

CROSSACCENT

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From the *Executive Director*

I WRITE THIS from the Grand Rapids, Michigan airport following a very stimulating conference at the Calvin Institute. ALCM participates in the Network of National Church-Related Music Ministry Associations. Our participation was initiated and authorized by the board five years ago. We were invited through the generosity of the Calvin Institute to participate in a conference with seven other colleague organizations. President Kate Adelman, Region 3 President, Zeb Highben, and I represented ALCM. The other colleague organizations that participated were: Association of Anglican Musicians, Association of Disciple Musicians, Fellowship of American Baptist Musicians, Fellowship of United Methodists in Music and Worship Arts, National Association of Pastoral Musicians (Catholic), Presbyterian Association of Musicians, and United Church of Christ Musicians Association.

In plenary sessions, denominational groups, and mixed groups, we discussed issues common to all of the participating organizations, and pursued strategies that would be mutually beneficial to each board and our respective memberships. Among the issues that were discussed were each group's identity including: what each organization's mission is, and how other facets of the association's life affect carrying out that mission; the self perceived role of each board; how boards are elected/appointed, and how they are trained; how the boards provide for funding the organization's mission. We also asked some stewardship questions including what is each board's strategy for engaging and evoking the responsibility for the organization and its mission, and how is the board leading and engaging the membership in carrying out the mission of the organization?

Beyond these conversations the network continued its work toward a major project proposal to be submitted to the Lily Foundation for possible funding. The proposal will include research, symposia, publications, and action. The research will include studying the relationship of music ministry to healthy church life, the place of music in church life, roles and expectations of musicians, and pastor/musician relationships. The symposia proposed will include the network from this meeting and other music

organizations (AGO), leaders of various ecclesial bodies, academic and pastoral leaders, and directors of church related ministry formation programs. Publications and actions will come out of the research and symposia. With the current state of the economy, this proposal will not be submitted for at least another year. If funded, the project will likely be ongoing for about four years.

The network has articulated its mission as, "Transforming Leaders, Building Bridges, Energizing Music Ministry." We discovered that whether an organization is small with no paid staff, or large with multiple paid staff, all have many of the same challenges, and we can work together in very specific ways to benefit of all. Our first collaborative efforts will be to develop on line distance learning opportunities to give our boards a common language and training in basic financials, fiduciary responsibilities, guidance in objectives and strategies, and implementation. Additional ideas for future offerings include training in development and symposia on issues and interests common to all organizations.

Our participation in this network has been and will continue to be very valuable to the long term strength and mission of ALCM.

James Johnson



Note from the *Editor*

This issue pays tribute to two very important personalities in Lutheran church music. We celebrate **Carl Schalk's** eightieth birthday with a conversation regarding aspects of his work as teacher and college professor, music director, composer, scholar, publisher/editor of journals, newsletters, and books. There are very few among us who have not been touched in some way or another by his work. He has been an ambassador of sorts for Lutheran hymnody and practice across Lutheran synodical boundaries, willing and able to work with the various constituencies of American Lutheranism. My thanks to editorial board member Victor Gebauer for organizing and editing the interview.

We commemorate the centennial of the birth of **M. Alfred Bichsel**, musician, pastor, and teacher at Valparaiso and the Eastman School of Music. He was, in addition, important to ALCM at the beginning of its existence. He presented a plenary address at the 1987 ALCM conference in Seattle that was subsequently published as one of the papers of this organization, *The Cantor in Historical Perspective*, published by Morningstar in 1989. It described the historic Lutheran model of the office of Cantor, much of it for the first time in English.

It is mid-October as I write this, and the weather is cooling down, the fall rains have begun, and work in the garden has begun to prepare for the coming winter. Some plants have already run their course and have been harvested and pulled up; others are just coming into their glory: the dahlias, the asters, and the mums; and still others will be planted in the next few weeks, the pansies, the violas, those tough plants that can freeze and bounce right back and bloom to their heart's content. Truly, as the chorale goes, in the midst of life we are surrounded by death. In that context, Markus Rathey's article in this issue, "The Private and the Public Death in Dietrich Buxtehude's Works for Keyboard Instruments," is timely.

October and November, of course, lead us into Advent, and Jan-Piet Knijff continues the "Hymns of the Church" series with an exploration of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." Jan-Piet has outdone himself this time, as he explores the history of the text and tune, explores variants, discusses the various settings, and provides one of his own. As always, I am pleased that *CrossAccent* can make this contribution to the life of the church. An article such as this is too big for a hymnal companion, but also too important to neglect. It is,

of course, our hope that this series will be of practical use to church musicians, and a resource for hymnal committees of the future. As I have remarked before, the work of a hymnal committee is so overwhelming that there is no time to do original research on the hymns (or at least not on very many of them). For that reason articles like this need to exist to help everyone in their decision making process, both now and for the future.

Thank you to our review editors, Paul Grime and Jean Boehler, as well as to the many reviewers who contribute their expertise to this and every issue of *CrossAccent*.

Mark Bighley

An Interview with



Carl Schalk

Carl Schalk's many contributions to church music have been acknowledged widely. A Festschrift was published in his honor in 2005.¹ Now in 2009 he has reached his eightieth year of grace, which was marked by an observance, including three concerts of his music, during the annual Lectures in Church Music at Concordia University Chicago, 18–20 October. CA's editorial board member Victor Gebauer spoke with Carl Schalk on 17 July 2009.

How did your early life as a parochial school teacher's son prepare you for your later work?

My father, not atypically for a Lutheran school teacher at that time, taught all but two years of his career at one school, Immanuel Lutheran School, Des Plaines, Illinois. Also typical for the time, he took his turn playing the organ for Sunday services, usually about once a month. Although he did not direct the church choir, he sang, as did my mother. So I heard singing regularly in our home. When I was growing up we had a piano in our living room on which my sister and I took lessons.

Later, when attending Concordia Teachers College High School² the curriculum required *every student* to take a weekly piano lesson throughout all four years. By the time I began as a freshman in college, I advanced to organ lessons, as did most of my classmates. We were all preparing to be teachers in the Lutheran elementary schools as well as organists for Sunday services. As teachers, the ability to play the piano for classroom devotions and music classes, and the ability to play the organ for Sunday services, even at a basic level, was the accepted norm.

But it was my experience singing in choirs that really sparked my interest, first in high school, and then continuing in college. Beginning in my sophomore year, the new conductor of the High School Choir, and later the College Choir, was Victor Hildner, a young, exceedingly dynamic and charismatic director. He introduced me to the world of choral music, both as an art and as a possible vocation in the life of the Church. I worked with him as his assistant conductor for nine years in both high school and college.

Please say a little more about that concept of vocation. What did that mean for a Lutheran musician?

My years as a student at Concordia (1943–52) opened up to me the world of choral music, both old and new. During the years in the High School Choir and the College Choir I sang all six of the J. S. Bach motets (from memory!), both Bach Passions, the Mass in B minor, large and small scale works by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Johannes Brahms, Virgil Thompson, Randall Thomson, and a host of other significant composers. Not a bad introduction to the world of choral music in a small Lutheran college in the late 1940s and early 1950s!

But these were also years when Lutheran musicians in America were beginning to experience a revival of interest in their liturgical and musical heritage. New publications of old music from the Lutheran heritage, new music from Lutheran composers of the time such as Hugo Distler and Ernst Pepping, new historical studies, and the beginning of publication of the collected works of some of the important early Lutheran composers, all contributed to a growing musical-liturgical-intellectual-scholarly ferment. Even among the faculty at that time, much of this music was largely new, unlike anything they had experienced before. As students, we became part of their adventure.

In my last year in college, after studying organ with the same teacher for my first three years, I asked to study with Carl Halter, a new professor at Concordia. I had heard him play many times at Grace Church where he had previously served as school teacher and director of music. He had graduated from Concordia in the late 1930s. It was not until he was doing graduate work at Baldwin-Wallace College in Cleveland, he told me, that he became aware of something called the *Orgelbüchlein*, Bach's collection of short organ preludes. I learned a great deal about playing baroque music from Carl Halter. He was a fine teacher. Faculty members were all re-discovering material from their Lutheran heritage, and as students we became part of their trip of discovery. Even though at the time we did not always understand or even appreciate what was happening, we did understand that we were exploring a new world of music with our teachers, music that was part of our heritage as Lutherans. And it was exciting.

In the summers from 1953–57 I studied at the Eastman School of Music leading to a master's degree in music theory. In the early 1960s, while working in St. Louis, Missouri, as director of music for the radio broadcasts of

"The Lutheran Hour," I enrolled in a graduate program at Concordia Seminary. I had become convinced that many church musicians knew precious little theology, and that pastors often knew precious little about music and its role in worship. My study of theology was not only to begin to clarify my own thinking, but to encourage a more intelligent conversation between church musicians and pastors. One result of that study was my little pamphlet *The Pastor and the Church Musician: Thoughts on a Common Ministry*.³

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Has that attempt at facilitated conversation been successful within the Church?

It is always an ongoing conversation. But it was stimulating for me personally to be able to understand many of the questions which arise in church music at the congregational level both from a theological as well as musical perspective and to see them as an integrated whole. To alert pastors and musicians to the other's frame of reference was the goal in that little pamphlet. I was suggesting that many of our problems could be solved if pastors and church musicians could agree on some basic Lutheran understandings about music in Lutheran worship, and I attempted to set out some of them in that publication.

You have named among your mentors not only Victor Hildner but also Carl Halter and Walter Buszin. What did you take away from them?

In addition to his exemplary organ work as a service player, Carl Halter was the first person I encountered who was writing seriously about the role of the church musician and music itself in worship. In his little treatise *God and Man in Music*⁴ he was exploring questions I had been thinking about and he helped me begin to focus on them more clearly. Walter Buszin⁵ also spoke and wrote copiously on these issues. I studied with him at Concordia Seminary and over the years got to know him both personally and professionally. He made a truly significant contribution in his writings. The theological insights he brought to bear on a variety of subjects related to music and the church continue to be profitable to read and study today. In his editing of church music he brought to his generation a host of significant choral and organ works that still shapes much of what is best in the publications of today. Buszin helped shape the understanding of many in his and my generation regarding a Lutheran view of church music as reflected in that formative period of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Later, as a professor at Concordia River Forest (now Concordia University Chicago),⁶ I had the opportunity to put many of those insights into practice and to develop materials that began to give a theological-musical-philosophical underpinning for a more systematic view of Lutheran church music.

What role did the history of church music play in your teaching at Concordia?

I especially appreciated joining one of the finest church music faculties in American Lutheranism at that time. They were all highly trained in their own disciplines, but they were also thoroughly committed to Lutheran liturgical worship. In such an environment I was able to develop a number of courses in church music history and practice which, to my knowledge, had never been taught anywhere before. These courses were all conceived and taught from an unapologetic Lutheran perspective, undergraduate courses like *The Musical Heritage of the Church and Traditions of Christian Hymnody*. Among them, at the encouragement of Paul Bunjes, chair of the music department, I was asked to develop a graduate course exploring the music of that formative period between Luther and Bach, the music of Walter, Hassler, Praetorius, Schein, Scheidt, Schütz, and all the others—and graduate courses relating to both music and theology and music and the liturgy. In this way I helped students in their own explorations of this material.

This leads one to think of the many branches of your career: teacher and college professor, music director, composer, scholar, publisher/editor of journals, newsletters, books). How did you come to add so much publishing and scholarship to your work as a church musician?

I started, of course, as a Lutheran school teacher in third and fourth grades, then fifth and sixth.⁷ In addition, I had children's and adult choirs, a smaller chamber choir, a string ensemble—and I played three services every Sunday. It was a busy schedule in addition to teaching every day. We never thought of that as anything but normal. It was just what you did as a teacher/church musician.

As a result of those various responsibilities, I began occasionally writing simple material for use by my choirs or ensembles when nothing was at hand: descants, simple harmonizations for choir, small-scale hymn concertatos, and so on. These early attempts were always for immediate, practical purposes. I did not particularly think I was “composing” but just preparing for practical situations. I did have some composition lessons with Carl Halter as an undergraduate student, and I valued that greatly.

In the early 1960s I was fortunate to have a few things published. In 1964 I began service as a member of the Music Editorial Advisory Committee of Concordia Publishing House and served in that capacity for some thirty years

along with Paul Bunjes, Theodore Hoelty-Nickel, Walter Buszin, and Edward Klammer. We helped guide the music publishing program during the latter half of the 20th century.

I rarely sit down and compose music just because it would be nice to do. Instead, someone asks me to write for a particular occasion or circumstance and I respond. The same is true for the hymns. With very few exceptions my hymn tunes were written because someone asked me to compose a melody and setting for a particular occasion. Most of my choral publications have also been the result of specific requests from congregations, individuals, or from the needs in the congregations I was serving at the time.

As far as scholarly writing is concerned, as a graduate student at Concordia Seminary I discovered there was little examination of the history of hymnody and the hymnals of the Missouri Synod. So I set out to write what later became the little monograph *The Roots of Hymnody in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*.⁸ Later that interest led me to explore the history of hymnody and hymnals throughout Lutheranism, ultimately leading to the publication of *God's Song in a New Land and Source Documents*.⁹

To support these historical studies of hymnody I began gathering Lutheran hymnals to the point where I have been told that I may have one of the best collections of Lutheran hymnals in the country, ranging from Muhlenberg's *Erbauliche Liedersammlung* (1786) to the most recent books. There is still much more scholarly study to be explored in these books.

You have had offers to teach elsewhere and enjoy a high reputation both nationally and internationally, yet you have remained very close to Concordia (River Forest) and the LCMS. What is the source of that loyalty?

True, I have had other opportunities, but I always saw my particular role as helping Lutheran church musicians be better *Lutheran* church musicians, whether that took place through teaching, writing, composing, or lecturing. That has been the particular focus of church music studies at Concordia River Forest, whether in the undergraduate or graduate programs. That is not always the primary focus elsewhere. Interestingly, in the graduate program at River Forest which I helped develop, we have had students from a variety of denominations. When asked on an exit interview why they would come to a Lutheran college to learn church music taught unashamedly from a Lutheran liturgical perspective, the answer almost always came back, “That's exactly what we want to learn. We will sort out what is most helpful to us in our particular situation.” That has enabled us not to dilute our Lutheran point of view, which is not a narrowly sectarian perspective but rather an approach which stands squarely in the historic tradition of the church throughout history. This could not happen, for example, in a secular school. For me, then, it is not so much loyalty to an institution as loyalty to a place where I have

been allowed and encouraged to teach without apology from a Lutheran perspective. The fact that Concordia is also my alma mater doesn't hurt my loyalty, of course!

What does the future hold for you? More books, music, hymns? Or—to put the question in your terms—are there issues which you still want to address?

I continue to compose and to work on a variety of projects. I have been preparing a major revision of my study of the history of American Lutheran hymnody and hymnals, now almost fifteen years old, and have also been revising my study of the Hymn of the Day, now almost thirty years old, in the light of recent events in Lutheranism.

There are other larger matters of interest related to church music and the culture in which it finds itself. Over recent years, musicians and theologians have addressed various aspects of that relationship. Should there be a relationship? If so, how close, how far apart, what kind of relationship? One of the largely overlooked responses to such a question is that the Church has a culture all its own. This culture is one that begins in Baptism and is nurtured in Word and Sacrament. It is a culture which determines what we do in worship and what role music can play in that culture. Church musicians and theologians need to think more clearly about the nature of that culture and what the implications are for the church musician and the composer of church music. We should answer such “church and culture” questions by proceeding from our life together in Word and Sacrament rather than developing a theology to fit the answers we have already determined to be the most convenient or most politically correct.

Another issue affecting church music is that in our post-modern era the church has inadvertently, sometimes even deliberately, adopted the secular view that all is relative and that objective standards are taboo. What is true, what is meaningful, is only what is true and meaningful for me. This view has subtly affected church music as well. It is too easy to quote Ephesians 5:19 and then assume that all is well in the world of church music. It is too simplistic to tolerate or even encourage the view that the maudlin and the mundane are readily acceptable as long as one's intent is missional or evangelistic. To view such ideas from a theological or even moral point of view seems irrelevant to many. To those who view such questions as beside the point, church music is simply a tool, a means to ends other than the proclamation of the Gospel and the praise of

God. At some point, musicians in the church need to say clearly and forthrightly that A is better than B. That there are objective standards by which music in the church can be and needs to be judged. To do so, however, will be to fly in the face of a culture, also in the church, which says otherwise.

Some liturgical theologians have talked about an identifiable culture of the Church within or alongside other cultures.

A practical question then arises. How does that culture of the Church take shape in words and music and melodies? What music does the Church envision for the immediate or long-range future? How does it sound? We have tried to answer these questions, ineffectively I believe, by identifying music which appeals to this or that group. To do so rarely unifies the people of the Church but instead fragments the Body of Christ into little groups identified by musical styles. The goal rather ought to be to find a musical practice that unifies us.

This approach goes beyond “what I like or don't like” to the question of what serves our proper purpose. On that point Luther is clear: the purpose of music is to praise God and proclaim the Gospel. He says that praise and proclamation are two sides of the same coin, that one praises God by proclaiming the Gospel, and that when the Gospel is proclaimed, that is the way God is properly praised. Separating those two aspects gets us into trouble. Luther says you do one by doing the other, and at the center is the proclamation of the Good News. That's why Luther puts music and theology *next to* each other, each complementing and enlivening the other.

Robin Leaver's recent book¹⁰ makes a strong case for Luther's pedagogical intent in understanding music. How do you understand the pedagogical side of music?

When we proclaim the Good News, we are teaching. The content of our teaching should be the Good News of the Gospel. As described in the New Testament, this content is the *kerygma*, the proclamation. I do not see *kerygma* and creedal content as disjunctive at all. Much of contemporary religiosity seems to avoid kerygmatic content at any cost. Much of contemporary “spirituality,” including many new hymn texts and the texts of choral music heard in the church, consists of a foggy haze of vaguely religious verbiage. It is vaguely “spiritual,” offending no one.

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All this raises another issue. High school students interested in church music (for example, the students at Lutheran Summer Music) often have difficulty finding role models. They are also not sure where to get college-level training. Where can young persons find the models they need?

Any young person interested in church music as a vocation, whether in high school or college, needs to find a congregation where good church music is practiced and to live in that culture. By good church music I don't mean difficult choral music, flashy organists, or big production anthems. Such an approach is readily found in churches large or small which try to imitate much of American Protestant practice. I mean liturgical church music which is rooted in the Lutheran tradition, which is often inherently more modest in intent, yet has its own kind of excitement and musical authenticity.

Places where church music is practiced in exemplary fashion are, admittedly, few and far between, whether one is speaking of congregations or even Lutheran colleges and universities. I happen to worship at such a congregation, Grace Lutheran Church in River Forest. In addition to the regular services of worship, our congregation offers a monthly Bach cantata vesper service which is characterized, as are the Sunday services, by reverence, a joyful solemnity, good preaching in a historically traditional liturgy that is a wonderfully authentic and moving experience and which draws many people regularly from the church and the surrounding community.

Not every parish will sing Bach cantatas every month, nor should that necessarily be the model for other parishes. But even in congregations with more modest musical resources there is much music which that fulfills the goals of Lutheran liturgical worship. What is necessary is a pastor and church musician who together understand what the Lutheran liturgical tradition is all about and who can inspire and model what that means in churches with modest musical means.

One place to begin is with the *Statement on Worship and Music* of the Association for Lutheran Church Musicians (see their web site).¹¹ It is a solid statement of church music unapologetically Lutheran, rooted in Lutheran history and practice yet open to the future. The implication of such a statement needs to be brought to life in the practice of Lutheran congregations.

Paging through the volumes of *Church Music*, the journal which you began and edited from 1966–80, one discovers a fairly wide range of opinions. Some writers weighed in to support serialism in church music; others took a freer approach to musical piety. What is the range of opinions at play at the present moment?

The motto for *Church Music* was “music in Lutheran liturgical perspective.” While we gave voice to a variety of viewpoints, they all fell within the broad outlines of that theme. At that time we were the only journal to seriously

address a variety of matters and issues of importance to church musicians. This role has been ably taken up by this journal today. There will always be a need for a serious church music journal which addresses issues beyond the mere “practical.”

From one perspective today's issues are different from those confronting the previous generation, yet there are certain underlying common problems. The language of worship remains an issue in many places. The search for absolute clarity of language can erode and impoverish richness in language. The matter of constantly changing texts in worship also presents problems for composers. What is “simple” or “clear” seems to change with every new Bible translation. In choosing a biblical text to set to music, one has to wonder how long that text will be used. Since Lutherans have no “official” translation whole texts can change rapidly. That causes problems for composers.

What is the future of the hymnal as we have traditionally understood it?

I have experienced two rounds of hymnal publication: first *Lutheran Book of Worship* and *Lutheran Worship*; more recently *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and *Lutheran Service Book*. In each of these rounds the suggestion surfaced that the hardbound book in the pew was out-dated, a dinosaur to be replaced by songs projected on screens, a variety of temporary duplicated materials, or completely duplicated service folders. I am convinced there will always be a place for the hardback Lutheran hymnal.

The three books which have shaped Lutheran piety historically are the Bible, the Catechism, and the hymnal. The hymnal still remains, at least in Sunday morning use, the basic resource for congregational worship and it should be. This hymnal is more than a simple collection of hymns. In its liturgies and hymns it is a confessional statement of the faith of the worshipping community, and as such the basic resource for congregational worship, teaching, and renewal. But it will not be so unless it is intentionally used. It is of no use to have a hymnal in the pews and never pick it up to open it except for the hymns. In worship we demonstrate who and what we are as a Christian community. The hymnal helps us articulate what we believe, who we are, and our mission in the world.

