About the Author

JOSEPH W. CLOKEY has made music his career since, in 1915, he graduated from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Much of his musical life has been spent at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, from which he received his A.B. degree and, in 1937, the degree of Doctor of Literature. He is now Dean of the School of Fine Arts of Miami University.

Dr. Clokey's musical compositions embrace a wide range of forms in nearly every medium. The son of a minister, that he should be concerned with Church music was almost inevitable. Among his finest works are his sacred cantatas, his hymns, and anthems. His organ preludes, "The Bell Prelude" and "The Cathedral Prelude," are familiar to most church-goers, as are his compositions for choirs.

Dr. Clokey has written many articles for musical magazines and at last comes this small book, written for amateurs and laymen, about music for the small church. In everyday language, as uncomplicated as the Key of C, Dean Clokey describes what he calls *worship-music,* and tells us how to use it.

In Every Corner Sing

In Every Corner Sing

An Outline of Church Music for the Layman

By

JOSEPH W. CLOKEY

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Contents

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.

The heavens are not too high,
His praise may thither fly:
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.

The Church with psalms must shout,
No door can keep them out:
But, above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in every corner sing,
My God and King.

—George Herbert (1593-1632)

I

The Man in the Pews

THE MAN in the pews is the rock bottom of the Church. Without his support the Church would not long survive. He is very likely to have his way in the matter of Church music. Authority may be vested in the minister, or in a music committee, or in a director of music, but the layman pays the bills.

The layman often says, "I know nothing about music, but I know what I like." To which the musician sometimes replies sarcastically, "You most certainly know nothing about music. Neither do you know what you like." It would be more to the point to say "If you know nothing about music, then learn something. You will get more satisfaction out of what you like if you know something about it."

The man in the pews has a perfect right to have his likes and dislikes, but they should be based on something more substantial than mere caprice. Religion is no mere caprice. The Church is no mere caprice. And the music of the Church should not be determined by anyone's whim, be he layman, minister, or musician.

This book is written for the layman, so that he may listen to the music of the Church in-

telligently and through it worship effectively. To explore the music of the Church can be a real adventure, for much of it is uncharted territory. One does not need to know a lot of technical terms in order to have an intelligent understanding of music.

This book is written also for the amateur musician. Because an organist is not adept at Bach fugues it does not follow that he is unfit to play a service. A choir that cannot sing the *Saint Matthew Passion* is not necessarily a failure.

Finally, this book is written for the small church. There is a saying that "Red cows give the most milk because there are more of them." It might also be said, "Small churches are the most important because there are more of them."

If a small parish cannot have an elaborate building it does not follow that it cannot worship effectively. Because it cannot have a costly musical program it does not follow that it must have inferior music. Even if it can have no choir at all, it does not follow that it must be deprived of music. I know of a small parish which has no choir. The congregation is its own choir. Hymns, chants, canticles, responses—the congregation does them cheerfully and heartily. If the organist takes a vacation it goes right ahead and sings without accompaniment. The result isn't what you would expect in a cathedral,

- it is worshipful and it is satisfying. It is even
ective musically.

This book is an attempt to offer something
finite in the way of a guide to the laymen and
nateur musicians who serve the small church.
ffective service is based on proper knowledge.
nd this book is based on three "knows"—

Know what constitutes proper worship-music.
Know what is within your capabilities.
Know how to interpret it effectively.

II
The Nature of Worship

WORSHIP is honor paid to God. This is a simple working-definition that will do for the purposes of this book.

You may worship internally and externally. If you worship externally your worship must be internal as well to be of value. To worship externally for show, that is hypocrisy. Anything that is internal is abstract, intangible, difficult of attainment, easy to lose. Externals are of great help in stabilizing the internal. They can stimulate and intensify. It is that quality which gives them real value. The mere act of dropping to one's knees can make it easier to pray. (But see to it that you do not kneel in order to impress your neighbor.) Music in the Church is a form of external worship. Its purpose is to stimulate, stabilize, and intensify internal worship.

When a large group of people attempts to worship as separate individuals the result is likely to be chaos. This is not very stimulating to internal worship. For a group to worship as a whole is far more effective. This is an impersonal, concerted expression. There is unity of intention and unity of attention. That kind of

'orship is known as *corporate worship*. Music iat is used as an integral part of corporate vorship will be referred to as *worship-music*.

THE DIRECTION OF WORSHIP

Worship has two directions, from man to God and from God to man. A hymn of praise, a prayer, the recital of the Creed—these are man-to-God. The reading of the Holy Scriptures, the benediction, the absolution—these are God-to-man.

Whenever the direction is man-to-man, that is not worship. If much man-to-man direction creeps into a religious service, worship will be crowded out. The direction of secular music is man-to-man. Its use in church is all too prevalent. Few churches escape it altogether. Many would be better off if they were to eliminate music entirely.

WORSHIP AND DRAMA

Corporate worship has much in common with the drama. It is often described as symbolic drama. Indeed, the secular drama is an offshoot of the sacred drama. The general principles upon which the drama is built will apply to corporate worship as well.

In drama there is a carefully planned story—the plot. It has a central and dominant theme.

It rises to a climax. If the climax fails, the play fails.

Those who present the play are called actors. Good acting is impersonal. The actor's own personality is unimportant. What is important is the character he portrays. The "star" system (far too common) violates this principle and poor drama is the result.

Good acting is not impromptu. It may appear to be spontaneous, but you may be sure it has been carefully rehearsed. The mechanics of the production are either concealed, so that the audience is unaware of them, or they are worked into the action of the play.

Much of the success of a play depends upon its setting. The producer begins to build atmosphere before anyone enters the theatre. The appointments of the stage are checked to see that they enhance the play. Anything which detracts is eliminated.

The drama is not complete without an audience. The play must be within the intellectual and emotional grasp of the audience. But the drama can lift an audience beyond its normal capacity. For this reason the drama has a cultural obligation to society. Too often the producer ignores the cultural obligation and thinks only of the box office receipts.

Like the drama, corporate worship has a plot—

called the "Order of Service," or "The Liturgy," or any of a number of names. It has a central and dominant theme. It must have a climax. If the climax fails then the service has failed to satisfy the worshiper.

The actors in this symbolic drama are the clergy, the musicians, and the others who take part in the service. They must be impersonal in their deportment. Star acting is as out of place in the Church as it is in the theatre.

Nothing is impromptu. Everything must be carefully planned and rehearsed. The mechanics should be either concealed or else symbolized so that they have meaning. The setting of this symbolic drama is the church. The religious atmosphere should be established as soon as a worshiper enters the building. All of the appointments should be checked to see that they enhance worship.

Corporate worship is not complete without a congregation. (The congregation should not be referred to as the "audience.") The form and content of this sacred drama must be within the intellectual and emotional grasp of the congregation. But corporate worship is capable of lifting people to heights which they could not otherwise attain. Its obligation is the spiritual uplift of humanity. The Church must not forget its obligation.

III

Music in Corporate Worship

IT SHOULD be clearly understood that music is in no way essential to worship. Indeed, the functions of corporate worship are complete without a note of music. Unless music has something to contribute to worship it is useless and may be actually harmful. It is better to have no music at all than the wrong music badly performed.

Music is permissible in corporate worship for two purposes. It may be an *act of worship,* or it may be an *aid to the act of worship.* Any other use of music in church that I can think of is an abuse.

