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Music: Its Theologies and Spiritualities

A Global Perspective

Edited by

Edward Foley

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Editor

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Contents

About the Editor

Edward Foley Duns Scotus Professor Emeritus and retired Professor of Liturgy and Music at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Edward Foley is the Duns Scotus Professor Emeritus of Spirituality and a retired Professor of Liturgy and Music at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. A member of the Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order since 1966, he was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1975. He holds multiple graduate degrees in music, ministry and theology, including a Ph.D. in Theology (1987) from the University of Notre Dame. An award winning author, he currently has 30 published authored or edited books to his name; some of his most recent works are *Catholic Marriage: A Pastoral-Liturgical Handbook, Defragmenting Franciscanism: Collaboration in a post Ite Vos era, and Preaching as Paying Attention: Theological Reflection in the Pulpit*. Foley has also authored over 300 chapters in books, scholarly and pastoral articles, and reviews. His current writing projects include a new work on Eucharistic worship after Vatican II. He was a recent recipient of grants from various foundations, including a major grant from the John Templeton foundation on preaching and the sciences. A well known speaker and teacher, he has lectured in over 60 dioceses throughout the English speaking world. He was granted the *mandatum* as a teacher of Roman Catholic theology from Francis Cardinal George. He received of the *Jubilate* Deo award from the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, and a Lilly Faculty Fellowship. Foley was awarded the life-time achievement *Berakah* award by the North American Academy of Liturgy in 2013, and the McManus Award from the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions in 2020. He currently serves his community as the vice-postulator for the canonization cause of Blessed Solanus Casey. He preaches and presides at Old St. Patrick's Church in Chicago and St. Mary's Church in Riverside.

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Editorial

Music and Spirituality: A Journey into Porosity

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Abstract: Serving as an introduction to this special issue of Religion entitled "Music and Spirituality: A Journey into Porosity," this introduction frames the following eight essays by considering the ambiguity not only of the meaning of music itself, but also of spirituality, liturgical-sacred music and other frames that attempt to examine and sometimes delimit the power of music. While taxonomies and theoretical boundaries are still useful, they need to be employed with some caution in view of the musical and spiritual realities they are attempting to describe or analyze.

Keywords: music; spirituality; theology

Early in my studies a treasured mentor once interrupted a presentation I was giving in his doctoral seminar when I too blithely attempted to distinguish "authentic" liturgy from people's popular devotions. His concise but memorable seven-word intervention was: "words are words and things are things". What Prof. Robert Taft[1] helped me begin to understand then and increasingly over the years is that too often—especially in western academics and all too consistently in my own Roman Catholic tradition—we easily confuse frameworks with the realities to which they point.

This Taftism, as his students came to deem his many memorable maxims, returns to me as these eight articles are gathered from honored colleagues into a volume that emerged from a special issue of the peer reviewed journal *Religion.* The distinguishing perspective, when first soliciting these works and now presenting them together as a monograph, was the word "global". There are other words that could have been employed in its stead, and in all likelihood this choice is equally as flawed as the many discarded ones. e.g., multicultural and contextual. Such framing words cannot capture all the richness and realities of these thoughtful contributions and the vast arenas of music and spirituality from which they emerge.

Attending to musics from around the world or outside what some might consider the "mainstream" is not new. How we view these musics and evaluate their worth, however, has changed drastically—especially over the past few decades. As in anthropology, non-Western musical practices were often categorized as exotic or, more problematically, "primitive" artifacts. This and comparable frameworks cast an undeniable specter of self-ceded superiority to the outside observers who stumbled across such "discoveries". While these findings were no revelation to the people who had been performing them for untold years, intrepid western explorers instinctively presumed their unchallengeable qualifications—whether derived from some advanced training, social status, or national origin—to judge the value of cultural productions about which they ordinarily knew precious little.

The emergence of the field of comparative musicology was an important context for critiquing the ethnocentrism of musical studies of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and valuing music that did not follow Western tonal or compositional frameworks. While largely agreeing with its aims, in 1950

[1] Robert Taft SJ (d. 2018), in a seminar on Eastern Liturgies at the University of Notre Dame, 1980. For more on Archimandrite see the Necrology from Sant'Anselmo at https://www.osb.org//wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TaftSAWebCorretto-EN-2.pdf.

Jaap Kunst argued that "comparative musicology" was an especially flawed term and in its place suggested the frame of ethno-musicology[2] which soon morphed into ethnomusicology.

From the outset there have been varying opinions on the purpose and focus of this discipline. Some ethnomusicologists were and yet are passionately committed to studying and preserving the music of non-Western societies. Increasingly, however, others recognized that besides the study of non-Western music, there is an essential role in this discipline for studying folk, traditional, and popular music in Western cultures. Prophetically one of the pioneers in the field, Bruno Nettl, suggested that ethnomusicology should concern itself with (1) music of nonliterate societies, (2) the music of Asian and north African "high cultures," and (3) folk music.[3] More recently ethnomusicologists have moved beyond the geographic confines of "non-Western" or restrictions of the oral traditions deemed "folk" music and understand the field of ethnomusicology as the study of music in any culture. As early as 1965 the French ethnomusicologist C. Marcel-Dubois held that his discipline was about studying "living musics" and placing them in their socio-cultural context.[4] Thus, the Society for Ethnomusicology itself currently defines the field apart from any geographic boundaries and, instead, notes that it is the study of any music in its social and cultural contexts.[5]

A similar development has evolved in the study of religion and religious music over the past decades. Particularly, since the 16th century religious Reformation in the West, theology in general and liturgy in particular have been understood to be arenas of denominational prerogatives. While the ecumenical and then interfaith movements of the 20th century have nourished theological dialogue beyond denominational boundaries, there are yet clear delineations. Thus, Reform and Roman Catholic Christians presume it is their right and responsibility to delineate what they respectively believe to be orthodox theologies for their churches. Along with the ecumenical movement, however, the emergence of the field of religious studies in the late 19th century has seriously challenged the unique authority of denominations and even world religions to maintain such boundaries and barriers. Alternately conceived as comparative religion or the history of religion, contemporary proponents of the study of religion emphasize that beliefs, devotional practices, rituals, and even religious institutions can be effectively studied without assenting to any religious beliefs. This turn from an emic to a more etic theological approached has spawned an unheard-of hybridity in appreciation for and interpretation of religious beliefs and practices, both traditional and contemporary. Emblematic of this movement is the sprawling American Academy of Religion whose annual meetings draw thousands of participants across the religious spectrum.

The definitions and study of sacred or liturgical music have also been largely defined by denominational boundaries. What a Roman Catholic might consider "liturgical" music—especially after the teachings of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65)—are very different from what a Jewish cantor might deem liturgical. However, categories such as sacred music and liturgical music have long been appropriated by musicologists and scholars from other purportedly secular fields. This "outsider" appropriation has contributed greatly to the blurring of denominational control of these frames. Furthermore, the rise of ritual studies as an independent academic discipline in the late 20th century[6] and the parallel emergence of ritual music as an optic for considering the ceremonial music of everything from Buddhist temples to Voodoo exorcisms continues to demolish denominational boundaries and unmoor many of the distinctions that corralled sacred and secular rituals and their musics.

A final boundary obfuscation that is pertinent here concerns the nature of spirituality. Traditional Roman Catholic theology considered the spiritual life as an integral element in theological discourse but for centuries did not treat it as a separate area of speculation. By the post-Reformation era, however,

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2 (Kunst 1950).
3 (Nettl 1964, pp. 5–7).
4 (Marcel-Dubois 1965).
5 https://www.ethnomusicology.org/page/AboutEthnomusicol.
6 (Foley 2012, pp. 143–52).

the distinctive discipline of mystical theology developed, which considered the soul's journey to union with God. At the same time, popular practices such as the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola (d. 1556) and the largely abandoned field of ascetical theology, concerned with the practice of virtues that would lead to such union with the Holy One, shifted emphasis from abstract theories about the soul to pastoral concerns about individuals and their call to holiness.

In the 20th century spirituality increasingly came to be understood as a multifaceted reality, e.g., (1) the lived experience of faith, as (2) teachings about that lived experience (e.g., formulated in schools of spirituality), and finally as (3) the academic study of the first two.[7] Because of the emphasis on experience in emerging definitions of spirituality, it too migrated beyond traditional religious boundaries and is now happily appropriated by groups as diverse as Muslims and humanists and so many in between. For the growing number of religiously unaffiliated in the world, Lionel Abadia notes that spiritual has emerged as an alternative or even substitute for institutionalized religion and has come to represent "a modern form of sacredness, centered on the individual and oriented toward emotions and experiences rather than based on rites and aligned on norms".[8]

It is in celebration of this welcome spiritual and musical porosity that the following eight essays are offered as a kind of sampler. Obviously eight essays cannot map the range of musical practice and theologizing that marks this topic. At the same time, these collected works serve as a kind of primer for understanding something of how contemporary disparate musical practices are reckoned as theologically potent and spiritually rich.

The collection opens with Helen Phelan's enlightening observations on the musical practices of a Congolese choir, established by a group of asylum seekers in her hometown of Limerick, Ireland in 2001. On the faculty at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, Dr. Phelan is well versed in the protocols of field observation and ritual theory. She also is conversant in theories of deconstruction and postmodern hermeneutics. These multiple lenses—the interdisciplinary marks of a trustworthy guide on this journey—allows her to present a sonic case study of the singing group *Elikya* (the Lingala word for "hope") that not only provides insight about the interplay of music and identity but also effectively tests the proposal of a new model for a respectful and enriching "sonic encounter".

The contribution by Juyoung Lee and Jane W. Davidson is also a study of migrants, but in a distinctively different context employing a decidedly different research method. Whereas the previous work examines music's contribution to the forging of identity, this piece is concerned with music's contribution to the physical and mental wellbeing of a small group of Koreans living in Australia. The musical exercise occurs in the context of weekly charismatic prayer meetings in a Roman Catholic Church. By employing a focus group method, the researchers were able to discern some of the key factors motivating the often-long term engagement of members in these prayer meetings that contributed to a palpable sense of communion among them. There was also evidence that engaging in this highly musical prayer practices contributed to physical and psychosocial benefits for participating members.

A completely different musical palette is examined by Sister Sidonia in her examination of Georgian polyphonic chant and spiritual songs. This interdisciplinary study explores Orthodox Georgian chant through theological as well as iconographic-architectural and historical lenses. Punctuated by almost two dozen musical examples, Dr. Sidonia offers thoughtful musicological analysis of selected chants and liturgical songs intended to serve her underlying theological questions. Weaving spiritual reflections throughout the analysis allows her to demonstrate how Georgian polyphony is a theologically potent repository for believers, especially regarding central tenets of Orthodox faith about the Trinity and Incarnation. Just as the theological traditions under consideration have been woven together from different strands of its members into an ecclesial confession of faith, so do these musical

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7 (Principe 1999).
8 (Abadia 2017).

examples illuminate a musical weaving from different melodic sources that effectively echo that same sustaining faith.

The next contribution admittedly is a geographical and spiritual leap from Georgian Chant and Orthodox Christianity to Irish funeral laments and Celtic spiritual yearnings. Nonetheless, Dr. Mary McLaughlin's historical and ethnographic study of the "keen" demonstrates in its own unique way how traditional musics both reflect and respond to deep spiritual needs of a community. Intimately wed to Irish wake practices in a predominantly Roman Catholic country, the practice of keening, like similar cultural practices, was both curtailed and condemned by various leaders within Catholicism. While this ecclesiastical critique pushed the practice underground, shrouding it in secrecy and rendering the ethnographic task of collecting evidence of its performance difficult, McLaughlin yet constructs a credible outline of this improvisatory practice from the sparse evidence available. She further illustrates how this practice informally continues, particularly among grieving family members, and points to the deep cultural-spiritual need for emotional expression in the face of death.

The interplay between music and theology is explicitly advocated by the TheoArtistry Composer's Scheme that Prof. George Corbett examines in his contribution to this volume. This initiation, based at the Institute for Theology, Imagination and the Arts at Corbett's home University of St. Andrews (from 2016–2017) created partnerships between theologians and composers, resulting in six new works of sacred choral music. A catalyst for this initiative was the Scottish musician and theologian Sir James MacMillan, a celebrated composer of classical and liturgical works. Corbett grounds his contribution in an opening analysis of MacMillan's convictions about the intrinsic religiosity of music. He then described the process of collaboration between six theologians and six composers, centered around six "annunciations" from the Hebrew Scriptures recounting God's direct communication with humankind. Prof. Corbett argues for future forms of reintegrating theology and the arts, as well as the special contribution that results from a more fulsome disclosure of the composer's theological inspiration.

Resonant with this claim is the work of Prof. Braxton Shelley and his consideration of the sacramentality of sound in "the Black gospel tradition". As an experienced musician in the tradition he exegetes, Shelley is aware of the challenges of employing a sacramental frame for music's role in Black Baptist theology and practice. He nonetheless credibly demonstrates how, in many Black Protestant churches, sound occupies a primary place in the sacramental economy. Central to this argument is a consideration of the song "Hebrews 11" by the gospel composer and artist Richard Smallwood. Through both textual and musical analysis, Shelley illustrates a structural similarly between Smallwood's composition and the New Testament text. Playing on the potency of sound—and therefore music—as a mediator of spiritual, even Godly presence, he concludes that, along with recognized liturgical practices such as baptism and the Lord's supper, sound itself is a primary conduit "through which spiritual sustenance finds its way into the bodies and minds of believers".

The ambiguous border between the sacred and the secular, between sacramental and profane sound receives a fresh infusion of insight from Dr. Jennifer Budziak's examination of major choral works that have emerged over the past few decades that self-identify as some form of "passion". While this has been a celebrated framework for crafting classic musical compositions that take the death of Christ as their spiritual and even textual center, the plethora of recent compositions draw their inspiration from a wide range of sources, some of which are decidedly not Christological and even spurn that religious frame as central to the genre. In a provocative methodological move, Budziak reappropriates a largely bypassed and even debunked theory—that of liminality as initiated by Arnold van Gennep and promulgated by Victor Turner—to consider the choral passion itself as a liminal space. Pushing the interdisciplinary margins, Budziak weds the frame of liminality with that of postmodernity as both a philosophical and musical movement. She concludes that the resurgence of the Passion as a serious genre of choral music coincides with the emergence of musical postmodernity. Furthermore, contemporary composers in the genre render the Passion an ideal template for pondering ritual liminality in the compositional process.

The volume closes with a contribution from the German composer and theologian Dieter Schnebel made possible through a translation of his seminal essay on spiritual music by Prof. Christopher Anderson. While in no way a summary of the previous seven contributions, Schnebel's reflections on the spiritual capacities of music are yet a fitting conclusion for this work. Anderson well situates Schnebel's thinking at the surprising intersections of mainstream theologians such as Karl Barth and the avant-garde music scene of post-war Europe, of the traditional and innovative, and of the sacred and the secular. Schnebel believed that Spirit-possessed music, like theology itself, is a source of renewal and liberation in a world saturated with suffering and oppression. Deeply committed to the Confessing Church, Schnebel yet believed that truly spiritual music must press out into the world, in order to grant space to the Spirit that similarly yearns to move into the world through contemporary forms and language.

This introduction began by recalling the wisdom of a beloved mentor whose seven-word aphorism underscored that the language we employ to explain our world and whatever Divine Spirit that inhabits that world is always inadequate. "Words are words and things are things". Attempting to explain the nature of music is similarly daunting. There is a celebrated story of Robert Schumann who, after having played a difficult études, was asked to explain the meaning of the music. In response, Schumann sat back down at the piano and played it again. Words are words and music is music. How music functions as a spiritual vehicle is not easily explained. The following essays certainly provide insight into that enduring question. At the same time, together they affirm anew the ambiguity of any and every "sound theology" and music's singular capacity for transcendence. Words are words, but music is music.

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Article

The Untidy Playground: An Irish Congolese Case Study in Sonic Encounters with the Sacred Stranger

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Abstract: This paper explores the proposal that music, and particularly singing, has unique properties that render it amenable to encounters with "the other" or the sacred stranger. Drawing on the deconstructionist works of Kristeva and Derrida, as well as the postmodern hermeneutics of Kearney and Caputo, it explores current debate concerning the nature of "the sacred" in contemporary life and the erosion of the theistic/atheistic divide, while proposing a deepening of the debate through the inclusion of the performative. As philosophical and theological discourses embrace this aporia, it does so against the backdrop of unprecedented human migration. The concomitant cultural and social disruption throws up new questions around the nature and experience of religion, spirituality and the sacred. This paper explores these questions in the context of a Congolese choir called *Elikya*, which was established by a group of asylum seekers in Limerick city, Ireland, in 2001. In tracking the musical life of this choir over the last decade and a half, including two musical recordings and numerous liturgical, religious and secular performances, it suggests that the sonic world of the choir both performs and transcends these descriptors. Using a three-fold model of *context*, *content* and *intent*, the paper concludes that musical experiences such as those created by *Elikya* erode any easy divisions between the religious and the secular or the liturgical and the non-liturgical and provide sonic opportunities to encounter the sacred stranger in the untidy playground of creative chaos.

Keywords: music; singing; migration; asylum-seeker; refugee; the sacred; creativity; sonority; Ireland; the Congo

1. Introduction

When we think of the many ways that our contemporary world attempts to address the seismic upheavals occurring across the planet in the face of human migration and dislocation, singing may not be the first activity that comes to mind. Nor might we immediately think of it as a performance of "the sacred". This paper explores the proposal that music, and particularly singing, has unique properties that render it amenable to encounters with "the other" or the sacred stranger. The paper introduces this proposal through an engagement with philosophical and theological discourse concerning the nature of the sacred. Drawing on the deconstructionist works of Kristeva and Derrida, as well as the postmodern hermeneutics of Kearney and Caputo, it explores current debate concerning the existential crisis in Western European culture and possible responses to a search for meaning in a world which many agree has moved beyond a metaphysical god but also beyond secularism.

Much contemporary philosophy and theology attempts to locate what emerges "after" God and "after" secularism, in a re-imagining of the sacred. For many, this is found in an engagement with the imagination through poetry, literature and art. In this paper, the deepening of this engagement through the inclusion of the performative is proposed as a means of anchoring the sacred in somatic, culturally expressed experiences. This proposal is grounded in an exploration of one performative phenomenon called *Elikya*—a Congolese vocal ensemble established by a group of asylum seekers in

Limerick city, Ireland in 2001; its musical life is tracked over the last decade and a half, including two musical recordings, numerous liturgical, religious and secular performances and several ethnographic interviews with members, colleagues and supporters. Using a three-fold model of *context*, *content* and *intent*, the paper concludes that musical experiences such as those created by *Elikya* erode any easy divisions between the religious and the secular or the liturgical and the non-liturgical and provide sonic opportunities to encounter the sacred stranger in the untidy playground of creative chaos.

2. Towards a Renewed Encounter with "the Sacred"

There is a significant preoccupation among postmodern philosophers with a sense of existential crisis in contemporary, European culture. Kristeva (1993, 2009) suggests that the root of this crisis is located in our need to believe, while living in a society, which actively questions or denies the existence of God. The "God is dead" crisis has its roots in Hegelian metaphysics but its most popular articulation in Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (Nietzsche 1891/1999). The proposal that the God of Christianity does not exist creates an ethical and existential crisis for a culture built on the values and morality embedded in Christian tradition. Kristeva suggests that the resulting secularisation of Western culture has not provided an adequate response to this crisis. If God is dead, so too is secularism as an alternative proposal. In an essay on dance and postmodernity, she suggests that secularism is as culpable in the rise of fundamentalism as religion is:

> If dance or rather dances in the plural have always accompanied religious rites and their offshoots, if men and women's dancing is inseparable from the experience of this *Homo Religiosus* which is *Homo Sapiens*, how is it possible to dance if God is dead? In saying "God is dead" I am referring to an event that happened in Europe—and nowhere else—which cut ties with religious tradition. An unprecedented event whose way was paved by the Greco-Judeo-Christian tradition. But "God is dead" also means that some use religion as a political tool if not a political weapon, as in the case of religious fundamentalism. (Kristeva 2013, p. 3)

Neither religion nor secularism appear capable of answering to the dual desire in humans to both believe in something that gives life meaning, as well as to understand the world around us through our intelligence and experience. The cognitive dissonance and psychic disturbances created by the inability to answer to these simultaneous needs are at the heart of the crisis.

In his later writings in particular, Derrida also confronts this crisis through a growing engagement with political and ethical issues (Derrida 1993, 2000, 2002). His writings on conditionality and unconditionality attempt, if not to bridge the gap between belief and pragmatism, to at least suggest that the optimal human condition resides in the "always already" space between the possible and the impossible. His writings on justice, for example, suggest that irreconcilable points of view must always aspire towards the impossible, unconditional acceptance of the other (De Ville 2007). Publishing and lecturing on topics such as human democracies, as well as peace and reconciliation, he notes that unconditional forgiveness is only possible in the face of the unforgiveable (Caputo et al. 2001). Conditional forgiveness is an act of the law, while unconditional forgiveness is the forgiveness of the unforgiveable; "it is only possible in doing the impossible" (Derrida 2001, p. 33). It is the relationship between the conditional and the unconditional which is central; one should not exist without the other. Limiting forgiveness to the law allows for the possibility of justice, but justice is too limited a construct to house the unforgiveable. Forgiving the unforgiveable requires the unconditionality of love:

> ... *on the one side*, the idea which is also a demand for the *unconditional*, gracious, infinite, an economic, forgiveness granted to *the guilty as guilty*, without counterpart, even to those who do not repent or ask forgiveness, and *on the other side*, as a great number of texts testify through many semantics refinements and difficulties, a conditional forgiveness proportionate to the recognition of the fault, to repentance, to the transformation of the sinner who then explicitly asks forgiveness. And who from that point is no longer guilty

> through and through, but already another, and better than the guilty one. (Derrida 2001, pp. 34–35)

It is his writings on migration and hospitality, however, that provide the fullest treatment of this paradoxical dualism. The topic is addressed in the publications, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, and *Of Hospitality*, which examine the issue of refugees within a European context. Encounters with "the other" or "the stranger" depend on this same double-stranded helix of conditional and unconditional hospitality: the strand of relative, political, law-based hospitality and that more aspirational 'absolute' hospitality, on which he claims real hospitality must rest. It invites a complex sense of relationship; an engagement not only with those with whom we have something in common, but also towards those whom we might feel a sense of hostility or even fear. Etymologically speaking, hospitality is linked not only to the host, the hospital, the hostel and the hospice, but also to hostility and the hostile.

Hospitality depends on a tacit, experiential engagement with the other. The stranger or the foreigner is a familiar figure in Western literature, philosophy and theology. Plato's interrogative *xenos*; Paul's Hellenistic cosmopolitanism; medieval *peregrini* and *advenae*; Marco Polo's accounts of the marvels of the East, and the good savage of Romanticism are all aspects of a complex, inherited projection of the other (Kristeva 1991). Derrida suggests that, at the turn of the millennium from the 20th to the 21st century, the stranger has been re-cast against a backdrop of global migration, unprecedented in its scope and character. The lecture entitled "Foreigner Question" (*Question d'étranger*) admits that the "question" of the foreigner preoccupies contemporary Europe but equally reminds the listener/reader that the foreigner him/herself is a question posed at the host society:

> . . . before being a question to be dealt with, before designating a concept, a theme, a problem, a programme, the question of the foreigner is a question of the foreigner, addressed *to* the foreigner . . . But also the one who, putting the first question, puts me in question. (Derrida 2000, p. 3)

The migrant holds up a mirror to the host, in this case, the European post-Christian host, and asks for hospitality, a place at the table. An inability to welcome the stranger often hides a fear that the stranger may expose our own existential impoverishment.

In inviting this philosophical discourse into the theological domain, scholars such as Caputo and Kearney attempt to, "leave behind the reductive options of secular and religious fundamentalisms" (Zimmermann in Kearney 2016, p. 2) by suggesting that there is an emergent space opening up in the return to God "after God". This, Kearney suggests, is neither a theistic or an atheistic space but one of *anatheism*—a return to God, not as a metaphysical reality but an imagined presence, often conjured by poets and writers and artists (Kearney 2001, 2011, 2016). Caputo seeks a "theopoetics", arguing that God is best approached poetically rather than rationally (Caputo 2006). His radical hermeneutics resists any teleological end to the infinite playfulness of interpretation (Caputo 1997, 2001) and this space of not-knowing, but ever seeking, is what Kearney calls "the sacred".

The sacred is distinguished here from both the spiritual and the religious. Religion is understood as a set of creedal truths, shared ritual traditions and institutionalized codes of behavior. Spirituality is something quested after without any necessary affiliation to a religious belief or practice. The sacred, suggests Kearney, is somewhere between the two, as it is also between God and the secular. It is not something we seek but something we find. It is already there, all around us in the natural and experiential world: "We do not cognize the sacred, we re-cognize it" (Kearney 2016, p. 16). It is through the sacred that we encounter the sacred stranger. The uncertainty of not knowing what we should believe, or what we should do to live good lives, can sometimes shut us down in fear and anxiety. It can also, however, be a creative space, allowing for the possibility of what and who may be. In this space, every stranger becomes a sacred guest to whom we extend the hospitality of a shared journey.

Kearney and others are acutely aware that they are writing against the backdrop of the largest and most significant migration crisis in recorded history (*Global Trends*, The UN Refugee Agency UNHCR). The crisis

of Western European Christian culture must dialogue with a human tragedy of global proportions. It must find a space between faith and reason, between a metaphysical God and secularism, to encounter the other, if both are to find hospitality, justice and a sustainable home.

3. Beneath Interpretation

What might be the nature of the sacred? Is it a place, an experience, an idea, a belief? Kearney and Caputo rely strongly on the apophatic traditions of mysticism, locating it in poetry, artistry and the imagination. Some theologians, however, wonder whether this sufficiently accommodates the culturally specific, *performative* nature of human experience. Drawing on a number of key, classic texts in liturgical theology, for example, we are reminded that our being in the world is a necessarily embodied phenomenon and we ignore or underestimate the body and its performances at our peril. Tracy (1981) notes that ritual and liturgy are key to any substantive experience of God in the world. These experiences ground the imagination, not only in the conceptual world of thoughts, dreams and ideas, but in the sensorial realities of sound, gesture, touch, smell and sight. Foley (1995) has focused this discussion on the sonic dimensions of ritual, arguing for a theology of sound. If, as Kristeva notes, dance is inseparable from the cultural and ritual experiences of *Homo Religiosus/Homo Sapiens*, Foley argues that the intrinsic nature of sound to all human experience (through the human circuitry of sounding and hearing) demands that it be given a key place in theological discourse. Uzukwu (1997) proposes similar arguments for understanding African orientations in Christian worship (1997) where theological understanding emerges from embodied, communal, ritual experiences.

The nub of this argument is that the sacred, while highly imaginative, must also be intensely performative. The sensorial, instinctive, unconscious aspects of human performance push at the boundaries of the hermeneutic foundations on which the sacred is built. It urges us to ask whether there is human experience and knowledge beneath interpretation and if so, how this might contribute to our experience of the sacred (Shusterman 2000). If the sacred both welcomes and emerges from our encounters with the stranger, how might this hospitality be performed? It is not coincidental that these questions concerning performative experiences and somatic intelligences are coming not only from philosophers, linguists and cognitive scientists (Johnson 2007; Gallagher 2005; Shusterman 2000, 2008) but overwhelmingly from performing artists (Bannerman et al. 2006; Bartleet 2009; Barbour 2011; Crispin 2009). Long seen as the vehicles for the artistic expressions of composers, choreographers and writers, performers have a growing sense of the intelligence of their bodies, not only in interpreting work, but in generating new insights. This body intelligence, often referred to as "body schema", involves the nervous and muscular systems, over which we have only the smallest amount of conscious control. It suggests that the body's intelligence does not manifest solely or even primarily in that which we can consciously interpret but at the deeper levels of instinct, motor-sensory response and genetic memory.

The ongoing marginalization of these intelligences can be seen in the dominant metaphors of post-modern philosophy. The proposal that experience is a *text* and encounters can be interpreted through inter-textual processes akin to those we use in analyzing and interpreting literature, demonstrates the depth of adherence to literary and language-based models of cognition even for the most foundational articulations of experience. It is not that these approaches exclude the body, but they privilege the hierarchy of interpretive interplays articulated through analytical, cognitive processes.

This "hegemony of textualisation" is challenged by a performative understanding of experience as "embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised and co-experienced" (Conquergood 2002, p. 147). Such knowledge is always local and always personal. Western philosophical and related theological traditions may be articulating the Western European existential crisis but may be less reflexive in recognizing the role they play in perpetuating it. Among the proposals explored in this paper for redressing this emphasis on the cognitive and the imaginative, is the inclusion of the performative, and the recognition of its necessary cultural grounding.

4. *Elikya*: A Sonic Case Study

The performative explored here involves the sonority of music, particularly singing. Its cultural grounding emerges from the disruptions of migration, as a group of Congolese musicians find themselves seeking asylum in Ireland and forming a choir. Called *Elikya*, the Lingala word for "hope", the choir was established in 2001 and has grown through a number of different manifestations, members and musical events in the sixteen years since. As an academic, activist, and sometime member of the choir, I have interacted with *Elikya* as colleague, friend, singer and scholar. Through a series of interviews with past and present members of the choir, friends and supporters, as well as an analysis of their musical output based on two professional recordings produced by the ensemble, this paper explores the proposition that *Elikya* is a case study—a sonic manifestation—in the performance of the sacred. *Elikya* traverses the old spaces claimed by liturgies, religions, secularisms and spiritualities with equal ease. Most importantly, it facilitates sonic encounters with the sacred stranger. Through performance, it opens up experiential encounters between cultures, beliefs and the pragmatic experience of migration in the world.

In order to explore this proposition further, I am drawn to two distinct but related triangulations of musical and ritual processes. The first was proposed by Rice (1987) in his seminal publication "Toward the Remodeling of Ethnomusicology". Drawing on Geertz (1973) interpretation of symbolic systems, Rice proposes a tripartite understanding of musical processes as historically constructed, socially maintained and individually created/experienced. In other words, music is contextualized by where it comes from; maintained according to the values of communities of practice; and created (and experienced) by individuals within these communities. Similarly, in the 1972 Post-Vatican II document of the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the liturgy "Music in Catholic Worship (1972)", the value of the musical processes and repertoires in liturgical celebration is proposed as determined according to a three-fold judgment based on musical, liturgical and pastoral considerations (Irwin 2004). I have combined these two models to create a new model, exploring *Elikya*'s musical processes under the headings of *context*, *content* and *intent* (See Figure 1).

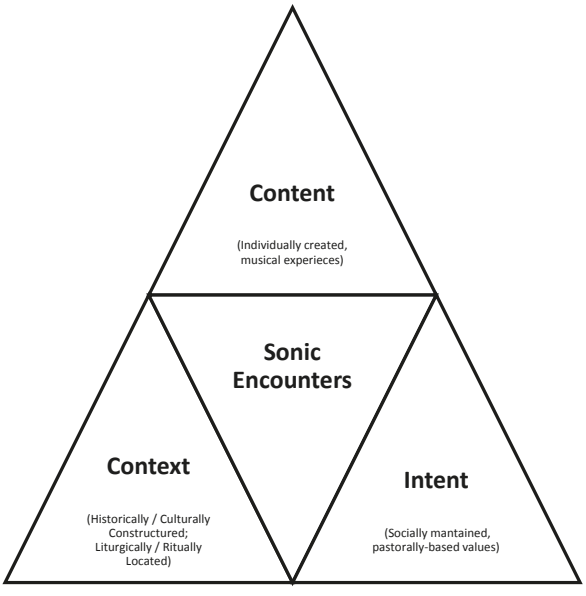

Figure 1. A Three-fold Model of Sonic Encounter.

Through an analysis of the descriptions offered by key protagonists concerning musical context (origins; the Catholic liturgy; other Christian contexts; other sacred contexts; other secular contexts) musical content (Catholic liturgical songs; African "Gospel" songs; African/Congolese Rumba/Soukous music) and musical intent (spiritual; musical; educational; social), it becomes clear that although these aspects of the sonic experience are named as discrete, they are experienced as a creatively performed flow. The secular is embedded in the religious, the religious in the liturgical. Religious songs are performed in pubs; popular, secular music, in churches. Political pragmatism flows into religious ritual, spiritual searching and pedagogical motivations. All of this is experienced and performed through singing and music-making.

4.1. Context

The founder members of *Elikya* all come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and came to Ireland as asylum seekers. One of the founders recalled being in a hostel in Dublin, and receiving a letter from the Department of Justice notifying him that he was being sent to Limerick city. He had heard worrying reports about Limerick. Its reputation as a tough city, often referred to in the media as "stab city" because of high rates of violence, had percolated into the hostel. He recounts his reaction to this news:

> *I was advised by people that Limerick was a tough place and I said, no, there is no tough place in the world. Everywhere, you can meet nice people and bad people. And because this is a Catholic country, we could sing in their churches and we will see if they are tough or nice.*

He had sung in the Catholic church choir in the DRC since he was a young boy and continued to sing popular music as an adolescent. As an adult and a politician, he noted how effective music was at opening doors:

> *I found out that every meeting started with music. Everywhere I went, I started with music to open the door. When I came to Ireland, I told people I was a politician. Some believe me, some don't. So I decided that everywhere I go, I will start the meeting with music then people will come back to me and find out who I am.*

Elikya was established in Limerick city in 2001. The choir was supported by the *Sanctuary* cultural initiative, operated by the Irish World Academy at the University of Limerick; as well as by the Augustinian church in Limerick city. The Augustinians provided rehearsal space while the university provided funding for their first recording. *Elikya* sang regularly at the Sunday Mass at the Augustinians, singing their first Mass on Mission Sunday, 2001, as well as performing at numerous festivals and community events throughout the city and country (Phelan 2003, 2017).

While committed to singing in the Catholic liturgy, the liturgical context in Ireland was very different to what most of the members were used to in Africa. One founder member noted that, "*The shock was that it was too quiet. Those people–to wake them up was the thing*." Another founder member recalled his first experiences of an Irish Catholic Mass:

> *The first impression was funny because I'd never been used to that kind of Mass—no choir—it was very funny—and very quiet—but sometimes when we are singing in some Masses we feel sometimes that we are back home because we can sing.*

An African colleague and musician who also came through the asylum process, describes coming to Limerick and finding the Augustinian church:

> *I went into this church—I can't remember where it was—and I said no, I am in the wrong place, God help me—and the second Sunday I came right down to the city centre and there was a church—and I felt a calling to go into that church and it changed my life—I had the feeling that this is where I belong—a sense of community and a sense of welcome . . . but it was fascinating that first Mass because it was nothing like I had ever witnessed. I didn't understand anything, not even the 'Our Father' which I grew up saying every morning.*

The home provided by the Augustinians was both pragmatic, in terms of rehearsal space and liturgical. While the liturgy was Catholic, the people flowing into the Augustinians during these early years of asylum-seeking in Limerick were from every country and faith. As one of the priests in the community noted:

> *Every possible group and every possible background—religious and non-religious, Muslim—every persuasion you could think of under the sun would be in an out and no one asked who you were, what you were or if you believed or didn't believe but they were welcome.*

From the beginning, the core of *Elikya* consisted of musicians from the DRC but it has always also had members from other parts of the world. Students from the University of Limerick as well as other musicians living in Limerick from the Americas, Europe and Africa have joined the choir over the years. Its earliest home was liturgical but from its inception, it also performed at community festivals and offered educational workshops. Increasingly, it was also in demand from other churches to perform at their events or rituals. *Elikya* has never refused an invitation to sing, as one founder member explains:

> *In my culture, as a Christian, even for traditional cultures, to sing for God is to pray twice. Any religion—I can sing for Muslims, Baptists, for Catholics. It is the message . . . if you sing for peace—this was the first idea.*

In 2010, the choir recruited a new artistic director. The director had a background both as a singer in Catholic church choirs, but also as a professionally trained musician. Educated in the *Institut National des Arts* in Kinshasa, he was attracted to *Elikya* because of the seriousness of its commitment to music:

> *It was the sense of having people doing music seriously. My previous experience was with a band working in Dublin. Back then, we were really, really young and the mind set was, 'I'm going to do music because this is something I really, really love'. But then as the years were going on, our music had to become something serious, not just something we were doing.*

As a professional musician, he immediately *recognized* the difficulty of maintaining a choir which consisted exclusively of volunteers, many of whom were still in the asylum process and therefore, in very unstable life situations. He recognized *Elikya* into a number of groups and sub-groups. At the core, was a group of three, professional musicians who formed a musical band:

> *Being in the music industry before, I had an idea of what needed to be done. That's when we started working with some friends I brought in . . . I wanted to make it easier . . . managing* Elikya *as it was before was almost impossible for me. I came up with a plan: the choir is big, why don't we make it as a band first . . . then we have a core group . . . if there are three people we can reply on we can start attracting different people.*

From this point onwards, the musical standard of *Elikya* starts to consolidate. There are increased invitations to also play in secular, paid venues. *Elikya* becomes an important conduit for other Congolese musicians to come to Ireland. In 2016, for example, Felix Manuaku Waku, best known as Pépé Felly, is invited to Ireland by *Elikya.* Pépé Felly is known internationally as one of the foremost guitarists in Congolese popular music. In 2015, the choir began a new relationship with the United Methodist and Presbyterian Church in Limerick. Again, the relationship was both pragmatic in terms of rehearsal space, but spilled into other community and liturgical spaces. As the church's minister notes:

> *We see the members of Elikya as part of our community. We may not see them for a while but that does not mean that they are not connected with us—like family. They have used our spaces for rehearsal, they have joined in the congregation on a Sunday sometimes and jammed with the young people afterwards. We also hosted what I think was a really important evening of music for them when Pepe Felly came to play with them.*

Elikya is also invited to sing in Pentecostal liturgies in Dublin and Limerick: "*We sing in Dublin now in different churches but more in African settings—in Limerick here and everywhere else we try to go to different churches.*"

While *Elikya* are very specific in the descriptions of their music (as will be discussed further in the following section) as liturgical or religious or secular, they are very fluid in the context in which this music is performed. They are happy to play and sing Catholic liturgical music at secular concerts if invited and equally, to play secular music in liturgical spaces:

> *At the performance with Pepe Felly, I was surprised by the pastor . . . she said it was not a good acoustic, do it in the church . . . we told her we would be doing secular music and she said that is not a problem.*

One of the university students who sang with *Elikya* noted that,

> Elikya *often perform in secular settings but in these situations, they bring the "spiritual" with them and catapult it at their listeners by pure force of joyous will and overpowering, voluminous charisma in Lingala.*

The context of *Elikya's* formation was at once political, pragmatic, pedagogical, religious and visionary. Its performances take place in liturgies of several denominations and none. The sacred Kearney postulates, somewhere beyond the options of a metaphysical God and an absolute secularism would seem to be the fluid space that best describes *Elikya's* sonic home.

4.2. Content

Elikya's musical influences originate in their experiences of Congolese Catholic liturgical singing, the widespread influence of Gospel in African Christian music, as well as secular Congolese rumba. Many of the members grew up singing in choirs in Catholic Congolese churches. In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, the liturgical music of these churches was increasingly open to indigenous musical influences. *Elikya* recognizes these traces in its music. As the director notes:

> *The liturgical music is more of the music that comes from the village, the rhythm of the village, because most of the rhythm will be percussion—they wouldn't have guitars or electric stuff—it's percussion or people clapping—that's what makes the spiritual touch. Once you just sing and you understand the harmony or whatever is going on in there, the connection just makes itself. I can't really pinpoint or explain it but it is in those kinds of things.*

The influence of African American Gospel is also very strong in the *Elikya* repertoire and style. A staple in African Protestant churches, particularly since the 1940s, its influence within Catholic ritual practices in Africa has grown since the 1970s, especially among Congolese communities (Russell 2011).

A third strong influence on the music of *Elikya* is Congolese *rumba*. Emerging from the urban centres of the Congo in the years between the world wars, it drew inspiration from Afro-Cuban styles, West African *highlife* and forms of indigenous music from the Pool region between Kinshasa and Brazzaville. Its earliest manifestations were performed by solo, itinerant *griot*-like guitarists playing in the bars and clubs of Kinshasa. Musical recordings date to the 1940s, with its popularity spreading by radio in the 1960s throughout Africa as "Congo Jazz". This Golden Age of rumba saw a more big-band style emerge. As one member of the band explained:

> *As Congo (Belgian Congo at the time) was the first country in Africa to have a recording studio and record pressing plan, it was in fact rumba which travelled across the continent and developed a strong fan base around the continent. It was the first music from Africa, recorded in studios and pressed on the continent for the enjoyment of other Africans.*

The 1970s saw a younger generation take up the music and make their own of it, through, for example, the introduction of choreographed dances. This Congolese dance music was marketed

globally as *soukous* (from the French *secouer*—to shake). The music developed a two-part structure with a slow, lyrical introduction followed by a faster dance section (White 2000).

The core, professional musicians in *Elikya* are all experts in this style of music:

> *The style is more rumba music, the fundamentals of music from the Congo. But I would not say Congo in general, it is the music of Kinshasa . . . the core of the music would be that—that's what we start from. But it takes more influences from people's cultures. From my culture, I will bring some influences, like the language for instance. Someone else will bring a touch of their influence and we patch it onto the rumba style . . . the rumba is in the slow section of the music but when it goes fast, that's kabasha music—rhythm is what makes people dance and move . . . soukous is a style of kabasha—another name for it.*

Elikya's first recorded album is called *To Lingala/Love One Another*. The recording has 10 tracks in Lingala, Swahili and Tshiluba. It features eighteen performers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (11), Germany (1), the US (1) South Africa (I) Ireland (1) Republic of the Congo (1) and Angola (2). All the pieces are performed with only voices and percussion (clapping and drums). Describing this first recording, a member explained: "*this first one mixed everything—popular, Christian music and Catholic songs.*"

An excerpt from one of the pieces is included here (Figure 2) as transcribed by one of the members of the choir. It is clear that the piece is in a call and response form with harmonic responses, drawing influence from the African Gospel tradition. The performance also includes traditional clapping and ululations.

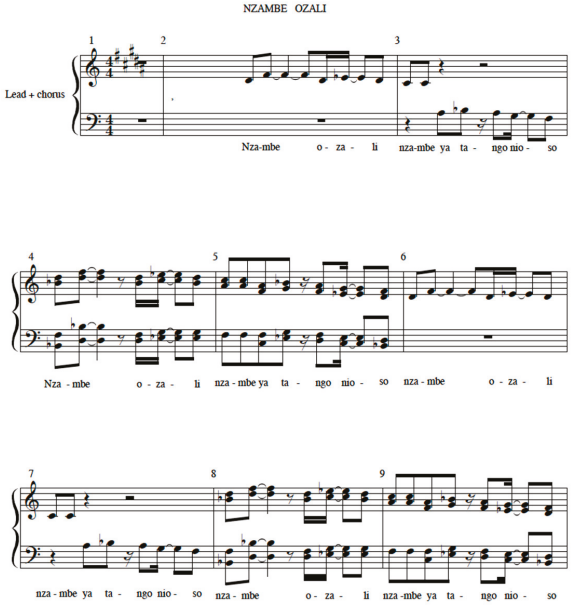

Figure 2. Excerpt of Music from *Nzambe Ozali* (trans. Hugo Mbunga).

The caller keeps changing the first line: "God of Gods, you are God"; "God of Moses, you are God"; "God of Congo, you are God", "God of Ireland, you are God". He then starts naming members of the choir: "God of Shana, you are God"; "God of Helen, you are God", God of Donat, you are God" etc. This practice of inserting individual names into public, improvised performances is also common in Congolese secular performance. In 2002, for example, King Kester Emeneya came to perform at

the Sionna Festival of World Cultures in Ireland. King Kester, one of the most popular singers in Africa from the 1980s, achieved international renown akin to those of African artists Papa Wemba and Koffi Olomide. At his Irish concert, the Congolese community came from all over the country. A striking feature of the performance was the stream of requests for individual names to be included in well-known songs (details of visit at www.youtube.com/watch?v=9b3TU3FoHQ4).

The second recording is called *Elikya Choir: Catholic Liturgical Songs*. This recording was, "*to show how we do the Catholic Mass, the liturgy*". It has a number of pieces from the liturgy of the Catholic Mass ("Kyrie Eleison", "Alleluia", "Mosantu" for example) but also includes more Gospel style pieces ("Oza Nzambe"). Instead of unaccompanied voices and percussion, this recording also includes keyboards, guitars and drums with musical styles influenced by Congolese rumba. While this second recording is named for the Catholic liturgy, its content and style demonstrate more fluid influences. One piece, for example, "Yesu Wangu", appears on both recordings but with striking differences in musical style and instrumentation. In *Worship Music: A Concise Dictionary*, the definition of liturgical music as music which "serves to reveal the full meaning of the rite and derives its meaning from the rite" (Foley and Bangert 2000, p. 181) is strikingly close to the explanation given for the creation of a recording specifically of Catholic liturgical songs:

> *If we go to play for the Catholic Mass, we have that, if we sing for the Anglicans, we have Gospel, if we go to play in a festival, we have rumba.*

Despite these seemingly clear demarcations, the musical content reveals much more stylistic and repertoire overlap between the three (much as the concise dictionary notes the overlap in common usage between terms including "liturgical music" "church music", "sacred music" or "religious music"). While the language of explanation may attempt to create clear Catholic liturgical/Gospel/secular rumba lines, the performative experience of style and repertoire is far more malleable.

4.3. Intent

Whatever articulations of demarcated space may appear in the language of context and content (most of which is over-ridden by performative examples), the language of intent is overwhelmingly inclusive from all participants.

One of the founder members was inspired by his memory of African people sent to the Americas and how they used music to help overcome difference and prejudice:

> *I was thinking about people deported—about Africans deported to America to work—I don't like to use the word slave—those people changed the minds of people because of music, everyone listens to music and they forget about the colour of the skin or the cultural differences because of the good sound of the music.*

Evoking the name of the group, another member speaks of what he hopes *Elikya* brings to people:

> *I hope that it can go beyond—because the word itself says "hope"—to bring that energy everywhere we go and to leave it there—that way, this sense of fulfillment I feel I hope to leave to everyone.*

Every singer I interviewed felt that "the sacred" was in the music itself: in the act of singing:

> *Yes, there is certainly a connection between my singing and my spirituality. I cannot exactly pinpoint why, but when I sing, I open and share as much of myself as I am at that given moment in the same ephemeral way as a personal prayer said directly and without prior preparation.*

The song types might vary, or their context or their style, but the sacred experience remained a constant. The minister of Christ Church named this experience as the experience of love:

> *I think it is probably a simple, "we're gifted by God and we celebrate that and offer those gifts when we make music": it's joyful . . . I think the connection is love.*

5. Conclusions: Singing the Stranger Home

The three-fold model suggested that content, context and intent are key aspects of musical and ritual processes. In examining the musical life of *Elika*, it becomes clear that *Elikya* performs a dual identity simultaneously: on the one hand, moving between different contexts, repertoires, styles and intentions, while on the other, blending these performatively in a way that both enforces and dilutes these differences (See Figure 3). The distinct categories are not obliterated, but find common ground in the sonic encounter:

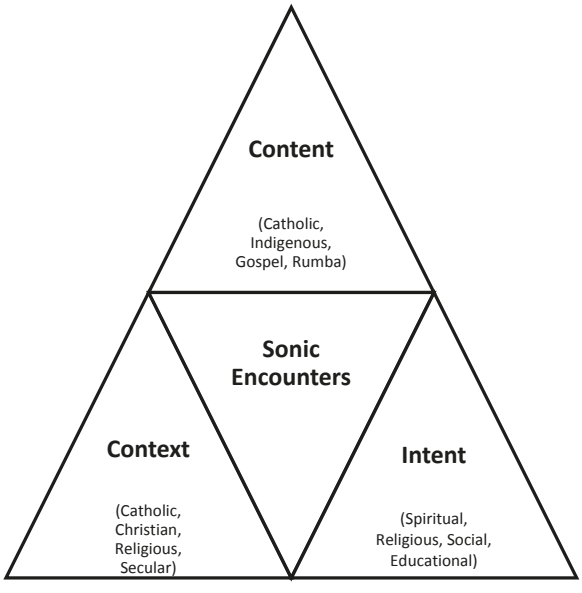

Figure 3. A Three-fold Model of *Elikya*'s Performance of Sonic Encounter.

This is Derrida's "both/and"; the space that allows for the distinctiveness of multiple identities but also for the malleability and changeability of these at the same time. This is what allows *Elikya* to be unapologetically Catholic and yet to simultaneously understand their music as transcending this identity:

> *I've asked myself that question as well before—the answer is quite simple—it's not about Catholic views, it's just about the music. I reduce everything to the feeling of the music because, like we said, if that good vibe is there, whether on the liturgical CD or the other one, we can bring it everywhere . . . the music goes everywhere, the music has no barrier—you can come to a place where the people are not Catholics but they accept the music. I believe that if we had to put the music that* Elikya *does into one category it would actually break the barrier of the music going everywhere . . . if we take away the barriers, it allows us to make a Catholic CD or a different one.*

This is the performance of who we are and who we might be; of ourselves and our potential others. It is the creative space where we meet the sacred stranger. One of the priests in the Augustinian church describes this moment as the creativity that emerges out of uncertainty and chaos. He related the story of a visitor to the church during a time of great architectural change in the physical structure of the building, coinciding with the arrival of new migrants to the church's community:

> *I apologized for the mess of the place. She said, "I prefer the model of church that is an untidy playground rather than a mortuary."*

When we cannot hold on to who we are in a strict or narrow sense of identity, we must re-negotiate this in the untidy space of chaos and creativity. When we are forced to re-invent ourselves in new parts of the world, we must simultaneously hold on to who we are (African, Congolese, Catholic) but also allow these identities to dialogue and sometimes merge with new ones (Irish, musical, ecumenical, performative). Those who encounter these changing identities are also changed, if they are willing to "sing along", to enter this space of simultaneous knowing and unknowing of ourselves and others.

The nature of "the sacred" may be deceptively simple in its performance. It might turn out to be a cup of tea and a song with someone you have never met before.

Elikya, for example, have become the musical patrons of a movement called *The Irish World Music Café* (See Figure 4). Started in response to the Syrian refugee crisis, it is a monthly gathering of people from around the world to sing, share stories, food and fellowship.

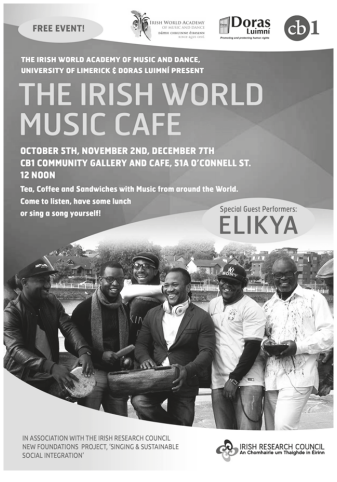

Figure 4. The Irish World Music Café (Poster Design by Joe Gervin).

What passes in the space of song or the "map of tune" as Irish poet Paula Meehan has it in her poem *Home* (Meehan 1994), may allow us to encounter each other in ways that permit us to remain ourselves and yet be changed utterly. This sacred encounter may happen to anyone at anytime but there are reasons to suggest that music (and particularly singing) is especially effective in facilitating it. Moreover, in exploring the musical soundscapes of *Elikya* as a case in point, it suggests that the global, seismic eruptions in human demographics brought about by migration in our contemporary world create an urgent need and unprecedented opportunity to explore the possibility of sacred encounter.

Humanly produced sound is one of our most primordial experiences. The ability to hear is one of the first senses to develop in the unborn child. The first sounds the developing child usually hears are the sounds produced by its mother's body (Stoppard 2006). Not only do babies respond to music they have heard in the womb, but they respond more emphatically to music, which is favored by their mother. Babies have demonstrated the ability to change their sucking patterns to re-enforce the humming of a well-known lullaby (Deliège and Slobada 1996). Moreover, the ability in the young child to produce sonority precedes its ability to generate language. The first phase of vocal development emerges when the physiological production of sound, superimposed on the infant's breathing, develops into a euphonic cooing at about eight weeks. By two months, the infant has developed a range of vocalizations based on these early modulations/melodies. Parents and care-givers intuitively guide these melodic vocalizations towards verbal communication and the later development of language, but these melodic modulations are also early forms of play and theorists

propose that this is one of the reasons why such modulations remain in the child's repertoire of sound as a form of singing, even after the acquisition of words and language. Singing is both the foundation for language as well as a form of ongoing play.

Singing remains, therefore, a primordial way in which human beings play and create. Pearce et al. (2015) note this in explaining why singing, of all human activities, seems to allow for faster and more immediate social bonding. In a study of activities from creative writing to craft making, singing demonstrated the most accelerated results in feelings of belonging and positive affect among groups of strangers.

Is it possible to image that we could sing our way into fruitful meetings with the sacred stranger? That the primordial, affective, sensorial and somatic character of singing may bring about experiences that allow us to both survive pragmatically in a disrupted world while also experiencing leaps of faith towards the unknown in ourselves and others? Performative and creative, singing opens up the space to encounter the stranger more successfully than almost any other human activity. Commenting on *Elikya*, the minister of Christ Church noted that "*their obvious engagement with a spirit of creativity would speak to anyone, a person of faith or none*". In a world where approximately one percent of the global population is an asylum seeker, refugee or forcibly displaced migrant, we urgently need creative ways to respond, welcome and have faith in a shared journey. As a priest from the Augustinian community offered, the untidy playground of creative performance offers one such possibility:

> *It's like the dawn of creation: the spirit moving over the chaos until something emerges from that chaos—but you have to find ways to live in the chaotic times until something creative emerges . . . I hold that image of the untidy playground where creative things happen in my head and in my heart.*

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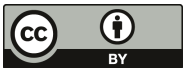

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Music's Role in Facilitating the Process of Healing—A Thematic Analysis

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Abstract: This qualitative study aims to understand the factors motivating Korean migrants' participation in weekly Charismatic Prayer Meetings in a Catholic Church. As music plays a crucial role in these meetings, the paper explores whether active engagement with music motivated the long-term commitment of participants to the meetings. The research is based on a thematic analysis of a focus group comprising six Korean adults living in Australia. Results show that music performed in religious forms such as Praise and Worship and Speaking/Singing in Tongues prayers was found to intensify spiritual experiences of the people as a group, and over time, each participant experienced improved physical and mental wellbeing, which in turn motivated further investment in the meetings. It was evident that the passionate group music-making enabled participants to focus on conscious and subconscious body, mind, and spirit, eliciting transpersonal experiences within each person. The findings of the current study are deemed relevant to this specific cohort and to others in similar contexts, where minority groups use worship and music for socio-cultural inclusion that addresses both spiritual and mental health issues. Though a small-scale study, the current paper provides a rationale for these religious groups to be involved in music-based spiritual practice.

Keywords: Charismatic Prayer Meeting; Praise and Worship; Speaking/Singing in Tongues; spirituality; music; wellbeing; Korean migrants

1. Introduction

The current study is written by authors with different religious and cultural backgrounds. The first author was born in South Korea and trained as a music therapist in Australia. As a Catholic Christian, she was involved in Charismatic Prayer Meeting (CPM) with a group of Korean adult migrants in Australia. Since attending Catholic Charismatic Renewal Seminars[1] in 2010 and 2011, she then attended weekly CPM gatherings and provided keyboard accompaniment for the group for five years. This involvement initially coincided with her fulltime postgraduate study and the challenges of new stressful life circumstances. Juyoung has now been living in Australia for 13 years and found spiritual peace through the CPM, believing that she had been able to experience the Holy Spirit guiding her life journey. Although the CPM is not regarded as a therapy, Juyoung experienced the structure and contents of CPM in a manner similar to group music therapy. The functional similarity between the two experiences provoked her interest in the current study.

The second author is of European origin and was raised in the Anglican tradition, attending a Church of England school. She migrated to Australia from United Kingdom 11 years ago. Since early adulthood, Jane has not followed any religious pathway and considers herself to be an atheist.

[1] It is a seminar that introduces Catholics a new way of praising and worshiping God, music occupying a central role.

As a musician, she has performed extensively as solo classical singer, often appearing in many historic religious venues such as St Paul's Cathedral in London and Durham Cathedral. She has also spent the last decade developing singing groups supporting frail older people, with an intention to offer positive ageing opportunities.

As part of Australian Research Council funded Discovery Project (DP 140102679), Musical Investment, that explores the relationship between musical activities and wellbeing across lifespan, the current study aims to understand people's motivations for and experiences of long-term music-based religious practice in the CPM format. In the current project, the first author led discussions with prayer meeting members, analyzed the data with the second author who acted as a discussant, co-analyst and co-writer. The two researchers respected one another's different beliefs and used these differences as a point of dialogue to probe and understand the data and its significance to the participants. The current article begins by situating this study within a cognate historical and theoretical context of the study. Then, the results of the data are presented thematically, followed by a conclusion with insights gained from the process.

2. The Historical Context of Korean Immigrants in Australia

Seeking spiritual power through religion is believed to offer significant life focus for many Koreans. It has been argued that this is specifically owing to the long, traumatic history of the Korean population (Buswell and Lee 2006). Due to being surrounded by strong and politically ambitious Asian countries such as China, Russia, and Japan, the peninsula of Korea has frequently been invaded, and Koreans have suffered in many ways. Colonization under the Japanese lasted for over 36 years, ending in 1945, during which times the slavery and oppression endured bore heavily on Korean identity. The Korean War (1950–1953) resulted in the forced division between north and south by the US and the USSR and led to extensive family trauma. Indeed, the pain of separation for families living between the two parts of Korea, as well as the constant threat posed by North Korea's nuclear weapons, are still an ongoing dilemma for many Koreans. Seeking spiritual strength and power has been imperative to several generations of Koreans, and this transgenerational yearning has been used to explain why Christianity spread rapidly in South Korea, especially in the past 20 years, and perhaps why so many Koreans are passionately conducting missionary work around the world (Seol 2001).

In terms of immigration history to Australia, Koreans were reported to be the least represented among the Asian ethnic groups in 2001 (Han and Chesters 2001b). By 2006, they became the second fastest growing ethnic group in Sydney, after Chinese—approximately 40,000 Koreans lived in Australia, and two thirds of them lived in Sydney (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006). Depending on the mode of entry to Australia, Korean immigrants have been classified into "amnesty (illegal)," "skilled," and "business" migrants. This migrant history began in the early 1970s, when approximately 500 people arrived in Australia as tourists. They came seeking a better life, escaping South Korea's poor economy, and became amnesty migrants (Han and Chesters 2001a).

From the 1980s, South Koreans were able to obtain skilled or business visas when they immigrated to Australia. Most skilled migrants expected to have more professional opportunities, and business migrants hoped for better quality of life and education opportunities for their children (Han and Chesters 2001b). However, according to an interview study conducted with 17 amnesty, 14 skilled, and nine business migrants about their immigrant life and health (Han and Chesters 2001a, 2001b), many of them reported that their expectations were not met, and as a result, they suffered from ill health. For example, amnesty and skilled migrants experienced poor physical health and immense mental stress due to their involvement in manual work such as cleaning and factory jobs. Although business migrants report improved physical health since their arrival in Australia, they also experienced poor psychological or mental health as a result of unemployment and subsequently losing purpose or meaning from their lives. A lack of social connections with local Australians was reported as another reason impacting on their health. Migrant anxiety, low self-esteem, and resentment were the major topics that described their mental health issues. In these studies, a Korean man reported that

his commitment to a Korean church was a vital factor in coping with personal challenges, indicating the significant role of ethnic churches for some migrants.

By 2004, Korean migrants had built around 200 Korean churches (consisted of independent churches, mostly Presbyterian and Uniting churches, and a few Catholic churches) in Sydney (Han 2004). In the 2011 questionnaire study conducted by the city of Sydney that assessed the Korean community's needs (Ng et al. 2011), approximately 40% of 342 respondents reported the most involved activity in their local community was attending church. The reasons for attending churches were to meet other Koreans and receive practical and psychosocial support for daily living (Seol 2001). It was reported that many new migrants would go to church first when they arrive in Australia in order to find help and support in setting up new life, such as looking for a house, work, school, and to seek mental support. Reflecting back on the previous discussion about Korean's spiritual need originating in ongoing transgenerational traumatic history, and adding to the migrants' needs for a familiar social structure, it seems that the church's role in offering psychosocial and practical support cannot be overlooked, certainly not for Koreans now living in Australia.

3. The Catholic Charismatic Prayer Meeting (CPM)

There are various opinions about the beginnings of Charismatic Prayer Meeting (CPM), but the Catholic Church acknowledges a beginning in 1967 at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where a small group of students prayed eagerly and claimed to receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Daniel 2010). These students reported a renewed Christian engagement with the Holy Spirit and prayed for others to receive such spiritual nourishment. Since that specific event, and through participating in Catholic Charismatic Renewal Seminars that introduce a new way of praying and worshiping God, many Catholics have experienced the transformational power of the Holy Spirit. These types of prayer meetings have spread to all over America and continue to develop worldwide (Daniel 2010).

The purpose of CPM is to encourage "the awareness and the experience of the full role of the Holy Spirit" that leads to "experiencing union with God; inner transformation; ministry empowered by charisms for evangelization and service; and building communities that witness to a renewed Catholic life" (Hogan 2016, p. 12). To facilitate the Holy Spirit to be experienced by each individual, CPM ministry uses various forms of music such as "Praise and Worship" and "Speaking in Tongues" prayers (Wu 2005; Hogan 2016). In contrast to the rigid and classical-focused music that most Catholics are familiar with in the usual church setting, the songs and music used in CPM utilize contemporary musical styles and guide individuals to participate in voluntary group singing with intermittent prayer, which is referred to as "Praise and Worship" (Tshabalala and Patel 2010). The official terminology for "Speaking in Tongues" prayers is glossolalia and it is often called "Praying in the Spirit" as well. The highlight of each CPM is when Speaking in Tongues is facilitated for each individual to produce murmuring vocal sounds and conceive thoughts and feelings about God. The participants believe that through this process, they are communicating with God, as speaking and interpreting tongues is considered one of the spiritual gifts[2] given by the Holy Spirit.

As it aims to evoke emotionally charged religious experiences in a safe space, conducting the group music-making such as Praise and Worship and Speaking in Tongues requires particular skills of a music leader. Accordingly, the Catholic Church offers a specific set of guidelines for the music ministry (Hogan 2016), emphasizing that music leaders need to have ongoing training. The CPM group in the current study has developed a trajectory of worship over the years, which offers an example of CPM sessions:

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[2] The nine spiritual gifts include (1) expression of wisdom, (2) expression of knowledge, (3) faith, (4) gifts of healing, (5) mighty deeds (miracles), (6) prophecy, (7) discernment of spirits, (8) varieties of tongues, and (9) interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:7–11 New American Bible with Revised New Testament 1986/1970).

(1) Preparation and Beginning of the CPM:
People prepare flowers, candles, a picture of Jesus Christ, and a statue of Mary on the altar in front of the group. The music minister plays keyboard, guitar, and sings several songs for people to join as they arrive and sit on chairs placed in a semi-circle in front of the altar. When the congregation is ready, the music minister starts the meeting with the beginning song called "The Sign of Cross"[3] (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul 2003, p. 142), which involves hand gestures that make a cross sign as the lyrics indicate.

(2) Daily Reading and Rosary Prayers:
A Bible scripture of the day is proclaimed by the worship leader, which participants contemplate during the meeting. Then, the rosary prayers are delivered, and the calling of the Holy Spirit is undertaken by singing the song, "Come, Holy Spirits"[4] (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul 2003, p. 504).

(3) Praise and Worship:
Everyone voluntarily thanks, praises, and worships God for gifts such as good weather, nature, and people etc. As each person offers their thanks, the others support them with the response lines, "Lord, receive our praise and worship", this sequence repeating many times until the worship leader feels enough prayers have been offered. Then, the congregation is encouraged to choose several songs from a book specifically published for CPM in Korean (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul 2003)[5]. Sometimes, when the song contains lyrics related to bodily actions such as raising hands and clapping, people undertake the action while singing. In the early days of this group, the participants danced around the room as well, but over time, people stopped dancing and remained seated in their chairs. At times, people discuss the meaning of words or lyrics of songs after singing.

