call to Worship” and “Benediction” generally frame the service, and formal structures such as “Announcements”, “Recognition of Visitors”, and the “Sick and Prayer list”, designated choral numbers (as opposed to congregational singing), the sermon, and the “Invitation to Christian Discipleship” are rarely moved (as to sequence or order), but what transpires in between those structures is largely responsible for the elasticity of the service. There is, as might be expected, considerable variation in the duration of the sermon from one service to the next, even at the same church. This sense of flexibility is to be desired and cherished, as it reflects receptivity to the influence of the Holy Spirit, and a permeability that allows for the physical manifestation of the Spirit in the service. Traditional African American Baptists have explained to me that the time allotted to service is thus elastic, because what is important is that one be open to the working of the Holy Spirit, whereas trying to control the duration of the service would be contrary to this.

7. A Brief Recent Overview of Clear Creek M.B.C

When I conducted fieldwork in Mississippi in the 1980s and early 1990s, Clear Creek M.B.C. in northern Mississippi, had a part-time pastor—the Rev. Grady McKinney (1971–1991)—which would have been quite usual in this area of Mississippi, and the church had a small, largely familial membership of about 180. In the last decade or so, however, Oxford, and as a consequence the surrounding satellite communities (of which Clear Creek is one) have experienced significant economic growth and prosperity. Four-lane highways have been constructed for the first time in this part of northern Mississippi, and this has, naturally, greatly influenced both mobility and trade. Where the population in 1990 was about 10,000, today it is closer to 40,000, roughly 17,000 of those associated with the University of Mississippi. The demography of the area has similarly changed. Whereas in 1990 I recall there being one Mexican restaurant (but little else in terms of “international” cuisine), when I visited in November 2012 there were three Japanese restaurants, one Indian restaurant, one Middle-Eastern restaurant, two Thai restaurants, a Portuguese bakery, countless numbers of other Asian restaurants, both Chinese and Malaysian, and of course, many Mexican restaurants. Both to accommodate and as a result of these developments, many new housing subdivisions have been built in outlying areas, some modest, others very extravagant (with some of these latter inevitably suffering as a result of the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States).

Thus, not only the pastor, but the congregation at Clear Creek M.B.C. has changed considerably, drawing in a more diverse (but still African American) population, Yet even prior to the economic

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[4] Whilst broad generalisations like this are always problematic, I base these observations on 10 years of living and conducting fieldwork in the United States (1981–1991), generally attending church services weekly, and on sporadic visits since then, most recently to Atlanta, GA (April 2012) and Clear Creek/Oxford, MS (November 2012). Most of my research was conducted in Kentucky, Mississippi, and Rhode Island, but I also attended at least occasional services at African American Baptist churches in California, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maine (rather rare here), New York, and Pennsylvania.

prosperity and gentrification that came to the South in the late 1990s and early 2000s (perhaps latterly to Mississippi), a South that has also suffered from the sub-prime mortgage crisis that threatened to derail the American economy, many of the key musicians from my earlier fieldwork had already moved away from Mississippi in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Mississippi is, of course, historically the most economically deprived state in the Union, and these musicians migrated in search of (better) jobs, typically to the expanding urban metropolis that is Atlanta, Georgia.

Clear Creek M.B.C. has also been transformed. The church now has a full-time pastor—Eddie D. Goliday, Sr., (May 1998–present)—which has resulted in many more weekly church activities. The membership has grown to about 800, and a new sanctuary (roughly four times the size of the previous one) was built in 2002 (see Figure 1a,b). Note the phenomenal difference in terms of size between the two church buildings, not just in terms of mass, but in height and physical presence upon the landscape. In contrast to the relatively low profile of the older building, the new building soars skywards, with an imposing entrance enclosed in a brick tower, which is itself topped by a multi-tiered white spire.

(**a**)

Clear Creek's Sanctuary today: note Baptism
pond (centre) and video screens (right and le

(**b**)

Figure 1. (**a**) The Clear Creek M.B.C. Building, November 2012 (previous building to the left, portion of newer building on the right; (**b**) The Clear Creek M.B.C. Sanctuary, November 2012.

The new sanctuary contains a Baptismal pool with a glass front set relatively high into the wall of the church behind the podium (much like the one that I described for Main Street Baptist church in Kentucky ([12], p. 53), so that the membership no longer has to travel to a local outdoor pond during the summer months to conduct Baptism, but can do so any time. Along with an increase in the size of the Clear Creek M.B.C. church sanctuary in 2002, has come a need for increased technology: a new PA system, and two large video screens installed on the wall behind the choir stalls (so that members far removed from the performers at the front of the church, can see those individuals, and read key texts that are projected onto the screens).

A bus was purchased to transport members in need of it to church events (see Figure 2).

Clear Creek's M.B. C.'s new bus

Figure 2. The Clear Creek M.B.C.bus, November 2012.

The church has a website, email contact, and a radio ministry (WOXD FM 95.5 each Sunday 4:00–5:00 p.m.), and recordings (both CD and DVD) are made of each service and may be purchased from a designated deacon. Because the physical distance within the church sanctuary is now so much greater, close ups of individual "actors"—prayer leaders, soloists, preachers, deacons—are projected onto two large video screens, as are such things as relevant quotations from the Bible. While the word "actors" and by correlation "audience" sits uneasily in this context, I use it advisedly in the sense of an individual committing an action, as opposed to implying any sort of make believe. In this regard, see ([15], pp. 2–3).

Despite all of these material changes, Sunday services at Clear Creek M.B.C. continue to be traditional and Spirit-filled. Rev. Goliday, Sr., is a powerful preacher, and the music ministry continues to be strong. One significant musical change is that a drum set has now been officially installed close to the other instruments (generally electric keyboard and acoustic piano): previously, partly because of the drum's close association with blues and "Devil's music", drums made only occasional appearances at Clear Creek M.B.C. (generally when other visiting churches brought them to accompany their music), and several members then expressed reservations about them to me.

8. Music in Clear Creek M.B.C Services

As stated in the introduction, music is so vital in the services of African American Baptist churches that there are few moments in the service when some sort of music is not being performed

and, especially in southern churches, the whole service may be underpinned by a coherent tonal system. At Clear Creek M.B.C., this is particularly true. Sustained as an auditory or imagined presence, music acts almost as a timbral membrane for the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the service (for more discrete explication of how church members view inspiration by the Holy Spirit, see ([12], pp. 111–40). The Holy Spirit is physically manifested (inspiration by the Holy Spirit) in the church membership predominantly (if not exclusively) in my experience, in a musical context. Thus music, in all of its various manifestations in a typical service—lined hymns, chanted prayers, congregational song, choral numbers, spirituals, Gospel pieces—facilitates the inter-penetration of the sacred into the secular, the divine into the profane. In some cases, this inspiration by the Holy Spirit may result in holy dance, or trance (this is more common among congregants, as opposed to individuals with designated roles—although I have seen deacons become inspired—and may appear to the uninitiated to be out of control). As Rev. McKinney explained it to me: "It's just something explode on the inside, and if a person haven't been born again, they wonder what is wrong with you" [16]. In the case of the preacher (or indeed musicians), control is more likely to remain with the individual: the preacher lends his voice to the Holy Spirit, who preaches through him, often in remarkably beautiful poetic and musical chant (for some examples, see [12], pp. 132–40, 194–204; [17], tracks 5, 7, 8, 9).

For the remainder of this article I would like to consider two musical instances or events from the Sunday morning service at Clear Creek M.B.C. on 4 November 2012.

9. Clear Creek M.B.C Morning Worship Service, 4 November 2012 [18]

With the slight exception of an earlier start—10:45 a.m., as opposed to 11 a.m., as it used to be—this service proceeded as previous ones that I had experienced. As this was a first Sunday, the service was also a Holy Communion day. The service began with a song and prayer sequence, listed in the bulletin as "Call to Order and Invocation, Pulpit Ministry". Intended to prepare the congregation for a Spirit-filled service, this sequence opened, as might be expected, with congregational singing of a favourite Baptist hymn, "Oh, How I Love Jesus". Led by Pastor Goliday, and performed in a swinging compound duple meter, 6/8 (with most people also swaying to the beat as is expected in holistic worship), all present—choir members, deacons, mothers of the church, the mission ministry and the pulpit ministry, as well as the entire congregation—joined in the singing, thus uniting everyone in a single "voice" as it were, reinforcing community and generating prayerful participation and integration from the outset. The lyrics of the song (see below), as well as the rather simple, limited-range melody, in combination with the primary colour, diatonic harmonies, and joyful and inclusive manner of performance, created a feeling of wellbeing and transported those present to the liminal, sacred space of worship. The alliance of text, music (the song was accompanied by drum set, tambourine, and piano), and central tenets of belief—the power of "the Word", the invocation of Jesus' name, and the assertion of His love—prepared those present to experience the encounter with the divine in a way that the absence of this type of musical performance could not, I would argue, achieve. Vocal music is recognised by the church membership and musicians alike as being uniquely powerful.

Lyrics to song “Oh, How I Love Jesus”

Verse

There is a name I love to hear

I love to sing its worth

It sounds like music in my ear

The sweetest name on earth

Chorus

Oh, how I love Jesus

Oh, how I love Jesus

Oh, how I love Jesus

Because He first loved me.

This song was followed by an improvised prayer from Pastor Goliday. Key phrases in his prayer continued the theme of implied thanks articulated in the preceding song (“Because He first loved me”)—“Father, we thank You Lord, for all the blessings you have bestowed upon us”—and preparation for prayerful worship—“Now Lord, as we go into this service, I pray that you cleanse our hearts and our minds, that everything we say, do, sing, pray or think, be directed toward You”. Reverting to communal participation, everybody then recited the Lord’s Prayer in unison, at the conclusion of which Rev. Goliday remarked, “Let us all open our minds and our mouth and let us praise the Lord. Bless us choir!” This latter comment highlights the role of music for this congregation. Now moving from full congregational participation to more formal performance (that also limited participation), Rev. Goliday instructed the choir not simply to sing, but to “bless us”. (It must be noted, however, that congregational participation in the form of hand clapping, exclamations, and other indications of approval, is very much expected in this context). The Clear Creek Choir Ministry responded with an upbeat Gospel piece—“Way Maker”—and thus this opening sequence, framed by music, and alternating individual or limited performance with communal performance, led into the Announcements, Devotion, and the heart of the service. Although seemingly simple, this carefully crafted sequence allowed for prayer, song, and music; improvised individual performance; congregational performances; and also more formal choral ones. In this opening sequence, then, music both frames the experience of worship, and facilitates the transition from the profane to the sacred.

The second event that I would like to consider from this service is the sermon, or “The Spoken Word” as it was listed in the church bulletin. I have chosen this second “event” not only because it is the central event in the service and thus provides a counterbalance to the initiatory nature of the

sequence just examined, but also because the sermon is central to the African American Baptist service. It is in the sermon, the fulcrum of the service, that unification with the divine is most to be expected.

10. The Text-and-Context Sermon

The text-and-context sermon remains today at the heart of traditional worship in the African American Baptist Church[5]. This genre, particularly when it moves into chant or song, is associated with a style of worship that is most often referred to as "traditional", if the speaker is from a Southern or a Southern-oriented church (*i.e.*, a church that has drawn its membership from the South, and that maintains many of the traditions of the South—the late Rev. C. L. Franklin's church in Detroit, Michigan, would be a very good example of this), or as "down-home" if the speaker is Northern. This is not, of course, to imply that all churches in the South maintain this tradition (or indeed other "down-home" traditions), yet the chanted text-and-context sermon is most common in the Deep South. Particularly when the sermon moves to chant, it is most often associated with churches that are generally also at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum, *i.e.*, those churches that have been least influenced by the dominant culture. As Roger Abrahams has remarked (although his terminology is by now somewhat dated):

> The more middle-class a black community becomes, the more its observances tend to conform to white norms (because it is whites who dictate the middle-class forms of behaviour). However, when dealing with features of lower-class or peasant behaviour [...] the manner of performance, especially of interactional expectations, is more characteristic of African performance practices. ([19], p. 33).

All evidence points to the fact that the text-and-context sermon structure, which is so favoured by African American Baptist preachers[6], was brought by the colonists to the New World, where slaves were exposed to it. Here slaves adapted and reinterpreted the style, creating a uniquely African American version of what had been a primarily English cultural form. As Jeff Titon has remarked, "It may be that the sung sermon is the result of black Americans' African-based transformation of the chanted Baptist prayers and exhortations. This would clearly seem to be the case as regards the black Baptist tradition of sung and chanted prayers and sermons" ([19], p. 309). This style of sermon has received considerable scholarly attention, from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and from early accounts (Brown 1880, quoted in [20], p. 190) to later and more comprehensive studies [19,21,22]. My

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[5] It is misleading, perhaps, to imagine a homogeneous African American Baptist church (as previously explored), as Baptist churches are singularly independent and many choose not even to affiliate formally with a national organisation. Nonetheless, most African American Baptist churches share basic aspects of belief and practice.

[6] For a discussion of such sermons by a variety of preachers see, for example, [20–25], or for earlier recorded examples from Clear Creek M.B.C., see the CD accompanying [12]. It is also, of course, true that a large number of such sermons (some chanted, some not, but totalling some seven hundred) were released on "race records" between 1925 and 1941, there are also the famous recordings of the Rev. C.L. Franklin. In addition, some labels continue to release recordings of sermons by more contemporary preachers. These find a ready audience in many African American communities, and specifically dedicated African American Gospel programs continue to broadcast them.

monograph [12] concentrated analysis on field recordings I made primarily in Mississippi and Kentucky in the 1980s and 1990s, and the reader is referred to this for more general context, as well as a more detailed consideration of the structure and development of this type of sermon. In the confines of this article, however, I would like to return to the central church community explored in that monograph—Clear Creek M. B. C.—and examine my most recent recording of a sermon there in the service under discussion, on Sunday, 4 November 2012.

While the entirety of the worship service can be interpreted as a liminal period (as defined by Van Gennep [26]), *i.e.*, a time of suspension from the profane time of everyday life into the sacred time of worship, the sermon is undeniably at the heart of this sacred time. Everything that precedes the sermon (routine announcements aside) is designed to prepare the congregation for the sermon.