MUSIC AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

History records that wherever there has been worship there has been music. Three thousand years ago the psalmist wrote, "O sing unto the Lord a new song" (Psalm 98). In this manner the Hebrews worshiped. Three thousand years have passed and the Psalms remain one of the great treasures of sacred song, unsurpassed in beauty and magnificence. They were the foundation of Hebrew worship. They are the foundation of Christian worship. Three thousand

ears and not a day has passed when the Psalms ave not been sung. Our Lord and his disciples ang (Matthew 26; 30). The early Christians ang until persecution drove Christian worship underground. Even then they sang, secretly. Once the persecution was lifted by the emperor Constantine (324) they burst into a paean of song. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (340-397), promptly founded a singing school. He wrote hymns in a new style—that of the Latin poets. They are still sung in Latin. Many of them have been translated into English. Few hymnals are without them.

It is only in modern civilization that spontaneous singing has become repressed. It has been said that the only place where modern man may burst into impromptu song is in the bath tub. It is rather too bad, for singing is a wholesome psychological tonic.

The early Christians sang the liturgy in its entirety. The whole congregation participated in Psalms, canticles, hymns, litanies, and responses. They are still the rightful property of the congregation. It is a plain evasion of duty to sit by idly and allow the choir to do the singing. Does anyone imagine that he need not pray because the minister is hired to do it for him? This sort of thinking is vicious. It reduces worship to the level of a superstition.

MUSIC AS AN AID TO THE ACT OF WORSHIP

From the first the Church has taught that the finest of human expression should be dedicated to the glory of God. Less than the best is sacrilege. Therefore great cathedrals have been built. They are filled with treasures of stained glass, sculpture, and painting. Great musicians have devoted their creative genius to the music of the Church. The grand total of sacred art is overwhelming in its magnificence.

But this very magnificence is at once a danger. When religion relies too much on professionalism it defeats itself. Worship becomes a mere esthetic experience. Cathedrals become museums. The liturgy becomes a show.

I have no quarrel with professionalism. Nothing could be more desirable than the right music performed in the right way by able, professional musicians. But the professional's talent is at the same time his temptation. I know from experience how much self-control it takes to refrain from the showmanship of the opera house. The musician who would serve the Church fittingly must learn a special technique, very different from that of the concert hall.

IV
Musical Association

ASSOCIATION of ideas is a capricious thing, often outrageous. Whenever I hear "Sweet Rosy O'Grady" I can see my father trying to play the tune on a violin and doing quite badly. (He was a minister, not a violinist.) I am glad it wasn't Brahms' "Requiem." Nothing is exempt from association. The most sublime moment may be spoiled by it. The most trivial thing may be hallowed.

Association plays a large role in worship. Utter perfection cannot be achieved in dealing with anything so unpredictable. But much has been done to control its effect and more can be done. Every one of the senses must be considered. The direction of one's thoughts is largely determined by what one sees, hears, feels, smells, and tastes.

Most people are fairly sight-conscious. Most people are aware of good or of bad church architecture. Almost anyone would be shocked to find a Mona Lisa as an altar piece. Or a Venus di Milo in the reredos. They are great art, but the one is secular, the other pagan. They belong in the art gallery, not in the church.

Most churchgoers do not become aware of the sense of touch unless the pews are back-breaking or the kneelers uncomfortable. It is difficult to pray when one's knees hurt. (It would no doubt be equally difficult if the pews were as luxurious as a chaise longue.)

A layman may or may not be taste-conscious, yet every clergyman knows the importance of selecting the right kind of bread and wine for the Holy Communion. People have been known to be sickened by a musty wafer or sour wine.

Of all of the senses, to me none is more subtle yet potent than smell. I once sat in a church near a lady who had a bag of freshly ground coffee. The odor was tantalizing but hardly inspiring to devotion. On the other hand, the merest whiff of church incense—no matter where it is—and, presto, I am in church! Everyone is familiar with the musty smell of a church that has been closed all week. It is sometimes jokingly referred to as the "church smell." It brings to mind something that is stale, stodgy, unused, and out-of-date. Not exactly conducive to worship!

None of the senses is more interwoven with association than hearing. Everyone likes certain pieces of music because of some fond recollection, especially of happy things associated with childhood. Often the music itself is inconse-

quential and would be forgotten were it not for the association. There is nothing wrong with this. It is perfectly natural. For purposes of critical analysis, however, one must be careful to distinguish between attraction to music and attraction to something associated with music. My affection for "Sweet Rosy O'Grady" is fond though amusing. Yet it would be a grave error in judgment if I were to place "Rosy" on a level with Schubert's "Ave Maria." My affection for "Rosy" is not lessened by knowing that it isn't great music. It is rather heightened. But I have no right to say to my children, "I insist that this is good music and I demand that you like it. And your children and their children must also like it."

The point to all of these observations on association is that the music of the Church cannot be considered static. Associations change. So does musical taste. What is good in one generation may be bad in another. Secular pieces are sometimes forgotten only to reappear later as proper Church melodies. The "Passion Chorale" was once a love song. "Orientis Partibus" was a semi-frivolous Christmas song about the animals at the Manger, the refrain being, "Hail, Sir Ass!" Palestrina's "Mass Without a Name" did not dare have a name for it was founded on a now-forgotten secular song. Even the

plainsong "Missa di Angelis" may have had a secular origin. In these cases the secular origins have long since been lost sight of and the compositions can now be considered Church music.

Bach's "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" is popular as an anthem, and rightfully so. It is becoming increasingly popular as a concert number, so much so that there is danger of its becoming secularized to the point that it will no longer be suitable for Church use. And I hate to think what might happen if some dance band decided to swing it!

We may state with certainty that music the connotation of which is secular should not be used in connection with corporate worship; but it is by no means easy to determine when the association is secular and when it is not. Professional musicians think of "Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee" as a part of Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony,* and therefore secular. Most people know it only as a hymn. To them it is churchly. A good rule is "When in doubt, discard." It is a painful rule to apply. You will not be popular if you apply it often.

Now, this business of association can be overdone. The appointments of the church can become so cluttered up with sensory stimuli that worship will be displaced by a pleasant esthetic experience. It is a question of propor-

tion, of good balance. The whole must not become less than one of its parts. However, worship can be destroyed by an unpleasant esthetic experience as easily as by a pleasant one. It is not uncommon for people to leave a church because the music is offensive. Everything that is definitely non-worshipful should be ruthlessly eliminated. This applies to music of which the connotation is secular as well as to music that is just plain bad. One can worship where there is no association at all, but he will find it practically impossible when surrounded by things that cry out, "You can't worship! As long as we are here we won't let you!"

V

How to Judge Worship-*Music*

MUSICAL criticism is the appraisal *of music* and its performance. Many people think that criticism is synonymous with fault-*finding*. It isn't. Criticism takes into account that which is good together with that which is bad *and* seeks to evaluate the whole.

The general belief is that musical criticism is something for the professional, that it is beyond the capacity of the layman. This is not true, either. Any person who listens to music thoughtfully can arrive at intelligent conclusions by following certain critical techniques which are easily learned.

Remember that the church is neither an opera house nor a concert hall. Each has its own technique and standards. A great opera singer is not necessarily a great concert singer. A great concert organist may be poor indeed at service playing. If a minister were to read the Scriptures in the manner of an actor playing Hamlet it would be incongruous. And a dramatic performance of the banquet scene from *Macbeth* with the ceremonial usages of the Holy Communion would be indescribably shocking.