(4) Facilitated Speaking in Tongues Prayers:
Lights in the room are turned off (candles remain lit), and a particular song that requests the Holy Spirit to be with the group is sung. Its verses can be repeated as many as needed until the music leader breaks into Singing in Tongues with loud and dynamic keyboard accompaniments. Everyone then starts their own Speaking in Tongues prayers with an intention to speak to God through the presence of the Holy Spirit. After reaching several musical climaxes, the sounds of Speaking in Tongues begin to subdue, and the music leader then gradually reduces the volume and tempo of the music. The music eventually ends with a silence.

(5) Interpretation of the Tongues:
After several minutes of silence, the worship leader asks, "Lord, we are waiting, please speak to us," and the group explains the messages they received from the God during their Speaking in Tongues prayer.

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[3] Lyrics in English: In the name of the father, and of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. In the name of the father, of the son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. We are here to give thanks, praise, and worship to you, Lord. We are here to give thanks, praise, and worship to you, Lord.

[4] Lyrics in English: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations, Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

[5] For Korean Readers who might want to inspect the book, the name of the book in Korean is "기도 공동체 성가."

(6) Praise and Worship:
People voluntarily pray for anything they need or want in their life and sing several songs of their choice.

(7) Ending of the CPM:
People voluntarily share their religious experiences over the week, then, gather and hold hands and sing "The Lord's Prayer"[6] (The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seoul 2003, p. 175) before ending the meeting.

Once a month, the group in the current study also participated in CPM mass, where a priest conducted the special mass embedded with some CPM activities. During the Speaking in Tongues Prayers, the priest laid his hands on each person's head to increase the power of the exchanges. To encourage and facilitate this process, the music minister offered live improvised music throughout that constantly changed with varying dynamics in tempo and volume, accompanying the Singing in Tongues as they do in a typical CPM.

To understand the way this type of religious experience is constructed through the ritualized Charismatic performance, cultural anthropologist Keping Wu (2005) observed Catholic Charismatic community practices in America. After 18 months of fieldwork, Wu was able to describe in detail how CPM was directed, and the findings support the practices undertaken in the current study. According to Wu (2005), "a lot of singing, dancing, speaking in tongues, chanting, prophesying, waving, jumping, laughing and crying" is practiced (p. 6). She sums up the priest's facilitation skills being to execute "a balance of spontaneity and control," where individuals act independently but also interact with others and God. Wu (2005) concludes that "unity and interaction are the most important qualities of rituals that aim at transforming individual realities" (p. 8).

Theresa Smith (2015) is another music researcher who describes music's vital role in music-based religious services. She observed how music is used in African-American Baptist church services. By describing two situations where music played a powerful role, Smith (2015) claims that music "functions as almost a timbral membrane for the presence of the Holy Spirit throughout the service" (p. 6).

With regard to quantitative investigations of the phenomenon relevant to the current study, the role of Praise and Worship on Pentecostal young people's spiritual wellbeing has been investigated in the context of youth ministry group (Tshabalala and Patel 2010). In that study, 40 young people living in South Africa completed a Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Halonen and Santrock 1999)[7] and a questionnaire that asked about the roles of various religious activities including Praise and Worship on participants' spiritual wellbeing. Results revealed that experiencing music in their meetings was described as "uplifting and transforming," and the young people felt a "sense of connection" with their peers and God. They believed that their involvement with the youth group provided them with "guidance and growth," and Praise and Worship supported them when they needed to "cope with difficulties."

A survey study conducted by Atkins and Schubert (2014) investigated whether the spiritual experience through music is intrinsic: whether it was evoked from music itself or extrinsically evoked by the memories or emotions associated with music. One hundred and seventeen people who attend various types of Christian churches such as Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Uniting Church members participated in the study, and the results indicated that spiritual experience, which is profound and transcendent, "comes to life" (p. 76), with musical forms. The authors also found that

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[6] Lyrics in English: Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

[7] This is an adapted version of Paloutzian and Ellison (1982) scale, which consisted of two aspects of spiritual functioning: religious wellbeing and existential wellbeing. Ten subscales of religious wellbeing measure perceptions of one's spiritual life, while another ten subscales of existential wellbeing measure meaning in life and the nature of one's existence (Tshabalala and Patel 2010, p. 75).

the music experienced in religious contexts is felt to be stronger, deeper, and more emotional than music experienced in non-religious context.

In the fields of music education and therapy, the uses of music in a group context have been well studied and documented. Benefits of group singing on healthy older people have been reported as increasing relaxation/feeling of happiness and lifting of spirits (Hillman 2002; Skingley and Vella-Burrows 2010; Lally 2009; Lehmberg and Fung 2010). Group singing was also offered to some people who experience various life challenges such as dementia (Davidson and Almeida 2014; Camic et al. 2011; Davidson and Fedele 2011), homelessness (Bailey and Davidson 2002), and being socially marginalized (Bailey and Davidson 2005, 2003). In general, it was considered that group singing offers the participants with a structure and controlled/directed environment to explore and reflect on their emotions, and over time, participants were reported to experience an enhanced sense of self and regulation of mood (Lee et al. 2016).

While there is no academic discussion that provides theoretical support to the music's role in CPM, some discussions in the field of music therapy are considered relevant. For example, Potvin and Argue (2014) explore music therapy as a spiritual practice by adopting a western Christian perspective. If the analogy is drawn between music as a prayer and the therapist as a minister, the relevance between CPM and group music therapy as a spiritual practice can be argued. In particular, for the current paper, the vital role of music ministry in CPM supports the idea of a professional music therapist controlling the specific uses of music to evoke and facilitate therapeutic changes in clients in various situations. Furthermore, as CPM is performed in a group environment, the notion of music as "a sociocultural phenomenon, an aesthetic expression of collectively constructed rituals and traditions that promotes individual and collective transformation" (Potvin and Argue 2014) provides a useful theoretical context for CPM.

Anne Lipe (2002) transformational model of music experience provides another important context for the role of music in CPM. After reviewing 52 published articles on the topic of music, health, and spirituality, Lipe proposes a transformation model of music experience. Incorporating various theoretical perspectives on the function of music, she claims its central function is personal transformation, with secondary functions being to: (a) evoke and support transpersonal[8] experiences, (b) promote individuation, and (c) invoke and transmit healing power. Making an association to Wu (2005) definition of the purpose of CPM being to transform individual realities, Lipe's transformational model of music experience provides a theoretical framework for the current study.

Despite the established history of CPM practice, no study to date explores the lived experiences of the Catholic Christians in CPM or the relationship between the music-based religious experiences and wellbeing benefits. In spite of the intense involvement of Korean migrants in both Catholic and Protestant churches all over the world, no study has explored the motivations of their heavy involvement in the church in relation to the possible role of music in their overall wellbeing. Therefore, the current study was guided by two research questions: (a) What is the experience of Korean migrants in CPM over an extended period of five years? (b) Has music been a motivating factor in their long-term commitment to CPM, and if so, how does music support the participants' spiritual experiences in this meeting?

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[8] The term "transpersonal" is defined as "denoting or relating to states or areas of consciousness beyond the limits of personal identity" in the Oxford Dictionary of English.

4. Methods

4.1. Study Design and Method of Data Collection

As the current study explored the lived experiences of participants who had engaged in religious practice over a five-year period, the nature of the data sought was private and personal, and accordingly, a qualitative study was designed to understand individual phenomenological experiences (Creswell 2013). Additionally, we wished to investigate the group's experience; therefore, instead of conducting individual face-to-face interviews, a focus group interview was selected as the most appropriate and time-efficient method to gather data (Stewart and Shamdasani 2015). This method was also enabled the researchers to identify both common and multiple perspectives relating to the shared experience of the particular group.

4.2. Participants

Participants of the current study were six Korean migrants who regularly attended the weekly CPM. The participants comprised two males and four females. Their ages were ranged from 33 to 62 years old, and the mean age was 50 years old. The number of years of participation varied between participants: the averaged year of participation were 3.8 years. Table 1 presents the information of the participants at the time of the data collection.

Table 1. Participants Information.

Name of Participant[9]	Age	Gender	Years of Attendance
John	59	M	5
Angela	57	F	5
Peter	46	M	5
Bernadette	33	F	5
Regina	42	F	2

Among the six participants, four participants—John, Angela, Peter, and Bernadette—have been active members who never missed a single meeting for over the five years. Peter was the worship leader of the group, and in CPM sessions, he led the prayers and offered guitar accompaniment. The first author, who has the Christian name of Bernadette, was the music leader as she is a qualified music therapist and confident music improviser. Working closely with the worship leader, Bernadette provided keyboard accompaniment and actively lead both Praise and Worship and Speaking in Tongues in all CPM sessions. Before participating in the focus group interview, the participants were provided with verbal and written information (plain language statements) and written consent forms. Ethics clearance for the study was given by The University of Melbourne (Ethics ID: 1442751.1).

4.3. Procedure of Data Collection and Analysis

The first author facilitated a one-hour focus group discussion with the participants while they were on their religious retreat at a remote religious respite place. As she was a main member of the long-term group, while facilitating the group discussion, she was not hesitant to share her personal experiences or to add to the on-going sense of group and its closeness in the CPM. It is for this reason that she, as an insider, was selected to carry out the interview, rather than the second author, who would have perhaps found it more difficult to elicit open responses from the group, as she is neither Korean or a Catholic. Questions were asked, including,

[9] These are participants' Christian names, protecting their Korean names.

1. What has been your experience in CPM?
2. What motivates you to continue CPM?
3. How would you describe the role of music in CPM?
4. How has this experience in CPM affected you in general? (Across your mental, physical, and social experiences?)

The interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim, which was then shown to the participants to validate the text data as part of member-checking process in qualitative study (Lincoln and Guba 1985). To identify motivating factors and any benefits of using music in CPM, a thematic analysis was then conducted and shared between the two authors. Braun and Clarke (2006) six phases[10] of conducting a thematic analysis were adapted to a simpler version of three steps in this study as follow:

Step 1. Identifying key statements;
Step 2. Searching for themes;
Step 3. Reviewing themes.

Initially six candidate themes were identified in step two.

(1) Beauty of music and singing;
(2) Improvement of general physical and psychological wellbeing;
(3) In-depth experience of the Holy Spirit through group singing;
(4) Relief of psychological stress;
(5) Great anticipation to the weekly meetings;
(6) Strong and binding spiritual power as a group.

In the third analysis step, the six themes were reviewed to investigate whether "some candidate themes were real themes (e.g., if there were enough data to support them, or the data were too diverse), while others might collapse into each other (e.g., two apparently separate themes)" (Daniel 2010). In this reviewing process, the second author actively examined the six candidate themes as an outsider observer and identified that themes 1 and 5 did not have enough data to support them. In fact, theme 1 was described by only one participant, and theme 5 was briefly described by two participants. It was also identified that theme 4 could be collapsed into theme 2, and theme 3 and 6 could be one theme, as those themes represented the same topic. Consequently, two principal themes were identified as the motivating factors of the participants in attending CPM: (a) experiencing strong spiritual power as a group and (b) improvement of physical and psychological wellbeing. The details of the results are explored in the next section.

5. Results

5.1. Motivating Factor 1. Experiencing Strong Spiritual Power as a Group

Four participants described how they perceived the strong spiritual power while practicing Praise and Worship as well as Speaking in Tongues with others. Angela remarked:

> *In my everyday life, I feel the presence of the Son, the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which I can perhaps consider as a liquid. When I meet the Holy Spirit in CPM, it feels like drinking a rich flavored red wine as people gather and intensively sing prayers together. For it is given to me for free, I think, "Why not?" That's the reason I come to the meetings. I cannot imagine myself not coming back.*

[10] (1) Familiarizing yourself with your data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 87).

Angela used a metaphor of "a rich flavored red wine" to describe the intensity of her spiritual experiences of singing prayers as a group. As the most religious person in the group, she was able to meet the Holy Spirit through her daily prayers. However, she certainly felt the difference in meeting the Holy Spirit through the group music making in CPM, which was much more intense and rich. Similarly, Bernadette elaborated more on the power of the group music making:

> *When we are together, when we are singing all together, and when we are performing "Speaking in Tongues," the Holy Spirit touches each one of us and tells me to feel Him. I can meet Him only here because He said that He will come when there are more than two people. Although God hears me when I pray alone, I think it is much more powerful when many people pray all together. (Bernadette)*

Her belief in God's presence in a group of people follows the Bible: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). By reflecting on the sensation of the presence of the Holy Spirit, Bernadette strongly believed that she can only meet the Holy Spirit in a group setting, especially when they perform Speaking/Singing in Tongues. Once she had raised this topic, the group started to share how the group singing made them focus on the contents of the songs and thus quickly enabled them to involve themselves at a much deeper level of communion:

> *When we move our bodies together and sing with all our hearts, we can totally focus. (Angela)*

> *We become so immersed into the song as a group. (Peter)*

As such, all described how the music making for the group was effective for binding spiritual power of all, believing that the Holy Spirit was present in the CPM, music being an effective and sensory medium, holding the people together, to achieve the spiritual experience.

5.2. Motivating Factor 2. Improvement of General Physical and Psychological Wellbeing

Five out of six participants reported improved physical and psychological wellbeing after attending the CPM. The religious communion experienced was perceived to be facilitated by music and prayer. Peter explained:

> *When we sing, we are de-stressed for sure. In fact, I have gained physical health, which helps me to gain spiritual health as well. The spiritual betterment leads me to come back to the meeting every week. When I come to CPM, I feel like I'm having a spiritual shower given by the Holy Spirit to clean the dust and dirt on my body. When I am spiritually awakened, I realize how much I am happy and actually I am. So, I keep thinking of that happiness, and I become positive all the time, and then everything gets better so then I keep coming back to the meetings. For me, singing is the fastest way to go up to the spiritually powerful status. My mind is positively moved and the spiritual healing fosters physical healing. (Peter)*

As the worship leader, Peter started the prayer group at its inception in 2011. At the time, as a result of harsh physical laboring work, he was not physically well. He experienced diabetes and rapid weight loss. He was also suffered from immense physical pain in his shoulder that required surgery. However, over the past five years, his physical health became more manageable, and he believed that his physical healing process was facilitated by CPM. He described this healing process as a "spiritual shower." For him, spiritual wellness helped his physical wellbeing, literally removing the "dust and dirt" from his body, which is perhaps a reference to the hard labor he was doing at the time. The role of singing in Praise and Worship was clearly perceived as an effective medium to access to a spiritual experience.

Similar to Peter's experience, John, in his 60s, also highlighted the wellbeing benefits he received from CPM:

> *There is a saying that singing the prayers is three times more powerful than just praying.*[11] *When I sing, I can feel that power. As an immigrant, I feel stressed by the foreign language and busy routines at work. But when I come here and sing with keyboard and guitar accompaniments, I feel relieved from the stress. Although I know that praising God is the priority in this meeting, I really like that we can have a relief from our stresses and start another week fresh again. (John)*

John immigrated to Australia in his late 50s, so learning a new language and culture was stressful and challenging for him. He was working in a large restaurant as a kitchen hand, and the working environment seemed intense and chaotic to him. As people use the Korean language in the meeting, speaking and singing in his mother tongue seemed to provide him a relaxing time. Because of this benefit, he has always hoped for other Korean immigrants to join in CPM.

Regina, who had attended the meeting for approximately two years at the time of data collection, also explained that she spends her time in CPM as a reflection on her busy week, connecting with God:

> *In CPM, I reflect on my week. It is a good time to catch up with prayers, looking at my inner thoughts and feelings by contemplating on the lyrics of the songs, and speaking with God. (Regina)*

Regina, who was born with a physical disability in her leg, was a single mother of a teenage girl and ran a beauty business. As she was usually a quiet and passive member of the group, the worship and music leaders often encouraged her to choose songs, and Regina carefully selected songs that contained meaningful lyrics to her, which often lead to further discussion with others. Although Regina was not musically active or a passionate member, she certainly benefited from the Praise and Worship activity.

Summarizing these data, two main motivating factors were identified by the six Korean migrants to continue attending the music-based religious meetings. The first factor, experiencing strong spiritual power while making music as a group, seemed to reflect their experiences of moments in the CPM, whereas the second factor, experiencing physical and psychological wellbeing, seemed to indicate benefits of the spiritually powerful moments accumulated over several years. They seemed to be motivated by feeling and expressing the intense religious and powerful emotions during CPM, but also experiencing the positive power of the spiritual experiences on their body, mind, and soul, further motivated them to commit long-term participation to the group.

6. Discussion

The findings taken collectively suggest that the motivating factors for attending a music-based religious practice such as CPM are not simply religious, spiritual, musical, or social, but a combination of all of these elements that generates a type of communion. From the religious perspective, it was evident that the participants often made a reference to scriptures from the Bible when explaining their experiences in CPM, which seems to indicate that their religious belief and context was crucial in understanding their spiritual experiences in CPM. The role of initial Catholic Charismatic Renewal Seminars cannot be overlooked in this phenomenon, where the participants gained strong religious belief and understanding of the CPM theories and practices. When it came to their musical experiences, participants highlighted the intense power of the group music, supporting the previous findings of Atkins and Schubert (2014)'s study that music experienced in religious contexts is perceived to be more emotional and spiritual. Music and sounds produced by the group during Praise and Worship and Speaking in Tongues seemed to offer a safe but flexible medium for the participants to feel, express, and reflect on their own emotions as they related to spirituality, loneliness, homesickness, personal challenges, joy, etc. But music and sounds also became a 'timbral membrane' through which to experience the Holy Spirit itself (see Smith 2015). Thus, the findings of the current study indicate

[11] It is generally believed that St. Augustine of Hippo said, "He who sings, prays twice."

that the CPM can augment religious and other personal experience through the music-based practice, and so support its members' wellbeing.

The findings of the current study further provide evidence of how profound religious experience can be achieved using both music and prayer. The participants felt the power to be transformed and guided through personal problems and difficulties by enabling them to express their emotions through music and prayer. Based on the participants' statement and reflecting on the first author's own experience, the two types of music experienced in CPM, Praise and Worship and Speaking in Tongues seem to require intense focus and attention to conscious and subconscious mind, body, and spirit. When singing songs and lyrics, thoughts and feelings on conscious levels are often evoked. When performing Speaking in Tongues, with a focus on the Holy Spirit, individuals seem to go deep into a subconscious level and find and speak to their inner God/voice. As the worship leader pointed out, the Praise and Worship seems like the fastest way to reach a spiritually powerful status where Speaking in Tongues prayers can be performed. The impact of these experiences on participants was referred to as a cleansing and refreshment (a "spiritual shower") by the worship leader in this study. By focusing on body, mind, and spirit using group music making, each individual seemed to experience transpersonal experience, which is one of the role of music in Lipe (2002)'s transformational model.

The personal experiences of some participants as migrants were similar to those in previous studies of Korean migrants' health and wellbeing (Han and Chesters 2001a, 2001b; Han 2004). The results also resonate with the experiences reported by Tshabalala and Patel (2010) and Smith (2015) who all describe a similar phenomenon in which an effective religious practice guided and supported ethnic minority groups to work through their personal issues such as new perspectives on socio-political situations. Such findings could have resonances for other people who are experiencing similar cultural or ethnicity issues such as asylum seekers.

Daniel (2010), who examined CPM from a sociological context, highlights "the importance of social stressors such as marginality, isolation, and relative deprivation in driving people to join the Charismatic movement which seems to provide a renewed sense of identity, meaning and power in religious affairs" (p. 174). The de-stressing nature of music is encapsulated in the theory of the transformational power of music (Lipe 2002; Potvin and Argue 2014). One of the primary and secondary functions of music in Lipe's transformational model of music is to invoke and transmit healing power. When it works, music serves as "a container for moving through trauma towards healing" (Lipe 2002, p. 231). This theoretical notion was manifested in the CPM group whose members experienced a spiritual transformation through their healing process which relied heavily on music making.

The power of singing in a group, seen as a way to gain physical and psychosocial benefits, replicates evidence from previous studies with healthy seniors to develop a healthy ageing process (Hillman 2002; Skingley and Vella-Burrows 2010; Lally 2009; Lehmberg and Fung 2010), seniors with dementia to cope with deteriorating health and relationship with their careers (Davidson and Almeida 2014; Camic et al. 2011; Davidson and Fedele 2011), and even homelessness men to regained resilience and strength to cope with their difficulties (Bailey and Davidson 2005, 2002, 2003). Thus, the function of group singing in a community context positively aligns with the findings of the current study. In short, participants can work on their emotions through music, and experiencing group membership has a source of healing power.

While some may regard the first author's role as interviewer a biasing influence on the data produced by the participants, we believe that the topic of the discussion was so personal, sensitive, and dependent on religious empathy that participants felt very comfortable with the first author and they would not have discussed their religious experiences with an unfamiliar person. Because the first author experienced similar phenomena, the in-depth conversation was facilitated by her closeness to others in the group.

Since few academic studies have been conducted in this area, this article offers some insights into a new area of study. Clearly, more qualitative studies exploring the unique experience of each

individual in the CPM would provide a richer understanding of the CPM for those regularly practicing it or who do not have positive responses to this form of Catholic meeting. Quantitative studies that utilize surveys or questionnaires (e.g., the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (Halonen and Santrock 1999) with large numbers of participants would also be useful in confirming or validating the findings of qualitative studies. The Catholic Church offers a firm guideline on the facilitation methods in CPM (Hogan 2016), thus, investigating the specific facilitation skills of effective music ministry or musical leader in CPM community might also be helpful in future work, specifically for training new musicians.

Certain factors need consideration for future studies. The role of the church for Koreans has been discussed in both spiritual and practical levels in previous studies. One negative aspect to have emerged in those studies has been that the Koreans meet within their own ethnic community through such churches, rather than socializing with local Australians (Han 2004; Seol 2001; Ng et al. 2011). The Korean migrants in the current study, however, spoke of the comfort they felt speaking and singing in their mother tongue in the meetings. Consequently, studying the benefits of speaking and singing in mother tongues on migrants in regular social contexts and using musical context for them to integrate with local people would be a useful area of future study.

7. Final Reflection

The first author, Juyoung, who is both the music participant and researcher in the current study, found that exploring the motivations of the six Korean participants in the CPM and researching their relationship to music offered an opportunity to contemplate the needs of the group as migrants. For the first time, she saw the group from the perspective of migrants living in a foreign country. Noticing the needs of fellow migrants and the role of group music making in a religious context offers her a fresh insight into her spiritual wellbeing as well as her music therapy practice.

The second author, Jane, is also a migrant, but one who has not developed a religious belief and has never experienced CPM, speaking in tongues, or any of the practices the participants undertook in their meetings. She is a singer and has group singing leadership experience, and after interacting with the data from the current paper and assessing it alongside other literature as well as her own experiences, Jane believes the current data add new data to the building pool of evidence that singing can bring group cohesion, a sense of being part of something larger than the self, and offers physical health and wellbeing benefits.

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Article

Polyphony and Poikilia: Theology and Aesthetics in the Exegesis of Tradition in Georgian Chant

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Abstract: Georgian polyphonic chant and folk song is beginning to receive scholarly attention outside its homeland, and is a useful case study in several respects. This study focuses on the theological nature of its musical material, examining relevant examples in light of the patristic understanding of hierarchy and prototype and of iconography and liturgy. After brief historical and theological discussions, chant variants and paraliturgical songs from various periods and regions are analysed in depth, using a primarily geometrical approach, describing the iconography and significance of style, musical structure, contrapuntal relationships, melodic figuration, and ornamentation. Aesthetics and compositional processes are discussed, and the theological approach in turn sheds light on questions of historical development. It is demonstrated that Georgian polyphony is a rich repository of theology of the Trinity and the Incarnation, and the article concludes with broad theological reflections on the place of sound as it relates to text, prayer, and tradition over time.

Keywords: Georgian chant; Orthodox theology; exegesis of tradition; aesthetics; polyphony; oral tradition; Dionysios the Areopagite

1. Introduction: Theological and Methodological Frameworks

The Georgian Orthodox three-part polyphonic chant has begun to receive greater academic attention outside its homeland, and it provides interesting material for historical and musicological study. It is also an excellent case study for questions about the spirituality of Orthodox chant, its place among the sacred arts and in liturgical space, its relationship to prayer, and its concrete expression of theology. This article will discuss such aspects of Georgian chant by exploring examples[1] within theological and iconographic-architectural frameworks, using historical and musicological analysis, contextual information, and patristic writings as tools for study and interpretation. Some of the same chant items will recur throughout the study as we explore the nature and significance of different details. We begin by establishing the frameworks and briefly describing the sources of the tradition, touching upon the difficult issue of dating the appearance of three-part polyphony in Georgia.

Much of the structural and theological discussion of Georgian chant relates to the concepts of hierarchy and prototype. The term *hierarchy* first occurs in the various works attributed to St. Dionysios the Areopagite, which some scholars attribute to the hand of the Georgian St. Peter the Iberian and which, in any case, have had an important place in Georgian theology, literature, and liturgy (Lourié 2010, 2016).[2] The saint defines and describes the phenomenon as follows:

[1] I have provided transcriptions for examples, especially those that analyzed in depth, and I have included links to available recordings wherever possible. It was impracticable to provide a transcription for every mentioned chant, and certain aspects may be more concretely and quickly perceived by listening, foregoing the need to first read a score.

[2] There are two English translations of the complete corpus. I have used that published by John Parker in two volumes in 1897 and 1899, which is now in the public domain and available online at http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/areopagite_01_intro.htm. I have listed the later translation in the references (Luibheid et al. 1987). For ease of reference, and so that the reader may

> "Hierarchy is, in my judgment, a sacred order and science and operation, assimilated, as far as attainable, to the likeness of God, and conducted to the illuminations granted to it from God, according to capacity, with a view to the Divine imitation. Now the God-becoming Beauty, as simple, as good, as source of initiation, is altogether free from any dissimilarity, and imparts its own proper light to each according to their fitness, and perfects in most Divine initiation, as becomes the undeviating moulding of those who are being initiated harmoniously to itself. The purpose, then, of Hierarchy is the assimilation and union, as far as attainable, with God, having Him Leader of all religious science and operation, by looking unflinchingly to His most Divine comeliness, and copying, as far as possible, and by perfecting its own followers as Divine images, mirrors most luminous and without flaw, receptive of the primal light and the supremely Divine ray, and devoutly filled with the entrusted radiance, and again, spreading this radiance ungrudgingly to those after it, in accordance with the supremely Divine regulations" (Celestial Hierarchy, 3:1).

Hierarchy; therefore, has to do with deification,[3] with communication of divinity (Purpura 2017), and in practice, it can be understood as a spiritual pattern that exists at all scales, not unlike a fractal on the physical level (Williams 2010). In his writings, the saint applies hierarchy to the angelic and ecclesiastical orders, but as the definition shows, it includes all beings. He specifies that God is the head of every hierarchy, thereby clarifying that hierarchies do not simply connect to one another in succession; each one exhibits "clinging love toward God" and has its source in Christ and its goal as union with the Trinity (Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, 1:3). Furthermore, hierarchies encompass all deifying activities. In the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, the Areopagite continues his definition, stating that "every hierarchy, then, is a whole account of the sacred things falling under it, a complete summary of the sacred rites of this or that hierarchy" (Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, 1:3), and though he does not comment on music but only on liturgical texts, chant is a part of such rites, along with architecture, iconography, vestments, vessels, and any relevant object or action. I suggest that there are also further hierarchies that relate to lay piety and folk practices and hymns, such as the Svan examples that we will later explore. The ecclesiastical hierarchy includes a "multitude of divisible symbols", and each hierarchy is "a kind of symbol adapted to our condition" (Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, 1:5), encompassing various needs and contexts. Human beings work to incorporate other created things through proper use and co-operation, as St. Maximus the Confessor describes in one of his texts on love (Berthold 1985, p. 38), and sacred art is a primary outcome. It is; therefore, important to keep in mind that hierarchy has to do with liturgical elements at least as much as with those who carry out the services. While the Celestial Hierarchy primarily describes hierarchical members, their work and relationships, the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, while giving some explanations of the relevant hierarchs, focuses on liturgical commentary. Some attention has been given to this topic in architecture (Bogdanović 2011), iconography (Ivanovic 2011), and Byzantine art and ceremony in general (Woodfin 2010), but comparatively little practical discussion of the Areopagitic corpus has taken place, perhaps because of the many differing philosophical considerations, interpretations, modes of reception, and attitudes towards it (Ivanovic 2011). However, given the definition of hierarchy, its explanation as "the source of the order of sacred things" by St. John of Scythopolis (Rorem and Lamoreaux 1998, p. 145), and its further interpretation as a particular pattern type, Georgian chant calls for its application. It applies in two primary complementary ways: The tripartite structure of voices, styles, compositional process, and related aspects; and the specific hierarchical relationship among the voices, in which the middle and lowest reflect, follow, and translate the top-voice model melody in many ways. As St. Ekvtime the Confessor (1865–1944) states, "The mode [i.e., with model melody for any given mode] is

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consult any preferred translation or edition, I have cited the work, chapter, and, where possible, section for all passages in this article.

[3] Deification has been discussed in the writings of various Church Fathers, including the Areopagite (Russell 2004).

the foundation of chanting[;] on the essence of its tune depend the movements of all the voices. Losing the mode is equal to losing the chant" (Sukhiashvili 2014a, p. 421). Yet, in religious folk songs, the middle voice often leads, and different types of compositions can shed light on particular hierarchies or powers within them. Other hierarchies (e.g., sections of a song or the relationship of dance, tune, and text) occur in this repertoire, which we will discuss near the end of this article.

Unlike hierarchy, the term *prototype*, also rendered *archetype*, does not generally occur in patristic works along with deliberate definitions, but its meaning is critical in discourses on icons and clear in context. In a treatise by St. John of Damascus, he describes different kinds of images and explains that an "image is not like archetype in every way" (Louth 2007, p. 25). Further on, he quotes St. Basil the Great, stating that the veneration bestowed upon an image passes to its prototype, that is, to the very person who is depicted; it likewise passes from saints and angels to God (Louth 2007, p. 35). Prototype also has a practical meaning, referring to physical icons and their canonical principles, from which other icons are copied and inspired, yet the analogical, theological sense, in which an icon is a "true likeness" by expressing "the sanctity and glory of the prototype", rather than its outward form, is most relevant (Kenna 1985, p. 345). The outward form of an icon can be studied; however, in order to discern aspects that co-operate in the analogy, in the sanctity and glory. In chant, it is somewhat difficult to apply the term in the literal way, since there is no musical equivalent to an icon "not-made-by-hands" (Moody 2016, p. 53), but the study of a specific repertory can bring to light its own means of expression, both musical and theological (Moody 2015). As we will see, within the given tradition, prototype applies in practice to model melodies and evident musical principles. Theologically, it shows how liturgical song comprises incarnate prayer and worship carried out by human beings, no matter the language or musical tradition, and relates to that uttered by those who hierarchically precede them, that is, angels. Prototype also relates to hierarchy, and all copies of prototypes and all hierarchies come from, and lead back to, the Divine archetype according to St. Dionysios (Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, 1:1; Celestial Hierarchy, 2:4). He states that Jesus Christ is the "Source and Essence, and most supremely Divine Power of every Hierarchy", and that in hierarchy, He "folds together our many diversities" (Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, 1:1). We will analyze the unfolding and folding of sound in Georgian chant, revealing prototypical structures, elements, and their significance. Like the complex surfaces of icons and textiles, chant can be characterized by the aesthetic term *poikilia* (Pentcheva 2010, p. 140), often translated as "variegation", which we will describe in more detail in the discussion of ornamented examples. While the term relates to visual surfaces, it was nevertheless applied to music and poetry, though most scholarly discussions of such examples relate to the Classical period (LeVen 2013).

A third concept that underlies the entire interpretive framework in this study is that of the *logoi* of things. The *logos* of something is its reason for existence, God's will for it, what it can communicate from God to human beings, and its "point of contact with the Godhead" (Lossky 1997, p. 98). St. Maximos the Confessor (d. 662), who commented on the Dionysian writings, who was exiled and buried in western Georgia,[4] and whose writings played an important role in Georgian culture and theology (Mgaloblishvili and Khoperia 2009), is one of the foremost expounders on the *logoi* in creation. Symbolism and mystagogical interpretations, such as those that we will quote below from various Church Fathers, relate to contemplation of the *logoi*, and the connection of subsequent musical analyses to theological frameworks and interpretations also depends on this view of reality. Another underlying concept is that of exegesis, which refers to chanters' interpretations of musical content, not unlike varied scriptural commentaries. The term is notably used in Byzantine chant (Lingas 2004; Touliatos 1989), but it can apply to any tradition. The concept is important since it allows for changes in speed, style, and other characteristics, is the basis for ornamented and melismatic repertoire, and lies behind the idea of a stable tradition with many embodiments. Thus, chanters feel that they sing "the same chants", as we will see below, and such does not entail literal congruence in every detail. The belief in

[4] First-hand accounts of the exile, death, and miracles occur in epistles written by St. Maximos and his peers (Allen and Neil 2003).

an unchanged tradition, then, is not a legendary idea, as such does not denote the sense that chanters across time and space sing the very same material in the very same manner. Hierarchy and prototype tie into this point, since choices based on knowledge and experience of principles lead the process, rather than any particular rendering. The topic of incongruity or disagreement about what may be a valid exegesis will be addressed through examples in several sections of this paper, and we will discover that this aspect has an interesting, even positive, place within the Dionysian framework.

A final methodological note is that it is useful to read sonic expressions in some ways as we would tangible ones, such as Georgian inscriptions, whose specific sizes, formats, self-references, and included crosses mark their prayerful function. The art historian Antony Eastmond considers them to be "textual icons, and states that "their overall form carries the same visual power and figural correspondence as icons in the Orthodox world. The blocks of text acted as mnemonic devices to imprint an icon of prayer on the mind of the viewer" (Eastmond 2015, p. 79). They hold "the same theological value as images, serving as representations of truth with access to the divine" (Eastmond 2015, p. 96). Sung and spoken texts, like their inscribed counterparts, can be similarly described as icons, and our analyses will specify recognizable forms and features that strike the ear as tangible expressions strike the eye and hand. This point has theological implications as well, since matter is as much a key component of making and hearing sound as of the production and reception of material objects. In order to create chant, solid, functional, resonating human bodies—not only brains, voices, mouths, and ears—and air, in which sound waves are formed, are necessary. St. Dionysios writes that, even through the lowest forms of matter, one can be "led to the immaterial archetypes" (Celestial Hierarchy, 2:4). This idea has to do with symbolism as it relates to God and the celestial hierarchy, and it can apply to expressive media and objects themselves and not simply to figures of speech. We will now consider the material sources and history of Georgian chant, including theological information from a medieval Georgian author. His thoughts will begin to fill in the framework just described while also aiding our understanding of historical development.

2. Embodied Tradition: Historical and Theological Sources and the Development of Georgian Ecclesiastical Polyphony

Besides later transcriptions and audio recordings, the historical record of Georgian chant is sparse in musical sources. Only six medieval neumed sources survive, all from the tenth century, and all other manuscripts contain only text and modal designations. Notation does not appear again until the eighteenth century (Oniani 2013). The neumatic systems that occur on both sides of the notation gap, through the twentieth century, are ekphonetic. Later neumes are idiomatic to each source (Graham 2008), but all tenth-century manuscripts employ the same notation. Oral transmission continued even after transcription into staff notation began in the nineteenth century, an effort that was led by several Georgian transcribers and master chanters after annexation by Russia and through the Soviet period (Graham 2007). Staff notation is now used, but like other repertories that include written notation, such as Byzantine chant (Khalil 2009), Georgian polyphony continues to have orally-transmitted components (Graham 2008). We will especially look at oral variation in the discussion of paraliturgical repertoire. While Georgian scholars have further analyzed neumatic notation types, Western scholars have not generally sought any connection between late and early Georgian sources, though sometimes between early Georgian and contemporaneous chant from elsewhere (Jeffery 1992). However, comparison of Georgian sources leads to interesting questions and conclusions about polyphony and the nature of oral tradition. Analysis of chant examples with the most variants and widest documentation reveals the structure and development of the tradition and provides rich material for theological explication. It is possible to ascertain certain points about the development of these examples and what they, and thereby Georgian chant in general, may have been like at least as early as the twelfth century, by reading primary sources concerning musical structure and professional activity; examining modal designations, notation, and text in manuscripts and printed sources; and considering audio recordings and the process of oral tradition, exploring the complex ways in which it relates to the extant neumes

from all periods. The notation gap and different combinations of musical source types—neumes, texts, transcriptions, and audio recordings—at different periods presents a complicated situation, but we also need to look outside the sources in question. Other primary information can then guide interpretation of musical specimens. Subsequent theological interpretations do not depend on questions of history, but we will see that they in turn have historical importance, helping to date three-part polyphony in the Georgian context.

Let us begin with the neumatic sources. Ekphonetic notation types feature two lines of neumes, one below and one above the text. Scholars debate whether or not the tenth-century neumes represent polyphony, but those on the other side of the gap correspond to three-part singing. One recently-discovered twentieth-century example, which has a corresponding recording, appears to outline the middle and bottom voices of a Trisagion variant.[5] In his recent work, the mathematician and chanter Zaal Tsereteli has compared the structures of heirmoi in tenth-century sources with those of nineteenth-century transcriptions. Previously, he proposed that there was no relation between these sources, but through statistical analysis he found a clear correspondence of phrase and structure (Tsereteli 2012). Georgian chants are based on genre-specific, top-voice model melodies for each of the eight modes, which are harmonized differently in each chant school and, as we shall see in later analyses, by individual chanters, and these are reflected in sources on both sides of the notation gap. We will look at the theology of this model-based, three-voiced form below. The Old Georgian term for harmony, "mortuleba", is polysemantic, and the chanter and musicologist Magda Sukhiashvili considers its appearances in tenth-century sources to refer to polyphonic rendering of chant (Sukhiashvili 2015). Whether harmonization of any kind is as early as these sources or even earlier will be discussed later, and at this point, one may surmise that polyphony, considered in the global context of Christian chant traditions, could have developed in Georgia at least as early as in Western Europe (Shugliashvili 2013).

There are various explanations for the dearth of notated sources between the tenth and eighteenth-centuries, such as the havoc of successive invasions and political upheavals. However, many liturgical books survive, especially in Georgian monastic centers outside the country, such as Mt. Sinai and Jerusalem. It may be that notation declined as polyphony developed, or was perhaps implemented in order to facilitate its beginnings, but it seems that oral tradition took precedence at all stages, as shown by scribal notes and hagiography. For example, in the margin of an eleventh-century menaion, the chanter and translator St. Giorgi the Athonite states that the theotokia are not included in full because "By God's grace we [Georgians] know them by heart", while Greek books give the full text, which would be intoned by a canonarch (Sukhiashvili 2014b, p. 435). This comment is one of many references to memory and orality. Earlier hagiographic accounts, such as that of St. Grigol Khandzteli (759–861), describe their subjects as knowing "the [canons] of all the feasts very well" (Sukhiashvili 2014b, p. 435). These descriptions are not literary exaggerations and align with well-documented nineteenth and twentieth-century chanters (Graham 2008). Thus, oral transmission and preservation, and reliance on the same over written sources, was prevalent even for text. We may infer that such was the case regarding musical material as well, and the ekphonetic nature of all notated sources before the transcription movement, and of idiomatic neumes through the twentieth century, indicates this situation across ten centuries. Concerning the lack of notated manuscripts, then, it may be that notation was not widely used, as is the case in other Eastern traditions, such as Ethiopian chant (Shelemay et al. 1993).

Regarding both practical and theological matters in Georgian chant, let us consider a passage from the preface to the translation of the Psalter by the twelfth-century Gelati Monastery theologian Ioane Petritsi.[6] His oft-quoted reference to three parts in music, names included, has nevertheless been

[5] This example is discussed along with several unique oral variants from the Mengrelian singer Polik'arpe Khubulava (d. 2015), who also refers to his father's use of some kind of graphical or neumatic notation (Kalandadze-Makharadze 2014).

[6] An English translation of the entire preface has been recently published, with the Old Georgian text on facing pages (Gigineishvili 2014, pp. 194–235). Another translation, also by Gigineishvili, of the first part of the passage on music,

interpreted by some scholars as referring to parts of a range rather than to voices in polyphony. The passage is part of an exposition of Trinitarian theology, based on mystagogy of the liberal arts, which somewhat echoes certain ideas in Clement of Alexandria's Miscellanies (Book I, Chapter XIII), but is far more specific in its purpose and in the various phenomena that it describes. This musical mystagogy appears after explications of arithmetic and of the three geometric principles of point, line and plane.

"Now, what about music? Is not, actually, our beloved book [the Psalter] altogether a music embellished by the Holy Spirit?! And any music requires three tunes or phthongs from which any wholeness is composed. They are called mzakhr [strained, high pitch], jir [middle], and bam [lower tension, bass], and, verily, all attunements of strings and voices make a pleasant melody through those three, because the beauty of any ornament derives from the irregularity of its adornments. The same is perceived in the number of the transcendentally Holy Trinity, for we say the 'birthlessness' of the Father, the birth of the Son, the [procession] of the transcendent Holy Spirit, and the unity of the Nature with differentiation of the Hypostases. Similarly, in the musical differentiation of mzakr, jir, and bam you will perceive a unity of composition. In fact, through the paradigmatic images, posited in His First Intellect, God has adorned and musically composed the order of the whole creation and has imposed ideas even on the prime matter looking to [introduce] a diversity even in the oneness of matter. Eventually, during wars and battles the best strategists used to arrange their armies in the shape of a triangle, deeming this shape invincible. In fact, wherever the power of seven is the third corresponding image (or: icon) of the first three. Why? Because, the first odd number is three, the second five and the third the renowned seven, which neither gives birth nor is born, for which reason, according to the teaching of the Italians, it was considered as the virgin [number] and was worshiped as such by them" (Gigineishvili 2014, pp. 221–22).

Readers may ask why Petritsi includes geometric and numeric figures since these aspects were already expounded. Analogy links the perhaps seemingly disparate illustrations, and such is especially so regarding the triangle. As the musicologist Nino Pirtskhalava also notes, he associates the three-voice structure with this shape, hence why the linear sense of range is not intended (Pirtskhelava 2014, p. 485).[7] In addition, the voices are also called "tunes", indicating that they could be sung independently, though the three together form a whole. Elsewhere, Petritsi mentions "simultaneously-sounding pitches", and he employs much polysemantic harmonic language in his works, sometimes using the term in the horizontal or general Greek sense and sometimes in the vertical sense, calling for close, contextual readings. Thus, notwithstanding the practical relation of ideas in this passage, its theological purpose primarily reveals the musical phenomenon to which the author refers. The Trinity underlies all his "theories", as he calls them, and a three-part polyphonic structure serves as sonic iconography, while a range of notes, sounded in horizontal patterns across time, does not. Following Petritsi's order, the top voice is like the Father, bearing the model melody, from which the equally or sometimes more active middle voice, like the incarnate Son, is begotten and the co-operative, grounding bottom voice, like the Holy Spirit, proceeds. The middle voice often has a leading role, especially in paraliturgical song, and St. Dionysios ascribes an important mediating power to the middle member of a hierarchy (Celestial Hierarchy, 9:2). Along with this Trinitarian discussion, Petritsi's geometrical analogies of the triangle and of point–line–surface figural construction are useful for musical analysis and for a theological understanding of sacred art and one's prayerful engagement with it (Freedman 2019).

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with several different renderings, one of which I have used below ("procession" instead of "issue"), appears in an earlier publication (Gigineishvili 2007, p. 100).

[7] Note that the author, following the earlier edition of Petritsi's works, writes that the Psalter preface is instead an epilogue to the commentary on Proclus' Elements of Theology. There may also be some confusion between Petritsi's separate annotated translation and commentary on Proclus and their related translations into other languages, which may explain the variations that she finds in the quoted Russian and English translations. Petritsi's writings on music call for further research, and as Pirtskhelava's work exemplifies, passages from various works should be examined together. Close contextual readings within each work are also of paramount importance regarding both musical information and Petritsi's own philosophical views (Gigineishvili 2007).

Petritsi's contemporaries would have shared the precise musical and iconographic experiences that correspond to his contemplations, and texts, icons, church buildings, and, as we are describing, at least general musical models, structure, and sensibilities have been carried forward from his time. If a three-voiced basis for musical knowledge was as commonplace as a triangle, polyphony was likely in practice for some time before Ioane Petritsi's twelfth-century theological exegesis. We will return to this point and see that monophony is not necessarily an older phenomenon or predecessor to polyphony in Georgian contexts and from a global perspective, and it is important to note how the theological purpose of the passage helps to clarify the music that it describes.

Nineteenth and twentieth-century sources, such as transcribers' notes and interviews, give further practical information, describing the oral transmission process and providing points on musical structure and history (Sukhiashvili 2014b). Chanters described a five-year curriculum: students began with "study voices", singing in parallel fifths and octaves in order to sharpen the polyphonic paradigm, and then learned the three chant styles, called "modes" in English, not to be confused with the modes of the oktoechos, which are called "voices" in Georgian.[8] First came what were considered the oldest and structurally essential chants: the plain mode variants. It is important to note that such entails model melodies and relatively simple contrapuntal style but can differ in harmonization and figuration (Graham 2012), as we will see in our examples. It may also be helpful to consider the three styles as existing on a continuum rather than as three separate entities, and chanters' aesthetic choices affect the quantity, extent, and type of decoration in any rendering in any mode. After becoming proficient in all three voices, students could add and adjust the other parts after learning the top voice of new chants. They then learned the other two styles, the true and ornamented modes. Ornamented versions have striking features respective to Eastern and Western schools, such as a highly-ornamented, active middle voice, passing between chords, in the former and voice-crossing (called "going across the cross") and diversion from model melodies (Graham 2013), with additional vowels, often over long melismas, in the latter. In simple variants, harmonization and bottom voice gestures differ, but as John Graham notes, shared features, such as model phrases, three-part structure, and cadence types point to the singing of developed polyphonic chant throughout Georgia before the 1220 Mongol invasion and subsequent separation (Graham 2016). Regional folk styles share features with the geographically-associated chant schools (Tsitsishvili 2010, pp. 295–97), and especially in the ornamented mode, improvisation is of great importance, especially in the Gelati and Shemokmedi traditions, and depends on chanters' practical, not theoretical—and there are no extant Georgian music theory treatises—understanding of musical structures, principles, and rules. As the master chanter Artemi Erkomaishvili, whose style we will explore, described it, one "hears the end of the [chant] in advance, and if the goal is seen, it is not difficult to achieve it; whichever way you take and how many turns you may take up and down, you are sure to get there … However, the voices may be twisted, we know where to get, but it is impossible to twist the voices in one and the same manner twice" (Sukhiashvili 2014b, pp. 436–37). John Graham describes how chanters use cadence pitches, textual rhythm, and most interesting for this study, what we will call reflections and translations of model phrases, that is, inversions and the singing of the same melodic patterns in a different range, to guide their improvisations (Graham 2013). Yet, these examples do not demonstrate the height of decoration that historically existed. A further method of ornamentation, of which we have no extant examples, was the addition of up to three more voices to the foundational three-part structure, each part with its particular name and characteristics (Shugliashvili 2013). Several scholars have noted that ornamented variants are akin, not historically or directly, but as a musical phenomenon, to late Byzantine kalophonic chant (Shugliashvili 2010), yet an important difference is that, rather than being entirely new compositions, they still follow the "traces", to use St. Ekvtime's term, of the model

[8] The term "mode" will be used in both cases in this paper, as context should make it clear whether Georgian chant style or the oktoechos is under discussion.

melodies (i.e., their formulae and contour) (Sukhiashvili 2014b, pp. 447–48). This importance of model melodies is indicative of the mechanism of orality over notation in the development of the tradition. It is likely, then, that the co-existent variants and the oral pedagogical process reflect the historical development of Georgian chant, beginning with the plain mode versions or perhaps the study voices. Three-part polyphony is the prototypical, foundational, hierarchical pattern, with the top voice having structural but not chronological importance for chanters. It begets and sends forth the other two voices, not existing before or without them; there is no monophonic stage in the curriculum. The ekphonetic neumes of later sources were used by chanters working with this knowledge and background, and the tenth-century neumes could have been read in a similar cognitive and perceptive context; diachronic graphical comparisons of neume types could shed much light on this situation. I suggest that, while allowing for great variation and development, three-part structure gave triangular strength and stability to oral tradition across the centuries, depending on at least three singers' memories and successful combinations of voices. Even when transcriptions emerged as a preservation measure, their very proponents nevertheless noted the necessity of oral transmission. Scores were understood as means to support and revitalize such learning but not to replace it. It was noted that chants sounded "out of tune" when choirs without the aural background sang from transcriptions (Graham 2007, p. 103). Yet, some kind of shared, somewhat precise, even if not entirely accurate, notation was needed in order to prevent the utter loss of repertoire under oppression and to make it possible for long-term preservation to occur when oral transmission was hampered. After yet further oppression in the Soviet period, the continued synergy of oral tradition and written score has been taking place since at least the late 1980's. Thus, embodied polyphony has been a primary technology of preservation as well as an enduring pattern over time and across sacred and secular music. We will briefly consider similar patterns in other forms of sacred art and discuss the chant-related linguistic and artistic inculturation process of Christianity in Georgia before examining specific musical examples.

3. Inculturation and Aesthetics in Chant, Architecture, and Iconography: Contextualizing Sacred Polyphony Amidst Language, Space, and Material Culture

Archaeological traces of Christianity are evident in Samtavro and other parts of eastern Georgia from the second century onwards (Licheli 1998; Mgaloblishvili 1998), and it became the state religion of Eastern Georgia, that is, the kingdom of Iberia, in the first quarter of the fourth century. The religion also became widespread in the kingdom of Egrisi in Western Georgia, which had continuous cultural exchange with the Hellenistic world from the classical (Giorgadze and Inaishvili 2016; Tsetskhladze 1992) through Byzantine periods,[9] and it is interesting that archaeological remains, churches, attributed apostolic burial sites, hagiographic summaries (Vinogradov 2017), and folk stories of specific apostolic episodes survive together (Makharadze and Ghambashidze 2014). The general Eastern Christian approach of inculturation, as opposed to acculturation, took place in Georgia (Doborjginidze 2014, p. 329), and while elements from surrounding cultures are present, local art, vernacular texts, and specific practices developed (Eastmond 2015; Schrade 2001). While it is sometimes difficult to ascertain whether a given element is Georgian, especially apart from language, since many cultural, literary, and practical elements are shared or follow indirect paths,[10] specific characteristics of Georgian Christian expression are identifiable. It is understood that music was also an integral, though less easily documentable, part of the same process. Studying the linguistic, artistic, and even topographical inculturation process can help to contextualize, interpret, and understand associated chant material.

The linguistic inculturation process can be divided into two major stages: a "functional", linguistically-legitimizing phase of initial assimilation and translation, ending in the tenth century, and a "qualitative" period of incorporating further knowledge, Byzantine influence, and precise use of

[9] Roman and early Byzantine monuments are rich in this region, greatly supplementing brief references in historical literature (Khrushkova 2007).

[10] There is a useful recent study of culture in late antiquity (Cameron 2015).

language, characterized by the translation of many new works and retranslation of others, ending in the twelfth century (Doborjginidze 2014, p. 331). Ioane Petritsi's work belongs to this second stage. The earliest Georgian liturgical books contain the Jerusalem rite, some containing notes about its use and translation by such figures as Ivane Zosime and Giorgi the Athonite, and such chant books are our only extensive hymnographic sources for Jerusalem liturgy in any language (Frøyshov 2008; Jeffery 1992). Two manuscripts of the *iadgari* (i.e., the Georgian Jerusalem hymnographic collection) are neumed, and Georgian churches kept contact with Jerusalem and followed the Palestinian typikon of the Byzantine rite (Mgaloblishvili 2014). The liturgical scholar Symeon Froyshov describes complementary ways of dividing the phases of liturgical inculturation, such as the multi-stage development of the Georgian recension of the Jerusalem rite through its final Byzantine form (Frøyshov 2008, pp. 264–67). Some texts underwent several shifts, such as the paschal canon, whose final form, reached by the twelfth century, was its fourth extant translation, two of which had been made before the tenth century (Frøyshov 2008, p. 240). Some early Jerusalem hymns nevertheless remain in the Byzantine rite and were not given new translations. While translations were being made, primarily from Greek, original hymnography was also composed, such as hymns by the aforementioned St. Grigol Khandzteli (ninth century); Mikaeli Modrekili's iambic compositions and much other indigenous hymnography (tenth century) (Frøyshov 2008, p. 261); St. King Demet're's paraliturgical hymn to the Theotokos, displaying a particular poetic form (twelfth century), sung today according to at least five regional variants, one of which was recently documented (Kalandadze-Makharadze 2014);[11] and octosyllabic redactions of hagiographical accounts (Pataridze 2013, p. 62). Two important forms of Georgian poetry, known as high and low verse, are octosyllabic, and further study of indigenous liturgical compositions, in comparison with Greek, Latin, Syriac, Ethiopian, and other literature, could lead to a greater understanding and discernment of specific cultural elements. Otherwise, such may not be noticed, or a common feature may be referred to as "Georgian." Froyshov discusses the question of indigenous elements in the Jerusalem rite manuscripts, highlighting original hymnography, pointing out elements that may have come from Syriac sources, and discussing common language concerning the Incarnation, which some scholars had previously attributed to one language or another (Frøyshov 2008, pp. 261–64). Georgian musical features are recognizable today, as are architectural and iconographic ones, some of which also have practical or symbolic roots in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem had an important place in Georgian Christian development in several aspects along with liturgical development. While the old capital, Mtskheta, became a New Jerusalem, with representative sacred sites, especially corresponding to the Holy Sepulchre and Golgotha (Mgaloblishvili 2014), such sites occur elsewhere, for instance, Imereti, and a monastic cell type, a tower containing an upper chapel and a lower cell, reflects the same symbolic geography (Gagoshidze 2015). The same hierotopy, that is, hierarchical pattern of sacred space (Lidov 2010), occurs on increasingly smaller scales, by southern church entrances marked by standing stone crosses, which also copy what was literally at the Jerusalem site according to Egeria's fourth-century account, (Chichinadze 2014) and again inside churches, by altars and uniquely-Georgian pre-altar crosses (Gagoshidze 2014). Forms of the cross in these sites and contexts, often featuring triangular decoration and atop three-stepped pedestals (Figure 1), simultaneously symbolize the life-giving pillar from the tree in Mtskheta, the cross at Golgotha in Jerusalem, the true cross (pre-altar crosses sometimes containing relics of the same), and the cross opening the gate of Paradise (Gagoshidze 2015). Especially in pre-altar crosses, their unique structure, patterns, and decorations bear interesting reflections of musical traditions, including a Trinitarian structure, variations specific to regions or workshops, and aesthetic and geometric parallels. Though there is not space to discuss these features here across media, I have described some examples elsewhere (Freedman 2019), and we will analyze some of the relevant features in chant examples

[11] John Graham has provided pages on this chant, similar to that cited below for the paschal troparion. http://www.johngrahamtours.com/shen-khar-venakhi-3/.

from the underlying structural and theological point of view. Three-part polyphony exists within this material and aesthetic milieu and contains its own Georgian elements, echoes of Jerusalem practice, and through cross-domain mapping, patterns, structures, and decorative trends found in material culture,[12] a point that may be overlooked if chant texts alone are over-emphasized.

Figure 1. Pre-altar Cross; photograph taken by Norma Mikeladze-Andersen; http://www.georgiske-kors.dk.

In order to further explore historical development, let us briefly consider contemporary variants of Jerusalem repertoire along with preceding historical documentation. The troparion of the Cross, though designated mode II in other Byzantine rite sources, follows the mode VI (plagal II) model melody in Georgian variants. Though assigned to mode II in the Jerusalem lectionary, it is plagal in tenth-century iadgari manuscripts. While there is an early Byzantine modal area that encompasses features of modes II, plagal II, and IV (Dubowchik 1996, p. 119), the Georgian system of model melodies for each mode suggests that this change may relate to Georgian musical development or categorization. While modal designations and gestures in monophonic repertoires are somewhat fluid, especially among medial modes or between authentic and plagal counterparts (Moran 2010), some melodies also possibly pre-dating modal codification (Jeffery 1992), the situation in Georgian chant is somewhat different since, with scale and range remaining consistent, each mode has one general melody for

[12] Examples of this kind of phenomenon have been recently studied (Harries 1973; Mora 2012), including other parts of the South Caucasus, though from a rather different linguistic and musical tradition (Naroditskaya 2005). Besides the aforementioned work on textiles, pre-altar crosses, and icons, I have previously discussed one Georgian folk Christian example, a Svan labyrinth carving (Freedman 2017).

troparia and one for heirmoi; other chant types follow similar formulas in the respective mode, and others, such as the Trisagion and cherubic hymn, have their own dedicated melodies. The modal change of St. Andrew of Crete's great canon, from mode VI to mode IV, took place in the eleventh century, coinciding with a new translation by St. Giorgi the Athonite, and it was translated again in the twelfth century by St. Arsen (Managadze 2006, p. 410). Today, its heirmoi have the mode VI model melody, but the "Have mercy on me, O God; have mercy on me" refrain sung between the troparia of each ode follows a mode IV formula. The decision to change the mode as part of the effort towards better translations may likewise stem from Georgian musical sensibilities and available material at any particular period, given the use of pre-existing heirmos translations by St. Giorgi, as the musicologist Khatuna Managadze notes (Managadze 2006, p. 410). By the twelfth century, such may relate to text setting and model melodies, especially since lexical, though not metrical, aspects of translation became quite Hellenophilic in the high Middle Ages (Doborjginidze 2014, p. 337).

This study will not analyze chants whose mode has changed, but it is important to note this phenomenon in conjunction with model melodies in Georgian chant development. Later, we will discuss the mode VI troparion model melody as it occurs in practice, but now let us consider late redactions of two Jerusalem chants.

Though no medieval neumes survive for these, our examples are the paschal troparion[13] (plagal I in Byzantine rite sources but no designation in the early Georgian lectionaries) and the Trisagion for the departed, also sung at Great Saturday matins and listed there in the lectionaries (not assigned to a mode) (Tarchnischvili 1959, p. 205). Variants from Svaneti (and for the troparion, also Lechkhumi, Samegrelo, and Rach'a) exist, adding to the number of regional, and sometimes family or personal, chant styles for comparison.

Six variants of the paschal troparion, representing different regions and degrees of ornamentation, are shown (Figures 2–5).[14]

The phrase division is the same in all despite the perhaps textually odd separation before, and beginning the next phrase with, the verb. The syllabic setting, often precise textual rhythm, is synchronous, except for expanded, decorated West Georgian endings. Plain mode variants have long notes at places that afford such expansion and decoration. The top voice model structure, which has an ABa'b' form, is evident, remaining even when voice crossing occurs, passing between the top two voices. Varied harmonization and ornaments; however, often render different structures. The middle voice is also of interest, particularly in Western plain mode versions. Contour and direction are similar, despite the characteristic solo call gesture in the Svan setting. The middle voice has a leading function in Svan song, and this way of building polyphony exists in counterpoint to the top voice-based structure described above; yet, even in that context, the middle voice stands out, for instance by receiving the greatest ornamentation in chants from Kartli-K'akheti. The voice with striking or foundational features, then, may differ and such does not coincide with chronological precedence. Each voice is fundamental in particular ways. Interestingly, in Svan folk song, when monophonic variants occur, they are derived from polyphonic ones (Khardziani 2010), and it seems that this process of shedding voices has taken place on a larger scale in Meskhian (Samsonadze 2012) and Pshav-Khevsurian[15] ritual song.

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[13] Note that the spelling of this hymn's title line, which this author renders as "Krist'e Aghsdga", differs in the scores used throughout this paper, due to different transliteration systems and older and newer forms of the verb in the respective sources.

[14] Transcriptions of these and many other variants, along with recordings, videos, and commentary, have generously been made available online by John Graham at http://www.johngrahamtours.com/kriste-aghdga.

[15] I have not come across a specific reference to voice shedding in this Eastern highland repertoire, and some scholars consider it to be an old, monophonic layer of Georgian music. However, Zurab K'ik'nadze and Kevin Tuite have shown that Pshav-Khevsurian ritual and religion, rather than being archaic, pre-Christian practice, are late developments derived from medieval Georgian Christian feudal culture (Tuite 1996). Religious terminology, e.g., "khat'I" ("Icon") and "jvari" ("cross"), come from Christian liturgy, and one may surmise that the ritual diaphonic and monophonic repertoire, along with some of its textual elements, may have derived from three-part polyphonic chant. A short or seemingly simpler structure "does not imply antiquity", as Frøyshov's study of hymnographic development demonstrates (Frøyshov 2008, pp. 264–67), and it is

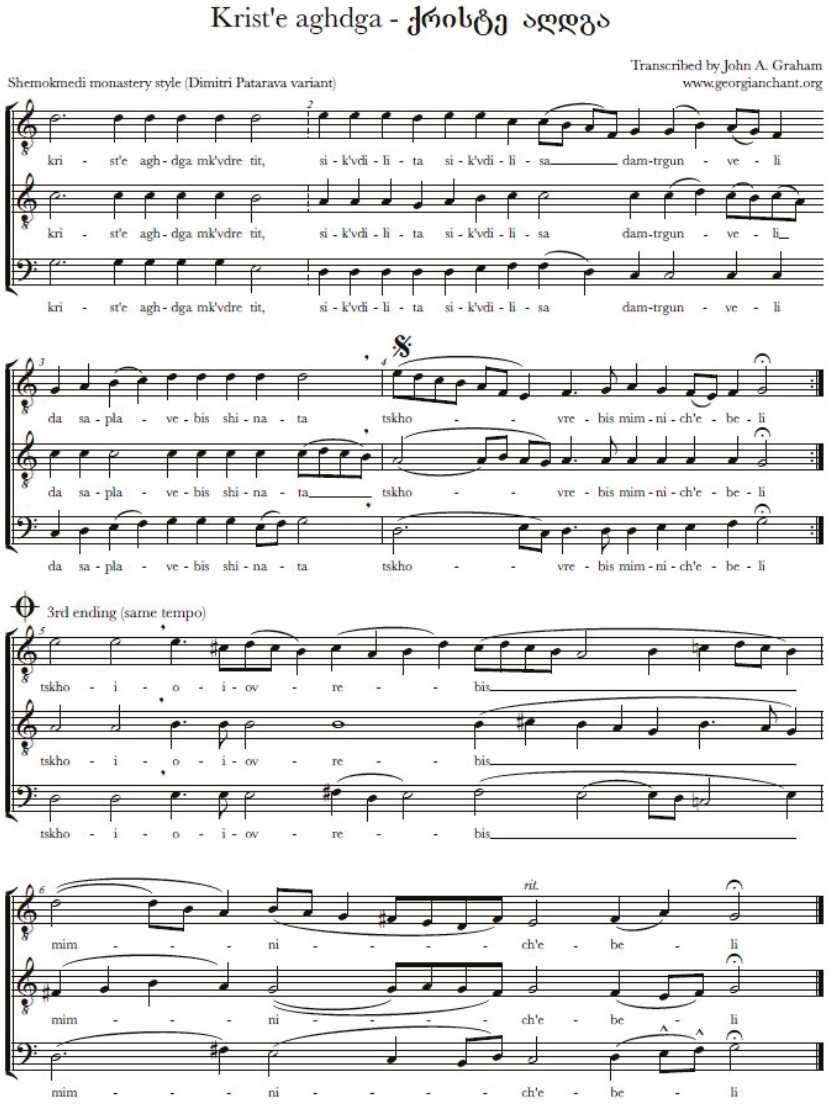

Figure 2. Paschal Troparion; Svetitskhoveli School.

noteworthy that most Svan ritual repertoire retains a three-part structure, pointing to differences in context, development, and/or age. We will discuss the development of this repertoire below.