It has been said that “every generation should add its own stanza to the Church's song.” What will the stanza of our generation of very prolific hymn writing sound like to the church of the future?

While every generation thinks its contribution is undoubtedly worthy, some contributions are better than others and some will soon fall out of use. History teaches us that every contribution, no matter how much we may think of it at the moment, is not necessarily destined for immortality. We

don't really know what will survive. History will be the better judge. Not all of my hymns will be sung into eternity—but you have to find out which ones by yourself!

The problem of judging contemporary contributions to the church's song is exacerbated by the ease with which today's technology makes instant production and distribution possible. Every new hymn or choral work immediately appeals for instant acceptance without any time for sober or deliberative judgment. Time and distance will give a better verdict. In the meantime, reserving judgment together with a healthy skepticism is probably the better path. My guess is that many of the hymns touted today as the answer to what the church's song ought to be will quickly fall out of use. Look at what has happened to "popular" hymns from the 1960s such as "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love," "Allelu," and "Sons of God!"

Speaking of hymnals, hymns and teaching are at the core of your work. Please tell us what makes a good hymn for children—or is there such a thing?

Nineteenth-century hymnals had sections called children's hymns, employing what they presumed were texts and tunes easier for children to grasp. I doubt, however, that there are many melodies which children can't learn—if they are taught.

There was also a time when many Lutheran schools commonly had "hymn schedules," and the pupils would learn a hymn a week through the eight grades. By the time they graduated they knew most of the tunes in the hymnal. Now we too often hear that the great hymn tunes are too hard for the children. But children can learn most any hymn if taught with interest and enthusiasm. When I taught elementary grades, the children easily learned Luther's "We All Believe in One True God,"¹² and didn't know it was "hard." You would occasionally hear some of them singing snatches of the melody in the hallway. Children will rarely rise above their teacher in what and how they learn and the enthusiasm they exhibit for any particular hymn. Too often the problem is not the children but the teacher who either does not know or is not prepared to teach the hymns of the Church.

Sometimes we hear the question, "Why do we always sing so many old hymns?" or "Why don't we sing more new hymns?" The terms are essentially meaningless, for what is new to me may be quite old to another and what is old to me may be new to another. To sing Luther's "We All Believe in One True God" may be an eye-opening new experience for many though it is quite an "old" (traditional) hymn for many others. The "old" hymns are very learnable. Two "old" hymns that only recently have become exceedingly popular

are "In Thee is Gladness"—not available to American Lutherans in their hymnals until 1978 (publication date of *Lutheran Book of Worship* [LBW])—and "Lord, Thee I Love with All My Heart" which could be found in TLH but became available for all Lutherans only with LBW. It's not that people can't learn. Too often church musicians or pastors don't give congregations credit for what they could do. Then we decide not to use this or that hymn because "the people don't know it." Of course! We haven't taken the time and effort to teach them.

Now we too often hear that the great hymn tunes are too hard for the children. But children can learn most any hymn if taught with interest and enthusiasm.



In view of what you just said, have we fulfilled Muhlenberg's exhortation (from the 1786 *Erbauliche Liedersammlung*) to teach our children the hymns which nourish them spiritually?

The positive note is that all three recent hymnals (for the WELS, LCMS, and ELCA) have a solid core of hymns with very "nourishing" content. The question is whether they are being used. That basic core of hymns which should be in the repertoire of every Lutheran congregation is represented generally by the traditional listing of the Hymn of the Day. Whether congregations choose to use it in a disciplined way or simply go their own way is the issue. What's a good children's hymn? Let's not forget that when Luther wrote his hymn "Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word" he called it a "children's hymn." Too hard?

The more interesting point about Muhlenberg is that he faced a multiplicity of hymnals among Lutherans when he arrived here from Germany, and soon developed a vision of Lutheranism gathered around one hymn book. With the subsequent proliferation of synods moving west, there came a parallel proliferation of hymnals until the end of the 1800's. Then began a period of consolidation until the mid-20th century when Lutherans were largely using one of two books: *The Lutheran Hymnal* and *Service Book and Hymnal*. The two groups using those hymnals joined together in the work of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship to produce one book (LBW) that would have realized Muhlenberg's dream. That dream was unfortunately circumvented and we are now, for a variety of reasons, proliferating again with at least four different Lutheran hymn books today: *Christian Worship*, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, *Lutheran Service Book*, and *Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* plus all the supplements now available.

Although they are not your only text writers, as a hymn tune composer you clearly have a special relationship with and Jaroslav Vajda and Herbert Brokering.¹⁶ How did those collaborations work for you?

These are two very different poets. The first text by Jaroslav Vajda for which I composed a tune was “Now the Silence.” I was assigned that text when *Worship Supplement*¹³ was being developed. The text was not stanzaic in the usual sense and no extant tune would fit. Since I was the “junior” member on the committee (which included Ed Klammer, Paul Bunjes, Richard Hillert, Theodore Beck, and Paul Manz), the text was assigned to me to compose a tune. The result was NOW which has since appeared in many hymnals.

In working with Vajda you were always presented with a text completely thought through, polished to account for virtually every musical possibility, and designed to avoid musical problems. He was a musician himself, having played in a string quartet in his student days. He would make sure that an accent in one line would be matched in the same place in subsequent lines, a real help for the composer. There were no technical linguistic questions left hanging when working with him.

On one occasion, concerning “Where Shepherds Lately Knelt,” however, I sought his permission about textual changes. For musical reasons I wanted to repeat the last line in each stanza. He understood that as a musical issue and agreed. The other change was theological. The very final line read “to live, to die and not alone for me.” I suggested that “to live, to die” was a common enough expression; but, for the Christian, it made more sense to read “to die, to live . . .” Vajda readily agreed. That explains why the very first printed version of the text contained the original sequence, which was then reversed in later printings.

Working with Herb Brokering has been an equally wonderful, although quite a different experience. His head is so full of lines and images that the creative process never seems to quit. He may present you with a first or second draft, but also with added alternate lines in the margins, including a note, “If you don’t like this line, what about this one?” He can see it either way and wonders what you want to do. With Herb you participate more in shaping the text. Once in a while I have even rearranged, with his permission, the order of his stanzas, and he seemed fine with that. Even after publication he may still be bubbling with ideas, wondering if we should have done it some other way. “Thine the Amen,” written in the early 1980s, was one of our most successful joint efforts.

You have crafted many successful hymns, but “Now the Silence” and “Thine the Amen” certainly stand out. Why are they so engaging for the congregation? And please say a word about the tempo of “Now the Silence.”

“Thine the Amen” sings rather easily because, for one thing, it moves consistently in a step-wise, diatonic movement. Only two skips occur across the beginning or ending of phrases. There are no melodic surprises. The hymn “Now the silence” was successfully received and appeared in many hymnals partly because of the unusual shape of the text— Erik Routley¹⁴ called the text a *tour de force*. The tune works for that text.

It is a quiet, meditative hymn, certainly not a “jig.” It moves in a gentle rhythm. Slowly, and reflectively! The tune builds up melodically toward the middle (“Now the hearing Now the pow’r Now the vessel brimmed for pouring Now the body Now the blood Now the joyful celebration” etc.) in an arc-like shape, then tapers down to the conclusion.

Vajda’s one musical request to me as I wrote the tune was to conclude the melody on the note “G.” As an entrance hymn for Holy Communion that provided the pastor with the beginning pitch for the liturgy. Vajda very much envisioned a sung liturgy and wrote “Now the Silence” for that context. But it is not a typical opening “rouser!” It anticipates the Holy Communion, while “Thine the Amen” was conceived as a post-communion canticle. My experience is that “Thine the Amen” is also tremendously moving in a funeral or commemoration service.

THINE and NOW, along with some of your other hymns, begin with shorter phrases matching the text lines but then extend into a “long breath” of a melodic arch. Do you recognize that as a specific style element in your melodies?

Yes. And that is partly because the texts are shaped that way.

But the text phrases at those points also could have been separated, as in the first few lines.

That’s true, but if I can tie some of those phrases together, I tend to want to do that in part because the longer lines offer more space to develop a more interesting melodic line. Years ago I remember running across a text in the *English Hymnal* (“Behold, the bridegroom cometh in the middle of the night”) ending “But woe to that dull virgin whom the bridegroom shall surprise, with lamp untrimmed, unburning, and with slumber in her eyes.” Big, long lines! They give you a chance to develop something musically over that longer space. As opposed to 86 86, 14 14 is much more interesting and, to me at least, more satisfying.

My tune RED HILL ROAD (“O Christ, the Same”)¹⁵ shares many of the same characteristics. The text appeared in *With One Voice* (WOV) set to LONDONDERRY AIR. It has eight long lines, though only three stanzas. While I said earlier that I rarely write a tune “just because,” this text was one I was attracted to and set for no special occasion. I wrote it and put it in my desk drawer. About eight months later a request arrived from the committee preparing ELW with a number of texts they wanted to include but that still needed tunes. Included was this text by Timothy Dudley Smith. I sent it in and it was accepted for inclusion. Writing hymn tunes, at least for me, always starts with the words.

What responsibilities do editors and composers have toward each other? What can be changed and what should stay untouched?

A good editor is worth his or her weight in gold, saving composers from a variety of embarrassments. If editors want to change something, however, they owe it to the composer to discuss and consult regarding the proposed changes. While editors often see things the composer may miss, often the composer may have a better solution to a given problem. As a case in point, you always see “Thine the Amen” in C major in hymnals, even though the original choral version was in D flat. The obvious reason for the change is that church organists do not want to play it in D flat. But D flat has its own characteristic sound, significantly different from C major and, in fact, I believe, better. Moreover, in “Thine the Amen” the music should continue uninterrupted between stanzas. That’s the purpose of the transition at the end of each stanza in the choral edition. The idea is that the music never stops until the very end of the last stanza. That is the way it was originally written and conceived. LSB has it right, but WOV and ELW do not. In these books each stanza comes to a full stop. So also in “God of the Sparrow” each stanza ends on the dominant and continues until the resolution on the final chord of the last stanza, as ELW properly presents it. You don’t always hear it that way.

Many commentators consider ours an extremely rich era in hymn production. What does the future hold? Will all this continue or is ours an exceptional experience?

Ours truly has been an era of many new hymns, but of varied quality as one might expect. In Lutheran circles we have had only a few truly significant poetic voices: Martin Franzmann, Jaroslav J. Vajda, and Herbert Brokering¹⁶, for example. Henry Letterman and Stephen Starke must be mentioned among the next generation of significant hymn text writers together with a few others. Hymn text writers inevitably reflect their personal theology or that of the denomination from which they come. Many of these newer hymn texts are useful and compatible in a Lutheran context. Many others are not. Careful discernment is necessary when evaluating hymns for use in worship.

Today many new hymn texts are published in small collections with the hope that some of them will find their way into future hymnals, a practice driven by copyright concerns. Publishers hope one or two texts or tunes will catch on in the next generation of hymnals. A few of these new hymns are indeed worthy candidates. Many are not.

Several questions will conclude our conversation. First, Noel, your wife, has been at your side since your early years. Besides figuring out for you what your computer manuals are trying to say, what role has she played in your working career?

Noel and I have been married for fifty-six years. She has been a quiet inspiration, a cherished spouse and partner, and fellow singer of God’s song in our life together, making space and time for me to do all the musical activities which

have filled up our many years together. That, in part, is why I wrote my choral piece, “Noel, Noel.” Without her support and help it would have been impossible to do almost anything I’ve done. That’s the meaning of the dedication to her in *God’s Song in a New Land*. Look it up!¹⁷

Second, you are noted for a quick, very dry, and unstopable wit. Where do you get your one-liners?

I sometimes hear from others remarks about my humor. I don’t think of myself that way. To answer your question, I have no idea.

Third, are you a musician who composes or a composer who also performs?

I have never been formally trained as a composer. Mostly I learned by finding models for myself and worked from there toward what I wanted. I think that is somewhat different from one who has studied composition formally. That’s why I think I work best in smaller forms such as the motet and other forms which are more obviously suited to liturgical worship. Right now I am working on a set of Gospel motets for the festival half of the church year.

Will the motets cover all three series in the church’s calendar?

That is the plan. The challenge is making sure I last long enough to get through all three series! *Scenes from the New Testament* has just recently been published by Augsburg Fortress as part of this larger project. It contains six sets of two motets each. The first of each set is a liturgical motet intended to be part of the Gospel reading for the particular Sunday or festival. The second motet in each is a setting of a new contemporary text related to the Gospel reading by Jill Baumgartner of Wheaton College. This project is something I have wanted to do. I leave it to others to decide how useful it all is.

Finally, as you look back, what do you think has been your most significant achievement, and why?

I cannot judge regarding any achievement. But what I can say is that for me personally, it has been tremendously exciting and most satisfying over the years to discover, or perhaps better to re-discover, the rich musical heritage of the Church’s song in the Lutheran tradition, what that means for worship, and to help people in my generation make that tradition come alive in congregational worship. To continue, as I am able, to keep it alive and important again for future generations remains a most rewarding endeavor. That is what I have been about “in many and various ways”—as a practicing church musician, teacher, composer, in my writing about church music, keeping that tradition alive not just as history but as a vital part of contemporary life in the Church today. How successful it all has been I’ll

leave to others, and I will also leave it to the next generation to take up the challenge in its own time.

Some have suggested that I have a particular gift for melody. I hope that's true. What I do know for certain is that anyone who attempts to write music intended to help God's people to sing their praises and to proclaim the good news of the Gospel cannot take that responsibility lightly. It is an awesome responsibility which one undertakes with fear and trembling and awe. As I wrote in the Introduction to the collection of my hymns and carols, they, like all of my music, are simply "signposts, . . . markers made by one individual who has been privileged to be a small part of the happy task of providing songs for a pilgrim people along their way."

Thank you, Carl, for this conversation and for the gift of song you have given to the Church. The Lord be with you in the years to come.

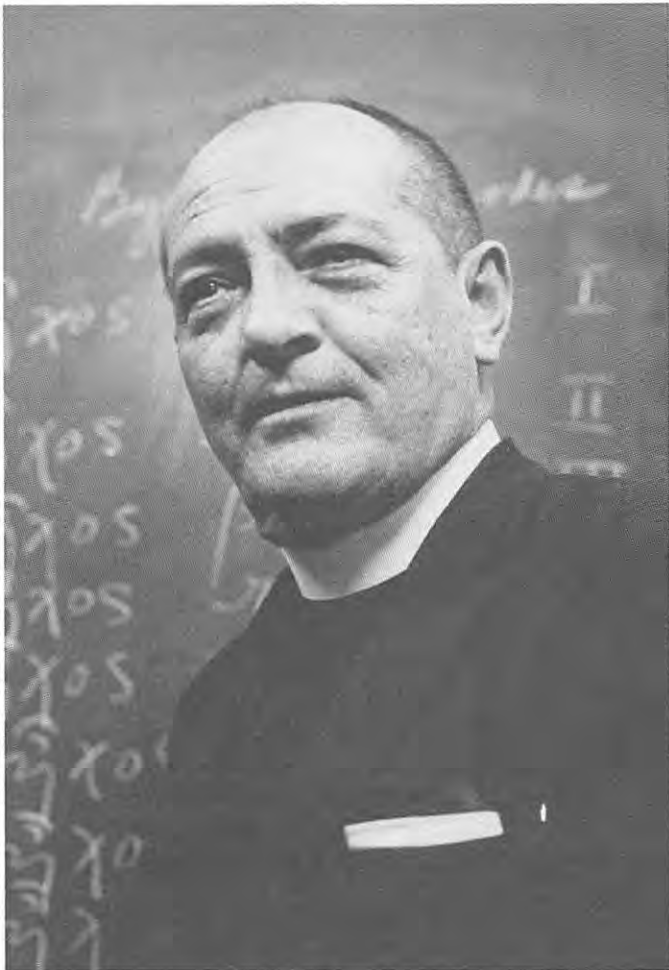
Endnotes

- 1
Carlos R. Messerli (ed.), *Thine the Amen: Essays on Lutheran Church Music in Honor of Carl Schalk* (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2005).
- 2
Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois. At the time this school, like others in the educational system of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, included both a residential high school (something like a "prep school") as well as a college department. The school was devoted to the preparation of Lutheran church workers, primarily parochial school teachers.
- 3
The Pastor and the Church Musician, Church Music Pamphlet Series (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1980).
- 4
Carl Halter, *God and Man in Music* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963).
- 5
Walter E. Buszin, a widely respected music editor and faculty member at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.
- 6
Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois (more recently known as Concordia University Chicago), also referred to simply as 'Concordia River Forest.' See note 2
- 7
Zion Lutheran Church, Wausau, Wisconsin.
- 8
The Roots of Hymnody in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: The Story of Congregational Song —The Hymnals and the Chorale Books from the Saxon Immigration to the Present, Church Music Pamphlet No. 2 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, © 1965).
- 9
God's Song in a New Land: Lutheran Hymnals in America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995); *Source Documents in American Lutheran Hymnody* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996).
- 10
Robin A. Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music—Principles and Implications* (Grand Rapids and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2007).
- 11
www.alcm.org/about/worship-statement.php.
- 12
"The Great Creed," i.e. Martin Luther's hymn on the Nicene Creed ("We All Believe in One True God.").
- 13
Worship Supplement (St. Louis and London: Concordia Publishing House, 1969). Designed as a "supplement" to *The Lutheran Hymnal* of 1941, this small hymnal also served as a trial collection of new liturgical and hymnic materials for future Lutheran service books.
- 14
Erik Routley (1917–1982), a leading hymnologist, hymnal editor, hymn writer and composer, sometime president of the Congregational Church in England, and later faculty member at both Princeton University and Westminster Choir College.
- 15
"O Christ the Same", ELW 760; text by Timothy Dudley Smith; tune RED HILL ROAD by Carl Schalk.
- 16
Editor's Note: Sadly, Herb Brokering died on 7 November 2009 in Bloomington MN, well after the text of this article had been completed.
- 17
CA looked it up and found, "For Noel—Cherished spouse, partner, and fellow-singer of God's Song" (p. 5).

M. Alfred Bichsel

A Centenary Tribute

Vincent A. Lenti



M. Alfred Bichsel

THE YEAR 2009 marks the 100th anniversary of the birth of M. Alfred Bichsel, Lutheran pastor, musician, and educator. It is, therefore, an appropriate moment to pause and reflect upon the life and work of this remarkable man. Rick Erickson, cantor and organist at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in New York, has commented that Bichsel “synthesized the pastor and musician into one person—himself,”¹ giving him a profound understanding of both roles and both worlds. The final years of his professional life were spent at a secular institution, the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, where his presence was richly beneficial not only to the young organ students who enrolled in his church music classes, but also to many others in the Eastman community who came to know and admire the man.

M. Alfred Bichsel was born on October 2, 1909, in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, the son of Alfred B. and Melusine Bichsel. He came to the United States when he was eighteen years old, attended Concordia College in Bronxville, New York, from which he earned an associate’s degree in 1933, and then studied at Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis, where he earned his bachelor of divinity degree in 1937. He was subsequently ordained into the ministry. Bichsel’s education continued at Union Theological Seminary, from which he earned a master of sacred music degree in 1942. While at Union he studied voice, organ, theory, composition, music history, and literature of music. His great passion for music led him to further his training with summer study at the Juilliard School in New York and at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester. In addition, he studied at the American Institute

of Musicology in Rome, and was awarded a *Docteur es-Lettres* degree from the University of Strasbourg, France. While at Strasbourg he studied with the distinguished organist and scholar, Yvonne Rokseth, who was the first woman to ever teach musicology at a university.

The first experiences in teaching for Bichsel were at Concordia College, Bronxville, where he was a faculty member from 1937 to 1943. While at Concordia he taught music theory and music appreciation, and conducted the choir, band, and orchestra. At the same time, he was organist and choir master at the Church of the Redeemer in the Bronx. In his later years he would regale his students with many stories of his teaching years at Concordia, including his playing of all fifteen stanzas of Luther's hymn "From Heaven Above" while the clergy scowled at the altar much to the delight of the congregation. As one of his Eastman students later observed, Bichsel was a Lutheran minister "who really sided more with the church musicians than with the clergy."²

In 1943, Bichsel was appointed to the faculty at Valparaiso University where he organized the chapel choir and served as professor of music. He was present, therefore, for the first Valparaiso University Church Music Seminar in 1944, a meeting of forty-eight organists and choir directors who were determined to bring American Lutheran church music back to its chorale-based origins. Recognizing the enormous contribution to music by the Lutheran tradition, the organizers were determined to bring that tradition into full use among Lutheran congregations in America.

Five years later the Institute of Liturgical Studies was founded at Valparaiso, being a continuation of earlier efforts by the Liturgical Society of St. James (founded in 1929), which had derived its membership from the clergy and laity of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). The new institute at Valparaiso was founded, not coincidentally, a year after the appointment to the theology faculty of Adolph Wismar, a prominent leader in the Liturgical Society of St. James and former pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in New York City. Wismar had served St. Matthew's for twenty-seven years, but he resigned to allow his congregation to merge with Messiah Lutheran Church. His efforts after coming to Valparaiso, in conjunction with faculty colleagues such as Jaroslav Pelikan, James Savage, and M. Alfred Bichsel, led to the formation of the Institute of Liturgical Studies in 1949. Bichsel, therefore, was in the forefront of liturgical renewal in the Lutheran Church.