Concert music is a pure art—music for its

own sake. Opera is a blend of music and drama. It can be judged only as a whole. Neither music nor drama can be judged apart from the other. In the Church we have a blending of music and corporate worship. Worship-music can be judged only by considering it as a part of the whole.

Do your critical thinking apart from the services. If you are critically alert during worship you are not worshiping. That is a bad habit to get into. Worship while you are at church and make your critical appraisal afterward.

Let us consider music that is an *aid to the act of worship*. First and last it must be considered as a means of enhancing worship. Ask yourself about the mood it produces. Does the music make it easier for you to worship? Your reaction may not be the same as your neighbors', but if the music is definitely right there will be a surprising unanimity of opinion. If it is definitely wrong, almost everyone will agree. Is your mind attracted to the music itself? If so, the music is surely wrong, regardless of how fine the composition or how well it is performed. Remember that great concert music will generally be poor worship-music.

Next think of the performance itself. You need not be an expert musician to answer these questions. What about precision? Do the sing-

ers enunciate the words clearly, as one voice? Do they start and stop together? Do the voices and organ keep together? In the organ solos can you hear all the notes distinctly, or is there a confusion of sound? Are the singers in tune? Is the organ in tune?

If the words are not distinct it may be the fault of the singers or it may be the fault of the acoustics. In a building which is too resonant, the speaking, singing, and playing will all sound indistinct. When this happens a reliable acoustical engineer should be consulted. If the organ sounds jumbled it may be the fault of the acoustics, or of the organist, or of the organ. Many an organist has been blamed when the instrument itself was at fault. Many organs are badly balanced. The treble may be clear while the bass is blurred; or the bass may drown out the treble; or it may be all middle with neither bass nor treble. If the tonal design is at fault then you should consult a reliable organ-builder.

What about blend? Do you hear individual singers above the others, or do you hear a welding of many voices into one? Does the organ blend with the voices? Does the organ blend with itself?

Nothing is more destructive of blend than the excessive use of the tremolo, either in the voices or in the organ. Nothing can make one

more performer-conscious and less worship-conscious. A singer who cannot control the wobble in his voice should not be in a church choir. Many organ tremolos are badly regulated. They are offensive even in concert playing. No harm can be done either to worship or to musical taste by omitting the tremolo altogether.

Are the mechanics of the performance in evidence? Do you see or hear the choir scrambling for music? Does the organist open and close the console with a bang? What about scuffling of feet, squirming, whispering, giggling, and other evidence of lack of decorum? Such conduct is pure carelessness and is inexcusable.

Let us ask about the music itself. Many of the questions are not hard to answer. Is the music too difficult? Are you conscious of a struggle on the part of the organist or of the choir; or does the music flow smoothly, evenly, and without apparent effort? Can the singers reach the extreme notes easily? Do the compositions seem too long or too short? Choirs often attempt music that is too difficult. A good critic attaches little if any importance to mere difficulty. The vital questions with him are, "Is it good music?" and, "Is it well performed?"

So far I have dealt with the mechanics of music and its interpretation. That evaluation is

objective and can be done in a wholly detached, impersonal manner. Now we come to the subjective phase of criticism. What about interpretation? This is largely a matter of taste. No two people are likely to agree entirely. Some performers have a mistaken notion about interpretation. With them interpretation becomes interpolation—interpolation of mannerisms. The true interpreter imparts the meaning of the music to the listener. He is a mediator between the composer and the audience. A serious composer seldom writes a composition solely to exploit a high note or a run. When a performer exaggerates the importance of such devices he ceases to become an interpreter. This is bad art, whether it be in the church, the opera house, or the concert hall. So ask yourself, "Did the performer make the meaning of the music clear?"

The most subtle distinction of all is that between good music and bad music. It may be consoling to the layman to know that the greatest critics often find themselves confused. Music considered great in one age may seem trite in another. One thing should be kept in mind, however. The purpose of worship is to elevate, not to degrade. The quality of the music used should be above rather than below the cultural level of the congregation. If the music seems to

be "over your head" the best plan is to raise your head.

Now let us consider music that is an *act of worship*. Here we have a unique set of conditions, totally unlike anything in the concert hall or opera house. The congregation is the performer and there is no such thing as an audience. Who then is to be the critic? And how shall the music be judged? The man in the pews must be his own critic. To perform and listen to oneself at the same time is difficult. To perform, listen, and worship at the same time is impossible. Nevertheless, you can take home some impressions from which you can formulate a very good criticism.

Did you think of the words while singing? Was your singing an act of worship, or just a musical pastime? Be honest with yourself.

You can easily recall certain things about the music. Was it too high or too low? Were you able to get your breath easily? Was there time enough after each stanza of a hymn for you to get a comfortable start on the next one? Was the tempo of the music a help or a hindrance? Did the congregation rise in time to start singing the hymns on time?

It is not easy to sing and at the same time to make an act of devotion. If you can't reach the high notes or get your breath, to do so will be

impossible. Therefore you have a right to be fussy about these things. The best pitch is the one most comfortable for the congregation, whether the soprano soloist likes it or not. The best tempo is the one at which the congregation sings with the greatest freedom, even though the organist might prefer it faster or slower.

Some hymns will be out of range for the congregation no matter where they may be pitched. There are others that provide no breathing-spaces at all, regardless of tempo. Such hymns had better be regarded as part of the choir repertoire, to be dealt with by singers who can be trained to vocal intricacies.

On the stage it is a breach of etiquette for one actor to steal the show from another. In the church it is equally bad form for the organist, the choir, or the minister for that matter, to rob the congregation of its rightful part in corporate worship. Hymns, chants, and responses are parts usually assigned to the congregation, and to the congregation they belong. The anthem belongs to the choir, the prelude to the organist. Here the musicians may do as they like. But with the hymns they must play a part secondary to the congregation. Do your choir and organist do this?

It will be found helpful and practical to appoint someone whose judgment is respected

to sit in a pew occasionally for the purpose of doing nothing but listen and take notes. An honest, detached opinion can be valuable, although it may be upsetting, especially if it affects some of your pet traditions. Congregations get into bad habits of singing just as singers do. They develop mannerisms in worship. An occasional housecleaning will be a good thing if they can take it in good spirit. Dragging the hymns is a common fault and the congregation is seldom aware of it. Actually the hymns can be sung more easily at a faster pace. Some congregations go in the other direction and race the hymns. They, too, would be happier if they took a more leisurely tempo. Your official listener can be of great help under such circumstances.

VI
Musical Interpretation

TO INTERPRET is to make clear the meaning. Music should make sense just as words do. If you do not like Milton's *Paradise Lost* it may be because the words do not make sense to you. If you do not like a Brahms symphony it may be because the music doesn't make sense to you. What you need is an interpreter. You may be sure that the meaning is there. Probably just as soon as you begin to grasp the thought you will begin to like the poem or the music. To understand a work of large extent may take repeated hearings. On the other hand, if a composition is inconsequential there will be little or nothing to interpret. You may like it on first hearing, but you will soon tire of it.

No interpretation will be effective if the music is of poor quality, or unsuitable for worship.

No interpretation will be effective if the music is too difficult. Even the greatest artist has his limitations. Part of his greatness is knowing what the limitations are and never going beyond them. Many choirs attempt music that is too difficult. The results are worse than ineffectual. They are revolting.