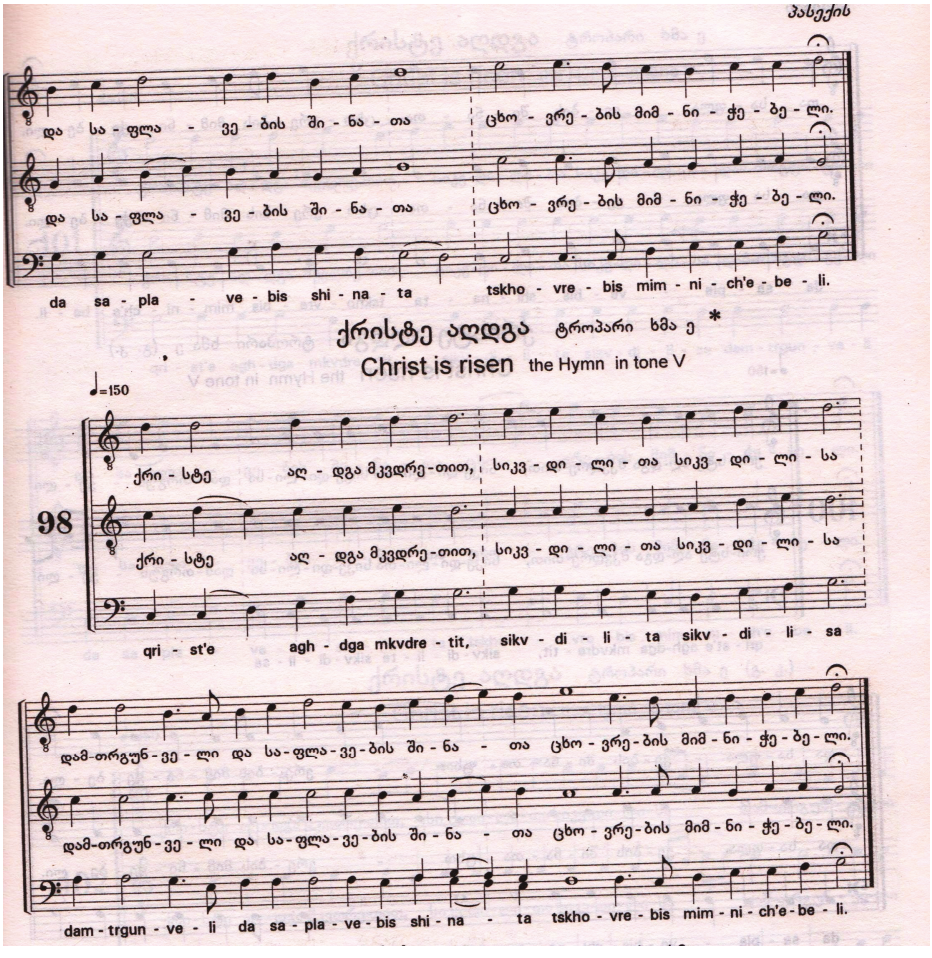

Figure 3. Paschal troparion; Gelati School.

To aid further interpretations from this brief analysis, let us examine the Svan troparion and Trisagion variants (Figures 6 and 7) in their local context.

These are two of only four ecclesiastical texts with Svan variants, accompanied by occurrences of Svanified "Kyrie eleison" in folk hymns and one setting of a triple "Lord, Have Mercy" for the departed (Figure 8).

Along with these chants, ritual round dances, folk hymns (some associated with specific medieval church buildings or villages), funeral songs, and prayers are sung to the present day; we will discuss some examples later. All exhibit three-part polyphony, and even extemporaneous spoken prayer is simultaneously uttered by three men (field notes, 25 July 2011; 28 August 2016; 24 July 2017). Some singers consider this paraliturgical repertoire to have pre-Christian origins, though they also deem it a part of their Christian faith and worship (field notes, 22 July 2011). Local veneration of Christ, the Theotokos, the Archangels, and various saints has its associated songs, high medieval churches, adorned icons, rituals, and manuscripts (field notes; Schrade 2001). The recently studied Kurashi Gospel contains the earliest known Svan specimens (this endangered Kartvelian language is primarily oral) in marginal notes, which include prayers written by fourteenth-eighteenth-century

hands (Gippert 2013). Several, such as a fifteenth-century prayer, reflect the character of folk hymns in their ornamentation with vocables, primarily to extend vocatives, including those in the Trisagion and Kyrie Eleison (Gippert 2013, p. 100). A vocative "O Christ" occurs at the beginning of prayers for blessing (Gippert 2013, pp. 95–97) and even at the start of a note that does not seem to have sacred content (Gippert 2013, p. 98), and this same calling upon the Lord is a common opening element in inscriptions on icons (Chichinadze 2008) and Svan folk songs. It is surprising to find these written witnesses to what is considered an oral folk tradition with no traceable past. Let us now explore the ornamented Svan repertoire in light of the three Georgian chant styles.

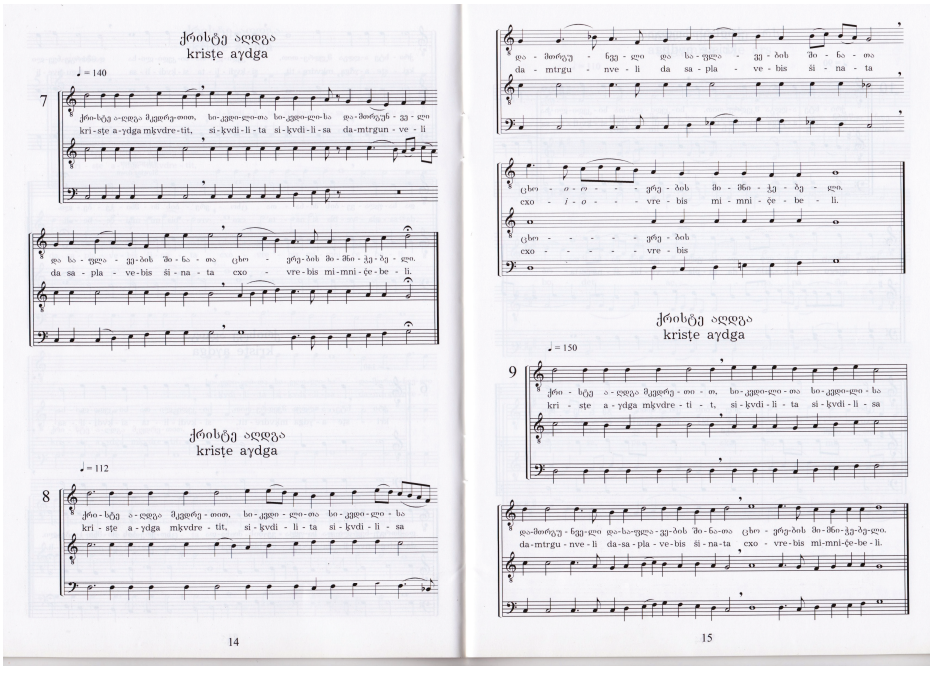

Figure 4. Paschal troparion; Shemokmedi School.

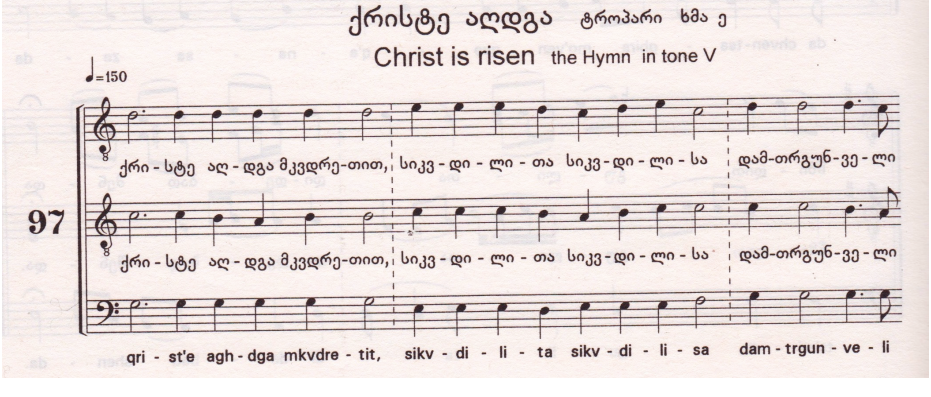

Figure 5. Paschal Troparion; Svan variant.

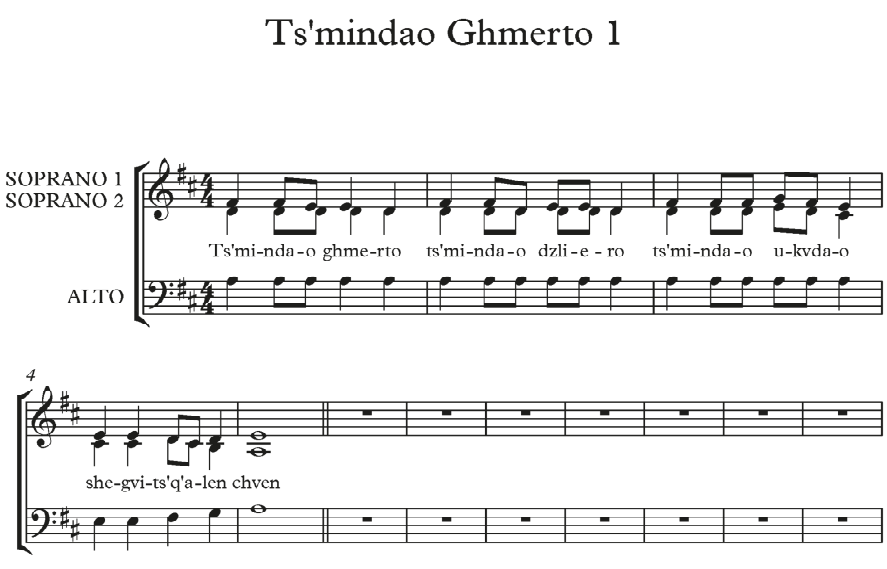

Figure 6. Funeral Trisagion; ornamented mode; Upper Svan variant.

Krist'e Aghsdga is likely the latest Svan chant, from the eighteenth or nineteenth century as John Graham suggests,[16] since it is plain mode, existing without decorated variants, and I suggest that it developed from other Western variants which, like manuscripts, made their way into this mountainous region. Its harmonic progression shares features with the plain mode Trisagion and, besides the latter's unison cadence, the "Lord, Have Mercy;" however, even the latter has been sung as a fifth (field notes, 24 July 2017). The Trisagion is likely somewhat older, since it has multiple versions, including that for the departed, which bears ornamental features. Svan chants have not been previously categorized according to the three styles, but the principles of decoration are clear. Some, such as rhythmic expansion and ornamented key pitches, occur in all Georgian chant schools. Others, such as the addition of vowels, are similar to what we find in Shemokmedi and Martvili chants (Kalandadze-Makharadze 2014; Shugliashvili et al. 2014). The parallel use of particular vocables and the concentric repetition of smaller cyclical figures inside larger ones are Western Kartvelian features, which we will continue to analyze. One decorated Trisagion[17] has different tunes and more repetition, but vocable patterns, placement thereof, and phrase structure are the same, which is why one could consider it another variant of the same chant, not simply because it shares the same ecclesiastical text. Vocables and lexoids comprise a sustainable and stable aspect of Svan song; singers consider them to be the essence, text, and tune allowing for variation and improvisation (Mzhavanadze and Chamgeliani 2016, p. 50). I add call gestures, pattern, vocable placement, repetition, types of beginnings and endings, harmonic and melodic figures, stock texts, certain structures, such as the labyrinth, and a particular type of three-part counterpoint to the prototype of the icon of Svan religious song (Freedman 2017). All these elements become clear when exploring what may be the oldest repertoire, paraliturgical hymns to Christ and St. George and a group of round dances and hymns that share certain lines of text, the same tune, and/or the same dance, as discussed in the relevant section of this article. Concerning the funeral Trisagion, the division of phrases, cadential patterns, and structure of the ornamented variants are similar to those in Gelati and Svetitskhoveli counterparts, showing how some features, not entirely

[16] Personal communication, May 2016.
[17] http://www.alazani.ge/base/basiani/Basiani_-_TSMINDAO_GMERTO.mp3.

text-dependent since other variants differ (cf. the Trisagion structure types described below), are common across regions. In the small group of Svan Trisagia, precise sequences of pitches or melodies are not fundamental, but they are preserved in, created by, and varied through the counterpoint of the aforementioned prototypical aspects. The co-existing repertoire of ecclesiastical chant from other schools also follows musical principles, and many are the same, such as the employment of model phrases, space between voices, labyrinth structure, trends in modulation, and some harmonic gestures. Thus, not only are Jerusalem chants translated into the Georgian language but also into recognizable local music that has its own prototypes, which can only be understood through many copies.

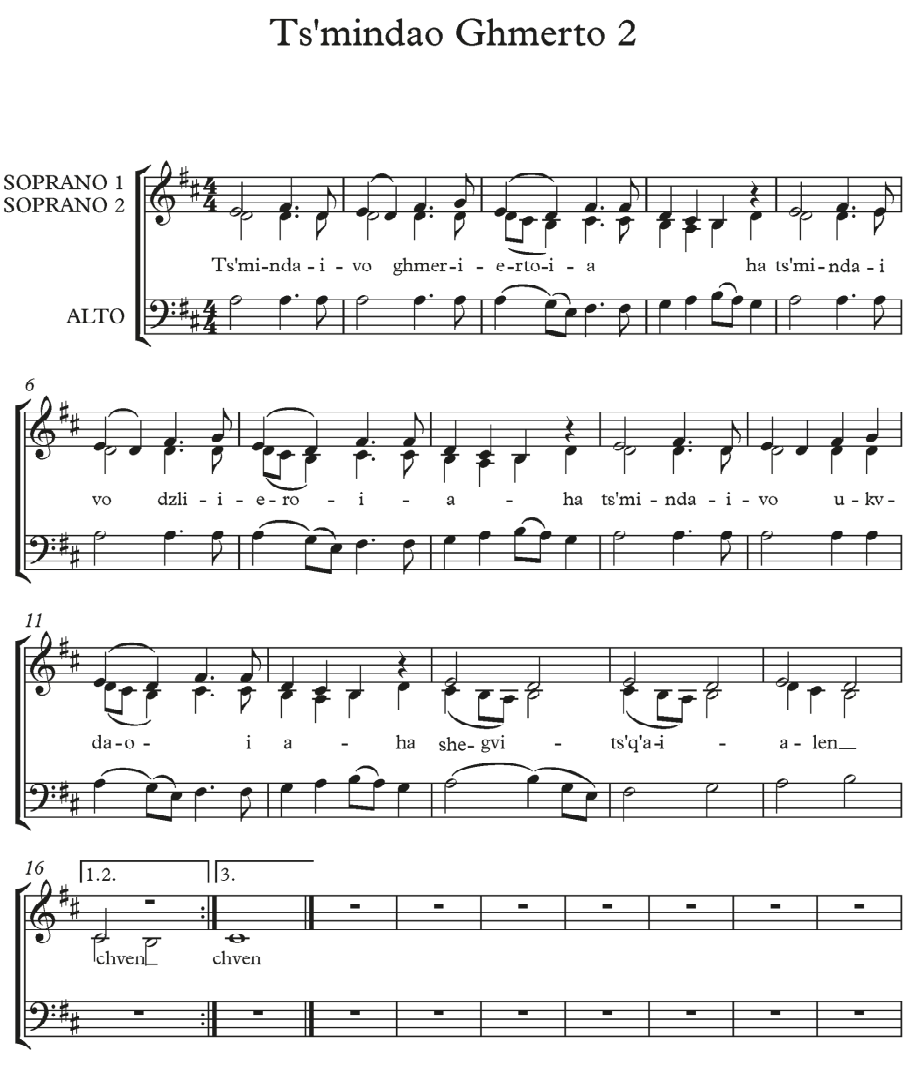

Figure 7. Trisagion; plain mode; Upper Svan variant, Lakhushdi Village.

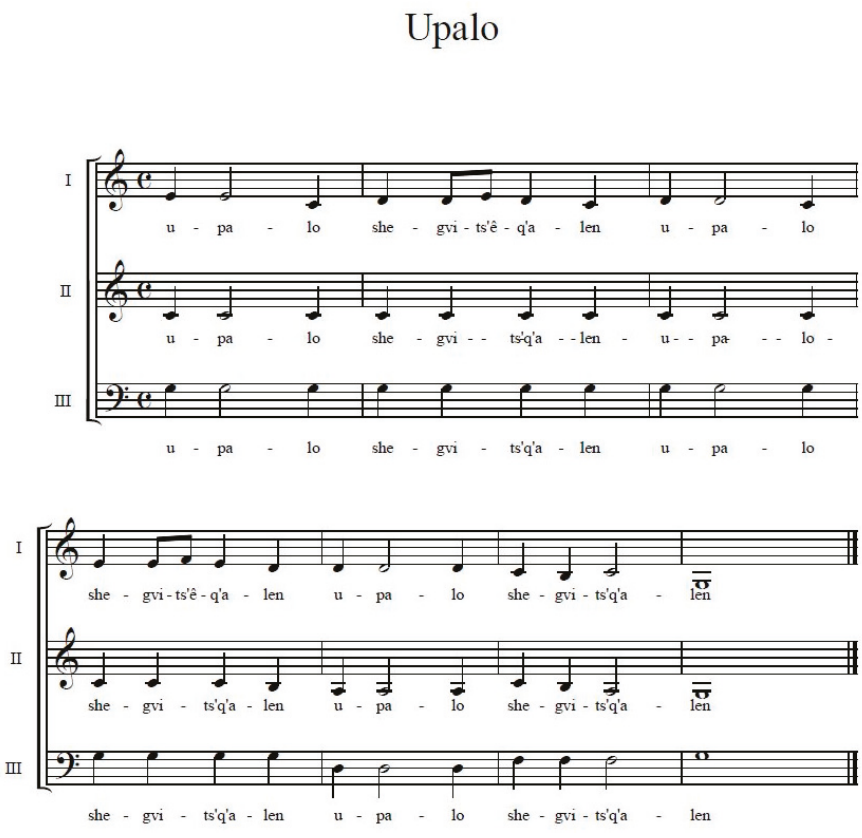

Figure 8. Triple Lord, Have Mercy; plain mode; Upper Svan variant, Lakhushdi Village.

We conclude this section with a few historical notes. If some form of Svan polyphony dates to pre-Christian times, and given its triangular stability, Georgian chant may have taken on polyphony as part of the inculturation process in each region at an early stage. As mentioned above, this process can be measured by textual sources and other art forms, such as architecture, which the art historian Erga Shneurson considers to be an artistic form of Georgian self-identity against the background of the surrounding Byzantine and Persian cultures (Shneurson 2012). The first, functional stage of linguistic inculturation established Georgian as the liturgical language; the Jerusalem lectionaries date from this period, as do some texts still in use. The second, qualitative stage included the creation of new terminology, that is, the "education" of the Georgian language in order to translate Greek semantics, in conjunction with the translation of new material and the revision or replacement of previous translations, in order to produce, as translators wrote, "icons" of the Greek texts (Doborjginidze 2014, p. 338). This stage is when we find the first neumes, the changing of some modal assignments, the references to harmony in chant manuscripts, and the works of Ioane Petritsi; thus, musical inculturation perhaps also underwent a second stage in the central Middle Ages. Being ekphonetic, the early neumes tell the chanter "where to get", and Tsereteli's work shows that the slope and destination correspond with variants from nine centuries later. When a translation was complete, specialized professionals put it to music; some propose that, by the twelfth century, this process entailed setting to model melodies and subsequent harmonization (Managadze 2006, p. 410). Some posit that Georgian polyphony dates to the division of the Kartvelian tribes in antiquity, though the passage from Xenophon sometimes

employed to make this point is too vague to lend support (Graham 2015). Yet, the ethnomusicologist Joseph Jordania states that choral singing was the first human music and provides countless examples that demonstrate the worldwide presence of folk polyphony (Jordania 2011). It is not out of the question that Georgian music to which Christians arrived was polyphonic. The music that they brought with them was most likely monophonic, though intriguing musical language that seems to describe instrumental polyphony occurs in patristic sources, such as St. Ephraim the Syrian's Hymns on Virginity (e.g., Hymn 30:1; translated in McVey 1989, p. 394). Though direct documentation of such is only as early as the nineteenth century, Georgian music entails polyphonic thinking; singers often find it difficult to sing isolated voice parts and will improvise additional voices to arias or unison Western and Byzantine music (Jordania 2006, p. 9; field notes, June, August 2014). Chant development includes much creativity, and translations that fit Byzantine meter when appropriate exist alongside those that do not. As shown by hagiography, canons, and rituals, Georgians may have sung paraliturgical songs and baptized folk traditions at an early stage, and/or these may have developed alongside, or out of, ecclesiastical chant and liturgy (Freedman 2017; Ghambashidze 2006). Regarding imported Greek monophony, they may have translated at least Kyrie Eleison into new musical idioms by the ninth century, and the aforementioned life of St. Grigol Khandzteli lists this as the only Greek text in use at the time (Lang 1995, p. 147). Folk settings occur in Western regions, including the aforementioned written and sung[18] Svan examples.[19] As with many human phenomena, it is impossible to firmly date the beginnings of polyphony; one can only roughly date occurrences as they are discovered and may yet find illuminating pilgrim's accounts and scribal notes. The earliest known Christian Georgian inscriptions, which include recognizable forms of what is now commonly called the "Jesus prayer", were found in Nazareth (ca. 330–427) (Tchekhanovets 2011, pp. 458–60), and Georgian polyphony, religious or otherwise, may have been sung by pilgrims in Palestine even as early as the mid-fourth century. Once textual translations were stable, ecclesiastical music could flourish, but vocable-rich song, which does not depend on written texts, could have existed earlier. Some Jerusalem texts occur in the Byzantine rite; the paschal troparion is one; the Trisagion is another, and its music has its own model melodies. These chants exist in a multitude of polyphonic variants with interesting similarities. As is the case now, it may have been in eighth-century Jerusalem, ninth-century Tao-Klarjeti, tenth-century Svaneti, eleventh-century Mt. Athos or Sinai, or twelfth-century Imereti, for any number of texts; that is, they may have been sung by Georgians in many ways, yet always in three plaited parts along the same path, which, as we saw, cannot be done in "one and the same manner twice." Plain mode variants may have been solidified by the twelfth century, at the end of the second inculturation stage. What some consider the most well-preserved Kartvelian folk music, Svan ritual song, shares, or has developed, features along the same lines, giving us two interrelated repertoires that embody similar principles. We will view this repertoire in a complementary way below and see that musical developmental patterns may differ, and that ornamenting with vocables may be a foundational, rather than a decorative, feature. Chants in notated and textual second-stage sources are still being sung in one variant or another, each performance constituting a new construction by those who know how to build towards the same goal. If we could have chanters from across the centuries sing for each other as Bishop Aleksander Okropiridze did from across the country in the nineteenth century, we might receive the same puzzled response, given by a Gurian choir director after listening to Eastern variants: "Why did you bother to bring us here? You have the same chants that I know" (Graham 2007, p. 102).

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[18] http://www.alazani.ge/base/Riho/Riho_-_Kviria.mp3.

[19] This text also occurs in Mengrelian paraliturgical songs (Makharadze and Ghambashidze 2014). The authors consider the changing of Kyrie Eleison into similar-sounding vocables to be a late phenomenon, in order to hide the sense of the words during the Soviet period, but given the Svan manuscript example and general Western decorative principles, I suggest that such is not the primary factor. This article also provides an interesting hagiographical story, passed down orally and related to the named festival, about first-century apostolic activity of St. Andrew and of Christianization in Western Georgia. Interestingly, like the story of St. Nino in Kartli, it includes the cutting down of an important tree, albeit in a very different context and for different, somewhat negative reasons.

Thus, the Georgian offspring of Jerusalem chant has multiple forms of three-part exegesis within a threefold system of styles according to regional chant schools; overlapping variations within each style and region; and a polyphonic sound since at least the high Middle Ages, interpreted by chanters according to the liturgical text, knowledge of established musical principles, and work with each other and their forbears. Early and high medieval Georgian art depicts Jerusalem through symbolic shapes and the forms of contemporary Georgian churches, which display local features like the darbazi house structure, rather than through Byzantine or Hagiopolite models (Gagoshidze 2014). We have seen the same phenomenon in sound, where chants from Jerusalem are expressed not only in the Georgian language but also according to Georgian musical forms and ornaments. The spiritual and tangible significance of Jerusalem, along with its practices and texts, are continued not through exact replication of physical form, word, and melody, but through meaningful and effective intermedial translation and iconography. Let us now further examine prototypes in Georgian chant through more in-depth examples, leaving aside questions of history and fully taking up theological discussion.

4. Musical Prototypes: Model Melodies, Foundational Characteristics, and the Case of the Trisagion

We have briefly touched on Svan Trisagia and some of their prototypical elements, and this section will look at variants of this hymn throughout Georgia and from different periods. However, we will first address the prototype phenomenon in general through field recordings and practical descriptions.

The role of model melodies as prototypes for Georgian musicians can be well understood in practice. The aforementioned mode VI troparion melody is widely known and documented, and field recordings reveal an interesting cognitive aspect. Several hymns that use this melody were recorded from the same Gurian singers in the early twentieth century. In one example, the paschal processional hymn,[20] the first two lines of the hymn are sung, followed by the substitution of text with the second half of a Palm Sunday troparion in the same mode. In another example, the troparion "O Heavenly King",[21] several lines of text are skipped, which leads to fewer repetitions of melodic formulae. It is likely, then, that the models and their formulaic phrases take precedence in memory and are available for the application of texts, whether read, recalled, interchanged, mixed, lengthened, or truncated. The Georgian musicologist Magda Sukhiashvili notes that the application of text to model melodies is not a static scheme but is based on experience and understanding of principles, of the "science of hymnography", as it is called. She describes this kind of compositional process as explained by chanters and through comparative analyses of several troparia. St Polievktos Karbelashvili, who, along with his brothers, preserved many east Georgian chants in the 1880's, called the joining of text to melodic formulae "threading", and the model melodies remain against the historical background of changing styles and aesthetics (Sukhiashvili 2014a, pp. 422–23). Even in the most decorated variants, they act as axes around which decorations move to and fro (Sukhiashvili 2014a, p. 423). Thus, the model melodies act as prototypes or foundational surfaces for text, but unlike monophonic chant traditions, they do so joined with various principles of style and harmonization, as we have already begun to explore. We will now return to the Trisagion. After discussing patristic theology of this hymn, we will examine the musical characteristics along with the text, continuing to identify various elements as prototypical in particular ways and giving rise to various characteristics in specific variants. We will; thus, further explore theology through analysis.

The Trisagion occurs in two primary forms: The direct quotation from the Book of Isaiah (Is. 6:3), sung during the anaphora, which begins with "Holy, holy, holy" and is combined with the praise from the account of Palm Sunday (Matt. 21:9); and an expanded and supplicatory proclamation, "Holy God, holy Mighty, holy Immortal, have mercy on us", which occurs at the end of the great doxology, during the synaxis of the Liturgy, during funerals and memorials, and at the beginning, middle, and

[20] http://www.alazani.ge/base/Guria/Guria_-_Agdgomasa_Shensa.mp3.
[21] http://www.alazani.ge/base/Guria/Guria_-_Meupeo_Zetsatao.mp3.

end of services in the daily office (Simmons 1984, p. 42). A third form occurs as the ending phrases in groups of troparia to the Trinity and the troparion for the weekday midnight office, also used for the first three days of Holy Week. Later in this article, we will explore this third form in a single Georgian paraliturgical setting, since the full troparia simply follow the given model melodies. Let us first consider the second form, keeping in mind that all are described as angelic prototypes. The second form is an interesting case for this study since tradition holds that it is not only sung but directly taught to human beings by angels (St John of Damascus, Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book II, 10). The Trisagion also holds symbolic and powerful significance, as demonstrated in liturgical commentaries. Referring to the anaphoral form, which is sung by members of the highest angelic hierarchy, St. Dionysios writes the following:

> "This, then, according to my science, is the first rank of the Heavenly Beings which encircle and stand immediately around God; and without symbol, and without interruption, dances round His eternal knowledge in the most exalted ever-moving stability as in Angels; viewing purely many and blessed contemplations, and illuminated with simple and immediate splendors, and filled with Divine nourishment—many indeed by the first-given profusion, but one by the unvariegated and unifying oneness of the supremely Divine banquet, deemed worthy indeed of much participation and co-operation with God, by their assimilation to Him, as far as attainable, of their excellent habits and energies, and knowing many Divine things pre-eminently, and participating in supremely Divine science and knowledge, as is lawful. Wherefore the Word of God has transmitted its hymns to those on earth, in which are Divinely shewn the excellency of its most exalted illumination. For some of its members, to speak after sensible perception, proclaim as a "voice of many waters", "Blessed is the glory of the Lord from His place" and others cry aloud that frequent and most august hymn of God, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabaoth, the whole earth is full of His glory." These most excellent hymnologies of the supercelestial Minds we have already unfolded to the best of our ability in the "Treatise concerning the Divine Hymns", and have spoken sufficiently concerning them in that Treatise, from which, by way of remembrance, it is enough to produce so much as is necessary to the present occasion, namely, "That the first Order, having been illuminated, from this the supremely Divine goodness, as permissible, in theological science, as a Hierarchy reflecting that Goodness transmitted to those next after it", teaching briefly this, "That it is just and right that the august Godhead—Itself both above praise, and all-praiseworthy—should be known and extolled by the God-receptive minds, as is attainable; for they as images of God are, as the Oracles say, the Divine places of the supremely Divine repose; and further, that It is Monad and Unit tri-subsistent, sending forth His most kindly forethought to all things being, from the super-heavenly Minds to the lowest of the earth; as super-original Origin and Cause of every essence, and grasping all things super-essentially in a resistless embrace" (Celestial Hierarchy, 7:4).

Note that the saint describes and gives reasons for the transmission of angelic hymnody to the human hierarchies. He specifies that the source is "unvariegated" and that the angels worship "without symbol", but a result of the transmission to, and assimilation by, human worshippers is variety and variegation. Yet, the human chanting of any form leads to unity and even to equality with the angels, including participation in the circular movement around God, as St Maximos the Confessor describes in two passages from his *Mystagogy*:

> "The triple exclamation of holiness which all the faithful people proclaim in the divine hymn represents the union and the equality of honor to be manifested in the future with the incorporeal and intelligent powers. In this state human nature, in harmony with the powers on high through the identity of an inflexible eternal movement around God, will be taught to sing and to proclaim holy with a triple holiness the single Godhead in three Persons. By the Trisagion there comes about the union with the holy angels and elevation to the same honor,

> as well as the ceaseless and harmonious persistency in the sanctifying glorification of God". (Berthold 1985, p. 201)
>
> "The unceasing and sanctifying doxology by the holy angels in the Trisagion signifies, in general, the equality in the way of life and conduct and the harmony in the divine praising which will take place in the age to come by both heavenly and earthly powers, when the human body now rendered immortal by the resurrection will no longer weigh down the soul by corruption and will not itself be weighed down but will take on, by the change into incorruption, potency, and aptitude to receive God's coming. In particular it signifies, for the faithful, the theological rivalry with the angels in faith; for the active ones, it symbolizes the splendor of life equal to the angels, so far as this is possible for men, and the persistence in the theological hymnology; for those who have knowledge, endless thoughts, hymns, and movements concerning the Godhead which are equal to the angels, so far as humanly possible". (Berthold 1985, p. 209)

Thus, the hymn is prototypical, iconic, transformative, and eschatological. However, one may inquire regarding its universal nature since, in any given language and musical tradition, it exists in a different sonic form or, as in Georgian, many musical variants, as well as the several aforementioned textual forms. These many forms are, as suggested above, a result of hierarchical patterns and processes and can be described in Dionysian terms as "variegated sacred veils" (Celestial Hierarchy, 1:2) that reveal what they cover. They may symbolically reflect the aforesaid "many and blessed contemplations" of the angelic orders.

Let us now consider the second of the textual forms in its musical settings. The semantics, syntax, and, where linguistically appropriate, grammar of the text are generally shared across languages. Therefore, the text can be said to be a prototype with many sonic icons even where speech is concerned. It can be labelled with the structure AbAbAbC, A marking the repeated vocative "Ts'mindao", b the other vocative, and C the imperative phrase; AAAB is the overall structure without divided vocative phrases. Yet, this text relates to given musical examples in a variety of ways. For liturgical examples, we will describe only the first iteration, though the hymn is sung four times at an ordinary Liturgy; some variants contain different settings for the third of these repetitions. The aforementioned ornamented Svan setting for the departed has the parallel musical structure AbAbAbC, as do Gelati and East Georgian funeral variants. Some liturgical settings, also in both Eastern and Western examples, join the final vocative to the imperative, rendering the structure AbAbAC (Figures 9 and 10).[22]

Yet other settings treat the text as a sort of ascending tricolon, again across Georgia, giving rise to such forms as Aa'B (Figure 11) and ABC.[23]

The repetition can inspire yet further permutations, and the popular setting by the current patriarch, Ilia II, has the form AbbC (Figure 12).

A lower Svan variant repeats vocatives, rendering the textual structure ABACADEACDE and the musical form AaaBCB', whose rhythm is like that of the above plain mode Upper Svan variant (field notes, November 2015). Like the above paschal troparion, these structures are further developed through harmonization, which, for instance, can turn a into a' and a". Principles of musical form, such as medial and final gestures, have a similar role (e.g., B and B' in the Lower Svan Trisagion), and the same affect harmony, the middle ceasing its parallel motion and reflecting the top voice's ascent, moving down a step in order to form the cadential fifth. Changes in ornamentation have similar effects in varying the repetitions, as in variants of the Svan funeral Trisagion, whose figures we will discuss below. Thus, as we previously saw with Svan vocables, principles and elements of musical composition direct the making of a chant alongside the text, and in rendering any given copy of a

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[22] Another Gelati variant can be heard at http://www.alazani.ge/base/AnchiskhatiG/Anchiskhati_-_Tsmindao_Gmerto.mp3.
[23] An Eastern variant with this structure can be hard at http://www.alazani.ge/base/AnchiskhatiK/Anchiskhati_-_Tsmindao_Gmerto.mp3.

prototype, harmonic, contrapuntal, and decorative aspects work in synergy. The text, its sounds, and its structure act somewhat like the basic warp in a balanced textile, and the musical features act like multifarious ground and pattern or supplementary wefts. Pattern warps may also be added, such as additional vowels and vocables.

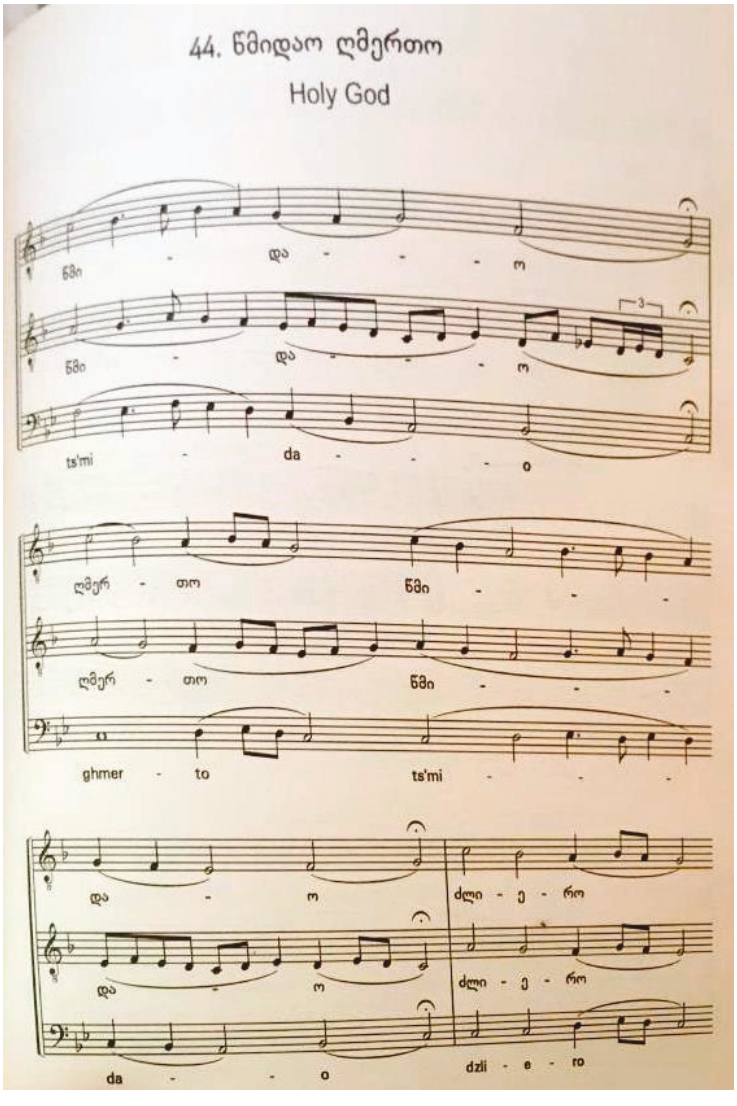

Figure 9. Trisagion; Svetitskhoveli School (Shugliashvili and Tsereteli 2012).

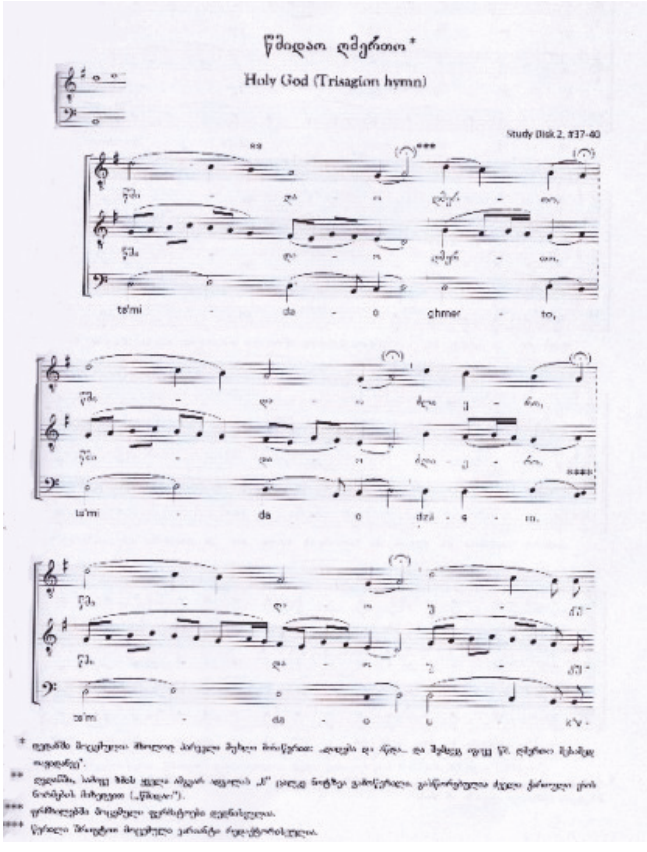

Figure 10. Trisagion; Gelati School (Chkhikvishvilli and Razmadze 2010).

Returning to the topic of the angelic prototype of the Trisagion, while we discussed a theological, hierarchical basis for variants above, one may ask how it practically relates to the many forms sung by human beings. No language or tradition claims to have the original melody or to be concerned with recognizing it. In part, this state of things has to do with the nature of the relationship between icons and prototypes, in which many copies exist, employing various media and techniques, displaying different styles and details, and containing inscriptions in different languages. While questions about literal copying may be difficult to address, we can relate Trisagion variants to their prototype not in the way that an icon relates to its iconographic prototype but to its participation in its theological one, that is, to the depicted person. One may ask, then, where this puts human chanting in relation to that of angels. We have discussed the hierarchical transmission process and begun to analyze some of its results. We can conclude that the outcome is not simple repetition but the creation of hymns, using skills, language, and musical materials accordingly and in co-operation, within the spiritual hierarchical framework. Indeed, an angelic sound may not even be reproducible but only somehow translatable through a multitude of utterances, and angels may have taught translations, providing sonic parallels to the forms in which they appear, which humans can perceive but which are not indicative of their nature (St John of Damascus, Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith, Book II, 3). In his aforementioned Celestial Hierarchy, St. Dionysios discusses how and why angels and God are described using symbols, often quite incongruous (2:5), and the great variety of liturgical sounds and

utterances can be understood as having a similar function. Furthermore, in his Divine Names, he writes that, through "supremely divine hymns", that is, chant, "we are molded to the sacred songs of praise", that is, angelic hymnody (1:3). Chant in the earthly hierarchy, insofar as it is inspired by that of the heavenly, becomes like unto it in a fitting way, which is not in every way bound up with its discernable characteristics. Chant, then, has an apophatic side, in which it is understood to point to incomprehensible sound and experience. Nevertheless, the saint states that we, unlike angels, need symbols, and humans help to create the same, though they are ordained by God and given as "sacred veils of the loving-kindness towards man" (Divine Names, 1:4). It is fruitful; therefore, to fold and unfold sonic symbols, studying all aspects of sacred song.

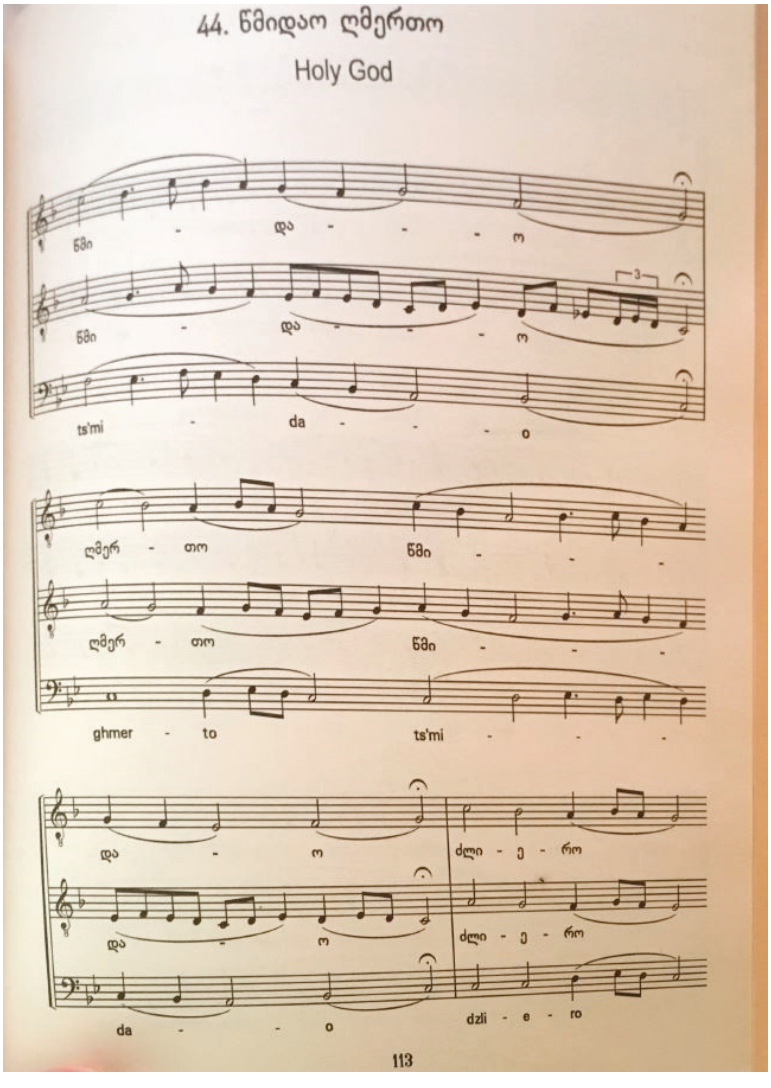

Figure 11. *Cont.*

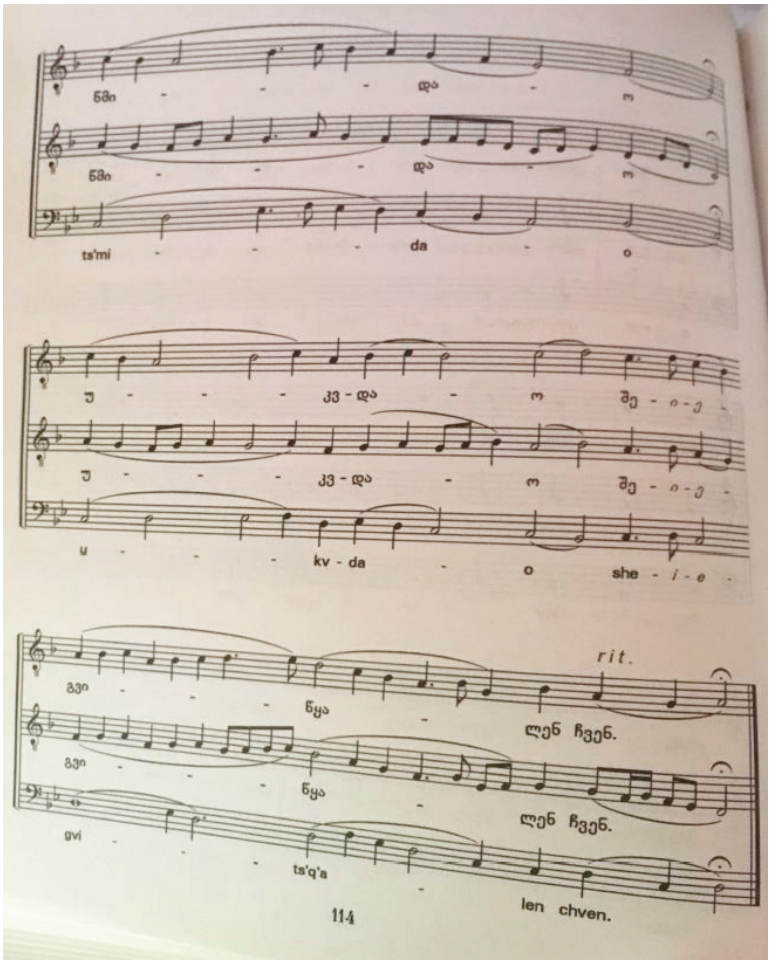

Figure 11. Trisagion; Gelati School (Chkhikvishvilli and Razmadze 2010).

Other patristic works provide further insights on the idea that human and angelic worship are not by all means dissimilar, and St. Dionysios himself specifies that lower hierarchies participate in the characteristics of higher ones but to a fitting degree (Celestial Hierarchy, 4:3), and that every individual participates in God. Near the end of his Celestial Hierarchy, he provides this note: "I might add this not inappropriately, that each heavenly and human mind has within itself its own special first, and middle, and last ranks, and powers, manifested severally in due degree, for the aforesaid particular mystical meanings of the Hierarchical illuminations, according to which, each one participates, so far as is lawful and attainable to him, in the most spotless purification, the most copious light, the pre-eminent perfection" (10:3).

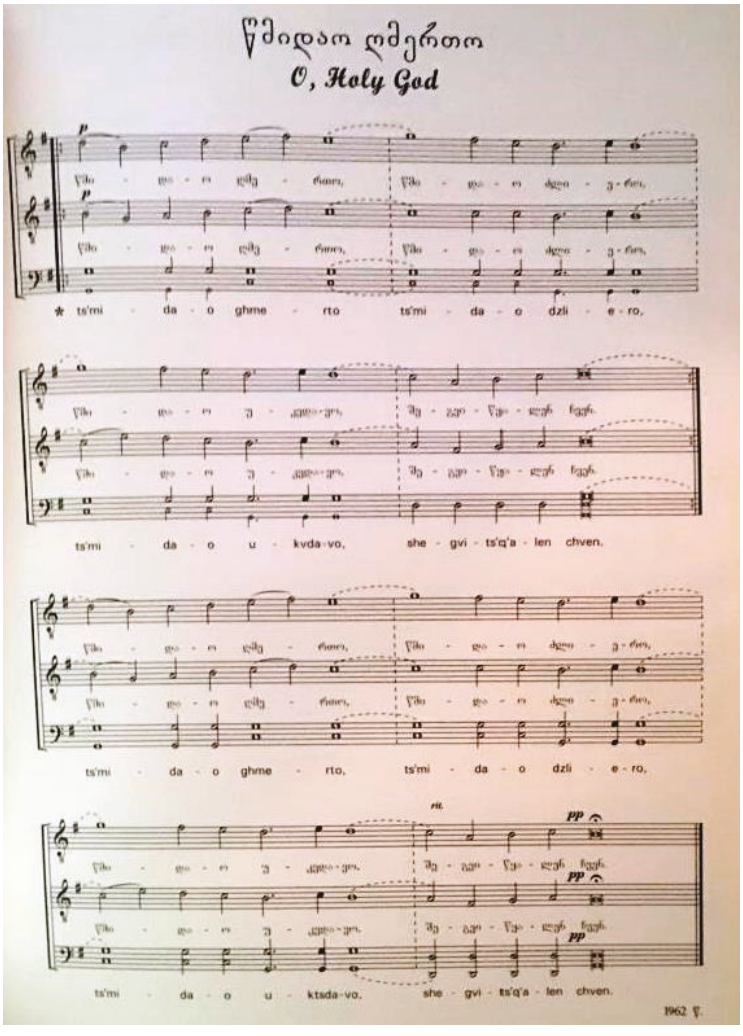

Figure 12. Trisagion; composed by Patriarch Ilia II (Jangulashvili 2013).

Regarding hierarchical participation, St Symeon of Thessalonike (1381–1429) applies the names and qualities of the highest angelic hierarchy—cherubim, seraphim, and thrones—to human beings who bear their characteristics, especially as they pray (Simmons 1984, pp. 9–13); it is understood that such are passed on to, and copied by, the human ecclesiastical hierarchy, monastics, and laypeople. Yet, strikingly, shared angelic and human co-operation also has a reciprocal aspect, and while St. Dionysios describes angels teaching men (Celestial Hierarchy, 4:4), St John Chrysostom states that angels also learn from humans (Homilies on the Gospel of John, II), grace working in synergy with all created beings (Loudovikos 2010, p. 15), with the Holy Spirit directing and inspiring everyone (Hildebrand 1980, p. 64). The forms of the Trisagion help to show this co-operation in practice.

The entire anaphora displays co-operation across all hierarchies, heavenly and earthly, angelic and human, priestly and lay, and the angelic-human relationship clearly occurs in the Trisagion. The first two phrases are the seraphic Trisagion as described by the Prophet Isaiah, while the refrain-like

"Hosanna in the highest" and third phrase were the children's worship of Christ at His entrance into Jerusalem. Children, to whom the Kingdom belongs, like angels, have an important role in leading worship and, as highlighted in Georgian hagiographic examples, confessing the faith (Lang 1995, pp. 40–43). The second form of the Trisagion hymn, though confirmed in its correct form by angels as mentioned above, was miraculously heard by a child, and it also contains distinctly human praise, as St. Symeon of Thessalonike again describes. He explains that the hymn was composed by the Church Fathers, giving the origin of each word or phrase, including the three "Holy's" from the seraphim, and points out that all other phrases come from the Scriptures, primarily from the Prophet David in the Psalms, and were sung in the Spirit (Simmons 1984, pp. 41–42). He describes how an angel confirmed the form of the hymn to a child when Peter the Fuller attempted to add an element that was deemed to be heretical (Simmons 1984, p. 42), mentioning the importance of children as much as of prophets and demonstrating that angels not only provide hymnography but are understood to confirm the prototypical value of inspired human utterances. Human contributions can; therefore, be easily identified. Even angelic praises, when uttered by human beings, will, like the shouts of the children in first-century Jerusalem, come from particular voices in a particular language and in a particular style and form. Along this line, St Symeon also interprets instances when the Trisagion is sung "with melody" as symbolizing the Gospel being preached and filling the whole world (Simmons 1984, p. 38). Thus, as in preaching, a word or prototype leads to ever-increasing and varying expressions, covering the entire linguistic and associated sonic and cultural scope. Besides angelic and human co-operation in the Spirit, the Incarnation, Resurrection, and process of deification have implications for the nature of chant, which we will further reflect upon in the conclusion of this study. St. Dionysios explains that chant teaches us, constitutes worship, and, like all other aspects of hierarchy, helps to make the work of Christ effective, in the following passage from the Divine Names:

> "You will find all the sacred Hymnology, so to speak, of the Theologians arranging the Names of God with a view to make known and praise the beneficent progressions of the Godhead. Hence, we see in almost every theological treatise the Godhead religiously celebrated, both as Monad and unity, on account of the simplicity and oneness of Its supernatural indivisibility from which, as an unifying power, we are unified, and when our divided diversities have been folded together, in a manner supermundane, we are collected into a godlike unit and divinely-imitated union; but, also as Triad, on account of the tri-personal manifestation of the superessential productiveness, from which all paternity in heaven and on earth is, and is named; also, as cause of things existing, since all things were brought into being on account of Its creative goodness, both wise and good, because all things, whilst preserving the properties of their own nature unimpaired, are filled with every inspired harmony and holy comeliness, but pre-eminently, as loving towards man, because It truly and wholly shared, in one of Its Persons (subsistences), in things belonging to us, recalling to Itself and replacing the human extremity, out of which, in a manner unutterable, the simplex Jesus was composed, and the Everlasting took a temporal duration, and He, Who is superessentially exalted above every rank throughout all nature, became within our nature, whilst retaining the unchangeable and unconfused steadfastness of His own properties. And whatever other divinely-wrought illuminations, conformable to the Oracles, the secret tradition of our inspired leaders bequeathed to us for our enlightenment, in these also we have been initiated; now indeed, according to our capacity, through the sacred veils of the loving-kindness towards man, made known in the Oracles and hierarchical traditions, which envelop things intellectual in things sensible, and things superessential in things that are; and place forms and shapes around the formless and shapeless, and multiply and fashion the supernatural and formless simplicity in the variedness of the divided symbols; but, then, when we have become incorruptible and immortal, and have reached the Christlike and most blessed repose, according to the Divine saying, we shall be "ever with the Lord", fulfilled, through all-pure contemplations, with the visible manifestation of God covering us with glory, in most brilliant

> splendors, as the disciples in the most Divine Transfiguration, and participating in His gift of spiritual light, with unimpassioned and immaterial mind; and, even in the union beyond conception, through the agnostic and most blessed efforts after rays of surpassing brilliancy, in a more Divine imitation of the supercelestial minds. For we shall be equal to the angels, as the truth of the Oracles affirms, and sons of God, being sons of the resurrection. But now, to the best of our ability, we use symbols appropriate to things Divine, and from these again we elevate ourselves, according to our degree, to the simple and unified truth of the spiritual visions; and after our every conception of things godlike, laying aside our mental energies, we cast ourselves, to the best of our ability, towards the superessential ray, in which all the terms of every kind of knowledge pre-existed in a manner beyond expression, which it is neither possible to conceive nor express, nor entirely in any way to contemplate, on account of Its being pre-eminently above all things, and super-unknown, and Its having previously contained within Itself, superessentially, the whole perfections of all kinds of essential knowledge and power, and Its being firmly fixed by Its absolute power, above all, even the supercelestial minds. For, if all kinds of knowledge are of things existing, and are limited to things existing, that, beyond all essence, is also elevated above all knowledge" (Divine Names, 1:4).

In this remarkable section, we see that the Incarnation makes all hymnography and symbols grounded and efficacious in the first place and not simply that such things exist in order to make the truth known. Additionally, symbols, including chant, elevate worshipper, making them "equal to angels", as St Maximos also stated. However, the divine is beyond all symbols, yet the same act as steps towards union with Him. The saint points out that we use symbols now but that we will have a completely changed, positive experience of God after the Resurrection. Until then, chant has a particular role in preparing for and pointing to the Kingdom, in which it will become something incomprehensible as those who sing and listen "become incorruptible." We will now continue to explore the sonic characteristics of Georgian variants and their theological symbolism, looking at some of the "shapes and forms" and "things sensible", which make up chant at least as much as lexical content.

5. Interweaving and Varied Expressions of Hierarchy: Multiple Aesthetics in Harmonization, Counterpoint, and Ornamentation across Region, Time, and Mode

Let us now explore the hierarchical relationship of the three voices in Georgian chant examples. The lower voices assimilate the model melody in a wide variety of ways, in part according to chanters' aesthetic choices regarding harmony and its related contrapuntal rhythm and types of movement. In place of common descriptions of contrapuntal motion (e.g., oblique and contrary) our analyses will employ geometrical terms.[24] We begin with two contemporaneous plain mode forms of the prototypical hymn, whose first phrases were added by the Archangel Gabriel,[25] "It Is Truly Meet", as transcribed by the chanters Ss. Razhden Khundadze and Ekvtime the Confessor *** (Figures 13 and 14).

In the first variant, the second voice primarily employs simple translation of the model pattern, giving rise to parallel thirds. Reflection occurs in the bottom voice, especially at cadences, and its movement in the opposite direction leads to intersection with the other voices to form a unison. The hymn is based on the iteration of two formulae, the first of which ends on a unison and the second, on

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[24] We will use terms that are used to describe the relationship of shapes to one another, including iteration, translation, and reflection, in analyses of contrapuntal movement and relationships. Additionaly, note that chords can be mapped within a non-Euclidian structure called an orbifold (Tymoczko 2006), signifying that Georgian polyphony is a folded, hierarchical entity not in a merely metaphorical sense. Melody, harmony, and counterpoint can all be analyzed and understood in geometrical terms, which are especially useful for repertoires where Schenkerian analysis is not relevant (Tymoczko 2010).

[25] While published synaxaria contain the story for the relevant feast day (11/24 June), it can also be found on the website of the associated cell, which still houses a monastic community: http://www.keliaxionestin.com/eng/?page_id=760.

a triad. The final formula; however, which includes intersection and voice-crossing in the upper two voices and more active top-voice rhythm, renders the unison a step lower.

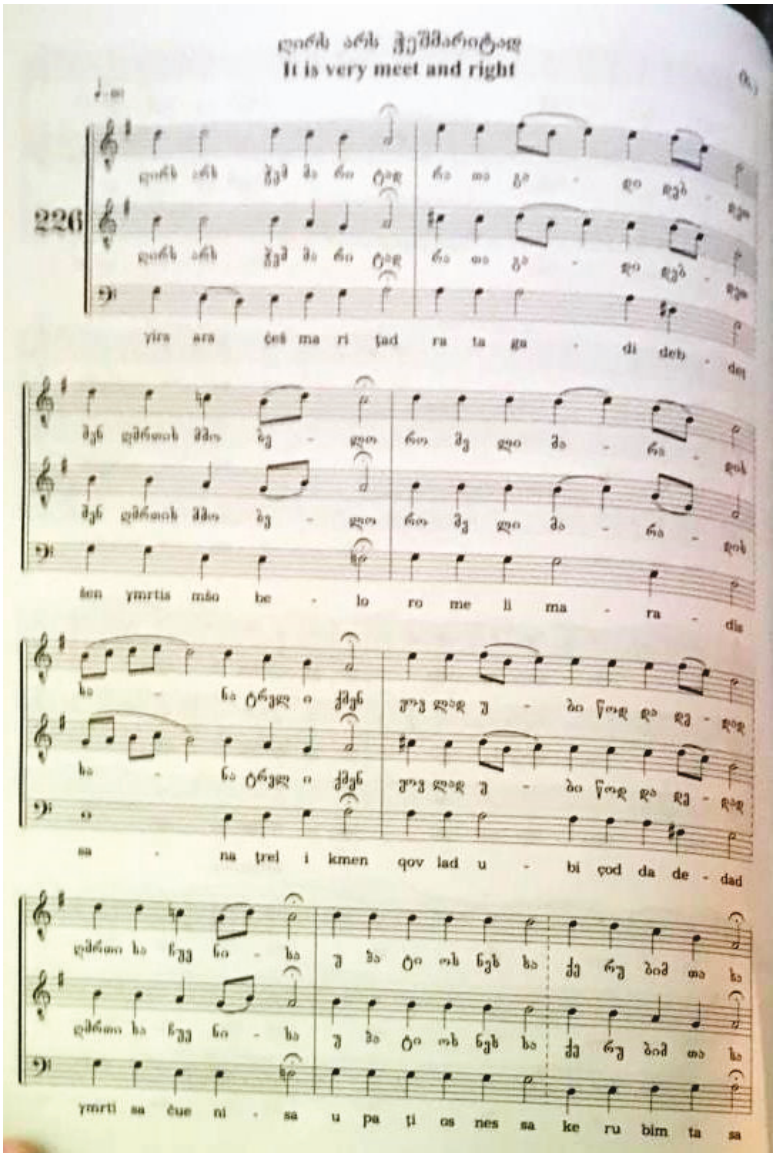


Figure 13. *Cont.*

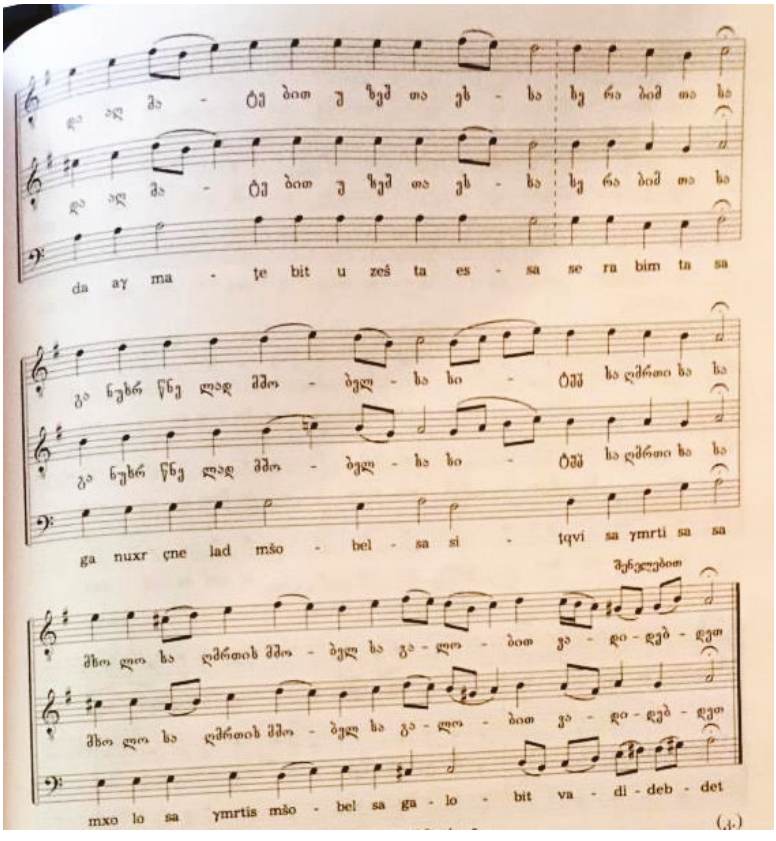


Figure 13. It Is Truly Meet; Gelati School (Erkvanidze 2004).

St. Ekvtime had strikingly different preferences, and the two saints even documented their disagreements in notes to each other in manuscript margins (Graham 2012); one is reminded of Dionysian incongruity. Translation of the model melody does not occur to the same degree and not only in the second voice. Second-voice parallel thirds only occur notably in the initial phrase. Rather, translation often occurs among the two lower voices, which remain on the same pitches while the top voice moves around its central pitch. For short durations, the bottom voice does translate the model, such as the beginnings of the second-formula phrases, creating parallel octaves. At other times, all three voices sing a static pitch in translation as they declaim text. Reflection occurs between the top two voices, such as at "romeli maradis", and while rhythm is often parallel, the top and bottom voices have mixed and active interaction, leading to the internal unisons. At the ends of phrases, the third voice has a characteristic rising, scalar, rhythmic figure, which successively translates and reflects the model's final three pitches. However, the second of these pitches does not occur in all variants and may be understood as ornamental. Therefore, the top voice has a permutation, in turn translating and reflecting the more active rhythm and the final three pitches of the characteristic bottom-voice cadential gesture while passing between the model melody notes. Thus, the top voice can embrace the characteristics of others, and, as we saw previously, translation of a supporting gesture, rather than of the model, can occur in the lower voices. We also saw that either voice may translate or reflect material from the model phrase, and intersection and union is the goal.