Valparaiso's institute eventually embraced an ecumenical approach, welcoming Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, and others as speakers and participants. It was also strongly Eucharistic in its outlook, a position that coincided perfectly with Bichsel's own beliefs. He was actively involved with the work of the institute during his years on the faculty at Valparaiso, and his specific contributions as an institute speaker included the following presentations:

"The Music of the Liturgy" (1949)

"The Liturgical Approach to Music" (1951)

"A Philosophy of Church Music" (1953)

"Choral Technique for Plainsong and Polyphony" (1953)

"Contemporary Polyphony within the Framework of Gregorian" (1955)

"The Attainnant Organ Books" (1956)

Bichsel's years at Valparaiso, therefore, were fruitful and involved him in many of the more important issues facing the liturgy and music of the American Lutheran church. But in 1960 he left Valparaiso and his professional association with the church to accept a position at the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music.

For many years the Eastman School had been a leading institution in the training of church organists. Although the school offered no major in church music at any level, organists at the school were required to take various courses relevant to the church music field. In the late 1950s, discussion was initiated concerning the possibility of adding a church music major. The person responsible for recommending a church music program at Eastman was Eugene Selhorst, associate dean for graduate professional studies. In addition to being a fine scholar, Selhorst was a dedicated church musician. His interest and involvement in that area of music prompted him to suggest a possible curriculum for a master of music degree in church music, while also presenting thoughts for a church music concentration within the recently developed doctor of musical arts curriculum. Howard Hanson, Eastman's long-time director, was very receptive to the idea.

In September 1959, a new department of church music was inaugurated at Eastman under Selhorst's guidance. The following June witnessed the conferral of the master of music degree on two Eastman students who were the first to complete the new church music curriculum. Meanwhile, discussion had continued concerning who might be selected as a permanent head of the new department. On January 26, 1960, Selhorst wrote Hanson to recommend the Rev. Dr. M. Alfred Bichsel, whom he described as "a splendid choral conductor and fine church music scholar."³ Hanson had previously discussed possibilities that the Eastman School might cooperate in some manner with nearby Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, an American Baptist institution. With the concurrence of Wilburn F. Saunders, president of the divinity school, Bichsel was offered a joint appointment as associate professor at the two schools, beginning in the fall of 1960. He taught at Eastman for fifteen years until his retirement in 1975.

Bichsel's arrival at Eastman was on the eve of an era of great liturgical "experimentation" and the introduction of many non-traditional musical forms and styles in worship

services. Such changes most likely started in the Roman Catholic Church, resulting from various priorities and decisions that had come out of the Second Vatican Council, but the coming years witnessed many of the same trends in other denominations as well. One of his students at the time was Carol Doran, later an important musical figure in the Episcopal Church. Doran has commented as follows:

I greatly appreciated Dr. Bichsel's knowledge of the orthodox traditions of liturgical practice. This was a time when respect for traditional liturgical practices was seriously unraveling in the U.S. Folk music and coffee houses were the "with it" *foci* of church music at the time. Even though my own work as a church musician has had a far wider scope than the studies that were central to Eastman's programs, they remain the foundation into which other knowledge and other perspectives could be integrated.⁴

Bichsel's faithfulness to what Doran describes as the "orthodox traditions" was a steadying and perhaps also comforting influence on his Eastman students during these difficult times. Some years earlier he had delivered a series of four meditations at the Devotions of the University Church Music Seminar in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, and these meditations included these pertinent observations:

We are living in an age of extreme materialism, secularism, and nationalism. The arts, and that includes the musical, are under the strong influence of these forces and are directed at satisfying the dictates of, and paying homage to, questionable ideals. The music of the world is aimed at pleasing man and glorifying his perishable exploits. Without question we are completely surrounded by these manifestations of secularism in the arts.

...We must be on our guard constantly so that the music we make or compose is music that is conceived purely for the worship of Almighty God. We must be sure that the underlying force that compels us to make music is one that is dedicated only to serving Him and Him alone, without so much as an eye on the approbation of man, the aggrandizement of self, and the furtherance of selfish interests.⁵

One of Bichsel's priorities upon his arrival at Eastman was to establish the Eastman Polyphonic Choir, a group of about three dozen singers for the performance of sacred choral music. Up until this time, the choral experience at Eastman had been centered upon a very large chorus that almost exclusively sang what might be best described as the concert repertoire. While students had wonderful opportunities to perform works such as the Mozart *Requiem* or Haydn's *Creation*, the sacred repertoire of masses, motets, and cantatas was largely ignored until the formation of this new group under his direction. Deborah Martin Kraus, now a prominent teacher and singer in Montreal, was among the

many Eastman students who had the opportunity to sing in the Polyphonic Choir:

I sang in Polyphonic Choir for two years. Bix was my introduction to small ensemble work and to sophisticated sacred music. He was intense and a taskmaster, and the results were worth it all. My memory is more of the experience. He wore (and I use that term loosely as they always seemed to be falling off) reading glasses and tucked his chin in to peer out at us over the top. He had the custom of swiping his big square hand over his bald top when puzzled or frustrated. Boy! Did we make good music!⁶

The Polyphonic Choir gave many memorable performances, including several that were done within the context of a liturgical setting. One very notable example of this was when Bichsel and his group provided the music for a Lutheran Christmas liturgy as it might have occurred in Leipzig in the year 1740. This liturgical service took place at the Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word (now ELCA) in Rochester, with the Polyphonic Choir singing Bach's Cantata No. 91, *Gelobet seist du, Jesu Christ*, and the Kyrie and Gloria from Buxtehude's *Missa Brevis*. Among the Eastman students participating in this Lutheran liturgy was the Reverend Marcel Rooney, O.S.B., a Roman Catholic Benedictine monk, who chanted the Gospel in Latin.⁷

Rooney's selection as a participant in the liturgy was but one example of Bichsel's ecumenical spirit. His daughter, Yvonne Truhon, has said that he "followed the ecumenical path well before that was the fashionable thing to do."⁸ He was certainly *not* an ecumenist in the sense of minimizing or apologizing for theological differences. He fervently loved Luther's theology and, perhaps above all things, the music of Bach. But he did see within the liturgy—and the music associated with the liturgy—a common ground for the convergence of people from different faith communities. On one occasion, for example, he joined a Roman Catholic priest and a group of Eastman students for the private celebration of a Latin Mass, in which he not only chanted the Gospel in Latin but also functioned in the role of deacon for this very "Catholic" liturgy.

When his dear friend Eugene Selhorst died quite prematurely, Bichsel brought his Polyphonic Choir to Corpus Christi Church in Rochester for the Requiem Mass. In addition, he served as the eulogist for the funeral liturgy. On another occasion he presided at an Episcopal Evensong (in connection with a regional convention of the American Guild of Organists), incensing the altar of the Episcopal Church in which the service was held, and even slightly burning his fingers by grasping the thurible too close to the burning charcoal. When someone expressed concern after the service, he only responded that the pain he experienced was well worth it, since he savored every moment of the occasion! His willingness to participate in and enjoy religious ceremony was such that Bichsel once

traveled to Pennsylvania to do a “house-blessing” for one of his former Eastman School students, a fellow Lutheran. This ceremony included sprinkling Holy Water throughout the entire house, all of this courtesy of a Roman Catholic priest who supplied him with the necessary “equipment” for such a blessing.

A shared interest in liturgy was the basis of many friendships with Roman Catholic priests. He wrote for *Sacred Music*, the journal of the Church Musician Association of America headed by the Rev. Msgr. Richard Schuler in St. Paul, Minnesota, a man who, incidentally, was a graduate of the Eastman School of Music. Among the personal friends whom he especially admired was the Rev. Msgr. Francis Schmitt, long-time director of music at Boy’s Town. Another friend was the Rev. Robert Skeris, whose priestly career included serving as professor at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome. Skeris, Schmitt, and Schuler were all involved in the establishment of the Church Music Association of America. Bichsel met Skeris through his association with Schmitt and subsequently invited him to lecture at Eastman during the fall semester in 1967 and in 1968. Father Skeris has commented that he always enjoyed his stays with the Bichsels “for they were not only wonderful hosts and charming company, but strong believers in the divinity of Jesus Christ and the inspiration of Holy Writ.”⁹ As with many of Bichsel’s friends, there were many shared convictions concerning liturgical and theological matters.

Bichsel’s ability to reach out to members of other faith communities also extended to Judaism. He had a high regard and appreciation for the Jewish origins of Christian worship. It was at his suggestion that his Eastman faculty colleague Samuel Adler was invited to give several guest lectures at Boys Town concerning Jewish liturgical cantillation. Bichsel was fluent in Hebrew and his knowledge of the language once provided the occasion to help a neighbor’s son prepare for his forthcoming Bar Mitzvah, a task that brought him much pleasure. Hebrew was one of the seven languages he knew, the others being English, French, German, Italian, Latin, and Greek. His gift for languages was of great benefit to the research and scholarship of his students at the Eastman School.

Although he was respectful of other ideas and traditions, Bichsel was not a man of wavering beliefs or self doubts. He was also not a person who could be called a “company man” or a “team player.” If something struck him as being fundamentally wrong, he would speak out forcefully and without any hesitation, sometimes with little regard for the consequences. When a senior member of the Eastman School administration failed to respond to several memos he had sent to him, Bichsel fired off yet another memo which simply said, “Writing you is like writing the dead-letter office.” This time he received a response, but with that response came a mild reprimand. At times he certainly could be a rather irascible character, feeling passionate about his work, about music, and about life in general. He approached everything

with unbridled enthusiasm and absolute dedication.

This led him to occasional disagreement with his denomination or with his fellow Lutheran pastors, while also prompting periodic disagreement with the administration of the Eastman School of Music. When the administration of the school decided, for example, that it would offer a summer workshop for stadium organists (i.e. those who “play” the organ at baseball games), his fury knew no bounds. He was equally upset when the LCMS retained the translation “one holy christian and apostolic church” in the Nicene Creed, rather than adopting the more literal translation “one holy catholic and apostolic church.” (Bichsel was, at the time, a member of the Liturgical Texts and Music Committee of the Commission on Worship which was working on the preparation of *Lutheran Worship*.¹⁰) He was similarly dismissive of fellow pastors who refused to chant the liturgy, an attitude which he found almost inexcusable.

To his Eastman students, however, he was a lovable and unforgettable character. He was also exceedingly generous to his friends and colleagues. Described by his daughter as one of the last of the Renaissance men, he had broad interests and a constantly probing intellectual curiosity. He had a great repertoire of stories and jokes, and he was a gourmet cook, a talent that was enhanced after his beloved wife Jean took a position as an executive secretary. Bichsel’s hours were flexible, and, therefore, he tended to be increasingly responsible for preparing the family’s evening meal. The noted concert organist, Timothy Albrecht, currently professor of music at Emory University (in the College of Arts and Sciences and in the Candler School of Theology), has commented that Bichsel’s hospitality inevitably included learning how to drink Scotch! He fondly recalled “many, many happy-hours in that little Irondequoit kitchen...before processing to the dining room for an incredible home-cooked meal enjoyed around the family table.”¹¹ Carol Doran has similar memories of his hospitality and his skill in the area of European cuisine.

On a more serious note, Timothy Albrecht has commented on his teacher as follows:

The mentor in Bix was at its best one-to-one, and I learned so much about liturgy, hymnody, Bach cantatas, “the history of the passions,” and choral conducting less from his seminars (many of which I took) and much more from his lending me ALL his lecture notes and our discussing things in all manners of settings.¹²

The Rev. Richard Resch, currently associate professor of pastoral ministry and missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, fondly recalls that Bichsel was “fiercely loyal” to his students.¹³ He credits his former mentor for shaping his own understanding of the historic and liturgical roots of Lutheranism and for developing his appreciation of the importance of the prayer offices, especially Matins and Vespers. According to Resch, Bichsel’s theological training was always at the heart of his teaching. His devotion to

his students fostered many endearing friendships. Timothy Albrecht has commented that there is only one photo on his desk at Emory University, and it is “of Bixie, donning both clerical collar and mischievous smile.”

When Bichsel retired from active teaching in 1975, he continued to serve for another five years at the Eastman School of Music as professor emeritus and advisor to students in the doctor of musical arts degree program. Unfortunately, the church music department which he had served with such devotion and effectiveness was closed. This decision by the school’s administration was the cause of much bitterness and disappointment. All of his labors seemed to have come to naught. The Eastman School, at this point in its history, had become a rather dominating institution for the training of organists. Faculty members David Craighead and Russell Saunders were in great demand as teachers, and emphasis at the school seemed to have shifted more heavily towards producing competition winners (of which there were significant numbers) and organists with impressive academic credentials that would lead to college and university teaching positions. Somehow, church music was no longer as much of a priority. Although a core curriculum in church music remained in place for the school’s organ students, the degree programs which Bichsel had nurtured became a thing of the past.

Bichsel’s retirement years, however, saw him maintain his level of interest and commitment to church music. His disappointment over the decision to terminate his degree programs at Eastman was lessened to some extent when the Eastman School’s Community Education Division began offering annual summer church music workshops. Bichsel was a lecturer for a number of these workshops during the 1980s, and many old friendships were strengthened and new ones nurtured by his collaboration with people who shared his passionate interest in the music of the church.¹⁴

One of his most notable post-retirement moments occurred when the Association for Lutheran Church Musicians held a national convention in Seattle, an occasion that provided Bichsel with the opportunity to make an important contribution to the general understanding of the historic role of cantor in the Lutheran Church. Rick Erickson, then serving at the Lutheran Church of the Incarnate Word in Rochester, assisted him in his preparation and recalls the event as follows:

One of his most notable post-retirement moments occurred when the Association for Lutheran Church Musicians held a national convention in Seattle, an occasion that provided Bichsel with the opportunity to make an important contribution to the general understanding of the historic role of cantor in the Lutheran Church.



One of his last major projects was his preparation for an address at the 1987 ALCM national convention in Seattle. I had the happy role of gopher for this, bringing materials from Sibley Library and helping with some proofing. In this speech and later publication, Bichsel laid out the historic Lutheran model of Cantor. This was, for Americans, ground-breaking stuff—much translated from German and Latin for the first time. It had and continues to have a broad impact on self-understanding, and the church’s understanding of the office of Cantor.¹⁵

Bichsel’s research was extremely thorough, and his presentation to the convention included important background information preceding an in-depth historical survey of the office of cantor, and ending with a discussion of the implications for today’s cantors. This very important contribution to the understanding of the office of cantor in the Lutheran tradition was subsequently published by the ALCM.¹⁶

Among other activities that occupied Bichsel’s retirement years was serving as chaplain to the Rochester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. He contributed a regular short “message” for each of the monthly newsletters, and his message in the November 1988 newsletter read as follows:

The beautiful colors of autumn are giving way to blustery winds, rain, and aggravating fluctuations of the thermometer. With it comes the end of the liturgical year with its eschatological overtones. Ushered in by the Feast of All Saints and the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed, we wend our way through these last Sundays of the Church Year only too conscious of the passing of time and the transitory nature of the physical world around us.

These were undoubtedly very personal thoughts of a man approaching his eightieth year, his contributions to his church and to the art of music now coming to an end. Yet the reminder of the transitory nature of life was for all of us. M. Alfred Bichsel was called home to the Lord on February 15, 1992. Throughout his life he had treasured his pastoral calling and had served several Lutheran congregations as an assistant pastor. His beloved wife and companion, Jean Nehring Bichsel, died on February 14, 1999, one day before the seventh anniversary of her husband’s passing. Their remains are interred in the outdoor columbarium of the Village Lutheran Church across the street from Concordia College in Bronxville, New York.

Vincent Lenti has been a member of the Eastman School of Music piano faculty since 1963. His responsibilities as a member of the piano department also include coordinating primary and secondary piano instruction and supervising doctoral teaching assistants. He previously served with distinction for a period of twenty-six years as director of the Eastman School of Music Community Education Division. He has a strong interest in church music and liturgy, and he has spoken to various churches, organizations, and associations including national conventions of NPM and the Hymn Society on a variety of church-music topics. He has written dozens of articles on church music and liturgy which have been accepted for publication by such respected journals as *The American Organist*, *Pastoral Music* (published by the National Association of Pastoral Musicians), *The Hymn*, *Cross Accent*, *Studia Liturgica* (published by Societas Liturgica), *Worship*, and *Sacred Music*.

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The Private and the Public Death in Dietrich Buxtehude's Works for Keyboard Instruments

Markus Rathey

Ars moriendi—The art of dying

Ars moriendi, the art of dying, was one of the cornerstones of Lutheran piety in the seventeenth century. This century saw the Thirty Years' War, the plague, and other catastrophes, which were a daily reminder of mortality and the fact that life could end at any moment. Baroque poetry and hymnody are filled with reflections of human mortality and the vanity of all earthly accomplishments.¹ As death was everywhere, the Christian needed to be prepared.

The primary aim of the preparation for death was to change one's life in the face of death and to die blessedly; "selig sterben," as Johann Heermann emphasizes in his widely read *Schola Mortis: Todes Schule* (School of Death), a collection of funeral sermons from 1628.² Martin Luther himself had laid the groundwork for this theology in his treatise *Sermon on Preparing to Die* from 1519.³ He urges his readers to reflect upon their own dying: "We should familiarize ourselves with death during our lifetime, inviting death into our presence when it is still at a distance."⁴

While the tradition of the *ars moriendi* dates back into the Middle Ages, the Lutheran Reformation created a significant paradigm shift when Luther rejected purgatory for theological reasons and therefore removed the possibility of atonement for sins after death. The preparation for one's own death became now central to all reflections about death and dying. The reformed *ars moriendi* also denied the family the opportunity to pray for the deceased to change his or her fate. Therefore, the entire life had to be a preparation for death, since death could come at any minute. Another important aspect of the *ars moriendi*, besides the awareness of and meditation on one's own death, was the reflection

on the exemplary death of Jesus Christ and its soteriological meaning. This facet of the theology of death is similarly rooted in Luther's theology. He pointed out in his Heidelberg Disputation of 1518:

**The primary
aim of the
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in the face of
death and to die
blessedly**



He deserves to be called a theologian, however, who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross. [...] Now it is not sufficient for anyone, and it does him no good to recognize God in his glory and majesty, unless he recognizes him in the humility and shame of the cross. ... A theologian of glory calls evil good and good evil. A theologian of the cross calls the thing what it actually is.⁵

According to Luther, God reveals himself primarily in the crucified Jesus Christ. Personal reflection on one's own death must therefore begin with meditation on Christ's death.

Seventeenth-century theologians spilled an enormous amount of ink on death and the vanity of human life. Countless contemporary theologians published similar books about the art of dying, such as Rostock Superintendent Heinrich Müller, whose *Geistliche Erquickstunden* from 1664 revolves around the theme of the *ars moriendi*.⁶ The Superintendent of the northern German city Lübeck, August Pfeiffer,⁷ provides in his *Anti-melancholicus, oder Melancholey-Vertreiber* (1691) a strikingly detailed description of the final hours:

I take fright as well whenever I think that my limbs, which I so carefully nourished and clothed and so tenderly cared for in my lifetime and which did me such steadfast service, should moulder and rot in the earth, and become a stinking carcass, dung, and filth, and perhaps be carried off by a thousand worms or maggots.⁸

Hymns and sacred songs were an integral part of the daily *ars moriendi*. Funeral sermons from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries emphasize frequently that the deceased had regularly read the Bible, sang hymns, and immersed him- or herself in religious literature.⁹ A characteristic example is the funeral sermon for the Mühlhausen Burgomaster Adolph Strecker, for whom Bach composed his famous *Actus tragicus*.¹⁰ Even though (or rather, exactly because) the description is idealized, it presents a model for how an individual should prepare himself for his death:

Even though he had to stay in bed, his heart was still confident in God while he was waiting for the hour of merciful dissolution with joy. He refrained from all worldly things and practiced instead his faith in patience, devotion, and hope so that his sickbed could be called a gymnasium of faith, a practice of true Christianity. Even though his state lasted a long time, with increasing pain day by day, he kept quiet towards God, strengthened himself with biblical verses, Christian prayers, and songs.¹¹

Burgomaster Strecker was in the fortunate position that he had time to prepare for his own death; the literature teaching the *ars moriendi*, however, urged its readers to be prepared for the unannounced death as well. An example for this constant preparation is a collection of hymns by the Leipzig Organist Daniel Vetter († 1721).¹² In the early eighteenth century he published two collections of hymn settings for keyboard instruments, which, as the title points out, could be used in church or at home.¹³ According to Vetter, the funeral songs were especially useful for the practice of daily piety, as they kept conscious the necessary thoughts about death:¹⁴

It is necessary to add the songs about death, because experience has taught us in what an edifying way the thoughts of death, written down by faithful hearts, can entertain. And I have not second thoughts to use again Luther as an example, who requested in several letters for this purpose from musician at the Bavarian court (who was in those days famous) a setting of the 4th psalm, verses 9 and 10, in order to edify himself and remind him of his own death.¹⁵

Singing and playing hymns that echoed this *ars moriendi* fulfilled a dual purpose: the text, whether explicitly sung or implicitly remembered when the melody was heard, reminded both the performer and listener of mortality and of salvation through Christ's death. The music—according to Lutheran theology of music—intensified the affective and emotive impact of the text and at the same time gave consolation in the grief (one could call it pedagogical grief) evoked by these works. Death was to be remembered and meditated on both in the private sphere, in prayer, song and readings, as well as in the public worship services, be it on Sunday morning, on special days of prayer and repentance (“Buß- und Bettage”), or in funeral services. The following

study of two compositions by the northern German composer and organist Dieterich Buxtehude (1637–1707) will explore the private and the public face of this meditation on and preparation for death.