The interpretation cannot be effective until the music is thoroughly learned. Skilled professionals know this. A good many amateurs do not.

If the music exceeds the vocal range of the singers the interpretation will be ineffective. If the music is too high it should be transposed to a lower key. If it is too low, raise the pitch. If it is both too high and too low, do not use it. Wishful thinking will not extend vocal range. Fit the music to the voice, not the voice to the music.

The first step, then, in interpretation is to choose good music suitable for worship. The second is to limit yourself to music that is well within the grasp of the performers. The third is to learn it thoroughly.

Worship-music is not unlike incidental music in a drama. In the theatre you go to see a play. You are not there to listen to music. If the music takes your attention away from the play, it spoils the play. That is bad art. When you go to church you go to worship, not to listen to music. Your attention must not be drawn away from worship. The music must allow your thoughts to go beyond the choir loft to the Infinite.

It may be asked, "If no one listens to the music does it matter how it is performed?" It

matters greatly. Two things must be remembered. First, anyone performing music in church must make of his performance an act of devotion. Otherwise it is mockery. Your performance must be *honor paid to God.* Nothing less than the best is fit to offer. Second, nothing can destroy the mood of worship more completely and lastingly than bad music carelessly performed.

What, then, should the performer strive for? First of all, for precision. This is a musical virtue that anyone can acquire if he so desires. The organist must rehearse his music until every note is correctly played. Nothing less will suffice. The choir should sing as one voice. Any group of singers can achieve precision. No group has it automatically. It can be acquired only by careful rehearsal.

Few choirs pay enough attention to enuncia tion. There is a school of thought which holds that atmosphere is the principal thing and that the words are not so very important. I find myself in sharp disagreement. Words themselves have worship value. Then why should they be disregarded? Words and music welded together have double value.

Clarity is akin to precision, but it is slightly different. The organist may play the notes accurately enough yet they may sound blurred

out in the nave. He may have to separate the notes somewhat or take a slower pace in order to compensate for the acoustical vagaries of the building and to have each note ring clear, throughout the church. Enunciation will be clear only if the words are heard distinctly by the people in the pews. Clarity can be attained only by painstaking experiment and practice.

Some people believe that interpretation means a continuous change in tempo and dynamics; in other words that the music must always be getting slower or faster, louder or softer. These devices are means to an end, not an end in themselves. Their only value is to give meaning to the music. Overworked, they make music meaningless. A celebrated musician once said that about ninety per cent of expression consists of no expression at all. Nothing can make people more conscious of the choir than constant and meaningless changes in tempo and dynamics. Nothing can make one more conscious of the organist than constant and meaningless changes in registration; or the pumping of the Swell pedal.

Music for the church may be interpreted in a far simpler manner than concert music. A good church performance would very likely be a dull concert performance. On the other hand, a good concert interpretation will almost surely

be too showy for the church. My own procedure in interpreting is first to learn the music in a strict, mathematical fashion. This would not do for music to be performed either in church or in the concert hall. It would be lifeless, therefore meaningless. I regard it, however, as an essential step in developing precision. The next step is to give the music what shading it needs to make the meaning clear. Once the meaning is clear the music will be vital, and that is where one should stop. There is always the temptation to over-interpret. Give more time to precision, less to so-called expression.

We now come to the perplexing question of balance. It is essential in a concert choral group, but with a small volunteer choir it is almost impossible to attain it. Attendance is irregular and changes in personnel frequent. What, then, can be done about balance? I offer this thought. Attain strength in precision and your weakness in balance may pass unnoticed. There is a goodly quantity of easy choir music that is effective even if the parts are not perfectly balanced. It is well-written and churchly. Unison music is appearing in increasing quantities. It is highly effective and choirs should use more of it. Let no one think he is too good to sing in unison for it is far from easy. It has tricks of its own that have to be mastered. Descants are

effective too, and in the singing of them balance is not so important as it is in more serious music. A soprano descant may be light or full, depending upon the singers available. It will be effective as long as the principal melody is not covered up. Most of the published descants are too high for average singers. They will be easier and will sound better if transposed lower.

I do not like the "watch me" type of conducting. Of course the singers should watch the conductor, but they should know ahead of time what he is going to do. Waving of arms, swaying, grimacing—this is a prima donna type of conducting that is entirely out of place in church. Proper choir conducting will be all but unseen by the congregation. If the composition has been adequately rehearsed the singers will know what is to be done in the way of tempo and dynamics. The slightest motion of the director's hand will suffice.

Church music may be effectively interpreted without visible direction. In fact, it is often necessarily interpreted so when the organist is also the director. Ritards, accelerandos, holds, crescendos, diminuendos, breathing-points—all of these can be carefully timed in rehearsal and plainly marked on the copies. The exact points for rising and sitting down should also be indicated. It takes time and patience to become

adept at choir-singing. There need be no uncertainty about what is expected of the choir, however. Such interpretation might be too matter-of-fact for concert use, but it can be highly effective in church. Because it is impersonal it is often the very best kind.

What about tone quality? Volumes have been written on this subject. Most of it is too technical for a book such as this. I think a good deal of time and effort has been wasted on tone quality by choir-directors. You are not running a voice studio. You will not have time to train your choir as a voice teacher would train a private student. There is more to tone quality than just singing scales and arpeggios on "Ah." If you are not an experienced voice teacher you might do more harm than good. The final proof of tone quality is the ability to sing words beautifully. This is the simplest and most practical approach. Train your choir to sing words beautifully, clearly, with precision and unity, and the tone quality will almost take care of itself.

Hearty singing is not synonymous with shouting. A *fortissimo* is not a bellow. Neither does *pianissimo* mean timidity plus apathy. Such practice is bad vocalization as well as bad team work. Develop accurate, clean-cut enunciation and your singing, whether it be soft or loud, will have vitality.

To summarize, I would proceed as follows in training a small, volunteer choir:

First, I would strive to achieve the utmost in precision, clarity, and enunciation.

Second, I would make my interpretation as simple and as direct as possible. I would use rhythmic and dynamic shading sparingly. When in doubt, I would err on the austere side.

Third, I would then devote what time might be available to such things as balance, blend, tone-color, and to that intangible something known as "feeling."

VII
Non-Liturgical Music

THIS BOOK is concerned primarily with music in its relation to corporate worship. It is here that the religious arts find their highest expression, and of all of the functions of the Church, corporate worship should receive the most careful attention.

When I was a small boy I made no distinction between the Sunday morning service, a church supper, an organ recital, and a Sunday School cantata. In my mind they were all "Church." I believe that this is typical of a rather general state of confused thinking.

Though, as I have pointed out, the highest and the most important service of the Church is corporate worship there are many other functions that take place in the church building which are a definite part of the Church's program. It is necessary to keep in mind that each of these functions is different from the other. Therefore, they require different music. It is a question of fitness, of good taste. One doesn't wear a red flannel shirt with a tail coat.

Corporate worship is impersonal. The individual is absorbed in the whole. No Church should disregard this kind of worship. There

is another kind of worship, however, that is also valuable. It is informal, and highly personal. Prayer meetings, Sunday Schools, revivals, missions, evangelistic services—and many other services like them—are a definite part of the program of the Church. It is of the utmost importance that one remember that these services are personal, while corporate worship is impersonal. Music that is fitting for one will very likely be altogether inappropriate for the other. There should be two totally different sets of music employed. People will be happier and better served if they accept this fact and act accordingly.