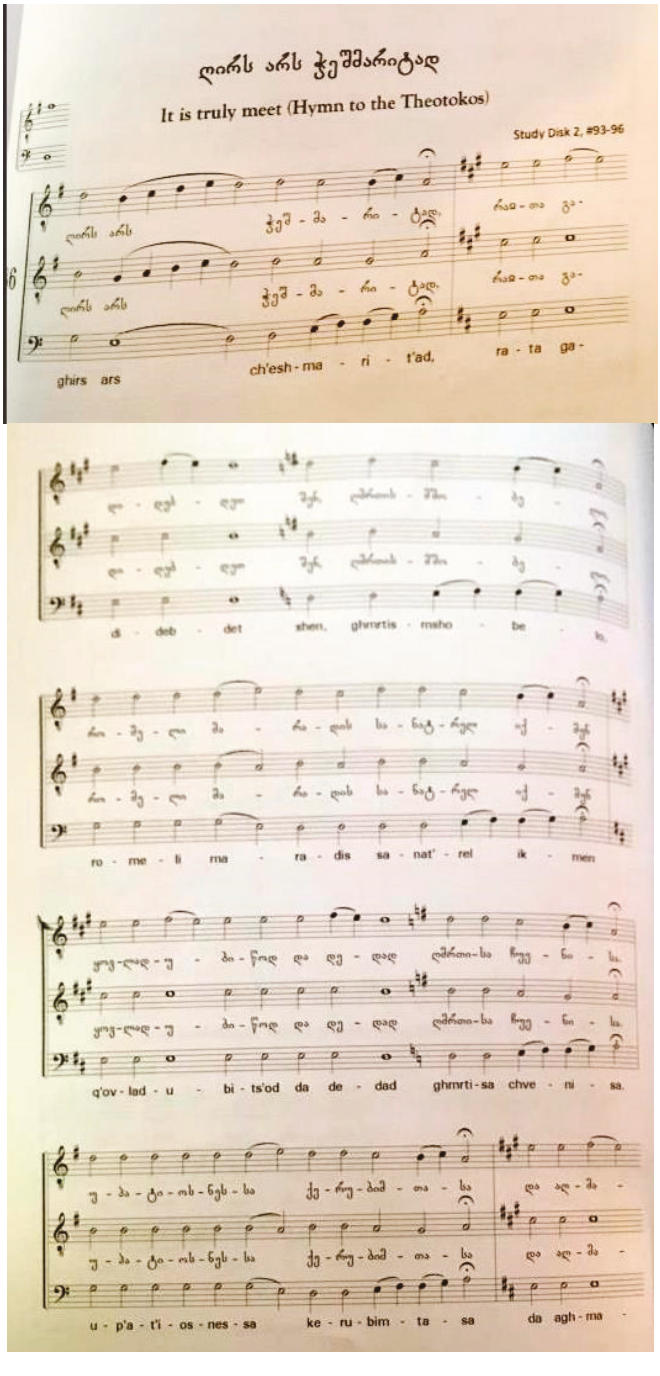


Figure 14. *Cont.*

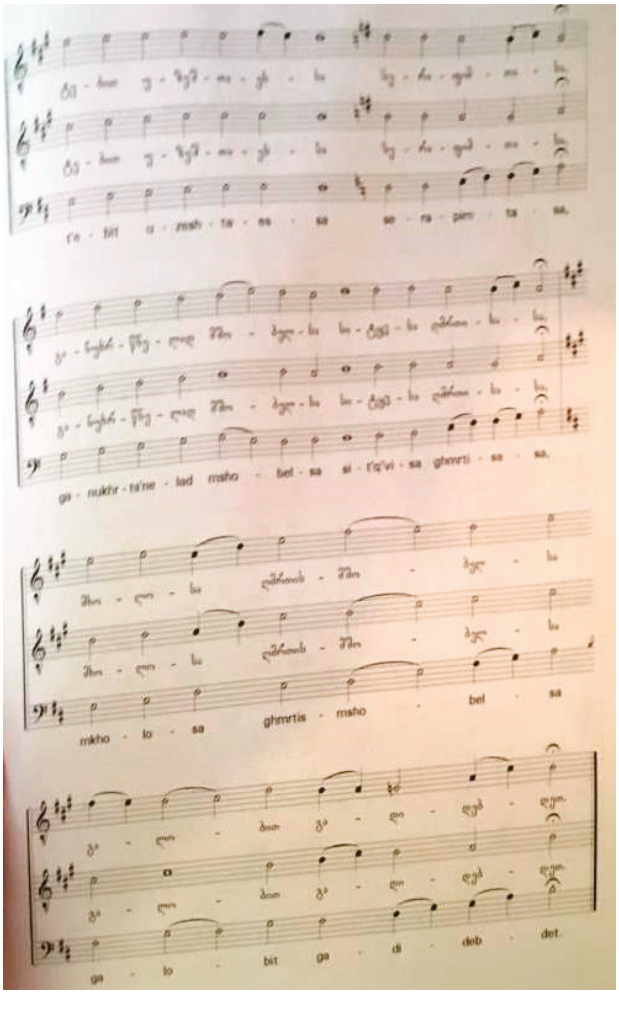


Figure 14. It Is Truly Meet; Gelati School (Chkhikvishvilli and Razmadze 2010).

Harmonic and contrapuntal preferences work in synergy and affect each other, for instance, the like or dislike of parallel thirds or use of particular bottom-voice gestures and octave interaction with the top voice. Given the hierarchical function of the model melody and the prototypical principles of chant, the model need not even remain in the top voice as hinted at by the final phrase voice crossing. In Western Georgian chants in the ornamented mode, as we will see in the next section, a great deal of crossing occurs, with little parallel translation, and the model melody sometimes passes between voices or acts as a reference in the minds of chanters, who create and interweave on its foundation. We will view this and other aspects of the Georgian chant hierarchy as we explore ornamented examples, but we will also see it in a somewhat later Western Georgian variant.[26]

[26] http://www.alazani.ge/base/AnchiskhatiA/Anchiskhati_-_Girs_Ars.mp3.

This Shemokmedi school variant (Figure 15) was recorded by the Gurian chanter Artemi Erkomaishvili in 1965, and we will explore his ornamented style in more detail later in the following section. However, at this point, we include this example in order to highlight some particular harmonic aesthetics in later Shemokmedi variants. One outstanding feature is stacked parallel fifths (i.e., successive 1-5-9 chords), such as at the beginning of the second phrase. While some consider this type of harmony to be archaic, it occurs primarily in these later variants. While it may reflect the aforementioned "study voices", there is nothing that is by nature archaic about any given type of harmony, despite the trajectory that documented polyphony took in medieval Western Europe, and the affinity of the complex polyphony with Gurian folk songs does not indicate age, either,[27] since it is difficult to date examples; Jordania's research indicates that new and old styles of polyphony co-exist in Eastern Europe, most Georgian music falling under the "old" characteristics (Jordania 2011, p. 24). What these features do demonstrate is the improvisatory element of the style, its parameters, and chanters' familiarity with the materials and techniques at their disposal. Thus, parallel 1-5-9 chords, voice crossing, and ornamentation work inside the same basic structure seen in the plain mode renderings, with its beginning, ending, and alternating medial phrases, and with the unison cadences of the St. Ekvtime variant. For example, the model melody passes between the top two voices when the middle voice crosses and takes it up at the beginning of alternating phrases. Thus, the alternation of melodic formulae is further diversified by voice crossing, not only in expected cadential gestures or ornamentation in the middle of a phrase, but at the outset. Voice crossing is guided by certain other features, such as the unison four-note figure at the lower unison cadences, as opposed to only sharing the final pitch. Crossing also makes room for certain kinds of ornamentation, such as the top voice's figures on the word "galobit" ("with a hymn") in the last phrase. Therefore, there is a kind of counterpoint of harmonic, melodic, and ornamental elements. Before we fully discuss Western ornamentation, let us look at an earlier Eastern variant of this same chant (Figure 16),[28] transcribed by the Karbelashvili brothers in the late nineteenth century.

Besides different contrapuntal interweaving than Western plain mode variants, this example displays even expansion throughout, making room for ornaments, some of which also have a functional role. The model melody and overall homorhythmic structure match the plain mode Western counterparts. Note that there is no voice crossing, which is a primary feature of Western ornamented chants. The ornaments are of five main types: The singing of consonants, that is, liquescence in Latin terminology; ascending ornaments in the middle voice; another middle-voice passing gesture, the successive decoration of pitches with adjacent upper and lower neighbors, usually moving towards a cadence (e.g., the last syllable of "gadidebdet"); a transitional descending figure in the lowest voice; and a second transitional motif, which ascends in the second voice, which arrives on the held model melody's note, and descends in the third voice, creating a reflection. The middle voice has other types of ornamental movement as well, some of which reflect each other (cf. the last syllable of "gadidebdet" and that of "deda"). In the two cadential figures, the model melody does not participate in their formation but provides them with a surface. They coincide with the two alternating cadence types in the Western variants and are slightly expanded interpretations of phrase endings that indicate continuation, which are often fifths as opposed to a final unison. Thus, there is a greater variety of ways to form internal cadences through decoration and movement, new ways of delineating structure rather than only enlarging and adorning it. Though this variant adheres to Eastern chant characteristics, it is noteworthy that the rising figures in the more active middle voice are similar to those in Western variants, and reflexive gestures across voices occur across schools, though with different functions as our examples show. In this variant, they are cadential transitions, while in Western chants, they often take place at the beginnings of phrases and lead to unison intersections among, or climax distances

[27] Graham, personal communication, 30 August 2016.
[28] http://www.alazani.ge/base/AnchiskhatiK/Anchiskhati_-_Girs_Ars.mp3.

between, voices. We will note instances of these features in the following section. Therefore, decorative and contrapuntal elements are employed and embodied in various ways, and prototypical principles lead to a wide diversity in practical application. Prototypes can be understood as beyond tangible, as so dense that they can be unfolded in an innumerable multitude of ways. Unfolding can also occur on a larger scale, revealing newer and more extensive types of ornamentation and interaction in the ornamented mode.

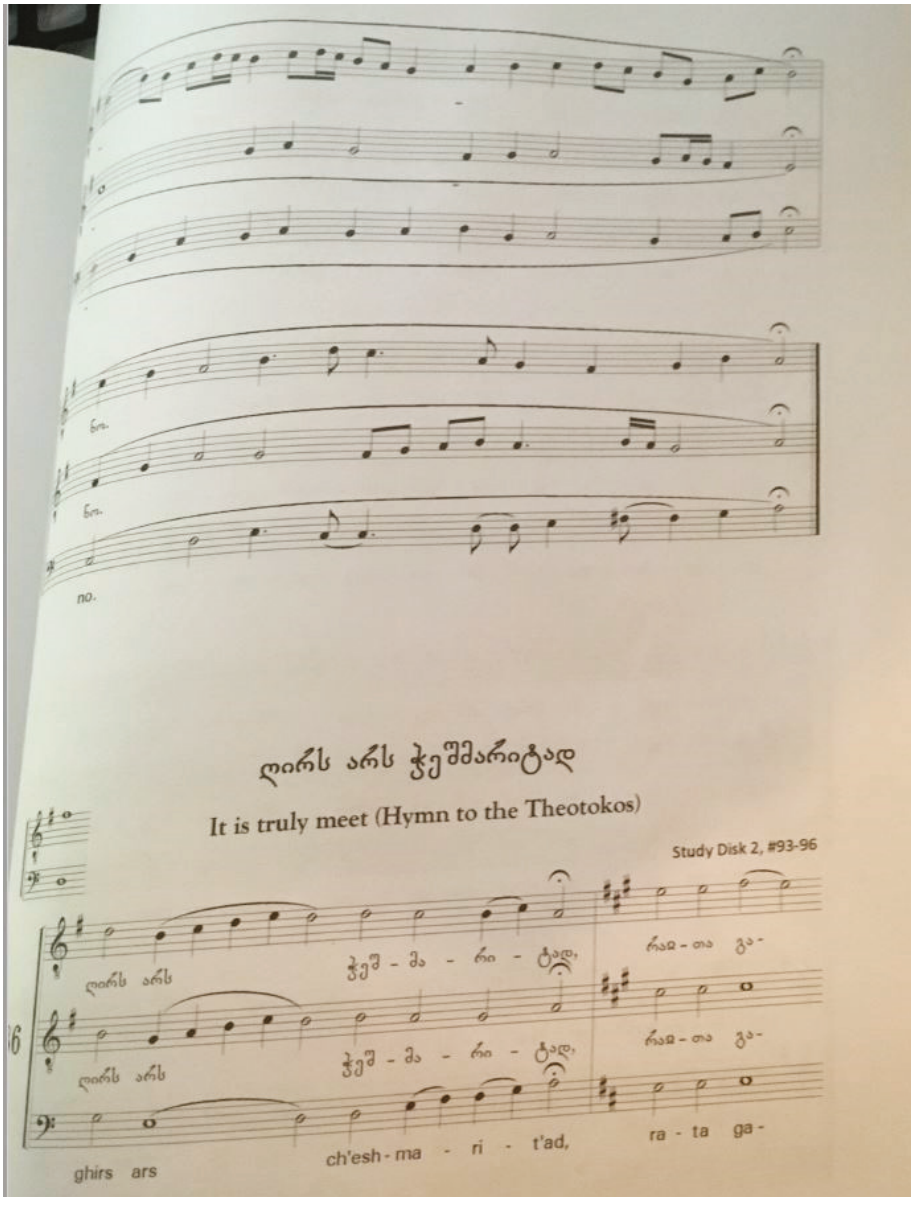
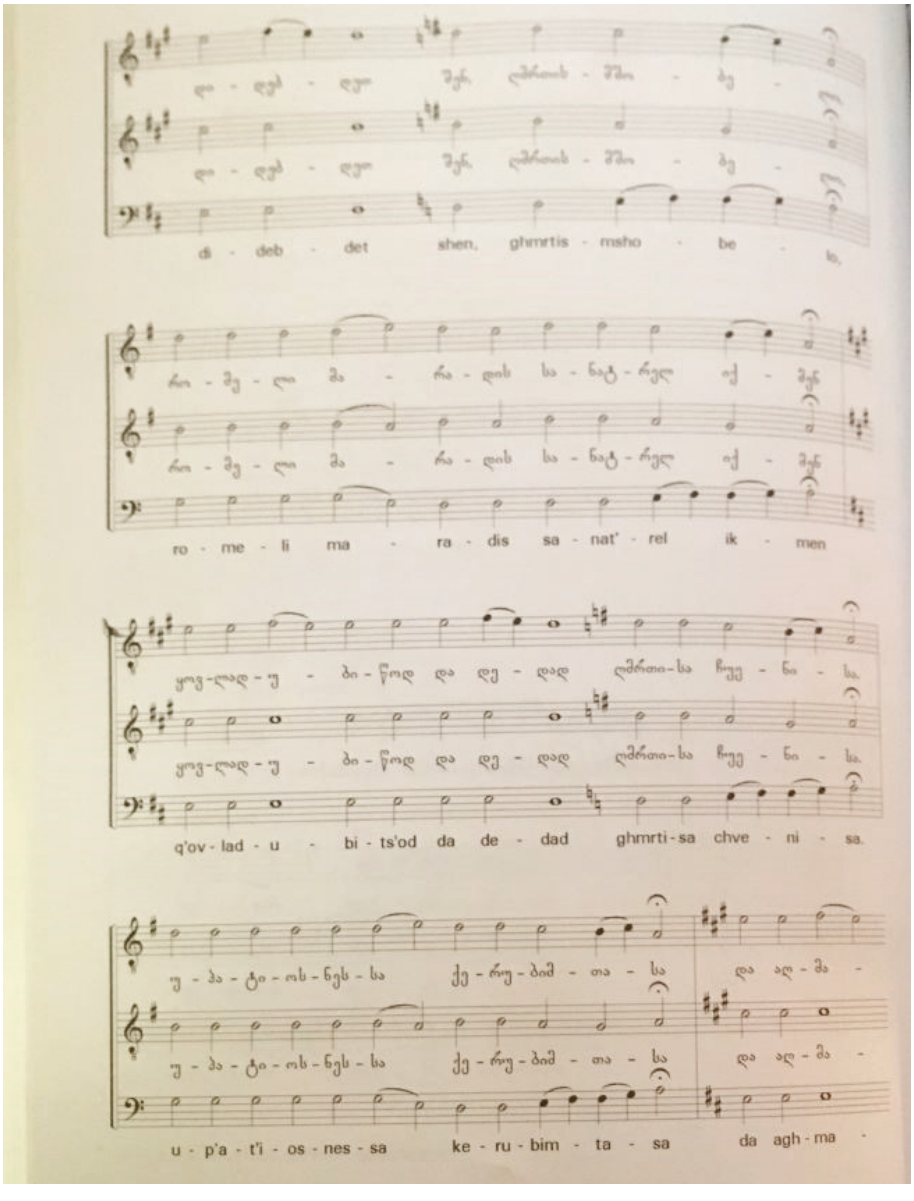


Figure 15. *Cont.*



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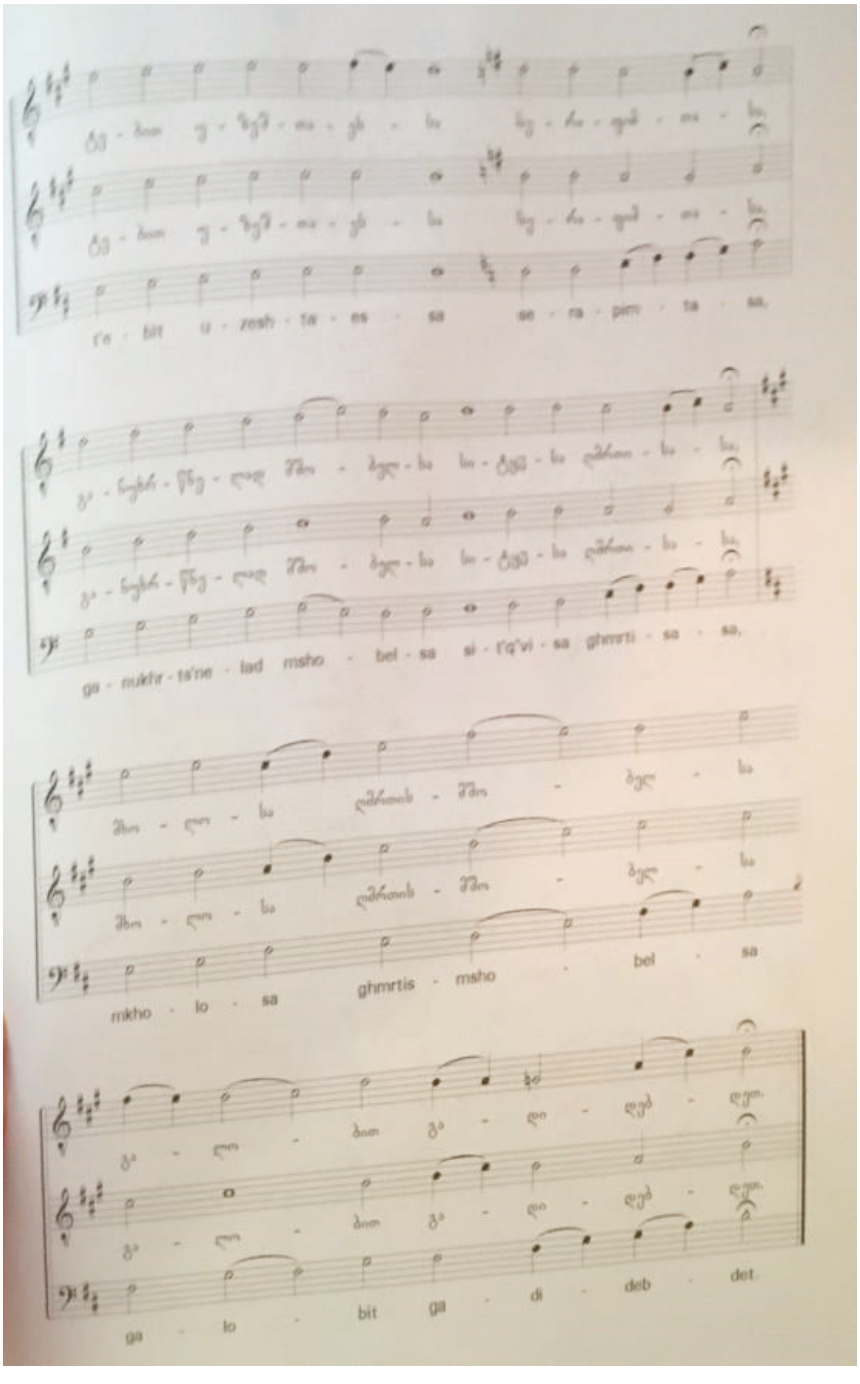


Figure 15. It Is Truly Meet; Shemokmedi School (Shugliashvili et al. 2014).

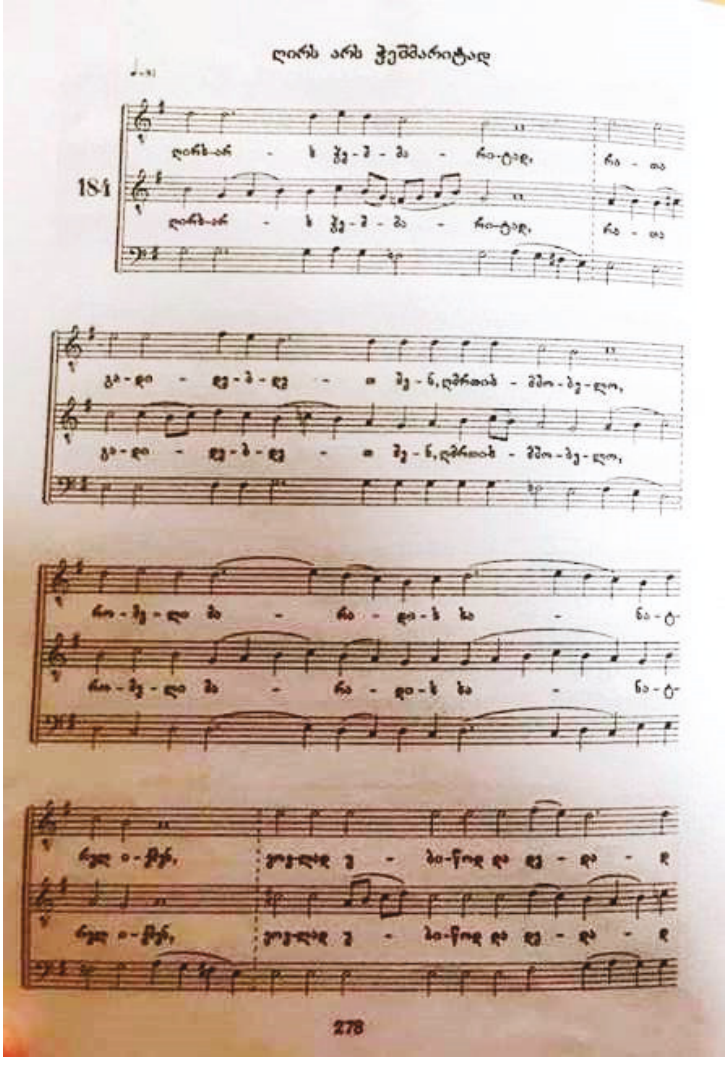


Figure 16. *Cont.*

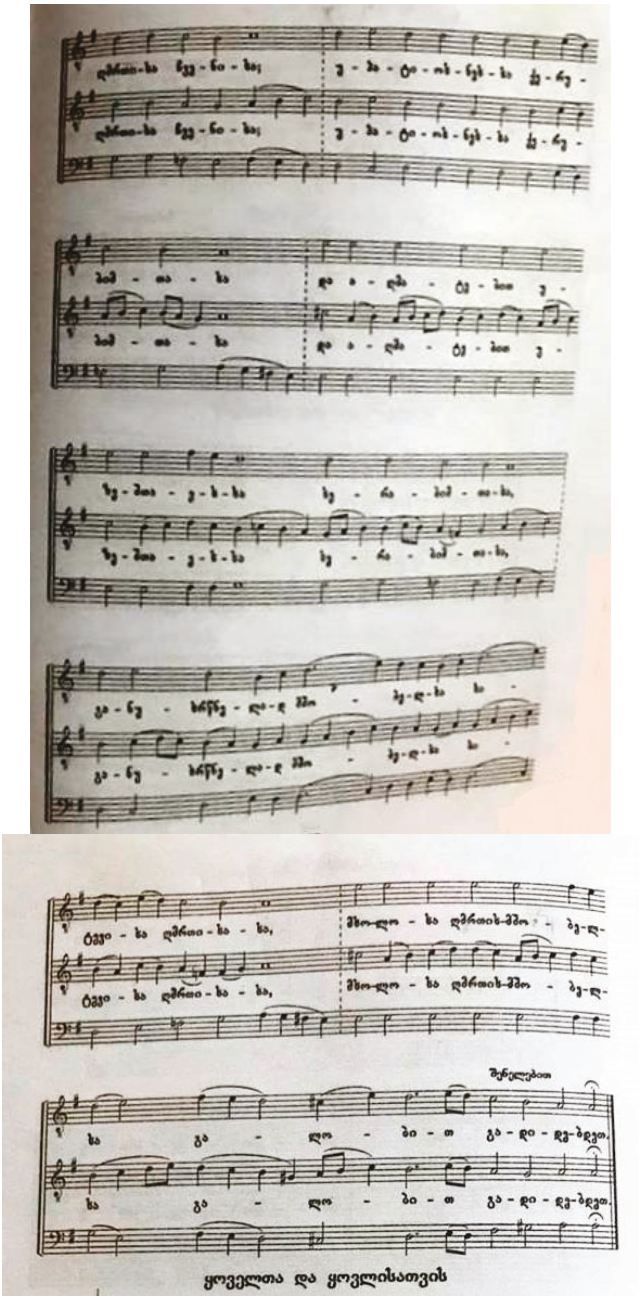


Figure 16. It Is Truly Meet; Svetitskhoveli School.

6. Unfolding and Adorning: Expansion and Ornamentation in Chant Variants and New Compositions

Like the three voices, the three styles of Georgian chant form a hierarchy. The plain mode is the first power, from which the two successively more complex and diverse modes are unfolded and adorned. Additionally, as discussed regarding prototypes, in the hierarchy that contains text, model melody, and three-part rendering, text also plays a role in directing expansion through reiteration of pitches and formulae. We will focus on types of expansion that do not depend on chant texts, though some include the addition of vowels, syllables, and sometimes entire word repetition. Subtle expansion and decoration occur even in plain mode chants, and such is hierarchically necessary. The plain and true modes furnish variants that elegantly display motifs and types of ornamentation in contrast to the surrounding recitational style, as textures in higher relief. We will now examine anaphoral chants with higher degrees of expansion and complexity of decoration.

The chants of the anaphora share a significant amount of musical material and not only in the setting of repeated texts, such as the confession of the Trinity. Let us unfold a recurring passage in a setting transcribed by St. Ekvtime the Confessor. It forms the expanded and decorated endings of four chants, one preceding the Creed and three responses in the anaphoral dialogue. All begin with the simple recitation of most of the text. One of these responses includes a Trisagion (Figure 17), and unlike the form sung earlier in the Liturgy, Georgian anaphoral variants do not generally employ a wide variety of structures. Instead, they declaim the text simply, usually with one or two medial cadences, until the expanded final ending, which is usually on the seemingly unimportant postpositional "shina." Thus, the musical structure itself is significant aside from the text, having a cadential, aesthetic, and symbolic role. In anaphoral chants, it generally occurs on the final two syllables of the respective texts and can be analyzed in two sections. The first contains several smaller units, the first one outlining the final cadential pattern in the top voice, and then moving around a key note a step above the final note. The next segment continues to focus around this same note and can be divided into two primary phrases. The first of these can be further divided into two six-beat units and the third, into three eight-beat units and the final unison note. The first phrase can also be understood as a twice-iterated, four-note figure, preceded by the first recitational pitch and concluded with a descending gesture. The model melody "sings around", to use the Georgian term Sukhiashvili 2014a, p. 422), the key note in the first two phrases and does the same with the final in the third. This first key note is also the second of the two recitational pitches in the preceding phrases, leads into the first major cadence, which is a fifth but nevertheless has the final note in the top voice, and acts as a sort of impetus for cyclical repetition of concentric, looped elements, hence "singing around." It functions like the renewed turning of a spindle in its rotations, and internal cadential fifths act in a similar way but give a greater sense of rest. The elongated rhythm and new central note in the last phrase both signal the end of the chant, and in practice, a ritardando amplifies and accompanies these features. The first major cadence in the chant, at "uplisata" and repeated at the beginning of the expanded passage, acts like a seedling and anticipates the final ending, the model melody moving around and approaching the same final note with the same two pitches but in reflected order, over more syllables, and in a more compact rhythm. The decorative passage expands, adorns, and fulfills the cadential form.

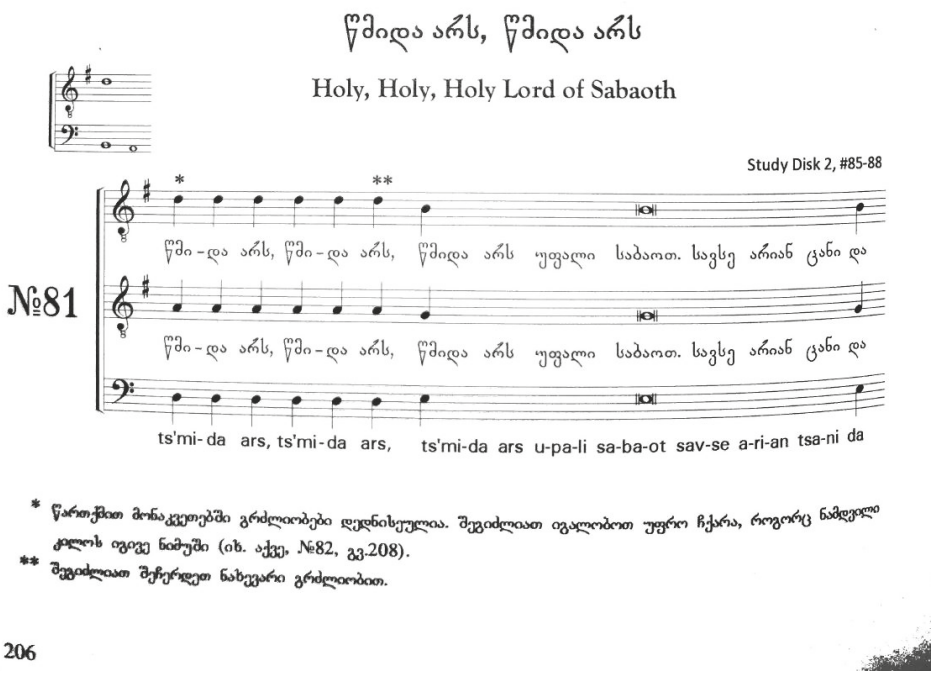


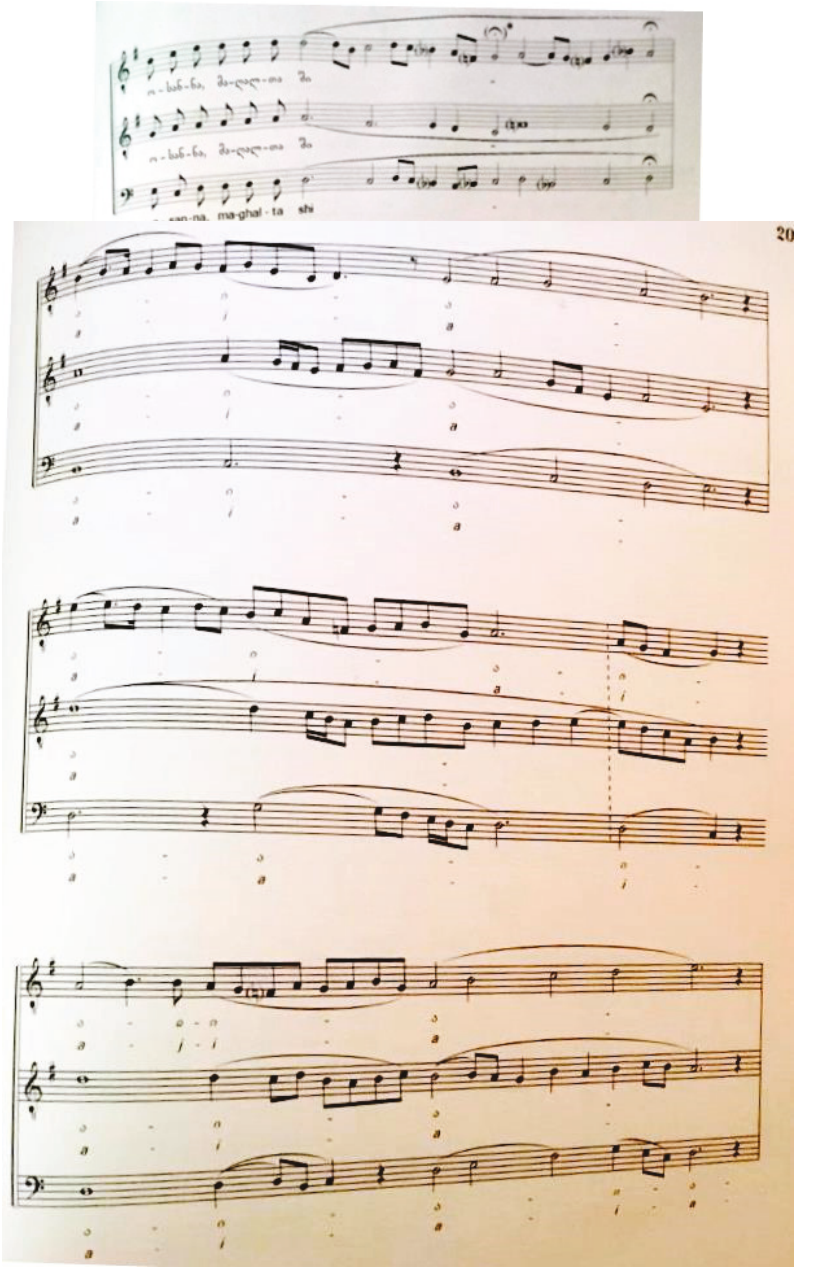
Figure 17. Holy, Holy, Holy; Gelati School (Chkhikvishvilli and Razmadze 2010).

Counterpoint and harmony add further elements as the other voices form their own patterns in order to assimilate the elliptical movement of the model melody. For example, at the end of the first section, while the top voice remains on its key note, the middle voice anticipates another important pitch, the note below the final, which is sometimes a resting point. It highlights this note with a typical "singing around" gesture before descending to the cadential note. The top voice nevertheless also moves to this resting pitch once the middle has finished decorating it, forming a unison intersection, and it continues the faster rhythm of the decoration on its descent, translating it across time. This voice may be perceived as participating in and extending the ornament, and simultaneously, the middle voice decoration may also be inspired by the upcoming active descent in the model melody, thus anticipating it with such an ornament. After this phrase, at the repeated four-note motif in the top voice, the middle voice translates the general melodic direction with a two-note, descending gesture, forming a zig-zag in contrast to the top voice loop. The top voice joins this figure's resting pitch again as it descends two adjacent pitches beyond the key note after its second motif, similar to its movement in the preceding phrase, but with expanded, less rapid rhythm, in part since it is not following an accelerated ornament in the middle voice. For the first iteration of the same motif, the bottom voice reflects the middle by ascending a step, but then, reflecting both upper voices and at a greater distance, it moves down a third, coming to rest, and providing a foundation for the middle and top voices to reach their shared cadential pitch in succession. The shifting harmonization of the same top-voice motif gives a sense of return, yet combined with change, somewhat like a spiral. In the next phrase, all voices begin by translating the ascent of a step, and then a characteristic type of climax occurs, in which the top voice moves up to the usual higher reciting pitch while the bottom primarily reflects it, descending to its lowest note in the entire chant before making its cadential rising figure. At this same point, the middle voice sings a three-note ascending figure, translating the top voice, followed by the descending reflection of that same figure in order to arrive at the usual cadential note, shared with the third voice a fifth below the first. The final phrase displays interaction like that in the above second

variant of "It is Truly Meet", but it is more rhythmically drawn out. The top two voices reflect each other in order to meet at, and then move away from, the final note before then meeting again, crossing, and reaching the final unison and intersection of all three voices. The top voice sings around the final, and after descending to its lowest note it approaches the unison. It first sounding the earlier resting pitch a step below, followed by the recitational note a step above, ultimately reaching the final itself. This figure, made up of approaching gestures from both directions, is common at final cadences, as is the voice crossing that simultaneously occurs. The middle voice holds the final note while the melody moves around it, thus leading to voice crossing when the top voice descends. It then meets the top voice on the resting pitch, remaining there as the top crosses back over to its usual place above. It then reflects the top voice gesture, moving up a step to the ending unison. During this entire final phrase, the bottom voice has a typical ascending gesture in order to reach the final, and it marks out and holds what becomes the top voice's lowest note during the voice crossing. As we saw in the variant of "It Is Truly Meet", it translates the top voice rhythm for the last three notes. It also participates in the middle voice, sharing its last two pitches, leading and pointing to the shared unison in all three voices. Thus, the phrase tapers to the end with a reflection, as the model melody descends and the other voices ascend together, in order to meet at the goal.

This expanded ending exists in variants that are unfolded to an even greater degree. Artemi Erkomaishvili recorded all three voices of the same three anaphoral responses, and he gives them a shared ending (Figure 18), albeit far more extensive than the previous example.

We are now firmly in the third style, the ornamented, as opposed to the true mode or decorated endings in the plain mode. It will be sufficient to discuss salient features rather than labelling and describing all phrases of this passage in order, though such an analysis was useful for the previous case. The passage occurs on the last syllable and is signaled by cadential octaves, a transition that is characteristic in decorated Western chants and even some zari variants. The top voice contains scalar passages in both directions, sometimes in translation of each other, which end at important cadential pitches, and these allow for many harmonic and contrapuntal permutations with the other voices. Voice crossing is a primary feature, with the top two voices often reflecting each other as they move towards their respective notes at cadential fifths. The bottom voice often has usual ascending cadential gestures, but the same at one point translates the upward scalar movement of the top voice, as opposed to reflecting its general direction as in the previous example. The progression of each voice's melodic line and the related harmonic movement that guides them (i.e., where the chant is going), as Erkomaishvili described above, defines the space within which all voices move independently. The top two voices exchange progressive motifs, such as the scalar ascent to the fifth, leading the movement in turn. They cross regularly and for significant durations, and they move or remain at complementary points, such as the beginning of the second phrase. With such equal activity and the switching of range in the upper voices, if one does not know the prototype, it is not immediately evident which voice is the first in the hierarchy. The nature of the bottom voice may stand out somewhat, but there is no clear leader. The top voice is generally the same in all three chants with this passage, but one must know its wandering line among the others in order to highlight it. Since the upper two voices are traditionally sung by soloists, individual timbre makes shifts more apparent but also facilitates the tracking of each voice.



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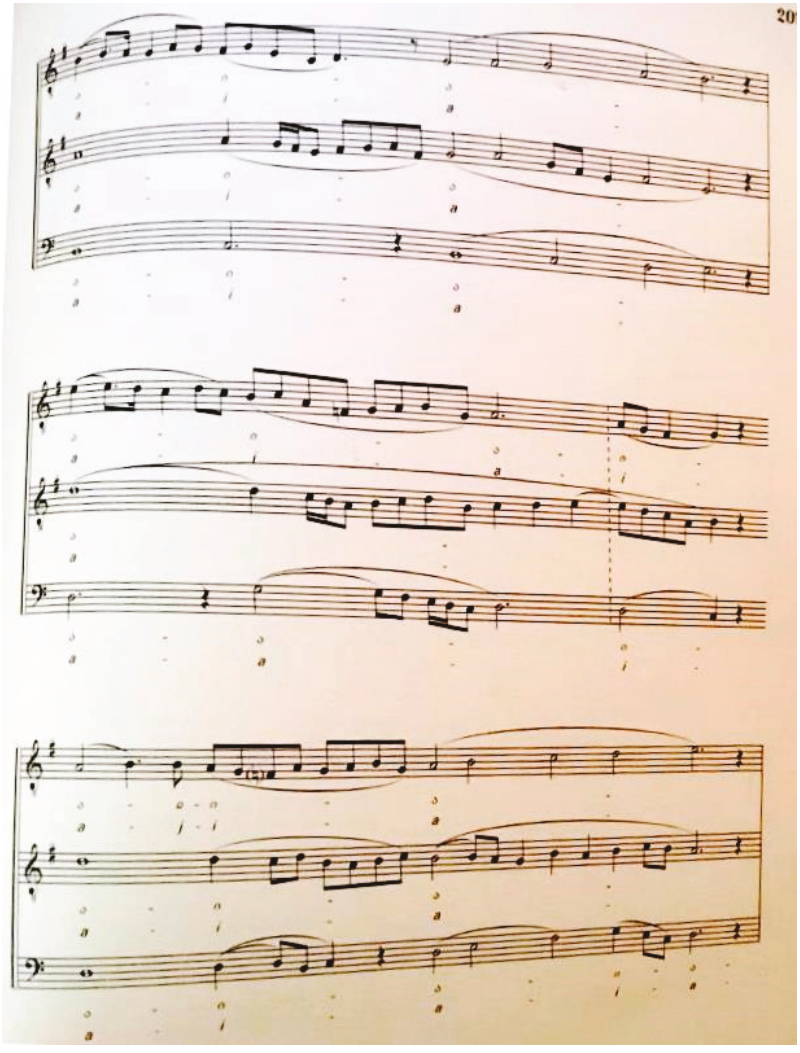

Figure 18. Holy, Holy, Holy; Shemokmedi School (Shugliashvili et al. 2014).

In addition to rhythmic and melodic activity, this passage exhibits a key characteristic of Georgian melisma found in both chant and paraliturgical song, especially the Western Georgian zari and zruni genres and Svan hymns: the expansion or creation of text with a series of vowels. These have their own sort of syntax and occur in particular patterns (e.g., a-i-vo, one that also occurs in Svan Trisagion vocables). Vowels usually change on strong beats, but sometimes one voice, especially the bottom, changes slightly later than the others as in one instance from this passage. The change of vowel adds yet another type of movement to the changing pitch and rhythm, rendering three aspects of sonic progression. The voices generally shift vowels together, and like words, vowels delineate spaces in which the more dense rhythmic activity, harmonic progressions, and melodic lines occur.

With so much activity and shifting voices, the overall sound of decorated chant has a sort of sparkle and iridescence, a strong sense of poikilia. This unfolded chant bears a wide, complexly-composed

and adorned surface. While experience of poikilia is said to be dazzling, it is not the sheer number of different elements and frequency of change that brings it about. Rather, poikilia is tied to pattern and hierarchy. Ordered change, balance, and coherence of details, like properly woven threads, are primary causes of the perception of variegation, as demonstrated by our sonic example. The interwoven voices, combining their complementary patterns of movement, create a sacred veil, to use the Dionysian term. Since sound exists in space, with all singers, listeners, and environment participating, this veil, while adorning the anaphoral text and analogizing the textile veil over the Eucharistic gifts, enfolds and brings worshippers and their surroundings into the present liturgical moment.

We can further explore the nature of unfolding through new chants and Svan religious repertoire, which we examined above regarding the history of Georgian polyphony. The current patriarch, Ilia II, has composed a number of chants and paraliturgical songs in various styles, such as settings of poems, prayers, and short excerpts of service texts. His version of "It Is Truly Meet" follows the structural principles of phrase arrangement, with two primary phrases, but it has a new melody rather than using the usual top-voice model, which, like the harmonization, is Western European style (Field notes, February 2011). We referred to his Trisagion earlier, which is similar in style. This style of harmony occurs in urban folk songs and other twentieth-century chants, though not always in the major scale and with room for variation. We will now briefly examine a stand-alone setting of the aforementioned troparion ending, "Holy, holy, holy art Thou, O God; through the Theotokos, have mercy on us."[29] The Bebnisi and Samtavro convent choirs sing this chant without ornamentation (field notes, August 2016, July 2017), but other choirs vary the performance. The rendition by the Georgian parish choir in Dublin, for instance, contains East Georgian folk ornaments (Field notes, February 2011). These were improvised by the singers, who applied them to all occurrences of the descending figure at open cadences (each repetition of "khar" and the second syllable of "Ghmerto"), as roughly transcribed in the example of the first phrase in the top voice (Figure 19).

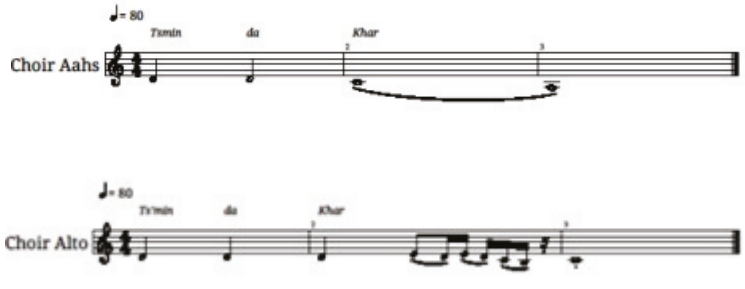

Figure 19. Holy Art Thou; plain and ornamented phrase variants.

The harmonization also differs, with the bottom voice descending a fifth at the cadence that marks the midpoint, at the second syllable of "Ghmerto" ("God"). We can see that adorning and unfolding can happen quickly, especially within a context of established means of doing so, and this chant may follow a trajectory over the years such that highly-expanded, decorated renderings will be created, stemming from the prototype and its contemporaneous adorned variations. This composition, then, fits squarely within its cultural and musical milieu, so much so that it is going through the same historical process, like a tree in the proper environment and conditions.

[29] Another unornamented variation can be heard at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWdxuvNgHPM. The recording quality is poor, but the second repetition is clear enough.

7. Unfolding, Folding, and Molding: Hierarchy and Development in Svan Chant Variants and Paraliturgical Polyphony

Let us now look at the fruit of devotion and compositional processes in a particular context, Svan religious and ritual songs, which cannot be given a precise date. However, we previously saw that something of the sort has existed since at least the fifteenth century. Let us again take up the Svan funeral Trisagion. We noted above that it seems to be a decorated form of the ordinary Trisagion in some respects, but its structure varies in the last two phrases, matching funeral settings from elsewhere. Yet, it can be said to have been created from the same prototype, and; therefore, some kind of relationship is apparent, especially in the A phrases. The same kind of seed will give rise to similar trees and fruit. This funerary form exhibits two primary types of expansion: the addition of vocables, with musical material to support them, and motifs related to "singing around", which make up much of that musical content. One set of vocables illuminates each iteration of "ts'mindao" ("holy"), and another set does the same for each of the second vocatives: "ghmerto" ("God"), "dzliero" ("strong"), and "uk'vdavo ("immortal"). In these vocative phrases, the two vocable types and their settings give parallel, respective highlighting to "ts'mindao" and to the other divine names.

The last phrase, the imperative, only includes an addition of the vowel "i", as is common in decorated chants from all regions. This vowel often has a passing function and decorative nature, as in "Ghme-i-erto" in the first phrase. It seems that Georgian melisma is averse to extending a single vowel for very long, save "a" and "i", which also fills in other vowels. In the penultimate word "shegvits'q'alen" ("have mercy"), the "i" does more than fill in and adds another syllable, giving parallel second and fourth syllables.

The new fourth syllable expands the rhythm, allowing three iterations of particular complementary figures over an even, six-syllable, twelve-beat space. The top voice has a descending, two-note figure, which it repeats in a zig-zag-like manner. The middle voice complements this figure with a four-note, "singing around" loop, which centers around the two-note figure translated down a third. Recall the complementary figures in the first expanded anaphoral passage. In practice, the top two voices sometimes interchange these figures across the iterations, still centered around their respective two notes, but rarely singing in parallel thirds, that is, not sharing one of the two figures during the same iteration. Thus, we have a sort of "crossing", not of range but of shape. In relation to the first figure, the bottom voice has a reflexive two-note, rising figure. The first and third of these are on the same pitches, but the middle repetition translates it down a fourth, reaching the lowest, yet climactic, pitch, a type of gesture that we also saw in the anaphora. The lowest pitch is reached by ornamental passing notes at the end of the first figure, but in practice, the figures can also be sung in a straight fashion, which also renders the climax pitch a step higher since it is not approached from below. The variations mentioned "in practice" are characteristic of oral tradition, but they also demonstrate the variety of ways in which prototypes are realized. While occurring across variants and voices, they can also occur across a particular voice's rendering of iterations, a feature that gives rise to the trading of figures. At the same time, it also allows a given voice to translate or reflect its own gestures; this characteristic is noteworthy since we have generally discussed such relationships only between voices. The top voice engages in this activity the most, while the others remain on supporting pitches. Reflection often occurs across repetitions of the syllables "tsmin-da-i", also changing the approach to "vo" to a descent and to postponing the intersection on the middle voice's pitch until the end of that same syllable; the initial figure also intersects at the syllable "i." Similar reflection occurs between the first two syllables of the other vocatives, treating the elongated "i" in "dzliero" as a separate sung syllable and the liquescent "v" in the same way. This latter case is a simple reflection, transposing the order of the same two notes, thereby changing the distance but not the direction of approach to the following pitch. In these cases, the intervals between voices change, but the overall progression remains. One can assimilate a model melody in various ways not simply in other voices but in the same voice, using similar principles of harmony and movement.

These variations can be understood as decorative, along with those that sometimes take place on the descending figure that accompanies the "o-i-a-ha" vocative endings that lead to the intersection of voices. This scalar passage is sometimes sung with a repetition of the second pitch, rendering two descending quavers instead of a crotchet on the lower degree. This ornament is in parallel rhythm and thirds with the second voice, thereby translating it. Some singers have marked preferences for not ornamenting this passage in the top voice, or the ascent that follows it, which some singers fill in with a quaver on the second (Field notes, August 2016; July 2017). Alternatively, the middle voice can sing a crotchet for its third note, allowing the top voice to vary its figure while preserving the counterpoint without parallel thirds, and singers must be keenly aware of the other voices in order to attune their choices as much as their intervals. Such aesthetic choices are reminiscent of St. Ekvtime's aforementioned contrapuntal preferences. Even a seemingly small ornament over a short duration, then, can noticeably affect the harmonic and contrapuntal character. The previous cases from the beginnings of phrases did not have this effect since the lower voices remain on the same pitches throughout. There is, then, a kind of counterpoint in how structure, ornament, and harmony work together, forming another hierarchy.

Yet another hierarchy found in Svan polyphony, to which we referred in the introduction, is that of text, song, and dance. These three aspects are intertwined, and songs may share the same dance steps, texts, musical material, or a combination. A particular dance, referred to as "Lamurgwäliash", occurs in songs, some of which share the same tune but which have a variety of texts: prayers, historical narratives, and legends (Field Notes, 25 July 2017). The prayers share text, which also occurs in round-dances with different music and steps (e.g., "Didebata",[30] "Lazhghvash"[31] (also performed without dance but with instrumental accompaniment),[32] and "Lagusheda"[33]), and in the hymn "Lile",[34] which also exists as a round-dance over the "Lagusheda" tune, requiring only slight textual variation.[35] All these examples are paraliturgical supplications and glorifications to God and the Archangels, connecting Earthly and heavenly hierarchies. Another song, "Gaul-Gavkhe",[36] shares dance and tune with "Lagusheda" but has a historical text, also a common Svan genre, about a battle that took place in the early nineteenth century. Yet another example, "Bail Betkil", is a legend about the goddess Dali[37] and only shares the dance element, having its own text and music. This situation is interesting for the exploration of how hierarchy works, how prototypes are copied and layered, how cultural material is appropriated, and what makes repertoire sacred. Text, vocables, and context help to determine the purpose of the stock tune and dance steps.

Studying hymns and funeral songs widens the scope, since they share extensive material. In the hymn "Ts'khav Krist'eshi" (Figure 20),[38] key passages and cadences are marked.

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30 http://www.alazani.ge/base/Riho/Riho_-_Didebata.mp3.
31 http://www.alazani.ge/base/Meshveliani/Meshveliani_-_Lajgvashi.mp3.
32 http://www.alazani.ge/base/Riho/Riho_-_Lajgvash.mp3.
33 "Lagusheda" can also share sacred texts with other hymns, such as this available recording, which is synchronous with "Voi Da Didabi", a round-dance that is mentioned below. http://www.alazani.ge/base/Meshveliani/Meshveliani_-_Lagusheda.mp3.
34 http://www.alazani.ge/base/Svaneti/Svaneti_-_Lile.mp3.
35 http://www.alazani.ge/base/Svaneti/Svaneti_-_Lile.mp3.
36 http://www.alazani.ge/base/Riho/Riho_-_Gaul_Gavkhe.mp3.
37 I have previously discussed the place of such legends (Freedman 2017).
38 For comparison, another variant can be heard at http://www.alazani.ge/base/Svaneti/Svaneti_-_Ckhav_krisdeshi.mp3.

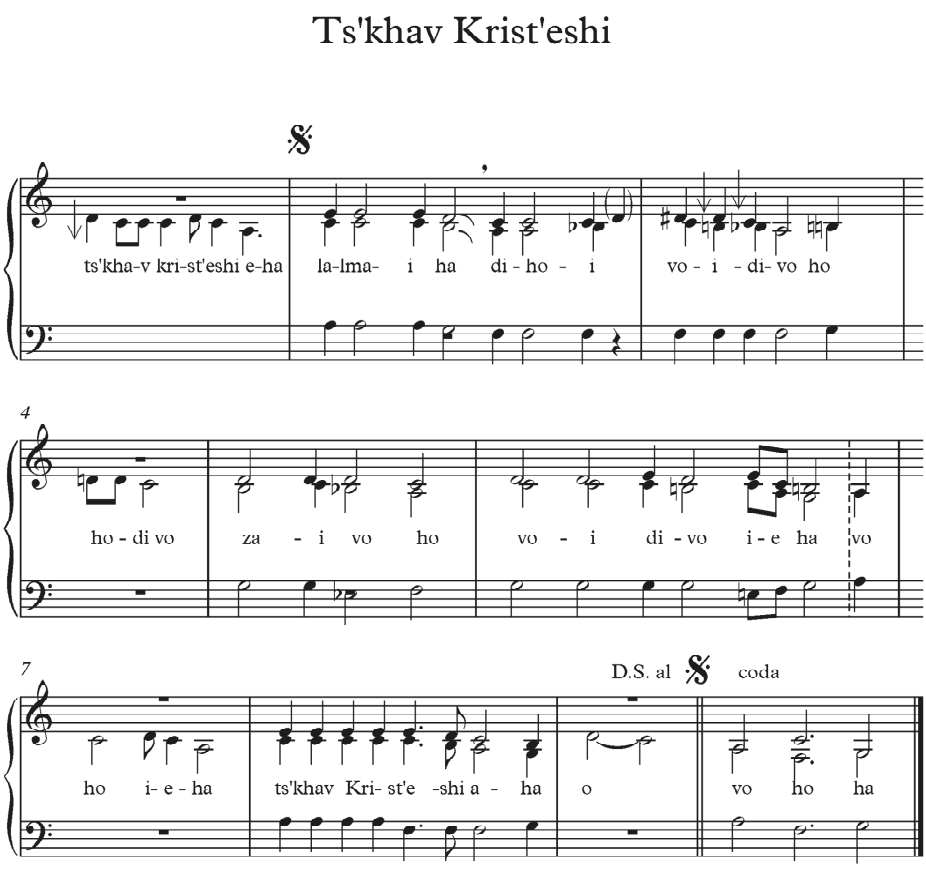

Figure 20. Ts'khav Krist'eshi; Svan hymn to Christ, Lakhushdi variant.

These occur in other hymns and ritual songs, including a hymn to St. George (Figure 22),[39] a variant of "Ga",[40] another hymn to Christ "O Krisdeshi", variants of the wedding blessing "Sadami",[41] and zari variants.[42] Jgragish and Ts'khav Krisdeshi share a beginning, with difference only of the vocative name in the text; the two hymns to Christ, Ga, and zari variants share internal phrases as well as cadence types. In particular, the more extensive, common internal phrases and cadences function like the expanded sections in anaphoral chants. These passages consist primarily of particular vocables, which form "nothing but a musical calque of invocation, supplication, and veneration" (Mzhavanadze and Chamgeliani 2016, p. 78). This phenomenon is of great theological importance for the nature of sung prayer, especially in cases where liturgical text is not a factor. Svan paraliturgical prayer and Western chant school ornamentation are similar musical and theological expressions.[43]

[39] http://www.alazani.ge/base/Riho/Riho_-_Jgragish.mp3.
[40] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AO2YAfB4Lr0.
[41] http://www.alazani.ge/base/Svaneti/Svaneti_-_Sadami.mp3.
[42] http://www.alazani.ge/base/Svaneti/Svaneti_-_Zari.mp3.
[43] It is noteworthy that the zari genre was more widespread in Western Georgia, though it is used in practice today only in Svaneti. There are examples from Guria and Samegrelo, including a variant from the same chanter whose paschal troparion we briefly discussed above; it can be heard at http://www.alazani.ge/base/AnchiskhatiP/Anchiskhati_-_Zari.mp3.

Jgragish

Traditional

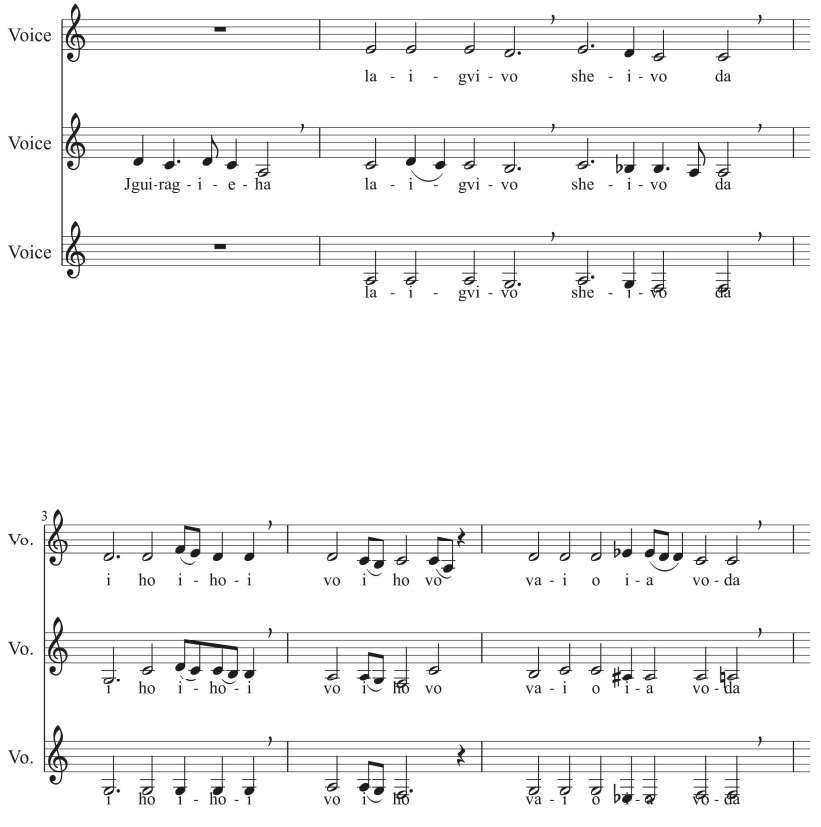

Figure 21. *Cont.*

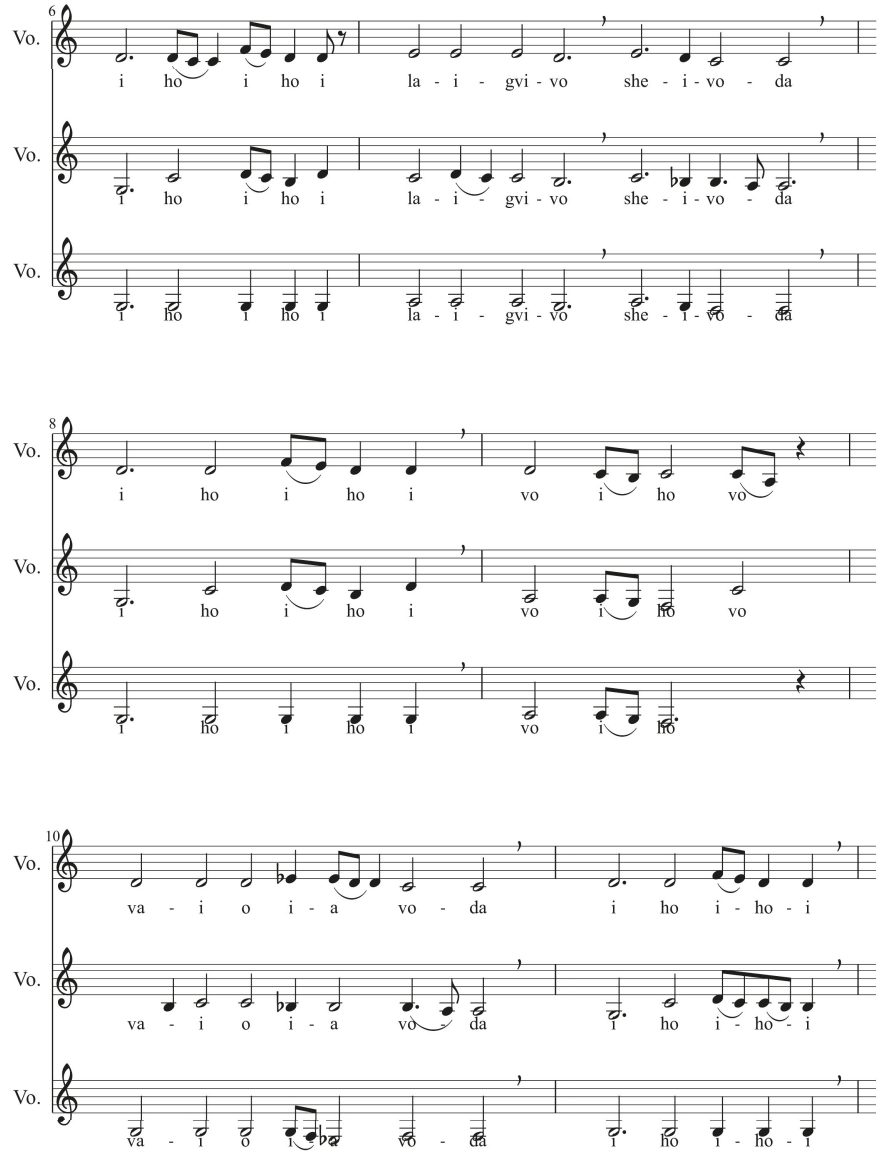

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Figure 21. *Cont.*

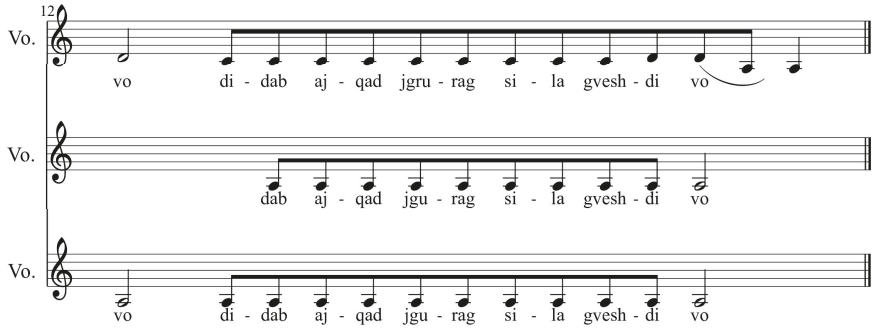

Figure 21. Jgragish; Svan hymn to St. George, Lakhushdi variant.

Let us consider the hymn "Lile" (Figure 22) along with the related round-dances.

The musical material of the hymn, while expressing the general features of the genre, can be understood as an expansion of the round-dance melody, or, vice-versa, as the root of the compacted round-dance. While the first process is like that which takes place throughout the styles of chant, the other may be more likely. Many round-dances are composed of sections that successively become more compact, refracting the opening segment. These sections are not simply rhythmically accelerated; they follow the same structures and key pitches but with shortened and altered phrases, and they generally share texts. Some, such as Lazhghvash, referred to above, include rendering the same musical material at double speed, but most form new compacted phrases of the material (e.g., "Voi Da Didabi"[44]). Round-dances and work songs from other regions, such as Rach'a,[45] Guria,[46] Imereti,[47] and Samegrelo,[48] share this feature. While one example, "Shisha da Gergil",[49] is often sung with a compact section followed by an unfolded one, its variant "Geregil"[50] begins with a hymn like section, followed by the later section of "Shisha da Gergil;" The first case demonstrates the expansion process found in ecclesiastical chant, and the latter arrangement is most common in Svan song. The feature of a hymn-like introduction is significant and especially present in sacred examples. The round-dance "Didebata" (Figure 23) also has a hymn-like introduction, followed by the square, compact round-dance, and the aforementioned "Lile" is sometimes sung in two sections, the hymn followed by the round-dance.

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[44] http://www.alazani.ge/base/Meshveliani/Meshveliani_-_Voi_Da_Didabi.mp3.

[45] This round-dance has text that may be related to the legendary figure Amirani, who has been compared to Prometheus. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNWLU49FFpk.