Rev Goliday's sermon on Sunday, 4 November 2014, was, as is customary, preceded by a song of praise (although choral as opposed to congregational, as it had always been in my previous experience) and followed by the "Invitation to Christian Discipleship". Pastor Goliday took his place at the podium and requested that the congregation read with him "from the screen"—this admonition was repeated twice as many members (and indeed deacons) instinctively turned to their Bibles—his text, which was from Psalms 22, verses 12 through 16[7]. It is worth emphasising, perhaps, that almost all church members have a personal copy of the Bible which they bring to church every week. Given this (and other) congregation's emphasis upon the inerrancy of the Bible, the unchallengeable veracity of "the Word", as well as the fact that Bibles may be handed down through the generations, inscribed with details of family births, marriages, and deaths, the sheer physicality of the Bible, holding God's Word in one's hand rather than seeing it projected onto a screen, is a religious experience of an entirely different nature. In this particular instance, technology, while reducing physical distance (by bringing the large text on the screen into visibility at the back of the sanctuary), also creates distance (by removing the text from the close proximity of hand-held Bibles, to a distant projection on a large screen).

> Many bulls have surrounded me,
>
> Strong bulls like Bashan have encircled me,
>
> They gape at me with their mouth, like a raging and roaring lion.
>
> I am poured out like water
>
> And my bones are out of joint.
>
> My heart is like wax, it has melted within me.
>
> My strength is dried up, like a pot shard

[7] Two large video screens were added on either side of the Baptismal Pool when the new church sanctuary was constructed in 2002. Because of the vastly increased size of the new sanctuary, the distance between the actors and the congregation had increased to such an extent that the screens were deemed necessary in order to integrate the congregation with the actors.

And my tongue cleaves to my jaws.

You have brought me to the dust of death.

For dogs have surrounded me.

The congregation of the wicked has encircled me

They pierced my hands and my feet. [18]. [8]

From this reading, Rev. Goliday then announced his theme: "for a very short time today I would like to talk about 'Surrounded by bulls and dogs'," and the congregation responded appropriately with verbal statements of encouragement and agreement. Then, before proceeding with his sermon, he announced that he had been asked by a member who was hospitalised to sing "I'm So Tired Lord, My Soul Need Resting". This performance revealed him to be a fine singer: his rendition was largely unmetered and melismatic for the verse, and more metered and less embellished for the chorus, and provoked considerable positive response from the congregation. After applause and several congregational "Amens" and good wishes to his hospitalised parishioner, Rev. Goliday returned to his sermon.

As is typical of the text-and-context sermon, Rev. Goliday, reiterated his theme—"Surrounded by bulls and dogs"—contextualised it within the Bible and Psalms—"this is David prophesying about the crucifixion in a psalm that begins 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'"—and proceeded to contextualise it in the lives of the church members. This correlates to the "weighted-secular" factor which Davis describes ([19], pp. 61–64) and which I have also described ([12], pp. 187–90), *i.e.*, an emphasis on the worldly as opposed to the otherworldly. Moving into the body of his sermon, he stated in unmetered prose [18]:

> All of us have folk in our families and in our circles, that doesn't [sic] mean us any good. An' I don't care what church you belong to, an' I don't care what denomination you belong to, there are goin' to be some folk in the congregation and in the denomination that doesn't mean you any good. So if you jump up and run trying to leave trouble, when you get where you goin', you goin' to find trouble there. That's why Paul said "every time I desire to do good, evil is always present with me". Sometime evil just follow you around. And if you're not careful, sometime evil may even be in your own heart.

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[8] While the psalm verses appeared as I have printed them on the video screens, below is how they appear in the King James Bible, which is the version that the Clear Creek membership has used since I have known them. Psalms 22, verses 12–16: 12 Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bāshan have beset me round; 13 They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion; 14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels; 15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death; 16 For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.

In the tradition of Rev. Grady McKinney, Rev. Goliday continues to "tell it like it is". Gradually, his prose became more metered and measured and he began to spin anaphoric sequences such as the following [18]:

> You have to be careful how you judge other folk
>
> You have to be careful how you look at other folk
>
> You have to be careful what you say about other folk
>
> You do know that as you sow, so shall you reap, don't you?
>
> You gotta give some of this back
>
> Oh Lord, have mercy, I'm gettin' excited [response, "Come on pastor!"], but I'm just goin' to talk a little bit.

These anaphoric sequences serve both a rhetorical poetic and an aesthetic function, particularly as articulated in relatively metered prose, but they also, of course, serve a practical purpose. In a tradition where the preacher has no printed text, where the sermon is spontaneous, the repetition (identical or varied) of the beginning of the phrase allows the preacher time to formulate the phrase's ending. A few moments later Rev. Goliday began another such sequence, but this time adding at its end the common admonition "You don't hear me!" designed to elicit greater response from the congregation, for this is an antiphonal tradition where the verbal interaction between preacher and congregants is critical.

> David was surrounded by folk,
>
> David was surrounded by folk,
>
> And I talkin' about church folk,
>
> That didn't mean him any good.
>
> You don't hear me! [18].

And for much of the sermon he continued this alternation between metered and unmetered, poetry and prose, returning regularly to a reiteration of his theme. The following is typical from about mid-way through his sermon [18]:

> What makes you think that because you in church nothing bad's gonna happen there?
>
> But it has always happened in God's congregation.

> You all don't hear what I'm sayin'!
>
> And so what make you think in this wicked society that we live in, we are not goin' to have some bulls and some dogs gathered around us?
>
> You don't hear what I'm sayin'!
>
> See, see you got to understand the mentality of a bull.
>
> A bull is a strong animal.
>
> An' a bull can just about bully his way
>
> You know what a bully is, don't you?
>
> A bull can just bully you around.
>
> An' I grew up on a farm, and there was a big, black Bremer bull, that if you got out there too far, he was gonna come after you because it was his territory. And sometime church folk feel like this is their territory, and they don't just necessarily want you in their territory. They will get after you.
>
> Lord, let me hush.
>
> Oooh!
>
> I'm just gonna stand here awhile.

Intermittently, as is also typical, Rev. Goliday added in personal comments to individual members of the congregation, thereby both giving individuals a sense of personal investment in the sermon, and also keeping his congregants "on their toes", as it were.

> Hush now, Brunel, I'm talkin'.
>
> You and Eulastine now here carrying on a conversation.
>
> We just havin' fun: I love 'em both and I think they love me [18].

Rev. Goliday was by now (he had been preaching for about fifteen minutes) heading towards the climax of his sermon [18].

> We are caught up in a society where folk will go to church and they will lift up holy hand, and they will sing and they'll shout, an' they'll pray, an' they'll preach and they'll holler "Halleluia!", and before they out the door they lyin' on somebody.

Oh, y'all don't hear what I'm sayin'.

An' talkin' about somebody, and you think, you wonder when they supposed to be church folk , well if you go talkin' about what they did to you, you doin' the same thing they did.

So some way, if God start disciplining folk, He gonna have to discipline you too! Just because you are tellin' the truth, don't mean it's right for you to spread it. Because you could cause somebody else to stumble.

Because somebody gonna look at you and say "well if you not goin' back, I'm not goin' back either."

And the Lord said, "Woe be unto you that cause the least of these, my little ones, to stumble."

Surrounded by bulls and dogs.

See, see, see you have to be ready, Barbara.

Just because you want to treat folk nice, don't mean folk gonna treat you nice.

Just because you showing respect don't mean that everybody goin' respect you!

But how you act isn't predicated on how somebody treated you

Your salvation is your salvation alone.

Your personality is your personality.

You've one soul to take care of.

And that's yours.

The congregation was by now responding to every line the preacher delivered, and while Rev. Goliday was speaking in heightened speech, he was not establishing an intoning note, nor was he showing indications of moving towards chant. Significantly also, none of the musicians or congregants was adding musical interjections, which I would have expected at this juncture of a sermon that would move into chant. Instead, Rev. Goliday moved to the latter portion of his theme—"Surrounded by bulls and dogs" [18].

And then you got dogs.

Ooh!

The wrong dogs is [sic] just nasty.

Dogs is just flat out nasty.

They'll vomit,

You know what the Scripture says.

An' they'll return to their vomit.

Now what that means is, they'll throw up, and they'll turn right back around and eat it up.

That's just flat out nasty.

You don't hear what I'm saying.

But not only are dogs nasty, dogs are greedy.

A dog will sit there, lay there with a belly-full

And can't eat any more

An' if you start up there, they'll growl at that stuff.

They don't want you to have any.

Well you got church folk who are greedy.

You don't hear what I'm sayin'.

You got church folk who are just downright nasty!

An' they're not nice to anybody.

Folk barkin' at you, "what you want?"

Lookin' all cross-eyed at you [makes a growling sound]

And then, I wondered, now David, how can you say that you are surrounded by bulls and dogs?

He said "I am surrounded, not just by bulls, but by *strong* bulls".

> And then, Deacon Thompson, I looked at that Word, and I broke it open, and I found out that when David was talkin' about bein' surrounded by bulls, he's prophesying Jesus's [sic] crucifixion.
>
> And think about who it were that Jesus was surrounded by.
>
> He was surrounded by the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem.
>
> It was not the Romans who were out there hollerin' "Crucify him!"
>
> It was the church folk!
>
> It's not the folk in the street that makes us act like we act up.
>
> It's us folk up in here that makes us act like that.
>
> See here we are trustees over God's property, and somehow it gets to be our church so much so until we run other folk away.
>
> Come on here somebody, I'm almost through.

This latter intimation ("I'm almost through") that many preachers use, is a common rhetorical device that functions to draw closer attention from the congregation because, to put it too simply perhaps, "the end is in sight".

> This is not your church.
>
> Jesus said "Upon this rock I build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
>
> An' even though you gonna catch some hell, he, the devil can't win.
>
> Ain't no point in you runnin', hell gonna follow you.
>
> But the devil can't win, all he can do is scare you.
>
> Jesus was surrounded by bulls.
>
> You're gonna be surrounded by bulls.
>
> Pere you gonna be surrounded by,
>
> An' if you ain't careful, there may even be some bulls in your family.

An’ if you’re not even more careful, you might even be the bull.

Y’all don’t hear what I’m sayin’.

Whoo! [18].

By now (about twenty minutes into the sermon), the congregation was interjecting chanted responses, and Rev. Goliday’s high-pitched “Whoo!”, was at least implying a tonal centre and intoning note. Yet he did not yet move towards either tonal recitation, or full-fledged chant. The central piece of the sermon, as so often, was Jesus’ crucifixion [18].

You know they were taunting Jesus.

They were sayin’ “if you are really are who you say you are, come down from the cross!”

Now see that’s why the Lord didn’t let either one of us die for other folk’s salvation

Or we would have came [sic.] down, slapped them up pretty good, went back up there and just died.

But no, He had to show humility more than I can stand.

Because I’m one, I’m a brother who would want to show you.

“What you mean?

Do you really think I can’t come down, I’ll show you.

I can come down!”

Y’all don’t hear what I’m sayin’.

You know we all like to show folk what we can do.

We might not be supposed to do it like that, but we will do it.

It’s human nature!

You just want folk to know, “no, I’m not scared.

What do you mean? I’ll come down here and slap fire from you!”

But Jesus stayed right there on that cross like He was supposed to.

An’ then they started sayin’ stuff like “Aw, he saved others,

But himself,

Whoo!

He can't save."

Wow, I'm just as happy as I can be!

Rather than choosing to dwell on Jesus' suffering, endurance and humility in this passage, Rev. Goliday by reiterating that he himself could not show such restraint ("I'll come down here and slap fire from you!"), both creates a series of vivid vignettes for his congregation, and identifies himself with the vagaries of human nature ("You know we all like to show folk what we can do"), thereby also reinforcing that he is a strong individual, and someone not to be "messed with", essential qualities for a successful leader.

Following on this passage, Rev. Goliday returned to the theme of dogs, more unmetered prose, and articulated some of the key vices that Christianity and this church community, in particular, abhor: having already touched on gluttony, he now warned the members against idleness, jealousy, and such obvious evils as gambling, before admonishing them that they should be grateful and thank God for what they already have. He then continued [18]:

By now they were taunting Jesus.

Gambling.

You know you got folk lookin' at what you got.

Gamblin' at the casino

Folk who won't properly apply what they have.

[…]

If you know God have been good to you

Your family and your friends that are not saved

Instead of telling them the bad things about Clear Creek, you should be telling them about the good things

An' when you get there [Clear Creek], instead of waiting for somebody to fire you up, you ought to be fired up for Jesus

Not worrying about who's looking at you

But you oughta be ready to lift up holy hand

Maybe you didn't have everything you thought you should have had

But God blessed you with something

And you ought to tell Him "Thank you"

Whoo!

At this juncture in his sermon, the Rev. Goliday began running around the platform on which the podium is elevated, thus signalling his excitement or almost ecstasy. The keyboard player joined in on the electric organ, and members of the congregation began to chant responses. By this point, the sermon had moved to that mysterious realm where believers hold that the Holy Spirit has taken command of the preacher's voice and is speaking through him[9]. Significantly, however, in contrast to his predecessor, Rev. Grady McKinney (see, in particular [12], pp. 197–204; [17], track 9), Rev, Goliday did not develop an elaborate sung structure. Certainly, his text became more personal and more metered, and he moved into heightened speech, but he did not develop any very elaborate melodic contours (and this I found somewhat surprising for such a confident singer). His interjected exclamation "Whoo!" was, from this point on, however always sung. He then continued [18]:

See I don't know about you, but sometime on Sunday morning I can't hardly stay in the bed

I'm sittin' there at my counter in the kitchen, an' I'm readin' and I'm prayin'

Just waitin' until daylight comes, so I can start getting' ready to get here

Cause I can praise God by myself,

But when I get where all of God's folk are,

An' I see lifted up hands,

An' I see tear-filled eyes,

An' I see hallelujas

---

9 There exists a wide variety of valuable writing on this area of belief, *i.e.*, that the Holy Spirit can be physically manifest in the Service, but detailed discussion of this literature is beyond the scope of this article. The reader is referred, however, to [23] for readings from a wide variety of perspectives and [24,25] and [27–29], referenced at the end of this article. For a variety of readings on African American church music and worship, the reader is additionally directed to [30], especially sections IV and VII.

Even though I'm goin' through what I'm goin' through

I know that everything is gonna be alright, because the God we serve is just good like that

He just good like that

And then when I look at my little ugly self, Caroline

An' I see how God still love me

I still make some mistakes, but He never cast me aside.

I'm gonna hush…

But He's been good to me

See I don't know what God have done for you Deborah, but He's been good to me.

Out of all of my mishaps

Whoo!

See if there's anyone here that thinks you're not good enough to be saved

Every now and then come talk to me

An' let me tell you my story,

Let me tell you where God brought me from

How God blessed me.