Gospel songs, revival hymns, songs of religious sentiment, spirituals, religious folksongs —these all had their origin in the informal, personal type of service. This is their natural habitat and this is where they are used to best advantage. They are not only inappropriate but ineffective in corporate worship. The rules of good manners usually have a practical background. If you eat mashed potatoes with a knife you may cut your mouth.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS

I can conceive of the Sunday School in no other way than as an approach to the Church and its services. The child should be instructed

so that he understands and appreciates the Church. He should be taught correct habits and techniques of worship. He should know the etiquette of the Church. I live in a college community. It is common knowledge that the average student displays an appalling ignorance of these refinements. Such knowledge should be basic. To talk about worship-music does little good until people know something about worship.

WEDDINGS

Organists regale each other with tales of outrageous things they have been asked to do at weddings. On the surface, these requests are funny. Actually, they are a lamentable display of ignorance. A church wedding is a civil contract to which the Church adds its blessing. It is a sacrilege to turn the House of God into the setting for a display of maudlin sentiment. Of all American vulgarities, I can think of none worse than the behavior of some weddings of which I have been told.

Before we can expect much improvement, an enormous amount of education will be necessary. Churches will have to adopt definite rules which state what may be done and what may not at weddings. The clergy and musicians will have to be given authority to carry out

the rules. They will have to be tactful but firm in enforcing them.

The Roman Catholics have specific rules about all the music of their Church. There is a black list of music that may not be used. These regulations are wise and reasonable. Every Protestant should take a look at the *White List of the Society of St. Gregory.** And be sure to read the famous *Moto Propriu.*

To be really effective Church rules would have to be nationwide in scope. Local rules are too easy to set aside. It is hard to say "No" to a charming bride or an insistent mama. The more remote the final authority, the more impersonal, the easier to enforce the rules without offending.

As I write these paragraphs I only hope that some day someone may write a suite of wedding-music that will be both great and fitting, and that it may become so popular that no one will want to use anything else. Then there need be no question of rules. So far it hasn't happened.

Everything that has been said about weddings will apply to funerals as well. Church funerals, however, are not quite so flagrant as weddings because they are not written up in the society columns.

* I. Fisher & Bro., New York.

SACRED CONCERT MUSIC

Most people, including many well-trained musicians, make no distinction between music which is intended to be a part of corporate worship and sacred music which is written for concert performance. The fault lies not with them but with their education. Few music schools have made such a distinction. Few of them have taught anything about music for the Church.

A bit of reflection will show that there is a vast difference between the two kinds of music, and a not particularly subtle one, either. Worship-music is functional. It is an integral part of corporate worship. Take away worship and the music becomes rather pointless. Sacred concert music, like any other kind of concert music, is an end in itself. The fact that it may have sacred words makes no difference at all. A sacred drama does not become worship merely because it is biblical. Worship-music, by and large, would be uninteresting in the concert hall, and sacred concert music is almost surely a misfit in corporate worship.

This does not mean that there is no place in the Church for sacred concert music. The Church has always sponsored the sacred arts. It is right and fitting that such music be heard

in church. But, let it be apart from the services of corporate worship.

Bach's B Minor Mass is considered by many to be the greatest musical composition ever written. Certainly it is one of the greatest. Notwithstanding, it would be impossible to use it as a liturgical mass on account of its great length. To be heard at its best it should be performed as Bach wrote it to be performed—by an extremely well-routined chorus and orchestra and with consummate artists as soloists. Few churches have such resources at their command. Handel's oratorios were written for concert performance in an opera house by an opera company. They are really operas given without scenery, costumes, or acting. Mendelssohn's oratorios were written for choral festivals. Countless cantatas have been written for performance by church choirs in churches, but definitely *not as a part of corporate worship.*

Most of the world's great organ music has been written by church organists for performance on church organs. But again, an organ recital in a church is not *corporate worship.*

Certain excerpts from these masterpieces may well be used as worship-music, especially at the offertory, which represents a brief pause in the course of the service. In general, however, it is a safe rule to leave sacred concert music for

concert performance, and worship-music for corporate worship.

HYMN-SINGS

The hymn-sing is not a form of worship at all. Yet it can serve a very useful purpose in the educational program of the Church. It has proved stimulating to congregational singing. It is an excellent way of learning new hymns and provides the opportunity to give instruction about worship-music. It is also a good way to give people the chance to sing some of the old favorites that may not be suited to corporate worship. Sometimes several churches combine for a hymn festival which is a hymn-sing on a large scale. The Hymn Society of America* has much good information about hymns and festivals, and many practical suggestions for the management of the latter.

* Address the Secretary, The Hymn Society of America. 2268 Sedgewick Ave., New York, N. Y.

VIII
Music in the Small Church

BECAUSE a church is small and the budget limited it does not follow that the music must be inferior. Indeed, many things are possible in a chapel that would be ineffective in a cathedral.

The very worst thing a small parish can do is to imitate a large church. There are imposing ceremonials for the cathedral. There is great music for such occasions. It is grand in its place. But it requires better than average singers. There must be many of them and they must be adequately rehearsed. Moreover, a large and well-appointed edifice is essential both for freedom of movement and effective acoustics. With less than these such music is bound to suffer. Grand opera done on a small scale with a handful of singers is absurd. By its very nature it must be done on a large scale. When a small choir imitates the musical program of a large city church the result is a cheap concert. Nevertheless, a small choir can do effective work if it will stay within its limitations.

A small church is bound to have limitations. The chancel is sure to be small, and the sanctuary restricted. The organ will be small. It may

be but a reed organ. Unless the parish is wealthy (few are) there can be no paid singers. The choir has to be made up of volunteers, with the attendant uncertainties. The organist may be a volunteer. Often there can be no choir at all. Even, sometimes, no organist.

Limitations are no cause for wailing. A string quartet is limited, but the composer does not weep because of it. Rather, he accepts the limitations as a challenge. He doesn't have to write for a string quartet unless he wants to. Most composers enjoy writing for just such small groups. The tiniest parish can have a musical program that is dignified, devotional, and appropriate; nor need the program be costly.

Your first step in planning music for a small church is to accept once and for all the fact that you cannot have the things you saw at the Spring choir festival. You haven't a cathedral and your Sunday morning service is not a music festival. You cannot have six different choirs, in multi-colored vestments, singing antiphonally up and down the aisles, with echo amens accompanied by harp and chimes. Your facilities are limited and no amount of yearning can make them otherwise.

Think again of the relation of a string quartet to a symphony orchestra. Each is perfectly balanced, proportioned to the kind of music which

it plays. Worship-music is so scaled. Some of it requires large resources as does the symphony. Some of it is like chamber-music and is heard to best advantage when done by a small group in a small building. A small choir—even a volunteer one—can attain a precision and unanimity that is difficult with a large chorus. The services can have an intimacy impossible in a cathedral. The solution of the problem, then, is to find the kind of music that is within your limitations, then to use that kind exclusively.

IX

The Choir in the Small Church

I HAVE IN MIND the kind of choir that is to be found in thousands of small churches. There are one or two dozen voices, all amateur, all volunteer, few of them trained. Often there is no singer to whom a solo can be assigned. There is not a very good balance of parts—too few tenors, sometimes none. Attendance is irregular. The voices are restricted in range. Ability to read music is but fair. Musicians often display an air of hauteur toward such a choir. "Impossible!" they say. It is not impossible at all. Such a group can make a real contribution to the services of the Church. But it must be sincere, devout, and willing to work. The singers must have the right music and the right interpretation.