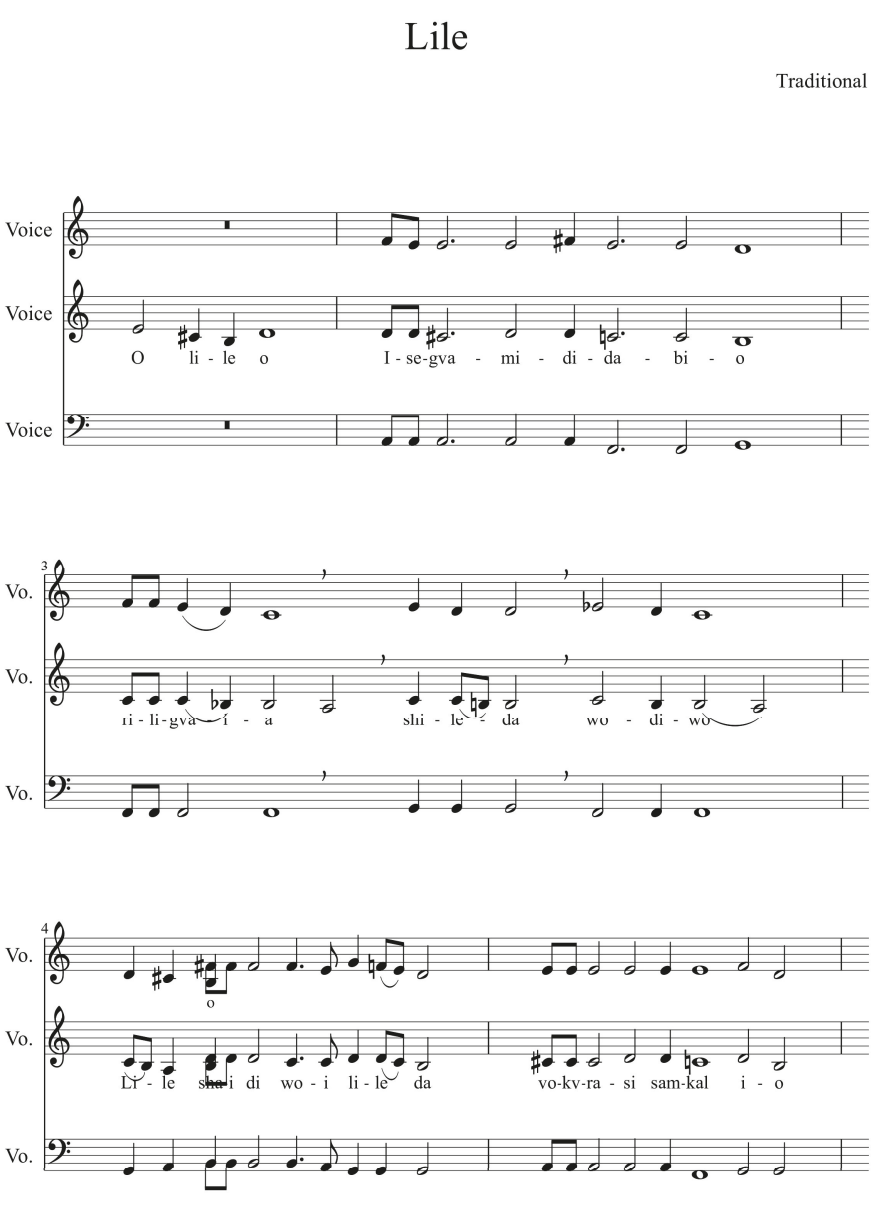
[46] A work song can be heard at http://www.alazani.ge/base/AnchiskhatiS/Anchiskhati_-_Elesa.mp3.

[47] This example is a paraliturgical paschal round-dance, which also includes "kyrie eleison" vocables: http://www.alazani.ge/base/AnchiskhatiS/Anchiskhati_-_Krialeso.mp3.

[48] This example is a harvesting song: http://www.alazani.ge/base/Polikarpe/Polikarpe_-_Ocheshkhvei.mp3.

[49] http://www.alazani.ge/base/Riho/Riho_-_Gergili.mp3.

[50] An important historical recording by the Lat'ali Village choir is available at http://www.georgian-music.com/folk-songs/folk-song-and-dance-ensemble-of-latali-village. Note that the tracks are mislabeled. "Geregil" is the track with the label "Name of an Old Man."



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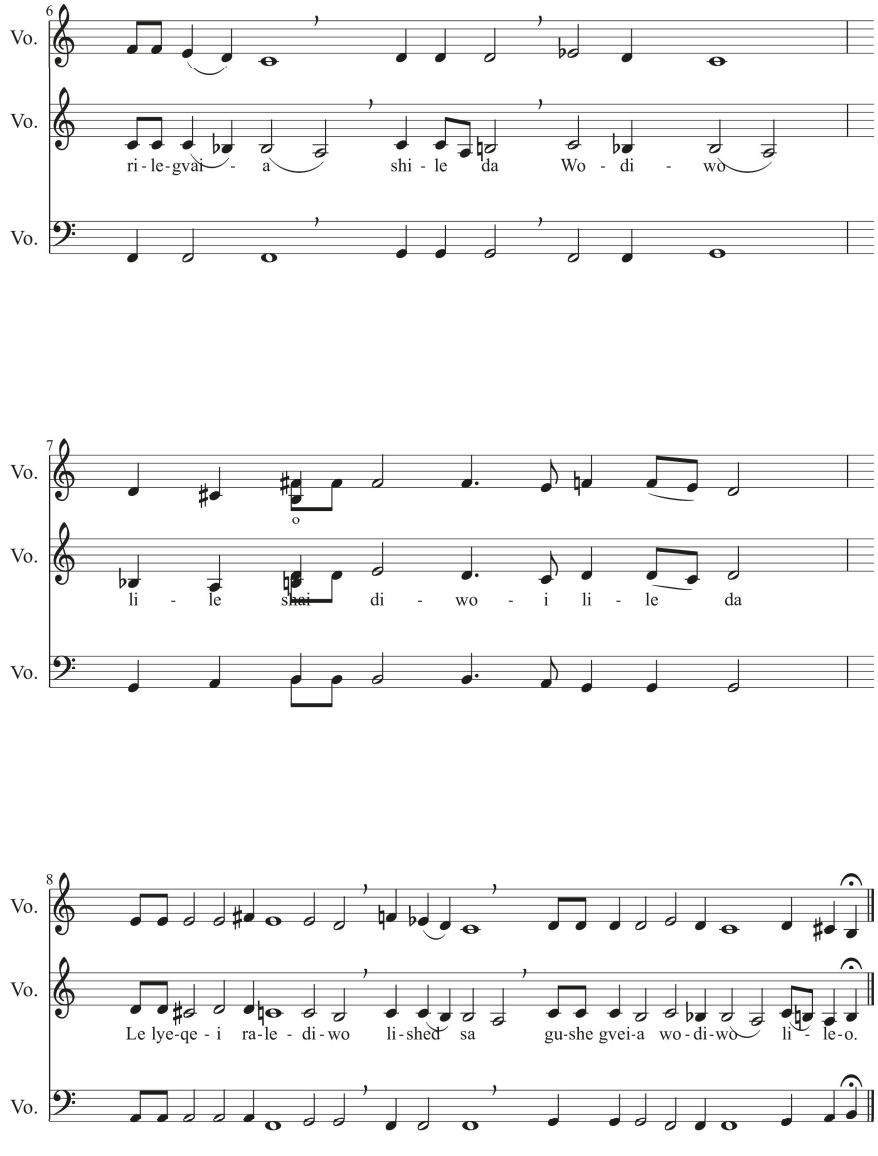

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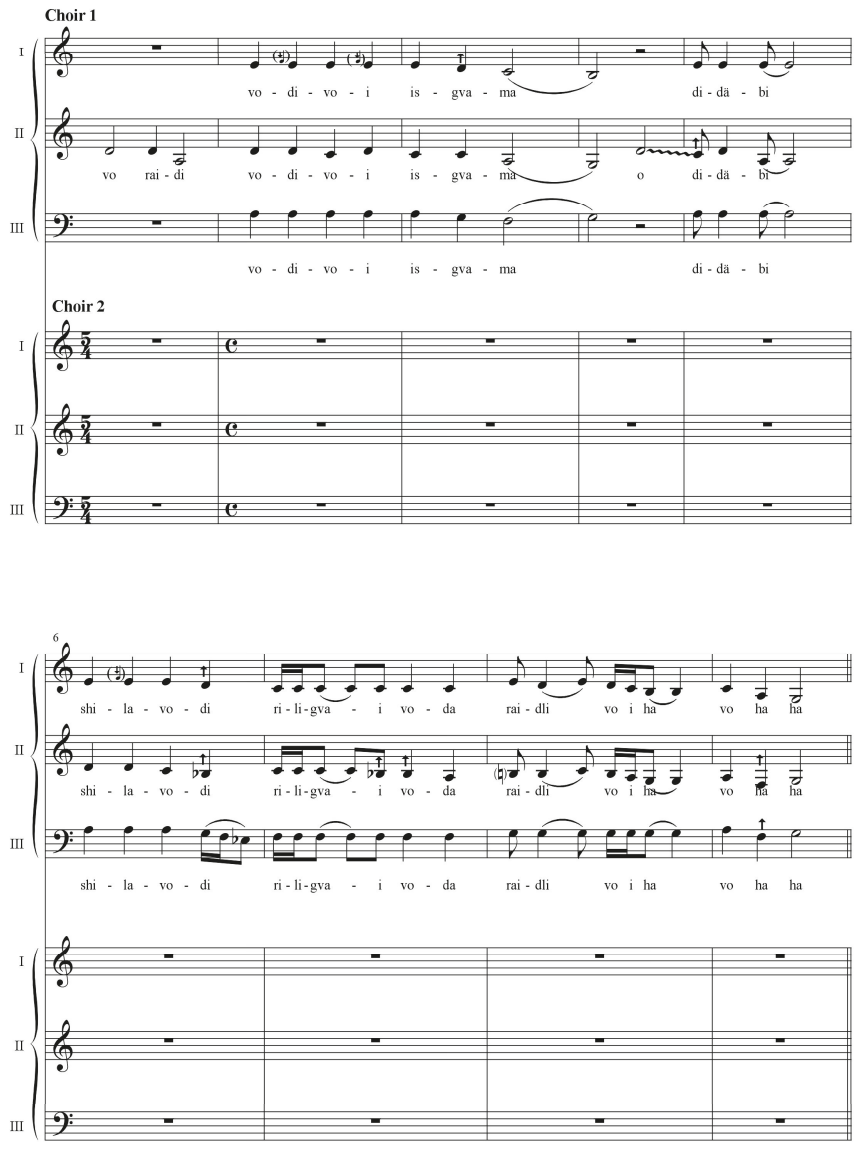
Figure 22. Lile; Svan hymn, Lakhushdi variant.



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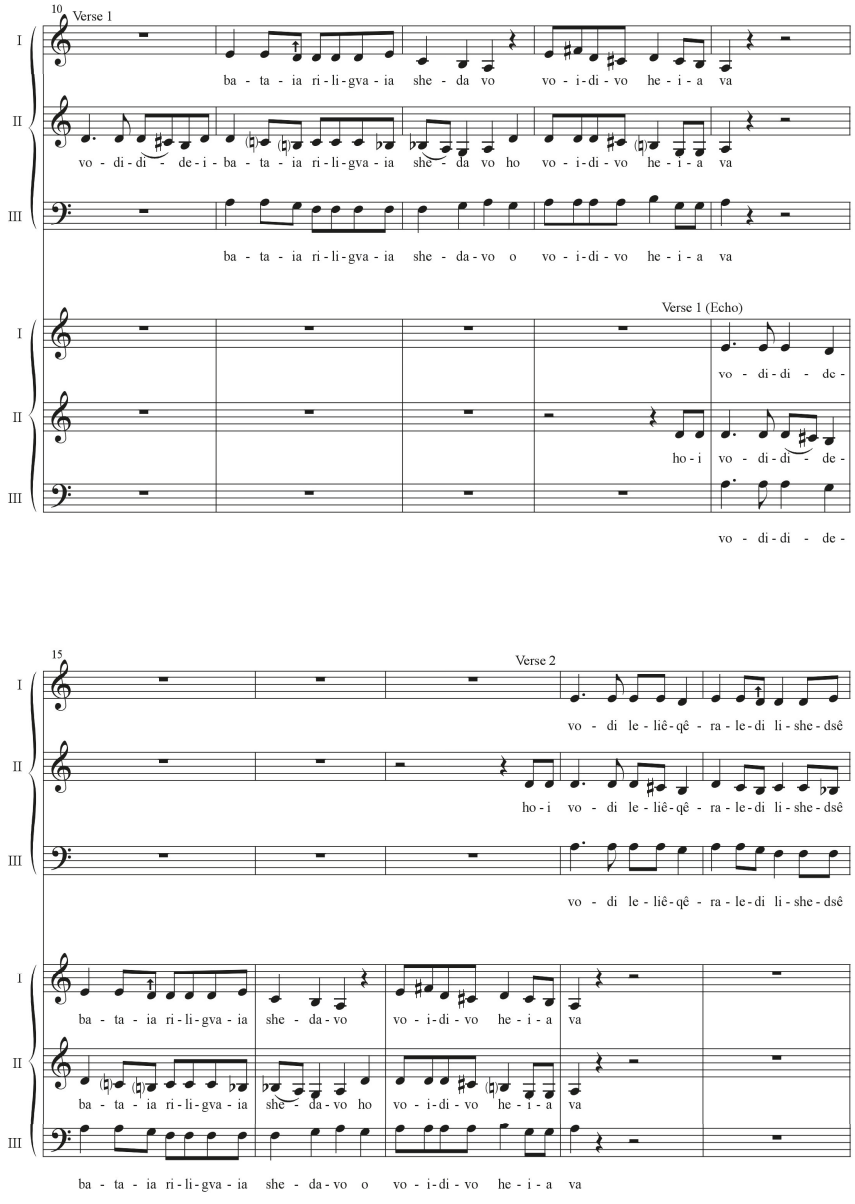

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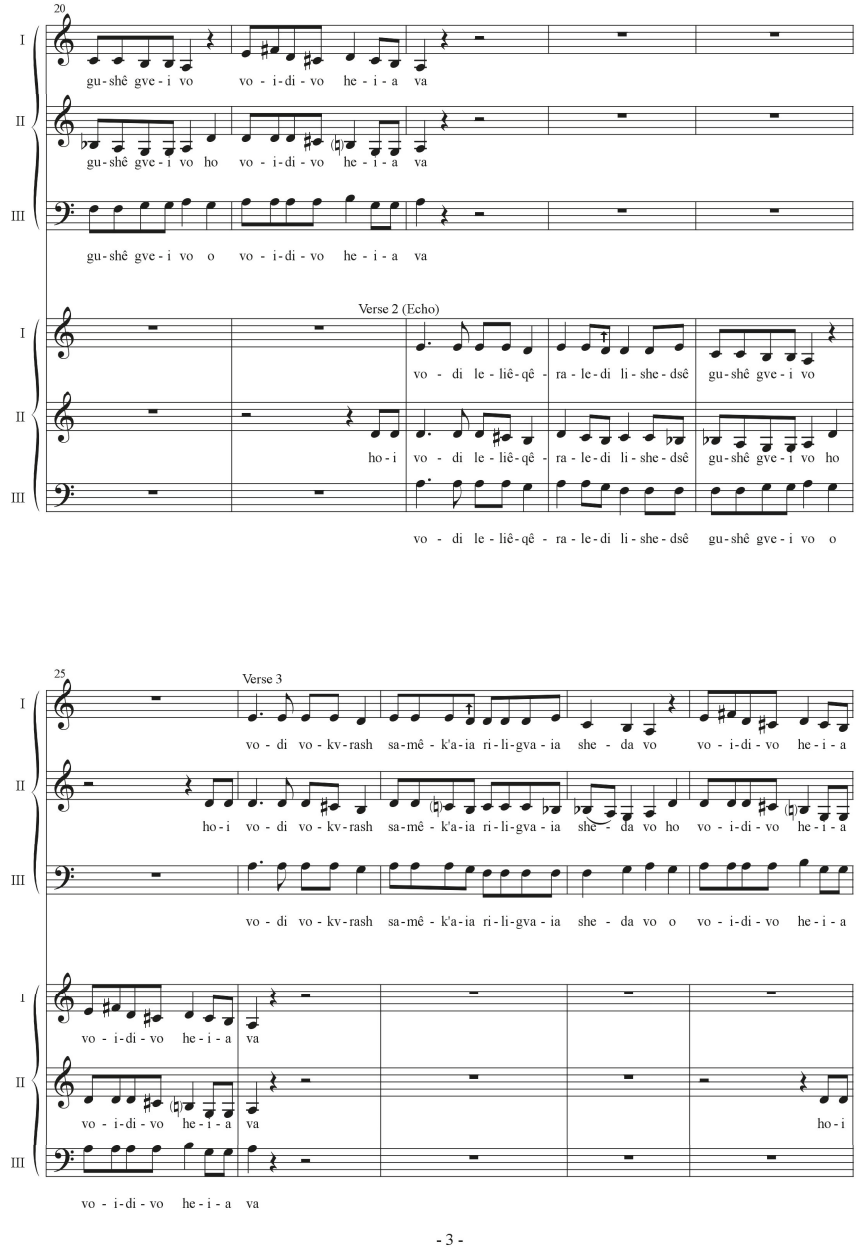

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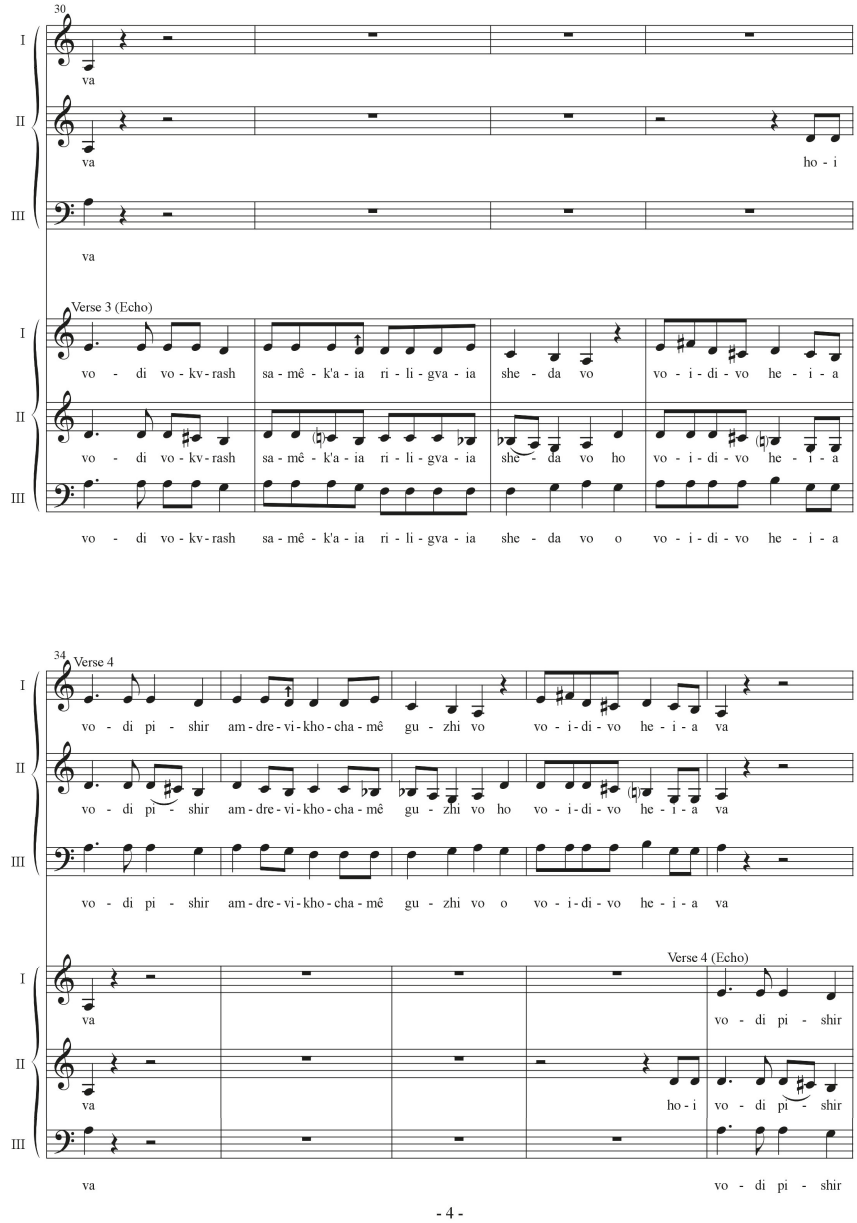
Figure 23. *Cont.*



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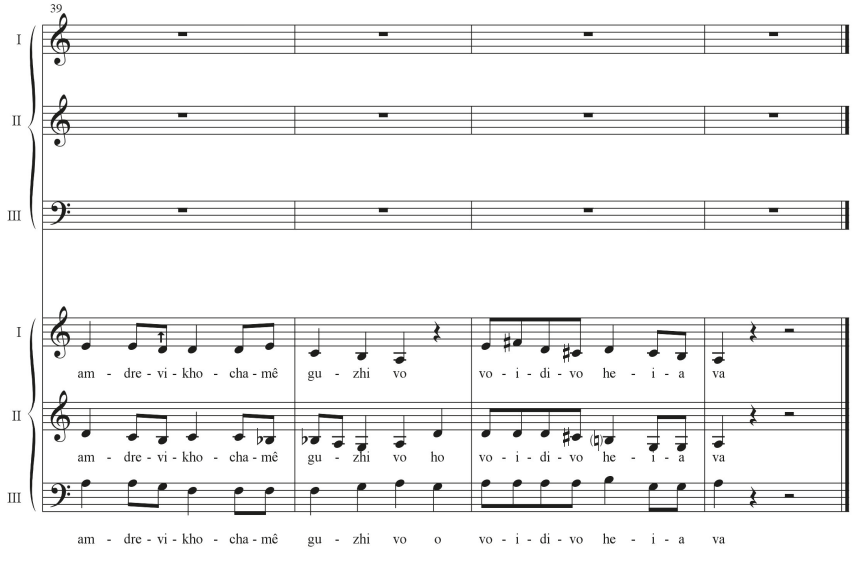

Figure 23. Didebata; Svan round-dance to the Archangels, Lakhushdi variant.

This segmented structure is fractal-like and hierarchical. Yet, the seemingly expanded, sometimes hymn-like, section gives rise to those that follow. Some hymns, such as "Barbal Dolash" (Figure 24)",[51] have more square, round-dance-like rhythm, rendering yet again three modes of sacred paraliturgical song along a continuum.

The expansive style has its particular character, exhibiting slow, homorhythmic movement, sparse ornamentation, and direction, such as in call gestures, and action delineated by the middle voice. The round-dance contains similar counterpoint but has well-defined, square rhythm, and the songs and sections that fit between these two styles are more regular or metrical in their rhythm and structure. I suggest that these styles have generally co-existed and that it may not be possible to determine if, for instance, expansive hymns developed first in a strictly historical sense. However, they take temporal precedence in the rendering of multi-section compositions.

The interesting process of compacting musical material is a direct reflection of that seen in the three styles of ecclesiastical chant. Yet, the underlying principle of the prototypical hymn molding what follows is held in common. In ecclesiastical chant, this foundation is the text and model melody; in Svan song, it is the hymn or most expansive section, sometimes joined to a text. The example of "Geregil" shows that the path may go in both directions (i.e., that a round-dance section can be expanded), but that hymns are the wide basis from which all following sections are folded. While I suggested earlier that the Svan funeral Trisagion may have developed from the so-called "plain mode" ordinary variant, the trajectory of Svan folk song indicates that the simpler version may have developed from the ornamented one. Perhaps the latter is not ornamented at all, its vocables and other features acting like features of handwriting rather than additional illuminations. Likewise, singers, such as those who adorn the Patriarch's compositions, may not view their renderings as ornamented but simply as the shape of the song as they form it.

[51] For comparison with the transcribed variant, another can be heard at http://www.alazani.ge/base/Svaneti/Svaneti_-_Barbal_Dolash.mp3.

Barball Dolash

Traditional

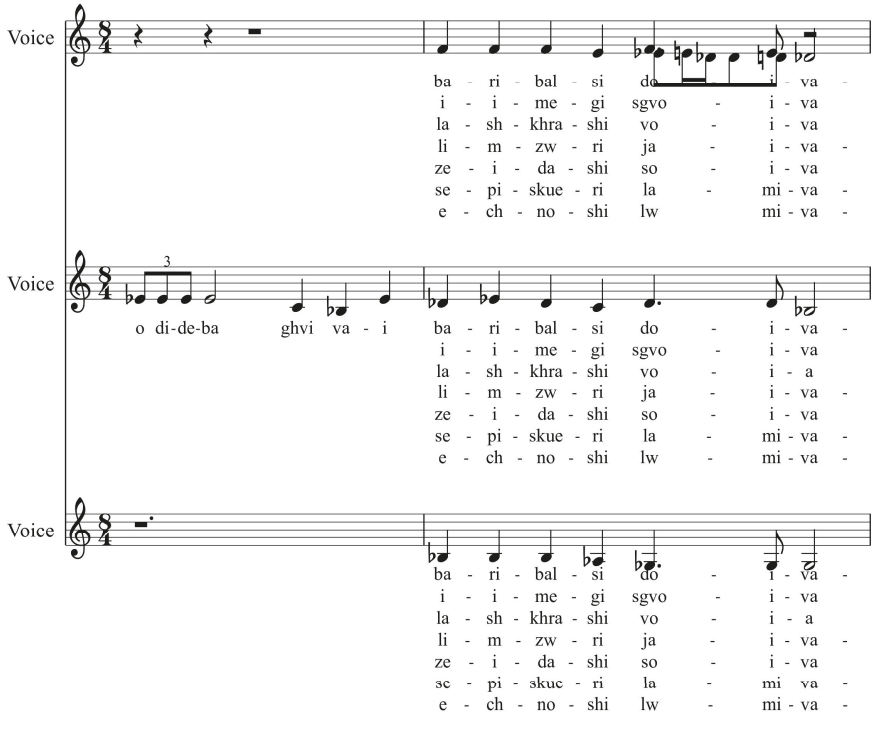

Figure 24. *Cont.*

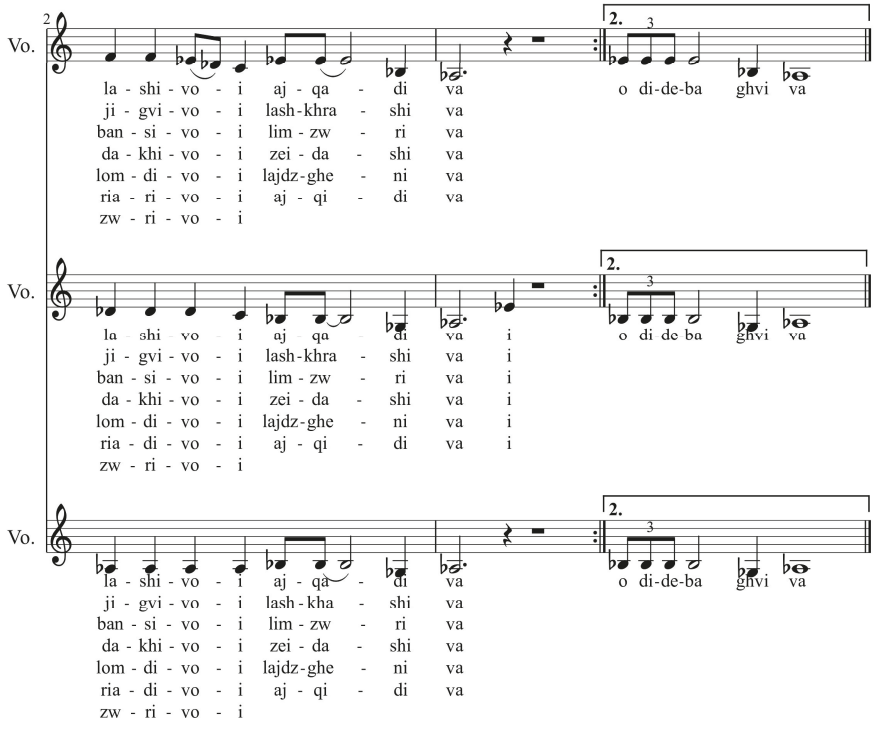

Figure 24. Barbal Dolash; Svan hymn to St. Barbara, Lakhushdi variant.

Our exploration of decoration and expansion in Kartvelian sacred song has brought to light two primary, rhythmically-opposite processes that are nevertheless embodied within congruous sacred repertoires. The nature of prototypes and their diverse copies renders a situation in which any given example can be either unfolded or folded. It can be enlarged and further diversified with ornaments, or it can become more narrow, direct, and smaller in scale, as a molded object is smaller than its mold, such that it can fit inside it. The assimilated patterns and destination remain the same.

8. Conclusions: Threading Sound, Text, and Theology in Prayer

We will end with some brief theological reflections. We have summarized a great deal of theological and historical material, examined the concepts and processes as they occur and are applied in examples, and discussed how theology continues to give birth to sacred song. We have observed great intricacy and variegation within individual chants, and this poikilia also exists across variants, both diachronically and synchronically. We have described the voices as warp and weft and as forming complementary figures that create complex surfaces, and unfolded chants have a more expansive, densely-patterned face while folded variants hold potential and patterns beneath a smaller, simpler, outward side. Even this side can be embellished, especially by the middle voice. Among all this musical material, however, hymn texts, vowels and vocables, and the prayerful purpose of the sound have their essential place, which can be described with further textile metaphor. These give shape to pitch and rhythm, as alignment, twist, thickness, number of plies, and other aspects form threads from fibers. In a homily on the Song of Songs, St. Gregory of Nyssa states that the "scarlet thread" of the lips of the Church is the confession of faith, the "agreement in mind", plied together as "one cord" from the "different strands" of its members (Norris 2013, p. 239); "*scarlet thread* means 'Faith working by love.' By 'faith,' *scarlet* is explained, while 'love' interprets *thread*" (Norris 2013, p. 241). Faith and love

are active forces in the composition and performance of chant. St. Polievktos Karbelashvili's threading of text and model melody is like the making of a warp, and subsequent harmonization by the other two voices, decoration, and expansion provide the weft and thread density. Alternatively, it can be said that the thread of each voice is laid out and stitched onto a pre-existing cloth. Above, historical change was referred to in this way as a shifting underlay for model melodies, but the threading of all chant would stand as cobwebs without the foundation of theology, that is, revelation and experience of God (Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonopetra 2009, pp. 266–93). No being or hierarchy would exist without its source in, and movement towards, God, and every element of liturgy, including chant, is a "God-bearing reality", a "sign that points to God", a "vehicle of His presence and grace", as the contemporary Greek Elder Aimilianos describes (Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonopetra 2009, p. 331). Since God became incarnate, He adds a unique thread, being "woven into the fabric of human nature" (Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonopetra 2009, p. 168), and He takes up the others, making human beings to "become His garments" (Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonopetra 2009, p. 348). There are further foundational threads from God, which clothe humans in robes "spun from the grace of the Holy Spirit", as the nineteenth-century Russian St. Seraphim of Sarov says (Mileant 2001, pp. 13–14). Thus, God in turn provides new garments for the faithful. The weaving of these garments is a synergistic process, and St. Hippolytos of Rome includes the Father, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Theotokos, Prophets, and Patriarchs; weaving takes place through the Incarnation and Passion, and the cross is the warp beam. Christ is described in all aspects, His grace providing thread, which binds human and divine natures by His love, and He Himself is a shuttle (On Christ and Antichrist, 4). We previously associated chant with the preaching of the Gospel, and; thus, it relates to the work of apostles and the Word and has an important place in building up the body of the Church.

St. Synklektike refers to chant as "incorruptible food" (Isaiah 2001, p. 30), and its threads, though imperfect in their Earthly form, and not always easy to relate in every way to their angelic prototypes, are affected by the Incarnation, like the visible threads of the sash of the Mother of God, which has been made incorruptible. As it says about the Theotokos herself in the hymn that we studied, she is "more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim", and the same applies to all subsequently deified members of the Church. At the Resurrection, when human bodies will be changed in a manner beyond comprehension, with their "threads worked up into something more subtle and ethereal", as St. Makrina says (St. Gregory of Nyssa, On the Soul and the Resurrection), then will our chant also be made truly incorruptible. Yet, even now, through its many symbolic aspects, the liturgical context, and grace, it already participates in the Kingdom in an indescribable way. God is interwoven with everything, even our cries (Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonopetra 2009, pp. 176–77). These metaphors and theological reflections can be unfolded further, but chant and silence may express their content better than further discourse, especially that silence which is, as St. Maximos the Confessor says, "rich in tone" (Berthold 1985, p. 190).

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Article

Keening the Dead: Ancient History or a Ritual for Today?

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Abstract: In his 1909 work 'Rites De Passage', Arnold van Gennep acknowledges that a ritual often contains 'rites within rites'. So, it was with the ancient ritual of the Irish wake, at the center of which was another ritual, that of the keen, the Irish funeral lament. The past tense is used tentatively here, as in this article the author explores the resilience of the ritual and how, rather than becoming extinct, the keen seems to spend periods of time underground before erupting again in a new form, attuning itself to a more contemporaneous social situation. Drawing on ethnographic and bibliographic research undertaken between 2010 and 2018, the author traces some of the history of the keen within the ritual of the Irish wake and funeral and gives instances of how it is being reconfigured in the 21st century. This continuation of the ritual, albeit in a new format, seems to speak to a deep emotional and spiritual need that may not be satisfied by more conventional religion in Ireland. Finally, the author considers the keen's relevance and place in Irish society today.

Keywords: keen; wake; funeral; Ireland; tradition; custom; culture; history; chant

1. Introduction

Arnold van Gennep theorized that rituals often contain rites within other rites (van Gennep 1909, p. 23). This insight is highly relevant to the subject of this essay, which examines the ancient Irish funeral lament known as the keen, within its traditional context of the greater ritual of the Irish wake. The term 'keen' is derived from the title of the mourning ritual for the dead, *caoineadh na marbh* (lament for the dead). The Anglicized word 'keen', from the Irish word *caoine* or *caoineadh*, meaning vocalized cry, has passed into common parlance as a descriptor for the instinctive raw cry that is often the first reaction of the bereaved to death. However, in Ireland, it has another deeper layer of meaning, based on a centuries-old ritual of which remnants still remain today. Although primal instinct may be at its core, the keen was a sacred improvised chant that evolved over many centuries. It was traditionally sung over a corpse and was intrinsic to the ritual of the wake and funeral obsequies. Etic observers did not understand the significance of either the Irish wake or the place of the keen within it and were inclined to dismiss both as heathenish and unacceptable to Christian society.

Brendán Ó Madagáin explains that there was a strong sense of protectiveness around the keen, which made the peasantry unwilling to perform it outside its context (Ó Madagáin 1982, in Ó Driscoll, p. 311). As a result, there are few available examples of contemporaneous keens. Those that were recorded by collectors in the 1950s include keens sung by Kitty Gallagher (Ní Gallchóir 1951, tr. 27/28); Bridget Mullin (1957, tr. 20), and the anonymous Aran Female Singer (1957, tr. 19). It must be noted, however, that these were remembered keens rather than the improvised performance, which is at the heart of the ritual.

Although set songs were sometimes used as mourning songs, including the body of religious keens that have been preserved within the Irish song and literary traditions, that corpus is not the subject of this essay. The traditional keen referenced in this essay is of an improvisational nature,

constructed around a tri-partite structure (Ó Madagáin 1982, pp. 312–13), and reflects the life and passing of the individual who has just died. Patrick Weston Joyce described this spontaneous form of keening performed on the occasion of a death, within the context of a wake, as 'a lament in Irish—partly extempore, partly prepared—delivered in a kind of plaintive recitative' (Joyce 1873, p. 59).

The practice of keening in Ireland came in for severe censure from the Roman Catholic Church (given that the keen was predominantly practiced by Roman Catholics). Church Synods from 1614 onwards voiced clerical opposition to wakes with increasing vehemence (Ó Crualaoich 1999, pp. 174–75) so that by the middle of the nineteenth century the custom had been noticeably watered down. It is interesting that, as the Roman Catholic Church has lost its once tight grip on Irish society over the last 20 years, the idea of 'waking the dead' is experiencing a resurgence in Ireland, particularly in rural communities. This author has heard rumors of the keen being sung in island communities to this day, but the nature of the ritual is sacred, private, and shrouded in secrecy (for the historical reasons outlined below), making it difficult to collect evidence of its performance. Based on empirical evidence from contemporary Irish writer Kevin Toolis and a credible witness whom this author interviewed (both of whom are referenced below), it seems clear that its reverberations were still being felt at the beginning of the twenty first century. To understand the significance of the keen, though, it is necessary to first understand its context—that of the 'wake'.

2. Brief History of the Irish Wake

The need to express the grief of bereavement in communal crying or wailing is not unique to Ireland; it is common to many cultures and contexts. In Ireland though, it took its own form of a ritualized vocal musical response. In an 1830s article, entitled 'The Irish Funeral Cry' the writer, known as O'G, cited the following report of the Irish keen by the twelfth century chronicler Giraldus Cambrensis:

> ... the Irish then musically expressed their griefs; that is they applied the musical art, in which they excelled all others, to the orderly celebration of funeral obsequies, by dividing the mourners into two bodies, each alternately singing their part, and the whole at times joining in full chorus. The body of the deceased, dressed in grave clothes, and ornamented with flowers, was placed on a bier, or some elevated spot. The relations and *keeners* (singing mourners) then ranged themselves in two divisions, one at the head and the other at the foot of the corpse. The bards and croteries had before prepared the funeral caoinan ... (O'G 1833, p. 242)

Over centuries, this mourning lament came to reflect a blend of pagan and Christian beliefs and was embedded in the wake and funeral obsequies.

The Oxford English Dictionary gives the meaning of the noun 'wake', as the following: 'A watch or vigil held beside the body of someone who has died, sometimes accompanied by ritual observances.' The origin of the word is given as 'Old English (recorded only in the past tense wōc), also partly from the weak verb wacian 'remain awake, hold a vigil', of Germanic origin ... ' (OED 2019).

The custom of 'waking the dead' is ancient and there are extant accounts of wakes throughout Europe, reaching back at least a millennium (Ó Súilleabháin 1967, p. 12). Samuel Hall, writing in 1841, commented on the very real danger of a body being stolen by unethical scientists for medical experimentation (Hall 1841, vol. 1. p. 232; Ó Súilleabháin 1967, p. 172). It is further believed that ancient funerary rituals included a protective element. James Mooney notes that there was a terror of supernatural forces, which were believed to be unleashed at the time of death, and that one of the purposes of the wake was to protect the body from "the attacks of evil spirits until it was safely disposed of..." (Mooney 1888, p. 270)[1]. Mooney (ibid., p. 256) and Daithí Ó hÓgáin (2002, p. 3) draw

[1] See also Annie Ross (Ross 1982, pp. 205–6) who suggests that the fear of the Otherworld propelled the wish for magical protection as displayed by early Britons—a belief that very likely was also held in Ireland.

parallels with ancient Egyptian burial rites, such as the depositing of grave goods and funerary feasts at the hills and dolmens that were chosen as final repositories. The idea of the 'funerary feast' is, to this day, an essential element of the wake ritual, which fulfills not only the pragmatic function of keeping mourners awake, but also affirms community. In addition, the act of sharing food is a habitual element of ritual and usually has a symbolic significance. Food, at its most basic level, is life-affirming and can offer comfort in a time of great distress. Not only food, but drink, tobacco, and snuff were all part of the traditional Irish ritual meal offered to visitors, at least until the second part of the twentieth century. Writer Kevin Toolis, for example, describes his experience of attending a wake as a fifteen-year-old in the 1960s, on which occasion he and his teen friends crammed sandwiches into their mouths, grabbed at the proffered cigarettes, and Toolis had his first experience of the acrid nature of snuff (Toolis 2017, pp. 248–49).

The liberal consumption of alcohol and tobacco, along with the playing of games and general riotous behavior, as described in Séan Ó Súilleabháin's 1967 *Irish Wake Amusements*, earned the wake the title of the 'Merry Wake'. It was this display of apparent merriment at the wake that caused great outrage among both visiting observers and the clergy. Etic observers, such as Samuel Hall (1841, vol. 1. p. 223), who were inclined to dismiss the custom as disrespectful, were, in fact, revealing their lack of understanding of the Irish culture. The Irish were 'celebrating life, not decrying the dead' (Toolis 2017, p. 252). In particular, the bawdy wake games were irksome to the clergy, intent on censoring earthly and carnal pleasures. As previously mentioned, over several centuries, there were many attempts by the Roman Catholic Church to stop these customs (Ó Crualaoich 1999, pp. 174–45; Ó Súilleabháin 1967, pp. 138–43). By the early 1800s a 'virtual curfew was imposed on young people, especially the unmarried, in an attempt to combat what the church considered the shameful and irreligious behaviors in which those attending the wakehouse indulged' (Ó Crualaoich, p. 175). During the latter part of the 20th century the tradition of 'waking the dead' went temporarily out of fashion and was replaced by the more modern custom of using funeral homes. For some, though, this was not sufficient closure. Kevin Toolis for example in the following, describes his feelings about the 'Western Death Machine' when his 26-year-old brother, Bernard, experienced a failed transplant and died in an English city hospital in the 1980s:

> We never had a wake for Bernard: the Machine, the proceedings of dying in the city, the rupture of his death, the defeat of the transplant, had defeated us … In the ruins, we did the other things too; a Mass, a funeral, a trip out to the city crematorium, a few hurried words at the head of the queue of hearses lining up outside, waiting their turn in the allocated slots of that day's burning … We got on with living but it never felt right. Bernard was a wound we never bound up; a grave I could never close. (Toolis 2017, p. 112)

This emotional account reveals a key to the evolution of the wake; generic formulae were not enough for everybody, many needed a more personalized ritual on losing a loved one.

3. Keen Within the Wake

Did the keen really vanish from the mourning ritual, or did it, like many local customs and rituals among indigenous believers, merely go underground? Critics, who usually fell into one or another of the following categories, heavily denigrated the keen:

(1) Visitors who had stumbled on a funeral procession;
(2) those who visited a wake from curiosity and took an observer role; or
(3) Clergy who had a vested interest in stopping the practice as they perceived it as anti-Christian (Lysaght 1997, pp. 3, 4).

In the first and second instances, the observers were unaware of the context of the keen. In the third, they were violently opposed to it. Either way, the keen was not seen as a part of a broader ritual process but taken in isolation and condemned. Yet, despite the many attempts to annihilate it, the keen

seemed to rise again in each generation, each new version reflecting societal and cultural/contextual shifts. This is a pattern that has continually repeated itself. For example, there were reports by the writer O'G of the keen dying out in the early 1830s. It is to be noted that O'G refers to past wakes and keening in terms of it having been a highly respected custom, being practiced by the noblest families. As a consequence of the denigration of the custom, it had become, even by his time of writing, debased.

> Till about the middle of the last century, the custom was very generally adhered to in Ireland, as well in families of the highest condition, as among those of the lower orders; and many of the elegiac poems, composed on such occasions, have come down to us, ... Of late years, the custom has fallen greatly into disuse, and is now of rare occurrence, except in some very few old families, and among the peasantry, and with them it has now generally degenerated into a mere cry of an extremely wild and mournful character, which however, consisting of several notes, forming a very harmonious musical passage, approaches to a species of song, but is almost always destitute of words (O'G 1833, pp. 242–43).

If the wake games irked the clerical establishment, then the keen inflamed them, as it was considered an example of unbridled paganism that had no place in a Christian society. Over time, and amply aided by both alcohol (sometimes the only 'payment' a poor mourning family could afford), and ecclesiastical censure, (Ó Súilleabháin 1967, pp. 138–43), the identity of the keening women, the *mná caointe*[2] (mraw kweentcha), became tarnished and by the middle of the nineteenth century. They were considered somewhat mercenary and dissolute (Ó Súilleabháin 1967, p. 141; Ó Buachalla 1998, p. 29). The practice barely survived but had changed over time and the absorption of Christianity was one agent of that change. This blend was noted in the 1930s in a report from Balla, Co. Mayo.

> Blessed candles are placed in the hands of the dying person ... If the person was not very old women when entering and saying a few prayers joined hands beside where the corpse lay and caoined [sic] for several minutes. They were not really crying but wailing (Ó Maolanaigh 2016, vol. 0095, p.176).

Sidney Robertson Cowell also witnessed a ritual that synthesized the ancient practice with the accepted Christian ritual on the Aran Islands in 1956.

> I heard the caoine going on in the house where the dead woman was lying, in the evening and before the coffin was taken to the church the next day. Except for two old women who came in to caoine before the service began, while there were yet only half a dozen people present, the service was seemly ... (Robertson Cowell in Ní Chongaile 2017)

It is somewhat ironic that the integration of Christian symbology into the pagan ritual possibly contributed to its survival, although not all, as the playwright John Millington Synge states in the following, appreciated this confluence of ideologies:

> Before they covered the coffin an old man kneeled down by the grave and repeated a simple prayer for the dead. There was irony in these words of atonement and Catholic belief spoken by voices that were still hoarse with the cries of pagan desperation (Synge 1907).

4. The Functions of the Wake

The traditional Irish wake can be viewed as having included several functions that were interlocked. At a time of upheaval, the action of the wake provided structure, a primary function of ritual. Although not strictly linear, the 18th century wake contained the following elements:

- The corpse was laid out.

[2] The noun for 'woman' in the Irish language is irregular, hence in the singular it is '*bean*' (pronounced 'ban') but in the plural it is '*mná*' (pronounced 'mraw' or 'minaw').

- The family keened over the corpse.
- Professional keeners took over.
- A stream of visitors came and went.
- The keening continued at regular intervals through the night (particularly when a new visitor arrived).
- The mourners stayed awake and participated in amusements and entertainment.
- There was periodic feasting and partaking of alcohol, tobacco, and snuff.

This pattern continued until the body was taken from the wake-house. Each one of these activities was heavily ritualized and, yet, they all fit together in a manner that passed the night or nights. This ordo appears to have survived in Ireland until the second part of the twentieth century.

On a pragmatic level the wake facilitated grieving in a very tangible manner, as follows:

- It was a powerful forum for emotional release, facilitated by two actors in the wake drama—the *Borachán* (Borachawn) and the *Bean Chaointe* (Ban Khweentcha), both of whose roles are discussed in detail below.
- It presented an occasion for the community to gather together, thus affirming and strengthening bonds. As Mooney wrote in 1888 (p. 270), 'a wedding or a funeral affords almost the only opportunity for a friendly gathering of neighbors to break in on the dul [sic] monotony of every-day life'.
- Community bonds were strengthened by the sharing of food, alcohol, snuff, and tobacco[3]. Samuel Hall's observation of wake customs in 1840's Munster reflected this, 'Close by it [the body], or upon it, are plates of tobacco and snuff; around it are lighted candles' (Hall 1841, p. 222). At that time, the tobacco was ritually smoked in special clay pipes, which were later buried. More than a century later the tobacco was contained in cigarettes but the ritual, as described by Kevin Toolis above (ibid., pp. 248–49), was similar. The wake also provided an opportunity for old bonds to be strengthened and new bonds to be formed (albeit many of these 'bonds' drew the disapproval of the clergy).
- The wake gathering offered an opportunity to celebrate the life as well as to mourn the passing of the deceased, thus it was also an occasion for celebration. This, indeed, is the main thrust of Seán Ó Súilleabháin's explanation for the somewhat festive atmosphere (Ó Súilleabháin 1967, p. 172). In fact, it reaffirmed life in the face of death.
- One of the most important elements was that the deceased was still included in that community. In fact, the deceased was the guest of honour. My mother once told me of a wake in Northern Ireland in the 1970s where the card game 'Bridge' was played and the corpse was propped up to hold a fan of cards to take the part of the 'dummy'. After all, this was a party for the deceased, so best to include him. This sort of action was based on two factors, honouring the deceased as a member of the community and fearing that he may wreak vengeance in his otherworldly state as a ghost if he was not honoured!
- Finally, it is considered by some, including this author, to have had a strong spiritual component where the soul of the deceased was safely shepherded to the Otherworld, principally through the work of the keening woman/women. . . . the keening woman, the bean chaointe, is the agent of the transition to the next life of the individual whose corpse lies at the heart of the wake assembly, and whose passing is ritually mourned all the way to the grave in the highly charged performance of the female practitioners of the caoin (Ó Crualaoich 1999).

[3] Today's wakes tend to feature tea, sandwiches, cakes and cookies.

Transition is the keynote of death; transition not only for the deceased, but also for the entire community involved. Major transitions are often best navigated through ritual and the wake was a prime example of a community ritual that helped to affect that transition.

5. Ritual Actors

'Much of the power of the keen was in the emotional intensity of its performance' (Mc Laughlin 2017, p. 108).

If we view the wake as a drama, then the central character is the deceased and two of the main actors are the *bean chaointe* (keening woman) and the *bórachán*,[4] the 'organizer and director of the pranks and games of the wake assembly' (Ó Crualaoich in Donnelly et al. 1999, p. 191). It is these two who control and propel the action forward. The interaction between them intensifies the emotional outpouring, with the *bórachán* facilitating the laughter by orchestrating the more earthy wake games and the *bean chaointe* encouraging the expression of sorrow in a wailing lament. Both give license for emotional release but, in addition, each of these actors has a specific role that interfaces with, and compliments, the other. They are 'threshold people', who play a liminal role and reflect the ultimate liminality of the mourners. As Victor Turner points out, 'The attributes of liminality or of liminal personae ('threshold people') are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space' (Turner 1969, p. 95).

5.1. The Borachán

Acting in the role of 'fool' the *borachán* can break all the constraints of normal society. Ronald Grimes points to the liminality of the 'fool' that allows him to straddle thresholds while directing the action.

> As the Latin etymology suggests, liminality is the process of passing over the threshold; it is a moment of boundary crossing. The idiot of the play is not only boundary crosser but also stage-manager (Grimes 2007, p. 211).

Ó Crualaoich notes that the term '*bórachán*' is also 'applied to the 'joker' in card playing, and its use in relation to the 'joker' or master of revels at wakes is an extension of this meaning' (Ó Crualaoich 1999, p. 191 fn). The 'joker' in turn reflects the 'trickster', a character that is often evident in classical mythology.

Wherever the trickster appears, the premise is the same, the 'actors' put aside their daily identity to don a mask that permits them to have a foot both in this world and the (mythical) Otherworld. As Joseph Campbell, in his 1964 talk *The Importance of Rites*, comments: "Myths are the mental support of rites; rites, the physical enactment of myths" (Campbell 1972, p. 45). The *bórachán* has an important role to play at a death scene. After all, the central character (the deceased) is in the ultimate liminal state, that of literally passing between life and death, and this is being mirrored all around. The bereaved are in a liminal state, between roles (e.g., the wife has just become a widow, the child an orphan), and the *bórachán* is both mimetic and liminal in his own right. The *bórachán* is in the same category as what Grimes refers to as the *Ritual Idiot*, "...He pursues a meta-reality—a liminoid reality on the creative bound of society" (Grimes 2007, p. 217).

The function of the *bórachán*, then, could be seen as three-fold. Firstly, as Ó Crualaoich points out, he helps to propel the rite forward on a practical level by instigating and organizing the games and entertainment (Ó Crualaoich 1999, p. 193). Secondly, he introduces a mythic level. At this level, humans are often able to integrate that which challenges them on other planes. Joseph Cambell points

[4] 'The term 'borekeen' as used by John Prim (1852) may be assumed to be a transliteration of a diminutive form of the Irish, 'a bow-legged person', a person with crooked feet'. (Ó Crualaoich fn op. cit)

out that it is particularly important for young people to participate in the myths and rites of their social group 'to accord with [their] social as well as natural environment . . . ' (Campbell 1972, p. 45).

Thirdly, as Ó Crualaoich indicates, the *bórachán* affirms the community,

> ...his role is that of the social order itself personified. In the person of the 'borakeen' and of his willing helpers and henchmen (the 'hardy boys' and 'prime lads'), the community displays its vitality and continuity in the face of mortally threatening contact with the supernatural realm (Ó Crualaoich 1999, p. 193).

Ironically it was these misunderstood functions of the *bórachán* that drew the wrath of the clergy and the censure of visiting reporters who, not being from the Irish culture, did not understand what they were witnessing. In their belief systems, prayer and restrained tearfulness were considered more appropriate and respectful at a funeral and there was no space allowed for laughter; neither was there space allowed for hysterical crying, never mind the combination.

The role of the *bórachán*, then, is part of the support system that facilitates the departure of the deceased from the community. This is an important stage in the rite and it paves the way for the other liminar of the funeral obsequies—the *bean chaointe* (keening woman), as she shepherds all present towards the Otherworld, where the deceased will be received and the mourners cry their final farewell from the human world.

5.2. The Bean Chaointe

In talking about his brother Bernard's passing in the 1980s, (see above) Kevin Toolis described the spontaneous outpouring of grief that occurred in his home on hearing of the death, as follows:

> I rushed back to my parents' house into the maelstrom of my keening mother, sisters and Bernard's wife. The immediacy of his death was a convulsion, a physical pain that gripped at your chest, smothering then bursting out in heaving sobs, rivers of tears, panic. The cries of the women, and my own, soared around an ordinary suburban sitting room. The keening was a primeval scream, a calling out of the agony of death, an eruption of despair, tenderness, fear, love, loss and pain (Toolis 2017, pp. 108–9).

This may seem at odds with his earlier statement regarding the ineffectiveness of the 'Western Death Machine' (see above). This spontaneous family mourning, however, was more organic than ritualized and if we look at the following elements of the wake (see 'Functions of the wake' above), we notice that, although the first stage of the traditional keen was a spontaneous expression of grief by the family, it was:

(a) Performed over a corpse (Lysaght 1997; Ó Madagáin 2005), and
(b) fully ritualized by the formalized keening of professional keeners over the body, within the context of the wake.

Neither of these elements were present in the case of Bernard Toolis. A disconnect occurs when a ritual is not completed. Arnold van Gennep's theory of the tripartite nature of a separation rite could well apply here[5]. Toolis stated that, in his brother's case, 'Bernard was a wound we never bound up; a grave I could never close' (Toolis 2017, p. 112). I would suggest that this was because the ritual of grieving, in his case, was not completed and the author remained in the liminal (in-between) state. Had there been a wake, he would probably have had more closure, as he did in the case of his father's wake (the subject of his 2017 book). In the traditional Irish wake, the process of keening

[5] Van Gennep positis that a separation rite has three stages, as follows: Pre-liminal (separation), liminal (transition), and post-liminal (incorporation) (van Gennep 1909, p. 21.).

would have moved from the searing spontaneous family reaction through the ritual of the wake with the professional keeners, led by the *bean chaointe* (keening woman), to a crescendo at the graveside and then to subsidence as the ritual closed. The professional mourners who were hired for such occasions, were highly proficient at their trade—creating a cathartic environment which helped release the grief of all present and satisfy the deeply held belief that the deceased deserved a good 'send-off', a premise eloquently explained by Seán Ó Súilleabháin in his *Irish Wake Amusements* (Ó Súilleabháin 1967, pp. 170–74). Men were sometimes known to perform the keen (Hennigan 2012, p. 72), but the keeners were usually women who worked either solo or in small groups. According to Breandán Ó Madagáin, the latter was more desired as 'to be keened by *gol mná aonair* ("the cry of a lone woman") is still remembered in the *Gaeltacht* (Gwayltocht)[6] as a great indignity to the deceased' (Ó Madagáin 1982, p. 313). Although an etic account, Samuel and Mrs. Hall's account of the wake they witnessed in the 1840s is invaluable in terms of the observer detail and gives us a visceral description of the process of Keening,

> The women of the household range themselves at either side, and the keen at once commences. They rise with one accord, and, moving their bodies with a slow motion to and fro, their arms apart, they continue to keep up a heart-rending cry. This cry is interrupted for a while to give the ban caointhe (the leading keener), an opportunity of commencing. At the close of every stanza, the cry is repeated...and then dropped; the woman then again proceeds with the dirge, and so on to the close (Hall 1841, vol. 1, pp. 222–23).

Over time, the perception of the keeners changed, from women who commanded respect and awe to women of dissolution. Angela Partridge (Partridge 1980–1981, pp. 29–31) paints a picture of the *bean-chaointe* as barefoot and bareheaded, with hair flying and clothes in disarray, often torn or ragged. The Halls, similarly, describe the *bean-chaointe*, whom they witness as having "long black uncombed locks [which] were hanging about her shoulders... Her large blue cloak was confined at her throat; but not so closely as to conceal the outline of her figure, thin and gaunt, but exceedingly lithesome" (Hall 1841, vol. 1, p. 227).

They also noted that the *bean-chaointe* was normally an "aged woman" but if she was younger "the habits of her life make her look old" (Ibid., p. 226). There was a certain rhythm to the *bean-chaointe's* performance and she used motion to dramatic effect, as the account below from the Halls demonstrates. In it, as follows, they describe how, as they enter the wake-house, she is sitting by the corpse; then she rises:

> When she arose, as if by sudden inspiration, first holding out her hands over the body, and then tossing them wildly above her head, she continued her chaunt in a low monotonous tone, occasionally breaking into a style earnest and animated; and using every variety of attitude to give emphasis to her words, and enforce her description of the virtues and good qualities of the deceased (Hall 1841, vol. 1, p. 227).

(The Halls observed that the *bean-chaointe* would cease each time a new mourner came into the wake-house and then begin the process again.)

> The only interruption which this manner of conducting a wake suffers, is from the entrance of some relative of the deceased, who, living remote, or from some other cause, may not have been in at the commencement. In this case, the ban caointhe ceases, all the women rise and begin the cry, which is continued until the newcomer has cried enough (Ibid., pp. 222, 224).

In their own ways, both actors are the personifications of a psychopomp—a leader of souls (Cowan 1993, pp. 61–62). The role of psychopomp that these two characters embody is only mentioned in

[6] Irish—speaking areas.

passing here but, basically, the *borachán* represents the clown/trickster, who leads the way into the Otherworld, and the *bean chaointe* straddles the two worlds of the living and the dead.

In addition, scholars such as Patricia Lysaght (1986, pp. 49, 64) and Gearóid Ó Crualaoich (in Donnelly et al. 1999, p. 192) draw parallels between the *bean chaointe* and the dreaded *bean sí* (banshee). In Irish folklore, the *bean sí* is an otherworldly harbinger of death who attaches herself to certain families. She is often reported as wailing before a death in the family and is thus much feared as she is considered to be a bad omen. Patricia Lysaght did an excellent exploration of the *bean sí* in her 1986 book, *The Banshee, The Irish Supernatural Death Messenger*, where she draws attention to the juxtaposition between the two figures of the *bean sí* and the *bean chaointe*. No doubt, the evocative picture of the keening women sitting on top of the coffin[7] and wailing as the funeral procession weaves towards the graveyard (see also Ó Súilleabháin 1967, p. 143, Ó Crualaoich in Donnelly et al. 1999, p. 182), contributes greatly to the confusion between the two figures.

Some scholars see one as the reflex of the other, further defining the keening woman's identity as being connected with the Otherworld. As 9puts it in the following:

> I suggest that we view the bean chaointe at the wake as a flesh-and-blood reflex of the supernatural female sovereign who rules over the Otherworld and into whose domain the deceased is now to be translated. In this light the bean chaointe is the (human) structural adjunct of the banshee … (ibid., p. 192).

Considering that one of the functions of the wake is that it is an important community event, where, as Gearóid Ó Crualaoich points out, social order is re-established after the rupture of death, the *bórachán* and the *bean chaointe* stand on either side of that event. Ó Crualaoich though, also notes the more profound role of each, as follows:

> If the 'old man' or 'borekeen', who is said to be well known in each district as an organizer and director of the pranks and games of the wake assembly, is the agent of that socially cathartic chaos out of which a renewed social order can emerge, then the keening woman, the bean chaointe, is the agent of the transition to the next life of the individual whose corpse lies at the heart of the wake assembly and whose passing is ritually mourned all the way to the grave in the highly charged performance of the female practitioners of the caoin (ibid., pp. 191–92).

6. Music of the Keen

Perhaps the most important thing to remember about the music of the keen is that it varied on each occasion it was sung. Whether it was performed by family or by professional keeners brought in for the occasion, there was a tradition in which the keeners worked and, according to Angela Partridge, they drew on 'the same body of motifs and diction',

> The metre they used is called rosc-short lines of two or three stresses, linked by Ó Madagáin, end-rhyme and arranged in stanzas of uneven length...The short lines and long stanzas give the caoineadh a sort of headlong, breathless style, which was used very effectively by some of the more talented mná caointe (Partridge 1980–1981, p. 27).

> PW Joyce gives an example in his 1873 'Ancient Irish Music', which shows how the lament vocable 'Ochone' was scanned to the melody (Joyce 1873, p. 60).

Both Rachel Bromwich (1948) and Seán Ó Coileáin (1988) give excellent analyses of the structure of the *caoineadh* by extracting specific characteristics that seem to be common to the genre. Brendán Ó

[7] There is an excellent illustration of this in Barrow (1836), published in Hennigan (2012, p. 71).

Madagáin (1982, pp. 312–13) has identified three components or motifs which help further analyze the form, as mentioned in the introduction of this essay. These three motifs are the following: The *salutation* (introduction), the *dirge* (verse), and the *gol* (cry). Ó Madagáin goes on to note that the melody is very different from the usual Irish style. He also comments on the speed at which the keen was delivered, as follows:

> ... indeed it can only be described as a chant, and that of a simple unornamented kind, reminiscent of Latin Plainsong. There is no musical metre, complete freedom being given to the language with several syllables and sometimes-whole phrases being sung to the same note... The lively speed at which it was sung (quaver = 208) may seem surprising for a dirge, but the other extant examples are equally as fast... (Ó Madagáin 1982, p. 314).

One of the best surviving examples of this three-part structure is probably the 'Caoinan or Irish Funeral Song' stored at the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. This is a manuscript that was reportedly transcribed in 1782 (Beauford 1790–1792, pp. 46–51) and which illustrates the keen's tri-partite structure and the vocal ability that was necessary to perform it[8]. Brendán Ó Madagáin claims that many of the lines of the keen on Beauford's manuscript (which Beauford claimed to have 'obtained from an old female keener'), harks back to an older manuscript as ' almost all the lines he uses were printed by Edward Lhuyd eighty two years before in his Archaeologia Britannica (Lhuyd 1707), p. 309)' (Ó Madagáin 1982, p. 329, n. 11).

There are three recorded keens from the mid-twentieth century (already referenced in the introduction of this essay) which, although recorded outside the context of the wake and therefore mimetic or remembered rather than spontaneous, give us some idea about the sound of the keen.

> It is interesting to note that of the three, Kitty Gallagher's 1951 recorded keen from Donegal (Ní Gallchóir in Lomax 1998, tr. 28) is more focused on the gol (the cry) than the Keens sung by the unnamed Aran Female Singer (1957, tr. 9) and by Bridget Mullin (1957, tr. 20) recorded by Sydney Robertson Cowell in 1957. These two examples are more reminiscent of the cronán, which is described by Eugene O'Curry as a 'purring,' beginning 'in the 'chest or throat on a low key and rising gradually to the highest treble' (O'Curry 1873, vol. 3, p. 374). Kitty's is more melodic and placed in the singing register of the voice while the two Aran Island Keens have a more chant-like sound in that they are closer to the speaking register (Mc Laughlin 2018a, Doctoral Thesis, p. 50).

There could be several reasons for this—not least that there was a considerable age-difference between the older Aran women and the younger Gallagher, but it is also worth considering the context. Gallagher's is entitled 'Keen for a dead child' whereas there is no such specific information attached to the other keens. The age and status of the deceased tended to reflect the depth of the mourning. The examples do suggest, however, the scope of the lament.

7. Spiritual Function

There is no doubt that many subscribe to the spiritual nature of the keen, in addition to its cathartic and community-building functions. It is also possible that the keen that has survived is but a reflection of a greater ritual, which, like many monuments in Ireland, became chipped away with time. In referring to a keen transcribed for their travelogue, Samuel Hall commented,

> This keen is very ancient and there is a tradition that its origin is supernatural, as it is said to have been first sung by a chorus of invisible spirits over the grave of one of the early Kings of Ireland (Hall 1841, pp. 227–28).