The door is open

This statement—"The door is open"—signalled that Rev. Goliday was effectively moving to the next "event" in the service, *i.e.*, the Invitation to Christian Discipleship" when all in attendance (but most especially sinners, or backsliders) are invited to come forward and embrace Jesus as their personal saviour, dedicating themselves to Him. It was, nonetheless, evident that Rev. Goliday was folding the sermon into the invitation to discipleship, eliding the separation between them and thus, as is not uncommon, building the climax of his sermon into the salvation of souls. Thus, he continued both preaching and exhorting [18]:

And if you can't think of anything else, you can say He died for me

He went in the grave for me

An’ three days later, He rose for me

He rose for you,

By yourself,

Just like you are

The door is open

The door is open

If there is one here

I don’t care what condition you are

See there is folk here

Who are tryin’ to wait ‘til they get their lives right

You don’t need to try to wait

You come to Jesus just like you are

God will accept you when it seem like there is no way

You come to Jesus just like you are

The door is open

God will love you when it seem like there is no love.

Come to Jesus

You remember that hymn, “Just Like I Am”?

The standard title for this hymn is “Just As I Am” and it features regularly in African American Baptist worship, emphasizing as it does the virtues of humility, obedience, a sense of one’s own wretchedness, and the salvation that is possible in the Lord. As I have remarked elsewhere ([12], pp. 131–32), preachers who do not move into full-fledged chant (but very well may move into heightened speech at the climax of their sermons) will generally introduce a religious song, particularly an old favourite, into the sermon. The song title may simply be mentioned, as here, or as

we will see later, it may actually be performed by the preacher (with the congregation joining in or not, depending on the occasion and spirit in the church) as part of the sermon. In either case, this introduction of music into the sermon almost inevitably draws further intensity from the congregation and may often result in some members of the congregation being inspired (possessed) by the Holy Spirit.

God wlll take you just like you are

Folk will make you think you not good enough

Folk will make you think you not ready yet

But God says, that's when God says "Come as you are"

He's not talkin' about your clothes

I know you a drunkard, but come on anyhow

I know you a smoke dope, but come on anyhow

I know you a big liar, but come on anyhow

"I know you a back biter", He said, "but come on in anyhow."

An' with the love of Jesus

Jesus get in your heart, all of those habits will start to dissipate [18].

As is clear from the preceding transcription, Rev. Goliday was still employing many of the structural characteristics of the chanted sermon: anaphoric sequences, repetition, personal mention, *etc.*, but he was also using "signal mode" for the "Invitation to Discipleship" by regular insertion of the phrase "the door is open". At this juncture also, he began to move, significantly, out of the sacred space that is the preaching locus of the podium, coming down from the elevated platform on which it is set, and gradually moving out into the sanctuary, exhorting and also physically embracing members of the congregation. While thus expanding, and yet democratizing the physical space that he inhabits, from elevated leadership role at the pulpit, lending his speech organs to the Holy Spirit who speaks through him; to the lowered, democratic space of the sanctuary, Rev. Goliday signalled his return, if not to the secular, certainly to the human realm, thereby transforming the space that he inhabits and aligning it with that of his church membership. His speech also began to wind down, becoming slower, with longer gaps between lines, and his language became more colloquial and personal.

The door is open

The door is open

Come to Jesus, just like you are

Sometime folk will make fun of you

They made fun of Jesus

Talkin' about Jesus, they made fun of Jesus

So it's no, it's no different

They gonna make fun of you

Some of your friends or your buddies, they gonna say

"Man, girl, I wouldn't have gone there"

Well, maybe not

But you remember, God, our God says

"If you will, then I will"

Sometime

And God is not gonna change His standard for us, but He will accept you just as you are.

Come to Jesus, just like you are.

No matter who you are, what your condition is,

Come to Jesus! [18].

At this point, one woman came forward to dedicate herself to Jesus (shepherded by one of the Mothers of the church), occasioning applause from the congregation and a break in the sermon. Rev. Goliday welcomed the woman in standard prose, before interjecting his sung "whoo!", and then launching into full-fledged song. This he performed in very elaborate, melismatic and unmetered song, further reinforcing the relationship between music and the presence or the invocation of the divine [18].

God bless you, we glad to have you

[Song]: "There is so much that the Lord have done for me,

[Spoken interjection] That's my personal testimony!

“When I was a sinner He set me free, Yes He did

All of my burdens, He helped me to bear

And all of my sorrow, He helped me to share

And I can’t pay the Lord, but oh-oh I can tell Him, “Thank yo’ Sir”

Through all of your sorrow you ought to tell the Lord

Whoo!

Thank yo’”

Following on the song, Rev. Goliday reverted to chant, and then to heightened speech as he referred back to his theme—surrounded (by bulls and dogs) [18].

I’m gonna hush, but God have been good to me

He been good to me

I’m only talkin’ about Goliday, but He been good to me

Surrounded [heightened speech], but God made me a promise

He said “I’ll never leave you, nor will I forsake you”.

So remember no matter what you goin’ through

The Holy Spirit, He’s right there with you through it all

Interestingly, at this juncture, where one might expect him to have called up the Andrae Crouch Gospel composition, “Through it All”, Rev. Goliday instead returned to normal speech, presumably having decided that it was time to end his sermon rather than launch into another climax.

Through it all, through it all

God bless you

May God keep you

God have been good to me

So you oughta know, no matter what you goin’ through

God is right there with you

There might be some things that you can't tell folk because they couldn't deal with it

But don't be ashamed to admit that God have brought about a change in your life

Don't ever be ashamed to admit that

Because we all need the Lord

Don't ever be ashamed to admit that

Amen

Amen [18].

Thus, having concluded his sermon, even while eliding it into the Invitation to Christian Discipleship, Rev. Goliday proceeded to an "unannounced" (but not unusual) section, *i.e.*, extending the "Right Hand of Fellowship" to a man and a woman who had requested to transfer their membership to Clear Creek M.B.C., and to the woman who had come forward during the sermon who requested that she be re-Baptised. Thereafter, the service concluded as might be expected, with the slight alteration that Rev. Goliday moved the Benediction from the end of the service to before the Ministry of Giving, and Offetory Prayer. This he did in order that those who might have to leave after Holy Communion would not thereby miss the Benediction.

11. Conclusions

The essential presence of music in African American religious services goes well beyond the desire for participation in joyous worship, as important as that may be. The intersection of the physical and spiritual worlds, facilitated by music, occurs almost exclusively in the context of music and, most clearly and generally, perhaps, in the chanted sermon In a tradition where the interaction of the Holy Spirit is expected, and where that interaction is facilitated by music, the constancy of a musical presence (as in the tonal consistency mentioned at the beginning of this article) mirrors, as it were, the breath of the Holy Spirit. Musical constancy calls forth and sustains the presence of the Holy Spirit. The musical and tonal system underpins the service, and allows for both spiritual insight (as explicated in the chanted sermon, in particular) and evocation of the divine.

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Abbreviations

M.B.C: Missionary Baptist Church;
T.O.M.B.: Tallahatchie-Oxford Missionary Baptist

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Elvis' Gospel Music: Between the Secular and the Spiritual?

Mark Duffett

Abstract: Do fans sanctify their heroes? In the past, I have argued that Elvis fandom is *not* a neo-religious practice but that attention to a modified version of Durkheim's theory of religion can, nevertheless, help to explain it as a form of social interaction. I take that argument further here, first by revealing the ethical and analytical advantages of neo-Durkheimian theory, then by pitting this theory against three aspects of Elvis' sincere engagement with gospel music. Elvis Presley won three Grammy awards for his gospel albums and was the musician who did most to bring the gospel quartet tradition to the mainstream. His eclectic personal ties to spirituality and religion have become a focus of debate within his fan culture. They offer a set of discursive resources through which to explain the emotional impact and social influence of his music. If star musicians are positioned as centres of attention, what happens when they use their privileged position in the spotlight to offer a "spiritual" message?

> I can understand that people have spiritual leanings and want to find a way to God. But there is only one way to God. Elvis never said, "I am the way, I am the light, I am the truth. And no man will ever come to God except if he comes through me." Elvis didn't say that. Jesus said it. Elvis is always going to be a special person in our lives because of what he did for our lives. But what he didn't offer was salvation. He did not offer a way back to God. Those of us who have successful lives, mostly if we have them, we have those lives successful because of what God has done for us through Jesus—nobody else… I trust Elvis as a man. He may have died in unhappy circumstances, but I'm sure inside he knew exactly who he was or perhaps more importantly who he wasn't…I don't want him tarnished. I have much more respect for Elvis than someone who might fall before him and worship him, because I don't think Elvis would have liked that.
>
> Cliff Richard [1].

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1. Introduction

Is music fandom a realm of spiritual practice? Do fans use their connections with heroes to adopt practices like veneration, sanctification or idolatry? While appearing to be magical and important social figures, stars are not necessarily deified. In the two decades since I started researching Elvis fandom, I have never met anyone who was "saved" or redeemed by Elvis Presley. On the other hand, I have met many fans that have been seduced, fascinated, empowered and inspired by his music. They all say that he has changed their lives for the better, but none expect heavenly rewards because of their fandom. I will begin my discussion by referring to comment that started this piece. It was

made by the British singer Cliff Richard, someone who remains both an avid Elvis fan and dedicated Christian. His description of Elvis as someone who "is always going to be a special person in our lives *because of what he did for our lives*" (emphasis mine) expresses the emotional appeal of a singer who was welcomed as a stellar performer, not worshipped as a deity. Richards not only claims that Elvis served fans, however. He raises the possibility of idolatry by saying that those fans should never actually *worship* Elvis. This notion is problematic, for Richards, not because *God* would not like it, but because *Elvis* would not have liked it. When discussing the ethics of fan behaviour, Richards' appeal is therefore primarily to what *Elvis* would have wanted. Be rejecting "someone who might fall before him and worship him", he wards off the *hypothesized* possibility of fans indulging in acts of religious devotion and misguidedly using Elvis as an *idol*. Richards draws on the assumption that fans would, notionally, wish to keep *Elvis* interested in *them*. He can count squarely on fans seeing Elvis as their centre of attention. Contemporary religious studies scholarship has a tendency to gloss over the distinction between *paying attention* to one's hero and relinquishing one's individuality (submitting). In his book *Sacred Matters: Celebrity Worship, Sexual Ecstacies*, *The Living Dead and Other Signs of Religious Life in the United States*, for example, Professor Gary Laderman claims that the Presley phenomenon is "seemingly secular but abundant with religious meanings" and its star "saves…the masses" [2]. His work takes it as self-evident that Elvis is positioned as a deity by fans. Laderman is not the only scholar to propose that spiritual identification shapes the Elvis phenomenon. His work comes in the wake of a range of scholars who hold similar views, such as Erika Doss, Robin Sylvan, Rupert Till and Christopher Partridge [3–6]. Slyvan, for instance, claims that Elvis and Beatles fan cultures "had powerful but unconscious religious dimensions" not just because of "West African spirituality implicit in the music, but also because they were deifying their musical heroes and engaging in what might be described as a form of worship" ([4], p. 72).

My argument in this piece of work is that Elvis fandom is best approached as a *secular* activity that can be understood by modifying Emile Durkheim's classic sociology of religion. Compared to ideas positing the neo-religiosity of fan practices, attention to aspects of Durkheim's work improves our understanding in both an ethical and analytical sense. What follows will develop in three parts. The first shows how Durkheim's notion of religion can be modified to help readers recognize Elvis fandom as part of a *secular* experience that is both social and emotional. The second considers where the neo-Durkheimian model differs from neo-religiosity scholarship. The third part explores three limit cases that begin to challenge a secular, neo-Durkheimian reading. These cases do not suggest that fans directly worship Elvis (as in Richards' vision of idolatry), but they do contest the notion that Elvis fandom is a secular process by showing—at least upon first inspection—how the singer and his fans have engaged in acts of *Christian* worship.

2. Secular Music Audience Practice: Rethinking Durkheim

I am not suggesting that popular music in general, or Elvis' music in particular, has *nothing* to do with sacredness or religiosity. Rather, I argue that a careful reformulation of Durkheim's work allows us to make a separation between the secular sociology of Elvis fan practice and the religious content of some of his music. A first way to approach this is by thinking about popular music's gradual development. Western music has changed significantly in form and context over the long

span of history. It is therefore dangerous to make any easy generalizations about its development [7]. Some influential writers, however, have suggested that music has emerged from its sacred context in a gradual process of development. In *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Jacques Attali famously said that music has undergone a series of historic transformations that have turned it into a commodity: “We have gone from the rich priest’s clothing of the musician in ritual to the sombre uniform of the orchestra musician and the tawdry costume of the star, from the ever-recomposed work to the rapidly obsolescent object.” [8]. Attali does not argue that popular music and religion have absolutely no connection, but rather that their relationship—if it can be generalized—is *primarily* one of *secularization*. What religiosity scholars see as the *expanded* sacred could equally be seen as something that perpetually *dissipates* as it enters new contexts. The gospel style, for example, has extended beyond church and become enjoyed by pop audiences. Christian music has hybridized ritual sounds and commercial concerns. One problem with the idea of modernized music, however, is that not all forms *seem* exclusively “modern” and secular. Does the general decline of spiritual engagement spell its end, or simply its rebirth in a secular forms? Few, if any, cultural forms can have completely escaped the pervasive influences of Judeo-Christian culture. Perhaps more than other forms of popular culture, music—with its capacity for emotional resonance—has, arguably, had a multiplicity of connections with its historical context, some of which appear to go beyond expressions of musical tradition or genre to encompass *affect*.

Many people *experience* popular music as a powerful phenomenon. It offers a form of emotional sustenance and can be highly rousing. Music is widely seen as something intoxicating, a form of magic, perhaps: something that arguably approximates or stimulates spiritual transcendence. A good example of its effects provided by Joel Williamson, in his recent book on Elvis, when he describes the way in which the singer moved female fans. He comments on Sonny West (a man who later became Elvis’ bodyguard), recalling a mid-1950s date where West took a virtuous “good girl” to see the singer perform:

> A half hour later, this young woman was, in Sonny’s limited understanding, “behaving totally out of character.” She acted “like a sex starved little nymphet”, he declared. “Believe me”, Sonny insisted, “this gal changed right before my eyes”. Sonny’s perception was that Elvis had caused the girl to become something she was not…Sonny never did, as he delicately worded his ambition, “score with the lady”. Indeed, he said, “after the show my gal just went back to what she was like before” [9].

It is evident here that the female fan in question was swept away by Elvis’ performance to the point where she temporarily lost her sexual inhibitions. Elvis’ performance let her escape from quotidian life and experience a realm of different feelings, one to which Sonny West—identifying in a different way with Elvis—did not have access. We could, of course, use spiritual language to describe this moment of lust. Some might say that Sonny’s date *transcended* her daily life and entered into a *sacred space of imagined union* with her hero. If many people *assume* that a musical performance is a spiritual act, does that mean that it definitely is one?