The besetting sin of most volunteer choirs is too much thinking that is wishful and too little that is realistic. There is no harm in wishful thinking so long as one remains sufficiently realistic to stay within bounds. A church choir rehearses once a week and sings every Sunday. A festival chorus can devote an entire year to the preparation of a single work. A mouse should not challenge a bear to a duel. Neither should

a volunteer choir attempt to compete with a festival chorus.

The man in the pews does not care very much whether the music is easy or difficult, whether it is in unison, in two parts or in eight. What does matter is a good rendition. The volunteer choir is seldom able sufficiently to rehearse difficult or complex works. Such music had better be left to the festival chorus. Choirs often attach too much importance to mere complexity. This is a species of vanity, and should be eliminated from their thinking. Sing simple music and do it well, and your work will be musical and devotional. Your reputation will soar.

I do not like the term "lead the congregational singing." Too often it merely means "drown out the congregation." I prefer to say "assist in congregational singing." The choir is a part of the congregation and when the congregation sings the choir should be *a part of it,* not *apart from it.*

Bellowing is unnecessary. It is better if the choir sings easily and naturally, with such precision, vitality, and clarity of enunciation that the congregation can't go wrong. But every hymn, every chant, every response will have to be carefully rehearsed. Particular care should be given to enunciation. The careful musician

always rehearses *all* music, no matter how easy or familiar. He is but a pseudo-musician who thinks himself too good to perform easy music.

Until a congregation acquires a great deal of confidence it is better if the choir sings the hymns in unison. The choir is of more help that way. The pitch should be whatever is best for the congregation, even though the choir might prefer it otherwise. Once the congregation begins to sing with assurance, the choir may do interesting things in the way of descants. But see to it that the congregation does not stop singing in order to listen.

As its own special part in the service there is much that a volunteer choir can contribute in the way of introits, anthems, responses, and the like. These contributions, however, *must* be regarded as *aids to the act of worship,* not as concert numbers to regale the listeners. Nothing of secular association can be admitted. The choir must get away from the idea of showing off and settle down to the sober business of developing a devotional atmosphere. The choir loft is no place for an exhibitionist.

Vestments help in maintaining decorum and a devotional attitude. (It is a good plan to use the vestments exclusively for the services of the Church and not to loan them for secular purposes.)

That the singers may go into the choir loft in the right spirit it is well to enforce a short period of quiet both before and after the service. "Silence when vested" is a good rule.

In a large church the choir room is often quite a distance from the chancel. The choir has to get from one place to the other. The choir processional is an orderly way to accomplish a mechanical necessity. However, it must be remembered that a processional is one of the externals of worship. It must contribute to the devotional content of the service. If it degenerates into a parade, something to be looked at, it becomes a detriment and it is indefensible.

When the choir room is but a few steps from the chancel a sung processional becomes absurd. It is over almost as soon as it begins. Taking a circuitous route through the church is parading for the sake of a parade. If you must have a processional, however, make it as little like a march as possible. Swaying of hips and tramping of feet are out of place. Some choirs make no attempt to march in time with the music. This is all right as long as the result is dignified. It is bad if it turns into a display of fancy and assorted waddling. It is simpler and far more dignified if the choir enters the chancel silently and goes directly to the stalls, taking no more time than is actually needed. Let the singers

remain standing for the opening hymn. Properly done, this procedure can be extremely devotional. The recessional, done in reverse order, allows the service to end in a mood of quiet contemplation. This is certainly more desirable than to have a burst of organ music followed by a burst of conversation.

X

The Organist in the Small Church

THE ORGAN was originally admitted to the church to assist the singers. This is still its principal function. The organist who can play hymns and simple accompaniments well fulfils about ninety-five per cent of his duties. The very simplicity of hymn playing is something over which many trip and fall. To play the notes just as written, accurately and without embellishment is sufficient. The hymns should be timed exactly as the singers time them, not a little bit ahead or behind. When the singers pause for breath the organ should pause also. Between one verse and another the man in the pews likes to have time to swallow, take his breath, and find the place for the next verse. The organist should allow time for him to do so. Often a whole measure's pause between two verses is not too much.

If the congregation drags, playing half a beat ahead will not lead them into a better tempo. If they sing too fast, playing behind will not correct it. Give out the hymn in the exact tempo you wish and play it with accuracy and vitality. This helps more than any other method to overcome faulty tempi. Listen

to the way any good symphony orchestra plays "The Star-Spangled Banner."

I will have more to say later about registration. Suffice it to say here that the organ should neither drown the singers nor be drowned by them. The thing to strive for is a blend and cohesion such as one hears in the choirs of a symphony orchestra. Of course, one cannot always achieve perfection, especially with an organ of limited resources. But there is always a best way. Once that has been found, stay by it. Even if the organ is admittedly bad, the organist is still duty-bound to make the best of it. It is bad ethics to make public display of an organ's defects.

Preludes and postludes are not strictly necessary in a small church. It takes but a few minutes for the congregation to assemble or to leave, and anything lengthy is out of place. Let brevity be the rule. Often a hymn or a chorale will suffice. Remember that the prelude is to prepare for worship, the offertory to sustain worship, the postlude to preserve the memory of worship.

Improvisation is an art in itself and a difficult one. The amateur organist will do better to put it out of his mind entirely. Modulating from one number to the next is another thing to forget about. Concert artists do not find it

necessary to modulate from one selection to another and it is no more essential in the church than in the concert hall.

If you have nothing but a reed organ you can still do very good accompanying. You can still play simple music that is devotional. This humble little instrument should not be despised.

If you have one of the several electronic instruments now on the market it can be satisfactory if you use enough self-control in the matter of selecting your registration. Stick to the plain-sounding combinations which will blend with voices. It is a temptation to use the bizarre effects which these instruments produce so easily. They may tickle the ear but they are hardly devotional.

In the church a piano is not a very satisfactory instrument. It is too much associated with the home, the school, the concert hall. However, if you have nothing else it will have to do. The temptation will be to use concert music. The trouble is that everybody knows it as concert music and you will be unable to develop a good, devotional atmosphere. The best thing is to use hymns, chorales, and other music associated solely with the church.

Simplicity, accuracy, good taste, unobtrusiveness—these things furnish the keynote to good service playing.

XI

Congregational Singing in the Small Church

THE SMALLER the church the more the congregation must do. Often a choir is hardly more than a gesture. Solos and anthems are out of the question. Frequently there is no choir at all. Does it follow that such a church must do without music, or, at best, have nothing but hymns? Not at all. Any congregation that is willing to work at it can develop a musical service that is richly devotional and musically satisfying.

Hymns, of course, will constitute the bulk of the music, at least for a long time. The hymn program will have to be more varied than is necessary where there is a choir. This means that people will have to learn some new tunes.

Human nature seems to have a certain inertia about learning anything new. However, once something new is learned, almost everyone takes pride in it. I have observed that by the time a new hymn has been in use for a year or two people begin to refer to it as "one of the good old hymns."