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[8] An abridged version is available in (Fleischmann 1998, p. 193).

Brendán Ó Madagáin (2005, p. 151) posits that the keen originally 'had a religious function—perhaps the validation of ritual—as it clearly belongs to the heroic tradition which as hero-worship was part of a religious cult.' In his 1989 paper ('*Gaelic Lullaby: a Charm to Protect the Baby?*') Ó Madagáin also draws parallels between lullabies and keens (Ó Madagáin 1989, p. 33) and further suggests that lullabies had an incantatory quality (ibid., p. 36). This could also be said of the keen. Building on the work of Ó Madagáin, I suggested, in my 2018 doctoral thesis, that the keen could have been part of a much more extensive ritual that marked the circle of birth and death. It was commonplace that the mid wife (who brought in life) and the *bean chaointe* (who brought out life) were one and the same person and who may well have used the same ceremonial vocables (Mc Laughlin 2018a, p. 205). As briefly mentioned above, it is also possible that the *borachán* and *bean chaointe* took the role of pyschopomps and were instrumental in ushering the soul of the deceased into the Otherworld. The concept of 'psychopomp' is a shamanic one and Angela Partridge (1983, p. 93) evidences comparisons between the *bean-chaointe* and a shaman. Fascinating as the shamanic connection is, that discussion leads into an area of magic ritual outside the scope of this essay and must be saved for another paper.

8. Current State of Affairs

It is remarkable that, despite both direct and indirect opposition, the ritual of the wake with the keen at its center is still a feature of Irish life in the 21st century, albeit that it has been, like the Gaelic culture in which it evolved, marginalized. Perhaps it is not surprising then that in Gaelic speaking areas, called *An Ghaeltacht* (The Gayltokht), the ritual is found at its most intact. Shadows of it, though, have never left the island and the wake, although a watered-down version of that which had prompted censure, has remained a facet of the Irish Catholic culture, both South and North. Presently, there are no hired keeners and plates of tobacco and snuff being passed around or wild bawdy games being played, but the vestiges have (and do) survived. The community comes in to visit the deceased laid out in the coffin and eat and drink in his/her presence as a mark of inclusion—the corpse is still among them and will be until the coffin lid is closed and another stage of the ritual begins.

Although the traditional keeners were considered professionals and were hired for the occasion, the keeners of the 20th and 21st centuries are more likely to be family members who are preserving and drawing on traditional keening practice. This would sometimes include the singing of songs either as keens or in addition to the traditional keen. For example, Breandán Ó Madagáin cites Seaghán Bán Mac Grianna from the Donegal Gaeltacht,

> They used to keen and they used to sing (songs) . . . Of course, singing and keening were very closely connected, and there was never a wake in the old days that would not have a song being performed. And I heard my own mother saying that she saw a woman putting her son into the coffin, a young boy, and she singing (as distinct from keening) and shedding tears (Ó Madagáin 1985, p. 155, n. 81).

Ó Madagáin (1982, p. 312) also refers to extant recordings of *Gaeltacht* keens as providing only 'a faint echo of a tradition recalled by individuals long after it has ceased to have had that continual community usage which alone would maintain its vigor and fullness, either musically or linguistically' (ibid.). Still, it seems to this author that the shadows of the old ritual have extended their influence and the keen has not so much died out as morphed into a ritual adapted to a more modern way of life, while maintaining its essential elements.

This author had the privilege of recording an eyewitness account of a *Gaeltacht* funeral as recently as the early 2000s and the account gave the impression of a very organic ritual, arising from within a community situation. The occasion was the funeral of a young man who was mourned at the graveside by his mother and two other females, possibly his aunts. My informant (who is referred to under the pseudonym of MK) was a witness to the mourning at the graveside.

> … there was three chairs brought to the graveside where his mother sat on one and two other women—now they were, what I found unusual was that they were very close together, literally thigh rubbing off thigh and they started to sing. Now the songs were in Irish, they were not anything I'd ever heard before. While they sang it was quite emotive, it was … they sounded like songs that he would have known or something, definitely there was connotation with the family, but the three nearly sang as one … they were all crying. I remember the way they sat. They kind of sat with their legs together and they had their hands crossed across their thighs [demonstrates] the three of them were the same. Their lower body didn't move but their upper body did, it was like as if they were kind of swaying, now it wasn't anything very pronounced … this is right at the grave, where literally the tips of their feet are at the grave and the three chairs very close together, really tight and people were just kind of all around.
>
> (MK went on to describe the eerie silence that descended on the large group of mourners.)
>
> … there wasn't a sound anywhere, all you could hear was the sound of the sea, and the sound of wind, but other than that nobody spoke, nobody said anything, people weren't, you know as you would see at funerals I think in these kind of moments, people at the back maybe having a chat [dramatic pause]—nothing. Everyone was just focused on it hmm [pause] and I don't think it was kind of a thing of respect—of 'we shouldn't talk when someone was singing'—I think it was just, people were kind of—it was like [short laugh] if you used the metaphor of the rabbit looking into the headlights; everyone was just glued to it you know. It was like an enchanted moment, just for that four or five minutes and then [short pause] it was gone. (MK personal interview in Mc Laughlin 2018a, pp. 189–92).

If this effect occurred in a reduced ritual, we can only begin to imagine the power of the ritual in its fullest capacity as suggested by Ó Madagáin above!

One other interesting thing to consider though is how not only Irish history and mythology play into the ritual, but also the very landscape. Whether this interplay between landscape and tradition suggests that the keen is an appropriate ritual for Ireland alone or encapsulates a universal piece of the human experience deserves another paper, but it seems appropriate to put this in context and let MK, a living witness to this amazing ancient ritual, describe what he meant by 'an enchanted moment', as follows:

> … what I would call 'an enchanted moment', I think, the landscape has to feed into it as well, maybe you're looking at things that you feel; well this makes up an enchanted moment. You have the water, the waves crashing, you have a very wide-open treeless scrub type of a landscape, just rolling hills and bleak, barren, rocky. Uh, and I think, for the few minutes it lasted, it was like as if everything else went out the door, you know, it was like … There was nearly like a crossover between [short laugh] the normal everyday life and kind of into the supernatural a small bit. It was like as if you were just standing on the cusp of it, where, there was nowhere to look forward, nowhere to look back; you're just in that moment.
>
> (MK op. cit.)

9. Conclusions

Within its context, that of the wake and funeral, the ancient Irish lament practice of keening, with its roots in pre-Christian Ireland, marked the rite of the passage of death. By the middle-ages Christian practice had become dominant and the keen was marginalized, almost to the point of extinction. For example, Padraigín Ní Uallacháin refers to a professional keener, Margaret Modartha Kelly, 'the last known keening-woman in southeast Ulster who died in 1926' (Ní Uallacháin 2005, p. 140). The reports that we have of keening on the Aran Islands in the 1950s from Sidney Robertson Cowell, or the

contemporary report from MK in the 21st century, show that the practice has not actually died but the modern practices are merely a reflection of this ancient tradition, while still placing the custom firmly within the context of the wake and funeral of a loved one, giving it an air of mystique and elusiveness.

Death is a profound event which elicits a variety of responses. In her chapter about the music chosen for the funeral of Princess Diana, Helen Hickey noted the following:

> ... in death she divided the public into those who grieved openly and unashamedly and those who thought that this type of open public grief was excessive and insincere (Dell and Hickey 2017, p. 167).[9]

Reactions of the bereaved can often be unpredictable, sparking further reaction in other mourners so that the course of the emotional release takes unexpected turns.

From personal experience, this author can verify that a fixed religious ceremony is not always sufficient to address the primal feeling experienced on the loss of a close relative or companion. At my mother's wake in 1995, the spiritual aspect was pre-dominantly Catholic, with the priest leading rosaries over the coffin, but for me it was not enough, as I described in a blog written for the Australian Centre of Excellence over twenty years later.

> Thirty-six hours after my mother had died the priest came to the house and, surrounded by our community of family and neighbours, we again chanted the rosary as he walked around the open coffin sprinkling my mother's lifeless body with holy water. The coffin lid was closed in preparation for her journey to church and burial. It was at that point that the reality hit me like a thunderbolt. I had been managing for a week; managing her fears about death, managing my family's hysteria and abject grief, managing my own feelings—and all of this without sleep. Her death and the period when she was waked had a very surreal quality, but I will never forget the sound of that lid sealing the coffin and in that instance realising she had gone from this life. I felt a wail begin in the centre of my stomach; it was uncontrollable as it came through my body and out of my mouth in a dis-embodied shriek of unbridled grief. My head was telling me that this was 'not respectful'. This was the construct that had been laid on Irish Catholics who had keened for their dead in the centuries anterior to its dwindling. I did not wish to be disrespectful but I just could not stop screaming. (Mc Laughlin 2018b, blog).

Customs may change and beliefs may shift, but the essential need of humans to express emotional pain at different levels will always remain. The Irish keen within the wake seems to have allowed for such possibilities in its malleable nature so that each generation could find their own point of resonance. Perhaps therein lies the secret of its survival in Ireland.

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[9] See chapter 1 by Samuel Curkpatrick (Dell and Hickey 2017) which addresses the emotional power of music as mourning in indiginous Australian tribe.

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Article

TheoArtistry, and a Contemporary Perspective on Composing Sacred Choral Music

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Abstract: This article presents the methodology and research underpinning the *TheoArtistry Composers' Scheme*, a project based in ITIA (the Institute for Theology, Imagination and the Arts), School of Divinity, University of St Andrews (2016–2017). I analyse Sir James MacMillan's theology of music, outline some practical and theoretical issues that arose in setting up theologian-composer partnerships, and reflect critically on the six new works of sacred choral music that emerged (these are printed as supplementary materials). The article assesses the implications of such collaboration for future work at the interface between theology and music, and between theology and the arts more generally.

Keywords: sacred music; choral music; composition; theology; theoartistry; annunciation; Hebrew Bible; James MacMillan; Michael Symmons Roberts; Jeremy Begbie

1. Introduction

In *Sacred Music in Secular Society*, Jonathan Arnold highlights a strange phenomenon: 'the seeming paradox that, in today's so-called secular society, sacred choral music is as powerful, compelling and popular as it has ever been' (Arnold 2014, p. xiv). In particular, the explosion of new media through the internet and digital technology has created a new, much broader audience for 'the creative art of Renaissance polyphony and its successors to the present day', a genre of sacred music that seems to have 'an enduring appeal for today's culture' (ibid.).[1] Arnold suggests, moreover, that sacred choral music is thriving, as well, in Anglican worship: while attendance continues to decline in general, he cites the 30% rise at religious services sung by professional choirs in British cathedrals over the last decade (p. xv).[2] In his entertaining survey *O Sing Unto the Lord: A History of English Church Music*, Andrew Gant concludes on a similarly optimistic note: 'Tallis is not dead, because people are still using his music and doing what he did, in the places where he did it, and for the same reasons' (Gant 2015, p. 377). In 2015, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI acknowledged the tension in Catholic worship following the Second Vatican Council between the principle that 'the treasure of sacred music is to be preserved and fostered with great care' (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 114) and the active participation of all the faithful (Ratzinger 2015).[3] While celebrating 'the breadth of expressive

[1] In the twentieth and early-twenty first centuries, there has been a remarkable flowering of different kinds of Christian music both inside and outside the denominational churches. Genres of contemporary music as diverse as Christian Pop, Christian Hip Hip, and Praise and Worship arguably have an equal right to be referred to as 'sacred music'. Nonetheless, due to the focus of this article, I use 'sacred music' or 'sacred choral music' to refer, as does Arnold, to the predominantly Western Christian tradition of classical choral music from Gregorian chant, through Renaissance polyphony to the present.

[2] In surveying the situation of sacred choral music at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Alan Kreider considers, instead, the stark contrast between the omnipresence of music (of all different kinds) and the decline in organised religion: 'Decade by decade attendance at Christian worship services continues to fall: a recent authoritative survey of church attendance in England is significantly entitled *The Tide Is Running Out*'. See (Kreider 2003).

[3] For a brief introduction that situates Ratzinger's theological aesthetics in relation to the reforms of Vatican II, see (Rowland 2008).

possibilities of the faith in the liturgical event', he reaffirmed his conviction that 'great sacred music is a reality of theological stature and of permanent significance for the faith of the whole of Christianity, even if it is by no means necessary that it be performed always and everywhere' (ibid.).[4] Whether in churches, or in secular spaces, sacred choral music continues to be, then, a significant part of many people's experience of, and theoretical reflection on, Christian faith and music today.

A foremost contemporary composer of sacred music for both secular performances and for Christian worship is Sir James MacMillan.[5] In 2015, he was appointed as a part-time professor in the Institute for Theology, Imagination and the Arts (ITIA), based in the School of Divinity, University of St Andrews. As part of a new initiative, *TheoArtistry*, MacMillan's appointment provided a stimulus for a research project—'Annunciations: Sacred Music for the 21st Century'—that sought to contribute to the fostering of sacred choral music in the twenty-first century as well as to interrogate, more broadly, the relationship between theology and music.[6] The project, undertaken between 2016 and 2017, had two principal aims.[7] The first was to re-engage composers with the creative inspiration that can come from an encounter with Scripture, theology and Christian culture. While composers are typically educated in the *techne* of their craft at conservatoire or university (even though, of course, the nature of that craft is contested), there has been a tendency in these contexts—as MacMillan highlights—to treat music as simply 'abstract', and to downplay the interrelation between music and the extra-musical. Commenting on the *TheoArtistry Composers' Scheme*, MacMillan wrote:

> It will be interesting to see if the next generation of composers will engage with theology, Christianity or the general search for the sacred. There has been a significant development in this kind of intellectual, academic and creative activity in the last twenty years or so. In the world of theology there is an understanding that the arts open a unique window on the divine (MacMillan 2017a).

For the scheme, six composers were selected (from almost one hundred applicants) to collaborate with theologians in ITIA and the School of Divinity. This led to six new choral settings of 'annunciations' in the Hebrew Bible, six episodes in which God—in different ways—seems to communicate directly to humankind: God speaking to Adam and Eve (Genesis 3); Jacob wrestling with God (Genesis 32); the Burning Bush (Exodus 3); the calling of Samuel (1 Samuel 3); Elijah and the 'sound of sheer silence' (1 Kings 19); and the Song of Songs (3: 6–11).

The second aim of the project was to show how an appreciation of the theological engagement, and/or profound spirituality, of composers can influence not only the creation of their music, but that music's performance and reception. Where Historically Informed Performance (HIP), arguably the most influential development in classical music performance in the twentieth century, focused almost exclusively on style, Theologically Informed Programming and Performance (TIPP) seeks to privilege

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4 Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI makes the major claim ('that has recently taken hold of me more and more') that 'in no other cultural domain is there a music of greatness equal to that which was born in the domain of the Christian faith. From Palestrina to Bach, to Handel, even down to Mozart, Beethoven and Bruckner, Western music is something unique, which has no equals in other culture. [. . .] This music, for me, is a demonstration of the truth of Christianity' (Ratzinger 2015).

5 MacMillan has also been a vocal public advocate for the important place of sacred choral music in Roman Catholic Liturgy, especially during the period leading up to and following Pope Benedict XVI's visit to Britain in 2010. See, for example, (MacMillan 2012): 'This is what Pope Benedict XVI is all about in his "Spirit of the Liturgy", there's an encouragement to regard high points of the Church's musical history such as classic polyphony and earlier, right back to Gregorian roots, as a kind of paradigm for Catholic music, "the very sound of Catholicism" as I have heard Gregorian Chant described. It can be kept alive in the modern age—a practical consideration, and also an ideological and spiritual consideration'; Ferguson (2015) has provided an invaluable, in-depth study that analyses MacMillan's theoretical and compositional approach to sacred music (profoundly influenced by Ratzinger, in part mediated by MacMillan's friend and former chaplain, the theologian Aiden Nichols; see (ibid., pp. 175–553, 326–27)), and situates it within the broader liturgical tensions and with a particular focus on Scotland.

6 I founded TheoArtistry in 2016 as a new dimension of the work of ITIA. TheoArtistry explores how ITIA's research at the interface between theology and the arts might inform directly the making, practice, performance, curatorship and reception of Christian art, and transform the role of the arts in theology, Church practice, and society at large.

7 I would like to thank especially Professor Edward Foley for inviting me to reflect on this project in this special edition of *Religions*.

the spiritual content of the music. Admittedly, there is a noticeable trend in recordings of sacred choral music to pay attention to a liturgical season, gospel episode, or Christian theme; nonetheless, as with classical music as a whole, recordings of sacred music still tend to privilege a particular stylistic period, composer, performer or performance group often at the expense of attention to the spiritual or thematic content of the music.[8] ITIA and St Salvator's Chapel Choir developed and researched a programme (and produced a new CD recording) that takes listeners on a musical journey through salvation history, exploring moments in the Old and New Testaments when God communicates directly to humankind (Wilkinson Forthcoming). At the heart of the recording are the composers' six new settings of 'annunciations' in the Hebrew Bible. These are framed by moments of divine communication in the New Testament—including the songs of Mary, Zachariah, the Angels, and Simeon—as well as settings of the annunciation: the angel Gabriel announcing to the virgin Mary that she will give birth to the Messiah.[9] In addition to this theological theme or journey, the recording also explores MacMillan's ongoing contributions to sacred music, particularly in the British choral tradition. Alongside five of his own pieces, the recording includes works by two decisive influences on MacMillan (Benjamin Britten and Kenneth Leighton), by two significant contemporaries (John Tavener and Judith Bingham), and by the six 'next generation' composers mentored by MacMillan.

This article presents the methodology and some of the research underpinning the *TheoArtistry Composers' Scheme*. In the first part, I analyse James MacMillan's own theology of music and compositional philosophy; in the second, I outline some practical considerations and theoretical issues that arose in setting up the theologian-composer partnerships and, in the third, I reflect on the collaborations and the six new works of sacred music. In conclusion, I assess some of the implications of such collaborations for future work at the interface between theology and music, and between theology and the arts more generally. It should be evident throughout that the model of theologian-composer collaboration presented could be productively applied to other genres of Christian music, as well as to the Christian arts as a whole. Scores of the six new choral pieces are printed for reference as supplementary materials.[10]

2. James MacMillan: Composition as Annunciation

Whether or not the composers on the TheoArtistry scheme were religious believers, the invitation to work with Sir James MacMillan was also an invitation to reflect on the nature of artistic inspiration. More specifically, it was an invitation to reflect on, and potentially to be challenged by, MacMillan's powerful claim that the search for the sacred has historically characterised the vocation of the composer: 'In music', he writes, 'there seems to be an umbilical link with the sacred. Through the centuries, musicians have proved themselves to be the midwives of faith, bringing their gifts to the historical

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[8] Jonathan Arnold explores this issue of performance context at some length: see (Arnold 2014, pp. 41–83). John Tavener, whose music has achieved a remarkable popularity, recognises the space for a kind of recording of his music that foregrounds its theological inspiration, with 'Mediations by Mother Thelka' accompanying his music. See (Tavener 1994, p. xi): 'The purpose of this book and CD is to try to give a hint of how it might be possible to reinstate the Sacred into the world of the imagination. Without this happening, I believe that art will continue to slither into a world of abstraction, into being purely self-referential, a sterile and meaningless activity of interest only to the artist and possibly "Brother Criticus". All great civilizations, except the present one, have understood this as a matter of course. We live in abnormal times; as André Malraux has said: "Either the twenty-first century will not exist at all, or it will be a holy century." It is up to each one of us to determine what will happen'.

[9] See (Wilkinson Forthcoming). The programme order of the recording, entitled *Annunciations: Sacred Music for the 21st Century*, is as follows: 1. James MacMillan, 'Ave Maria' (2010); 2. James MacMillan, 'Canticle of Zachariah' (2007); 3. John Tavener, 'Annunciation' (1992); 4. Kenneth Leighton, 'Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis from the 2nd Service' (1971); 5. James MacMillan, 'A New Song' (1997); 6. Anselm McDonnell, 'Hinneni' (2017); 7. Dominic de Grande, 'Whilst falling asleep, Savta told me of Jacob' (2017); 8. Kerensa Briggs, 'Exodus III' (2017); 9. Seán Doherty, 'God Calls Samuel' (2017); 10. Lisa Robertson, 'The Silent Word Sounds' (2017); 11. Stuart Beatch, 'The Annunciation of Solomon' (2017); 12. James MacMillan, 'And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them' (2009); 13. Benjamin Britten, 'Hymn to the Virgin' (1930); 14. Judith Bingham, 'The Annunciation' (2000); 15. James MacMillan, 'O Radiant Dawn' (2007).

[10] I would like to thank the six composers, Stuart Beatch, Kerensa Briggs, Dominic de Grande, Seán Doherty, Anselm McDonnell, and Lisa Robertson for agreeing to the inclusion of the scores of their compositions as supplementary materials to this article.

challenge of inspiring the faithful in worship' (quoted in (Arnold 2014, p. 1).[11] For MacMillan, music and spiritually are 'very closely entwined', and this is the case with all musical works and not just with those that have an explicit theological stimulus:

> Music is the most spiritual of the arts. More than the other arts, I think, music seems to get into the crevices of the human-divine experience. Music has the power to look into the abyss as well as to the transcendent heights. It can spark the most severe and conflicting extremes of feeling and it is in these dark and dingy places where the soul is probably closest to its source where it has its relationship with God, that music can spark life that has long lain dormant (MacMillan 2000, p. 17).

MacMillan's conviction about the intrinsic religiosity of music, however, was hard won and emerged in reaction to a prevalent attitude towards music 'in university environments' of his generation: namely, that music 'was complete in itself' and that 'anything else was extraneous and irrelevant' (ibid.). He subsequently considered such a retreat or 'divorce' from 'resonances and connections with life outside music' as ultimately sterile, a cerebral playing around with notes on the page in 'train spotterist fashion', a music which delighted in its own inaccessibility and unpopularity (ibid.).[12] MacMillan's voice as a composer emerged, then, when he allowed—against this prevalent university music culture—the 'spiritual dimension to emerge' (ibid., p. 18).[13] He came, indeed, to relish the 'extra-musical or pre-musical' impetus, and to compare the transformation of these ideas into music as 'to use a Catholic theological term, a transubstantiation of one to the other' (MacMillan and McGregor 2010, p. 75).

For MacMillan, if one takes the long view (including—in perspective—the blip of some post-war obscurantism), it is not exceptional to be a religious composer but rather the norm: 'I feel that I'm absolutely rooted in something that has lasted for thousands of years but, even in modernity, in my branch of the arts, if you think about it, all the composers of the past hundred years have been religious one way or another' (quoted in (Arnold 2014, p. 29)).[14] MacMillan references Schoenberg (who 'reconverted to a practising Judaism after the Holocaust'), Stravinsky (orthodox), Messiaen (Catholic), the 'profoundly religious' Schnittke, Ulstvolskaya, Kancheli and Arvo Pärt (from behind the Iron curtain) and even Benjamin Britten (for his social questioning Anglicanism).[15] MacMillan emphasises that he is 'part of a mainstream [. . .] I'm not peripheral—people like me, John Tavener, Jonathan Harvey, it's not peripheral at all. It's not just plugged into the Christian traditions but the very experience of modernism in music' (ibid., pp. 29–30). Indeed, MacMillan highlights that religious conservatism may be, as with the case of Stravinsky, an inspiration for musical revolution.[16] MacMillan's understanding of the history of classical music, and of sacred music in particular, is a challenge, then, to the composer in a contemporary cultural climate frequently characterised as secular: it suggests that the most exciting and innovative music has come about in response, or in relation to, theology and the search for the sacred. The TheoArtistry scheme proposed, therefore, a renewed engagement with Scripture, tradition, and theology, in the confidence that such engagement

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[11] For studies of some of the influences on James MacMillan's identity as a composer, see (Ferguson 2015, pp. 165–82; McGregor 2011; Wells 2012).

[12] MacMillan again emphasises the 'pre-musical or extra-musical starting point or impetus, its genesis, its inspiration' in (MacMillan and McGregor 2010, p. 74): 'music is plugged in to something more than the notes on the page or the concept of moving those notes about the page in as successful a way as possible'.

[13] It is interesting to note that the composer Roxanna Panufnik (b. 1968), a decade on, had a similar reaction to the teaching of musical composition in the academy. See (Panufnik 2003, p. 84): 'I left music college swearing never to write another note again, because I wasn't getting good marks. It was during the mid-1980s when esoteric and cerebral avant-garde music was still considered the right kind of music to be writing. [. . .] I felt very false and that I wasn't being true to myself in writing that kind of music, so I didn't'.

[14] See also (MacMillan and McGregor 2010, p. 71): 'There's a sort of *idée fixe*, I think, running through the development of a lot of musical modernism that points to the sacred'.

[15] In the epilogue to his survey of the history of English Church Music, Andrew Gant comes to a different conclusion. See (Gant 2015, p. 375): 'Most leading composers of church music of the last hundred years have not been conventional believers'. It is notable, however, that he gives only two examples: Michael Tippett and Peter Maxwell Davies.

[16] Quoted in (Arnold 2014, p. 29): Stravinsky was 'as conservative [in his religion] as he was revolutionary in his music making'.

of whatever kind (reverent, reactive, playful, etc.) and by composers of whatever faith or none would be generative, as in the past, of powerful new music, and striking theological expressions or perspectives.

The project's theme of 'Annunciations' focused on Scriptural moments where the divine communicates directly with the human. But the 'annunciation' also has resonances, as MacMillan emphasises, with the life of the Christian and, in a special way, with the vocation of the Christian artist. In describing his own compositional process, MacMillan draws on Scriptural accounts of the interplay between Divine and human creativity in the Old and New Testaments. He reflects on the word 'inspiration' itself, as 'from the Latin *inspiratio*, mean[ing], "in-breathing", an arousal or infusion of an impulse of illumination that impels a person to speak, act or write under the influence of some creative power' (MacMillan 2000, pp. 21–22).[17] The Old Testament model of creativity *par excellence*, for MacMillan, is Adam. In Genesis, MacMillan writes, 'God presents his limitless love for humanity in the gift of Creation and yet, at the same time invites Adam, the archetype, to make his own sense of this new world. [. . .] Humanity's inner creativity is being *inspired* to express itself in the face of God's immeasurable love' (ibid.).[18] The creation of Eve from Adam's rib is, for MacMillan, moreover, an image for how composers 'have always taken fragments of material, consciously or unconsciously, from elsewhere and breathed new life into them, creating new forms, new avenues and structures of expression' (ibid.).[19] It is Mary, the second Eve, however, who provides for MacMillan the true model for the Christian composer:

> It is not just Mary's fecundity that is inspiring to a creative person. A more powerful and more pertinent metaphor for the religious artist is the balance between, on the one hand, Mary's independent free will and, on the other, her openness to the power of the Holy Spirit. There is something in the instinct of an artist or a composer, or any creative person, or any Christian for that matter, which is inexorably drawn to the idea of Mary's 'vesselship'—the notion of making oneself as a channel for the divine will (ibid., p. 23).

MacMillan has highlighted that 'the Christian believer is paradigmatically female: receptive to the seed of God's word. Receptive of the potency of God, the believer is waiting to be filled, longing to bear the fruit which will result from his or her union with God, to bring Christ to birth in our own life stories' (ibid., p. 24). This is a standard theological reading of the Annunciation, of course: Aquinas, for example, comments that 'just as the blessed virgin conceived Christ corporeally, so every holy soul conceives him spiritually'.[20] Nonetheless, MacMillan draws out from this paradigm the very conditions of his own compositional process:

> Mary opens the door to the very heart of God, and in the silence of my own contemplation, in that necessary stillness where all composers know that music mysteriously begins, the following words from our sacred liturgy have lodged themselves in the womb of my soul, trapped in a scarlet room, gestating gently with a tiny pulse:

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[17] (MacMillan 2000, p. 21) notes that 'the engagement between theology and culture, between religion and the arts is now such a faded memory for most people that a whole generation has grown up without an understanding of the true meaning and implication in the word "*inspiration*". And when a creative person comes across the definition for the first time, it is a discovery made with undisguised delight—a recognition of a primal truth that has lain hidden for a long time'. See also (quoted in Arnold 2014, p. 151): 'I [MacMillan] believe it is God's divine spark which kindles the musical imagination now, as it has always done, and reminds us, in an increasingly de-humanized world, of what it means to be human'.

[18] See also (MacMillan 2002, p. 34): 'All art is a kind of mirror image or a response to divine creation, to the first gesture of creation by the Creator. In many ways, artists have a tiny glimpse into the pathos with which God, at the dawn of creation, looked upon the work of his hand'.

[19] As MacMillan highlights, his own work *Adam's Rib* (1994–1995) is 'simply an acknowledgment of this eternally regenerative process of music as it develops through the ages' (MacMillan 2000, p. 22).

[20] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, IIIa, q. 30, a. 1, arg. 3: 'sicut beata virgo corporaliter Christum concepit, ita quaelibet sancta anima concipit ipsum spiritualiter, unde apostolus dicit, Galat. IV, filioli mei, quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis' [just as the Blessed Virgin conceived Christ in her body, so every pious soul conceives Him spiritually. Thus the Apostle says (Galatians 4: 19), "My little children, of whom I am in labour again, until Christ is formed in you"].

> Hail Mary, full of grace,
> The Lord is with thee
> Blessed art thou among women
> And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

MacMillan's compositional understanding is, then, profoundly incarnational: 'Mary, who was receptive to God; Mary who was filled by God; Mary who bore God's son. Mary is a paradigm of our receptivity [. . .] a model for all creative people [. . .] and an example for all Christian believers' (ibid., p. 23).

MacMillan's music, springing from his faith, is always a witness to that faith. And that faith by virtue of the Incarnation is bodily as well as spiritual: 'I've always been drawn to a theology of music which emphasises [. . .] a sense of the physical, the corporeal, rather than a sense of the spirit being in some way divorced or set apart from the corporeal'.[21] Through the Incarnation, as through music itself, MacMillan believes that one can come to intimacy with God: 'there's an analogy between music and the mind of God: that in music there is, we see or even feel something of the thinking of God' (MacMillan and McGregor 2010, p. 99). But this is a journey to God *through* and not *away from* the body.[22] Notably, on reflecting on the first workshop performance of the six new compositions in the TheoArtistry scheme, MacMillan returned again to this incarnation metaphor:

> It is a huge thing for a composer to hear their work come alive in the hands and voices of interpreters. Up until the first rehearsal the composition remains in the inner imagination of the composer. But it comes to life, incarnationally, when conductor and singers (in this case) start to transform it into live musical flesh. The open rehearsal of these new works [. . .] was the moment when composer and theologian began to realise where their joint discussions had led (MacMillan 2017a).

As the Annunciation provides a model for his composition of music (and for artistic 'conception' itself), so Christ incarnate is, for MacMillan, the pattern for musical performance—the transformation of the 'joint discussions' and 'inner imagination of the composer' into 'live musical flesh'. As the Annunciation always points to the Incarnate living word through whom Christians come to know God, so musical creation, for MacMillan, is always fulfilled through the sensual, bodily communication of performance.

The 'Annunciation' may also be, at this performance stage, a model for the reception of music and, more particularly, for how God may encounter the human person through music: 'Being openly receptive to the transforming power of music is analogous to the patient receptivity to the divine that is necessary for religious contemplation' (MacMillan 2000, p. 25).[23] Indeed, MacMillan sees music as

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[21] See (MacMillan and McGregor 2010, pp. 82–83): 'That's certainly a very Catholic way of understanding the theology of the body, the theology of spirituality which is about the here and now, as well as a sense of the Other. It's about the interaction—for us it has to be about—the interaction of the here and now, the mundane, the everyday, the joys and tragedies of ordinary everyday people, and some concept of the Beyond or something that we stretch towards, something that we're not completely fully aware of. And that tension brings about the great hope and potential for human beings to rise to the heights of what humanity is capable of'.

[22] In this way, MacMillan distances his own theology of music and compositional language from those of his contemporary, John Tavener. See (MacMillan and McGregor 2010, p. 98): 'I [MacMillan] don't share his [Tavener's] disparagement of the Western canon and indeed modernism, and I think we're even different kinds of Christian thinkers as well. And the way he talks in, I think, rather pessimistic terms about the body, although he, as a product of the 60s, is clearly someone who has taken full cognisance of hedonistic tendencies, probably more so that I have. But he talks about the body as quite distinct from the spirit and that always strikes me as rather odd, and a negation of full human potential. It seems an uneasy relationship in which to have the corporeal and the spiritual, and one could easily be dropped in relation to the other, and that worries me'.

[23] MacMillan speaks or writes eloquently about the transformative power of music on many other occasions. See, for example, (MacMillan 2002, pp. 35–36): 'Whether they are religious or not, people can and do speak in religious terms about the life-enhancing, life-changing, life-giving transformative power of music. This quasi-sacramental aspect of the form proves that music has a power and depth to touch something in our deepest secret selves, for music cannot be contained in its abstract parameters. It bleeds out into other aspects of our existences and experiences'.

not only 'a striking analogy for God's relationship with us' but, more profoundly, as a 'phenomenon connected to the work of God':

> Music opens doors to a deepening and broadening of understanding. It invites connections between organised sound and lived experience or suspected possibilities. In the connection is found the revelation, a realisation of something not grasped before. Such 'seeing' offers revelations about human living and divine relationships that can affect changes in our choices, our activities and our convictions. Music allows us to see, like Mary, beyond to what lurks in the crevices of the human-divine experience (ibid.).

MacMillan therefore suggests a model for what he would describe as his 'ideal listener' who 'has to be not just open minded or open eared [. . .] but a hungry listener, a curious listener' (MacMillan and McGregor 2010, p. 87).

In remarkably similar terms, Maeve Louise Heaney underlines the 'annunciation' as a paradigm for the receptivity of the listener when setting out her own recent theological epistemology of music: specifically, she suggests that: 'to be open and receptive to Christ's continued presence among us now through art and music is a doorway to a transformed and transforming experience of life and faith; a transforming presence theology needs to both receive from and speak to' (Heaney 2012a, pp. 163–69). Drawing on Bernard Lonergan's emphasis on embodied experience of God, Heaney presents music as 'a gift of God to humanity' that frees the human person from the 'pragmatic' to the 'contemplative', and opens a space or, in John Henry Newman's terms, a 'disposition' for the experience of God (ibid.). The encounter with the aesthetic is, in George Steiner's terms, 'the most "ingressive," transformative summons available to human experience' and it is notable that Steiner sees in the Annunciation the 'short hand image [. . .] of a "terrible beauty" or gravity breaking into the small house of our cautionary being' (ibid.). For Heaney, then, music 'enters "the small house" of our embodied self in a much more powerful way than any other form of art. It changes us. To not accept its potential at the service of a faith that is always experienced as Another entering one's life, be it in the invitation of a gentle breeze, be it as an interruption or intrusion, would be shortsighted' (ibid.). The model of Mary at the Annunciation is an invitation not just for the composer, then, but for the listener who, in receptive response to music, may be open to the communication of the divine.

3. Forming Theologian-Composer Partnerships

As part of his openness to extra-musical inspiration, MacMillan has not only set Scriptural, liturgical, and secular texts, but he has also actively sought out collaborations with other artists and theologians.[24] As he commented on the TheoArtistry scheme, 'collaborations between musicians and others can be wonderful things and can push the composer beyond their comfort zone to see the impact of their music outside of purely abstract considerations' (MacMillan 2017a). Foremost amongst MacMillan's collaborators is the poet Michael Symmons Roberts. MacMillan first set Symmons Roberts' collection of poems as *Raising Sparks* (1997), considering his poetry as 'a search for the sacred that needs to ruminate in your mind', a search which—he felt—his music could 'enable and enhance' (MacMillan and Symmons Roberts 2008).[25] As he commented in an interview with Rhiannon Harries after over a decade of collaborations, however, he sought a more dialogical creative process: 'I really wanted to work with him from scratch on a piece so that we could both have some input into the other's work' (ibid.). This has led to a series of collaborative ventures, including *Quickening* (1998), *Parthenogenesis* (2000), *The Birds of Rhiannon* (2001), *Chosen* (2003), *The Sacrifice: Three Interludes* (2005–2006), *Sun Dogs*

[24] See (MacMillan 2002, pp. 34–35): 'Many of my works begin with an extra-musical starting-point. The pre-musical inspiration is an important factor on the specific nature and character of the music itself. It is important that this connectiveness between the pre-musical and the musical is always palpable and audible in the final creation'.

[25] As (MacMillan 2002, p. 33) notes, *Raising Sparks* 'sprung forth initially from Michael's reading of the eighteenth-century Hasidic mystic and theologian Menahum Nahum'.

(2006), and *Clemency* (2009–2010).[26] Although their roles as poet-librettist and composer are clearly delineated, it is apparent, then, that MacMillan and Symmons Roberts see themselves as part of the other's creative process.[27] Underpinning the collaboration, moreover, is a shared passion for the theological and human issues at stake: 'We spend a lot of time talking around our subjects, trying to get to the root of it before we work' (MacMillan and Symmons Roberts 2008).[28] As someone who highly values, and has considerable experience of, collaboration, MacMillan was a particularly appropriate mentor, then, for the *TheoArtistry Composers' Scheme*.

For the innovative project *Theology Through the Arts*, Jeremy Begbie invited MacMillan and Symmons Roberts to collaborate, in addition, with the theologian Rowan Williams. Symmons Roberts reflects on this creative process in his poem 'Study for the World's Body', which concludes:

> [. . .] an intimacy
> takes two people by surprise.
> It may be, in the world's eyes
>
> they should not be here,
> but without their risk the house is bare. (Symmons Roberts 2002)

As Symmons Roberts suggests, collaboration involves risk, but such risk—such openness to the other—frequently turns out to be generative. This is, he writes, 'the open-endedness and risk involved in making any worthwhile art, and any worthwhile theology' (ibid.). Begbie's project, which pioneered the bringing together of theologians and artists in creative collaboration, provided a provisional model for the *TheoArtistry Composers' Scheme*.[29] Four insights proved especially important when constructing these six theologian-composer partnerships: first, the need for practical guidelines; secondly, the recognition of the revelatory power of such collaborations, thirdly, the emphasis on the value of *praxis*; and, fourthly, the issue of artistic integrity.

Begbie set up *Theology Through the Arts* (TTA) in 1997 in Cambridge but, from 2000–2008, the academic work of TTA was undertaken at the Institute for Theology, Imagination and the Arts in St Andrews. TTA's stated aim was 'to discover and to demonstrate the ways in which the arts can contribute towards the renewal of Christian theology in the contemporary world' (Begbie 2002, p. 3). Begbie brought together theologians, artists working in different media (poets, composers, sculptors, playwrights), and other interested parties (historians, local clergy, commissioners) to collaborate on new works of Christian art. Each of the four 'pod groups', as Begbie called them, were different,

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[26] See (MacMillan 2002, pp. 33–36): Where *Quickening* (1998) celebrates the 'mysterious fragilities and ambiguous sanctities of human life', *Parthenogenesis* (2000) confronts head on the moral and theological issues of embryo research and genetic experimentation and manipulation: 'areas that are uncomfortable, messy and disturbing [. . .] theologians need to engage in these areas and be involved in debates pertaining to the nature of human life which are currently raging in our culture'. See, also, (Fuller 2015) for a brief discussion of some of these collaborations including *Parthenogenesis*.

[27] (MacMillan 2000, p. 20) credits Symmons Roberts, indeed, with helping him to articulate his own theology of music: 'Michael Symmons Roberts, whose poetry I have set a lot, has used the term "the deep mathematics of creation" about music. This is a term that chimes with me because music does seem to be a kind of calculus, a means of calculating something of our very nature. And because we are made in the image of God, music can be seen as a calculus of the very face of God'.

[28] In a revealing BBC radio interview, (MacMillan 2010) comments: 'When I set poetry [. . .] I live with the poem for a long time, a necessarily long time, so that I can fully understand it, and the music can wrap itself around the words in a way that brings about the deeper meaning which is not immediately apparent in first encounter'.

[29] The theologians and composers on our scheme were asked to engage with Begbie's research as well as with the reflections of James MacMillan, Michael Symmons Roberts and Rowan Williams on the fruit of their collaboration, *Parthenogenesis* (Begbie 2002, pp. 1–13, 17–53). *Parthenogenesis* focused on an intriguing story, or urban myth, of 'a young woman in Hanover in 1944', who was injured by an Allied bombing raid, and gave birth nine months later to 'a child whose genetic profile was identical to hers. She insisted that she had not had intercourse before conceiving' (Begbie 2002, pp. 21–22). In addition to a methodological model, *Parthenogenesis* (etymologically, 'virgin-creation'), with its theme of a peculiar 'dark-Annunciation', provided, of course, a key inspiration for our own theme of 'Annunciations'. Although our collaborations explored 'positive' Annunciations—God communicating directly with humankind and, at the Incarnation, becoming man (and of the lived and artistic experiences associated with this)—one cannot but be acutely aware in contemporary Western culture of the 'negative mirror image of the Annunciation' (MacMillan 2002, p. 37) in the destruction and manipulation of human life at its earliest and most vulnerable stage.

and the meetings arranged were flexible (some pod groups met more frequently, others less so; some always together, others in smaller and bigger groupings). The freedom of the 'pod group' had many advantages, not least that the artistic work could develop organically through meetings. Thus MacMillan, for example, describes fastening on to a 'common concept that provided the basis for much discussion and thought, bearing artistic fruit in due course' (MacMillan 2002, p. 33).

For the *TheoArtistry Composers' Scheme*, we experimented with a more compact and formal structure for the artistic collaborations, with a time frame of just six months.[30] The key collaboration was between one theologian and one composer; nonetheless, this 'theologian-composer partnership' was nourished by the wider research community of ITIA, the school of Divinity, and the Music Centre, as well as being mentored by MacMillan. We established a strict framework for these partnerships: in the first two months, the six theologians researched six 'Old Testament' annunciations, and the six composers were able to select one of the passages which resonated with them; at the first TheoArtistry workshop, the theologians then shared and discussed their research with the composer. For the next three months, the theologians and composers collaborated through three scheduled one-to-one meetings (via Skype) and continued email correspondence, as the compositions started to take shape. In the final month, first drafts of the new compositions were given to St Salvator's Chapel Choir to rehearse before a second one-day workshop with MacMillan, in which the six new choral pieces were performed.

We encouraged the theologians and composers involved to be open to the revelatory capacity of the arts, 'their ability to "open up" and disclose in unique ways [. . .] to contribute to *theology*' (Begbie 2002, p. 2).[31] Begbie presents the arts, indeed, as 'vehicles of *discovery*', as 'the materials, not simply the channels, of learning', citing Rowan Williams's insight, which it is worth reproducing once again (ibid., p. 1, 5):

> [. . .] art, whether Christian or not, can't properly begin with a message and then seek for a vehicle. Its roots lie, rather, in the single story of metaphor or configuration of sound or shape which *requires* attention and development from the artist. In the process of that development, we find meanings we had not suspected; but if we try to begin with the meanings, they will shrink to the scale of what we already understand; whereas creative activity opens up what we do not understand and perhaps will not fully understand even when the actual work of creation is done (ibid., pp. 1–2).[32]

This was important in re-approaching the Scriptures through the imaginative possibilities of the arts, always being open to how—if one allows one's artistic imagination to engage sympathetically with the Scriptural stories—new meanings and perspectives may emerge. As MacMillan put it: 'At the Symposium, we presented the composers with this underlying research. We then encouraged them to engage deeply with their theologian collaborator, to be open to surprises, to what such collaboration might bring to the creative process' (MacMillan 2017a).

Begbie's emphasis on *praxis* was also influential: 'art is first and foremost not a theory or an "aesthetics", but something done' (Begbie 2002, pp. 4–5). By asking those involved to 'recount the process of collaboration' and 'what the group members believed could be learned from their

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[30] I would like to register here my gratitude to Kathryn Wehr, then a doctoral student in ITIA, who provided invaluable administrative assistance to me in co-ordinating these theologian-composer partnerhips.

[31] See also (Williams 2002, p. 29): 'Artistic work is always discovery, not illustration. Or, to put it slightly differently, but to connect it with the whole thesis of this essay, artistic work both engages with the real otherness of the environment and itself becomes "other" to the original planning mind as it moves towards its final form. It is not an empty cliché to repeat that the artist genuinely doesn't know until the work is coming to its expression just what it is going to be'.

[32] More controversially, (Williams 2002, p. 28) goes on to draw an analogy with the process of the composition of the Gospels themselves as 'not a story repeated, not a story invented to make a point, as the more mechanically minded critics might argue, but a set of narratives constantly being retold, and altered in the retelling because of what the very process of telling opens up, shows or makes possible'.

experiences about the future of theology', Begbie valourises the doing and making of art as contributing to the enterprise of theology itself (ibid.). He writes:

> the very activity of meeting together—praying, listening, responding, agreeing, disagreeing, exploring blind alleys, arguing at rehearsals, and so on—was not only intrinsic to the final result ('the play behind the play', as Ben Quash put it), but also the means through which a vast amount of the most important theology was actually done (ibid.).

Although research in Biblical Studies, the commentary traditions, reception history, liturgy and artistic representation was an important first stage, the participants similarly experienced the collaborative process itself as generative of ideas and theological insights.

Begbie addresses directly the issue of artistic integrity, recognising that his phrase 'theology through the arts' is in itself problematic: 'To speak of the arts serving theology—I have been told—inevitably means they will be dragooned into some kind of slavery, condemned to being mere carriers of predetermined theological "messages". Even worse, artistic freedom will likely be choked by some inflexible ecclesiastical orthodoxy. Either way, the arts don't get the "room" they need' (ibid., pp. 10–11). At a theoretical level, Begbie seeks a via *media* between what he perceives as the 'double hazard' of 'theological instrumentalisation' (where 'music is treated as essentially, or no more than, a vehicle, a mere tool at the behest of theology') and 'theological aestheticism' (where an overriding concern with the 'autonomy of music' leads people to give music 'a semi-independent role in relation to theology', and to attribute to it a 'veridical access to the divine') (Begbie and Guthrie 2011, pp. 10–12).[33] Begbie's concern with 'theological aestheticism' is that music, or the psychological and 'spiritual' power of music, may be set against the 'norms derived from Scripture and its testimony to God's revelation', such that art becomes 'an ultimate measure of theological truth' (ibid.). Begbie's anxiety, in this respect, is not specifically with regard to music but with regard to any of the arts, insofar as an independent 'theology' might be derived from them: 'History is replete with examples of the arts over-determining theology: among the subtler forms, the keenness in much contemporary writing to identify the immense psychological power of music, film, painting or whatever as "spiritual" or "religious", and then cultivate some strand of "theology" accordingly' (Begbie 2002, p. 10).

One could argue, of course, that music does have the capacity to disclose the divine while maintaining, from a Christian viewpoint, that this cannot contradict the revealed doctrines of faith, a perspective provided, for example, by Richard Viladesau (Viladesau 1999; Viladesau 2000). But Begbie opposes this approach, explicitly rejecting 'a norm immanent to musical activity' as well as any 'foundational metaphysics or ontology elaborated prior to, or apart from, the specific dealings of the Christian God with the world' (Begbie and Guthrie 2011, pp. 12–13). Begbie affirms, instead, that Christian theology must have 'a distinct orientation as it engages with practices such as music—to the gospel, the dramatic movement of God by which he reconciles us to himself by the Spirit through the Son, witnessed to and mediated normatively by Scripture' (ibid.; Begbie 2007). Whether or not Begbie's via *media* is in fact an in-between stance is, therefore, open to question. Although it is clear that Begbie's approach avoids 'theological aestheticism', it is harder to see how it avoids envisioning art as merely carrying 'predetermined theological "messages"'.[34] Furthermore, Begbie's claim that his approach will not 'suppress but *enable* a faithful honouring of music's integrities' because the Christian God, to which music is thus ordered, 'is dedicated to the flourishing of creation in its own order (the order out of which music is made)' is, albeit theoretically plausible, problematic from a practical

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[33] Although the introduction is co-written with Guthrie, the discussion of instrumentalisation, aestheticism, and orientation seems to expand directly on the passages cited in (Begbie 2002). See, also, (Begbie 2000) and, more recently, (Begbie 2013) for his evolving theology of music.

[34] For this reason, (Broadhead 2012, pp. 157–61) characterises Begbie's theoretical method as 'dialogue through analogy', and reproduces Heidi Epstein's assertion that Begbie's theologising ultimately 'reduces music to a mere proof-text for biblical doctrine. Music thus remains an evangelistic revealer of Christian truths' (ibid., p. 161; Epstein 2004, pp. 84–86).

point of view, unless one works exclusively with Christian artists (ibid.). This seems to have been the case with the four pod groups involved in *TTA*: indeed, Begbie suggests that it was 'just *because* of a joint orientation to the triune God of Jesus Christ, who is committed to the flourishing of the world in all its manifold particularity and diversity, that they were able to honour the integrity of the arts with which they were dealing, and the integrity of the artists in each group' (Begbie 2002, p. 11).

For the TheoArtistry collaborations, however, we did not request that *either* the theologians *or* the composers had any faith commitments; at the same time, we maintained that, whatever the individual beliefs of the participants, the compositions could potentially contribute constructively to theology. Gavin Hopps, the Director of ITIA, presented new ways to envisage the relationship between theology and music, approaches which move beyond Begbie's apparent insistence on pre-emptive Christological criteria, on particular musical forms, and on a privileging of cognitive over affective experiences of music.[35] Hopps advocated, instead, a recognition of the listener's role in the co-constitution of music's significance: one should begin, he affirmed, with particular works of music, as well as particular acts of reception, and consider their theological value in light of their affects or the experiences they elicit, and not simply in terms of their 'immanent' meanings. The work of David Brown, Emeritus Professor of ITIA, similarly seeks to validate less exclusive approaches to the presence of God in music, approaches which are particularly valuable—from a practical point of view—when working with theologians and composers in a more secular environment.[36] As Frank Burch Brown comments, 'it has become more imperative than ever for theology to expand its scope to consider culture, arts, and specifically music not as somehow illustrational, or as helpful analogies "outside" theology's intrinsic modes of thought, but, rather, as means of reshaping (and in turn being shaped by) that very thought—if, indeed, "thought" is the best word for what is called for' (Burch Brown Forthcoming).[37] The theologians and composers on the TheoArtistry scheme were thus introduced to a rich, and developing dialogue about the contested relationship between theology and music, a dialogue which has been at the heart of ITIA research culture since the Institute's inception.[38]

In the theologian-composer collaborations, the relationship between theology and music was, in one sense, somewhat straightforward insofar as the composers (whether Christian or not) were responding to 'annunciations' in the Old Testament. Perhaps especially because of this, it was important to stress that a 'correspondence', 'applicationist', or 'instrumental' method was but one way of approaching the task at hand. We were keen, then, that the theologians and composers had the licence to explore these scriptural passages with or without regard to particular doctrinal standpoints. In this respect, again, we were encouraging theologians and artists to exercise the freedom of their theological and artistic imaginations, without insisting on predetermined theological criteria or constraining them by an excessive concern with Scriptural or doctrinal 'orthodoxy'. In his 'Afterword' to Begbie's *Theology Through the Arts* project, Nicholas Wolterstoff registers anxiety about envisaging artistic media as 'media of disclosure': there is, he affirms, always 'the need for *critical discernment*': a 'theological (or other) interpretation wraught in some artistic medium may prove *unacceptable* in one way or another; rather than being a means of disclosure, it may be a means of distortion if we allow ourselves to be led by it' (Wolterstorff 2002, pp. 228–29). This is a valid concern, which Wolterstoff shares, of course, with Begbie; however, an alertness to these dangers need not lead one to restricting the role of theological art to simply communicating a predetermined revelation (as *propaganda fidei*). We sought to maintain, by contrast, that this is just one (albeit highly important) role of theological art, others being

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[35] I am grateful to Gavin Hopps for sharing with me, and with participants on the scheme, forthcoming research. See (Hopps Forthcoming).

[36] David Brown has consistently advocated in his work a 'generous' understanding of God's self-revelation in the world through human history and culture. See, most recently, (Brown 2017). See also (Brown 2004, 2007, 2008). In this context, see also (Begbie 2012)'s response to David Brown's approach to theology and music, including his 'misgivings'.

[37] See also (Burch Brown 1989).

[38] This dialogue, of course, contributes to a much wider, international scholarly discussion on the relationship between theology and music. For a descriptive summary of some of these scholarly viewpoints see, for example, (Heaney 2012b).

precisely to provoke and challenge, (as by distortion, play, or irreverence). As Burch Brown insists, theology 'must exist in complementary and dialectical reaction not only with praxis but also with those richly aesthetic arts that can bring these relations imaginatively to life' (Burch Brown 1989, p. 88).

A Thomist paradigm for engaging non-Christian truths may offer an additional way to articulate this more hospitable via *media* in which theology can be seen to interact with music without constraining music's autonomy or, indeed, its intrinsic capacity to reveal the divine, while, at the same time, showing how music can be transformed and transfigured by the encounter with theology. Gavin D'Costa draws a parallel between twenty-first century attitudes to Christian engagement with other religions and the three attitudes characteristic of early Christian engagements with philosophy: first, a rejection of engagement altogether; secondly, a critical encounter and accommodation; thirdly, an uncritical adoption of philosophy such that it determines Christianity rather than being transformed by it' (Ganeri 2012, p. 1058; D'Costa 2005).[39] D'Costa favours the second as the appropriate mode by which theology should engage with other disciplines, and sees in Aquinas' theology a key model. What happens, then, in this encounter with theology? Aquinas uses the scriptural image of water and wine: rather than the philosophy (water) diluting theology (wine), philosophical doctrines (water) become, are transformed into, wine. Crucially, as Martin Ganeri highlights, 'the water of [philosophical] thought still remains the material out of which the theology is made and without it we could not have the resultant theology in the form we have it' (ibid., p. 1066). In other words, this wine is new to the cellar of divine wisdom, not replicating what was already there. Although I would make the analogy with theology and music tentatively, there is, I think, a sense in which music (the water) can be transformed by its encounter with Christianity and come not to *serve* theology, but to be theology or, more exactly, theoartistry, insofar as it may reveal God and His revelation in a new way through artistry.

4. Six New Choral Works of Sacred Music for the 21st Century

The composers were given quite strict parameters for their composition: it had to be approximately three minutes in length and performable by a good amateur choir. Tom Wilkinson discussed with the composers different aspects of sacred music from a choral director's perspective, including voice-leading, harmony, individual and ensemble rhythm, metre, texture and text. He invited the composers to challenge the choir in these areas, giving examples from the repertoire, but advised against doing so from each angle simultaneously. He also encouraged the composers to experiment, especially as the scheme incorporated a 'workshop' to try out compositional ideas, before a final draft of the composition would be submitted for public performance and for the recording. We considered this practical dimension important for the project not least because, in the tradition of sacred music, composers have always had to write with the capability of particular groups of performers in mind.

In preparing an Old Testament 'annunciation' for their composer-partner, the theologians may be seen to have taken three different kinds of approaches. The first was to reappraise a familiar Scriptural passage through the lens of the artistic imagination, bringing out a new or 'hidden' aspect that countered the dominant interpretative paradigm (whether in Biblical Studies or in the wider cultural imagination). The second was to approach the passage with a specific question or personal interest. The third was to explore the semantic challenges of representing God's presence or voice through word, music, and silence.[40] In each of the six collaborations, the Scriptural passage spoke in a particular way to the theologians and composers; at the same time, the theologians and composers' own cultural beliefs, individual personalities and research interests offered an enriched understanding of the Biblical episode in question.

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[39] Martin Ganeri situates his Thomist model for comparative theology in relation to the summary of approaches provided by Gavin D'Costa.

[40] In discussing briefly each of the six collaborations, I rely on the draft chapters of the theologians and composers which will be published subsequently in (Corbett Forthcoming).

Theologian Margaret McKerron emphasised that in the Biblical commentary tradition, and in the popular cultural imagination, *Genesis* 3 is typically envisaged in terms of the temptation and judgement of Adam and Eve, and their expulsion by God from the garden of Eden. This is even the case when the Biblical story is self-consciously parodied or inverted in modern popular culture and advertising, where temptation becomes self-liberation, sin self-fulfilment, and expulsion emancipation. Returning to the passage with a focus on how God speaks to Adam and Eve, McKerron sought a way out of this polarised cultural perception of *Genesis*. She showed that the verses between the eating of the fruit (3.6) and God's judgement (3.14) are conspicuously under-represented in art. Moreover, she highlighted the chiastic structure unifying Genesis 2.4 and Genesis 3.25: the creation of Adam (A), the creation of Eve (B), the serpent's dialogue with Eve (C); Adam and Eve's sin and its revelation to God (X); the judgement of the serpent (C); the judgement of Eve (B); the judgement of Adam (A). In the first part (AB), we witness God's provision for man while, in the heart of the episode (X), God poses three questions prior to his three judgements (CBA), re-opening the lines of communication and relationship. These questions are: 'Where are you?' (3.9b); 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' (3.11). Even after Adam and Eve resist the opportunity to acknowledge their own guilt and seek repentance (instead Adam blames Eve, Eve the serpent) and are judged and expelled, God continues to provide for them in the world outside. McKerron suggested that this provision and promise is a protoevangelium, to be fulfilled in the coming of Christ and, ultimately in Christ's passion on the cross. McKerron and composer Anselm McDonnell, therefore, creatively explored Jesus as the new Adam. In the first part of McDonnell's choral setting *Hinneni* (2017), the focus is on the central moment of God's conversation with Adam and Eve before their expulsion from Eden, with God asking them: 'Where are you? Who told you you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of knowledge of good and evil? What have you done?' In the second half of the composition, it is now man who questions God on the cross: 'For whom are you naked? What is this you have done, my saviour? Hanging cursed from the tree of death, of wrath, of death, for me? What is this you have done, my God'. Throughout there is the refrain 'Hinneni' (Here I am), the ongoing presence and provision of God even when man is hiding or seemingly helpless.

Theologian Caleb Froehlich similarly sought to challenge a conventional interpretation through re-appraising his Old Testament 'annunciation' through an imaginative, artistic lens. The story of God's threefold calling of Samuel (1 Samuel 3) is typically associated, Froehlich suggested, with children and 'Sunday school': in developing their own relationship with God, Samuel seems to offer them a simple model. Even Biblical scholars, moreover, can characterise the episode as 'an idyllic childlike exchange'. By contrast, Froehlich explored the setting of God's call, what the episode might reveal about the voice of God (how it is mediated, and how we might miss it), and the 'psychological and emotional turmoil' that the young boy, Samuel, might have experienced. Froehlich emphasised the climax of the story: God's terrible judgement on the house of Eli, Samuel's mentor. The composer Seán Doherty responded, in particular, to this potential terror of Samuel; in discovering that Samuel could have been as young as four to eight, he writes: 'this made the passage more personal to me as I reflected on my Godson, my nephew Aodhán (the dedicatee of this piece), who was six years old at the time. I thought of what my own reaction would be to a child who was visibly distressed after waking up, which would be comfort them immediately'. Doherty then took up the 'viewpoint of Samuel, who is traumatised by this nightmarish prophecy' which foretells the 'destruction of the only family he had ever known', to such an extent 'that he is afraid to tell Eli about it in the morning'. Doherty stripped the dialogue to its essentials, drawing on the etymological potency of the three names Samuel (meaning 'God hears/the one who hears God'), Eli (meaning 'My God') and El ('God') to carry implicitly the dialogue of the episode. The only further speech is 'Hinneni' ('Here I am') and 'Daber ki shomea abdecha' (Speak, for your servant hears'). As Doherty states, 'the rest of the narrative could unfold in the music itself'. Doherty structured his piece in three sections around God's threefold call to Samuel (A), Samuel's call to Eli (B), and Eli's call to Samuel (C). In the manner of an oratorio, Doherty assigned to each protagonist a group of performers: 'the soprano soloist is the boy Samuel; the choir

with organ is the voice of God; the choir without organ is the voice of Eli'. In this way, 'the musical material of the three-fold call (A) is echoed by Eli (C), but now without the organ accompaniment, signifying that the voice of God has now departed, and it is Eli, alone, who speaks'. Doherty thus renders musically the mediated voice of God that 'sounds like' but is not that of Eli, the addition of the organ being a self-conscious allusion to 'the use of the organ as a metaphor for the word of God in seventeenth-century sources'.

In her exploration of the 'Song of Songs', theologian Kimberley Anderson considered how a traditional gendering of the experience of God (the soul as female, God as male) can be difficult for men to inhabit, given the still pervasive cultural norm that sees men 'as strong and logical'. She drew on her own research interest in contemporary rock music, where gender stereotypes can be both reinforced and creatively challenged as, for example, in Beyonce's album *Lemonade* (2016) and her husband, Jay-Z's responding album 4.44 (2017). While registering the traditional allegorical glosses of the bridegroom and bride in terms of Christ and his Church, or God and the human soul, Anderson chose to focus primarily on the heterosexual relationship between bridegroom and bride in the *Song of Songs* alongside, and as a reconstitution of, Adam and Eve's relationship in *Genesis*. She explored the ambiguity of *Genesis* in relation to gender, highlighting Adam's incompleteness: 'it is not good that the man should be alone' (Genesis 2.18). Even Eve's status as 'bone of my bones', as Anderson argued, can be interpreted in a superlative sense (as in 'King of Kings' or, indeed, 'Song of Songs' itself). She also suggested texts from Milton's *Paradise Lost* in order to give a voice to the bridegroom, and to explore the vulnerability and sensitivity of maleness within the marriage union. In the first section of his composition, Beatch's threefold repetition of the line 'Who is this?' underlines the key question of identity. In the second part, Beatch adapts Milton's text with its description of Eve as 'in herself complete'. Deciding that 'Solomon's masculinity would be purposefully *feminized*', Beatch 'intentionally aimed to portray this masculine voice through stereotypically "feminine" music [. . .] the harmonies are lush, the phrases are short and breathless, and even the rhythms are gentle'. Furthermore, the female voice 'is given direct agency at the opening of the piece, since it is the sopranos and altos who first observe and define Solomon's agency', whereas the literal male voice (the men of the choir) sing alone for only two brief moments. In the final 'chant-like' section, the pomp of 'Solomon King' is avoided, and—instead—the vulnerability and complexity of the young man and woman in the marriage union is evoked.

In preparing *Genesis* 32: 22–32 in its immediate context, theologian Marian Kelsey first addressed the interpretative ambiguity surrounding Jacob's nocturnal wrestling with God. Jacob is blessed by God, and given a new name—Israel–, and rejoices in having seen 'God face to face', but there is also a self-awareness of his proximity to death: 'and yet my life is preserved'. In the struggle itself, moreover, Jacob's opponent is unidentified, and Kelsey emphasised that the term translated as 'God' in this passage (the Hebrew *ʾĕlōhîm*) may also refer to angels, leaving the engagement with the divine more open-ended. Kelsey then showed how Jacob's encounter with his divine opponent has been appropriated in diverse ways in the history of its reception, from being a model of persistent prayer (set alongside the parable of the unjust judge; Luke 18: 1–8) to embodying human struggles with 'spiritual and emotional crises'.[41] Composer Dominic de Grande responded to Kelsey's challenge to find his own personal reinterpretation of Jacob's struggle:

> I had struggled with many starts and stops (the irony of wrestling with a narrative about wrestling was not lost on me). [. . .] I began to realise that I needed to develop a deeper and more personal relationship with the text, something that I could feel invested in. [. . .] The turning point for me came when I thought about my Grandmother who was religious

[41] In terms of theologian-artist collaborations, of particular note is the play *Wrestling with Angels* (based on *Genesis* 32–33 and 2 Corinthians), a collaboration between theologians and Riding Lights Theatre Company in 1998 that led, in turn, to the collaboration organised by Jeremy Begbie, *Till Kingdom Come*, in 2000. See especially (Ford 2002).

> and the way she was full of music and stories. She would improvise bedtime stories and I would often have to wake her for conclusions that seldom ever came. I realised that it wasn't only about the words working with the music but feeling comfortable with the numinous context that bound them together. It turns out that my own sense of religiosity was found through the memory of my Grandmother.