The public death

Hymns and hymn settings were (and are) an important part of the Lutheran Sunday morning service. In the seventeenth century hymns were either performed by the choir in homophonic and polyphonic settings or by the congregation. In the latter case, the hymns in Buxtehude's time were often sung *alternatim*, which means the congregation and the organ alternated in the performance of the chorale stanzas. One verse was sung by the congregation, which in Buxtehude's Lübeck still normally sang without the accompaniment of the organ. The next verse was then played by the organist while the congregation “sang” the text of the stanza in their minds (and hearts). Then another verse was sung by the congregation, and so forth. Furthermore, the hymns were preceded by an organ prelude, often presenting the chorale melody in its entirety.¹⁶

Buxtehude composed several sets of chorale variations that were intended for this *alternatim*-practice.¹⁷

BuxWV 177

“Ach Gott und Herr”
2 movements

BuxWV 181

“Danket dem Herren”
3 movements

BuxWV 205

“Meine Seele erhebt den Herren”
2 movements (fragment)

BuxWV 207

“Nimm von uns Herr, du treuer Gott”
4 movements

The most extensive and diverse set of variations is BuxWV 207, “Nimm von uns Herr, du treuer Gott.” It is based on a hymn by the sixteenth-century theologian and poet Martin Moller (1547–1606).¹⁸ The text is loosely modeled on the litany, a prayer for God's forgiveness, mercy, and consolation. The words were traditionally combined with Martin Luther's melody for the hymn “Vater unser im Himmelreich”:



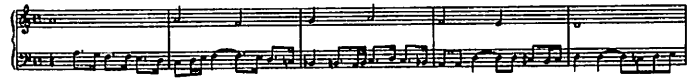
Example 1: The tune VATER UNSER IM HIMMELREICH, used for “Nimm von uns Herr”

Buxtehude's set of variations consists of four verses. The composer does not indicate how the movements should be used. However, we can assume on the basis of what is known about the *alternatim* practice in the seventeenth century that the hymn was probably divided between the organ and the congregation in the following way:

Organ	Prelude	BuxWV 207/1
Congregation	Verse 1:	Nimm von uns Herr, du treuer Gott
Organ	Verse 2:	Erbarm dich deiner bösen Knecht, BuxWV 207/2
Congregation	Verse 3:	Ach Herr Gott, durch die Treue dein
Organ	Verse 4:	Warum willst du doch zornig sein BuxWV 207/3
Congregation	Verse 5:	Die Sünd hat uns verderbet sehr
Organ	Verse 6:	Gedenk an deins Sohns bitterm Tod BuxWV 207/4
Congregation	Verse 7:	Leit uns mit deiner rechten Hand

The four movements of Buxtehude's set of variations correspond at first glance with the seven-verse structure of the hymn with the first movement serving as a prelude and the remaining movements replacing the even-numbered verses, while the congregation sang the odd-numbered stanzas. A closer examination shows that the variations in Buxtehude's chorale partita also correspond in an interesting way to the texts of the stanzas that were played by the organist. The first movement of the partita has a rather neutral affect, appropriate for the preparation of congregational singing. It is a three-part setting with a mostly unembellished *cantus firmus* in the upper voice. The melody can be clearly heard—a feature that supports its preparatory function in the course of the liturgy. The occasional embellishments of the melody do not obscure the melodic contour. The entire movement is basically a figuratively embellished chorale harmonization. Only occasionally the alto voice develops a certain degree of independence and engages in a motivic dialogue with the bass.

The second movement of "Nimm von uns Herr" (Example 2) is a typical bicinium in the tradition of composers from the previous generation, such as Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1562–1621) and Samuel Scheidt (1587–1654). The melody in the upper voice, even less embellished than in the first movement, is accompanied by a lower voice of extraordinarily wide tessitura, spanning the range from alto (mm. 7–9) to a low bass voice (m. 28). Only a few embellishments ornament the melody, which is otherwise left intact.



Example 2: Buxtehude, "Nimm von uns Herr," versus 2

Buxtehude's setting reflects the lyrical content of the second stanza of the chorale:

*Erbarm dich deiner bösen Knecht.
Wir bitten Gnad und nicht das Recht;
Denn so du, Herr, den rechten Lohn
Uns geben wolltst nach unserm Thun,
So müßt die ganze Welt vergehn
Und könnt kein Mensch vor dir bestehn.*

Have mercy upon your evil servants.
We ask for mercy and not for justice;
For if you, Lord, wanted to give
The earned reward to us for our deeds,
The whole world would have to perish
And no man could stand before thee.

The movement transfers the affect of the stanza into music: The restrained sonority of the two-part texture, the chromaticism and hushed thirty-second notes accompanying the third phrase of the melody ("for if you, Lord, wanted to give the earned reward," mm. 12–14), and the restless sixteenth-note motion towards the end of the setting ("and no man could stand before thee") capture the feeling of trepidation and hope expressed by the words of the hymn.

The last movement of Buxtehude's chorale partita is a bicinium as well. The *cantus firmus* is played in the upper voice, accompanied by a vivid, motivically independent lower voice. This second bicinium, replacing the sixth stanza in the *alternatim* performance, reflects the general mood of the words in a similar way:

*Gedenk an deins Sohns bitterm Tod,
Sieh an sein heilig Wunden rot,
Die sind ja für die ganze Welt
Die Zahlung und das Lösegeld,
Des trösten wir uns allezeit
Und hoffen auf Barmherzigkeit.*

Remember your son's bitter death,
Look upon His holy red wounds,
That are indeed for the entire world
The settlement and ransom,
From this we gain consolation always
And hope in your compassion.

The restrained sonority of the two part texture underlines the meditative character of the text. An interesting melismatic embellishment appears in the second phrase, emphasizing the words "look upon His holy red wounds."

The third movement of Buxtehude's set of variations is exceptional (Example 3). It resembles the type of chorale

setting that is traditionally labeled by Buxtehude scholars as “organ chorale” or “monodic organ chorale.”¹⁹ The melody in the upper voice is highly embellished, while the lower three voices serve as an accompaniment and bridge the transitions between the lines of the chorale with short, imitative interludes. It is the type of chorale setting Buxtehude uses in most of his single movement chorale preludes.²⁰

While the movement represents one of Buxtehude’s preferred compositional models, it is unusual to find a setting of this type in the context of an otherwise rather simple chorale partita. It is also the only movement in the partita that requires pedal. The remarkable form of the movement, however, corresponds to the text of the fourth stanza of the hymn:

*Warum willst du doch zornig sein
Über uns arme Würmelein?
Weißt du doch wohl, du großer Gott,
Daß wir nichts sind als Erd und Kot;
Es ist ja vor dein Angesicht
Unser Schwachheit verborgen nicht.*

Why would you be so angry
Against us poor little worms?
For you know well, great God,
That we are nothing but dirt and dung;
Indeed before your face
our weakness is not hidden.



Example 3: Buxtehude, “Nimm von uns Herr,” versus 3

It is easy to find correspondences between single words of the text and Buxtehude’s way of embellishing the chorale melody (the wrathful God, mentioned in the initial line, could be the reason for the rhythmically agitated embellishment of the first note of the melody).²¹ What is more, the movement also captures the mood of the entire stanza. The most agitated and graphic verse of the text finds its equivalent in the most agitated and expressive movement of Buxtehude’s composition. This correspondence between text and instrumental realization is more than a coincidence. Johann Sebastian Bach’s setting of the same stanza of the hymn in his chorale cantata BWV 101 (composed in 1724) features a similar musical realization of the text. The text of the fourth movement of BWV 101 is a paraphrase of the fourth stanza of “Nimm von uns, Herr”; while changing some of the words, it retains the overall character and affect of the original text. The paraphrase of the fourth stanza in Bach’s cantata can be read as a theological commentary of the chorale text, underscoring the dramatic affect of the hymn text:

Warum willst du so zornig sein?

Es schlagen deines Eifers Flammen

Schon über unserm Haupt zusammen.

Ach, stelle doch die Strafen ein

Und trag aus väterlicher Huld

Mit unserm schwachen Fleisch Geduld.

Why would you be so angry?

The flames of your zeal already

Strike together over our heads.

Ah, leave off your punishments

And out of paternal favour deal

Patiently with our weak flesh.²²

Bach’s composition of the text is an agitated aria that resembles the emotional expressivity found in Buxtehude’s organ piece.²³ He even features an agitated broken minor chord at the very beginning, just as Buxtehude does. The similarities between Bach and Buxtehude grow out of an analogous form of piety and understanding of death and dying, which renders unnecessary the question of whether Bach might have used Buxtehude’s chorale setting as a model for his cantata. In the fourth verse the hymn evokes the remembrance of mortality, an aspect that was—as we saw earlier—of central importance to the piety of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. I have already quoted from August Pfeiffer’s *Anti-melancholicus* (1691). Pfeiffer served as superintendent in Lübeck during the time of Buxtehude. Remember how Pfeiffer’s text featured metaphors similar to the fourth stanza of the hymn: “I take fright as well whenever I think that my limbs... should moulder and rot in the earth, and become a stinking carcass, dung, and filth, and perhaps be carried off by a thousand worms or maggots.”²⁴

Buxtehude’s chorale partita, played probably during Sunday morning services in Lübeck and by his students elsewhere, emphasizes the very stanza that exemplarily reflected the perception of death and dying in his time. It urged the attentive listener to remember and reflect on their own death and to be prepared for the final hour of their lives.

The private death

The preparation for death, however, was not only a matter for the Sunday morning service, but it affected every second of the believer’s life. Even more than during worship, the Lutheran Christian had to prepare for his or her death during daily life. I have already quoted from Vetter’s collection of hymn settings, which was intended for use in churches and at home. And we have seen that he recommended (similarly to Martin Luther) the singing of funeral hymns as a form of *ars moriendi*, emphasizing the benefit of music for the consolation of the grievous heart.

Buxtehude contributed to this private discourse about death on a high artistic level in his chorale partita “Auf meinen lieben Gott” (BuxWV179). The composer combines

the (sacred) genre of the chorale partita with the (secular) genre of a dance suite by modeling the movements of the partita on popular dances: Allemande, Double, Sarabande, Courante, and Gigue. This transgression of genre boundaries (and of the boundaries between sacred and secular music) is unusual. Kerala Snyder suggested in her seminal Buxtehude-biography that the composer “may have intended it for harpsichord.”²⁵

Buxtehude’s chorale partita is based on a hymn from the turn of the seventeenth century (Example 4). The text dates from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century while the melody is older and was originally composed for a secular song by Jakob Regnart in 1576 (“Venus, du und dein Kind, seid alle beide blind”/Venus, you and your child are both blind). Johann Herman Schein combined the melody with the text “Auf meinen lieben Gott” in his *Cantional* from 1627.²⁶ The hymn “Auf meinen lieben Gott” was frequently used in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries for services of repentance and for funerals.²⁷ The text lends itself to both purposes. It expresses the trust in God in times of fear and need, but also in the time of dying.

1. Auf mei-nen lie-ben Gott trau ich in
Angst und Not; der kann mich all-zeit ret-ten aus
Trüb-sal, Angst und Nö-ten, mein Un-glück kann
er wen-den, steht alls in sei-nen Hän-den.

Example 4: The tune AUF MEINEN LIEBEN GOTT.

The partita—as it is preserved in its only source, an eighteenth century manuscript—poses a problem: The order of the movements of the suite is unusual. While the dances appear as Allemande, Double, Sarabande, Courante, Gigue, a suite at that time would normally have had the movements in the following way: Allemande, (Double), Courante, Sarabande, Gigue. The editor of Buxtehude’s organ works, Klaus Beckmann, suggested that the order of movements might have been changed by the copyist and hence brought them into the “correct” order.²⁸ Matthias Schneider suggested recently that Buxtehude might have intentionally chosen the unorthodox order, since the Allemande and Double on the one hand, and the Courante and Gigue on the other hand are based on a similar harmonic plan, while only the Sarabande in central position is different.²⁹ The exchange of the two dances thus led to a symmetric structure in which four movements are grouped around the central Sarabande. Our analysis of the relationship between text and music will support Schneider’s assumption that the order in the source

is probably correct.

What was the genre context of the set of variations? Buxtehude’s chorale partita belongs to a large group of non-liturgical instrumental pieces from the seventeenth century that is based on (Protestant) funeral songs. A collection of funeral pieces that is stylistically similar to Buxtehude’s suite are the *Musicalische Sterbensgedancken* by Johann Pachelbel from 1683. The print is lost; however, Johann Gottfried Walther reports in his music dictionary that the collection contained four chorale partitas.³⁰ According to recent reconstructions, which suggest that some of the chorale partitas by Pachelbel that survive in manuscript sources elsewhere originate from the print, suggest that each set of variations started with a simple 4-part setting of the chorale in the upper voice, followed by four to twelve variations for keyboard without pedal. The pieces could be played either on the organ or on a harpsichord or clavichord. Even though Pachelbel did not compose dance suites based on the hymns, he occasionally employs dance patterns, resembling a Gigue. What is more, the overall style of Pachelbel’s chorale partitas in the *Musicalische Sterbensgedancken* is similar to secular keyboard collections for domestic use, like his own *Hexachordium Apollonis*, a set of song variations published in 1699.

The *Sterbensgedancken* were music to be played at home for spiritual edification. Similar pieces survive in other seventeenth-century sources. German harpsichord collections from the century frequently contained—besides dances and variations on popular melodies—hymn settings of different types.³¹ A typical example from Buxtehude’s time in northern Germany is the manuscript *Mus. Ant. Pract. 1198* in the Lüneburg Ratsbücherei. The collection preserves a number of suites, single dance movements (all together 158 secular pieces) and twenty chorale settings.³² This was the type of music (and the mixture of music) that was played at home in the late seventeenth century.

Besides these mixed collections, containing both secular and sacred repertoire, we can also find in the second half of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century an increasing number of printed collections consisting only of chorale settings for manual keyboard, intended not specifically for use in church but for the homes of the educated middle class.³³ One prominent example are the *Musikalische Kirch- und Hauß-Ergötzlichkeiten* by Leipzig Organist Daniel Vetter, mentioned earlier. In his foreword Vetter explains the purpose of the print: the edification of mind and soul.³⁴ It is supposed to provide delightful entertainment without being worldly or frivolous:

It is a spiritual delight, which I lay in front of your merciful eyes. Insofar as an inner delight is preferable over external, sensual joy, in so far as it is also preferable, when this is based on a spiritual exercise. And who wouldn’t want to begrudge this title to these edifying songs?³⁵

Vetter emphasizes the spiritual impact of hymns and points out that the hymns have the ability to stir the affects and thus prepare the heart for the sacred:

Who would not want to concede that it is an honorable delight, when in a pleasing way, the senses of the human heart are strengthened and the sacred affects, which are necessarily connected with them, are moved with a higher degree of tenderness?³⁶

Thus contextualized in the keyboard music of his time, Buxtehude's chorale partita was not a transgression of the boundaries between the sacred and the secular, but it was part of the private musical *ars moriendi* in the second half of the seventeenth century in particular. Buxtehude's chorale partita on the funeral hymn "Auf meinen lieben Gott" was music that could be played at home, providing religious and educational entertainment. The music was pleasing in its rhythmical character yet pious at the same time. A player of the partita could memorize and reflect on the familiar text of the hymn and prepare herself for her own hour of death.

The purpose of Buxtehude's dance suite is underscored by its compositional form. The suite has five movements, and the chorale has the same number of stanzas. The piece is not intended for *alternatim* performance, as was Buxtehude's "public" chorale variations for organ we explored earlier.³⁷ The movements of the suite were to be played *instead* of the chorale, each dance reflecting the content of one stanza of the hymn. The first movement of Buxtehude's chorale partita (Example 5) is characterized by an expressive harmony and a rhythmic structure that is full of contrasts. It serves as an interpretation of the first stanza of the hymn text. Buxtehude puts an emphasis on words like "Gott" and "Not" (both at the end of a phrase) and he highly embellishes the setting of the fifth line of the chorale "Mein Unglück kann er wenden."

*Auf meinen lieben Gott
Trau ich in Angst und Not:
Er kann mich allzeit retten
Aus Trübsal, Angst und Nöten;
Mein Unglück kann Er wenden,
Steht alls in seinen Händen.*

In my dear God
I trust in fear and need:
He can rescue me in all times
From distress, fear, and need;
He can turn my misfortune,
everything stands in his hands.



Example 5: Buxtehude, "Auf meinen lieben Gott," Allemande

The second movement of Buxtehude's suite, the Double, is based on the same harmonic ground plan, only the motion is—as is typical in Doubles—increased. The text fits the affect of the dance movement. The increased and continuously forward-driving motion might interpret the phrase "will ich verzagen nicht" (I will not give up) suggested by the continuous motion.

*Ob mich mein Sünd anficht
Will ich verzagen nicht:
Auf Christum will ich bauen
Und ihm allein vertrauen;
Ihm tu ich mich ergeben
Im Tod und auch im Leben.*

If the sin leads me into temptation
I will not give up:
I will count on Christ
And only trust him;
I surrender myself to him
In death and also in life.

The third and fourth stanzas of Buxtehude's chorale partita pose, as mentioned before, a problem. The order does not conform to the conventions of suites from the time or of Buxtehude's other suites for that matter, and it could have been inversed by accident (or intention) during the process of transmission. However, if we assume that the order was correct, the Courante (Example 6) would represent the fourth stanza:

*O mein Herr Jesu Christ,
der du so geduldig bist
für mich am Kreuz gestorben,
hast mir das Heil erworben,
auch uns allen zugleiche
das ewig Himmelreiche.*

Oh, my Lord Jesus Christ,
Who did so patiently
die for me at the cross,
You have earned me salvation,
And all of us
The eternal kingdom of heaven.



Example 6: Buxtehude, "Auf meinen lieben Gott," Courante

Since the memory and awareness of death, both one's own and of relatives, was a cornerstone of the *praxis pietatis* of early modern Protestantism, it was necessary to move the "sacred affects" into this direction. *Memento mori* and the memory of the death of Christ were two sides of the same coin.³⁸ Christ's death was the exemplary death, as we saw

earlier in Luther's sermon. The third stanza of the hymn "Auf meinen lieben Gott" describes exactly this relationship:

*Ob mich der Tod nimmt hin,
ist Sterben mein Gewinn,
und Christus ist mein Leben,
dem tu ich mich ergeben:
Ich sterb heut oder morgen,
mein Seel wird Gott versorgen.*

May death take me,
Dying is my gain,
and Christ is my life,
I surrender myself to him:
If I die today or tomorrow,
God will take care of my soul.

Buxtehude chose the slow Sarabande to represent this text of the hymn. The stanza is the soteriological center of the hymn and it summarizes the central thoughts of the Lutheran *ars moriendi* in a nutshell. The Sarabande is both harmonically and rhythmically different from the other movements. It exhibits a slow motion in quarter-notes instead of the surrounding movements that feature mainly eighth- and sixteenth-notes. If Buxtehude had wanted to emphasize one stanza by a different harmonic backdrop and with the slow pace of a Sarabande, then this stanza would have been the most appropriate, since contemporary theorists label the Sarabande as "serious," "grave," and "apt to move the Passions."³⁹ It is thus likely that Buxtehude changed the order of the movements intentionally, to give the Sarabande the central position in the five-movement partita, corresponding with the soteriologically central third stanza of the chorale. With different means but with an effect similar to his liturgical chorale variations for organ, Buxtehude emphasized the very movement that was closest to the piety of the time and its interest in the art of dying.

The last movement of the partita is a vivid Gigue, emphasizing the joyful and hopeful affect of the last stanza. The movement is joyful in character⁴⁰ but at the same time carries the characteristic harmony and melody of the underlying funeral setting. The fifth stanza of the chorale expresses a similar mood, a combination of thankful happiness and contemplation:

*Amen zu aller Stund
Sprech ich aus Herzensgrund:
Du wollest uns tun leiten,
Herr Christ, zu allen Zeiten,
Auf daß wir deinen Nahmen
Ewiglich preisen! Amen.*

Amen, in every hour
I speak from the bottom of my heart:
You may lead us,
Lord Christ, every time,
So that we praise
Your name forever! Amen.

As hymns were a part of private piety in the seventeenth century, it was only natural that they were not only sung but also played on instruments where those were available. Contemporary collections with both secular keyboard pieces and hymn settings show that these two spheres were mixed, and it seems likely that contemporary performers played a dance, then a hymn, then a prelude, and so on. The style of the hymn settings slowly appropriated the style that was found in the secular pieces, with expressive embellishments, *style brisé* (broken style), rhythmic changes of the melody, and—finally—even the transformation into dance movements, as we can see in Buxtehude's chorale partita on "Auf meinen lieben Gott."

Conclusions

The awareness of death was a cornerstone of piety in the seventeenth century. The preparation for death had to be a daily routine. Hymns and music played an important role in this. The hymn texts served as reminders of one's own mortality. These hymns were mostly sung, but they also inspired composers like Buxtehude to compose elaborate and artful settings. The two sets of chorale variation by Buxtehude explored here show the two sides of the musical *ars moriendi* in the second half of the seventeenth century, the public side of congregational singing and *alternatim* organ playing, and the private sphere of the believer alone with his harpsichord or house organ. The techniques used by Buxtehude in both spheres are significantly different: here the traditional chorale variation, there the modern dance suite. In both cases, however, Buxtehude uses the formal frame provided by the individual genre to express the affect and meaning of the text, and he also emphasizes the stanzas of the two hymns that express the core concepts of the art of dying.