In the absence of a more comprehensive understanding of fannish rationality, instances of excitement (sexual or otherwise) seem premised on something *mystical*—explicable only in terms of

charisma, enchantment or spirituality. We can counter claims about Elvis' supposed sacredness with Arthur C. Clarke's famous point: "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic" [10]. In other words, both fans and scholars reach for religious vocabularies, perhaps, in part because they lack a sufficient *theoretical* framework to explain fans' emotions. Until we have a clear, *secular* explanation of the emotional experience and language of fandom, religiosity explanations will continue to haunt popular music scholarship.

Emile Durkheim wrote influential work on the sociology of religious experience. Ironically, a modified version of it allows us to challenge neo-religiosity readings and understand popular music's "sacred" energy as *secular* attention. Durkheim's work describes how the energy of the collective is expressed through individual excitation as something he calls effervescence: "The very fact of assembling is an exceptionally powerful stimulant. Once individuals are assembled, their proximity generates a certain kind of electricity that quickly transports them to an extraordinary degree of exaltation" [11]. Effervescence was only part of Durkheim's understanding of tribal religion, however:

> By gathering together almost always at fixed times, collective life could indeed achieve its maximum intensity and efficacy (*i.e.*, effervescence), and give a man a more vivid sense of his dual existence and his dual nature (*i.e.*, transport him into and out of a sacred realm). But this explanation is still incomplete. We have shown how the clan awakens in its members the idea of external forces that dominate and exalt them. But we have yet to understand how these forces were conceived in the form of the totemic species, that is, as an animal or plant. ([11], p. 165, emphasis mine).

Durkheim recognized that each tribe had a totem—an animal, plant, person or object—which mediated the emotional charge of the collective. In a section on the "genesis of the totemic principle" he explained that "Within a crowd moved by common passion, we become susceptible to feelings and actions of which we were incapable on our own" ([11], p. 157). As he further suggested:

> By definition, it [the totem] is shared by everyone. During the ceremony, all eyes are upon it…Because religious force is nothing but the collective and anonymous force of the clan, and because this can be imagined only in the form of the totem, the totemic emblem is like the visible body of god. Therefore it seems to be the source of actions, benevolent or dreaded, which the cult's purpose is to invoke or prevent. ([11], p. 166, emphasis mine).

Totemism is therefore the key point where the energy of the collective is mediated to participating individuals through one focus; it is acts as an *emblem*, rather like a flag might encapsulate and evoke our feelings toward a nation. Durkheim further explained why a human totem could feel energized while representing the collective:

> This unusual surplus of forces is quite real: it comes to him from the very group he is addressing. The feelings provoked by his speech return to him inflated and amplified, reinforcing his own. The passionate energies he arouses echo back to him and increase his vitality. He is no longer a simple individual speaking, he is a group incarnate and personified. ([11], p. 158, emphasis mine).

In Durkheim's analysis, whatever or whoever comes into contact with him or her gets magically and contagiously connected to the sacred aura (*i.e.*, the energy of the collective expressed as something sacred). Individual followers now experience effervescence *through* their contact with the totem. This jolt of social energy not only gives followers a mood-raising personal boost. It also begins to motivate shared beliefs, values and behaviour that maintain the social system. The totem therefore occupies a central social role because he or she both symbolizes the powerful force of the collective (in an "energetic" sense) and governs the boundary between the sacred and the secular (in a semiotic one).

While Durkheim primarily wrote about tribal religion, it is important to add that his theory was a vehicle of secularization. It replaced divine mystery with human sociology. Durkheim argued that religious assembly was not the only means of creating heightened collective emotion, citing the French Revolution, for instance, as a moment of "general effervescence" ([11], p. 158); [12]. When applied to Elvis in particular, Durkheim's work has significant explanatory power. His formulation of effervescence describes a type of emotional excitation emergent when physically coming together as the tribe in collective experiences. On an individual level, participants are aroused through their experience of participation in the collective. They require this communal context to feel excited. In an age of electronic media, it could be argued that participation in a collective is not limited to physical, face-to-face group encounters. We are encouraged to assume a degree of social unity when we are part of *any* collective, real or notional, including, say, the viewing audience for a national television show. For Durkheim, totemism is a way to mediate collective energy. In popular music, experiences of social unity are often premised on a shared focus—sometimes a celebrated, leading individual such as musician and star.

Attention to totemism alone goes quite far in helping us to understand fans' desires to get closer to their heroes. Durkheim's notions of totemism and effervescence can help to explain music's function as a vehicle for intimacy, the repeated behaviour of celebrity-followers, the marketing of particular artists, and other aspects of popular music. Applied to an artist as unique as Elvis, many aspects of Durkheim's schema work perfectly. Sonny's date, for example, knew that Elvis was a focus of attention and responded to his style of performance, to the extent that she expressed her sexual excitation. She demonstrated a new set of ethics and values by expressing her desire in public. Elvis' performance is central in this reading because it offers a gestural form of intimacy that justifies his role at the centre of the spectacle.

Some of Elvis Presley's most electric performances were sixty years ago. As an individual, he is no longer here. Despite this, he remains a focus of collective attention—the emblem of a particular social group (his fan base)—because of a musical legacy that still makes him seem sexy, vulnerable and emotionally available. Attention from fans in turn continues to render Elvis an important person in their hearts. His totemic role gives him an energized and privileged position, embodying the approval of his fan base. Elvis fandom can therefore be understood as a matter of discovering "the wonder of Elvis" by unconsciously recognizing both the star's popularity (as a guarantee of his social value) and a feeling a personal connection with his music. In that sense, *one aspect* of Elvis fandom is a bit *like* a tribal religion: for Durkheim, "religion is above all a system of notions by which individuals imagine the society to which they belong and their obscure yet intimate

relations with that society" ([11], p. 270). Applying the notion of totemism suggests that there is a recognition in the head of each fan that Elvis is worth our individual attention both because his music has attracted a vast fan base, and because it helps people to feel closer to him [13]. To borrow Durkheim's words, Elvis and his fans "form an interdependent system in which all parts are linked and vibrate sympathetically" ([11], p. 116).

Durkheim's schema is interesting precisely because it shows that something *appearing* to be spiritual activity is actually based on social interaction. It enables us to understand how a combination of tacit assumptions and group behaviour can generate an emotional buzz. Depending on the celebrity's public persona and the meanings attributed to it, a fan-to-star connection can theoretically consist of almost any positive fan feeling—lust, love, empathy, admiration or even grief—as long as a redistribution of attention is there. If fans *deified* their hero in idol worship, in contrast, they would actually be misattributing the results of a secular sociological process. In a chapter from their book on cult obedience, *The Guru Papers: Masks of Authoritarian Power*, Joel Kramer and Diana Alstad ask, "Is experiencing intense energy a sign of spirituality, or is the experience in the same vein as young ladies who swoon in the presence of rock stars?" [14]. Kramer and Alstad draw a distinct boundary here between sacred and secular experience. Their contention is that the buzz of participating in rock music is qualitatively different to what are, in their view, more "genuine" spiritual miracles. From Kramer and Alstad's perspective, recognizing the difference may actually help us become more aware of the truly divine.

3. The Limits of Neo-Religiosity Scholarship

Elvis' fans tend to say that his magnetic appeal is either solely based on him as an individual or is inexplicable. Although popular speech confuses the two, I would argue that this understanding of personality as a source of charisma is not the same as deification, which is the attribution of metaphysical divinity. Fans become emotionally moved when paying attention to their heroes, but that does not mean that they "sacralize" or "venerate" or "transfigure" or "sanctify" or "worship" them. To say this does not mean, however, that the extended spirituality paradigm is "untrue" or the neo-Durkheimian one is "true", as if there is an ultimate truth at stake. Both theories attempt to account for pleasurable participation in popular music. Each produces its "truth" in a different way. The key question is how *analytically and ethically useful* it is to frame fan participation as a form of sacralizing activity. A judicious appropriation of Durkheim's work avoids the pitfalls of neo-religiosity scholarship and offers a fresh perspective on the subject of fan behaviour.

Neo-religiosity scholarship has a significant central problem. One of the problems with liberal definitions of spirituality and the sacred is that they stretch almost *ad infinitum*. Religiosity scholars constantly run the risk of empire-building beyond notions of the sacred that can be offered with any degree of precision. In Christopher Partridge's work, for example, the sacred is applied to anything set apart from daily life. Therefore, high culture and art are sacred (because they require cultivation to appreciate). The profane is seen as a variant (because it transgresses the absolutely sacred and thus reinforces its importance as a category). Loud music is seen as sacred (because it immerses us in an experience that is different from daily life). Celebrity-following is seen as a sacred practice (because fans supposedly "sacralize" anything touched by heroes who are set apart from daily life). Through

such acrobatic semiotic feats, Partridge's use of the term covers just about all popular music-related experience. The issue is even more pressing when we look at academic discussions of "post-secular" culture or "secular spirituality". According to Cimino and Smith "secular spirituality" can mean anything from feeling wonder when seeing nature to believing that the world is governed by unseen deities [15]. "Secular spirituality" therefore references anything beyond total materialism and occupies an extremely broad conceptual marshland. If "spirituality" and "secular spirituality" represent everything beyond materialism, they lump together very diverse and contradictory feelings and ideas, from Satan worship on one hand, to Islamic fundamentalism, Christian mysticism and neo-gnostic conspiracy theories on the other. In other words, the sacred, spirituality, post-secularity, "secular spirituality" and associated ideas are being used as *ecumenical concepts*—outreach tools that can place anything, including all of popular music, within their purview:

> "The commonplace becomes impregnated with the solemn, the serious, and the sacred." ([6], p. 238).
>
> "Religion can both refer to a bounded and specific set of institutions and practices that endure over time and to a more nebulous sense that of the spiritual as it interpenetrates with everyday life." [16].

The idea that spirituality nebulously "impregnates" and "interpenetrates" everyday life mystifies the term itself. The argument that religious faith is like some kind of gothic mist falling on individuals and cultures mistakes a process that mediates between social activities and personal convictions. Contrary to the claims made that sacredness is everywhere, spirituality can be understood as *a perspective from which daily life can be seen* as miraculous. The issue is that anything and everything can be seen as spiritual if it is framed that way: even science and materialism, for example, can arguably be construed as alerting us to the magnificence of God's creation. Unlike Partridge, I therefore think it is unproductive to look for the sacred *in* the secular. If a star signs an autograph, it has value in the fan community not because it has radiated out as something contagiously sacred, but precisely the other way round: being a personally inscribed endorsement, it draws us closer toward (and makes us more intimate with) him or her. The process is a pull, not a push. We are not drawn to Elvis—or One Direction for that matter—because they are intrinsically sacred (or socially sacralized); if we are drawn to them, it is because we recognize their popularity and feel an emotional investment in their performance. In contemporary society, neither of those aspects are sacred or spiritual things.

Generalizations about spirituality and sacredness fail to define or find secularity. They are therefore in danger of *constantly overstepping the mark*. Part of the issue is that dictionary definitions of spirituality are rather liberal. According to the Oxford Dictionary "spirituality" is the adverb form of the adjective "spiritual" which has two associated meanings. One is "relating to religion or religious belief" (where the latter means belief, faith, devotion to and worship of "a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods") [17]. The other is something "relating to or affecting the human soul as opposed to material or physical things", which breaks down into "having a relationship based on a profound level of mental or emotional communion" and "not [being] concerned with material values or pursuits" [18]. In the context of such an all-inclusive, human

rather than divine definition, to its engaged participants popular music is *necessarily* spiritual. After all, it raises our mood and brings us closer together. However, so does successfully participating in relatively secular activity, from watching an absorbing lecture to playing a team sport. Satisfying communal activities do not have to be seen as spiritual ones.

The liberal quality is spiritual language also helps to creates a kind of vagueness in popular discussions. Religious terms are ingrained in ordinary talk about music. They are attractive both to listeners who wish to emphasize the awe-inspiring nature of musical experience and scholars concerned to question the rationality of fan behaviour. Indeed, fans, critics and academics *all* use a vocabulary from religion to talk about popular music culture. Despite this apparently shared ground, at times they talk past each other because they use *different registers*. Fans alternately deny the religiosity of their experiences and embrace a language of spiritual transcendence. To describe feelings of uplift that spring from their love of music, they sometimes reach for religious terms [19]. They tend to adopt figures of speech that most people use to describe engagements with pop culture, terms that do not especially single them out as eccentric. Popularly accepted terms include words like "icon", "idol", "passion", "soul", "devotion" and "pilgrimage" [20]. Music critics, as a kind of intermediary group, have often drawn upon religious language *as rhetoric*, emphasizing the power of particular performers to change lives. In this register, concepts such as prophecy and terms like "fire" play a key role [21,22]. Peter Guralnick's affectionate suggestion that Sam Phillips "had the look of an Old Testament prophet in tennis sneakers" is a typical example [23]. The music critics' register is subtly different in tone and style from the more blatant mass culture parodies formulated to dismiss Elvis fans as being "crackpot cultists". In Christopher Partridge's discussion, for instance, Elvis fans are associated with veneration, transfiguration, idol worship, fetishism, conspiracy theories, shrines and visions. Such terms suggest that scholars aim to create portrayals that do not treat fans as ordinary, sane, rational human subjects.

The term "worship", for instance, is not innocent: there is a danger that it can be is extended from religious discourse to dismiss fan engagement as servile activity. Religiosity scholars have used a spiritual vocabulary to associate fandom with arguably negative, *fundamentalist* qualities like worship (submission), piety (intolerance) and blind faith (closed-mindedness)—qualities that raise ethical concerns. For Partridge, for example, Elvis fans are essentially idealists, out of touch with the realities of life. They are portrayed as dreamers who have chosen to ignore the final predicament of their hero as a "bloated, paranoid drug addict who died in less than seraphic circumstances" ([6], p. 239). On face value, one or two prominent examples of the Elvis phenomenon—from the famous meditation garden at Graceland to the fans' annual candle-lit vigil—*seem to* imply spiritual devotion. These practices are, in fact, different ways in which people pursue their totemic interest as fans: thinking about their personal loss and individual connection to Elvis, and being pleasantly reminded about his ongoing popularity. Such fan practices are not moments of beatification or veneration, as if to say that Elvis was perfect and could do no wrong. Elvis fans have not blindly chosen to ignore the final predicament of their hero as an addict who died in less than seraphic circumstances. In fact, they often know *far more* about that than the reporters and scholars who misidentify their community. Instead, they *choose* not to emphasize Elvis' least appealing qualities *to non-fans* because those will

not attract new recruits to the fan base—a concern that is perfectly consistent with Durkheim's argument that totemic groups share self-preserving value systems [24].