De Grande explains that his title 'Whilst falling asleep, Savta told me of Jacob' evokes this relationship: 'Savta is the Hebrew word for grandmother. My own grandmother used to sing and whistle to me when I was a child and she would tell me stories as I fell between sleep and dreams'. This intermingling between 'whistling' and 'singing' is heard as a novel texture throughout De Grande's composition. To evoke the delicate balance of adult seriousness and childlike simplicity, De Grande sets an Emily Dickenson poem, 'A Little East of Jordan', suggested to him by Kelsey: the poem draws out the inherent ambiguity of the Biblical text, with the unnamed opponent referred to as an angel until the very last line and word of the poem in which the Gymnast 'found he had worsted God!'.

For theologian Rebekah Dyer, 'the challenge of presenting the burning bush in music necessitated an entirely new theological method'. Dyer started from her own experience as an amateur fire-spinner, an experience which makes palpable the full sensory aspects of fire: heat, light, movement, smell, the 'sound of a flickering flame'. The burning bush, then, is not just a visual image but a multi-sensory one: prioritising sound, Dyer emphasised, meant 'doing theology with my eyes closed and my ears open'. Dyer sought out an 'embodied way of knowing', an 'experiential, rather than intellectual, exploration of fire', which would correlate with her sense that God, like fire and music, is 'ungraspable'. Composer Kerensa Briggs responded to the mystery of the consuming fire that does not consume, and to the initial ambiguities surrounding the voice from the fire, and Moses' identity itself: 'These were factors which I felt were important to express within the piece, and directly influenced the continually flickering quaver writing in the organ part and the recurrence of harmonic ambiguity or bitonality. I wanted to juxtapose tonal harmony against bitonal ambiguity to express the different sections and ideas found within the text'. Briggs' setting for the opening line 'Moses, Moses, Here I am' in three upper voices, furthermore, similarly reflects musically 'the notion of the Trinity, the ambiguity of the voice coming from the bush, and a reflection on or response to the quivering flame'.

As Rebekah Dyer drew on her experience as a fire spinner in approaching Exodus III, so theologian Mary Stevens's experience within the Carmelite Order gave a privileged entry point into considering Elijah's encounter with God in 1 Kings 19: 4–12. Stevens introduced early on the poetry of St John of the Cross, with its contemplation of the paradox of divine presence:

> The Father spoke one Word, which was his Son, and this word he speaks always in eternal silence, and in silence must it be heard by the soul. [. . .] What we need most in order to make progress is to be silent before this great God with our appetite and with our tongue, for the language He hears best is silent love.[42]

Stevens emphasised that 'the sound of sheer silence' is 'an encounter with God', an encounter beyond the medium of words. Composer Lisa Robertson picked up this lead in making 'the sound of sheer silence' the focal point of her piece:

> As this follows the three dramatic natural phenomena of 'the wind, the earthquake and the fire', it was possible to use these events as a means of intensifying the tension towards the climax point. I felt that the most successful means of achieving this would be to enhance the listener's musical expectations with four repetitions of musical material. The fourth repetition begins to conform to the listener's expectations, according to the patterns, but is then suddenly interrupted and, surprisingly, met with lengthy silence.

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[42] St John of the Cross, *Maxims and Counsels*, 21, 53.

To create a soundscape 'inspired by the vastness of the mountains', Robertson adopts a 'sparse but widely spaced harmonic language [including] large contrasts in the dynamics, texture and range'. To suggest the points where God is not present ('My God is not in the earthquake'), Robertson inserts 'percussive sounds'; where He is present, she employs another extended technique of 'whispering sounds', mimicking the sound of wind (and evoking the breath of God which 'hovered over the waters' in the Creation story).

5. Conclusions

Cathedral, chapel and chamber choirs need new works in their repertoire, as well as those of the great masters of the past. The fostering of sacred music therefore includes engaging the next generation of composers with the extraordinary creative power of Christianity, of a faith that 'makes all things new'. At the same time, artistry brings new dimensions, perspectives and insights to theology, whether challenging conventional readings of Biblical passages (as with regard to the Fall, or the calling of Samuel), turning to that tradition with contemporary questions (as in relation to gender or the search for faith in a more secular environment), or meditating on the communication of the divine (through the word, the senses, and silence). TheoArtistry's inaugural project seeks to contribute, then, to this long tradition of sacred choral music, with its particular cultural presence in British culture. As Kenneth Leighton, one of MacMillan's teachers, commented: 'it is perhaps only in the light of experience that one realises how fundamental and important a part the Church music tradition—which is after all the only unbroken musical tradition in this country, stretching right to the middle ages—plays in the musical life of Britain as a whole' (Leighton 1984).

TheoArtistry seeks to do more, however, than helping to foster theologically engaged and fruitful choral music. It seeks to offer a new, open and flexible model for collaborations between theologians and artists that can be adapted in different contexts, with different art forms, and with different styles within those art forms. Indeed, MacMillan sees music—with its special relationship to spirituality—as a medium which may lead the reintegration of theology and the other arts. As he comments:

> the discussion, the dialogue, between theology and the arts is not some peripheral thing that some have claimed it has been, but it actually might have been a very central thing in the development of the way that we think of our culture (MacMillan 2017b).

TheoArtistry's second project—*The TheoArtistry Poets' Scheme*—is a collaboration between ITIA and StAnza (Scotland's International Poetry Festival), and over fifty poets applied for six places to work, like their composer counterparts, with the School of Divinity's theologians. These poets will be mentored in 2018 by MacMillan's long-term collaborator Michael Symmons Roberts. But the hope is that the collaborative experiments of *TheoArtistry* will inspire others to set up similar initiatives, and to contribute to a growing dialogue about the creative power of Christianity.

This reintegration of theology and the arts, as I have intimated, has important implications not just for the creation of new art works, but for their curatorship and programming, their performance and reception. It is vital not just to the future of our culture and our arts but also as a way of encouraging the full appreciation of the art of the past, which due to the secularised impoverishment of so many people today is often misunderstood, misconstrued or ignored altogether. The recognition of the theological and spiritual significance of art is an important starting point. There is a discernible trend (albeit still a minority one) in the curatorship of visual art to recontextualise religious paintings, so far as is possible within the 'secular frame' of a museum. In the recording of choral music, there are signs, as I have suggested, that more attention is being given to Christian liturgy, themes, and context. By practising and celebrating theologically informed programming and performance (TIPP), however, it may be possible to improve dramatically the public appreciation of Christian music, both past and present. For believers and non-believers alike, the artistry of the composers will be so much more apparent when the composers' theological inspiration is more fully understood. But, also, this may

allow art to create a space for and communicate the divine, which is one of its most ancient and celebrated capacities.

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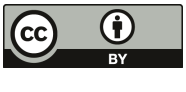

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Article

"I Love It When You Play that Holy Ghost Chord": Sounding Sacramentality in the Black Gospel Tradition

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Abstract: This essay argues that the distinctive aesthetic practices of many African American Christian congregations, indexed by the phrase "the Black gospel tradition", are shaped by a sacramentality of sound. I contend that the role music routinely plays in the experience of the holy uncovers sanctity in the sound itself, enabling it to function as a medium of interworldly exchange. As divine power takes an audible form, the faith that "comes by hearing" is confirmed by religious feeling—both individual and collective. This sacramentality of sound is buttressed by beliefs about the enduring efficacy of divine speech, convictions that motivate the intensive character of gospel's songs, sermons, and shouts. The essay begins with a worship service from Chicago, Illinois' Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist Church, an occasion in which the musical accompaniment for holy dancing brought sound's sacramental function into particularly clear relief. In the essay's second section, I turn to the live recording of Richard Smallwood's "Hebrews 11", a recording that accents the creative power of both divine speech and faithful utterances, showing how reverence for "the word of God" inspires the veneration of musical sound. In the article's final move, I show how both of the aforementioned performances articulate a sacramental theology of sound—the conviction that sound's invisible force brings spiritual power to bear on the material world.

Keywords: sacramentality; music; gospel; African American; dance

Several years ago, in the middle of a conversation about the musical accompaniment that is often summoned at the end of many Black preachers' sermons, a member of my home congregation turned to me and said, "I love it when you play that Holy Ghost chord!" What a phrase! What an elision of musicality and divinity. As this statement expresses one congregant's approval of the efforts many gospel musicians take to "bear up"[1] ecstatic preaching, it also gives vent to a deeper, more fundamental conviction. While the aforementioned parishioner is neither a musician nor a minister, and while she has no formal training in either music or theology, her words point to the body of beliefs that lies behind distinctive elements of Black Christian worship. In the phrase, "I love it when you play that Holy Ghost chord", there is a literal, embodied commingling of musical sound and the sacred, of musical material and the Holy Spirit—a transcendent fusion that expresses the belief that the divine is palpably present in the song, sermons, and shouts that characterize Black worship. What might it mean for God to be present in sound? How does this proximity to divinity ground the Black church's relationship to music's sonorous materiality?

This essay argues that the distinctive aesthetic practices of many African American Christian congregations, indexed by the phrase "the Black gospel tradition", are shaped by a sacramentality of

[1] (Hurston [1934] 1996).

sound. I contend that the role music routinely plays in the experience of the holy uncovers sanctity in the sound itself, enabling it to function as a medium of interworldly exchange. As divine power takes an audible form, the faith that "comes by hearing" is confirmed by religious feeling—both individual and collective. This sacramentality of sound is buttressed by beliefs about the enduring efficacy of divine speech, convictions that motivate the intensive character of gospel's songs, sermons, and shouts. The essay begins with a worship service from Chicago, Illinois' Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist Church, an occasion in which the musical accompaniment for holy dancing brought sound's sacramental function into particularly clear relief. In the essay's second section, I turn to the live recording of Richard Smallwood's "Hebrews 11", a recording that accents the creative power of both divine speech and faithful utterances, showing how reverence for "the word of God" and the veneration of musical sound sustain each other. In the article's final segment, I show how both the aforementioned performances articulate a sacramental theology of sound—the conviction that sound's invisible force brings spiritual power to bear on the material world.

1. Ritual Sound

While worship services at Chicago's Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist Church often become an ecstatic fusion of music and movement, an excerpt from a service in January 2016 reveals the theology that precedes these physical expressions of religious belief. At 8 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month, the church holds its customary communion service, a worship event designed around the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This monthly observance is common among many Black protestant congregations. While it is customary to arrange the communion elements—trays, bread, wine, and sheets—before the service, Greater Harvest bids congregants to watch as the unadorned pulpit is transformed into a space for communion. During Greater Harvest's communion service, deacons and deaconesses decked in white and red contribute to the sacred scene, walking one-by-one in a line. One deaconess sweeps the pulpit off with a small broom. Another group of deacons roll in a modified table whose sides fold down to reveal plates prepared with elements to be distributed to congregants. In so doing, they reveal the reverential preparation that has occurred before the service began. As one member of Greater Harvest notes: "the deaconesses who prepare the communion have an entire room dedicated for that purpose. While they do their work, there is no talking."[2] Even before the pastor proclaims the words of institution, then, these sacred symbols echo the following invocation: "the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silent before him."[3] However, while the deaconesses acknowledge the presence of God through their silences on Saturday, on Sunday, the entire congregation incarnates that presence with joyful noise.

Among the dozens of Greater Harvest services that I have attended, the 8 p.m. service on Sunday, 5 January 2016 was most instructive. Between the sermon and the celebration of the communion service, the pastor, Elder Eric Thomas, began to sing the refrain of Margaret Douroux's canonical gospel selection, "He Decided to Die." Though located in Chicago's Washington Park neighborhood, this sanctuary perceptibly moved toward the scene of the crucifixion as pastor, choir, and congregation incessantly sang, "He would not come down from the cross just to save himself. He decided to die just to save me." As this assembly repeatedly elevated their vocal parts, the transcendent proximity that the Lord's Supper offers to Christ's Passion became a tangible reality in the liminal space of worship. While the performance of "He Decided to Die" continued, congregants used their bodies to offer praise and to incarnate divine presence. Joining a chorus of embodied demonstrations, two women stood and ran, in trance, around the sanctuary, foreshadowing the collective ecstasy that would soon emerge.

Soon enough, the performance of Douroux's "He Decided to Die" gave way to an ecstatic period of holy dancing. Instead of reiterating that song's material, the band began to play fast, repetitive

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2 (Rhinehart 2016).
3 Habakkuk 2:20.

musical patterns often used to accompany holy dancing; practitioners refer to this as "shouting music." As they played, the pastor vented the feeling that seemed to course throughout the building, exclaiming "I feel the Holy Ghost" before turning to dance for a moment—transferring his weight between his feet in synchrony with the band's "shouting music." These are all actions that affirm that "the shout", one common name for the gospel church's holy dance, functions as an embodiment of divine presence. While his congregants sustained this physical form of praise, Elder Thomas rhythmically intoned phrases like "the blood of Jesus" and "got my joy", turning the preceding song's Eb major tonic into a reciting tone. The musicality of Thomas's elevated speech amplified the repetitive shape of the "shouting music" by which he was accompanied. Later, while the musicians iterated the metric and tonal framework of the shouting music, Elder Thomas, himself a renowned organist, turned to the band and gestured with his hand the rhythm that is depicted in Figure 1:

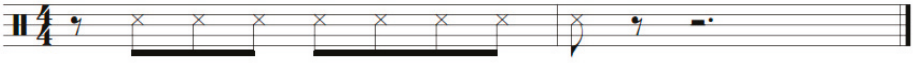

Figure 1. Riff gestured by Pastor Thomas.

Elder Thomas then said, "I just felt that in my spirit."[4] What was it that the pastor felt? This question's musical answer emerged just a few moments later when the band started to play the material that is represented in Figure 2, an elaborated version of the pattern that the pastor signaled to the band.

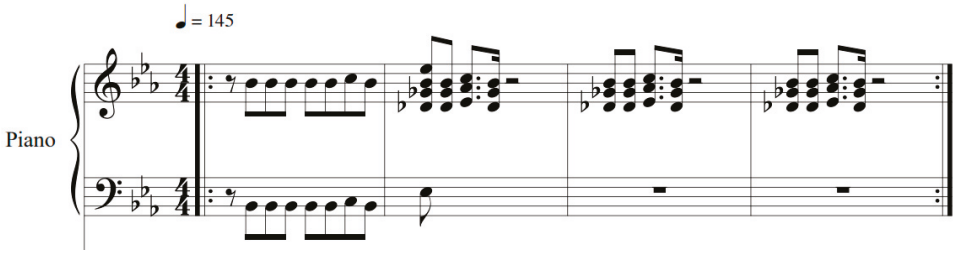

Figure 2. Excerpt from shouting music at Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist Church (MBC).

As Figure 2 illustrates, the musicians turn a simple gestured rhythm into a riff, adding a pitch contour and harmonic scheme to it. However, the story is more complicated. It is likely that, by "playing" the rhythm in the air, Thomas summoned a shouting music formula that was already known and loved by members of the congregation. In either case, through this emphatic and empathetic musical transition, this team of musicians breathed new life into the collective embodiment of religious ecstasy.

As the bodies entrained to the musical framework constructed around this riff, an even greater sense of musical coordination served as proof of their pastor's assertion that this music had arisen in his (and other congregants') spirit. It was as if he could feel just what rhythm, just what riff, just what sound the people needed to access the highest form of communal praise. As more people partook of the spontaneous but regularized movements of the holy dance, believers used their bodies to articulate gospel's fusion of musical sound and the Holy Spirit. By gesturing a very specific rhythmic phrase and exclaiming, "I just felt that in my spirit", Thomas elevates musical syntax to the realm of sacrality, disclosing what Katherine Hagedorn calls a "theology of sound": "talk about music [that] reveals deeply embedded ideologies about identity and territoriality—literally one's place in the world."[5]

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4 (Thomas and The Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist Church Choir 2016).
5 (Hagedorn 2006).

Thomas's statement about the sound felt in his spirit exemplifies "how the function of sound is theorized by musicians and adherents within a religious context, such that 'divinely targeted sound,' as well as discourse about that sound, map the experience of divine transcendence onto a human grid."[6] The bit of music depicted in Figure 1, the evocative rhythm that inflected this moment in the service, is what Thomas says he felt in his spirit. This statement conjoins the invisible subject of the congregation's belief with the audible object of collective experience, contending that the modification of what congregants hear will bring them closer to what they cannot see. Feeling, Thomas suggests, mediates between sight and sound. This scene from Greater Harvest offers an instructive example of how other congregations experience the Holy Spirit through music.

Thomas's "theology of sound" bears striking resemblance to the snippet with which this essay began: "I love it when you play that Holy Ghost chord." The sentiment that Thomas, both musician and pastor, expresses here feels quite similar to that of the parishioner who uttered the preceding words. Now, we have gone from a Holy Ghost chord to a Holy Ghost rhythm, or, a musical pattern "felt in one's spirit." In both cases, feeling the spirit and feeling the music become synonymous; musical sound becomes a channel of divine power. How, then, to categorize this convergence of the material and the divine, the sensuous and the spiritual? To answer this, I want to return to the context of the performance in question—a celebration of communion. What if one uses the concomitance of the Lord's Supper and this period of ecstatic dancing to interpret sound's function in this moment of corporate worship? To do so would be to contend that gospel's embodied engagement with musical sound be understood in sacramental terms. That is my approach, an argument that builds from the philosopher James K. A. Smith's proposal that "that there is a kind of sacramentality of Pentecostal worship that sees the material as a good and necessary mediator of the Spirit's work and presence."[7] Yes, I want to explain music's peculiar power with reference to sacramentality. While sacraments are traditionally defined as "external signs instituted by Christ to give grace", the notion of sacramentality has been applied much more broadly, naming the manifold media through which God is revealed; some call this the "sacramental principle."[8] In many Black Protestant churches, sound occupies a primary place in the sacramental economy; this is evidenced by the forms of musical and emotive worship that are indexed by the term "the Black gospel tradition."[9] On this, I agree with Louis Chauvet's argument that "to theologically affirm sacramental grace is to affirm, in faith, that the risen Christ continues to take flesh in the world and in history and that God continues to come into human corporality." Rather than any single liturgical element, the body, Chauvet contends "is acknowledged as the place of God, provided we understand the body … to be the archsymbol in which, in a way proper to each person, the connections to historical tradition, the present society, and the universe—connections which dwell in us and are the fabric of our identity—are knitted together."[10] I claim that the robustly embodied engagement that practitioners have with the songs, sermons, and prayers that are conventional in these liturgical contexts expresses the grace that believers receive through these aesthetic forms. The intense forms of sociality that emerge in ecstatic moments of Black worship—in songs, sermons, and shouts—offer fleeting glimpses of the sacramental unity of the body of Christ.

Musical sound's ability to direct collective attention to the presence of holiness becomes particularly clear when examining its instrumental forms. As it moves away from human speech, purely instrumental musical sound puts forth a transcendent manifestation of what Nina Eidsheim, following Pierre Schaeffer, has called "the acousmatic question."[11] While it is quite clear that no one is *singing*,

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6 (Hagedorn 2006, p. 36).
7 (Smith 2010).
8 (Osborne 1988; Himes 2014).
9 (Burnim 1980; Shelley Forthcoming).
10 (Chauvet 1995).
11 (Eidsheim 2019).

the acousmatic question asks: who is *speaking* through the instrument? As the Hammond organist for Rev. Clay Evans' 2003 recording of the gospel standard, "All Night, All Day", Elder Eric Thomas performed two, evocative solos of the tune in question; his solos punctuated the choir's declaration of these treasured lyrics: "All night, all day the angels keep watching over me, me, my Lord." Before the second solo, Rev. Evans' said, "Eric, I want you to say it again on the organ." In so doing, Rev. Evans affirmed that while organs, pipe and electric, mechanical and synthesized, often seem tethered to a chameleonized sonic politics, that is, a need or desire to sound like some other instrument—the work of the Hammond organ seems specifically preoccupied with sounding like the human voice. As Thomas's organ spoke, it recruited bluesy melismatic passagework, using the full range of timbral techniques afforded by the Hammond organ's drawbars, echoing and then exceeding the sung versions of the melody. Listening to the recording, one hears the efficacy of the organ's speech: congregants shriek, using their voices and bodies to bear witness to the message of this song. Attending to that believer's scream, one might wonder if she had sensed the presence of an angel—the emblem of protection, past or future—as the song mediated between the seen world and another. In this case, an instrumental solo's pursuit of human vocality made it an even more effective channel of divine grace than the collected voices of the Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church Choir. This, perhaps counterintuitive, proposal is buttressed by the fact that the most arresting exclamations from members of the congregation seem to arise while Elder Thomas solos on the organ. That musical sound routinely elicits such wanton forms of religious reaction attests to its capacity to convey sacred force; this is sacramentality.

Yet, the use of sacramentality to name sound's interworldly efficacy might seem dissonant with certain fundaments of Black Baptist theology and practice, one pervasive strain of which was forcefully articulated in Edward Thurston Hiscox's highly influential *The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches* (1890):

> Christian ordinances, in the largest sense, are any institutions, or regulations of divine appointment, established as means of grace for the good of men, or as acts of worship for the honor of God. In that sense, not only are baptism and the Lord's Supper ordinances, but preaching, prayer, hearing the word, fasting, and thanksgiving are also ordinances, since all are of divine appointment. But, in a narrower sense, it is common to say that *baptism* and the *Lord's Supper* are the only ordinances appointed by Christ to be observed by his churches.[12]

Crucially, Hiscox contends that these "emblematic and commemorative rites . . . .are not *sacraments*, as taught by some . . . "[13] However, this line of thought has not gone altogether unchallenged; Baptist polity affords great diversity, for, as Bill Leonard notes, "Baptists themselves often differ as to doctrinal definitions and approaches to ministry."[14] While attending many of Greater Harvest's Communion Services, I often heard Pastor Thomas refer to the communion elements as sacraments. That the notion of sacraments arises in Thomas's discussions of the Lord's Supper testifies to sacramentality's place in his religious imagination, inviting one to understand his claim to feel a rhythm "in his spirit" as a sacramental assertion.

Pastor Thomas's "theology of sound" is aptly understood as sacramental; it views musical sound as a means of grace, a conduit of divine presence that is acknowledged with the body. However, this theology is not Thomas's alone. In fact, James Cone contends that "the truth of Black religion is not limited to the literal meaning of the words. Truth is also disclosed in the movement of the language and the passion created when a song is sung in the right pitch and tonal quality. Truth is found in shout, hum, and moan as these expressions move the people closer to the source of their being."[15]

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12 (Hiscox 1903).
13 (Hiscox 1903, pp. 18–19).
14 (Leonard 2005, p. 65; Cross and Thompson 2003).
15 (Cone 1997).

What truth does sound convey? The presence of God on the side of the oppressed would seem to be Cone's reply. Musical sound is uniquely suited to making this presence palpable. What does music have in common with divinity? I propose that musical sound's invisible immanence is its most valuable sacred attribute; it is the condition of music's operative and "sensibly perceptible . . . likeness" to the divine.[16] Alongside its systematic malleability—the fact that musical sound can be transformed in accordance with shared systems of organization—its sensible, yet invisible ontology enables it to evoke the holy, drawing congregants into an enfleshed experience of belief. While "ordinance" is the typical term for rites in Black Baptist worship, the modality that gospel congregants use to think about and use musical sound calls for a different category.

2. Musical Sound and the Power of the Word

Gospel's sacramentality of sound is motivated by beliefs about the power of divine speech, convictions that come into particularly stark relief in Richard Smallwood's song, "Hebrews 11", which was premiered at his 2014 recording, *Anthology: Live*. As its title suggests, the song is a rendering of a New Testament text; it is also an invitation to reimagine a familiar and foundational text as a source of musical sound. The opening moments of Smallwood's "Hebrews 11" use a polyphonic melisma to herald the drama of this piece. The melisma's canonic opening, the gravity of its *maestoso* beginning, the mounting accumulation of choral sound, and the marked modulation from E<flat> minor to E<flat> major, work in tandem to gather the audience's attention, building anticipation for the song's first plain lyrics: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things we cannot see."[17] Unlike many Smallwood songs, which present original lyrics before summoning saintly texts, the *A* section of this paraphrase begins with the first verse of Hebrews' 11th chapter, asserting, from the outset, a particularly close relationship to its scriptural source. As it replaces the introduction's sequential, chromatic complexity with a more conventional chord progression, the harmonic support of this opening statement reinforces the sheer centrality of Hebrews 11:1 to what I call "the gospel imagination."[18]

How to characterize this scripture's significance? The second verse offers an instructive reply. This song ever so slightly loosens the song's connection to the scripture by rendering Hebrews 11:3 as, "by faith, the universe was created by God's word, so what we view is formed by what we can't see."[19] In so doing, Smallwood altogether skips Hebrews 11:2 in order to conjoin verse 3 and verse 1. This compositional decision has theological and philosophical inspirations: it forges a musical, textual, and conceptual linkage between the first verse's definition of faith as an unseen substance and the third verse's assertion that holy words played a key role in making the material world. By placing this early accent on the creative power of divine speech, Smallwood exhorts believers to understand God's word—read, spoken, and sung—as an efficacious force: the substance of faith.

With two escalating iterations of the interjection, "oh", the song transitions into its *B* section, a shift that produces a lyrical exchange between versions of Hebrews 11—from the scripture to the song. In this bridge, the choir proclaims, "by this same faith healing is mine. By this faith wholeness is mine. By faith mountains will move. Victoriously, I will come through."[20] Iterated twice, these lyrics comprise the only original—that is, neither paraphrased nor quoted—text in the song. Moreover, while section *B* is obviously the song's middle section, this material's formal location mirrors its role as a kind of transcendent conjunction. In its discussion of "this faith"—the faith described in the text as "the same faith" that those who sing and listen will use to achieve healing and wholeness, to move mountains, and to experience victory—"Hebrews 11" does more than merely cite scripture:

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16 (Hugh of St. Victor 1951).
17 (Hebrews 11:1).
18 (Shelley Forthcoming).
19 (Smallwood 2015).
20 (Smallwood 2015).

it makes an argument about the mutability of time and space. In this way, Smallwood asserts that the contemporary singing of sacred words provides access to the world-making power of divine speech, using unseen energy to transform material circumstances.

Believers know this by their faith, a faith that both scripture and song define as the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen; but what is this substance? What is faith's evidence? I would argue that, in this tradition, musical sound is one of the substances through which faith takes form. I mean to accent the way faith is shaped by, carried in, and expressed through musical sound. Additionally, although it cannot be seen, this sonic materiality is still substantial: it is a foundation of faith. As St. Paul wrote, "faith comes by hearing."[21] When I spoke with Richard Smallwood about his music, he linked gospel song and divine speech:

> I am adamant about making sure that whatever I write is scripturally correct. I just think, you know, gospel music is also the truth, so whatever we put out there for people to hear has to be the truth. I think so many times people put their own theology or their own personal opinions in their lyrics—and I think that it's important that we put what the word of God *says*, so that when people hear it they'll hear what God *says*.[22]

Smallwood wants audiences who hear his music to hear what God says. Not what God *said*, but what God *says*. Note well Smallwood's use of the present tense. Twice in this one reply Smallwood identifies an aural element in sacred writ; since "the word of God" speaks, his communicative desire is for audiences to "hear what God says"[23] through his music. How does this desire shape compositional strategy? In the third section of "Hebrews 11", its vamp, Smallwood orchestrates a striking resonance with the song's scriptural source. As the choir iterates the lyrics "by faith", Smallwood interpolates the text from the rest of Hebrews 11:

> (By faith) We understand the worlds were framed by God's Word.
>
> (By faith) Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, Hah!
>
> (By faith) Enoch was translated, that he should not see death.
>
> (By faith) Noah prepared an Ark, to the saving of his house.
>
> (By faith) Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, concerning things to come.
>
> (By faith) The Children of Israel passed through the Red Sea, and by dry land.
>
> (By faith) The walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.
>
> (By faith) The prophets, subdued kingdom, worked righteousness;
>
> (By faith) Obtained promises; stopped the mouths of lions;
>
> (By faith) Quenched the violence of fire; escaped the edge of the sword;
>
> (By faith) Out of weakness, were made strong, became valiant in battle.
>
> (By faith)[24]

At the same time, Smallwood's mode of vocalization is transformed; as he moves from song to speech, instead of the more characteristic sermonic movement from speech to song, he enacts an arresting inflection, calling heightened attention to this part of the song. When joined to the choir's repeated lyric, these interpolations reanimate the remainder of Hebrews' 11th chapter, actualizing the work of this song's discourse on faith. Like the epistle, the vamp of Smallwood's paraphrase defines faith through a host of exemplars—Abraham, Enoch, and Noah, among others. In so doing, this heightened

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21 (Smallwood 2011).
22 (Smallwood 2011).
23 (Smallwood 2011).
24 (Smallwood 2015).

moment of "Hebrews 11" forges an unlikely, sacramental kind of connection, "deepening our interior life by rendering it alive and passionate and bring[ing] us into relation and communion with others."[25]

While one might call this song a paraphrase of its scriptural foundation, this is a case where the term "paraphrase" may be insufficient. If one were to compare the lyric of Smallwood's vamp to the text of Hebrews 11, striking structural similarities would become apparent. The homology between the formal structure of the scripture and this section of the song points to deeper resonances between the two texts. For, while Hebrews is often referred to as the Epistle to the Hebrews, the content of this portion of the New Testament is essentially sermonic. As New Testament scholar Kenneth Schenck observes, Hebrews' "discourse—the way the words of its text are presented to the reader—is a sermon that makes arguments."[26] Hebrews might then be thought of as the transcript of a speech act, whether actual or imagined. Thinking of Hebrews in homiletic terms, instead of only in epistolary ones, invites the auditor to think rhetorically. For instance, New Testament scholar Ceslas Spicq argues that Hebrews 11 contains "the best example of anaphora in the entire bible."[27] Both because of its grammar and its location in the bible, Hebrews 11 functions as the rhetorical climax of the text. Given such emphasis and such recursion, we might say that Hebrews 11 is *the vamp* of the epistle. What is the effect of this structural similarity? What meaning arises from this song's profound connection to scripture?

3. Sound and Sacramentality

In the song's vamp, Smallwood helps listeners "hear what God says", by mirroring the scripture's rhetorical form. More than just a resourceful compositional decision, the structural similarity between these two versions of Hebrews 11 reveals Smallwood's theology of musical sound, aptly summarized in one of his Facebook posts: "Music is spiritual. It comes from the spiritual realm and goes beyond our ears, and into our spirits. Spirit recognizes spirit."[28] Here, Smallwood explains music's peculiar affect with reference to otherworldly origins, in view of which, auditory perception is preceded by spiritual contact. Musicking, then, more than an ordinance of the church, must be an inherently transcendent endeavor. As the fuel for these efforts, musical sound functions sacramentally. Moreover, Smallwood describes sound as an interworldly material, an energy that travels between worlds sustaining connections between believers and the invisible subjects of their belief. This way of thinking about sound is sustained by scriptural traditions that depict divine speech as a source of transformative power. Indeed, at the live recording of "Hebrews 11", between the song's first ending and the reprise of its vamp, Smallwood exhorted his audience about the efficacy of faithful utterances:

> The Bible says all you need is a grain the size of a mustard seed, and you can speak to the mountain, and that mountain has to move. It might be sickness, but it's got to move. It might be depression, but it's got to move. It might be heartache, but it's got to move. It might be grief, but it's got to move. When you use your faith, things begin to happen, things begin to change. There's nothing impossible, as long as you have faith, faith![29]

As Smallwood weaves together treasured passages from Matthew 17:20; 21:18–22; and Mark 11:20–24, he uses these scriptures to interpret his setting of another. What emerges in the dialectic between Hebrews 11 and these other texts is a description of sound's role in making and remaking the world. Smallwood's expression resonates with many pericopes in both the Old and the New Testament. In Isaiah 55, the prophet describes God sending out a word that will not return as void, but, instead will accomplish the purpose for which it has been sent. In Psalm 120, the psalmist described God sending his word out to heal and to deliver. This same tradition is reanimated in the gospels, (see Matthew 8:5–13)

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[25] (Congar 1983, pp. 38–39).
[26] (Schenck 2007).
[27] (Spicq 1952).
[28] (Smallwood 2014).
[29] (Smallwood 2015).

in the request of the centurion who asks Jesus not to physically go to his house, but instead, to send his word out and heal his servant. In each case, there is a sense of sound that literally travels across space and time with the capacity to remake whatever it encounters. This preoccupation with the power of the word actualizes what Walter Ong fittingly termed "the presence of the word", the contention that that the sounding word, and not the written word, "is the most productive of understanding and unity, the most personally human, and in this sense closest to the divine."[30] Smallwood's "Hebrews 11" exemplifies the sonic intimacy gospel music nourishes between believers and the divine, an affection that refracts back onto sound itself, imbuing this sensuous force with a spiritual presence.

When Smallwood drew an explicit link between his rendering of "Hebrews 11" and the aforementioned verses from the gospels of Mark and Matthew, he brought the words of Jesus to bear on gospel performance writ large. As he accented the power that can be unleashed by speech, he demonstrated a divine sanction for the robustly embodied way gospel congregants engage with songs, sermons, and prayers. In a sense, Smallwood's exhortation uses passages from Mark and Matthew to teach his listeners that sound's sacramentality was sanctioned by Jesus. Like the New Testament's disciples, contemporary believers are to imagine that sound has a material force of great consequence. Of course, there is an important, phenomenal distance between the efficacy of divine speech and musical sound. However, I assert that the patterning of sound into gospel form is inspired by a conviction of the power of the word, even as gospel performance fosters a communal understanding of the word's power. Like the vamp of Smallwood's "Hebrews 11", the gospel tradition is full of songs that endeavor to lend to sacred words a setting fit for the revelation of power. In song, as in speech, vocalization is paramount. It is the articulation of sound—musical and non-musical—that activates the power of the word. However, sound is more than what meets the ear; I agree with Nina Eidsheim that "not only aurality but also tactile, spatial, physical, material, and vibrational sensations are at the core of all music."[31] In gospel churches, as choirs and ensembles, instrumentalists, and congregations proclaim the word through song, musical sound becomes an enveloping force, an agent of immersion, a sensible indication that "the Lord is in his holy temple."

Alongside liturgical institutions such as baptism and the Lord's supper, two widely adopted means of grace, sound serves as a primary conduit through which spiritual sustenance finds its way into the bodies and minds of believers. In this essay, I have argued that the theology that braids musical sound together with the Holy Spirit unfurls a deep sacramentality, a system of belief that inspires the escalating shape of sermons, songs, and prayers—collectively, these media constitute the Black gospel tradition. In the scene from Chicago's Greater Harvest Missionary Baptist Church, music's capacity to foment embodied ecstasy illustrated gospel's power to reveal the sacramentality of sound. As music traveled into the pastor's spirit, and from the pastor's gesture into the congregation's collective consciousness, sound's kinesthetic force fortified a fleeting connection between worlds, seen and unseen. Smallwood's "Hebrews 11" clarifies the source of sound's power. Accenting the enduring force of divine speech, this song shows how beliefs about the power of the word sustain the sense that sound itself is efficacious. As this essay has shown, sound's invisible materiality makes it an especially useful means of religious encounter. Musical organization systematizes sound's malleability, turning musical syntax into an extension of the holy. At the intersection of music and divinity, a rhythm can be felt in one's spirit and a sonority can be termed a Holy Ghost chord. Sound is regarded as sacramental.

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30 (Ong 1967).
31 (Eidsheim 2015).

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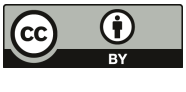

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Article

Liminality, Postmodernity and Passion: Towards a Theoretical Framework for the study of 21st Century Choral Passion Settings

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Abstract: After more than a century of neglect of the form, over thirty major concert works with "Passion" within the title have emerged into the choral landscape during the past 50 years. These settings use diverse libretti, drawing from sources both sacred and secular; some of the composers of these works profess Christianity, some adhere to other religious traditions, and some do not profess any particular faith at all. Their only common threads seem to be their self-identification with the title of "Passion", and their depiction of a story in which a particular individual undergoes suffering and death. The purpose of this article is not to analyze specific Passion settings but rather to explore the structural form and content of the Passion genre as a whole, and begin to develop an interdisciplinary framework for future analysis of this body of music, using the tools offered by the field of liminal studies. Additionally, this essay will explore how the concept of Postmodernism, both as it manifests both in Western culture and through that culture's artistic and musical expression, might give some insight into the Passion form's resurgence into modern musical thought.

Keywords: Passion; liminality; ritual; postmodernism; choral music; 21st century music

1. Introduction

Since the middle of the twentieth century[1], after more than a century of relative abandonment of the form, the field of Western concert music has seen over thirty major choral works composed with "Passion" within the title. Their musical styles are incredibly diverse, as are the libretti from which they are drawn. Many use the expected Gospel narratives, but many others relate the story of Christ's suffering and death via an original text or set of texts. Some of the composers of these works profess Christianity, some adhere to other religious traditions, and some do not profess any particular faith at all. Some use the Passion name and form to tell the story of another's suffering, leaving the Jesus story behind. Some end at the tomb; others depart from the traditional Passion ending and move forward into resurrection. Their only common threads seem to be their self-identification with the title of "Passion", and their depiction of a story in which a particular individual undergoes suffering and death.

This unexpected synchronicity prompts one to question, first, why the Passion form is seeing such a resurgence at this point in time and space? And second, what in the Passion narrative speaks to these composers to such an extent that those who do not share the religious convictions of the Christian faith are still drawn to set it to music, and to the audiences of varied backgrounds who

[1] In 1966 Penderecki's *St. Luke Passion* premiered, followed in 1981 by Arvo Pärt's *Passio* and, through the end of the 20th' century, about a dozen more Passion settings. By contrast, since 2000, over 20 major works self-identifying as "Passions" have entered the repertoire.

receive them so enthusiastically? One route to addressing these questions, proposed and explored in this article, will use the tools offered by the fields of ritual theory and liminal studies to consider how the processes of identity-shifting and social transformation might situate themselves within the world of musical postmodernism, and how these two concepts may meet and interact within the structure of the choral Passion setting in the twenty-first century. This pathway of study requires an interdisciplinary approach drawing together threads of inquiry from the fields of musical analysis, sociology, anthropology, and religious studies.

This paper will first address the sub-discipline of ritual theory and anthropology known as liminal studies. The term "liminality", first applied to initiatory rites of passage in the early twentieth century, has broadened significantly since its first uses by Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner; it has since been adopted by sociologists, political anthropologists, educators, and scholars from many disciplines. Section 2 of this paper will attempt to give a brief but coherent overview of the field of liminal studies from its origins over a century ago through to the present, sketching out its trajectory from being a clearly defined moment or state in an initiation ritual process to its current much broader application in fields from religion to health care to the arts.

The application of liminal studies to music is still in its early stages, and it is generally applied more in performative settings than in the creation of a fixed or scripted work of art like a musical setting. However, the narrative of Christ's passion, his journey to suffering and death on the cross, resonates very clearly with the liminal process as outlined by Turner, van Gennep, and the other scholars whose work we will examine. The sung Passion setting, a re-telling in music of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, has been part of Christian worship since as far back as the fourth century, growing more complex and including additional instruments and interpolated texts, the form reaching its pinnacle with J. S. Bach's monumental *St. Matthew Passion* and *St. John Passion*. This article will not attempt to analyze in depth any specific passion settings, nor the genre's development through history. Section 3 will, however, examine the overall shape and narrative arc of the Passion *form* through the lens of liminal studies, and outline the resonances between the Passion narrative and the classical liminal journey.

Finally, the fourth section of this paper will attempt to clarify the salient characteristics of Postmodernism—both the sociological phenomenon of its time, and the musical period following the structure- and rule-dominated era of mid-twentieth-century modernism—and begin to tease out the intriguing resonances between Postmodernism and liminal studies, by way of the choral Passion form and the resurgence of contemporary Passion settings in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Postmodernism, as a musical movement, released composers from the expectations and compositional values that had become entrenched in the work of composers such as Boulez and Stockhausen; it invited an abandonment of structure, a return to a new and reinvented approach to tonality, and an acceptance of the potential value of almost any type of music from any style, era, or part of the world. This freedom of the composer to move away from the strictures of the past, while still accepting and appropriating those elements of it useful to the composer, may well be a factor in the revival of the Passion genre after almost two centuries of neglect. This study will conclude with a brief discussion of how these three areas of study might intersect and dialogue with one another, and the implications for possible future music analysis of choral Passion settings.

2. Liminal Studies: An Overview of the Field

> *Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols ... liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness... (Turner 1969, p. 359)*

The fields of ritual theory and liminal studies examine the way patterned behaviors and strategic manipulation of social situations have—globally and throughout human history—served to maintain social structure and assisted individuals to move in and out of different stages of their life's journey.

The term "liminal" comes from the Greek *limen*, or threshold. It was coined by Arnold van Gennep in 1909 in his seminal work *Les Rites de Passage* (*The Rites of Passage*, translated into English in 1960) to describe the three-stage journey through which every individual moving through a life-passage event must travel: first, the separation from their previous state; second, the "liminal" in-between phase; and third, the re-aggregation with the community, when the individual returns to take their place in society, now possessed of a new social identity and role (van Gennep 1960). Victor Turner's *The Ritual Process* (Turner 1969) took van Gennep's work a step farther and expanded the "liminal" phase into a much larger and more detailed understanding, developing characteristics of the individual's sociological and anthropological experience of this "threshold" place—characteristics which bear a strong resonance to the overall characteristics of postmodernism and how it manifests itself in musical performance, as will be discussed in the latter sections of this document.

Turner accepted van Gennep's three categories of life-passage or initiation rituals, but he took greatest interest in the second, "in-between" phase of life-passage rites. He focused heavily on this middle step, the liminal period, and more specifically on the qualities of the individuals who inhabit that state. He found that, in many cultures, liminal persons fit almost no concrete classifications; by their very nature they are "betwixt and between" (Turner 1969, p. 359), and thus symbol and metaphor become necessary for describing and mediating their state. The liminal state is often likened to death, to the womb, to being in the wilderness, to invisibility, and so on. Liminal entities are expected to be humble, submissive, passive, and obedient without question. Their obedience is not to another individual of higher status (for they themselves are not merely of low status; rather, they simply have no status at all), but to the authority of the entire community into which they seek entry. Even if this authority is represented by a single individual elder or "ritual master", the person filling that role stands symbolically in the place of the entire social construct, not as a distinct individual. Of liminal persons, Turner says, "It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life" (Turner 1969, p. 95) and that "they have to be shown that in themselves they are clay or dust, mere matter, whose form is impressed upon them by society" (Turner 1969, p. 103).

This lack of status often results in a close sense of kinship among those who enter into the liminal state together. Turner calls this state of connection *communitas*, out of which emerges a sense of group identity. According to Turner, society in general exists in two different states: the "normal" structured, hierarchical, differentiated state, and the undifferentiated state of *communitas*, wherein all function as a single entity, without status, structure, or hierarchy (though all in this state still function in subordination to the ritual elders or masters).

Turner likens *communitas* to the space between spokes of a wheel: The spokes themselves define the space between them, the space has to be there, but the space is only what it is because of the spokes (Turner 1969, p. 127). Everything about the liminal state plays into this structure/anti-structure duality: hierarchy gives way to radical equality, systems of nomenclature give way to anonymity, pride of position is abandoned for humility, and an individual's right to speak as an individual is given up for silence.

The liminal state, and the beings and qualities inhabiting it, are almost always imbued with and bounded around by magico-religious qualities. This bounding is crucial, because if structure is key to society's function, then any being or state existing outside of this structure is inherently dangerous; it must be circumscribed and kept distinct from those in the "normal" state. When an individual is to move from one life state to another, rarely do they move directly "up" or "down" from one social stratum to another. Instead, they must leave structure entirely and enter the liminal state of *communitas*, in order to then return to structure in a different state. Once outside of structure, there exist only these careful symbolic boundaries to prevent the liminal person from remaining outside the structural system forever, or attempting to break out of the structure entirely, thereby distorting or breaking the social fabric as it is currently preserved.

Liminal space, then, whether or not the ritual nature of its generation was deliberate and recognized, paradoxically functions to both maintain societal and social cohesion *and* provide an arena for generating even the most dramatic social change; and it accomplishes this, nearly always, while functioning at a level beneath cognitive consciousness. The late ritual scholar Catherine Bell, in her 1992 book *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Bell 1992), gives a name for this quality of ritual: she demonstrates how rituals are embedded in "misrecognition" of their true purpose, lying "beyond the reach of a logical theoretical articulation" (Bell 1992, p. 115). It is this aspect of misrecognition that makes rational and rigorous study of liminality and ritual functions so challenging, because in whatever element of human socialization is studied, there is an unperceived under-layer beneath that which can be observed and quantified, and the hidden forces that function there are where ritual strategy and liminality can function most profoundly.

Moreover, even if societal norms or individual identities shift from one side to the other of this liminal space, this change from before to after is as nothing when compared to the difference between "normal" society and the anti-structural *tabula rasa* qualities of the liminal space itself and the *communitas* it generates. Ritually and strategically managed liminal space can effect transformation of an individual or an entire community—or, conversely, it can ensure that change does not happen and that every participant emerges firmly grounded in the social reality the rituals maintain.

The concepts brought into play by liminality have, in the decades since Turner first explored them, spread beyond the area of ritual studies into other disciplines. Secular cultural anthropologist Robbie Davis-Floyd has applied ritual theory analysis to a process through which a large percentage of adults in the United States pass at some point in their lives, i.e., that of participating in the birth of a child in a hospital. In her study *Birth as an American Rite of Passage* (Davis-Floyd 2003), Davis-Floyd synthesized the works of many noted ritual scholars, drawing heavily upon van Gennep, Turner, and others[2] to create a list of characteristics of ritual in general, whether initiatory or otherwise. She defines ritual as a "patterned, repetitive, and symbolic enactment of a cultural belief or value" (Davis-Floyd 2003, pp. 8–9), proposing that its workings are an integral part of human society in general, deployed with greater intensity in particular moments in cultural life. Ritual, she says, explicates its symbolic messages through often-rhythmic repetition. This repetition and redundancy have the effect of first achieving a sense of "cognitive simplification", followed by a "cognitive stabilization", in all participants, pulling each to the same highly suggestible mental level; this increases the ability of the ritual strategies to work on everyone, something far more difficult if participants approach the process in different mental and emotional states (Davis-Floyd 2003, p. 12). Davis-Floyd synthesizes the theories of numerous ritual scholars to draw out four particular strategic techniques often used to accomplish this goal of cognitive simplification: rhythmic repetition, hazing, strange-making, and symbolic inversion (Davis-Floyd 1994, pp. 323–40). These are frequently-employed strategies for this combination simplification/stabilization process: what is familiar is altered to seem strange and alien, what is normal is traded for the completely abnormal, and established symbolic relationships are turned inside-out and upside-down, all creating an environment of confusion and disorientation in which the participant has no reference points for expectation or normalcy (Davis-Floyd 2003, p. 19). The progress of the ritual will feel inevitable and unchanging, with a pre-determined order and progression from which there is no deviation possible. This progression of inevitability often leads to some climactic moment when the emotional experience of participants is at a particularly heightened state, and it is this climactic emotional moment that enables the cognitive transformation (and/or reinforcement of existing status) of the already unified and stabilized participants to solidify. These strategies serve to induce the state of *communitas* in the participants and ensure that the ritual process will not break out of its boundaries and risk the

[2] Including but not limited to Geertz, Marcus, Fischer, Leach, Wallace, Needham, McManus, Moore, Myerhoff, and Malinowski.

destabilization of ordinary social structure during the dangerous period of anti-structure at the heart of the liminal process. They are not limited to particular method or medium but rather approaches that could apply across any number of disciplines.

Turner himself shifted his focus away from liminality as an element of ritual to a broader look at performance studies and practice theory, and he later coined the term "liminoid" to express the dynamic of liminal-type characteristics appearing in non-ritual settings (Turner 1982). Danish anthropologist Bjørn Thomassen questions this choice, suggesting that removing the liminal from a ritual setting and allowing it to be more imprecise and performative does not take into account the ritual-like strategies and sequences which often occur in non-classic ritual settings (Thomassen 2009, p. 15). Thomassen, like Davis-Floyd, favors opening the discussion of liminality to a far broader set of circumstances while maintaining the key salient characteristics with which Turner introduced it to begin with (transitionality, transformation, *communitas*, and often the presence of "masters" to guide the process), and widening the arena of research fields through which it might be approached.

Arpad Szakolczai takes this theory a step farther, examining several of Turner's posthumous essays that link to the work of nineteenth-century psychologist and philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey and address long-standing questions about the nature and structure of human experience itself. In these essays, he suggests, Turner's goal was to "place the triadic, sequential and processual structure of rites of passage at the core of anthropology, overcoming Durkheimian classificatory logic...the solution is the recognition that the sequential order of a rite of passage *is the structure of lived experience*" (Szakolczai 2009, p. 147). This perspective takes liminality into a new realm with new challenges: First, if liminality permeates all personal and social change, how can its presence or absence be realistically identified? Second, and even more paradoxically, when all of society shifts, where is the sense of control or boundary? How can safety be maintained, and how can the space between the structural/anti-structural wheel-spokes keep their integrity, if the society itself is not functioning outside the liminal space to bound it? What governs transformation when the institution and its ritual masters are no longer outside, but are within the liminal space itself, undergoing transformation in communitas with the entire fabric of society?

Szakolczai, Thomassen, and political anthropologist Agnes Horvath have thus moved liminal studies into the political arena, using it as a lens to examine cultural and societal shifts worldwide. They place a particular focus on the question of liminality as key to the rise of Communism in Eastern Europe after World War II. All three scholars in various writings pose the question: what happens when liminality and *communitas* go wrong? What happens when the legitimate ritual masters are replaced by 'trickster' figures (Jung 1969)[3] who impede the progress of transitional liminal time and hold it fixed in place, and do not permit it to end (Agnes and Thomassen 2008)?

These scholars examine the mythology of the "trickster"—beings perpetually on the margins, never engaged in community, shadowy, and generally not to be trusted—against the tenets of liminality. According to Szakolczai, the trickster figure in an unmanaged liminal situation often attempts to usurp the role of the ritual master, thus perpetuating the "crisis" nature of the liminal phase and holding the community in the un-structured state indefinitely. Agnes Horvath examines this phenomenon in her article "Tricking into the Position of the Outcast: A Case Study in the Emergence and Effects of Communist Power" (Horvath 1998), analyzing the speeches of a particular Hungarian Communist leader through the lens of liminal theory. She demonstrates how the structure and imagery of these speeches, rather than their actual content or message, function to create and sustain the conditions necessary for extended maintenance of a liminal state among the populace.

Horvath's work focuses heavily on how the reign of Communism represented, especially in Eastern Europe, a period of suspended or "stuck" liminality following the nearly global liminal period that should have come to a close following the Second World War. (Whether the liminal

[3] The "trickster" is one of the archetypes found in (Jung 1969).

period was successfully negotiated by the rest of the non-Communist world is another question entirely, and one with which she does not engage here.) Horvath offers an intriguing case for liminality as an underlying principle for the emergence and staying power of the Communist Party during the twentieth century, as she analyzes the speeches of a single individual Hungarian Communist leader over a five-year period. She discovers that while the overall content of the speeches is unremarkable—disorganized, unsophisticated, incoherent, and needlessly repetitive—their *form* suggests an entirely different perspective. The speeches present uncomplicated emotional messages, repeated over and over in similar ways; these are overlaid with the pairing together of opposing images, e.g., discipline/freedom, obedience/democracy, suffering/comfort, in a manner at once both deliberately confusing and rationally unacknowledged (or as Bell might suggest, "misrecognized" (Bell 1992)). Horvath demonstrates how the overall process of these speeches can be analyzed as mirroring traditional liminal processes, but with a caveat: The difference in this case, she suggests, is that instead of using these strategies to move a society through the liminal journey into stability, the Communist Party's unarticulated aim was to instead hold society permanently in the state of *communitas*, thus maintaining the anti-structure of liminal space indefinitely while attempting to give it the illusion of stability.

If, as Szakolczai suggests, the pattern first suggested by Arnold van Gennep as a template for ritual initiation is in reality the pattern for all human experience and identity-forming, it is a logical extension to expect that this pattern will manifest fractally in varied ways throughout human culture and history, including and especially through myth, story, and the arts. Thus we may return to the Passion story, and the choral tradition of its musical settings and performance, with a new eye for how this mythic journey of Christ manifests and echoes the process of liminality and transformation.

3. The Choral Passion as Liminal Space

> *Whether dream or myth...in these adventures there is an atmosphere of irresistible fascination ... that which has to be faced, and is somehow profoundly familiar to the unconscious—though unknown, surprising, and even frightening to the conscious personality– makes itself known; and what formerly was meaningful may become strangely empty of value ... the summons can no longer be denied. (Campbell 1973, p. 46)*

If we consider the journey of Christ through the Passion narrative, we can very clearly see the architecture of van Gennep's and Turner's constructs for ritual transformation echoed throughout the story, as well as elements of ritual strategy and function at work. Early elements of the "separation" portion of the journey exhibit themselves, not just in the Scriptural narrative, but in the traditional forms of the musical settings as drawn from the past. In numerous oratorio Passion settings, an interpolated choral introductory movement explicitly (in the manner of the opening movement of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, "*Kommt, ihr Töchter*") or implicitly (e.g., Telemann's many Passion settings beginning with chorales) takes this role. Even the insertions of a simple *exordio* in responsorial Passion settings from the sixteenth century and onward (part of the liturgical ritual) (Von Fischer and Braun 2014) could be said to function in this "attend and enter the story" role, as listeners/congregants are invited not simply to hear the story but to enter into the journey *with* Jesus. Similarly, though it is not generally proclaimed as part of the Passion itself but takes a pivotal role in the larger ritual of the Mass, the telling of the Last Supper connects the Passion to the central Christian ritual uniting Jesus (the one who undergoes the ritual liminal journey) with his followers: first his disciples, and then by extension all who share in the "communion" he instituted there. This is a clear ritual signifier that the liminal journey to be undertaken is more than observance of another's passage but that it intends to include and thus transform all of Jesus' followers as well.

The "separation" moment of van Gennep's tripartite form is advanced in the Garden of Gethsemane, in which Jesus goes away from his disciples to pray; he asks for the cup to be taken from him, but he also accepts the road set before him ("Not my will but yours be done", Luke 22:42). That he

returns to his disciples and finds them sleeping highlights his drawing away from them all the further, and the three-fold repetition of this sequence both narratively and ritually reinforces this separation.

The moment in the Scriptural Passion narratives in which a threshold is definitively crossed, when the journey becomes inevitable, is the betrayal of Judas and the arrest of Jesus. Here the liminal process begins in earnest; Jesus' experiences moving forward reflect the same pattern of trials and increasing intensity as the classical depiction of any initiatory transformational journey. The precise sequence of events varies slightly from evangelist to evangelist, but in each of the four Gospels Jesus is betrayed by Judas,[4] the soldiers approach, the disciples attack, one cuts off the ear of the High Priest's slave[5], and Jesus is carried off. In Matthew and Mark's account, the disciples' flight from the scene is explicitly cited. All four Gospel accounts contain Peter's denial of Christ. The gospels differ regarding elements such as the stripping of Jesus' clothing and the wrapping with a purple cloak, but all contain the literal experience of Jesus' "trial" before the authorities (the priests and/or Pontius Pilate).

The narrative elements of abandonment and "stripping" are typical of the liminal journey, and these can be witnessed in various tellings of liminal myths and ritual experiences throughout human history. We can see them in the goddess Inanna's relinquishing of her possessions as she moves through the gates of the Underworld in ancient Sumerian myth (Wolkstein and Kramer 1983); the tonsuring and habits of those entering religious orders of old, or the buzz-cut and colorless military uniforms of new boot camp recruits, operate under the same mechanisms (Davis-Floyd 1998).[6] Anthropologist Robbie Davis-Floyd's theories regarding cognitive simplification in ritual settings (Davis-Floyd 2003, pp. 8–9), noted previously, suggest that many of these ritual strategies analyzed as the "trials" of the liminal journey by Turner function more to effect mental simplification and cognitive reduction than to strengthen and test the initiate. Within the Passion narrative, we see these elements crop up with frequency: Peter's repeated denials, Jesus' repeated questionings, the beatings and mocking by the Roman soldiers, the strange-making and symbolic inversion as Jesus the condemned criminal is cloaked in royal purple and crowned with thorns (juxtaposed of course with the image of the King of all creation being mocked and killed like a common criminal, forming an ironic double inversion)—all of these elements function within the Passion story to assist the initiate, and likewise, Davis-Floyd would suggest, we who have already (ritually and narratively) identified with him, into a simplified and suggestible emotional state.

As the Passion narrative progresses from the trial before Pilate (and in the case of Luke's gospel, the trial before Herod), through the beatings and humiliation and the carrying of the cross, to the crucifixion itself, as the crowds' taunt Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Matthew 27:40), the equalizing and *communitas*-engendering cognitive simplification laid out by Davis-Floyd and other strategy- and praxis-based ritual theorists continues and intensifies. Here the narrative continues to draw the participant in, "grind them down", as Turner would advocate (Turner 1969, p. 95), preparing them for the climactic moment of the liminal process.

At the moment of Christ's death on the cross, a curious thing happens from a liminal and symbolic perspective: we have established how the narrative works not only to tell of Christ's journey through liminal space but also to draw participants into the journey as well. At the moment of conscious release and unity with the Father ("It is finished" in John; "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" in Luke; in Matthew and Mark he merely "cried out" and "breathed his last."[7]), in all four Gospel accounts, the veil in the temple is torn, thereby in this moment of highest ritual intensity giving a powerful symbolic image of the destruction of the barrier between human and divine. At the same time, however, at this point in the narrative the listener/watcher is cut off from the remainder

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4 The kiss of betrayal is omitted from John's account.
5 John's Gospel identifies Peter as the disciple with the sword.
6 Davis-Floyd, in her analysis of ritual initiation processes, cites this phenomenon in her studies of ritual operation in societal settings, whether these situations self-identify as "ritual" or not. (Davis-Floyd 1998).
7 John 19:30; Luke 23:46; Mark 15:37; Matthew 27:50, respectively.

of Christ's story; the remaining brief portions of the narrative re-establish the separateness of the now-dead Jesus from the living who remain behind, react to his death, and care for his body. While the Gospels themselves continue the narrative to its mythic and liminally fulfilled conclusion with the Resurrection and Ascension, the Passion narratives as set for liturgical use from the early Church through to the concert settings of the eighteenth century stop at the tomb. Even the most popular of the widely freely-composed non-Scriptural libretti (not intended for liturgical use), such as Rammler's *Der Tod Jesu* (set by many composers, including Graun and Telemann), the "Brockes-Passion" (a text by German poet Barthold Heinrich Brockes), and Metastasio's *La Passione di Gesù Cristo*, stop at this point. The remainder of Jesus' journey is not conveyed as part of the normative Passion story; the telling does not continue with the telling of his return with the gift of salvation, his triumph over death, the stone rolled away from the tomb and the greeting of the disciples by angels, his ascension to the Father, or his sending of the Holy Spirit. The universal connection to the remainder of this liminal path is abruptly severed in the telling of the Passion, denying a sense of closure or finality to those who had entered the liminal journey with him. This is of course one of the goals of the Passion proclamation in its place as part of Christian ritual worship in the context of Holy Week; the Church pauses at the tomb and waits before continuing with the next part of the story.

However, as the Passion moves away from church and into concert performance, and especially as it is being reclaimed by new and often non-Christian composers, this incomplete liminal journey needs to be addressed as its own phenomenon. How do composers negotiate the issue, and how does the postmodern perspective from which many of these composers emerge deal with the phenomenon of a highly structured narrative that, by its existence within the realm of liminal space-time, lives at the same time in a world of anti-structure? To further address this issue, we turn now to an examination to the manifestations of "postmodernism"—both as it emerges in contemporary thought and society, and as that emergence is reflected in the art and music of its time.

4. Situating Postmodernism

> *Postmodernism can expand into a still larger problem: is it only an artistic tendency or also a social phenomenon, perhaps even a mutation in Western humanism? If so, how are the various aspects of this phenomenon—psychological, philosophical, economic, political—joined or disjoined? (Hassan 2001, p. 279)*

Postmodernism, as the expression of a prevailing cultural mode of thought, grew out of a post-WWII disenchantment with the tenets of Enlightenment-based modernism. It has proven itself unusually resistant to concrete definition or categorization, being called by turns "slippery" (Felluga 2011), "maddeningly imprecise" (Kramer 2002, p. 13), and prompting the hope that "it would disappear under the weight of its own incoherence or simply lose its allure as a set of 'new ideas'"(Kramer 2002, p. vii). Some scholars are skeptical of the entire idea of postmodernism or postmodernity; macro-sociologist Bernhard Giesen writes that postmodernism "bears the dust of the latest fad", believing instead that Western culture now finds itself not in a "post" modern state but instead in an inevitable third phase of the modernity which began with the rational turn of the Enlightenment and moved through Romanticism's subjective turn into the current cultural impulse to seek new certainties and existential terra firma (Giesen 2009, p. 240).

If postmodernism as a concept is challenging to define with certainty, then clearly the postmodern artistic expression emerging from it will be likewise; it is unsurprising that there is little consensus regarding its priorities or boundaries. Perhaps one of the more helpful perspectives on postmodernism comes from French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard in his *The Postmodern Condition* (Lyotard 1989). For Lyotard, the rise of postmodern is connected to its rejection of the grand narrative or "metadiscourse", which for Lyotard was the defining characteristic of modernism. The modern, via its birth in Enlightenment thinking, would always value progress and development, with everything coming into existence through a grand narrative that develops over time. Postmodernism, then, represents a break in this ongoing sense of progress; instead of the meta-narrative, the micro-narrative

now takes over and becomes dominant as the "quintessential form of imaginative invention" (Lyotard 1989, p. 60)[8]. From an artistic standpoint, this concept of meta- and micro-narrative gives the musician a place to start examining what a "postmodern" musical perspective might look like: it frees this perspective from the concept of a metanarrative just as it frees the composer from writing in one, and allows for a much broader exploration.

Ihab Hassan, in his essay "Toward a Concept of Postmodernism" (Hassan 2014), identifies a series of oppositional distinctions between modernism and postmodernism that are helpful, from an artistic perspective, in connecting with an understanding of postmodernism's salient characteristics: Modernism embraces a sense of form, closed and connected; postmodernism is anti-form, open and disjunct. Modernism embraces design and purpose; postmodernism, chance and play. Modernism is structured hierarchically, holding value in rationality and articulable truth; postmodernism is more likely to exist in anarchy, letting "truth" remain unspoken or be read only between the lines. Modernism values the whole, complete, finished; postmodernism is more likely to embrace the process more than its completion. In this way, according to Hassan, postmodernism separates itself from what came before it and reshapes both art and thought.

Hassan identifies indeterminacy and immanence as the two most crucial markers of postmodernism. The first, indeterminacy, reveals a "vast will to unmaking" everything Western culture and discourse once held as firm and unassailable; rather, postmodernism leans to discontinuity, rupture, decomposition. The second, the pull for "immanence", he defines as "the capacity of mind to generalize itself in symbols, intervene more and more into nature, act upon itself through its own abstractions" (Hassan 2014, p. 123) and thus connect to its environment in a different way. These two concepts are not dialectically opposed to one another, nor does one generate the other; they mutually generate one another, each creating a situation where the other is needed.

Jonathan Kramer, without referring directly to Hassan, identified in his article "The Nature and Origins of Musical Postmodernism" (Kramer 2002) a total of sixteen characteristics often exhibited by postmodernism in music, many of which reflect Hassan's more general theoretic concepts above. Kramer believes that postmodern music is generally not simply a rejection of modernism or its continuation, but that it "has aspects of both a break and an extension"; any sense that the past and present should be divided and bounded one from another is rejected. Postmodernism rejects barriers between "high" and "low" styles, questioning the mutual exclusivity of elite vs. popular values. By extension, postmodernism according to Kramer considers music as relevant to, not autonomous from, social and political contexts. Structural unity will not necessarily be valued, nor will holding a particular "type" of compositional technique throughout a piece. Postmodern music is often ironic. Technology as constitutive rather than assistive, references to or quotations from other cultures, embrace of fragmentation or discontinuity—all are fair game in musical postmodernism, an ethos that tends to welcome paradox and be skeptical of oppositional duality, not requiring a piece of music to hold a single meaning or ethos. Finally, for Kramer, postmodern music "locates meaning and even structure in listeners, more than in scores, performances, or composers" (Kramer 2002, p. 17).