In "Mitten wir im Leben sind," Martin Luther translated and expanded the medieval hymn "Media vita sumus in morte": In the middle of life we are in death: surrounded by life but also bound to die. The hymn was frequently sung in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Buxtehude's two sets of chorale variations make clear that death affects all parts of life. The music that was played during the public liturgy, and the music that was played in the private home, was different, but both share the same inspiration (the hymn) and the same theological trajectory, the awareness of death and hope in Christ.

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Endnotes

1 See for an overview Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Knopf, 1981); Norbert Bolin, "Sterben ist mein Gewinn": Ein Beitrag zur Evangelischen Funeral-Komposition des Barock (Kassel: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Friedhof und Denkmal, 1989).

2 Johann Heermann, *Schola Mortis: Todes Schule: Das ist: Ander Theil Christl. Leich-Predigten* (Leipzig: Eyring 1628); later editions were published throughout the 17th century. The latest one was printed in 1657.

3 Cf. Austra Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying. The ars moriendi in the German Reformation (1519–1528)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 47–75.

4 Martin Luther, *Works, American Edition*, Vol. 42 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955), 101.

5 Martin Luther, "Heidelberg Disputation (1518)," in: *Martin Luther: Basic Theological Writings*, 43–44; cf. Jos E. Vercreyde, "Luther's Theology of the Cross at the time of the Heidelberg Disputation" *Gregorianum* 57 (1976), 523–548.

6 Heinrich Müller, *Geistliche Erquickstunden oder 150 Hauß- und Tisch-Andachten* (Rostock: Keyl, 1664).

7 Regarding Pfeiffer and his *Antimelancholicus* see Wolf-Dieter Hauschild, *Kirchengeschichte Lübecks. Christentum und Bürgertum in neun Jahrhunderten* (Lübeck: Schmidt-Römhild, 1981), 311–312 and 344–346.

8 August Pfeiffer, *Anti-melancholicus, oder Melancholey-Vertreiber*, Leipzig: Gleditsch, 1691 (1st ed. 1683): "Ich erschrecke auch/ wenn ich daran dencke wie diese mein Glieder die ich bey Lebzeit so sorgfältig ernehrt und bedeckt die ich so zärtlich gehalten/ die mir so viel treue Dienste gethan sollen in der Erden verwesen/ verfaulen zum stinckenden Todten-Aas/ Koth und Unflath und vielleicht von 1000. Würmern oder Maden verschleppt werden," Pfeiffer, 583, translation David Yearsley, *Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7.

9 Cf. Patrice Veit, "Private Frömmigkeit, Lektüre und Gesang im protestantischen Deutschland der Frühen Neuzeit," in: *Frühe Neuzeit–Frühe Moderne? Forschungen zur Vielschichtigkeit von Überlieferungsprozessen*, ed. Rudolf Vierhaus et. al. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992), 271–295.

10 See Markus Rathey, "Zur Datierung einiger Vokalwerke Bachs in den Jahren 1707 und 1708" *Bach-Jahrbuch* 92 (2006), 65–92, esp. 84–88.

11 Johann Adolph Frohne, *Rechtschaffener Christen Heil in Zeit und Ewigkeit [...] bey Hochansehnlicher Leich-Bestattung Des weiland HochEdlen / Vesten / Hochachtbaren und Hochgelahrten Herren / Herren Adolphi Streckers [...] Leichen-Predigt [...] Mühlhausen [1708]* (copy Stadtarchiv Mühlhausen Th. 84/3288 Nr. 1), 52: „Mußte er nun gänzlich zu Bette erliegen / so blieb doch sein Hertze in GOtt getrost / die Stunde der gnädigen Auflösung mit Freuden zu erwarten / entzog sich dahero gänzlich allen *mundanis*, übete hergegen seinen Glauben in gedult / in Andacht und Hofnung / daß sein Krancken-Bette wohl möge genennet werden *Gymnasium Pietatis*, eine Übung des wahren Christenthums: Hielt gleich dasselbige lange an / mit täglich mehr hinfallenden Kräften / so hielte Er GOtt geduldig stille / stärckte sich mit Biblischen Sprüchen / Christlichen Gebeten und Gesängen," translation MR.

12 See also Stephen Rose, "Daniel Vetter and the Domestic Keyboard Chorale in Bach's Leipzig," *Early Music* 33 (2005), 39–53.

13 *Musicalische Kirch- und Hauß-Ergötzlichkeit/ Bestehend in denen gewöhnlichen Geistlichen Liedern/ so durchs gantze Jahr bey öffentlichen Gottes-Dienst gesungen werden/ auff eine gantz angenehme jedoch leichte Manier in Italienische Tabulatur gesetzt/ so/ daß allemahl der Choral eines jedweden Liedes auff der Orgel, nachgehends eine gebrochene Variation auff dem Spinett oder Clavicordio zu tractiren folget [...] Leipzig: Daniel Vetter (Printer: Christoph Friedrich Rumpff), [1709]. A second volume was published in 1713: *Musicalische Kirch- und Hauß-Ergötzlichkeit/ Anderer Theil/ Bestehend in denen noch zurücke gelassenen gewöhnlichen Geistlichen Liedern/ wie auch Morgen- Tisch- Abend- und Sterbe-Gesängen/ auff eine gantz angenehme/ jedoch leichte Manier in Italiänische Tabulatur gesetzt/ und in Kupffer gestochen/ so/ daß allemahl der Choral eines jedweden Liedes auff der Orgel/ nachgehends**

eine gebrochene *Variation* auff dem *Spinett* oder *Clavicordio* zu *tractiren* folget [...] (Leipzig: Daniel Vetter [Printer: Krüger, 1713]); reprint of both volumes (Heidelberg: Olms, 1985).

14

“Die Sterbens-Lieder aber allezeit unsere höchst-nöthige Todes-Gedancken unterhalten können.” (Vetter, preface II, C’).

15

Vetter, preface II, C2: “Da nun ferner die Sterbens-Lieder notwendig hinzu gefüget werden müßten/ so ist es nicht weniger durch die Erfahrung beglaubiget/ wie erbaulich auf diese Weise die Todes-Gedancken gläubiger Hertzen unterhalten werden können. Und nehme ich kein Bedencken/ mich nochmahls auff das Exempel *Lutheri* zu beruffen/ welcher zu dem Ende von einem damaligen berühmten *Musico* an dem Bayerischen Hofe die Worte des 4ten Psalm im 9. und 10. *vers componiret/ ihme zuzuschicken/ durch Briefe ausgebeten/ auch hiernechst zu seiner Erbauung und offmahligen Todes-Erinnerung beständig gebraucht.*”—Vetter refers to letters exchanged between Luther and Ludwig Senfl in 1530, see Robin A. Leaver, *Luther’s Liturgical Music. Principles and Implications*, (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 2007), 51–54.

16

For more about the *alternatim* practice in the seventeenth century see Joseph Herl, *Worship Wars in Early Lutheranism. Choir, Congregation, and Three Centuries of Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 76–81 and 273 n 1.

17

Cf. Markus Rathey, “Funktion und Struktur – Zur Zyklusbildung in Dietrich Buxtehudes Choralvariationen,” (in preparation).

18

Cf. Elke Axmacher, *Praxis Evangeliorum. Theologie und Frömmigkeit bei Martin Moller (1547–1606)* (=Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte 43) (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), 149–151.

19

Cf. Werner Breig, “Die geschichtliche Stellung von Buxtehudes monodischem Orgelchoral,” in: *Dietrich Buxtehude und die europäische Musik seiner Zeit. Bericht über das Lübecker Symposium 1987* (Kieler Schriften zur Musikwissenschaft XXXV), ed. by Arnfried Edler and Friedhelm Krummacher, Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1990, 260–261; Lawrence Archbold suggests the term “expressive chorale prelude,” see Archbold, “Towards a Critical Understanding of Buxtehude’s Expressive Chorale Preludes,” in *Church, Stage, and Studio–Music and Its Contexts in Seventeenth-Century Germany*, ed. by Paul Walker (Ann Arbor and London: UMI Press, 1990), 87–106.

20

Friedhelm Krummacher has described this type of chorale setting by Buxtehude as “eccentric,” and has pointed out its roots in the northern German *stylus phantasticus*, see: Krummacher, “Intimität und Exzentrik–Buxtehudes Choralbearbeitungen für Orgel,” in: *Krummacher, Musik im Norden. Abhandlungen zur skandinavischen und norddeutschen Musikgeschichte*, ed. by S. Oechsle et al. (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1996), 60–74.

21

One could even see the long-winding sixteenth figurations as a depiction of the “worms” mentioned in the second line of the chorale. But that interpretation might go a step too far.

22

Translation after Alfred Dürr, *The Cantatas of J.S. Bach: With their Librettos in German-English Parallel Text* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 482.

23

Alfred Dürr called the aria “passionately dramatic,” a description that would be appropriate for the movement in BuxWV 207 as well; see Dürr, *The Cantatas*, 485.

24

Yearsley, *Bach and the Meaning of Counterpoint*, 7.

25

Kerala Snyder, *Dieterich Buxtehude. Organist in Lübeck* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 276.

26

Cf. Bernhard Schmid, “Regnart, Jakob,” in: Wolfgang Herbst (ed.), *Handbuch zum Evangelischen Gesangbuch 2: Komponisten und Liederdichter des Evangelischen Gesangbuchs* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 250–251.

27

See for example the hymn-sermon based on this song: Philipp Saltzmann, *Gedultige Creutz-Gedancken. Gläubige Buß-Gedancken. Seelige Todes-Gedancken/ des ... Herrn Hieronymi Näffzers/ Gewesenen Raths-Verwanten zur Naumburgk Aus seinen schönen Creutz- und Leib-Lied/ Auff meinen lieben Gott Frau ich in Angst und Noth etc. Bey seiner Christlichen Sepultur, welche am Tage Michaelis des 1661sten Jahrs ... gehalten wurde/ erkläret* (Jena: Sengenwald, 1661).

28

See Klaus Beckmann, *Buxtehude, Orgelwerke IV* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1995), 80–82.

29

Matthias Schneider, “Spuren des Tombeau in der norddeutschen Tastenmusik des 17. Jahrhunderts,” in *Tod und Musik im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Günter Fleischhauer (Blankenburg: Stiftung Kloster Michaelstein, 2001), 218–219.

30

Cf. Kathryn J. Welter, “Johann Pachelbel. Organist, Teacher, Composer: A Critical Reexamination of His Life, Works, and Historical Significance.” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1998), 151–167.

31

See the extensive lists on hymn settings in German keyboard manuscripts in Bruce Gustafson, “The Sourced of Seventeenth-Century Harpsichord Music. Thematic Catalog and Commentary.” (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1977), esp. pp. 312–407.

32

Lüneburg, Ratsbücherei, *Mus. ant. pract. 1198*, facsimile ed. by Bruce Gustafson (17th Century Keyboard Music 22) (New York: Garland, 1997).

33

See the short overview in Rose, "Daniel Vetter and the Domestic Keyboard Chorale," 42.

34

"Denn so sind tugendhafte Seelen geartet/ Ihre Neben-Stunden einer so anständigen *recreation* zu wittmen/ und sich dadurch zu denen ernstlichen Verrichtungen desto mehr anffzumuntern [sic!]." (Vetter, Dedikationsvorrede), without page number.

35

Vetter, preface, C: "Es ist eine geistliche Ergötzlichkeit/ welche ich vor dessen gütige Augen geziemend lege. So weit nun eine innerliche Vergnügung des Gemüths den äußerlich-sinnlichen Freuden vorzuziehen; so weit edler ist dieselbige sonder zweiffel zu schätzen/ wenn sie eine geistliche Übung zum Grunde hat. Und wer wolte nicht diesen Titel willigst erbaulichen Gesängen gönnen?"; translation MR.

36

Vetter, preface, C: "Wer wolte es nicht vor eine preißwürdige Ergötzlichkeit *passiren* lassen/ wofern durch eine anmuthige Art die Empfindung des menschlichen Hertzens weit mächtiger gemacht/ und diejenige heilige *affecten*/ so mit ihnen nothwendig verknüpft seyn müssen/ mit einer grösseren Zärtligkeit *moviret* werden?"; translation MR.

37

Cf. Snyder, *Buxtehude*, 276.

38

Cf. Renate Steiger, *Gnadengegenwart. Johann Sebastian Bach im Kontext lutherischer Orthodoxie und Frömmigkeit* (Doctrina et Pietas. Zwischen Reformation und Aufklärung. Texte und Untersuchungen, Abt. II: Varia, Bd. 2) (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Holzboog, 2002), 237–238.

39

See descriptions in Meredith Little/ Natalie Jenne, *Dance and the Music of J.S. Bach*. Expanded Edition, Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 2001, 94–95 and Doris Finke-Hecklinger, *Tanzcharaktere in Johann Sebastian Bachs Vokalmusik* (Tübinger Bach-Studien 6) (Trossingen: Hohner, 1970), 58–59.

40

The *gigue* is univocally described by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theorists as happy and joyful, cf. Little/Jenne, *Dance*, 146; and Finke-Hecklinger, *Tanzcharaktere*, 67–68.

Hymns of the Church

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Jan-Piet Knijff

I'M NOT SURE how much congregations like the hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” but I bet it's a favorite with church musicians of all kinds of denominations around the world. In *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW), the hymn is found at 257; in *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB), at 357; and in *Lutheran Book of Worship* (LBW), at 34. A quick look at the hymn in the three pew editions immediately brings up a host of questions:

- The Pew Edition of ELW offers only the melody of the hymn—no harmonization—in a stemless notation, probably in an effort to emphasize the origin of the melody in medieval chant. ELW has no fewer than eight stanzas.
- The Pew Edition of LSB presents the melody in 2/4 time (although no time signature is printed), running mostly in eighth notes and with an eighth note pick-up at the very beginning. The harmonization is credited to C. Winfred Douglas; there are seven stanzas.
- Although without crediting an arranger, the Pew Edition of LBW gives the same harmonization as LSB (with two relatively small variants which I'll discuss below). There are no barlines, but “short barlines” indicating the end of each poetic/musical line and a double bar separating the refrain from the stanzas. There are only five stanzas.

- A slightly closer look at the poetic text reveals that the translation in the three hymnals is in essence the same, but that there are a lot of “minor disagreements” (if I may use that expression in this context). The beginning of the third stanza in ELW and LSB and the second in LBW is a striking example (my emphases):

ELW:	O come,	O come,	O	Lord of might.
LSB:	O come,	O come,	Thou	Lord of might.
LBW:	Oh, come,	oh, come,	great	Lord of might.

For so classic a hymn, this seems a remarkable situation. The responsible Lutheran church musician consulting these three hymnals in conjunction is left with many questions: Has ELW finally restored the melody to its authentic, medieval, free-floating qualities by removing those odd, “Romantic” stems? Has the same hymnal given us back the last stanza? Why did LSB fail in that regard? And what about those “minor disagreements” between the three versions of the text?

Text

It is well known that the origins of the text of the hymn lie in the so-called “O” antiphons. They were sung before and after the Song of Mary—the Magnificat—during vespers, the early-evening part of the divine office, during the week before Christmas. In the *Liber usualis* (that convenient though by no means complete collection of Gregorian

chant), they are referred to as *Antiphonae maiores*, “great” antiphons. On the seven days before Christmas, the soon-to-be-born Savior was evoked by seven different biblical titles, traditionally associated with the Christ:

<i>Sapientia</i>	– Wisdom
<i>Adonai</i>	– “Lord of might”
<i>Radix Jesse</i>	– Rod or Branch of Jesse
<i>Clavis David</i>	– Key of David
<i>Oriens</i>	– Orient (rising sun, “Dayspring”)
<i>Rex gentium</i>	– King of the nations (“Desire of nations”)
<i>Emmanuel</i>	– meaning, of course, “God with us”

Less well-known, perhaps, is that first letters of the seven titles, when read in reverse order, form a cute Latin acrostic: ERO CRAS: “I will be [there] tomorrow.” LSB prints the texts of the “O” antiphons on the page facing the hymn.

The “O” antiphons must have been so popular that around the twelfth century an anonymous poet wrote a hymn using five of the “titles”—not only leaving out two, but also mixing up the order: *Emmanuel*, *Radix Jesse*, *Oriens*, *Clavis David*, and *Adonai*. The poet added a refrain, echoing the words of Paul that are used for the introit of the Third Sunday in Advent: “Rejoice in the Lord always!” (That Sunday, of course, is known as *Gaudete* after the very first word of the Mass.)

It would be nice if we had tons of medieval manuscripts confirming the popularity of the hymn in the late Middle Ages, but that is not the case. In fact, the earliest source for the Latin text is an early-eighteenth-century print from Cologne, the *Psalterium cantionum catholicarum* (1710). The hymn was translated into English by John Mason Neale and first published in Thomas Helmore’s *A Hymnal Noted* (London: Novello, 1852). Less than a decade later it was included in the famous *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (1861), though with substantial changes. Here are Neale’s translation from *A Hymnal Noted* and the version from *Hymns Ancient and Modern* with the differences indicated in bold print:

A Hymnal Noted 1852

1. Draw nigh, draw nigh, Emmanuel
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lowly exile here,
Until the Son of God appear;
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall be born for thee, O Israel!

Hymns Ancient and Modern 1861

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel;
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel.

2. Draw nigh, O Jesse’s Rod, draw nigh,
To free us from the enemy;
From Hell’s infernal pit to save,
And give us victory o’er the grave.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan’s tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o’er the grave.

3. Draw nigh, Thou Orient, Who shalt cheer
And comfort by Thine Advent here,
And banish far the brooding gloom
Of sinful night and endless doom.

O come, Thou Day-Spring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine Advent here.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s dark shadows put to flight.

4. Draw nigh, draw nigh, O David’s Key,
The Heav’nly Gate will ope to Thee;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heavenly Home;
Make safe the way that leads on high;
And close the path to misery.

5. Draw nigh, draw nigh, O Lord of Might,
Who to Thy tribes from Sinai’s height
In ancient time didst give the Law
In cloud and majesty and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall be born for thee, O Israel!

O come, O come, Thou Lord of Might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai’s height,
In ancient times didst give the Law,
In Cloud, and Majesty, and Awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to Thee, O Israel. Amen.

The reader will notice that the hymn as we know it is essentially the version from *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, and perhaps that’s not a bad thing. Few people will regret the loss of lines such tongue twisters as “And banish far the brooding gloom / Of sinful night and endless doom.” Whether Neale wanted us to sing *ennemeye* to rhyme with “draw nigh” I don’t know, but I’m glad that the editors of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* got rid of the problem for us. My favorite, though, is the *ope* in “The Heav’nly Gate will ope to Thee”—perhaps because it reminds me of the immortal “I’m broke / It’s oke” from Larry Hart’s “The Lady Is a Tramp.”

With five stanzas, LBW offers the complete hymn in a version very close to that in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. The biggest difference is that the last stanza (...Lord of Might...) was put *second*, perhaps—but this is only a guess—because the corresponding “O” antiphon came second. Another difference is the replacement of “Rod of Jesse” by “Branch of Jesse”; this handsome turn was apparently borrowed from T.A. Lacey’s translation published in *The English Hymnal* (1906). LBW also replaced the “Thou” at the beginnings of stanzas 2–5 by an adjective (*great* Lord, *strong* Branch, *blest* Day-spring) or a simply a repeat of the O (O Key of David).

What about the two extra stanzas—two and seven—in ELW/LSB? In a collection of *Cantiones Sacrae* (Ratisbon: Pustet, 1878), one Joseph Mohr, S.J. (not identical with the legendary lyricist of “Silent Night”) includes seven stanzas (in Latin) of the hymn—albeit with a totally different tune. Mohr gives the year 1625, but that surely refers to the melody, not to the text. It seems that somebody—perhaps Mohr?—added the stanzas addressing the Savior as *Sapientia* (Wisdom) and *Rex gentium* (King of the nations) to the Latin hymn some time during the nineteenth century. In Mohr’s collection, the order of the seven stanzas reflects that of the seven “O” antiphons, so that the *Sapientia* stanza is now first and the *Emmanuel* stanza last. (Unfortunately, the acrostic is not regained, since *Jesse virgula* had already replaced the word *radix Jesse* of the third “O” antiphon.) The translator of the “Wisdom” stanza as it appears in ELW/LSB is apparently unknown; the translation of the *Rex gentium* (“Desire of nations”) stanza may be by T.A. Lacey. It is clear, however, that the hymn was commonly understood as consisting of five, not seven, stanzas until well into the twentieth century. The above-mentioned translation in *The English Hymnal* (included, with an arrangement by David Willcocks, in the famous collection *Carols for Choirs II* [1970]) respects the five stanzas in their original order. So does Zoltán Kodály in his exquisite setting for three-part choir (in Latin, first published in 1943, now by Boosey & Hawkes [#19152]).

But although the hymn is complete with five stanzas, congregations may want to have the seven stanzas as a reminder of the seven “O” antiphons. From that point of view, the decision of the editors to include stanzas corresponding to all seven antiphons is understandable. ELW’s idea of repeating the first stanza at the end (thus creating eight stanzas) seems to reflect the idea of replacing the “O” antiphons with hymn stanzas, perhaps in daily vesper services in the week before Christmas: of course, the “Emmanuel” stanza then has to come last. But to not start the hymn with “Emmanuel” would probably have been a bit much, so that we ended up with eight stanzas.