In order to understand the ethical significance of a secularized version of Durkheim's schema, I will discuss Elvis fandom's changing predicament in the public sphere. The mass culture critique is the idea that fans are controlled and manipulated by popular culture to the point where they are docile, subservient dupes. In public discussions of fandom, this paradigm has held sway as the dominant discursive resource. It was most prominent in the mass broadcast era between the 1920s and 1990s [25]. Mass culture ideas suggested that dedicated followers were in fact servile consumers who had relinquished their individual independence in favour of embracing irrational fads and fancies. In this paradigm, criticism had often been expressed through the concept of "idol worship". Because of the emotional nature of their interests and the way that they entered the public sphere, pop and rock fans were an easy target for such interpretations. Describing music fans as "idol worshippers" became a way to portray them as misguided "believers" unable to separate fantasy from reality [26].

At the climax of Elvis' 1969 film *Change of Habit* (dir. Graham), a nun played by Mary Tyler Moore found herself in church watching the man that she loved strumming his guitar and leading the congregation in a rousing folk pop sing-a-long called "Pray Together". She gazes most longingly at Dr. Carpenter (played by Elvis) then glances across to a crucifix hung on the wall. The camera pans up to the cross, inviting spectators to share her gaze and her dilemma: should she keep her vows and follow her religious vocation or lead a romantic life in the arms of the man she loves? *Change of Habit* was Elvis' final narrative film and amongst the least popular with his fans. Watching its ending, it is hard not to think that Sister Michelle was supposed to substitute for spectators as they compared religious ecstasy and rock'n'roll glory. It is hard not to interpret the scene as a sly, knowing, Hollywood skit on the idea that Elvis was, to his fans, almost as seductive as the Almighty. *Change of Habit* was not the only time that Elvis sent up his own alleged divinity, however. One of his renditions of "The Lord's Prayer", recorded in Nashville, May 1971, joked about how he went from Sun Records to RCA [27]. In other words, Elvis clearly understood and affectionately played upon the idea that his fans had mistakenly worshipped him.

The idea of Elvis fans as "worshippers" has had a long and varied history. In the conservative 1950s, Elvis caused widespread excitement amongst female teens. His phenomenon was particularly prone to mass culture interpretations: almost everything—from the sentimentality of his music to his refusal to adopt middle class trappings—sat uneasily with structures of cultural capital that informed critical elites. In the tumultuous 1960s, Elvis made light, family movies that sat uneasily with the changing times. To an extent, "crackpot cultist" readings of his fan base—as one Amazon book reviewer labelled them—were already in circulation and made their way into media representations. In the 1970s, Elvis toured the USA and played to packed audiences, but eventually became addicted to prescription medication, put on weight, and died on the brink of a new tour. In the neoliberal 1980s, a feeling emerged that Elvis' human failings were being ignored by those who rallied to save his legacy. Critics dismissed the Elvis phenomenon as emotionally excessive, commercial and vulgar. "Drive-by" media, unconcerned with any sustained engagement with fans, lambasted Elvis' following. In a process not unique to representations of Elvis culture but common to portrayals of

pop fandom, the media focused on a handful of "extreme" fans [28]. It selected only their most eccentric practices to show, and it presented them only within particular frameworks. Tom Corboy's 1984 documentary *Mondo Elvis*, for instance, featured a woman who said her husband divorced her, in part for "excessive devotion to Elvis Presley" [29]. In the nostalgic 1990s and 2000s, guardians of refined culture felt threatened by Elvis because he was increasingly adopted as part of America's heritage. Historical plaques were erected to mark his achievements. Fans campaigned for a national Elvis Presley day, to be held on his birthday every year. The Smithsonian recognized his artistic significance. In 1992, presidential candidate Bill Clinton played "Heartbreak Hotel" on national television. The American public voted to select an image for a commemorative postage stamp. Just when Elvis was becoming officially accepted as a *legitimate* historical figure, to some it appeared necessary to focus attention on jumpsuits, pills, burgers, and "crazy" followers. "Cult" diagnoses reflected deep anxieties about the awkward popularity of a contested cultural icon, someone who enchanted working class audiences so well that they could not let him go. Two decades after Elvis died, the BBC devoted an episode of its weekly documentary series *Everyman* to "Elvis and the Presleytarians". Similar representations arose in environments where there were commercial pressures to portray fans in ways that would normalize "mainstream" (non-fan) audiences. It had become a going concern to stereotype Elvis fans as cultists [30]. To disagree was to fight against the commercial tide.

Unfortunately, when it came to discussing Elvis culture, a number of scholars adopted ideas created by popular parodists, and pursued reworked mass culture perspectives [31]. Because their priority was to frame the Elvis phenomena as a new kind of spiritual practice, some seized upon stereotypes from second-hand sources. I describe this phenomenon, at worst, as a form of "drive-by academia" because it uncritically perpetuates stereotypes developed by "drive-by media". Exploring supposedly substitute religious practices they envisioned fans as misguided "believers" who had sacrificed their rational faculties in favour of blind devotion. Critics, commentators and academics thus began to label the Elvis phenomenon a "cult" [32–35]. Others followed in their wake. The scholars who have made such claims sometimes profess to be popular music fans, but they rarely demonstrate any sustained engagement with the Elvis Presley fans that are their object of study [3]. Their diagnosis positions fans as servile and misguided neo-religious believers. I therefore wrote an article for *Popular Music and Society* in 2003 called, "False Faith or False Comparison? A Critique of the Religious Interpretation of Elvis Fan Culture" [31]. As someone who had completed a Ph.D. working with Elvis fans, I was concerned that the subjects of my research were being misrepresented and treated with neither dignity nor respect. The "False Faith" article became part of an ongoing debate about popular music and religiosity. It was summarized by several scholars who said that the neo-religiosity thesis reflected middle class bias in academic discussions about music fandom [36–38]. At least one researcher took me as saying that perhaps academics should "give up critically analyzing" fans' autobiographical statements [39]. My key concern was that scholars had never taken the time to engage *dialogically* with the human objects of their discussion. Instead they tended to uncritically adopt constructions of fandom emerging from "drive-by" media and, in effect, summon up an imagined cult of Elvis.

Ironically, in cultural studies, the work of Henry Jenkins and others generated a paradigm shift that has put aside mass culture thinking and recognized media fans as textual poachers, cultural participants and activists—networked and politically engaged individuals who can act in communities to express their intelligence, creativity and ability to make a difference to the world [26,40,41]. Mass culture thinking still holds sway to some extent both outside of academia and in some disciplines within it. Psychologists McCutcheon, Lange and Houran, for instance, have pathologized media fandom by attempting to invent a psychiatric disorder they describe as "celebrity worship syndrome" [42]. McCutcheon, Lange and Houran's use of the term "worship" is indicative here. It could be argued that some neo-religiosity scholarship has, like much psychology, repackaged mass cultural assumptions.

4. Beyond the Stereotypes: Gospel, God-Given Talent and Worship Music

In the last section I questioned the value of making "crackpot cultist" readings of popular music fandom and introduced Durkheim's notion of totemism to explain fan rationality. One of the ways in which music is secular now is that stars can operate as centres of attention without any particular emphasis on spirituality. If fans do not "worship" Elvis, does that mean his religious concerns are irrelevant to their engagements? This section will examine Elvis' interest in church music and how his fans have responded to that interest. It considers three different limit cases which challenge a secular neo-Durkheimian reading: Elvis' passion for sacred music, the idea that his voice was a God-given gift, and his live gospel performances. While these do not suggest that fans have worshipped Elvis himself (pop idolatry), they nevertheless challenge a secular reading of his phenomenon because they appear—at least upon first inspection—to demarcate moments of *Christian* worship. My argument, however, is that Elvis' meaningful engagement with sacred music does not fundamentally alter the secular sociology of his fan phenomenon.

In terms of its styles, themes and lyrics, contemporary music contains all kinds of allusions to the sacred. What, then, is the role of such frequent allusions in Elvis' case? Neo-religiosity arguments have often ignored Elvis' actual music. Partridge, for instance, offers an extended discussion of the transgressive project of Genesis P-Orridge yet says little about P-Orridge's audience. Alternately, he makes very particular claims about Elvis fans while saying next to nothing about *Elvis*' music [6]. Such critical silences indicate the structures of cultural capital that guide popular music scholarship, a field where Elvis remains a relatively unrepresented figure. Attention to totemism suggests that vernacular music has, in a secular environment, provided a wellspring of signs and meanings that can provide an especially close conception of intimacy and therefore make both emotional and economic sense. On the semiotic level (*i.e.*, in terms of musical *content*) ascriptions of "the sacred"—in its widest sense from sexuality and profanity to church-based spirituality—are useful in helping to justify the powerful sensations of intimacy that emerge from celebrity-following interactions.

Elvis was a Christian who grew up going to church and publically expressed his love for gospel music [43]. According to the critic Shane Brown, his earliest known recording of a gospel song came in September 1954 when he attempted to record Martha Carlson's country-gospel number "Satisfied" [44]. Unfortunately, Sam Phillips only released Elvis' rock'n'roll material. The tape of "Satisfied" was either recorded over or lost. During his earlier years, Elvis was not therefore understood as a gospel artist. Instead he performed rock'n'roll in a state of abandon that had both

racial and sexual connotations. Elvis' second Sun single, for example, "Good Rockin' Tonight", knowingly implied sexual pleasure in its title. In an era where civility was defined around the practice of courtship behaviour, Elvis evoked female desire *en masse* in public. He was attacked by a range of critics that represented the Establishment and its interests. Late in the summer of 1956, for example, Pastor Robert Gray told his congregation at Trinity Baptist Church in Jacksonville that Elvis Presley had achieved "a new low in spiritual degeneracy" [45].

During his first phase in the national spotlight, Elvis experimented by reflecting on his connection to religion in order to diffuse the controversy. Explaining his rock'n'roll style in May 1956, he said, "I just landed upon it accidentally. More or less I [am] a pretty close follower of religious quartets, and they do a lot of rockin' spirituals" [46]. As the national controversy broke, he could not sustain this link. Discussing a piece which had said that he got his moves from church singing, Elvis told a *TV Guide* interviewers four months later, "My religion has nothing to do with what I do now, because, the type of stuff I do now is not religious music. My religious background has nothing to do with the way I sing." ([46], p. 53). Although Elvis flaunted his body and teased his audience, he was not quite the young upstart that his detractors imagined. He evidently loved his parents. He also had a deferential attitude and good manners. With an air of apparent innocence, he stressed that his gyrations were simply expressions of the music.

Elvis quickly began singing gospel music on national television in between his rock'n'roll numbers. RCA then decided that they wanted a Christmas album to draw on the success of his recorded gospel repertoire. In September 1957 Elvis went into the Radio Recorders studio in Hollywood and cut the knowing "Blue Christmas"—which had been a country hit for Ernest Tubb—and Leiber and Stoller's equally racy "Santa Claus Is Back In Town", plus more conservative Christmas classics like "White Christmas" and "O Little Town of Bethlehem" [47]. This set a characteristic pattern in Elvis' recording career: church music *alongside* secular material, with considerable interchange between the two. Given his reputation, the singer's embrace of conservative music was almost as controversial as his rock'n'roll had been. Irvin Berlin, for example, was furious in 1957 that the rock'n'roller had decided to record his staple "White Christmas". Traditional music nevertheless allowed Elvis to express his conservative side and become a successful, mainstream artist. The bid to present him as a family entertainer—someone that Ed Sullivan grudgingly called "a real, decent, fine boy"—succeeded when Elvis entered the army [48]. The singer continued performing gospel music right up until his death in 1977.

Southern gospel quartets drew no distinction between the sacred and the commercial. They were part of a racially segregated culture of sharp-dressed singing groups who combined a secular approach to stage presentation with a "sacred" repertoire of gospel music. While the quartets emerged from a tradition of church music and sang with immense sincerity, they were commercially viable stars in their own right on the Southern circuit—successful enough, in fact, to tour the region on their own buses and play to packed houses of excited fans. Elvis had grown up with the quartet phenomenon and took its leaders—with all their charismatic vocal feats—to be his own heroes. In the years just before he became famous, he regularly attended the popular gospel all-nighters at the Ellis Auditorium in Memphis. One of the leading groups, the Blackwood Brothers, signed to RCA. The outfit received national television exposure and sold over a million records. Quartets emerged

from the culture of Christianity that was a strong part of the social fabric of the South. They clearly expressed a spiritual ethos *through* commercial means, but it could also be argued that they unwittingly "secularized" their sacred root music by bringing it into a space governed by the concerns of commerce.

Elvis was drawn to the gospel quartet scene and wanted to be part of it. In July 1953, just before his break at Sun, he auditioned for the Songfellows, an apprentice version of the Blackwood Brothers. Once he became an RCA artist, beginning with the Jordanaires (who had started back in 1948), he hired a series of quartets to back him on recorded then live performances. In the 1950s albums were seen as afterthoughts to singles; Elvis' first official gospel release was his *Peace in the Valley* EP. He followed this up with a string of gospel releases, including the RCA LPs *His Hand in Mine* (1960), *How Great Thou Art* (1967) and *He Touched Me* (1972). His style extended the gospel quartet tradition into contemporary country—popularizing the Nashville sound—and, later, influenced Christian music: a hybrid commercial genre based on religious lyrics, an easy-going delivery, and instruments, sounds and styles from modern folk and pop. Elvis' interest in gospel was also expressed in his 1970s live sets. Beyond hosting his quartet backing singers, he also introduced, and sometimes duetted with, a gospel vocal group called Voice, an act fostered to showcase the haunting vocals of Sherrill Nielsen. By this point Elvis' live sets encompassed the totality of American music. In a context that was primarily about entertainment, fans shared the sound of gospel and hymns alongside ballads and up-tempo rock'n'roll numbers. A good example of this is the way that Elvis would occasionally sing a line or two from the Catholic devotional song, "Ave Maria", in the middle of his August 1970 extended live rendition of Ray Charles' "I Gotta Woman"—itself a secular r'n'b song based on the tune of a gospel number by the Southern Tones called "It Must Be Jesus". At first sight, Elvis' propensity to sing sacred music alongside its secular counterpart may seem strange, or perhaps even sacrilegious. According to his most infamous critic, the biographer Albert Goldman:

> Elvis Presley never stood for anything. He made no sacrifices, fought no battles, suffered no martyrdom, never raised a finger to struggle on behalf of what he believed or claimed to believe. Even gospel, the music he cherished above all, he travestied and commercialized and soft-soaped to the point where it became nauseating [49].