There has been much discussion about the

best way to teach new hymns. I am not prepared to offer the final solution. This much is certain. You do not learn new hymns by talking about them. You learn them by singing them. The tune must be made familiar, and the people must then be able to fit the words to it. Only one way is known to make any tune familiar. It must be heard over and over again. The organist can prepare the way for a new hymn by playing it often as a prelude or an offertory. If there is a choir, it can help greatly by singing the new tune as a choir selection. If the congregation could be induced to attend an occasional hymn practice much could be learned in a comparatively short time. I doubt if many congregations would do it. A short rehearsal before or after the service helps, and, if it is done briefly and with dignity, it need not be out of harmony with the service. Some ministers have occasionally turned over the sermon period to the congregation for singing.

I pass along my own procedure for what it is worth. I prefer to take about five minutes at the beginning of the service hour. I announce that a new hymn is going to be sung, that I will play it through twice, and that after the second time the congregation will sing the first stanza. Then I play it through a third time and we repeat the first stanza. Now we can consider

the service as having begun and we sing the whole hymn. It generally doesn't go too well the first time. The congregation is self-conscious and sometimes there is a bit of grumbling. For the remainder of the service I use very familiar hymns to offset the feeling of unrest. The next Sunday and the one following I post the new hymn, and by the third Sunday it usually goes very well. After that I make it a point to use it frequently enough that it may not be forgotten.

If the congregation is to sing at all, obviously the hymn must be pitched within its range. Organists often pitch the hymn to suit the choir rather than the congregation. When there is no choir, he is bound to consider the congregation first. Otherwise there will be no singing at all. I have heard a good deal of theorizing about the range of congregational singing. I don't think theorizing is the way to get the answer. The most direct way is to find out by actual observation just how high and how low your particular congregation can go. Once you know that, stay strictly within the limits. If you play out of their range, they can't sing. A congregation for which I formerly played had a range of C to D; another, C to E flat. Very likely you cannot hear from the choir loft just what the congregation is doing. In this event get an accomplice to sit in a pew and

take notes. In most cases you will find there is a definite point above which the voices simply drop out.

If you want your congregation to sing with comfort you must consider the breathing-spaces. Few people outside of trained singers know anything about breath management. Consequently, it takes a congregation longer to take a breath than it does a well-trained choir. Every organist is accustomed to observing the holds at the phrase ends of the chorales. They were put there in order that the singers might have time to breathe. The same holds can be applied to all hymns.

In many churches chanting is not in very good repute. People would like chanting better if they were used to a better system of pointing. Pointing is the rhythmical and melodic treatment of the words. The "rattle-count" system heard so frequently is certainly not very musical and often it distorts the words until they are beyond recognition. Chanting is merely tuned speech. Approached from this standpoint it can be musical, interesting, and devotional. Good pointing is difficult with the abbreviated printing used in most hymnals. After many years of experimenting I have found that when a chant is printed in full with a note for every syllable, just as any other kind of music is

printed, people find it very easy to sing. Above all, there must be precision in the enunciation. Without it, there is no excuse for chanting.

More churches should learn to chant the Psalms. They were written to be sung. Until quite recent times, no one ever thought of doing them in any other way. They are not hard to chant if a congregation will work at it a little. There are available selections of the Psalms fully noted so that there need be no doubt as to the pointing.

In addition to hymns and chants there are a number of musical responses available which a congregation would find quite singable. Appearing now are a few unison anthems which a congregation can sing. Another effective form of congregational singing is the litany. This consists of prayers sung by a solo voice to which the congregation replies "Lord have mercy" or some similar phrase. The custom is not common in the West but all the Eastern Churches use the choral litany. People are invariably impressed with it when they visit the Russian Orthodox Church.

All in all there is a wide variety of music which can be sung by almost any congregation without the aid of a choir. Any church, no matter how small, can have a rich and varied musical service if the congregation so wills.

XII
Hints for the Organist

FIND OUT what the range of your congregation is and, when playing hymns, stay within it.

Find out how your organ sounds from the pews. Have someone else play it for you while you sit back and listen. Use this method to find the best registration for accompaniments. If you suspect that there is a tone lag in the organ which requires you to play a bit ahead of the singers, check thoroughly from the pews. I have an idea that a good many organists feel that there is a tone lag when there isn't.

Keep a notebook in which you can transpose hymns into suitable keys. I regard this notebook as extremely important. It may take a little time at the start but you will soon have an indispensable aid. Changing keys at sight is tricky, even if you transpose well. I have, on a few occasions, reached the middle of a hymn and then discovered that I had forgotten the key in which I was playing! A notebook would have helped me to avoid those disconcerting fixes. Leave room enough on each page for several transpositions. The tune St. Anne is in the key of C in many hymnals. You should

have it in B flat and A as well. If there is a tune you plan to use for a prelude it will be very handy if you transpose it up a fifth. This will give variety in key. Arrange your notebook alphabetically by tunes.

I have advised against improvisation unless one has had extensive training in it. In lieu of an improvised prelude try this plan. First play the hymn as written, *mezzo-forte* with pedals. Next, play the melody on a solo stop, the rest on an accompanying combination. Then, play the hymn an octave higher and without pedals, on a soft string stop. An average hymn can be played this way in about three minutes, long enough for a prelude or an offertory in a small church. To use the hymn as a postlude, start softly and build up. If you have the hymn transposed to the dominant key, play one verse that way, then return to the tonic. It adds a bit of variety. In the chapter "Hints for the Choirmaster" I describe a similar method for turning a hymn into a hymn-anthem.

Remember that it takes a congregation longer to get ready to sing than it takes a choir. The congregation hasn't been trained to prepare the music ahead of time and to rise at a given signal. Therefore, if there is no choir give quite a bit more introduction than is needed for a choir. This is especially necessary for chants,

which are usually started with almost no introduction.

A congregation unassisted by a choir is always uncertain about when to stand up. Ordinarily it follows the choir. In my church we have a system which works well. We have an official "stander-upper." He sits down front where he can see the organist. At a signal from the console he stands up and the congregation follows his lead.

In playing hymns you do not need the pedal all of the time. Do without it frequently.

Breathing-spaces between phrases and verses need careful study. Usually the organist is ready to go ahead before the congregation is. Therefore, give it more time than you feel is needed. In many hymns a whole measure's rest between verses is not too much. You will be surprised how often two extra beats between phrases will be just about right. Try all of the familiar L.M. (long meter) tunes in your hymnal. Many of them, such as Old Hundredth, will sound fine with two extra beats at the end of every phrase. Try the C.M. (common meter) hymns. Tunes like St. Anne can have two extra beats after the first and third phrases. S. M. tunes like Williams need extra time at the end of the third phrases. Many of the well-known tunes were originally written in a free kind of

rhythm which allowed easy breathing. Editors have rewritten them in strict metrical form. Personally, I prefer to have the congregation sing comfortably, even if the metronome is unhappy about it.

Every organist should have a copy of the English Hymnal. It contains many fine hymns and chorales that are not familiar in this country. They make excellent preludial material. Short polyphonic motets, such as Palestrina's "O Bone Jesu" can be played as soft organ music, and they create a splendid atmosphere.

Don't be afraid to simplify accompaniments. Many printed accompaniments are unplayable on the organ, and ineffective as well. An example is the solo "The Lord is My Light" by Allitson. It will be much more effective if reduced to simple chords almost like a hymn tune.

I can't get too angry with people for liking the chimes. I like them myself occasionally. But I don't want them for a steady diet. Perhaps the most dignified way of using them is to play the melody of a chorale, quite slowly. If you go too fast the notes will blur.

In selecting hymns and organ music avoid repetition of key and meter if you can. It causes a certain monotony that is easily felt though the cause is often overlooked. Plan all of your music programs a long time ahead. In this way

you can maintain a good balance between the new and the familiar, between that which is austere and that which is popular.