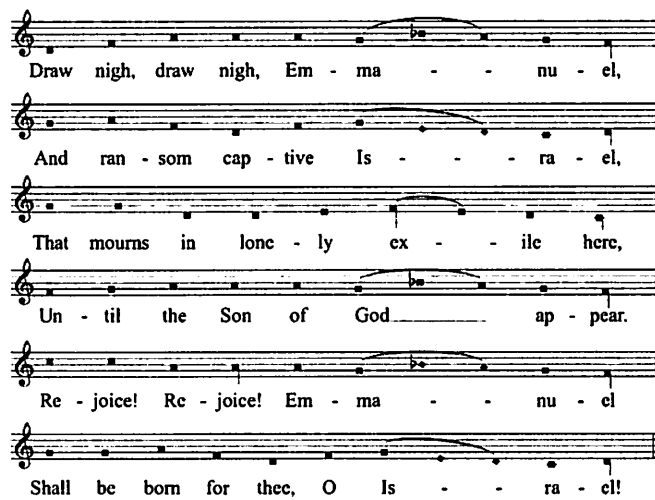
Pastors, organists, and liturgical committees should be aware of the option of singing only the original five stanzas—preferably, it seems to me, in the order of the original hymn: Emmanuel, Branch, Dayspring, Key, Lord. If the hymn is used throughout Advent season to remind the congregation of the approaching Light, one could consider singing two,

then three, four, and finally five stanzas on the four Sundays. Congregations using ELW may want to sing stanzas 1 and 2 on the First Sunday, 2 and 3 on the Second, and so on. (I personally don’t like this too much, though, because it doesn’t allow one to experience the hymn as a whole.)

Melody

The honor of reintroducing the beautiful melody of the hymn traditionally goes to Thomas Helmore, who first published it in *A Hymnal Noted* (London: Novello, 1852). According to Helmore, the tune had been taken “from a French Missal in the National Library, Lisbon.” Helmore later wrote that it had been J.M. Neale who had copied the tune; but in 1909, H. Jenner wrote that his father, Bishop Jenner, had been the copyist. Unfortunately, the source itself could not be traced by later researchers; and it was even suggested that Helmore himself had composed the tune in quasi-medieval style. But in 1966, Mother Thomas More found a two-part setting of the melody in a fifteenth-century Processional (now at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris) that had formerly belonged to Franciscan nuns. Remarkably, in the Processional, the tune was used for a number of additional verses for the funeral responsory “Libera me, Domine!” The melody thus goes back to at least the fifteenth century, but is likely much older than that.

Helmore’s plainchant notation in *A Hymnal Noted* uses three kinds of notes: stemless and stemmed square notes, and stemless diamond-shape notes. Strangely enough, the melody is notated on a four-line staff with a C-clef on the top line, so that the first “looks like” an E but is actually a D; yet the harmonization in Helmore’s *Accompanying Harmonies to the Hymnal Noted* is in E minor:



Draw nigh, draw nigh, Em - ma - - nu - el,
 And ran - som cap - tive Is - - - ra - el,
 That mourns in lone - ly ex - - ile here,
 Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - ma - - nu - el
 Shall be born for thee, O Is - - - ra - el!

Since we don't have access to the "French Missal" from which the melody was apparently copied, it is impossible to know how precisely Helmore's notation reflects the notation in the source. But even if the shapes of the notes are exactly as in the source, it's difficult to say to what extent (if at all) they have a particular rhythmical/metrical implication. The four-part setting (by one Rev. Samuel Stevenson Greatheed) in Helmore's accompaniment book, however, is in standard notation, with the half notes and whole note replacing the stemless and stemmed square notes respectively. So we have at least an unambiguous idea of how the plainchant rhythm was interpreted by Helmore (who obviously supervised the work of his arrangers). Perhaps most interestingly, the diamond-shape notes are interpreted as quarter notes. Here is the melody as it appears in Rev. Greatheed's setting, but transposed to the D-minor of the plainchant for easy comparison:



Although at first glance the stemless notation in ELW seems to reflect Helmore's plainchant notation, ELW actually suggests a very different rhythm than Helmore. The short-long-short-long rhythm at the beginning of the refrain, for example, is found neither in *A Hymnal Noted* nor in *Medieval Hymns*. Very strange is the use in ELW of a stemless open note tied over to a stemless closed note on the syllable *-el* of the word "Emmanuel" in the refrain. Finally, the use of eighth-note rests is obviously totally out of place in a stemless notation. All in all, the notation in ELW is an odd compromise at best.

LBW, while using eighth notes and quarter notes, refrains from regular barlines, but uses "short" barlines to separate the poetic/musical lines, just like Helmore did. Yet the 2/4 time in LSB is not totally absurd: both *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and *The English Hymnal* print the melody with regular barlines—albeit in half notes and whole notes, rather than eighths and quarters (see the settings below). I personally don't like the notation in 2/4, because it feels too "light" to me, but this is a subjective matter.

Settings

Mother Thomas More's discovery of the melody in a fifteenth-century source not only proved that the melody couldn't possibly have been composed by Helmore; since the source offers the melody in a two-part setting, it also provided us with by far the oldest "harmonization" of the tune. Undoubtedly for equal voices, the setting is admittedly very simple. Yet it gives a valuable idea of how the hymn (and doubtless many others) was performed in the late Middle Ages. It is hard to say anything definite about the interpretation of the rhythm of the setting. While it seems that, in principal, the stemless notes are all equally long, it is hard to believe that this would also apply to the last notes of a line. How long is a line? I think the first one ends with "Emmanuel," the third with "here"; but one could look at this differently. (I have put the first stanza of the English hymn to the music; in the source, the first line is repeated with different words):

Hymn settings are fascinating, not only because they can put a melody in a completely different light, but also because they tell you a lot about how a melody was understood at one time in history. We LBW-ers and LSB-ers have come to think of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" as moving "freely" in eighth-notes with a chord supporting, by and large, every second melody note. For Kodály (see the above-mentioned choral setting of at times surpassing beauty), the melody moved in quarter notes—and I have no doubt that the Kodály's sometimes dense counterpoint suggests an ever-so-slightly slower tempo than, say, the 2/4 notation in LSB. Hymn singing in earlier centuries must by-and-large have been very slow by our twenty-first-century standards. As a curiosity, here is the setting W.H. Monk wrote for *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. I can't help loving the as-if-in-G-major beginning, the bold ending of the second and last lines, and the unabashed 6/4-chord towards the end of the third and fifth lines!:

First system of musical notation, consisting of a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The treble staff contains a series of chords and melodic lines, with a large slur over the final two measures. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar structure.

Second system of musical notation, consisting of a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The treble staff contains a series of chords and melodic lines, with a large slur over the final two measures. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar structure.

Third system of musical notation, consisting of a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The treble staff contains a series of chords and melodic lines, with a large slur over the final two measures. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar structure.

Fourth system of musical notation, consisting of a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The treble staff contains a series of chords and melodic lines, with a large slur over the final two measures. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar structure.

Fifth system of musical notation, consisting of a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The treble staff contains a series of chords and melodic lines, with a large slur over the final two measures. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar structure.

Sixth system of musical notation, consisting of a treble and bass staff. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The treble staff contains a series of chords and melodic lines, with a large slur over the final two measures. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with a similar structure.

How fast would Monk's congregation have sung this? I doubt that we'll ever find Monk's private notebook with metronome marks for all the hymns he played over time. But Ralph Vaughan Williams, who took a year off to edit the music for *The English Hymnal* and provided metronome marks for every hymn, indicated 80 to the half note, with the

remarkable explanation "in free rhythm"! The hymn, says *The English Hymnal*, is "to be sung in unison." That allowed the arranger (RVW?) to vary the number of real voices from three to the majestic six-part chords at the beginning of the refrain (and don't you love 'em!):

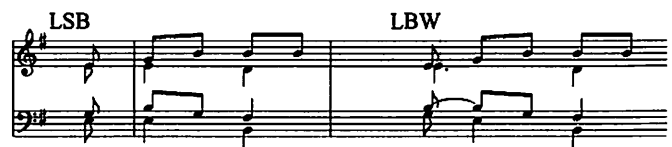
The image displays a musical score for the hymn "Cross Accent" in G major. It consists of six systems of piano accompaniment, each with a treble and bass staff. The music is written in a style that allows for a wide range of voice parts, from three to six parts. The score includes various chordal textures and melodic lines, with some measures featuring long, sweeping lines across the staves. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be common time (C).

It seems almost certain that the arranger of the setting in *The English Hymnal* knew the one from *Hymns Ancient and Modern*; see, for example, the beginning of the third line. But there can be little doubt that the *English Hymnal* arranger had a much better “feel” for the modal nature (and the grandeur!) of the melody.

C. Winfred Douglas’s setting, first published in *The (Episcopal) Hymnal 1940* and preserved in LSB, breathes a completely different esthetic. For example, the avoidance of the V–I cadence at the end of the refrain has a charm of its own:



LBW has a few small variants in the harmonization. The editor must have disliked the idea of repeating the tonic chord in root position at the very beginning. The remedy was to harmonize the very first note with a sixth-chord, followed by a root-position chord on the downbeat:



LBW also has a variant at the word “Emmanuel” in the refrain; not an improvement, I think:



The new keyboard accompaniment in the Accompaniment Edition of ELW, on the other hand, is a different story altogether. While in theory it may be a sympathetic thought to keep the harmonization of the stanzas in three-part harmony, it seems to me that this setting is too “thin” for any congregation of more than a handful of people. Perhaps the arranger was thinking of a soloist singing the stanzas; but even then the low fifths, fourths, and thirds in the tenor range are less than satisfying. As for the refrain, the four-part harmony to be sure offers a much better support for congregational singing. As for the choice of chords, I leave it to the reader to form his own opinion about the beginning of the refrain:



Finally, a word about the tradition of shortening the last syllable of “Emmanuel” in the refrain, as is sometimes done. It seems that this started with the setting in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (see above); *The English Hymnal* also does it (see above). So, in the above-mentioned setting, does Kodály. Here is the end of his fourth stanza; notice the congenial move to the dominant-seventh chord (leading back to F-minor for the last stanza) with the “final” of the melody being the seventh—yet it somehow doesn’t sound like a dissonant at all:



However musically appealing this “moving on” into the second line of the refrain can be, Helmore’s notation clearly suggest a long note here, and ELW, LSB, and LBW all follow him in that regard.

Since it would be unfair to criticize settings without offering at very least an alternative, I conclude with a setting I wrote last year for an Advent Lessons-and-Carols service around the “O” antiphons. (We sang the “O” antiphons in Latin, followed by the appropriate stanza of the hymn in English.) In one place, I have taken a rhythmic liberty compared to the version in our hymnals: the third note—a B—of the refrain comes too early (and it’s really nice to have it right there for harmonic reasons). I don’t think this will confuse anybody; in fact, it may help to “keep things moving”... But of course, if somebody really felt the need to adjust the rhythm to the version in the hymnals, one can simply replace the half note B by a quarter rest followed by a quarter note B. The setting was conceived instrumentally, bearing in mind a string quartet or a group of brass players (we used both in turn).

ELW 257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

LSB 357

Setting: JAN-PIET KNIJFF '08

The first system of musical notation consists of two staves, a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music begins with a treble clef staff containing a series of eighth notes and quarter notes, followed by a repeat sign. The bass clef staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines.

The second system continues the musical notation with two staves. The treble clef staff features a melodic line with some slurs and ties, while the bass clef staff continues the accompaniment with steady rhythmic patterns.

The third system of musical notation shows the continuation of the piece. The treble clef staff has a melodic line with various note values and rests, and the bass clef staff provides a consistent accompaniment.

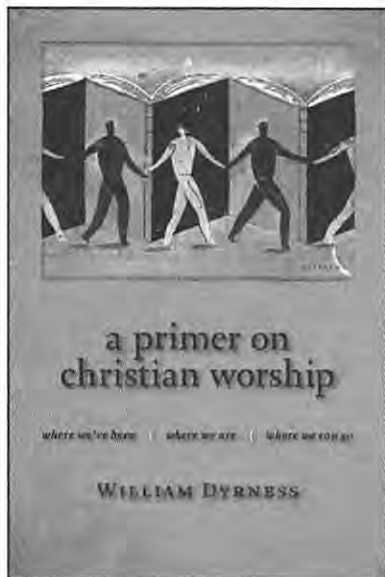
The fourth system of musical notation continues the composition. The treble clef staff contains a melodic line with some slurs, and the bass clef staff provides a steady accompaniment.

The fifth and final system of musical notation includes two staves. Above the treble clef staff, there are two boxes: the first is labeled "to next stanza" and the second is labeled "last time". The music concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots. The bass clef staff has a long slur under the final few notes.

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REVIEWS

Books



William A. Dyrness.
A Primer on Christian Worship: Where We've Been, Where We Are, Where We Can Go. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 2009. 154 pp. ISBN 978-0-8028-6038-5. \$18.00, paperback.

Scripture, theology, and the historic liturgical practices of the Church constitute the rich soil in which the past, present, and future of Christian worship are rooted. However, as William Dyrness, professor of theology and culture at Fuller Theological Seminary, asserts in *A Primer on Christian Worship*, contemporary conversations about worship also need to integrate cultural considerations into the dialogue. He observes that liturgy and culture have been mutually influential since the time of the early church. Yet, the failure to connect biblical and theological reflection on the liturgy with listening to the culture is one of the deficiencies in current discussions of worship.

Dyrness seeks to elevate the level of worship renewal discourse beyond the “worship wars” battleground. His book, a part of The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Study Series, reflects the author’s roots in the Protestant Reformed tradition even as he critiques the Reformation and speaks from the catholicity of Christian worship practices to a broader ecumenical audience. He presents a concise overview of the history, shape, and practice of Christian worship that can be a useful resource for clergy, church musicians, worship and music committees, worship leaders, study groups, and worshipers alike. Discussion questions at the end of each chapter encourage reflection and conversation with the goal of engaging all worshipers. Even though the need for worship is deeply rooted in the human creature, worship that is biblical and faithful begins with God and what God has done for us. As Dyrness notes, true worship is “dual-directional” in character: “God

approaches in invitation and blessing; we respond in faith” (2).

Because worship is always shaped to some degree by the surrounding culture, problems can arise if we fail to perceive “nefarious influences” or “take advantage of possible cultural bridges” (4). It is Dyrness’ observation that current differences over worship tend to be more culture related than historical or theological in nature. Our superficial, passive, media-driven entertainment culture often works at cross purposes with a worship tradition that encourages active participation and reflection on a deeper level. To provide “symbolic resonance and theological depth

worship has to confront the false gods and facile desires of its context. But on the other hand, while it must not conform itself to this world, worship has always to situate itself within that world, finding its voice in the language of the day and in its genuine spiritual longings, even as it presents a rhetorical vision of an alternative world that God in Christ is bringing into being” (15–16).

Faithful worship renewal depends on how the Church responds to the realities of the culture.

Dyrness contends that many of today’s contentious worship issues were first raised in the Middle Ages and the Reformation. He celebrates the reformers’ focus on preaching and teaching the Word but laments the faith-nurturing richness of the tradition that was cast aside and lost in the process. A discussion of the medieval Mass also includes mention of the multi-sensory symbolism worshipers experienced through ritual actions, church architecture, music, stained glass, mosaics, frescoes, mystery plays—the media of the day. While there were some abuses, these media had depth and meaning that facilitated the spirituality of many.

Also included is a brief overview of Martin Luther’s efforts to reform worship in light of his breakthrough understanding that people are justified by God’s grace through faith. (As an aside, the year listed for the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses is incorrect.) Even though Luther was a somewhat conservative reformer who retained a large portion of the Church’s liturgical heritage, it is Dyrness’ opinion that Luther didn’t do much to develop worship practices that gave better expression to the “liberating reality” of justification (35). Lutheran readers may want to engage in deeper conversation about that assertion.

Dyrness next turns his critical attention to John Calvin, whose reforms precipitated a dramatic shift for worshipers in Reformed congregations. Worship became more of an aural event than a visual experience. “Within barely a generation,” notes Dyrness, “the symbolic images and actions were entirely eliminated in favor of Calvin’s careful program of instruction and regular preaching of Scripture” (36).

Luther and Calvin reshaped sixteenth-century worship life in a variety of ways. Their influences were diffused in

multiple directions as Protestant Christianity splintered into myriad expressions. As European immigrants later made their way to North America, the soil of the New World would be very hospitable for the further evolution of diverse worship practices.

In the American religious context, Dyrness explores how different spirituality styles gave rise to a variety of worship practices. He summarizes the Puritan New England style, the Free Church style, the Revival style, the Christian Nurture style, and the Pentecostal style. In addition, he takes into account the influences of twentieth-century Roman Catholic liturgical renewal and the impact of evangelical Christianity in the United States.

From this continuum of styles, Dyrness identifies three streams of worship practice present today. As he characterizes it, on the “left” are those who attempt to make strong connections with the prevailing culture and are therefore most distant from medieval patterns; on the “right” are those who want to stand against any cultural influences and thereby hold closely to the traditional patterns; and, in the “center” are those who are interested in preserving ancient patterns but seek to transform cultural influences because of their obedience to scripture (69). In the interest of promoting dialogue, Dyrness notes that his “purpose is not to promote some particular form” but “to call attention to the way that current discussions of worship are re-integrating aspects of worship that have been for centuries estranged from each other” (71).

Christian worship is Trinitarian, “seeking the glory of God, as invited and enabled by Christ, and as empowered by the Holy Spirit” (78). As the story of God’s activity in the world through Jesus the Christ is told and enacted again and again, the ongoing presence of the Triune God is made available in worship through the work of the Holy Spirit. “Worship leads us into the life of God.” However, Dyrness cautions, “thinking about the mechanics of worship, as we surely must, should never lead us to think that worship is something under our control” (93). When all is said and done in worship, the story of God’s love is retold, re-presented, and refreshed so that we may dwell in the story and make it our own.

Observing that the lives of American Christians today look like most everyone else, Dyrness raises the question of what the life of someone formed by Christian worship should look like. In our fast-paced, pluralistic, materialistic culture, he lifts up several lessons the liturgy can teach us: *hospitality*, echoing God’s own welcome and encouraging the worshipping congregation to be open to all; *reconciliation* and *love*, calling us to be reconciled not only to God but also with each other despite our differences, prejudices, and suspicions; *lament* as we come together to express our needs to God and our need for God; *new community*, with the Eucharist as the locus of Christ’s real presence among us; and, *honor for God’s material creation*, because the sacramental use of common earthly elements such as

water, bread, and wine underscores our connectedness with creation and our stewardship responsibilities (125–35).

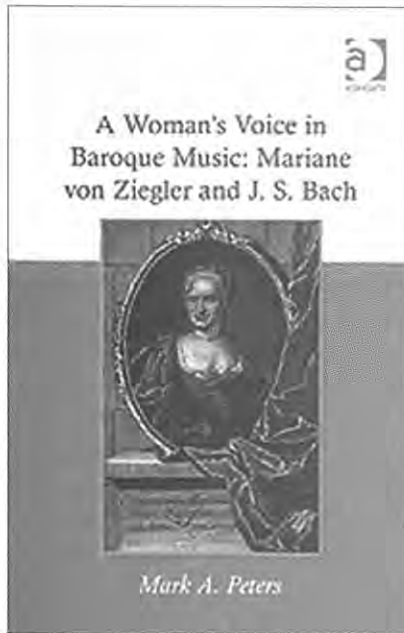
Dyrness calls for worship renewal because there is a need for worship that expands our imaginations and pays more attention to form and aesthetics in a twenty-first century culture that has “shrunk reality to the cramped confines” of the natural world and is more visual in its learning patterns. Worship style “is not something to take lightly. The question is not whether the words, actions, and objects used in worship impact worshipers, but whether what they say and show comports well or poorly with the Gospel.” He continues that “‘praise music’ illustrates that forms and styles cannot be left to take care of themselves: they must be integrated into and disciplined by the narrative of the liturgy” (142–43).

Regardless of the worship style(s) a congregation may use, several steps are suggested for facilitating the reflection and discernment necessary for re-imagining faithful, biblical worship. Worshipping communities should (1) reflect on the history and character of the congregation; (2) review and reflect on the liturgy; (3) listen to the culture; and (4) release the poets in order to make the church a center of creativity and imagination. “When the congregation understands its liturgical and theological tradition, when it has reflected deeply on the cultural situation with its assets and liabilities, and when those with artistic gifts have been nurtured, then it is possible to revisit the liturgy and pray for the touch of the Spirit” (151).

Worship is, at its heart, God’s invitation to us. In our response, our lives are shaped and re-formed by the timeless vision of God’s grace and love in Jesus Christ. As Dyrness concludes, “The practices of worship together prod our imagination to see another world in the midst of this one” (153).

Dennis S. Roberts

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Mark A. Peters.
*A Woman's Voice
 in Baroque Music:
 Mariane von Ziegler
 and J.S. Bach.*
 Burlington VT:
 Ashgate, 2008, xviii
 + 192 pp. ISBN
 978-0-7546-5810-8.
 \$99.95, hard cover.

One thing the Bach “sacred” cantatas ask of their listeners is that they take the texts seriously. The cantatas, after all, are musical sermons. Translations can mute that characteristic of engagement, but the homiletical modality cannot be easily dismissed unless there is no access whatever to the words being sung.

I begin with that observation because those who find themselves addressed by these works (and I include myself here) are often quick to imagine Bach himself as the one standing in the musical pulpit preaching the ideas that move us. But of course that flies in the face of fact since a little over a quarter (about 54) of the librettos were demonstrably written by others, and of the remainder only a few, if any at all, may have been written or assembled by the composer. This is not meant to deter from the wondrous ways Bach manages to get those texts into our musical receptors.

To be sure, knowledge about the authors of these texts is limited, even of those seven librettists we know Bach employed. Apart from a few scholarly if not arcane articles about each of them in languages and journals mostly unknown to the average aficionado, information about these rather talented and devout people is scarce.