Goldman lamented that Elvis "sold out" gospel as sacred music, bastardizing it for a commercial mass audience. This claim, like so many of his others, misunderstands both the artist and the vernacular musical traditions within which Elvis' musical interests developed. It was not so much, as Goldman suggested, that Elvis was single-handedly perverting sacred music; it was rather that what he sang came from a vernacular commercial tradition in which sacred and secular styles were thoroughly and appealingly entwined. Just as Southern traditions drew no clear line between sacred and commercial gospel music, so Elvis drew no clear distinction between his own secular and sacred numbers. He recorded both kinds during his studio sessions and performed both at his live shows; it was actually his record releases that separated the two.

So what did gospel do for Elvis? It was the music that seemed closest to his heart and it served a variety of associated functions. First, the values expressed in gospel were part of his explanatory

framework. In a 1956 piece in *Elvis Answers Back* magazine, Elvis explained that, unlike his critics suggested, he had not forgotten religion, and had stayed dedicated to his faith. He added, "I believe all good things come from God" ([46], p. 70). Over fifteen years later, Sherman Andrus—the black singer who made the Imperials a mixed race outfit—reminded Elvis of his privileged iconic position. He replied, "You know, I know that and I couldn't have done it without God". Gospel was therefore the music that Elvis used to express his faith. To one journalist he said, "I never expected to be anyone important. Maybe I'm not now. But whatever I am, whatever I will become, will be what God has chosen for me. I feel he's watching every move I make." [50].

The relationship between Elvis' religious proclivities and musical output is a complex one. We cannot say that gospel was a transparent expression of Elvis' faith: his engagement with it was as much musical (about form and use) as religious (about content and faith). Musically, he was inspired by a very wide variety of influences and recorded a range of broadly Christian, religious songs, from black spirituals to Catholic tunes like "Miracle of the Rosary". Although he was a professional singer and addressed a range of audiences with such material, when given free rein to express his own musical preferences he usually pursued gospel quartet singing. Gospel was, in effect, Elvis' version of both "folk" (pre-commercial) and "soul" (emotionally expressive) music. It connected him to his roots and his mother, a Southern matriarch who also had a strong Christian faith. Here it is important to note that Elvis' pursuit of the genre has sometimes (falsely) been positioned *against* the imperative of commerce: after all, Elvis would sometimes sing gospel as warm up music at the start of his pop recording sessions, using expensive studio time. Gospel was, in effect, the genre that Elvis used to get his voice ready to attempt various vocal feats. It was also Elvis' "party" music, in so far that it connected him to a certain kind of communality. He tended to avoid up-tempo gospel on stage, but would often sing it together with friends back in his penthouse in the early hours of the morning. Elvis used gospel when he wanted to bond voices together. Gospel united the star with those around him, linking all of them to a strong tradition of sacred music. It put his mind at ease. It was also a way to add a touch of metaphysical mystery to his appeal as an entertainer. What I want to emphasize here, however, is that Elvis' followers are interested in his gospel music for their own set of reasons. It could be argued that fans pursue their interest in Elvis' expression of religious faith primarily because it highlights a very close form of intimacy. For instance, biographer Joel Williamson recently noted that the church in which Elvis was raised "focussed on the blessings of the Holy Spirit and on a very personal closeness to God" ([14], p. 85), adding, "These Christians felt the spirit of God with an intimacy and power that mainline churches had found during the Great Awakenings" ([14], p. 87). Williamson draws our attention to intimacy here, perhaps, because faith offers an idealized form of closeness toward which the star-fan relationship aspires.

The second part of this final section will consider how fans of different outlooks understand the role of Elvis' faith in his musical performance. In an interesting recent piece, Andrew Crome has examined My Little Pony fans that have strong, pre-existing religious faith. He has argued that they have used their media fandom to reinforce their Christian identities. Crome's work is interesting because it looks beyond media consumption in its effort to understand research subjects. He refuses to simplistically posit fandom as a replacement for—or degraded form of—spirituality. In a more ambitious project, Crome instead aims to understand how "[media] fandom serves as one resource

(among many others) to be used as part of the construction of faith identity" ([51], p. 414). This avenue could be productive for fan studies because it does not conflate fandom and faith but instead examines the interactive nature of their relationship.

Some popular discussions about Elvis interpret his religious faith. One common idea is that he was not simply a skilled musician but had a God-given gift. This notion has its secular counterpart in the Darwinian idea of natural selection: that musical skill is randomly distributed throughout the population and that through the mechanism of the music industry we promote those who have the most talent. From a sacred perspective, a musical gift is an expression of God's light in the world. Elvis arguably aimed to use the structures of human feeling identified by Durkheim, in that sense, to direct his audience's attention beyond himself and alert them to the divine. Certainly, he often said that he did not like his nickname: he was not "The King" as there was only one (God). In other words he contributed his gift to celebrate his maker. At one point in 1976, according to JD Sumner, Elvis considered committing himself only to gospel music—and, in effect, becoming a preacher—but then the evangelist Rex Humbard told him that "he was tilling the soil for others to sow the seed" [52]. Elvis' performances of songs such as "How Great Thou Art" were genuine attempts to use his vocal gifts to showcase the majesty of the divine, in the same way that, say, the devout Roman Catholic painter Paul Cézanne used his talent to, as he saw it, reflect upon God's creation.

Peter and Madeleine Wilson are an English couple who believe that Elvis has a role as an outreach tool for the church. In 1998 they started Elvis Gospel Ministries as a way to bring fans into the fold of the Christian community. Elvis Gospel Ministries remains an Internet based operation with a regular newsletter, occasional UK events (both in and outside church), connections to Memphis (via both Elvis Presley Enterprises and the Centre for Southern Folklore) and community of intercessors (who pray on behalf of fans). Elvis Gospel Ministries tends to ignore the non-Christian aspects of Elvis' spiritual quest, including things that have troubled other Christian organizations [53]. They understand Elvis as a kind of disciple figure and use him to preach an evangelical message to fans. On national television, Madeleine Wilson claimed that those interested in Elvis' charisma were actually seeing the Holy Spirit at work:

> Nobody can come to God except through Jesus, and I believe that Elvis may be one of the ways—that God's put him on Earth to draw people to him, and then through Elvis to see Jesus…My faith was changed as I have become more excited as I realized how God can move in the world today… People see in Elvis something very, very special. I believe what people see that is special in Elvis is God, is the Holy Spirit. And I believe it's God's way of drawing people to himself [1].

While it is not impossible to conceive of fans that come to a greater knowledge of God through their interest in Elvis, neither is it *likely* that his music has been the *sole* reason for any Christian conversion. Many fans assent to the "gift" reading simply because it aligns with Elvis' own broadly Christian values. They know that Elvis was a person who held spirituality in high regard. The notion of the gift ultimately therefore serves to align Elvis' own totemic popularity with a version of his spiritual faith in a way that allows fans to *both* respect *his* beliefs (as a spiritual person) and affiliate

with him *as a totem* (with his God-given gift justifying his popularity). According to Elvis' friend Christine Ferra, for instance:

> Part of the strength of Elvis is his faith and his belief spiritually—that's what attracts a lot of people to him. People can talk about his swivelling hips or his wonderful voice and then the sexual attraction he had, but the biggest attraction of Elvis in my estimation was his spiritual strength and his faith, and his being plugged into the power source—so to speak—plugged into God, and people are always attracted to that tremendous energy [54].

The "power source" that Ferra identifies here is, arguably, collective support. Elvis' felt recognition of audience interest inevitably enhanced his confidence and totemic aura. If, nevertheless, both the singer and his Christian fans understand his magnetic appeal as a result of being "plugged into God", does that mean that Elvis' fan base ordinarily sees him as a conduit to the divine?

One issue here is that fans usually know more than non-fans about the theological complexity of Elvis' quest. The singer's dedicated audience finds his faith interesting precisely because it reveals something about him as a person. His religious quest was characterized by its avoidance of easy divisions. Elvis Presley's most profound, personal recorded religious experience came when he was driving back from Los Angeles to Memphis during his movie years. After a few hours travelling through New Mexico and Arizona, he experienced a miraculous moment out in the desert. Elvis became fixated on a cloud formation, thinking he could see a human face. He exclaimed:

> And then it happened! The face of Stalin turned right into the face of Jesus, and he smiled at me, and every fibre of my being felt it. For the first time in my life, God and Christ are a living reality. ([53], p. 110).

Such revelatory experiences can be accommodated within a Christian perspective, yet Elvis' varied spiritual interests did not stop there. He had been raised in the First Assembly of God church (a variant of the Southern Pentecostal tradition), but his mother's family line was Jewish [55]. He put a Star of David on her grave. His inner-circle contained several Jewish friends. According to George Klein, "When he was once asked why he wore both a cross and a Jewish chai round his neck, Elvis said, 'I don't want to miss out on getting into heaven on a technicality'." [56]. Furthermore, in the mid-1960s—under the influence of his hairdresser, Larry Geller—Elvis also began exploring new age alternative spirituality. In 1965, Geller took Elvis to the Self-Realization Fellowship in Los Angeles, an organization pursuing the meditational teachings of a deceased Indian guru called Yogananda. As the hairdresser explained, "For Elvis, his spiritual studies were part of his spiritual evolution" ([53], p. 137). The Memphis singer was fascinated with Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, flirted with the study of astrology and telepathy, and gave many of his friends copies of Joseph Benner's 1914 book *The Impersonal Life*. Indeed, the latter was so linked to Elvis that in 2001 the Presley estate brought out a special Graceland edition [57–59].

During Elvis' lifetime, in show business the news circulated of his willingness to pursue a range of spiritual interests. A number of organizations, including Scientology, "made pitches" to him ([53], p. 135). Precisely because knowledge of his faith is understood as revealing more about his personality, controversies about his religious beliefs have become a point of fan discussion in the

wake of his death. Elvis' spirituality has become subject to claims from individuals and organizations that wish to speak to his audience. A good example of this came when "super fan" Cricket Coulter said that she had given Elvis a copy of the Book of Mormon, and that only a premature death cut short his plan to be baptized in the Mormom faith. In 2001 the archives of the Latter Day Saints church said that it had located two Books of Mormon featuring his annotations, and had also received enquiries on a weekly basis trying to substantiate Coulter's claims [60]. In summary, while Elvis was most associated with Christianity, his interest in religious practice was a quest that was exploratory in nature. It was so meandering that in 2013 Gary Tillery published a book-length "spiritual biography" to summarize Elvis' life long quest. It is crucial to understand, however, that Elvis' public image did not feature much variety while he was alive. It was not common knowledge until after 1977. Since then his fans have become more apt than outsiders to recognize the complexity of his spiritual engagements because they are more likely to read such biographies.

Although he loved gospel music, Elvis did not actually use it as a means of worship in the strict sense. His relationship to sacred music can be explored through comparison to what Thomas Bossius called "worship music" [61]. This category includes any type of music—from hymns and ritual chants, to contemporary pop songs–written and used with the intention of being "sung prayer". Bossius mentions that worship music is performed on occasions that are understood by those involved as worship events, even though they can sometimes resemble rock concerts for young Christians. Crucially, the musicians keep a low profile at such events and the music is organized for the glorification of God rather than for any human individual. In relation to that idea, the Presley repertoire included hymns like "How Great Thou Art" and contemporary gospel such as "Pray Together". However, other elements of Bossius's definition do not entirely square with Elvis' performances. While 1970s live shows included sincere moments of gospel performance, they were not understood by all concerned as acts of worship. It is relevant here to note Bossius's definition:

> Musically, most of the new worship music is based on the styles and sounds of pop, rock, and country, but other types of music are also used…What is specific and new about contemporary worship music is instead that, despite its close relationship to the mentioned genres, it does not function primarily as popular music, but as sacred devotional music. Worship music is not performed as entertainment, but as prayer music in ordinary services or special worship services. In addition, worship concerts are also arranged. These concerts can be said to be something between a worship service and a rock concert…at the youth events, the line between rock and roll entertainment and worship, at least during the up tempo songs, becomes very thin. ([61], p. 53, emphasis mine).

For Bossius, worship music offers "secular" pop and rock pleasures in a religious format. One might argue that Elvis' concerts were, in fact, the complete *opposite* of that. It is likely that fans understood his "sacred" performances in a secular way, as moments of popular spectacle where Elvis performed vocal feats that showcased what his life was about. We cannot, furthermore, say that Elvis kept a low profile during these events—although sometimes he did attempt to divert attention that was given to him toward his gospel singers and said their vocal achievements were performed in the service of God. The Memphis singer sincerely understood certain parts of his show as an act of

worship, but that does not mean that his audience saw them in the same light. Elvis' fans respected their hero's religious devotion, but did not necessarily take him as introducing them to Jesus. They knew that his 1970s stage performance was a window on both his personal interests and the ways of the South—a culture bonded through community, locality and religion.

In order to understand the response of Elvis fans specifically to his gospel music, I extracted the full set of over 200 user reviews from his three original studio gospel albums from the website of a popular online retailer. Most of the review comments were simply recommendations, but a small minority considered the way that gospel music inspired Elvis to give his most soulful performances and also of the sense of comfort those performances could bring to listeners. Fans took gospel music as the genre that offered a privileged insight into Elvis' own struggle and beliefs. Three reviewers, who evidently already had spiritual beliefs, framed their discussion in terms of God's blessing enabling Elvis to share his musical gift. The same number talked about Elvis' music giving them a spiritual boost. Two asserted that listeners of any religion could enjoy Elvis' gospel recordings. Only one out of over 200 mentioned that their engagement with the music gave them a deep spiritual experience of any sort. None talked about finding Jesus specifically through Elvis. These results only begin to scratch the surface of fan responses. They tell us nothing about the live audiences who attended his shows in the 1970s, but at least reveal something about how his music is understood by dedicated listeners today. What they tell us is that fans frame Elvis' gospel output primarily as a source of their own aesthetic pleasure, rather than something that does pastoral work all by itself. This is consistent with a neo-Durkheimian reading, because it shows that fans see Elvis as their primary centre of attention.