Kramer sees postmodernism "not as a historical period, but as an attitude—a current attitude that influences not only today's compositional practices but also how we listen to and use music of other eras" (Kramer 2002, p. 14). He echoes Lyotard's assertion that the very nature of the postmodern must by definition be in some way a reaction to or against the modernism that preceded it. Thus for Kramer the breaking of the metanarrative for the micronarrative, the release of structural

[8] Giesen would doubtless disagree with Lyotard here; for him, the descent into the micronarrative would be a symptom of the crisis of the second over-subjective turn of modernity, to be overcome by a reassertion of absolutes in the third. (Giesen, "Three Cultural Projects.").

unity for fragmentation, and the abandonment of formula for chaos, themselves become the fabric of postmodernism simply by virtue of their rebellion against what preceded them.[9]

Neo-Romantic composer Robin Holloway, in his 1989 article about the shift from modern to postmodern music entitled "Modernism and After in Music" (Holloway 1989), similarly sets out a list of characteristics he feels are common to postmodern music in general, but from the perspective of the composer rather than the theorist. First, he notes that postmodern music takes advantage of the wide swath of source material available to composers who, like Stravinsky, wish to take advantage of "creative kleptomania", including world and popular music as well as centuries of Western art music. On the opposite side of the same coin, the broad availability and use of music from every time and age has made it difficult for this time to develop a culture or "sound" of its own. "We are all chameleons", Holloway writes, "everything is revival; and such superabundance of knowingness allows any previous style to be made to order" (Holloway 1989, p. 66). Finally, he sees nostalgia not as a negative or simply "anti-modern" retreat from anything new in the music of this era but as a source of great power and connection; in a time of violence and uncertainty, he says, "it's where things are good—undestroyed, unpolluted, unabused. 'Nostalgia' is a burning emotion, fierce rather than enervating, purposeful rather than lazy" (Holloway 1989, p. 63). Modernism, he suggests, took us to farther horizons than we had ever traveled before, but at the same time it in some way severed our connection between past and present. The task of the postmodern, Holloway believes, is to re-forge that connection.[10]

Holloway's view of postmodernism's impulse to seek new certainties and connections with culture, community, place, and time is almost a direct echo of macro-sociologist Bernhard Giesen's analysis of the third of modernity's three "projects" (Giesen 2009).. Giesen's disdain for the term "postmodernism" has been noted; for Giesen, the phenomena commonly associated with postmodernism are themselves crucial components of modernism. The Enlightenment represented the "turn to the rational"; Romanticism, then, initiated a "turn to the subject", a dismantling of rational assumptions, and a pushing of morality's boundaries to their farthest extent. For Giesen, the third turn of the Modern era is "a new quest for certainties." He writes, "The price of the bold venture to untie all bonds of universal morality and functional rationality is anxiety and anomie, a cynical retreat from commitment, and overall apathy...faced with such an abyss, the anchorless movement of disenchantment provokes a new longing for roots and for certainties beyond questions, debates, and deconstructions" (Giesen 2009, p. 245).

This summary of selected scholars' approach to naming and describing the movement collectively understood as "postmodernism", as well as artists' and musicians' views regarding how this movement plays out in artistic expression, may begin to give some clues to why and how the Passion story might be particularly evocative to postmodern composers. We have seen that postmodern music is largely defined by its complicated relationship with its own past; it reclaims its heritage as its own but completely renegotiates it. The very act of re-claiming this traditional musical genre from the past and re-shaping it into a familiar and yet new re-invention of itself is thus a quintessentially postmodern tactic—the very choice to *write* a Passion in the twenty-first century could be seen as a tendency toward the postmodern.

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[9] When speaking of the ethos of rebellion against and abandonment of the procedures and paradigms of the modern status quo, we would be remiss not to acknowledge John Cage and the pivotal point he holds in the shift out of modernism into postmodernism. Cage stands as an enigmatic figure in the modernist-postmodernist musical landscape; consensus holds him as a crucial catalyst between modern and postmodern music, though not all agree as to where he stands on the continuum. See (Bertens 1994; Hamm 1997).

[10] Kramer appears to take a polar opposite stance on nostalgia's relationship to the postmodern from that of Holloway: "Nostalgia for the 'good old days of tunes and tonality ... is not so much postmodernist as antimodernist ... An important first step in understanding musical postmodernism, therefore, is to distinguish it from nostalgic artworks." He then proceeds to cite works by Rochberg and Torke, whom Holloway had classified in his lineage from modern to postmodern composers, as among those whose works are merely "nostalgic." (Kramer).

In postmodern musical expression, there is no limit to the vast sound-worlds a composer may explore and utilize, and former boundaries between high and low, artistic and popular, here and there, are often defied or dismantled. When in 2000, as part of the "Passion 2000" project sponsored by Helmut Rilling and the Internationale Bachacademie Stuttgart, Argentinian composer Osvaldo Golijov composed a *Pasión según San Marco*, he sought to express the Passion story through the eyes of the Latin American poor (Golijov 2002). His setting called for folk soloists, Argentinean percussion, and Afro-Cuban and *capoeira* dancers, supplementing the St. Mark text with excerpts from the psalms, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and Kaddish, as well as writings of Galician poet Rosalia de Castro. In 2008, Greek/Dutch composer Calliope Tsoupaki crafted a massive *St. Luke Passion*, drawing from her Orthodox religious background in sound and content and incorporating traditional Byzantine chanters, Palestinian vocals, and several Middle-Eastern instruments in the work, intermixing them with Western instruments and chorus. Brad and Doug Baillet, in the program notes of their 2014 *Gnostic Passion*, write that the musical influences on the work are a "collage-like melange of Stravinsky, Berlioz, Verdi, the Beatles, and the Dirty Projectors" (Baillet and Baillet 2014).

Another characteristic common to postmodern music, as we have noted, is the way former boundaries of structure, linearity, time, and narrative are similarly no longer accepted; they may be abandoned, fractured, or entirely re-envisioned. This is also made manifest in several of the new body of Passion settings: in Êriks Eŝenvalds' *Passion and Resurrection*, set for string orchestra, soprano soloist, chorus, and solo quartet, the libretto is so free and non-linear that it barely constitutes a narrative as such, presuming the listener to be already familiar with the story. It contains no original textual material but quotes different sources and faith traditions (primarily Scripture and selected excerpted texts from the rites of the Orthodox and Catholic traditions); though some of the typical Passion texts are used, they are not employed in an expected way. Rather, this work forms a series of moments, scenes from the final two days of Jesus' life on earth, which are loosely strung together to give the impression of the telling of the full story—which, in the case of Eŝenvalds' work, proceeds past the Crucifixion into the Resurrection. Chinese composer Tan Dun, in his *Water Passion*, begins his telling of the Passion not with the Passion story itself but with the baptism of Jesus, and he combines the Matthew narrative with scriptural interpolations and seven short texts of his own. Throughout his setting he incorporates themes and sounds of water: at the heart of his setting are seventeen sound-amplified bowls of water in the shape of a cross on the stage, and elements of movement and improvisation take key roles in the work.

Among postmodern composers, tonality may be embraced or dismissed to great extent, but it is rarely rejected or ignored as it was by modernist composers such as Boulez and Schönberg. The postmodern approach to tonality, however, seldom adheres to former eras' concepts of functional harmony, though it may momentarily borrow from the harmonic structures of another era or even borrow passages of music entirely, or create its own systems of tonal organization. Interestingly, this element of freedom toward tonal systems can also manifest itself out of the above-mentioned incorporation of "folk" or popular musical styles and genres intermixed with more conventional Western "art music" compositional processes. For example, Tsoupaki's inclusion of Byzantine chanting in her Passion setting brings with it the introduction of Orthodox micro-tones into the equal tempered system observed by the Western chorus and orchestra, and the traditional instruments and sonorities included not just in Tsoupaki's setting but also those of Tan Dun and Golijov brought significant implications for the role tonality would play in each work. These are only a small number of examples demonstrating how postmodern cultural expressions can both break with and at the same time re-think their relationship with historical continuity; language and images from the grand narrative of the Enlightenment and onward remain, but they are significantly altered in their presentation and meaning and re-presented in a completely different milieu.

Considered side-by-side with ritual studies' analysis of the nature of liminality, this summary of the salient characteristics of postmodernism, both in society and as it manifests in music, can be seen to have definite parallels with the movement from organized "normal" society to the undifferentiated

in-betweenness of liminal space. In the liminal world, time and space exist, but they do not adhere to the rules of linear progression of the outside world. Liminal beings are cut off from the narrative heritage of their social identity; through their liminal journey, they will have the messages of the transformational journey imprinted on them in different ways until their reemergence into society. While this can be accomplished by a complete *tabula rasa* erasure of all that had come before, it can also be accompanied by a puzzle-piece reshaping of the old "pieces" of existence into a new picture. It is also important to remember that everything in liminal space is symbolically mediated, and in the realm of symbol things do not necessarily mean what they appear to on the surface. Regardless of content, the symbolic ripping apart of the linear narrative of a people's past existence and reimagining it anew, assimilating some aspects of the past while jettisoning others, is itself a powerful image for those moving through transformation.

The radical egalitarianism of postmodernism is, of course, evocative of one of the defining characteristics of liminality and Victor Turner's state of *communitas*; in his study of liminal beings (Turner 1969, p. 97), he found that this sense of forming a new collective made up of all those moving through the liminal space together is one of the most powerful (and dangerous[11]) aspects of the liminal phenomenon. Drawn together by the journey they take together, all come to be viewed as of equal importance, with no hierarchy of one over the other. This sense of all ideas as being equally valid is of course one of contemporary culture's war cries against the terror of postmodern "moral relativism" as opposed to "absolute truth" and begins to make plain the problems and dangers some elements of culture perceive regarding postmodernism as a whole. Viewed as a mode of thought, this terror could perhaps be reasoned with; viewed within the strategic and non-cognitive realm of liminal theory it must be acknowledged that this form of radical equality can seriously threaten the status quo and must, for those who value that status quo, be very carefully managed, bounded, and hedged. By extension, for those who have an interest in changing the shape, values, and priorities of the status quo, the journey into and through ritual and liminal space provides a vehicle to do so.

The postmodern shift in the artist's relationship with the audience can be seen as another manifestation of the boundary-breaking radical equality of liminal *communitas*. Just as the breakdown of internal musical structure (and thus the emergence of a new anti-structure) can take place within the preservation of designated aural boundaries within a work of music, we also can see the expected roles and boundaries of the concert hall shifting. The audience is more likely to be seen, not as silent witnesses, but as active participants in the performance being generated, John Cage's *4′33″* being of course the extreme example of this sort of boundary-bursting. Considered from the perspective of liminality, in this case the division between performer and audience is all but removed, and the audience is thus invited into the same liminal "state" as the performers, without hierarchy or differentiated status between them.

This blurring of roles and status between performer and audience can be accomplished in other, subtler ways as well. The historically normative concert hall has performers at one end of the room, raised or raked above floor level, and illuminated; the audience is separated from them, seated below them, and generally in darkness. As composers create works where this patterned norm is deliberately shifted, the symbolically mediated relationship between performer and audience is likewise changed, as in works such as David Lang's *The Whisper Opera*,[12] Music on Main's *The Orpheus Project*,[13] and even the current proliferation of musical "flash mobs" bringing performances to unlikely locales. John Luther Adams' *Sila: The Breath of the World*, which premiered in July of 2014 at Lincoln

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[11] The danger to established social structure stems from the paradoxical power of liminal beings who, though they are in effect powerless and without identity or stature in liminal space, nonetheless have the power to choose whether to rejoin structural society; if they choose not to do so, or if the liminal arena is not carefully bounded, they have almost unlimited potential to take the anti-structure of liminal space *into* society's structure and re-make or even un-make it.

[12] David Lang's *The Whisper Opera* premiered in 2013 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

[13] Music on Main is a Vancouver musical organization led by David Pay, whose stated goal is "creating informal, intimate musical experiences" that take music outside of the concert hall. *The Orpheus Project*, a site-specific event wherein

Center's "Out of Doors" festival, sets five different ensembles scattered around a large outdoor area, with audience members able to move around and experience an entirely different perspective of the piece depending on where they stand. The proliferation of "sound installation art", by artists such as Maryann Amacher, Susan Philipz, and Brian Eno, not only removes the live performer from the performance but also irrevocably alters the image of "audience" from the seated-in-one-place spectator role that has long been the norm in concert-style musical performance. These public installations also subvert the role of intentionality in audience members, removing the concept of an individual *choosing* to attend a performance and instead setting up situations where listeners may wander unknowing into the midst of a musical event without necessarily deciding to do so. Again, this removal of hierarchy and unmaking of accepted social roles and positions is highly typical of liminal situations.

5. Conclusions

When approaching a study in which previously independent areas of scholarship are placed in dialogue with one another for perhaps the first time, it is inevitable that the interaction will produce many more questions than it will answers. The field of liminality studies itself is to all intents and purposes little more than half a century old; more recently, the pursuit of liminality as a phenomenon reaching far beyond purposeful ritual settings, particularly in the work of scholars like Catherine Bell and Robbie Davis-Floyd, has been taken up by varied disciplines, as scholars examine the ritual-like behavior and structures that seem to insert themselves into multiple layers of human social existence. This interdisciplinary study has attempted to draw together three threads of inquiry rarely combined and examined as one. The domain of ritual and ritual studies has primarily been in the worlds of theology and anthropology; postmodernism has generally been relegated to the areas of philosophy, literature, architecture, and the arts. Music of course has a home in both the theological and the performance-art worlds, but while "ritual music" is its own field of musical study within the theological realm, concert music has rarely been examined from a ritual perspective.

In the area of music, the interaction of musical performance and ritualized behavior is beginning to be studied on numerous levels, from examinations of how music functions to support or subvert ritual symbolism (e.g., Foley 1995) or build communal identity in contemporary religious ceremony (e.g., Phelan 2008), to studies of how the deployment of music in hegemonic power settings impacts the wider social order. Bruno Nettl's *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music* (Nettl 1995) takes an interesting look at contemporary music schools using the tools of ethnomusicology and examines some of the ritualized aspects of higher education in musical fields. Some scholars are turning attention to the role of music in liminality and the role of liminality in music-making, many within the areas of ethnomusicological field studies: Irish scholars Helen Phelan and Caitríona Ní Shíocháin are studying indigenous music's connection to communal identity-building, Lynn Hooker (Hooker 2007) has undertaken a study of the social role of Romani musicians in Hungary, and Michael Bywater (Bywater 2007) has written about urban street musicians and their negotiation of public space within the context of social marginalization. Cathy Benedict (Benedict 2007) and June Boyce-Tillman (Boyce-Tillman 2009) have written on liminality in the context of music education, and Katherine Butler Brown (Brown 2007) and Stephen Cottrell (Cottrell 2007) have in their own way brought the conversation into our Western concert halls by attempting to assert that *all* music-making is in some way inherently liminal.

Still, the interaction of music studies and liminal studies remains in its early stages. There is as yet limited available published work in academia linking liminality and ritual transformation with the musical composition itself—that is to say, to music on the page, removed from the added dimension of performance and experience. This project has sought in its small way to address that lack: by examining

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the audience was invited to walk around and through various areas of the theater, was performed at The Cultch in July of 2014.

the overall phenomenon of postmodern music from the perspective of liminal studies, exploring the clear resonances between them, and by examining the form and shape of the choral Passion setting, looking briefly at its re-invented approaches by a few postmodern composers. It has looked at the resurgence of the Passion as a serious genre of new choral music, and how that resurgence has closely coincided with the emergence of musical postmodernism as a dominant compositional force. As we have noted, the influences of musical postmodernism on the newly composed Passion settings of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries have resulted in composers re-inventing the Passion form in intriguing ways. Liminally, we have seen how the Passion narrates an almost universal life-passage story in its depiction of Jesus' transformative journey to the tomb, echoing universal myths of sacrifice, loss, and transformation. The decisions composers make regarding how to interpret or tell the story, especially within the varied techniques and approaches common to musical postmodernism (and the patterns of social thought from which they grew), make this form an ideal template upon which to witness the overlaying of a ritual liminal process or journey upon a musical composition. The deep but freely negotiated relationship with which many postmodern composers consider the music and conventions of centuries past offers new and unexplored options for approaching a work such as a Passion setting, a form with its own rich history now being reshaped according to postmodern approaches.[14]

Also crucial is the concept that any instance of liminal space, whether or not the ritual nature of its generation was deliberate and recognized, paradoxically functions to both maintain societal and social cohesion and provide an arena for generating even the most dramatic social change. As we have noted, liminal space can be the matrix for either transforming an individual or group, or reinforcing the societal status quo to hold a community solidly grounded in an existing identity. A liminal space/time event entered but subverted by a "trickster" personality or idea can be derailed or shifted to new purposes and become suspended in an anti-structural state, not permitting the crossing of the threshold into the new state which the liminality was originally generated to bridge.

As liminal studies branch out and widen their scope, the question of what is or is not liminal is in peril of becoming as muddied an issue as that of postmodernism. Just as terms like "postmodernism" and "postmodernity" become enmeshed in conflicting definitions and perspectives, the concept of the liminal is at risk of becoming diffused and undefined, as its original role in ritual transition branches out into examinations of any marginal beings or power negotiation, political struggle, social upheaval, or in fact any time or place where normal hierarchical societal structure does not clearly and obviously function. Horvath and Szakolczai's "broken liminality" studies notwithstanding, this paper takes a position similar to that articulated by Thomassen (Thomassen 2009): that the extent to which liminality can be said to exist in time and space will be in direct proportion to the clarity of ritually defined progression in and through the space[15], and to the value placed on transformation and change (or deliberate maintenance of continuity and stability) as articulated or unarticulated goals for the process.

One of course should not imply any actual *equivalence* between postmodernism and liminality, nor that the presence of some of liminality's salient characteristics in a piece of music necessarily means that the work in question traces a liminal process. Given the previous discussion of how society has progressed through modernism into the difficult-to-define period in which we now find ourselves, however, we must again return to Bernard Giesen and his "third project of modernity" (Giesen 2009): he suggests that all of modern Western culture is still working through its three "projects" of modern

[14] This is of course not to imply that all postmodern music will of necessity be liminal, nor that the ability to *compose* liminally powerful works of music is limited to composers in postmodernity. Richard Wagner, for example, clearly knew and deployed mythic structure and liminal transformation in any number of his operas; it would be fascinating to explore how this liminal template might interact with various musics of various genres and centuries.

[15] Horvath's and Szakolczai's scholarship on "stuck" liminality in Communism stand as the exception that proves the rule, as careful ritual maintenance and perpetuation of the liminal state is what enables it to not end.

thought, resolving a crisis of identity with which we have been struggling through a century of world wars and widespread civil uncertainty. For Giesen, what our contemporary culture might view or label a messy postmodern period may be in essence a crucial step in our sociological growth. As with any sociological turn through history, it is inevitable that this striving will manifest itself in the artistic and musical expression of a people, whether the growth has progressed smoothly or gotten "stuck" somewhere in in-betweenness, looking for a way forward into new meanings and new certainties. Thus, striving to return to a path of healthy transformation into its next phase of existence, the artistic and musical manifestations of liminality we see in much contemporary music may play a significant role in that striving. The Passion form itself, especially in its postmodern rebirth into the body of contemporary repertoire, seems to be an ideal reflective matrix for this transformative process, one that invites both artists and scholars to question not only where we are currently situated as a society and a culture, but what may be the future goal of our transformation.

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Article

Dieter Schnebel: Spiritual Music Today

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Abstract: This article presents an annotated English translation of the composer-theologian Dieter Schnebel's seminal essay exploring music's spiritual capacities. Speaking explicitly from his time and place, Schnebel considers compositional questions arising from the most advanced new music of European modernism. The approach is driven by insights derived from Marxist critical theory and the "new theology" associated with Bonhoeffer, Bultmann, and others. Acknowledging the secularized, religionless society Bonhoeffer had predicted in 1944, Schnebel argues that an authentic *geistliche Musik* has always been one driven by a secularizing dynamic, pressing beyond the walls of the church to engage a broken world of injustice and suffering. For him, the experimental avant-garde is fertile ground, since a music of the Spirit is a new, non-conformist music engaged in renewal. A translator's introduction analyzes briefly the major components of Schnebel's thought.

Keywords: Theodor Adorno; Dietrich Bonhoeffer; Karl Barth; Anton Webern; Gustav Mahler; demythologization; secularization; Confessing Church; German modernism

1. Introduction

On 31 March 1967, now over a half century ago, a German conference on contemporary church music meeting in Kassel programmed an address entitled *Geistliche Musik in der neuen Zeit* (Spiritual Music in Modern Times). The speaker was Dieter Schnebel (b. 1930), trained in theology and musicology at Tübingen, parish minister, teacher of religion, and composer associated with the experimental Darmstadt circle. Under the revised title *Geistliche Musik heute*, the text appeared immediately in an issue of *Musik und Kirche* devoted to questions of sacred music and modernity, then again in collections of Schnebel's writings from 1972 and 1993 (Schnebel 1967[1]; Schnebel 1972, pp. 420–30; Schnebel 1993, pp. 238–55). Still in 2004, a fascinating interview with the composer returns to its points (Gröhn 2006, pp. 233–53), and when Schnebel himself wrote a compact retrospective of his compositional output in 2008, he chose to call it *Geistliche Musik—gestern und heute. Ein Werdegang* (Spiritual Music—Yesterday and Today. A Career), an unmistakable allusion to the earlier essay (Schnebel 2008).

The intellectual commitments that inform Schnebel's views (and his music) are neither routine nor monolithic. Shaped by the dialectical materialism of Theodor Adorno and Ernst Bloch, by the theologies of Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and by the provocative aesthetics of the post-war New Music scene, he insists on a musical theology that embraces the plight of a secularized, fragmented social order, moving unapologetically between the concerns of the modern German Confessing Church on the one hand and the aims of avant-garde composition on the other.

A relatively brief introduction is not the place to undertake anything like a comprehensive exploration of the ideas that inform Spiritual Music Today. A few observations by way of outline seem

[1] The companion essays in the issue are by the theologian Manfred Mezger (*Geistliche Musik—in theologischer Sicht*), the composer and conductor Clytus Gottwald (*Neue Musik in der Kirche—Aspekte und Tendenzen*), and the musicologist and church musician Gerhard Schumacher (*Warum zeitgenössische geistliche Musik?*).

in order nevertheless. One useful point of departure is a remark made much after the fact in 1983, when Schnebel reflected revealingly on the remarkable constellation of influences that had come to inform his worldview:

> There have been times in my life when I have had difficulty connecting, intellectually and morally, the life of an avant-garde artist with that of a theologian who teaches daily religion classes and repeatedly sermonizes, particularly since these two existences ran more or less parallel to each other. Schooled particularly in the "critical theory" of Adorno, I had the feeling that the extremist, nuanced position I represented artistically and intellectually did not mesh straightforwardly with what the church calls simply "faith" (Nauck 2001, p. 81).[2]

The unease with competing allegiances evident here translates, in the essay, into an unwillingness to reach simple conclusions, a refusal to accept that contemporary theology and contemporary composition have nothing important to say to each other. On the contrary, Schnebel strives to weave precisely these incongruent "existences," as he calls them, into a coherent theology of contemporary *geistliche Musik*, that is, of an authentically new music proceeding from the Spirit. In Christian terms, it is not too much to say that he aims to propose the outlines of a musical pneumatology.

The questions Schnebel wants to engage arise at the knotty intersections of the sacred and the secular, the traditional and the innovative, the theological and the musical. What does it mean to speak of music's spiritual or sacred parameters? Is a real sacred music even possible in an anxiety-ridden society traumatized by conflict and divided by competing political systems, a society for which the notion of God seems ever more antiquated and ever less relevant? What role does a music "of the Spirit" play in such an environment? What are the responsibilities of the composer? Of the listener? Schnebel responds to these queries more nearly with challenges than with answers, challenges formulated through the lens of place and time, marshalling the insights of contemporary cultural criticism, social theory, theology, musical analysis, and aesthetics.

It is difficult to overestimate the decisive influence on Schnebel's theology exercised by the philosopher-musician Theodor Adorno, and further, by the whole circle of intellectuals around the so-called Frankfurt School of Marxist critical theory for which Adorno was a leading voice. Indeed, Schnebel penned his lecture-turned-article at the height of the brief but intense personal friendship with Adorno initiated in 1964 and ending with the latter's death in 1969 (Nauck 2001, pp. 128–29). Some twenty-seven years Schnebel's senior, Adorno had been a composition pupil of Alban Berg, sharing with the younger man an intimate knowledge of and regard for the progressive music of the Schoenberg circle. The key roles played particularly by Mahler and Webern in Spiritual Music Today witness this common interest. Further, and more fundamentally, it is reasonable to see reflected in Schnebel's views Adorno's overriding attentiveness to human suffering and oppression, as well as the social theorist's typically guarded optimism that the human lot could be improved through remediated cultural institutions. Adorno's disdain for what he famously called "the culture industry" makes itself heard in Schnebel's work, too, in the latter's condemnation of *geistliche Musik* as a locus for conformism, and in the insight that music of the Spirit must serve as an "impulse" rather than an excuse to acquiesce to the utilitarian forces of mechanical entertainment.

A second nexus of ideas originates in the theologies of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Karl Barth, and Rudolf Bultmann. Much after the fact, Schnebel recalled that he had written an essay "more strongly informed by Barth and particularly Bonhoeffer" (Gröhn 2006, p. 236). Further, it is no coincidence that the Bultmann pupils Ernst Käsemann, Günther Bornkamm, and Herbert Braun come in for citation alongside Barth and Bonhoeffer.[3] To varying degrees, all these theologians reflect the priorities of the

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[2] Unless otherwise remarked, translations from the German sources are my own.

[3] Schnebel's reception of Barth remains largely unexplored. In the 1967 essay, it seems fair to perceive overtones of an admiration for Barth's thesis that Christianity is (dynamic) faith rather than (static) religion. On the other hand, the composer found the theologian to be "a word man" possessed of a mere superficial admiration for Mozart: "I was never

German *Bekennende Kirche* or Confessing Church, the Protestant alliance springing from opposition to the religious policies of the Hitler regime. (Schnebel expressly cites its formational document, the Theological Declaration of Barmen, in his essay.) Gisela Nauck reads Schnebel's perspective through the lens of those priorities, which she distills in

> the notions of secularization [*Säkularisierung*] and demythologization [*Entmythologisierung*]. In order to be the church—that is, in order to arrive at the essence of the Christian religion in the historic figure of Jesus Christ, the church must take upon itself the conditions of the world. It must cast off all the encrusted legends about God and church. Theologically, both notions aspire to a dialectal thinking about God, free of fetish and fundamentalist elements, with the messianic essence of the Passion and Resurrection at its center. In that Jesus offered up his life, he precipitated the new world he had proclaimed. This is an event that, in the process of its transmission, is anchored in perpetual renewal. Musically, this way of thinking suggested to Schnebel that only a music of the avant-garde, with its essential commitments to renewal and change, can be a truly spiritual music (Nauck 2001, p. 169).[4]

The linked concepts of secularization and demythologization are essential to the theology of Rudolf Bultmann, but also to Adorno's critical theory.[5] For Bultmann, a "demythologized" proclamation of the Gospel is one emancipated from a way of speaking that assumes, as the ancient texts do, an enchanted or magical world of spirits. An existential interpretation of the Biblical truths is necessary to introduce the Gospel into the secularized world of reason and science. For Adorno, the casting off of myth is tantamount to the rejection of an uncritical, supposedly objective way of apprehending reality itself. To "demythologize" in Adorno's sense means to remediate the social conditions that hold the human consciousness captive.

The interpretation of both theologian and social theorist—indeed, the structure of the term itself, whether in German or English translation—assumes a state in need of undoing ("*ent-*" or "de-"), a liberating positive acting upon an imprisoning negative. On the theological plane, it is possible to say that an *entmythologisierte* condition is an essentially eschatological one. Schnebel, who adopts neither Bultmann's nor Adorno's perspective straightforwardly, nevertheless seems to strike overtones of both in his assertion below that "the sphere of the spiritual is one saturated with constant renewal, one could almost say with demythologization." For "the radical Lutheran theologian Schnebel, indebted to historical and dialectical materialism" (Metzger 1967, cited in Nauck 2001, p. 169), music and theology are bound together as twin demythologizing forces—that is to say, forces of renewal and liberation that render the Gospel palpable to (again, Schnebel below) "the stage of history in which we find ourselves."

To the notions of secularization and demythologization should be added a third idea that surfaces repeatedly in the essay: the critique of ecclesial language Schnebel prizes in Bonhoeffer's theology. In short, the "tak[ing] upon itself the conditions of the world" means the church's need to jettison antiquated ways of speaking that shroud the Messiah-event in hallowed terms—in myth. The world must be engaged in its secularized reality. Translated into compositional technique, this implies for Schnebel both the unapologetic embrace of radically new musical dialects and a critical, deconstructive approach to text setting. Such approaches are framed not in terms of abstract musical "progress," but rather as the capacity for a real Spirit-possessed music to absorb the human condition of suffering. In exploring the question "What is a contemporary spiritual music?", two modern scholars have

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a proper Barthian. I also hold Bultmann in high regard. But my schoolmates, all these Barthians, smoked pipes and listened to Mozart. That was the Barth religion" (cited in Gröhn 2006, pp 237–38).

4 For another condensed, insightful assessment of Schnebel's theological priorities, see (Pröpsting 2008, pp. 96–97).

5 (Gröhn 2006, pp. 118–25) has explored Schnebel's adoption of the term *Entmythologisierung* in light of Bultmann's as well as Jürgen Moltmann's theology. While acknowledging the socio-political implications of the concept as worked out in Schnebel's music, he does not pursue its import in Adorno's philosophy. This is striking, since it is in relation to Adorno, not to Bultmann or his pupils, that Schnebel chooses to cite the notion of demythologization in Spiritual Music Today. (Dreher 2010, pp. 59–61) traces the term neither to Bultmann nor to Adorno, but rather to the New Testament theologian Hermann Strathmann, who used it as early as 1914.

likewise suggested that such music "cannot be understood, as some critics suggest, as the Emperor's new clothes but as a response to post-Enlightenment secularization" (Sholl and Maas 2017, p. 2). This is both an adequate description of the issues as Schnebel perceives them and the key to the common dynamism governing the spiritual and the musical: both, Schnebel writes, "strive outward toward freedom."

Whatever reception Schnebel's thinking has enjoyed in the German-speaking orbit, his work has not yet penetrated Anglophone discourse, a situation the present translation seeks to correct. In recent years, a growing interest has attached to the religious and spiritual dimensions of modernist art music: the singular figure of Olivier Messiaen has received perhaps the most intense attention in this regard, but also the thought and musical works of (among others) Pärt, Penderecki, Stockhausen, Ligeti, Cage, and Ives have been and continue to be subjected to examinations aiming to uncover qualities we may term "theological" in the broadest sense.[6]

Certainly, Dieter Schnebel and his concerns belong in this burgeoning conversation. Perhaps the most consequential word in Spiritual Music Today is "today", that is, 1967. Schnebel does not propose a systematic theology of spiritual music but rather crafts his perspective as a response to existing social circumstances as he understands them. As with any reader of Adorno, the illusion of objective thought hovering somehow above the fray of history is not at issue here. From subsequent interviews with the composer, it is clear that Schnebel would revise parts of the argument were he to have written it later: the mistrust of "religion" evident already in the first part of the 1967 essay—what he calls the "brimborium" of ecclesial behavior—has moderated in recent years (Gröhn 2006, pp. 238–39; Schnebel 2005, pp. 54–58). But as a coming to terms with the spiritual in music from the perspective of secular modernism's upheavals, Schnebel's voice has something enduring to say to our own time's struggle with similar questions.

2. Dieter Schnebel: Spiritual Music Today

> The dilemma of all spiritual as well as all politically "engaged" music: to express the supposed content by the selection of a title or a text set to music, but not by the actual music, because mere notes are neither Catholic nor communist.
>
> Heinz-Klaus Metzger (to whom this essay is dedicated)

The notion of spiritual music, already problematic in itself, has become thoroughly questionable in the context of contemporary culture. If someone today were to write J.j. (*Jesu juva*) or OAMGD (*omnia ad majorem Dei gloriam*) at the beginning or end of a completed musical work, it would have an obsolete feel, and a dedication like that of Bruckner for his Ninth [Symphony] would be absolutely impossible.[7] Such dedications exist nevertheless, pointing the music to the higher glory of God. A *Deo Gratias* marks the close of Stockhausen's *Gruppen*.[8] Also, Krzysztof Penderecki, "asked why he, the experimental musician, had set a Passion text to music," answered, "I am Catholic" (Stuckenschmidt 1966, p. 152).[9]

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[6] The question of how Schnebel's thought expresses itself in his music cannot be explored here. (Gröhn 2006) and especially (Nauck 2001) offer pertinent work-centered discussions. For a brief English-language analysis of how one of the composer's works (the *Choralvorspiele I/II*) aspires to enact his theology of Spirit, see (Busch and Herchenroeder 2012, pp. 63–64).

[7] Anton Bruckner worked on the unfinished Symphony No. 9 in D minor between 1887 and 1896. Its dedication is *Dem lieben Gott* ("to [my] dear God").

[8] Schnebel might have added that Igor Stravinsky had composed his *Symphony of Psalms* (1930) "to the glory of GOD", some fifteen years before Karlheinz Stockhausen began work on his *Gruppen* for three orchestras and three conductors. In Stravinsky's case, though, the dedication tends to abet the work's neoclassicism, perhaps underscoring the "obsolete feel" Schnebel points out.

[9] Penderecki composed his large-scale *Passio et mors domini nostri Jesu Christi secundam Lucam* between 1963 and 1966. Many of his views about society, religion, and music are developed in (Penderecki 1998).

No matter how honestly they are meant, such remarks leave a bad taste, a bit like Rilke's *Geschichten vom Lieben Gott*.[10]

This is not a bad thing, since music collectively carries the stigma of the painful and the old-fashioned. Ceremonial music, with dressed-up people, has been stylized for a very long time. The external features of most instruments suggest a fossilized charm, and there is something antiquated about a solo performance or an ensemble giving its best. Spiritual music has been affected, since, in the fairly widespread, secularized conditions at present, whoever speaks about God in a thoughtful way already begins to smell of the Salvation Army. The fact that, despite this, spiritual music (or music with a spiritual subject) exerts a certain fascination is attributable less to its content than to the archaism and reverent nature of its subject matter. It has an aesthetic appeal similar to that of monuments like old fortresses, castles, and cathedrals, marvelous because of their lack of subjectivity. In Beckett's *Endgame*, one of the dissociated characters says, concerning questions that have been posed millions of times, "I love the old questions," and then enthusiastically, "Ah the old questions, the old answers, there's nothing like them" (Beckett 1963, p. 255).[11]

Spiritual music, which once concerned itself with making the Spirit present, is today more nearly defined by the spirit of the past, or more precisely, by that spirit's particular realm (which, by the way, does not mean that all is lost, especially since the Spirit moves where it wills, certainly able to express itself in old forms). But it is fatal when music is granted a dignity on account of its subject matter that it cannot so easily derive from itself. More than a few new works live on this and get a positive reception.

The fact that, in the present circumstances, spiritual music has about itself predominantly the "old effect" discussed above is due to a process in which music called "spiritual" has participated since its beginnings, namely that of secularization. As is well known, the spiritual songs of the Middle Ages were sung by the laity [*den Nicht-Geistlichen, den Laien*]. Such songs were conceded as exceptions in order to grant the laity a certain participation in the liturgy shaped by the clergy [*Geistlichen*]. Musically, these unaffected [*kunstlos gesungenen*] folk songs constituted secular enclaves within the strict speech-song [*Sprechgesang*] of the Gregorian repertory, which of course had already been infiltrated by secular polyphony.

The Reformation aimed at the priesthood of all believers and therefore sought to involve the congregation in the service on a regular basis. Consequently, these secularized [*profanisierten*] liturgical songs were adopted to provide an engaged congregation with corresponding music. In the first collections of congregational song in the style of secular music, these are called "spiritual" ["*geistlich*"] (Walther's *Wittenberger Geistliches Gesangbüchlein*, Rhau's *Neue deutsche geistliche Gesänge*).[12] Later pieces that import secular forms into church music carry similar appellations, such as Heinrich Schütz's *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* and the *Geistliche Chormusik*.[13] Such a notion of the spiritual at the same time implies the secular, of course not simply the sanctification of the latter, but rather expression by contemporary means, a making-present through current language.

Because spiritual content is manifested in secular form, sacred music presses outward from the church. Since the classical period at latest, perhaps already since Bach's Passions, spiritual works have been just as often (if not more) intended for the concert hall and its increasingly secular public as for a sacred space. The turn of spiritual music toward the secular finally proceeded so far that its

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[10] Rainer Maria Rilke, whose writing often deals with the disconnect between an anxiety-ridden, secularized society and the idea of God, wrote the thirteen short stories of his *Geschichten vom lieben Gott* (*Stories of God*) in 1899. The original title was *Vom lieben Gott und Anderes: an Grosse für Kinder erzählt* (*Of God and Other Matters: Told to Grownups for Children*).

[11] Samuel Beckett's one-act play *Endgame*, originally written in French as *Fin de partie*, appeared in 1957. The play's principal protagonist, Hamm, speaks the lines Schnebel cites.

[12] Johann Walther's *Geystliches gesangk Buchleyn* appeared first in 1524 with a preface by Luther, in essence the first Lutheran hymnal. Georg Rhau—publisher, theorist, composer, and like Walther a member of Luther's circle,—was easily the most important publisher of Protestant materials during the early years of the Reformation. The anthology *Newe deudsche geistliche Gesenge für die gemeinen Schulen* was published at Wittenberg in 1544.

[13] The two parts of the *Kleine geistliche Konzerte* appeared in 1636 and 1639 respectively as opp. 8 and 9 (SWV 282–305 and 306–337). The *Musicalia ad chorum sacrum, das ist: Geistliche Chor-Music* (SWV 369–397) appeared as op. 11 in 1648.

criteria dissolved and the forms developed from such music largely disappeared. Where such forms were preserved (for example, in the Mass Ordinary), their effect was that of remains from a long since faded time, approached more nearly out of archeological interest. It is not by accident that Stravinsky stylized his Mass in an antique language, and even Webern's and Pousseur's settings of Latin sacred texts preserve something of the archaic in their canonic style.[14]

But certain other works that followed the trend toward the secular found forms devoid of spiritual specifics. Already Bruckner's work dedicated "to [my] dear God" was a symphony, and without words. Mahler's Second and Eighth Symphonies, the spiritual programs of which are recognizable by the texts, strike deep into the secular sphere and even lose themselves in it.[15] The Second Symphony joins a pious folk song [from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*] to Klopstock's *Auferstehn, ja auferstehn wirst du*, a product of Enlightenment thinking and hardly intended for the traditional church.[16] The Eighth proceeds from the ancient Pentecost hymn *Veni creator spiritus* to the Gnostic pantheism of the conclusion to [Goethe's] *Faust II*.

In his Violin Concerto, Berg wholly integrates Bach's chorale *Es ist genug* as a spiritual element in a secularized Requiem.[17] Ligeti takes precisely the opposite approach in his Requiem. He does not follow Berg by integrating a spiritually engaged element almost to the point of making it disappear, but rather, he adopts that element as if it had never been spiritually invested in the first place. As such, it becomes the departure point for a composition that transforms a seemingly neutral text content into music and therefore spiritualizes it in a secular context.[18] Webern's work is autonomous music, no longer dependent upon a verbal cantus firmus. The texts in his late works and those from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* are, as with Mahler, remarkably ambiguous blends of Spirit and non-Spirit.[19] The spiritual character that is nevertheless inseparable from almost all of Webern's music expresses itself as an aura, or it comes from within, from the constructive features of the music.

Schoenberg's most significant spiritual work, *A Survivor from Warsaw*, and similarly, Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge*, consume their Biblical texts.[20] A world that has become a fiery furnace smothers the Word, or at least deforms it. This concerns spiritual music and its medium, the *verbum Dei*, to a particularly high degree. In a secularizing guise that is already nearly unrecognizable anyway, now spiritual music loses its characteristic speech. In certain recent works the words of the text are

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[14] On the significance of "antique language" to Stravinsky's music, see also note 8. Stravinsky intended the Mass (SATB and wind) for liturgical use, but in fact the work was premiered at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, in 1948—a vivid example of "sacred music press[ing] outward from the church." The Schoenberg and Adler pupil Anton Webern composed no Latin choral music, but Schnebel likely has in mind his *5 Canons nach lateinischen Texten* op. 16 (1923/24), setting liturgical texts for the most part. The Belgian composer and Webern advocate Henri Pousseur set several Latin texts, including the *Missa brevis* of 1950, to which Schnebel perhaps refers.

[15] Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 2 (so-called "Resurrection" in C minor and E-flat major) was composed from 1888 through 1894. The Symphony No. 8 (so-called "of a thousand," E-flat major) was composed during the summers of 1906/07.

[16] Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock is perhaps best known as the author of the enormous epic *Der Messias*. He exercised a profound influence in German literature of the later eighteenth century. Mahler had heard Klopstock's *Die Auferstehung* (The Resurrection) in a setting by J. G. Beutler at the Hamburg funeral of Hans von Bülow and subsequently adopted portions of the poem for the last movement of his "Resurrection" Symphony No. 2.

[17] Alban Berg composed his Violin Concerto in a concentrated period of four months in 1935 on a commission from the American violinist Louis Krasner. The work is dedicated to the memory "of an angel," in this case Manon Gropius, the daughter of Alma Mahler and Walter Gropius who died at 18 of poliomyelitis—hence the concerto's "Requiem" character. Berg ingeniously integrates J. S. Bach's harmonization of the chorale *Es ist genug* from the cantata *O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort* BWV 60. The first melodic phrase of the chorale forms the last segment of the dodecaphonic row on which the Violin Concerto is based.

[18] György Ligeti's Requiem, composed from 1963 through 1965, was still relatively new at the time of Schnebel's 1967 lecture.

[19] *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, a collection of folk poetry published by Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano between 1805 and 1808, was a central source that fed German romanticism's fascination with folklore. Mahler was particularly drawn to the *Wunderhorn* poetry and returned to it several times for musical setting.

[20] In the wake of the atrocities of World War II, Arnold Schoenberg composed his brief but intense *A Survivor from Warsaw* op. 46 on an original libretto for narrator, male voices, and orchestra. The work dates from 1947 and incorporates the *Shema Yisrael*, reportedly sung by a group of Jews on their way to the gas chamber. Karlheinz Stockhausen's astounding *Gesang der Jünglinge* (*Song of the Youths*), on the subject of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace as related in Daniel, was realized in 1955/56. In it, the composer for the first time integrates electronically produced sound with acoustically recorded sound, in this case a boy's voice, in a work of total serialism. The notion of a "consumed" text is particularly apt here.

hardly intelligible, or hidden and unclear.[21] Also, text can appear merely sporadically, really only in the negative. Spiritual music that moved out into the world itself became secular; we might even say that it delivered itself up to the world. No restoration will save it. Rather, such music can bear witness to its truth only by suffering the same fate as the secular music into which it divested itself—*musica crucis*.

If spiritual music thus presses toward secularization, such a tendency originates with its genuine intention: to grant space to the Spirit that wants to move out into the world so as to make itself understood in contemporary language. The pull toward the world derives from the essence of music. Adorno writes in his *Fragment über Musik und Sprache*,

> The language of music is quite different from the language of intentionality. It contains a theological dimension. What it has to say is simultaneously revealed and concealed. Its Idea is the divine Nature which has been given shape. It is demythologized prayer (Adorno 1998, p. 2).

Accordingly, music itself is of divine origin, and at the same time, the seeds of secularization are placed within it. There seems to be a really right relationship when the spiritual joins itself to music.

The occurrence of the Spirit is formally the process of being seized or moved [*Ergriffenwerden*], which transforms into motion and presses toward communication: illumination that continues to give out its light and allows communication to succeed. This process does not ally itself with any particular form, and where one arises, it is discarded. This applies to music, the language of which, according to Adorno, is defined by intention, "but only intermediate ones." Its meaning denies the fixed and the interchangeable; music is without words. "Music points to true language in the sense that content is apparent in it" (Adorno 1998, p. 2). This is the actual Pentecost.

Significantly, the earliest spiritual music had a doxological character. Music accrued to a content that, as a spontaneous outburst of praise, usually eluded a linguistic conception. Perhaps the formulaic essence of doxology developed early, and music satisfied the need as a more adequate expression over the insufficiency of language. In this way, the *Gloria* of music established its own realm, and where the spiritual content found appropriate expression in language, namely in prayer and proclamation, musical setting entered the picture only with hesitation. Tones for reading and psalmody are more nearly rhetorical stylizations than real music. Prayer took on a musical guise more likely as lament or as a sigh of the creation, as in the *Leisen* of the Middle Ages. Proclamation and teaching resisted musical setting most tenaciously. Pure speech content could be set to music only when *musica reservata* had developed speech-like music into a language of the affections. Such a musical anointing did not exactly make a sacrament of the *verbum Dei*, but rather it gave it a worldly luster. Every sort of *stile rappresentativo* (not only the style properly identified by this term) lends the Word a theatrical sense.

Music can join easily with the spiritual because both resist fixed meaning. Of course this is true for different reasons. Spiritual content wants to elude a fixed conception because otherwise it would forfeit its characteristic element of movement and could become false to its dynamism. But musical content per se cannot bring about a determined meaning either, and when such a meaning is imposed on it—say, by the addition of a text—the musical content liberates itself of this meaning. Even the most exact musical clarification could always mean something else. In that the spiritual unites with wordless music to mollify the inhibiting effect of linguistic determinism, it sows the seed of its dissolution. If the spiritual really matures in music, it loses its own essence insofar as is possible and submerges itself in the musical.

Admittedly, such a self-divesting does not appear strange to the Spirit, since in any case it always finds new (and entirely secular) hypostases, whereby the Spirit obviously presses to the transgressing of boundaries. Already among the early Christians, certain members of the community were suspicious of excessively spiritual phenomena like glossolalia [as in I Corinthians 14], since they tended to justify

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[21] Schnebel well could have mentioned here a work like Ligeti's *Lux aeterna* for 16-part choir (1966), which develops a densely canonic micropolyphony to obscure its traditional Latin text.

themselves or to go too far. In the liaison of the spiritual with music, praise became *jubilus*, prayer became lament or cry, and proclamation became drama. In the end, the musical had seized all instances of the spiritual and baptized them into the secular realm, because music's demythologizing character infects even the spiritual components.

In such an ambiguous form, the secular aspect can easily conceal the spiritual content. The music that grows from this profits. The Reformation professed allegiance to the secular exterior of music as a necessity, as it strove to hallow secular essence generally. The chorales that at first made their way into and later even consumed the liturgy were musically not recognizable as such: rather, they were folk songs according to their melodic substance. Their secular guise rationalized the truth that spiritual tones, too, were woven merely from a material essence (namely, music) and not from a spiritual one. The secular tunes that suited the outward striving Spirit did not then in any way concern the content. It was degenerate [*heruntergekommene*] folk music like that of the Salvation Army or nationalist songs that first jeopardized this content, even made it unenjoyable. The unthinking union of profane music with spiritual texts led down a completely blind alley, as music was lost in the interstice between church song and folk song.

That which one has since attempted to introduce in its place—consumerist music, for instance, which has slipped into the role of the older folk music—has hardly been helpful. The old tunes that now are effective on account of their age remain as if their music were spiritual in the first place. The secular melodies of long ago have acquired a second, supposedly spiritual nature. Art music in the church that conjures up the ancient songs or forms in order thus to present itself as *musica sacra* is no less a pretense. Petrification kills the Spirit. Great spiritual music has always endeavored to loose itself from that law of liturgical music which permitted only an enhancement of the text, although one has tried over and over again to anchor such music in divine worship.

Since the Renaissance, and latently even earlier, music has tended to take on an independent essence, and church music has in no way remained immune to this tendency. On the contrary, church music has more nearly supported such a tendency in order to develop its tonal materials. Once music reached an autonomous state, the content of spiritual music organized according to this aesthetic soon appeared incidental, foreign, and wholly imposed from without. Integrated into the music's mechanics of autonomy, the content was absorbed. Of course, the content thus engaged the musical substance, so that the latter would become spiritual by way of its construction. This substance per se would hardly be recognizable, however, particularly since the musical exterior [*Gestalt*] would present itself as thoroughly secular. The spiritual element, which in order to express itself had to find a way into a self-secularizing music, disappears in it.

In the world of New Music, spiritual music has found itself in the same isolation as other sorts of music and now has really landed in a tight spot, because its content (hidden in any case) has interested the decidedly secular auditors of New Music only marginally, and believers have rejected the music itself. This all-around dilemma reveals the tension inherent in the notion of spiritual music: that both the spiritual and the musical strive outward toward freedom, the one as an emanation of the Spirit that stretches out over the secular sphere, the other as emancipation from its theological origin.

The object of spiritual music is that of theology and it can only be determined from the perspective of the latter. What has transpired with theology is similar to the situation of *musica sacra*. In a letter from Dietrich Bonhoeffer [of 30 April 1944 to Eberhard Bethge], we read:

> The age when we could tell people [what Christianity is] with words—whether with theological or with pious words—is past, as is the age of inwardness and of conscience, and that means the age of religion altogether. We are now approaching a completely religionless age (Bonhoeffer 2015, pp. 353–54).

The situation Bonhoeffer has so precisely diagnosed is the result of a comprehensive process of secularization, reflected by a parallel process in music. It, perhaps, has its theological roots in the messianic abolition of oppression through Jesus, in the Pauline doctrine of freedom, or in the halfway

heretical theology of the Spirit of Joachim de Fiore through Lessing, which saw the advent of a third kingdom of the Spirit (after that of the Father and the Son) in which religion is inapplicable.[22]

Because it is necessary, even theologically necessary, the secularization process is not to be opposed by the church in a reactionary way. [In a further letter of 8 June 1944 to Bethge] Bonhoeffer finds "the attack by Christian apologetics on the world's coming of age as, first of all, pointless, second, ignoble, and, third, un-Christian. Pointless," so he maintains, "because it appears to me like trying to put a person who has become an adult back into puberty. . . . Un-Christian—because it confuses Christ with a particular stage of human religiousness, namely, with a human law" (Bonhoeffer 2015, p. 418).

In view of the stage of history in which we find ourselves, the only valid attitude is one of solidarity with secular humanity. For the sake of comprehensibility, it is best to discard religious language. Bonhoeffer's aversion to religiosity, which goes much further than that of Barth, notes this exactly. [In his first letter to Bethge cited above,] Bonhoeffer is "reluctant to name the name of God to religious people," because to him this "somehow . . . doesn't ring true" and he appears "a bit dishonest" to himself. Also, he falls silent when faced with religious terminology, because he "then . . . clam[s] up almost completely and feel[s] uncomfortable and in a sweat." The problem, then, is: "How do we talk about God—without religion? . . . How do we speak (or perhaps we can no longer even 'speak' the way we used to) in a 'worldly' way about 'God'?" (Bonhoeffer 2015, pp. 355–56). According to Bonhoeffer [in another letter of 8 July 1944], we are dealing with "the worldly interpretation of biblical concepts" (Bonhoeffer 2015, p. 446).

Theology, then, becomes marginalized on account of having secularized itself to this degree, a position grounded in the very object of theology itself. Bonhoeffer further [in a letter of 16 July 1944, again to Bethge]:

> God consents to be pushed out of the world and onto the cross; God is weak and powerless in the world and in precisely this way, and only so, is at our side and helps us. Matt. 8:17 ["This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.'" (RSV)] makes it quite clear that Christ helps us not by virtue of his omnipotence but rather by virtue of his weakness and suffering! . . . Human religiosity directs people in need to the power of God in the world, God as *deus ex machina*. The Bible directs people toward the powerlessness and the suffering of God (Bonhoeffer 2015, p. 465).

One can pursue theology only as *theologia crucis*, which implies a willingness to surrender oneself.

Insofar as theology takes upon itself the secularization that buffets it, liberation from ecclesiastical language becomes the actual task. The newer theology has embraced this, admittedly at the price of alienation from traditional congregational piety. Therefore, the "worldly interpretation of biblical concepts" demanded by Bonhoeffer has been attempted recently, to the extent that the notion of God has been demythologized. The christocentric core of dialectical theology has been revitalized in the process. The proclamation and life of Christ as the center of revelation has come back into view. That view is now a very historical (that is, secular) one that has endeavored to see the Christ of faith precisely in this way. A Christ became visible who simply "did what was necessary in the present moment and placed his purpose rather than his person in the center of his preaching" (Käsemann 1960, p. 211), whose honor and messianic essence are grounded not in entitlement, but rather only "in his word and deed and the direct nature of his historical appearance" (Bornkamm 1960, p. 163).

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[22] Joachim de Fiore (c. 1135–1202) posited the movement of history in three ages, each corresponding to one member of the Trinity. The coming "age of the Spirit" would achieve a relationship with God more direct than that of any previous era, hence transcending the literal parameters of language and obviating the traditional church. Schnebel holds to the view, popular since the nineteenth century, that Gotthold Ephraim Lessing had implicitly sanctioned Joachim's tripartite conception in his own positing of a history in three ages, particularly in Lessing's seminal essay *Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts* (The Education of Humankind) of 1780.

That which Jesus says and does seeks to engage people. The same goes for the biblical texts that witness to him or develop his intentions. An example from Herbert Braun "of how [biblical] texts integrate their intent," that is, how they wish to move [the reader] directly:

> The Jesus of the synoptics (in essence the historical Jesus) makes no distinctions between the pious and the impious, between the just and the unjust. He does not assume two classes of people. And he claims that God does likewise. This is the position of Jesus with people whom we today call traitors, the unchurched, easy women: God does likewise. Does this say something to us? Does this air of discipline and unbounded goodness help us to live more easily, to find new pleasure and joy in life? This question: "Can I live more fittingly this way?"—this is the basic question of faith. Only from this perspective do I understand Jesus of Nazareth properly (Braun 1962, pp. 306–7).

Somewhat further on, Braun writes:

> The New Testament is written so that those who hear it make its content their own and pass it on, so that they "profess" ["*bekennen*"], as the terminology of the New Testament itself puts it. But of course to profess does not mean the recitation of reverent formulae. Rather, it means to make something one's own in understanding and then to pass it on in such a way that the hearer notices that one is speaking here about life, joy, the very foundation of things, about something he can really stand up for.
>
> (Braun 1962, pp. 308–9)

Braun sees spiritual phenomena here in a secular way. Belief and profession mean that one has the Spirit and lives out of it.

If we use this new theology to help define the notion of the spiritual, at first we are directed to "Jesus Christ [as] the one Word of God" [in the *Theological Declaration of Barmen* 1934, §8.11] (Barth 2013). Jesus of Nazareth, who lived and proclaimed *in nuce* a new life and even a new world, is the authoritative event: seen and professed by the congregation as Jesus Christ, who suffers and rises again, who therefore brings about this newness because he surrenders himself. But this decisive event has a more far-reaching effect in that it engages people and confronts them again and again, due to the power of the Spirit that it contains. In this sense, insofar as Jesus the Messiah is himself the Spirit, in that he continually manifests himself, he likewise supplies the ingredient for the climate that reforms the notion of the spiritual. But the messianic Spirit as enduring process—an always fresh making-present of Jesus Christ—contains an opposition within itself, located at a single fixed point, radiating from the historical Jesus, from the Fixed altogether. The Spirit abandons the word that became formula, the word that had made itself into a fetish. It brushes off fixed forms like husks and leaves them behind, empty. Therefore, the sphere of the spiritual is one saturated with constant renewal, one could almost say with demythologization. However, the direction of the Spirit aims into the world, so that the Messianic event of Jesus of Nazareth impresses itself upon that world. It is this field that the Spirit seeks to infiltrate, a Spirit that renders itself similar [to its surroundings] on the exterior, but transforms from the inside out. A secularization that never confronts the world—because it is obligated to its A and Ω—is a peculiar property of the Spirit.

Spiritual music as such—so to speak, a music that makes itself a medium of the Spirit—accordingly would be a music in which, again, so to speak, the Messiah happens. This is of course no more demonstrable than faith itself, the spiritual existence of the human being. Nevertheless, one would stand to expect from spiritual music that messianic impulses might dwell in it, in a music specifically of the New Testament, of the history of Jesus Christ.

Here we should not too quickly pass over the notion of service. One should expect of spiritual music exactly the same thing, especially since Jesus' service as manifested in the model of foot-washing is so shocking. The service to the congregation demanded again and again of spiritual music, reinterpreted from a conformist viewpoint as an adaptation to what already is, usually results in

"helping the congregation to achieve an extremely flattering experience of itself," as Clytus Gottwald once put it (Gottwald 1966, p. 47). Such an approach then excludes "the corrective of proclamation" which "contains the will to change what is" (Gottwald 1966, p. 47). Only where spiritual music's service also serves as an impulse is it legitimate. It can achieve this when, for example, it musically alienates words that have become empty, making them into something unusual, which one then considers in a new way. The wildly angular melodies of Webern's songs unlock the sense of Latin formulations and give the content back its disturbing character. In such service to the word, this character is placed in the simmering messianic condition, and, itself already full of dynamism, it becomes dynamic for a congregation prepared to render the service of hearing.

The spiritual quality of Webern's music, by the way, is also found in the renunciation of pomp, the sphere of humility, and a truly Franciscan poverty. This is accomplished through a limiting of means to the necessary, also by an extremely sparse orchestration in which sometimes only a pair of clarinets, a fiddling violin, and a guitar make music—a music, so to speak, for the entrance of the lowly Messiah Jesus into Jerusalem. Naturally, such poverty is in no way a requirement of spiritual music: particularly, a music that seeks to praise the heavenly Jerusalem would have to develop its riches. Near the end of the second movement of Mahler's *Lied von der Erde*, at the words *Sonne der Liebe* ["sun of love"], the music brightens indescribably from its otherwise dim and reserved state, then immediately falls back into its former tone. There, one discovers a utopian luster in the notion of love, in this text intended as a thoroughly secular concept. This passage, hardly conceived as spiritual music, nevertheless points to what the latter can do: it can reveal the messianic.[23] Any music that achieves this should be called spiritual, no matter how it presents itself.

Freedom, as a sign of the Spirit, demands, in any case, that we guard against limitations too hastily applied. But we should expect of a Christian spiritual music (a music that seeks to take on the essence of Jesus the Messiah) that it be collectively a music of the Passion, so to speak. What Adorno once demanded of all contemporary art—that it be shot through with the experiences of Auschwitz and Majdanek—is the first criterion for spiritual music. Bonhoeffer formulated an aesthetic law of *musica sacra* in his dictum that the Church can sing in Gregorian style only when it simultaneously cries out for the Jews and the Communists. Such music becomes spiritual only when it comes down on the side of the victim. Here the shape of the cross will register and the music becomes a *musica crucis*.

The character of spiritual music's content has formal consequences. The Spirit as an event of making-present requires new forms of expression according to context. Therefore, spiritual music is to be conceived as new music. Indeed, constant renewal is its form, which Stockhausen correctly recognized (Stockhausen 1964, p. 249). (Admittedly, the thing that Stockhausen called Webern's maxim—"the same things always differently"—should not be claimed exactly as a spiritual phenomenon, although the spiritual certainly can manifest itself in this way.)

In any case, spiritual music as new music must engage with the questions of modern composition, and such questions are particularly complex in the case of texted music. First, one should not simply take the ancient words of Biblical texts, frequently still in Latin, as material to be given a musical setting without reflection, as if one were dealing with something objective and timeless. The Biblical texts are themselves emanations of the making-present process of the Spirit (of course distinguished in the New Testament by the relatively close proximity to the Spirit's source). They therefore do not permit one to hide behind them. Rather, they require the sort of translation that spiritual music can undertake musically: this is their "hermeneutical problem."

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[23] Mahler composed *Das Lied von der Erde* in 1908 and 1909 to texts drawn from Hans Bethge's *Die chinesische Flöte*, a 1907 German translation of ancient Chinese poetry. The cited passage begins at rehearsal 18 (m. 128) of the second movement (*Der Einsame im Herbst*), where a memorable modulation from D minor to E-flat major (then back again) introduces the words "*Sonne der Liebe, willst du nie mehr scheinen, um meine bittern Tränen mild aufzutrocknen?*" ("Sun of love, will you never again shine, gently to dry my bitter tears?"). This is the emotional and musical high point of the movement. Schnebel's "utopian luster in the notion of love" is unmistakably Wagnerian in tone here—one might think just as easily of *Tristan und Isolde*, Act II—and a striking example of the porous boundary between the secular and the sacred in matters of "spiritual" music.

Whether the text is Biblical, liturgical, or otherwise, in old, less old, or new form (whereby the old texts carry a particular nexus of problems due to the past that clings to them), the difficulties are further complicated by recent thinking. At least since Stockhausen's *Gesang der Jünglinge*, language is no longer simply set to music but rather composed according to its elements. The phonemes rather than the sense of the text constitute the point of departure, and the material of speech becomes like music, joined together with music. On the other hand, one regards speech acts themselves, which are acoustic processes structured in particular ways, as music. In this way, pure speech can be brought into music as melody. Thus, speech can be transformed into music, and music can dissolve into speech.

For spiritual music, the aim of which, among other things, is to interpret spiritual content anew, reflection upon the function of music becomes a pressing concern. In a remarkable passage, Karl Barth writes of the angels:

> The whole history of the Bible, while it intends to be and is real spatio-temporal history, has a constant bias towards the sphere where it cannot be verified by the ordinary analogies of world history but can be seen and grasped only imaginatively and represented in the form of poetry (Barth 1960, p. 375).

One might add, also in music. Art as spiritual complement or completion—this means that music can accomplish that which language of itself cannot: acoustic figuration, the act of symbolizing, a kind of sacramentalizing. In proclamation, which wants to console or encourage, this becomes something like dynamic speech-gesticulation; in prayer, it is more nearly the reserved, monotone, and musicalized language that shrinks from intoning or calling out; in praise, where speech is inadequate, it becomes a metamorphosis into music. In every case, the musical doubling of the textual content—the simultaneous transferring into musical speech—no longer suffices, if it ever did. Material-based composition, at which music has recently arrived, wants to advocate an approach to composition no longer from something given, but rather from processes of the musical material. This sort of composition tends to present the important point as a flow of the material. Concerning a recent composition [of mine, *Glossolalie* of 1959/60], Heinz-Klaus Metzger notes that its artistic position consists in "transferring the spiritual character of music to its technical complex," nearly analogue to political content in other contexts (Metzger 1966, p. 27). Then, music itself would become a spiritual event, as at Pentecost.

The making-present brought about by the *creator spiritus* involves secularization, which of course does not dissolve into the world. It demands of spiritual music that it, like secular music, be conceived autonomously. It also asks something specific of spiritual music, namely, sensitivity to religious affectation, as expressed in Bonhoeffer's idiosyncratic position against pious language. Because spiritual music finds its nature based on its derivation from the Spirit that presses outward "to the end of the earth" [*"bis an das Ende der Erde"*], it seeks to reach everyone and does not turn merely to a circle of believers.[24] This demands of the new theology the "solidarity with the Godless" that has been asked for repeatedly. Respect and consideration demand the avoidance of language against which the other party is allergic. Wariness in this regard may be compared with the Old Testament reluctance to pronounce the name of God. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon spiritual music of the present to reflect upon how proclamation, prayer, and praise are possible today; and whether or not such forms rooted in divine service would need to be further developed, transformed, or surrendered in order to look for other forms, perhaps entirely secular ones. In any case, the *spiritus absconditus* does not tolerate a spiritual essence that pushes itself on others, if it ever had tolerated this at all. *Musica sacra* probably becomes sacred only when it conceals its holiness within itself.[25]

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[24] Schnebel alludes to Acts 1:8: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth" (RSV).

[25] This is an arresting notion most directly rooted in the instruction concerning prayer in Matthew 6:5–6: "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they

Considering all this, spiritual music has become extremely difficult to write. This is due not only to the isolation in which it finds itself together with New Music, but also to theological and compositional considerations. Also, we must meet the problem of language. The resulting issues will not go away by fleeing from them, but rather only when one takes them upon oneself. One must cast off the worrisome question of where one has come from and instead concentrate on the intention to write good music, which is always a truly new music. Because only great music deserves such a name, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*.

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may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you" (RSV).

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