Mark Peters’ recent book on Mariane von Ziegler thankfully begins to fill in some empty spaces. A fruit of the “new musicology” with its emphases on context, criticism and co-disciplinary commitments, Peters’ study plays well not only because of its solid treatment of Ziegler herself and the nine cantata texts Ziegler supplied but because Peters helps us to appreciate how she prophetically advanced the public voices of women during her lifetime. How Bach became involved in her goals, or she in his, is one of the subplots that accompany the reader throughout the book.

Mark Peters teaches at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois. This book evolved from his

dissertation completed at the University of Pittsburgh under the tutelage of Don Franklin, a widely respected Bach scholar who counts theological issues among his interests. Peters chose to organize his material around the notion of “voice” since Ziegler regularly confronted blatant or subtle resistance to female contributions to public discourse. The book has four major chapters: 1) Woman’s Voice: Mariane von Ziegler as Poet; 2) Anonymous Voice: Ziegler’s Sacred Cantata Texts; 3) Divine Voice: The Significance of the *Vox Christi* for Ziegler and Bach; 4) The Composer’s Voice: Bach’s compositional procedures in the Ziegler cantatas. A short final chapter puts this first in-depth study of Ziegler in perspective. Notes to the text are, as in any scholarly study, enlightening, but even more helpful for the general reader are the illustrative figures, the many tables that reveal hard data about compositional tendencies, abundant musical examples, a select bibliography, two indices, and especially the three appendices: An annotated bibliography of Ziegler’s works, the nine Ziegler cantata texts in German and in translation, and a list of all the cantatas in the first two yearly series that Bach produced in Leipzig.

Born to the prominent and apparently wealthy Leipzig Romanus family in 1695 Mariane von Ziegler had all the advantages of advancing her education privately. Her father was for a while one of the city’s three contemporaneous mayors. While in office Ziegler’s father built a five-story mansion worth \$2,016,000 in current valuation. Such wealth provided her with leisure to read and write. She became friends with Gottsched, the famous literary giant, and managed to move freely in the educated circles of Leipzig. She married, but lost her husband and two children to illness, a circumstance that led her back to her interests in poetry and to the support of the slowly emerging role of women in society. During her middle 40s, Ziegler remarried and moved to Frankfort on the Oder.

Her accomplishments are many, including the publication of four books, being named the first female Imperial Poet Laureate by the faculty of Wittenberg University, and being inducted as the first female into the *Deutschen Gesellschaft*, a society for the promotion of German literature and theater. For several years she hosted a French-inspired salon in her home, and prided herself in the fact that no male ever edited any of her published materials. Peters fills in these impressive accomplishments with juicy excerpts from her writings and with the opinions of her contemporaries, all the while making it clear that we are dealing with someone here who had strong—very strong—commitments to the contributions that women can and ought to be making especially to the literary field.

For his second year in Leipzig Bach determined to write a year’s series of cantatas based on hymns. That series began on Trinity Sunday 1724 and was to extend through the remainder of the year. For unknown reasons Bach broke the pattern earlier than apparently planned, and beginning with Jubilate, the third Sunday after Easter, chose instead

to compose nine cantatas on texts supplied by Mariane von Ziegler. Her librettos thus completed the series.

Peters carefully attends to this rather unorthodox decision on Bach's part, noting Lutheran unease at the time with public airing of female voices, especially regarding theological matters. Even though her authorship was not openly revealed when these cantatas were first performed, Bach's choice is nevertheless puzzling—not because of the quality of her work, however, as Peters helps the reader understand, for the texts are creative, masterful and Biblically founded. In the midst of her concerns for voice/silence, she made extensive use of Biblical quotation (carefully documented in this book), a characteristic that may have caught Bach's interest.

In the third chapter Peters takes the reader into the cantatas themselves, showing in great and interesting detail how the composer worked knowledgeably within the compositional tradition of setting *vox Christi* (the voice of Christ). Centuries old, that tradition invited composers to treat the words of Jesus in a variety of ways. Bach answered the call in unique ways, as Peters meticulously points out. The origin of this interest in *vox Christi*, both by Ziegler and Bach, is attributed by Peters to Luther, though one may want to argue with the reasons Peters supplies for his attribution. Luther's profound understanding of the Word of God as a sounded entity, a conviction shared by nearly all of Bach's predecessors, trumps any theories about Luther's penchant for spreading Gospel chant tones across his revised liturgies, hence setting pattern, as Peters rehearses.

In chapter four Bach's compositional procedures for these nine cantatas are unmasked to show a distinct unity to the entire collection as well as to reveal the composer's unusual inventiveness throughout these nine works. The details are too numerous to mention here, other than to point out Bach's fascination with instrumentation. These nine cantatas make rich use of the oboe da caccia (predecessor to the modern English horn), and provide virtuoso parts for the violincello piccolo (not used anywhere else in the cantata literature), as well as the flauto piccolo (a recorder in d). Bach's ventures in formal design are just as interesting in these cantatas. Instrumentation and formal creativity together call forth more intense questions about the composer's interest in these texts at that time under those circumstances. The puzzlement intensifies when one learns that Bach's interest in the cantata form began to wane once this yearly series had been completed.

Leaving the reader with questions, Peters concludes his study by exposing a myth long held by respectable scholars (and in some instances still held by respectable scholars). The libretti of these cantatas, together with sixty-four additional cantatas, were published by Ziegler in 1728. Because the texts of the nine cantatas in that publication differed from the texts employed by Bach it was assumed that Bach had made alterations, implying further that he did this under the influence of anti-feminist inclinations. In the

spirit of his study's subject Peters successfully debunks the old orthodoxy.

But questions remain. While the book's single thesis about the textual integrity of the Ziegler cantatas is clearly addressed and defended, one ends up wishing for the author's opinions, if nothing more, on at least two vexing questions: a) How did Bach justify to himself and to others of his contemporaries the public liturgical use of texts authored by a woman? Could one hope that with this choice Bach emerges as a personality more progressive than what we have been accustomed to allow? b) Why did he break off the hymn cantata cycle, taking on instead these non-hymn based texts of Ziegler?

Had Peters ventured some possible explanations for these persisting queries, such as Walter Hindermann's far-fetched theories about Bach's forty-first birthday in March of 1725 and his supposed numerological-driven decisions about compositional directions at that time, the reader might have been assured that others have asked these questions, even as we suspect that Peters himself has given these vexing problems some thought. But, alas, all these unanswered issues await a subsequent article from this author, we can hope.

This is a very important study for scholar and amateur alike. To know something about Bach's librettists is to know more about him and his world. What's more, through this book we have a chance to become acquainted with a rather astounding woman, far ahead of her time. Peters has done a masterful job of setting her work within the literary and musical streams of the age.

Mark Bangert

John H. Tietjen Professor of Worship and Church Music,
emeritus

Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
St. Luke (Chicago) Bach Choir Artistic Director and
Scholar in Residence

Music Reviews

We welcome two new reviewers to our *CrossAccent* review staff, John Bernthal, Associate Professor of Music and Associate University Organist at Valparaiso University and Linda Schmidt, Handbell Director at St. Mary's Lutheran Church in Kenosha, WI. Linda presented the workshop "New Music for Bells" at the ALCM National Conference in Milwaukee. We thank them for their willingness to serve ALCM with their expertise in organ and handbells. *JRB*

Instrumental

Handbells



Cynthia Dobrinski.
God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen.
3–7 oct bells.
Agape (2495), \$4.50.

This piece is an exciting setting of the English carol. In typical Dobrinski style, many bell techniques are employed, including martellato, thumb damp, pluck, mallet, shake, and ring touch. All ringers are kept busy in this challenging and engaging Level 3 piece. This arrangement would work well for worship or for Christmas concerts. *LS*



Dan R. Edwards.
Fanfare and Exaltation.
3 or 5 oct bells.
Choristers Guild
(CGB611), \$4.50.

Fanfare and Exaltation is a well-written piece that could be played in a variety of settings and occasions. Techniques include swing, echo, martellato. This Level 3 piece is full of energy and rhythm. *LS*



Sandra Eithun.
Coventry Carol.
3–5 oct bells; opt. flute, windchimes, finger cymbals.
Concordia Publishing House
(97–7311), \$4.00.

This setting of the traditional English carol is a Level II+ piece. The optional instruments would add greatly to the overall effect of the piece. The piece offers lyrical writing and a mysterious setting. The piece is quite accessible—ringers just have to be ready for some accidentals! *LS*



Cathy Moglebust.
Sing We Now of Christmas.
3–5 oct bells, with
finger cymbals, chime tree,
tambourine, and tenor drum.
Choristers Guild
(CGB591), \$4.50.

Moglebust's background as a percussionist is quite evident in this Level 4 piece. The beginning is played very freely; striving for an ethereal feel. At measure 30, a driving rhythm begins that is carried through to the end. The middle and ending sections are in 6/8, with much use of mallets. The other title for this piece is "Now the Green Blade Rises" and a choir could make double use of this piece, playing it again during the Easter season. *LS*



Arnold B. Sherman.
Song of Assurance.
2 or 3 oct bells or chimes.
Choristers Guild
(CGB604), \$4.50;
or 3–5 oct bells.
(CGB605), \$4.95.

This piece is based on Isaiah 40:10, "Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God..." Sherman has crafted a masterful and thoughtful composition. The tune FOUNDATION is quoted at the end. The two editions are compatible for massed ringing. This would work well in a bell festival, as well as in local congregations with multiple bell/chime choirs. *LS*

Organ Music



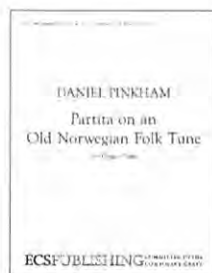
Donald Busarow. *Easy Hymn Preludes for Organ, Vol. 7.* Concordia Publishing House (97-7322), \$18.00.

This collection consists of settings for organ of twenty-one hymn tunes. Ten settings employ relatively easy pedal parts, while the remaining pieces are written for manuals alone. Most settings, while not difficult to play, have sufficient musical interest to make them attractive for players and hearers alike. One of the more challenging settings is *FOREST GREEN* with its active, wide-ranging triplets in the right hand and disjunct block chords in the left hand. Many examples abound of well-crafted settings. *ASCENDED TRIUMPH* features fanfare motives, *cantus firmus* phrases migrating from right to left hand, and references to hymn tune motives well integrated into the texture. The simple setting of *AWAY IN A MANGER* includes the initial two phrases of “Silent Night” as countermelody to the hymn tune. Multimeter (7/8, 6/8, 4/4) and vigorous rhythms energize *DIADEMATA*. A chorale fughetta based on the initial phrase of *FRÖHLICH SOLL MEIN HERZE SPRINGEN* opens this delightful setting, which also makes reference to the first and last phrases of the chorale melody. *NUN LOB, MEIN SEEL* begins with a two-part texture somewhat reminiscent of J.S. Bach’s setting of “Jesus Christus, unser Heiland” (BWV 688) with its disjunct bass line in steady eighth notes against an obbligato melody in sixteenths in the right hand. A contrasting style is employed in *RUSTINGTON* with its rich chordal texture well suited to the hymn tune. The setting of *WITTENBERG NEW* is written in a style reminiscent of Jan Bender, the composer of the hymn tune. This collection is a valuable and economical addition to the church organist’s library. *JB*



David Maxwell. *Earth Shall Ring—Ten Settings for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany.* Organ. Concordia Publishing House (97-7333), \$ 25.00.

Most settings of these hymn tunes and carols are modest in length (2–4 pages), with “It Came upon the Midnight Clear” and “The First Nowell” being somewhat more extended (5–6 pages). Many settings in this collection exhibit a well-developed, rich harmonic palette that contributes to the effectiveness of the pieces. *CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM* is beautifully evocative and employs block chords in parallel motion and unexpected harmonies. *CAROL* (“It Came upon a Midnight Clear”) features a repeated pedal drone against parallel sixths in the accompaniment part. In a middle section the *cantus firmus* appears in the pedal against block chords and a hint of arpeggiation in the upper voice. A *perpetuum mobile* style with constant eighth-note motion in the manuals (and later pedal) effectively conveys the excitement of *PERSONENT HODIE*. *THE FIRST NOWELL* features gentle syncopation and hemiola in the manuals against the clear statement of the *cantus firmus* in the pedal. A repeated pedal drone and a slow harmonic rhythm provide a sense of leisure in *KINGS OF ORIENT*. *JB*



Daniel Pinkham. *Partita on an Old Norwegian Folk Tune.* Organ. ECS Publishing (No. 6409), \$7.50.

This partita, based on a melody from Nordmøre, consists of six brief movements. It is moderately easy to play, and utilizes simple textures in a less traditional style. The Norwegian folk tune, consisting of three phrases, is most clearly set out in movement two, “Chorale.” In this movement the complete tune appears twice, first in the right hand, and then in the

left hand. The opening movement, "Introduction," presents an interplay of motives derived from the first phrase of the Norwegian folk tune. The energetic two-voice "Canon" which follows the "Chorale" is based on a skipping rhythmic figure in 6/8 meter. The very simple "Trumpet Dialog" is a *bicinium* featuring imitation, then a countermelody. In the three-voice "Aria" which follows, a freely composed ornamented melody in the right hand is combined with the folk tune melody in half notes residing in the lowest voice. The concluding movement, "Scherzo Finale" witnesses a transformation of the placid folk tune into a jaunty tune in mixed meter, with sporadic rhythmic interjections of chords in the left hand. This work provides a fine introductory exploration into the world of nontraditional twentieth-century music. *JB*

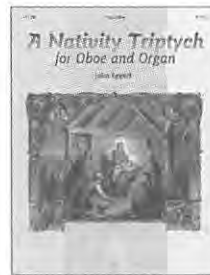
Organ and Instrument



Jeffrey N. Bleresch.
Wake, Awake for Night Is Flying.
 Organ, 2 trumpets (C or B-flat),
 2 trombones, timpani,
 congregation.
 Concordia Publishing House
 (97-7326), \$ 30.00.

This festive hymn setting of WACHET AUF includes an extended introduction for brass, organ, and timpani; stanza one which adds the congregation to the above forces; stanza two for congregation and organ alone; and stanza three which returns to the full ensemble of stanza one. All instrumental parts are included in the booklet, including parts for C and B-flat trumpets, horn in F (as a substitute for trombone 1), timpani (G, C), an independent organ part in full-size print, and a reproducible hymn tune/text for congregational use. The introduction features fanfare motives in the brass, a *perpetuum mobile* style in the right hand of the

organ part based on quartal harmonies, and the introduction of the *cantus firmus* phrases in brief segments. The overall effect is very exciting and is reminiscent of Distler's treatment of this same hymn in his organ partita, WACHET AUF. In stanzas one and three, the brass are used effectively to fill out the texture and add a fine descant in the trumpet 1 part. Stanza two provides a fitting contrast to the exuberance of stanzas one and three. Here, a beautifully flowing obbligato line in the right hand of the organ provides commentary on "the singing of the watchmen." An effective presentation of this work will require careful coordination of forces and a steady sense of rhythm. This work is highly recommended. *JB*



John Eggert.
A Nativity Triptych
 for Oboe and Organ.
 Concordia Publishing House
 (97-7332), \$12.00.

John Eggert's collection of three Christmas hymns is beautifully arranged for oboe and organ. The collection includes GOTTES SOHN IST KOMMEN, IN DULCI JUBILO, and LOBT GOTT, IHR CHRISTEN. The arrangements utilize the oboe and organ effectively as they exchange the *cantus firmus* and countermelodies. Eggert's style of composition interprets the text very well, adding some fresh air to these very familiar tunes. The oboe parts are included in the booklet and are reproducible. Both the organ score and oboe parts are of medium difficulty and would serve well as hymn introductions or special music. *MS*

Piano Music



Valerie A. Floeter.
10 Sacred Piano Solos Volume 2.
Floeter Music
(ISBN 978-0-9823040-1-0),
\$16.00.

Floeter has set a number of traditional hymn tunes from a range of cultures. These include folk tunes from America, the British Isles and Finland, in addition to melodies associated with the German chorale tradition. Most settings utilize flowing, eighth-note rhythms rather than thick textures. These sight-readable arrangements call for an expressive keyboard touch. The arrangements are, for the most part, uncomplicated but not trite. While the collection utilizes traditional hymn tunes, many, such as ST. PATRICK'S BREASTPLATE, OLD 124TH and LOST IN THE NIGHT, are not widely heard in today's mainstream worship culture, making this an attractive choice for musicians seeking fresh material. This collection is suitable for use as pre-service or worship meditations, especially for communion, funeral, Easter or Lenten occasions. *CP*

Vocal Music

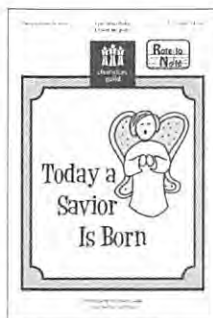
Children's Music



Viva Voce!
*The Complete Resource
for Children's Choirs,
Vol. 1.*
178 pages on CD-ROM.
St. James Music Press, \$79.

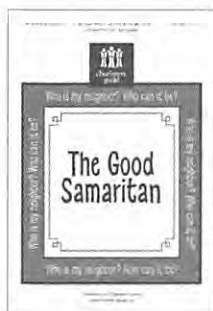
The philosophy of this CD-ROM is to teach vocal technique, music skills, hymnody, liturgy and anthems for the church service in a fun, efficient, memorable and rewarding manner for both the choristers and the directors. The curriculum follows the church year and contains twelve Grade 3–6 anthems and eight Grade K–2 anthems. All instrumental parts are included. There is also a Christmas musical

called, "The Best Old-Fashioned Christmas Pageant Ever!" You simply download the anthem and print it out. And, recordings of all the pieces are included in an mp3 format. You are encouraged to make CD's of the music for your choir. Permission to photocopy and record everything is also included. A vital part of this curriculum is the monthly e-mail newsletter, sent to each *Viva Voce* subscriber. Each newsletter contains a teaching overview, teaching points, vocal warm-ups for the specific anthems, and songs and games to help children's choirs learn many aspects of musicianship. Note: You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader version 7 or higher. *KO*



Lynn Shaw Bailey.
Today a Savior is Born.
Unison and piano.
Choristers Guild
(CGA1161), \$1.85.

"Today a Savior is Born" is an anthem which would work well for a cherub choir or inexperienced junior choirs. The text is based on the Christmas story in Luke: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." There is enough repetition of the text and melody in this 6/8 anthem that facilitates easy learning. There is also an opportunity to learn scales that go up and down, dynamics, and breath control. This anthem is good for anytime in the Christmas season. *KO*



Lynn Shaw Bailey and Becki Slagle.
The Good Samaritan.
Unison/two part and piano.
Choristers Guild
(CGA1168), \$1.85.

The unique (optional) introduction to this junior choir anthem is a spoken scripture-based reading between three speakers to "set the stage" for the musical setting of the familiar story of the good Samaritan. There are a lot of words because of the story-telling nature of the anthem, but the text and the music blend together well enough

that the words are not difficult to learn. The two-part section at the end combines two previously introduced melodies. The anthem ends with the moral of the story, “The good Samaritan showed us what to do. Love your neighbor, too!” KO



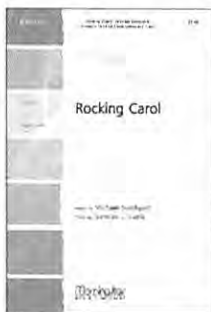
Matthew Machemer.
Your Hand, O Lord, in Days of Old.
 Two-part treble or mixed voices,
 piano, flute.
 Concordia Publishing House
 (98-3967), \$1.75.

Based on the KINGSFOLD tune, this uncomplicated arrangement features two singing parts often derived from canonic phrases of the hymn tune. Clear diction and attentiveness to vowel shaping will help convey the serious text message. The piece will require solid musicianship for successful presentation; “cute” will not carry the day if done by a children’s choir. Likewise, a good acoustical performance venue will bring out the best in this setting. Rhythms for the singers are straightforward eighths and quarter notes. The piano accompaniment features passages of blocked, half-note chords that alternate with segments of flowing triplet rhythms. Neither flute nor piano parts are difficult; however, an added point of interest is the piano’s triplet rhythms poised against the flute’s duple rhythms, a feature that will require solid musicianship for successful execution. CP



Ellen Woods Bryce
In the Morning.
 Unison/two-part with piano,
 opt. congregation, opt. flute,
 opt. handbells (3-4 oct.).
 Choristers Guild
 (CGA1167), \$1.95.

With a text focused on thanking God every morning, and a combination of two-part choir, spoken words, flute, handbell and congregation participation, this junior choir (or combined junior and cherub) anthem is perfect for a Thanksgiving Eve or general service. The melody is hymn-like, with the first, second and fourth phrases the same, and the third slightly higher (similar to the hymn ST. DENIO). Beginning with a speaking choir, handbells and piano, the anthem evolves from just choir and piano on verse one, to choir, flute, handbells, piano and congregation (all music and duplication rights included) on the third and final verse. KO



Michael Burkhardt.
Rocking Carol.
 Unison/two part and piano.
 Morning Star
 (MSM-50-1115), \$1.50.

A gentle and simple lullaby for the Christmas season, “Rocking Carol” is suitable for cherub or beginning-level junior choirs. The two-part writing can be sung in unison, but is intended to be sung using an echo-effect. The tune, ROCKING, (or in Czech “Hajej, hynjei”) is a combination of Lydian and Ionian modes (E-flat Major). This intriguing melody is brought to life with a well-written accompaniment. This anthem could also be effective sung as a solo, especially if sung by a child. KO



Mark Patterson.
Advent Celebration.
 Unison/two part with piano and
 opt. finger cymbals, claves, and
 shaker.
 Choristers Guild
 (CGA1159), \$1.95.