5. Conclusions

In this piece I have suggested that even though Elvis fans are emotionally uplifted by his music and sometimes use religious language, they are not engaged in practices of sacralisation. I have argued that what religiosity scholars see as the expanded sacred is, in fact, a complex, multi-layered phenomenon. On one level, ideas of "idol worship" have been used to frame fandom as servile and misguided. Fans, music critics and detractors all use a religious vocabulary, but they use different registers within the same discourse to emphasize different experiences. At times this means that they talk past each other. Part of the reason for using religious language is that celebrity and music still enchant us in seemingly magical ways. Extracting one mechanism from Durkheim's work means we can recognize this "spiritual" phenomenon as something human: the result of an unequal exchange of attention. In a secular environment, vernacular music provides semiotic resources to express great intimacy and therefore makes commercial sense. When it appears in music themes and lyrics, the "sacred" (in its expanded sense) is therefore a *justification* for thrills generated by the totemic system. Attention to Elvis' sacred music—a field ignored by religiosity arguments—shows us how this happens. Gospel quartets drew no lines between the sacred and the secular. Elvis loved gospel and used it to enter the mainstream. Despite his own intentions, he did not, however, practice "worship" music. His fans respected his values but have not generally understood him as a conduit to God. Some have said that Elvis used his music as a God-given gift, in part because the reading aligns Elvis' values with his talents. He remains a centre of attention and is understood as a fascinating,

socially-valued individual, but his fans do not position him as a deity or perfect being. An issue with neo-religiosity scholarship is that it rarely addresses counter-arguments or makes the fine distinctions necessary to fully understand the topic. Various ontological levels require untangling: the frameworks dominating public discussions about music fandom, how fans negotiate such frameworks, what actually generates listener emotions, why notions of the sacred appear in popular music, and, finally, how fans understand the faith of their heroes. When we start separating those out, we find that—despite superficial similarities—there is a marked difference between worshipping an idol and following a star.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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Are Spiritual Experiences through Music Seen as Intrinsic or Extrinsic?

Peter Atkins and Emery Schubert

Abstract: Music has a great capacity to afford spiritual experiences, but are those experiences intrinsic or extrinsic to the music? This paper reports the results of research aimed at answering that research question. One hundred and seventeen self-reported Christian religious people completed a survey, answering eight rating-item questions about strong musical experiences, both in a religious and a non-religious context. Factor analysis revealed that ratings related to spirituality grouped together, but were separate from intrinsic and extrinsic semantic groupings, suggesting that there is something special about the phenomenon of spiritual experiences with music that is beyond a simple identifiable source. We concluded that spirituality, therefore, appears to be something profound and transcendent that *comes to life* with the musical forms, rather than being perceived as either explicitly intrinsic or extrinsic to the music. In the religious context, experiences were stronger, more spiritual, and more emotional, but in the non-religious context experiences elicited similar features, just to a lesser degree. This suggests the phenomenon is not merely a product of religion. This research, although limited due to its quantitative nature, demonstrated an important place for spirituality within the experience of music, and therefore places a call on the research community to invest more in understanding this phenomenon.

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1. Introduction

Music has a great capacity for eliciting spiritual experiences. We see this in the ubiquitous use of music in religion, in the transcendentalism of the Romantic period with great works of Art such as Liszt's Transcendental Studies [1], and in Robert Schumann's description of music as a universal language that animates the spirit [2]. There is something about music that makes it an effective vehicle for the expression of an ultimate reality that we can call spirituality [3–8]. Research on emotion in music over the last 20 years has led to an increasingly sophisticated understanding, culminating with perhaps one of the most important presentations of its mechanisms, through the work of Juslin and Västfjäll [9]. The mechanisms they propose can be grouped in a way that was proposed by Meyer [10] a half a century earlier, with a distinction between *referentialism* (extrinsic, e.g., Juslin and Västfjäll's "episodic memory") and *absolutism* (intrinsic, e.g., "emotional contagion"). That is, for at least the last 50 years, music in emotion researchers have been able to conceptualise emotion as having its source *extrinsic* to the music (memories, imaginings, *etc.*) or *intrinsic* to the music (coming from within the structure of the music). However, little work has been conducted to see if spiritual experiences can similarly be classed as intrinsic or extrinsic to the music. Are they of the same kind as the music, so that the music embodies the spiritual? Or are they of a different kind,

so that the music simply designates the spiritual? That is the research question this study seeks to explore. We begin by demonstrating that several researchers are aware of this possible dichotomy, but we identify little research that directly addresses the question from an empirical perspective, and so a survey-based study is reported to address the question.

There is debate amongst the research community as to what exactly spirituality means [11–13]. Rather than try and solve that debate in this paper we note that it is recognized as being closely related to transcendence [14–16]. For example, Kennedy and Kanthamani suggested that both transcendence and spirituality encompass an "overwhelming feeling of peace and unity with the entire creation, or profound inner sense of Divine presence" ([17], p. 334). Therefore, we can compare spiritual and transcendent experiences to see whether music conveys them intrinsically or extrinsically.

They will be intrinsic to the music if they are *embodied* by the music; if, for example, the sense of transcending beyond this physical world and losing track of time and space is inherent in the perception and reception of the melody, harmony and rhythm of the music itself. Meyer [10] called this *absolute* meaning. Absolute meaning is contained within the music itself, arising from some natural signification that the music possesses. Davies [18] called this the *dynamic characteristic in appearance,* where music models the spiritual experience through its pitch, rhythm and dynamics. Just as a Bassett Hound *looks* sad, so music has the dynamic characteristics that match the spiritual experience.

Accordingly, spiritual experiences will be embodied by the musical forms and not simply mediated through them, so that those forms can be done away with. Harvey called this *integration*, claiming that spirituality is in the very nature of music's working: "The music is neither an abstraction nor an outer object but an inner coming-to-life of something" ([19], p. 32). Therefore, "music is by its very nature spiritual" (p. 82). To the extent that this is the case, spiritual experiences will be intrinsic to the music.

The alternative is that spiritual experiences are extrinsic to the music, if they are simply designated to the music through association. This is what John Booth Davies [20] meant by the expression "Darling, they're playing our song". It is an intentionality that is merely *lent* to the music, which the music does not, of itself, possess [21]. A particular song may, for example, come to represent one's connection with God even if it does not inherently possess that intentionality. This is what Meyer [10] classified as *referential* meaning because the music merely refers to something outside the music. While Meyer focused on thoughts and, in particular, emotions, we are proposing that this provides a way of understanding spiritual experiences in music.

This extrinsic association can happen either with the music itself or with the text, which is part of the music in a wider sense. This research includes the possibility of the latter because of the close association between music and text. Various studies have shown this connection [22–24], which became known as the "integration effect" [25]. More recent studies have found that language in music (text) appears to be qualitatively different from language on its own [26]. Therefore, we will include the possibility of spiritual experiences arising from music and text together.

Music has a great capacity for sustaining such extrinsic references. It can trigger images or thoughts of people, places and experiences that are spiritual in nature, especially in the religious context. It can also carry connotations or shared associations that are spiritual in nature, such as in an

African freedom song. Further, music can convey moods that are spiritual. This was evident in Gabrielsson and Lindström Wik's [27] existential and transcendence categories, such as "*heavenly/extraterrestrial feeling*", "*oceanic feelings*", "*spiritual peace/harmony*", and "*devout, sacred atmosphere*".

Research on emotion as an experience of music has demonstrated that emotion can be both extrinsic, through its propensity to attract and maintain extra-musical references, and intrinsic, derived from the structure of the music itself, emanating from its forms. This was the focus of Meyer's seminal work *Emotion and meaning in music* [10], which is still bearing influence today [9,28–30]. Yet Davies [18] is one who claims that while music can have external references as it operates as a code, the power of music does not seem to depend on those codes, so emotion is better accounted for as an intrinsic phenomenon.

In our previous paper [31] we found that spiritual experiences operate in a similar way to emotion. However, that paper was limited to qualitative responses to open-ended questions about spiritual experiences identified in response to personally significant musical experiences. This paper examines, via quantitative techniques, whether spiritual experiences are reported as being intrinsic to the music and therefore embodied by it, or extrinsic to the music and therefore referred to by it, with the music acting as a conduit or link to this spiritual experience.

The study deliberately limits the participants to religious people because we wanted to be sure that a range of spiritual experiences could be reported, including those of a connection with the supernatural. Participants were drawn from the Christian religion (see Participants section, below). However, to safeguard against the possibility that participants will provide spiritual responses *because* they believe the researchers are seeking information about religious context experience (which we were not, we were seeking information on spiritual experiences) comparisons of experiences from the religious and the non-religious contexts were employed.

Music does not operate in what Sloboda [32] called a pharmaceutical way, by constraining a certain experience regardless of context and listener factors (personality, mood, *etc.*). It is, at least partially, a cultural phenomenon, whose meaning is developed within a cultural frame [33]. The community will respond to the music with a pre-given comportment to listening that includes attitudes, beliefs, expectations, and behaviors [34]. This influence of culture was examined here by comparing experiences in religious and non-religious contexts. If the spiritual experience is simply a demand characteristic of the religious context, it should not be present in the non-religious context. Furthermore, a demand characteristic should lead to lower ratings in the non-religious context, but in that case the differential responses to the different items related to spirituality will still be able to inform relative differences between contexts. In light of the contemporary understanding of spirituality as distinct from and wider than religion [12,13,35], we expect that experiences in the religious contexts will be more extrinsic in nature, involving references to the supernatural, but we expect that the overall spiritual experience will not simply be an effect of context.

This study has two aims:

(1). To see whether spiritual experiences are intrinsic or extrinsic for religious people.
(2). To see whether religious context has any effect on this.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and Recruitment

Participants in this study were recruited from Christian religious groups. This broad set of aesthetic and spiritual traditions was chosen on the basis that these participants would not reject the term spirituality either as being vacuous or as identifying them with beliefs to which they could not subscribe. These participants were drawn from specific churches (selected on the basis of their strong commitment to music), an arts college, para-church organizations, and various societies, choirs, and guilds. In addition, some were recruited from the Internet through groups concerned with religion.

Participants had the option of completing a paper-based or electronic survey, the latter facilitating participation from people overseas. Valid responses were received from 117 people aged between 18 and 77 years (Mean = 37.3, SD = 16.6) of whom 52% were male. Most major Christian denominations were represented, including Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Assemblies of God, Vineyard, Christian City Church, and Uniting Church.

Across the participant pool, 6% reported having no musical experience, 14% rated themselves as novices, 32% reported having some training, 35% experienced, and 13% professional musicians. Ninety percent of participants were from Australia, the rest being from the United States, Germany, Malaysia, Singapore, and South Africa.

2.2. Procedure and Material

A survey-based approach, consisting of three parts, was developed to address the research question as part of a larger study on spiritual experiences in music. The first part consisted of revealing ethics commitments, and gathering background and demographic information. The second part asked participants to recall a significant musical experience they had had in a religious setting. Participants were free to choose whatever significant experience they wished, and so they would be making reference to the music that was part of that experience, whether vocal or instrumental music. We then limited the main elements under investigation to quantifiable rating scales. Participants were then asked to rate, on an 11 point Likert scale (0 to 10), the extent to which the significance of the experience was due to extrinsic significations, such as memories, ideas, concepts, emotions and so on, represented by the music[1]. This formed the quantitative part of the "extrinsic" element. Participants were also asked to rate the extent to which the significance of the experience was due to intrinsic embodiment of the music itself, such as melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments and so on[2]. This formed the quantitative part of the "intrinsic" elements.

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they experienced six other elements in addition to "intrinsic" and "extrinsic". They were asked about the "strength" of the experience and whether there were "particularly intense emotions". They were asked about three elements that relate to

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[1] This extrinsic question read: "To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the memories, ideas, concepts, emotions, *etc*., represented by the music?"

[2] This intrinsic question read: "To what extent was the significance of this experience due to the music itself? (For example was it due to the melody, harmony, rhythm, instruments, *etc*.?)"

transcendence: “a sense of being part of or overtaken by something more powerful than yourself”, a sense of “losing track of time or space or even yourself as an individual”, a sense of being “transformed or strengthened”. They were then asked about the extent to which they would “describe this experience as spiritual”[3]. (What participants meant by “spiritual” was an open question so they were simply encouraged to use their own understanding of the term.) There were other qualitative questions in this study, but this paper presents these questions as the quantitative aspects, which comprised two general elements: “strength” and “emotion”, and four elements related to spirituality: “overtaken”, “lose track”, “transformed” and “spiritual”, in addition to the two elements “intrinsic” and “extrinsic”, mentioned above. The third part of the questionnaire asked the same questions about an experience in the non-religious setting, such as at home or at a concert. The order of parts 2 and 3 of the survey were swapped randomly across participants as a means of counterbalancing religious and non-religious context.

3. Results

A factor analysis was used to explore the inter-relationships between the eight quantitative elements in this study. Varimax rotation was used to obtain maximum separation of the emergent factors. The data from the religious and non-religious contexts for each individual were pooled in order to provide a larger data set and to maximize variation. This provided a maximum total data set of 234 entries (not all included participants completed all questions). All rating scales used ranged from 0–10.

Table 1 shows three distinct factors. The third factor was included despite having an Eigenvalue of less than 1 (0.9) because this allowed the presentation of both intrinsic and extrinsic meaning as well as spirituality. The first factor accounted for almost half the variance and included very strong loadings for all the spiritual-related elements, as well as “strength” and “emotion”. We suggest this factor is therefore identifying a sense of spirituality, which was also related to strength and emotion, and therefore labeled that factor accordingly. This identifies the importance of the spiritual experience in these experiences of music, as well as the connection between spirituality and emotion.

The second and third factors were strongly loaded with just one element each; “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” meaning respectively. We interpret this finding as indicating that spiritual experiences are not clearly either intrinsic or extrinsic parts of the music. These findings were further examined by comparing experiences in the religious and non-religious contexts. Tables 2 and 3 present the results.

These analyses are very similar to the overall analysis (Table 1), suggesting context had very little effect. The spirituality factor was again the strongest, and again it bore no relationship with intrinsic or extrinsic meaning, which both loaded independently. “Strength” did load more strongly onto the “intrinsic” factor in the non-religious context, suggesting that the music itself involved a sense of strength in the non-religious context that was not so relevant in the religious context. In the same context both “strength” and “emotion” loaded strongly onto the extrinsic factor.

[3] All quotes come from the questionnaire, and no further guidance was given in these questions.

Table 1. Factor analysis of the pooled questionnaire data.

	Factor		
Rotated Component Matrix	**1 Spirituality**	**2 Intrinsic meaning**	**3 Extrinsic meaning**
Strength	0.74	0.13	0.33
Emotions	0.76	0.10	0.34
Overtaken	0.90	0.08	0.10
Lose track	0.82	0.12	0.03
Transformed	0.89	−0.10	0.03
Spiritual	0.86	−0.16	−0.06
Intrinsic	0.04	0.85	0.02
Extrinsic	0.13	0.05	0.95
% of Variance	48%	18%	10%
Eigenvalue	4.24	1.72	0.94

n = 234; Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization; Shaded rows are elements related to spirituality.