“Celebrate the coming of the King! Light the candles one by one, come share the joy he brings.” This rhythmic Advent anthem is enhanced by a small percussion section of finger cymbals, claves and shaker. The parts are easy enough for three members of the choir to learn and play while they sing. The score is well-marked with dynamics, legato and non-legato singing, and where not to breathe. The echo effect is used in the writing, offering a chance for less-experienced junior choirs to learn two-part singing.

If you have singers that sound great on a high F (lower part on a low F,) the ending of this anthem will be spectacular! KO



Allen Pote.
Sing We All Noel.
 Unison/two part with piano and optional handbells or handchimes (3–4 oct.).
 Choristers Guild (CGA1158), \$1.95.

Allen Pote was one of a number of composers who wrote anthems for the celebration honoring children's choir expert Helen Kemp's 90th birthday in 2008. Mr. Pote chose a Christmas text by C.F. Hernaman: "Sing with joy, 'tis Christmas morn! Unto us a Child is born. Christ has come on earth to dwell, God with us, Immanuel. Sing noel!" Effective because of well-written key changes and easy-to-learn harmonies, this anthem for junior choirs also incorporates the festive sound of handbells or handchimes. The time signature is a "Wassail, Wassail"-like 6/8, making this anthem a festive addition to your entire Christmas season. KO



Allen Pote.
To Be a Child of God.
 Unison with piano and opt. flute.
 Choristers Guild (CGA1169), \$1.95.

The title of this anthem suitable for junior choirs does not hint at the fact that it is based on the familiar old hymn, "His Eye is On the Sparrow." Pote creates his own melody that, after a few smooth key changes, leads nicely into the chorus of the hymn. The flute part is also written with some knowledge of the instrument, and requires a slightly more advanced player. The anthem builds to a climactic moment before the end, then decrescendos to a mezzo piano with the words, "What a wonderful thing it is to be a child of God." KO

Choral Music



The Sewanee Composer's Project, Vol. 16 (2009).
 St. James Music Press, \$79.00.

"We're good, we're cheap and we're snooty."

So says the subtitle of the St. James Music Press website. The CD is the sixteenth-annual collection (now issued on electronic files) from St. James Music Press. As most church musicians know by now, the project allows the purchaser to buy a license to reproduce the music on the CD. The result is a large amount of affordable music which can be copied legally. At a cost of \$79 for the entire disk, the scores are truly cheap compared to purchasing individual paper octavos.

In general, the quality of the music is very good. At worst, some of the music is well-crafted but pedestrian. At best, it is very fresh and interesting. The style is traditional with Anglican overtones. Accompaniments are mostly for organ. Anything which smacks of commercial contemporary music is meticulously avoided, allowing the St. James Press people to live up to their subtitle as "snooty."

This year's collection includes voicing as follows:

- 26 SATB
- 3 Two-part mixed
- 5 SAB
- 2 Treble voices

Obviously, the collection has more application for choirs which sing in four parts. Several pieces use a variety of instruments in very creative ways.

Two larger work are included: "The Gift of Music" by Alfred Fedek and "Evening" by Robin Milford. In addition, three larger liturgical works are presented: "Preces and Responses" by Richard Shepherd, "Magnificat" and "Nunc Dimittis" pairings by Peter Matthews and Thomas Pavlechko, and a Christmas Mass by Richard Shepherd.

Two extended SAB pieces are offered. An edition of Buxtehude's "In dulci júbilo" is offered in a practical

setting which has been lowered to F major with English words. Also, Mark Schweizer's "We Praise Thee, O God" is a setting of the Te Deum for SAB voicing, which is rare.

The CD includes music for the entire church year. The editors have thoughtfully included Sundays for which there is not much material, such as "Cana in Galilee" and "When to the Temple Mary Went" for the Feast of the Presentation.

A few pieces jump out. Choirs would have a great time learning "Chanticleer's Carol" by Vernon Hoyle, a very jolly setting of a charming text by William Austin (d. 1633). "As the Wind" by David Ashley White for trebles, flute and harp is a unique, haunting piece which is the perfect antidote for trite children's music. "A Hymn of Glory" using the tune DEO GRACIAS is a fine setting of the Venerable Bede text for Ascension, again by David Ashley White. "Cradle Song," "Creator Spirit," "Kerstlied," "The Lamb," "Rejoice, Rejoice Believers," and "There Is No Rose" are also especially attractive. While most of the music is newly-composed, the collection also includes editions of little-known music by Telemann, Haydn, Billings and a rollicking Renaissance dance-style piece, "Verbum caro factum est" from the 16th-century *Cancionero de Upsala*.

Overall, the collection is of a great value for the cost. Choir directors on a limited budget or who are hungry for fresh material should consider it. KAO



William Averitt.
I Saw Three Ships.
SATB, soprano solo.
E.C. Schirmer (No. 7116), \$1.85.

In his setting of the traditional English carol "I Saw Three Ships" for unaccompanied four-part choir, Averitt uses a variety of textures to propel this work through its nine stanzas. Starting with a solo voice, the piece builds to two-part, three-

part, and finally full choir, before reducing in texture back to a single voice. Although a key change from G major to C major and back again, along with a few measures of 9/8, may provide a temporary challenge, church choirs and congregations will find this a joyful addition to their Christmas repertoire, suitable for services or concert settings. AE



John A. Behnke.
Awake, My Heart, with Gladness.
SATB, keyboard, 2 flutes.
Concordia Publishing House
(98-3999), \$2.00.

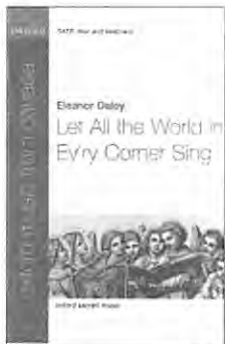
In his setting of this Paul Gerhardt/Johann Crüger hymn, Behnke achieves a sense of joy through ascending lines, effective use of the triple meter, and interaction between the flutes, keyboard, and voices. The choir sings most of the first verse in four-part harmony, with simple imitation in a few phrases. The second verse begins by illustrating the text with unison men, *fortissimo*, alternating with four-part *piano* women. The texture then returns to simple imitation and four-part harmony, slightly varied from the first verse. The final verse features increased motion in the instruments, a new harmonization for the voices, and a playful conclusion. This would be a good introduction or re-introduction to AUF, AUF, MEIN HERZ, a joyful German Easter hymn. LW



Michael Burkhardt.
Three Carols from Poland.
SATB, unaccompanied.
Morning Star
(MSM-50-1113), \$2.50.

Michael Burkhardt gives us three Polish carols, PRYZBIE ELI DO BETLEJEM, LULAJ E JEZUNIU, and DZISIAJ W BETLEJEM, which would work well for a carol service or for Christmas Eve. Harmonically fairly static, contrasting sections of full choir, small ensembles,

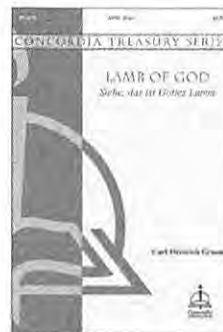
and soloists provide musical interest. While the pieces could be sung separately, they are meant to be sung together, textually moving from the shepherds receiving the good news from the angels to Mary's lullaby and finally to a joyful scene of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, with angels singing and shepherds piping at the manger. Musically, the piece moves from a 2/4 allegro, to be sung "cheerfully," to a tender 3/4 lullaby and finally to a 3/4 allegro, sung "joyfully." The text is given in both Polish and English, and a helpful pronunciation guide is provided. There are brief sections of soprano and bass *divisi*. This piece is a recommended addition for choirs accustomed to singing four-part unaccompanied music and who are looking to broaden their carol repertoire. AE



Eleanor Daley.
Let All the World in Ev'ry Corner Sing.
 SATB and keyboard.
 Oxford University Press
 (ISBN 978-0-19-380473-9),
 \$2.95.

In a three-movement suite, part of the Oxford Music from Canada series, Daley sets "King of Glory, King of Peace," "The Call," and "Antiphon" (Let All the World in Ev'ry Corner Sing), all poems by George Herbert. Her writing captures the majesty and grandeur appropriate to these distinguished lyrics. The first movement is a three-verse anthem based on her newly-written tune, first sung by the choir in unison, then in four to five part harmony, *a cappella*, then in unison by the lower parts with a soprano descant. The second movement is unaccompanied throughout and includes *divisi* in soprano, alto, and bass. It begins with a solo or semi-chorus melody accompanied by humming in the rest of the choir. The choir carries the text for verses two and three, with the melody in the first soprano, then bass, then soprano. Movement

three, the joyous Antiphon, is mostly in 7/8 meter, with frequent meter changes. The choral phrases are generally unaccompanied, with the keyboard providing interludes and punctuating occasional downbeats. Daley's harmonic language is tonal, with controlled and effective use of dissonance. Ranges are comfortable. *Divisi*, accidentals, meter and key changes provide challenges, but this suite will be worth the extra effort. LW



Carl Heinrich Graun.
Lamb of God
 (Siehe, das ist Gottes Lamm).
 SATB and organ.
 Concordia Publishing House
 (98-3995), \$1.50.

Graun (1704-59) uses phrases of the chorale *CHRISTE, DU LAMM GOTTES* in the soprano, alternating with a ritornello in the other three voices on the text, "Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world." Graun varies the ritornello enough to maintain interest while still unifying the piece. Altos and tenors will have the greatest challenge and greatest reward, with long phrases and moving eighth notes. Ranges are comfortable, and the organ accompaniment is moderately easy, although it does require pedal. Graun's classical-era style is accessible and provides a fitting interpretation of the text, while editor Scott Hyslop's translation fits the music well. The original German text is not included. LW



Jane Holstein.
The Power of Your Love.
 SAB and piano.
 Hope Publishing Company
 (C 5613), \$2.10.

This arrangement of a popular praise song by Geoff Bullock would work especially well for a young or inexperienced SAB choir (there is also an SATB setting available from the publisher). While some choral

arrangements of praise music can be stilted or clunky, this one retains the feel of the original and is easy to follow. The words are beautiful, reflective verses from Psalm 103 and could be used almost at any time of year. The piano accompaniment is certainly sufficient to stand alone, but additional rhythm parts are available separately along with a rehearsal/performance CD if desired. *DR*



Hal H. Hopson.
Brightest and Best of the Stars.
SATB and keyboard.
Morning Star
(MSM-50-0054), \$1.85.

This is an octavo setting of the familiar hymn text by Reginald Heber. Slight alterations to the text were made, including the addition of a refrain; however, the meaning of the original lyrics remains intact. The setting starts with a unison female stanza and a unison male stanza. They are each followed by a simple two-part refrain. The remaining stanzas contain some SATB as well as male-female two-part sections. While the accompaniment is most suited for piano, it would be possible to accompany with organ as well. This is a good example of how Hal Hopson strives to create accessible music for choirs of all sizes. *MS*



Hal H. Hopson.
What Sweeter Music.
SATB and organ,
with opt. string quartet.
Morning Star
(MSM-50-1426), \$1.85.

Set to a centuries-old Christmas text by Robert Herrick, this lovely melody and setting are neither complicated nor predictable. The meter frequently toggles between duple and compound. The underlying harmony is consonant, while non-harmonic tones, such as anticipations and suspensions, both in the choral writing and accompaniment, gently intrigue both listener and singer. Unison and two-

part singing also are featured. This piece will be best performed by a choir that has mastered blend and vowel shaping and is able to artfully execute the many subtleties of tempo and dynamic expression contained in this piece. *CP*



Kevin Keil.
When Signs of This World's Anguish.
SAB choir, optional assembly,
descant, piano, and oboe.
OCP (20049), 2.00.

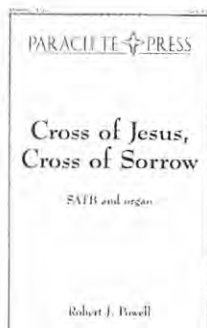
Using a slightly modified version of the tune KING'S LYNN, Keil has set the vivid poetry of Benedictine hymn writer Genevieve Glen in a mood that is plaintive but never harsh. Speaking of God's compassion, the first stanza ends with "You weep at friendship's graveside; You grieve the hard caprice That seals your ancient city Against your proffered peace." Throughout the piece, the melody passes from men's to women's voices in choral writing that is simple and effective, while the piano and oboe parts provide continuity and sustain the emotion. An assembly edition for reproduction is provided on the back page, but blanket permission is limited to special occasions. As an anthem, it would work well during Lent or with a theme of social justice. *DR*



Donald Petering.
Sing, Men of God, Volume 2.
TTBB, keyboard, instruments.
Concordia Publishing House
(97-7343), \$50.00.

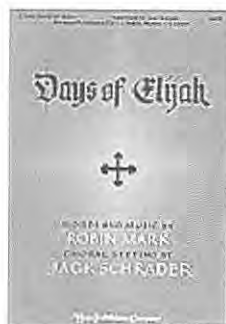
This is an excellent collection of 23 arrangements for men's choir. The settings range from TB to a full TTBB sound with optional string instrument and oboe accompaniments. The choral parts are carefully arranged to stay within a reasonable vocal range for the average choir. These settings are useful for choir hymn stanzas as well as special music. The book contains all of the vocal and instrumental parts. Permission is given for reproduction of the

pages within the collection. There are 15 hymn tunes used in these arrangements. "Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing" is presented in a two stanza arrangement. Stanza 1 is the Duet from Handel's *St. John Passion* while stanza two is a TB arrangement of DER AM KREUZ. MS



Robert J. Powell.
Cross of Jesus, Cross of Sorrow.
 SATB and organ.
 Paraclete Press
 (PPM00921), \$1.60.

This hymn was originally written by John Stainer as part of his oratorio *The Crucifixion* (also the source of the familiar short anthem "God So Loved the World"). Powell's arrangement uses verses 1–3 and 10 from the original, with one editorial modification from the graphic "was tortured" to "did suffer." The sopranos introduce the melody in verse 1 and Powell creates his own harmonization for verse 2. For verse 3 he moves to a new contrasting melody in E minor reflective of the "mysterious condescending" phrase in the text. On the final verse the melody is sung by the men while the women have a unison *obbligato*, conclusion simply by repeating the last phrase with the melody back in the soprano. Intended for Good Friday, the anthem could also be sung for Holy Cross Day. It is simple, yet lovely and flows well through the powerful images of the cross. DR



Jack Schrader.
Days of Elijah.
 SAB and piano.
 Hope (C 5609), \$2.20.

Jack Schrader arranged this popular praise song by Robin Mark for SATB choir in 2006; the SAB arrangement is new this year. The text points to the coming of Christ and would be suitable for Advent, End Times, or General use. Schrader builds up layers of text and music throughout the anthem. After growing from one to three parts in the

first verse, the texture adds untexted countermelodies in the second verse. Then, a second theme enters, which is soon combined with the refrain melody from the first two verses. These voices continue as a soprano descant joins them. After a key change, the refrain is repeated without the second theme, this time with three-part women's harmony and a men's countermelody. Finally, the descant rejoins the refrain for the climax. *Divisi* for the men are optional, but the women frequently have three independent parts (S1, S2, A). A separate rhythm packet (C5402R) includes parts for electric guitar, bass, synthesizer, and drums. LW



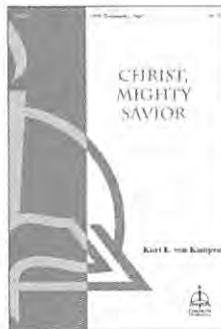
Joel Raney.
God with Us, Emmanuel.
 SATB, optional 5 handbells
 and congregation.
 Hope (C 5607), \$1.95.

Subtitled "A Candle Lighting Ceremony for Advent," this piece begins with a piano introduction and a brief section for two-part choir. This is followed by a spoken litany and candle lighting with piano in the background, playing a simple arrangement of GABRIEL'S MESSAGE. Another brief choral section, this time with optional congregation, concludes the work. This final section is mostly unison, expanding to three and four parts only on the last two notes. For each of five candles (4 Sundays of Advent and Christmas Eve), the octavo includes a litany, a text to be read during the lighting of the candle, and a concluding prayer. These are based on the names of Jesus from Isaiah 9:6: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace, Everlasting Father, Emmanuel. Litanies, readings, prayers, handbell music, and congregational music may be reproduced. LW



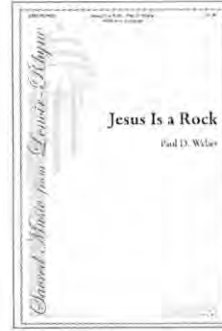
Camille Saint-Saëns.
Patiently Have I Waited.
SATB, organ, with opt. cello.
Morning Star
(MSM-50-7550), \$1.85.

This is a sensitive arrangement by Raymond H. Haan for mixed choir of the beautiful soprano solo “Expectans expectavi” from Saint-Saëns’ *Christmas Oratorio*. Haan opens with a soprano-alto duet that blossoms into a four-part texture. At the sequential stepwise motive (m. 27) that appears at the repeat of the text “have I waited for the Lord,” the upper and lower voices trade the melody back and forth, before returning to a four-part texture at “and Lo! He heard my cry!” With its undulating eighth-note patterns, the optional cello part adds further tonal interest and a longing quality. Within reach of most church choirs, this setting is suitable for many occasions, especially Advent, the Christmas season, and funerals. *AE*



Kurt E. von Kampen.
Christ, Mighty Savior.
SATB, congregation, organ.
Concordia Publishing House
(98-3990), \$1.75.

The organ introduction does a wonderful job of establishing the irregular meter found in the tune *INNESHREE FARM*. It sets to tone for this gentle hymn very well. Stanza 2 is composed for soprano and alto. Stanza 3 is another unison stanza for the congregation. Stanza 4 is a very expressive SATB setting with optional organ accompaniment that uses dynamics and rubato to bring out the prayerfulness of the lyrics. Stanza 5 concludes the hymn with a soprano and tenor descant. This is a beautiful setting and could easily be learned by the average church choir. *MS*



Paul D. Weber.
Jesus Is a Rock.
SATB *divisi*, a cappella.
Morning Star
(MSM-50-2609), \$1.85.

Weber’s setting of this familiar spiritual uses a thick choral texture and is best sung by a larger choir. The men provide the accompaniment, alternating between a 4-part chordal repetition of “Jesus is a rock” and an imitation string bass line sung on “dum.” The women carry the full text in generally 3-part harmony, and there are solo lines for male or female. Set in the key of F minor (modulating to F#), the piece stays in a comfortably low tessitura and only adds one brief high A for the sopranos at the end. A piano reduction is provided for rehearsal, but the singers should find the harmonies intuitive and satisfying. With its strong rhythmic vitality and affirmative images of Jesus, this would be a welcome addition to the Lenten repertoire. *DR*



Mack Wilberg.
Suo-gân (Rest in me).
SATB choir and piano.
Oxford University Press
(ISBN 978-0-19-386989-9),
\$1.85.

The simple, repeating melody of a Welsh lullaby forms the basis for this arrangement and features an alternate Christmas text. Treble voices always carry the melody, underpinned by four-part men’s voices. As such, a balanced men’s section is necessary. Although basic in nature, this music is best suited for a choir mature in its dynamic expression and sensitivity to nuances of tempo. Accompaniment supports the voices in an inconspicuous manner. Again, the pianist’s sensitivity to dynamic and tempo fluctuation will do justice to this lovely piece. A chamber orchestral accompaniment is available on rental from the publisher. “Suo-gân” would be suitable for use at Christmas or at a child’s memorial service. *CP*

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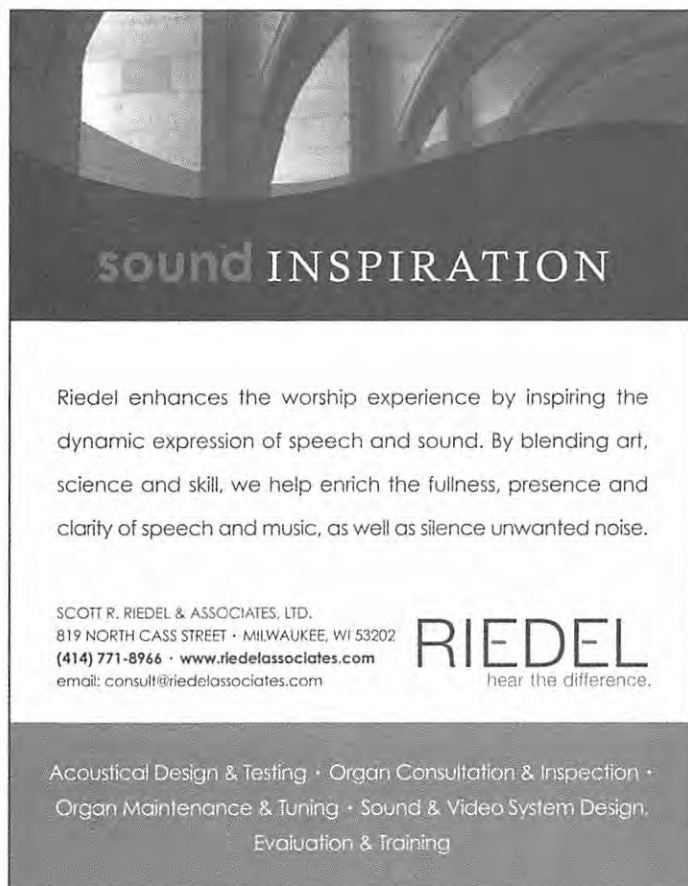
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