Table 2. Factor analysis of the religious context.

	Factor		
Rotated Component Matrix	**1 Spirituality**	**2 Intrinsic meaning**	**3 Extrinsic meaning**
Strength	0.69	−0.03	0.50
Emotions	0.67	0.23	0.35
Overtaken	0.86	0.07	0.12
Lose track	0.80	0.18	−0.06
Transformed	0.85	0.04	0.04
Spiritual	0.88	0.02	−0.02
Intrinsic	0.05	0.82	0.14
Extrinsic	0.02	0.22	0.91
% of Variance	46%	17%	10%
Eigenvalue	4.14	1.51	0.88

n = 117.

Table 3. Factor analysis of the non-religious context.

	Factor		
Rotated Component Matrix	**1 Spirituality**	**2 Intrinsic meaning**	**3 Extrinsic meaning**
Strength	0.55	0.42	0.42
Emotions	0.66	0.20	0.46
Overtaken	0.82	0.29	0.22
Lose track	0.77	0.21	0.16
Transformed	0.87	−0.00	0.11
Spiritual	0.86	−0.07	−0.06
Intrinsic	0.05	0.85	−0.03
Extrinsic	0.11	−0.05	0.92
% of Variance	47%	16%	11%
Eigenvalue	4.23	1.44	0.96

n = 117.

Some of the dependent measures did not exhibit the assumptions required for parametric statistical testing. However, the decision was made to use parametric tests since the violations fell within the gamut of those described by Finch [36]. The eight elements were entered as the dependent variables into a MANOVA with context (religious and non-religious) as the independent variable, and this showed some differences between the religious and non-religious contexts. There was an overall main effect ($F(9,168) = 19.08$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.506$), and a series of follow-up *t*-tests confirmed there were significant differences for all elements except for "extrinsic" (see Table 4). Figure 1 plots the mean and standard error (SE) of each variable by context.

Table 4. *T*-test results and effect size (Cohen's d) for comparison between Religious and non-Religious contexts.

Element	t	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Strength	5.29	<0.01	0.693
Emotion	5.106	<0.01	0.668
Overtaken	8.103	<0.01	1.064
Lose track	4.544	<0.01	0.592
Transformed	9.167	<0.01	1.197
Spiritual	11.941	<0.01	1.562
Intrinsic	2.839	0.04	0.374
Extrinsic	0.935	0.99	0.124

Note: df = 232, *p* values adjusted for multiple comparisons using Bonferonni correction.

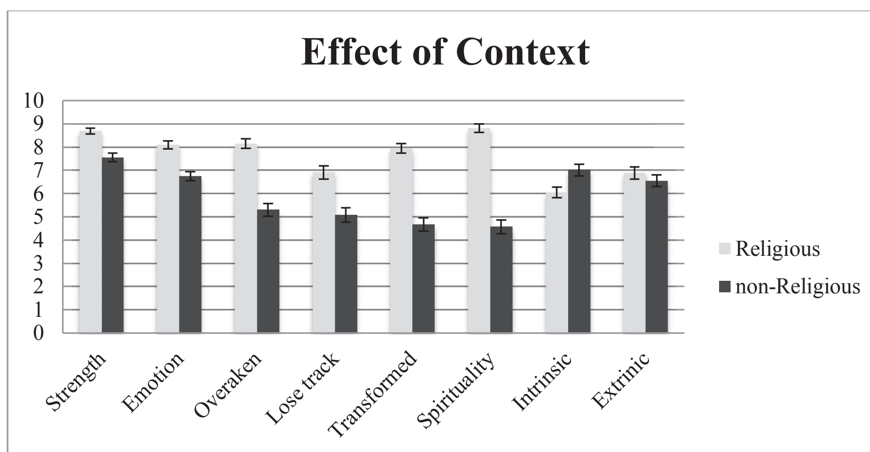

Figure 1. Mean element ratings comparing religious and non-religious contexts. Notes: $n = 117$; Error bars show ±1 SE; Dependent variables rated on a scale of 0 to 10.

For most of the elements it was the religious context that produced the higher ratings. The "spiritual" and transcendence-related elements in particular, but also "strength" and "emotion" were stronger in the religious context. This may be expected due to the religious nature of the participants. Yet these elements were still rated at around 5 out of 10 or higher in the non-religious context,

suggesting there is still some sense of the spiritual and transcendence and more so of strength and emotion even in the non-religious context.

The "extrinsic" element was rated similarly for both contexts, indicating it was a moderately important element regardless of context. Ratings for "intrinsic" were, by contrast, higher for the non-religious context. This may be due to a greater focus on the music itself in the non-religious context, whereas in the religious context people experienced something more, often involving the words.

Results also demonstrated strong support for the similarity between spirituality and transcendence. Table 5 shows that correlations between the three transcendence elements and spirituality were all strong and significant. The correlation between "spiritual" and "lose track" (0.59) was the lowest, which may identify where spirituality and transcendence differ for these participants. It seems spirituality had less to do with the idea of withdrawal from time and space and more to do with the connection or fusion with another entity, such as God.

Table 5. Pearson correlations of the three transcendence elements with the "spiritual" element.

Element	Correlation
Overtaken	0.74*
Lose track	0.59*
Transformed	0.79*

Note: $n = 230$; * $p < 0.01$.

4. Discussion

This paper has presented the quantitative findings pertinent to the research question of whether spiritual experiences are intrinsic or extrinsic to music, by analyzing quantitative ratings on a self-report questionnaire. Participants with a keen interest in music were selected from the Christian religious tradition, which represents one aesthetic tradition in which spirituality should be a concept that is readily accessible. A comparison was made between experiences in a religious context (e.g., a church service) and a non-religious context (e.g., a concert) for each participant. We acknowledge the limitation of findings that do not take into account qualitative aspects of spirituality and we refer the reader to our previous paper where such information was reported [31]. Nevertheless, we submit that these quantitative data yield valuable results contributing to a broad understanding of spirituality and music.

4.1. Spirituality as Intrinsic or Extrinsic?

There was no obvious link between spirituality and either the intrinsic or extrinsic meaning of the music. Rather, it occupied its own dimension in both religious and non-religious contexts. The spirituality factor, which included both spiritual and transcendence elements, was statistically independent of both the intrinsic and extrinsic factors. We acknowledge that there were more questionnaire elements relating to spirituality (four out of eight), which could account for the amount of variance that factor represented. However, that does not explain why the spiritual-related elements did not load onto the intrinsic or extrinsic factors.

Apart from a slight loading (0.22) of "Overtaken" with extrinsic meaning in the non-religious context, there was very little evidence of spiritual experiences being extrinsic to the music. The qualitative responses that support this quantitative data, which were discussed in our previous paper [31], suggested there was some degree of extrinsic dimension to the spiritual experience, in that there were some comments intimating that the music brought external references to spiritual aspects, such as references to God (p. 316). However, this only accounts for part of the experience of spirituality. When the spiritual experience is considered holistically, as was done here, it is not an extrinsic phenomenon.

These quantitative results also indicated that the spiritual experience was not really intrinsic to the music either, in that the factors were clearly separate. "Overtaken" and "Lose track" did load weakly (0.29 and 0.21) for the non-religious context, but that was all. We suggest that this is because intrinsic meaning was taken in a constricted, formal sense of "melody, harmony and rhythm". Meyer [10] characterized the formalist position as "the meaning of the music [that] lies in the perception and understanding of the musical relationships set forth in the work of art and that meaning in music is primarily intellectual" (p. 3). The finding that "strength" generally did not load onto the intrinsic factor, whereas it loaded onto the spiritual factor, implies that the strength of the experience was distinct from whether or not it was a result of the music itself. This suggests that the "intrinsic" element was seen by participants to relate not to the nature of the experience, which one would expect to be strong (because participants were asked to consider the strongest experiences they had had), but to the formal components of the music itself. Therefore these quantitative data indicate that spiritual experiences are not a formalist phenomenon; not a product of the musical forms.

In the qualitative responses participants went beyond this formalism to state why the experience of those tonal forms might have been significant. For example, "There is a rare beauty that we understand and that resonates with us and calls us beyond ourselves" ([31], p. 319). We conclude, therefore, that while the components of the music (melody, rhythm, harmony, *etc*.) were not sufficient to account for the experience of spirituality, they gave rise to the *expression* of spirituality in the same way that Meyer claimed that emotions are an *Absolute Expression* of music. He described it in these terms: "these same [musical] relationships are in some sense capable of exciting feelings and emotions in the listener" ([10], p. 3). Correspondingly, the musical forms express the feeling or sense of the spiritual. They can do that because, as Sloboda [37] has written, music *affords* worship or the experience of the spiritual.

The other reason to conclude this is that "emotion" did not load with "intrinsic" on the factor analyses either. It is well documented that emotion can be intrinsic to the music, [10,18,19]. Furthermore, musical features have been causally linked to emotions, such as loud music producing high energy emotions and major mode generating positive emotions [38]. Emotion consistently loaded on the same factors as "spiritual", and correlations between emotion and each of the spiritual-related elements were all strong and significant. This not only indicates that spirituality and emotion are closely related phenomena, relating to music in a similar way (even though that cannot be explained more fully here), but that if participants had approached the "intrinsic" element in more expressionist terms, rather than formalist, it would have demonstrated a closer relationship with the spiritual experience. The question of the relationship between spirituality and emotion was discussed in our previous paper [31].

Taken together, these findings show that spiritual experiences were not simply a product of the musical forms, because if they were, "spiritual" would have loaded strongly with "intrinsic" meaning. Nor were they merely an association of the music because if they were, "spiritual" would have loaded more strongly with "extrinsic" meaning. (This probably would have been all the more the case if we had restricted experiences of music to just instrumental music. The text, although associated with the music, arguably allows more extrinsic associations. Therefore the fact that such associations were absent from these data suggests that spirituality is not merely an extrinsic association). Instead, spirituality, like emotion, is a form of expression that arises from the music; an awareness that is apprehended in the encounter with music.

Two other points are worth making. The presence of the spiritual factor as the first factor in every factor analysis underscores the importance of the spiritual experience with music. While the elements of spirituality might have been distributed across various dimensions in the factor analysis, on each analysis they in reality remained connected, suggesting a strong semantic cohesiveness in the concept of spirituality in terms of our proposed elements (in particular, the three elements of overtaken, lose track and transformed). We interpret this as a call on the scientific community to bring spirituality from the fringes and examine it as a vital part of the experience of music, as the same community has been doing with emotion for over 20 years.

Secondly, these data indicate that transcendence is closely related to spirituality. The consistently strong loading of "spiritual" with the three transcendence elements, along with the strong correlations depicted in Table 5 intimate that these phenomena are very similar. This supports the research indicating that transcendence is central to spirituality [14–16].

4.2. Spirituality is Not a Product of Context

One aim of this study was to determine whether the intrinsic or extrinsic nature of spiritual experiences was a product of religious context. Some differences between contexts were clearly evident. Experiences in the religious context were stronger and more emotional, spiritual and transcendent than those in the non-religious context. This is in line with Dibben and Hansen's [39] finding that religious experiences were more intense and profound than non-religious ones, despite physiological responses being similar. Higher ratings for "strength" may indicate a demand characteristic, in that participants may have filtered out truly strong experiences in the non-religious contexts to satisfy the hypothesis the participants may have believed was under investigation (spirituality in religious contexts). Alternatively, this may indicate that experiences in the religious context were simply stronger for religious people, which would make sense.

The "intrinsic" meaning element was rated higher in the non-religious context, suggesting that experiences in the religious context are perhaps focused on something more than the music. The qualitative data (reported in [31]) demonstrated that this was an added dimension of rational signification, such as references to the supernatural. This seems to be evidence of the combining of conceptual and experiential knowledge, as distinguished by Rahner [40]. It is as if an ineffable sense of spirituality was experienced in the non-religious context, but in the religious context there was an added dimension of conceptual signification that made the experience more pronounced. The

inclusion of music with text in some experiences may partially account for this, yet music with text was also included in some non-religious experiences.

However, these differences do not mean that spirituality is therefore a product of context. The factor analyses were very similar, and the spiritual factor was equally distinct from intrinsic or extrinsic meaning in both contexts. Ratings for "extrinsic" meaning were equal for both contexts. However, most importantly, average ratings for all the spiritual elements still came in around the 50th percentile in the non-religious context. Therefore, although spirituality is more prevalent in the religious context, it is still apparent in the non-religious context. This indicates that the spiritual experience is not simply a product of context.

5. Conclusions

We conclude that, as far as our interpretation of the quantitative data reveals, spiritual experiences with music for religious people are best understood as an expression of the (intrinsic) musical forms such as melody, harmony and rhythm. They are not intrinsic in the sense of being contained within those forms in a formalistic sense, for the qualitative data in particular expressed an apprehension of something beyond these physical attributes that one understands intuitively in relation to them. Equally, spiritual experiences are not entirely extrinsic in the sense of some intentionality lent to or referred to by the music. There are aspects of the experiences that are extrinsic, and these are experienced more in the religious setting. This may be partly due to the presence of text with the music, and this will need to be examined in future research. Nevertheless, the extrinsic aspects only partially account for spiritual experiences. These experiences are best understood as an apprehension of something profound and transcendent that "comes to life" [19] with the music itself.

We also conclude that spirituality is not a product of context. There were some differences between experiences in religious and non-religious settings, where experiences in the religious context were stronger, more spiritual, and more emotional, as well as involving more rational content. However, experiences in the non-religious context also included these elements, albeit to a lesser extent. This would not be the case if spirituality were simply a product of religious context.

This study has demonstrated clear evidence for the importance of spirituality in the experience of music for religious people. It confirms that this phenomenon is not a peripheral one, but a legitimate research area in need of further investigation. Our approach in this study has been quantitative, which places limitations on the conclusions drawn, but it builds on our earlier qualitative research to embrace different methodologies for better understanding the nature of spirituality and music (See, for example, [41]). In particular there is a need to investigate whether these results are applicable to non-religious people, or people of other religions. If they are it will only heighten the need to better understand spiritual experiences in relation to music.

Author Contributions

This paper is based on a part of the first author's PhD dissertation, and is primarily his work—both writing and research—with a contribution of about 80%. The second author was the PhD supervisor, and worked with the first author closely in the design, analysis and writing up of the

study. Additional work was performed by the supervisor as part of his Australian Research Council (ARC) Future Fellowship, FT120100053.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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