In planning your music keep the season in mind. If your church has a formal plan of Lections, keep in mind the Gospel or Lesson for the day.

XIII

Hints for the Choirmaster

WHERE there is a volunteer choir you must face the fact that attendance is going to be irregular and unpredictable. By all means plan your music a long time ahead but keep in rehearsal a good supply of emergency music. You should have ready at all times some unison anthems, some hymn-anthems, music for soprano, alto, and bass, and some for treble voices. There is a goodly number of them all in my lists.

It is better to rehearse six numbers for ten minutes each than to spend half an hour each on two. They will be better learned and the singers more confident.

Always rehearse the hymns. The tunes are easy enough, but it takes practice to sing the words with precision and clean enunciation. Don't let the choir bellow hymns, and don't strain the voices by using too high a pitch. Remember that you are developing devotional atmosphere, not a brilliant concert performance. Sing much in unison. Many singers think unison singing is easy—too easy. It isn't. It has tricks of its own and it takes careful rehearsing to obtain a good blend of voices.

Have new hymns in rehearsal a long time before you plan to teach them to the congregation. Use them ahead of time for hymn-anthems or for responses. This will help greatly in making them seem familiar to the congregation.

I have recommended the English Hymnal for the organist. It is equally useful for the choir. There are many beautiful things which are unknown in this country. Your choir can make good use of them. There are some fine descants also. Some of the descants are rather too high for average choirs. If you are going to use them, the accompaniments had better be transposed down a bit.

Here is a simple plan for making an anthem out of a hymn. Change the voice combinations for each verse. Let one verse be sung by a solo voice or by sopranos in unison. Do another one in harmony, possibly without accompaniment. If the last verse is strong, it will be very effective sung in unison, *forte*. Now, if you want still more variety take your pencil and notebook and transpose as follows: First, take the last phrase of the hymn and write in a fifth higher. This is to provide an interlude that will establish the new key. Now write the entire hymn a fifth higher. Then let either the altos or the basses sing the melody, which will now be in their range. Only the organist will need

the transposition, as the singers know the melody. To get back to the original key, use the last phrase in the tonic as an interlude. You will be surprised how much freshness a simple treatment like this will provide.

When the congregation begins to sing with confidence, you can introduce the use of descants. In hymn-anthems descants can add a lot of interest and the voice arrangements can be varied to fit the nature of the choir. I have published a number of things with two descants—one for high voices and one for low. They can be put together in many different ways to add variety.

Occasionally it is interesting to have the tenors sing the melody of a hymn, while the sopranos sing the tenor part. With a choir large enough to divide parts you can get a rich, multi-voiced arrangement by letting some of the sopranos sing the tenor part and the baritones the melody. Likewise, some of the altos can sing the bass part. A seven part effect is given. But don't have any of the basses sing the alto part. You will find that you get unmusical inversions of the chords if you do.

If you find yourself without tenors, as is frequently the case, you can do a good many things that will sound quite well. Often it is possible for anyone who has had training in

harmonization to change the alto part a bit so that the harmony sounds satisfactory without any tenor. Sometimes you can let a few sopranos—light ones—sing the tenor part (an octave higher of course). The result is often an effective obligato which fills up the harmony. To an arrangement for soprano and alto you can generally add the bass part from the original mixed-voice version. It may be necessary to doctor the words somewhat, unless the two editions are identical. Sometimes the tenor part can be turned into a composite affair for altos and baritones, the altos singing the higher notes, the baritones the lower ones. But don't try to improvise this arrangement. Write it out. When not doing the pseudo-tenor part each voice can return to its regular notes. Believe it or not, I have done parts of Bach's B Minor Mass this way, and the listeners were not aware that there were next to no tenors in the chorus.

Any directions which you wish to mark on the copies should be done boldly and legibly. Don't try having the singers mark the copies in rehearsal. They make astonishing mistakes and their orthography is weird to say the least.

The use of an occasional plainsong hymn as a choir number is a sound educational policy and will add diversity to your program. People would like this type of music better if they

heard it more often. There are some lovely plainsongs in the English Hymnal. The only difficulty is that they are written in the plainsong notation. If you take a little time to figure it out it isn't difficult to read.

There are a few other points for the director of a small choir to bear in mind. Use rhythmic shading sparingly. Use dynamic shading sparingly. Sudden changes in rhythm or dynamics draw attention to the performance and detract from worship.

If metrical music (music with regular time signature) is being sung, let your departures from strict time be for the following purposes: (1) To round out the phrase endings; (2) to provide adequate breathing-spaces.

When singing non-metrical music (free rhythm) remember that the flexibility is usually written into the music. There is almost always a beat-unit, frequently the quarter note or eighth note. The beat-unit should be maintained at a rather uniform tempo.

Solo passages are likely to draw attention to personalities. It is often better to have group singing throughout.

Conceal the mechanics as much as possible. If it can be arranged, the organist and the director should be out of sight of the congregation.

Rehearse standings, sittings, page-turns, and

the rest, until they are silent and unobtrusive. Have music, chairs, and everything else, ready beforehand. Distribute the music in its proper order so that no hunting is needed. If you haven't regular music racks let the singers carry their copies in and out. The worst place to put music is on the seats. The sight of a choir turning around, stooping, and picking up music from the chairs is grotesque.

XIV

The Accompanimental Voices of the Organ

THE ACCOMPANIMENTAL virtues are transparency, support, and reticence. An instrument which is to be used for accompanying singers must have these properties. It must have transparency, otherwise the singers will be covered up. It must have sufficient body to give support. Without support the singers lose confidence. It must have a certain reticence, otherwise it will draw attention away from the singers and therefore cease to be accompanimental.

Many of the voices one finds in present day organs are unsuitable for accompanimental use. Hence the organist's problem is often one of elimination. He must eliminate stops which are not transparent, stops of which the tone might be described as thick, muddy, heavy, ponderous, or "loud." Likewise, sixteen-foot manual stops or couplers destroy transparency. Stops which may be described as thin, keen, cutting, edgy, or too "soft" will not give adequate support. Most of the favorite solo stops of the organ are lacking in reticence. Examples are the Vox Humana, Harp, Chimes, Orchestral Oboe,

and Tremulant. These are star performers and should be used only for solo playing.

What organ voices, then, are best suited for the accompaniment of singers? My conclusions have been reached through the experimental method. It is simplicity itself—so simple that it is often overlooked. All that is necessary is to put a few singers in the choir loft, an assistant organist at the console, then go to the back of the church and listen to the results. In any organ there is bound to be a voice or a combination of voices which blends best with the voices of the singers. In a large organ there may be several, in which case the organist is fortunate. Once the best organ voices have been found it is well to stay strictly within their limits. Under no circumstances should the experimenting be done in public.

Many times I have been called upon to accompany choral performances with little opportunity to acquaint myself with the organ. In these instances I. have set the manuals with a *forte* combination on the Great, *mezzo-forte* on the Swell, *piano* on the Choir, and used these combinations exclusively. Monotonous? Perhaps, if you are thinking in terms of an organ solo, but not from the accompanimental standpoint. On the other hand, I have often heard organists steal the show by over-elaborate reg-

istration. The piano has but one tone color, and no one calls it monotonous. It is rather an ideal accompanying instrument.

Let us conduct a simple experiment. Place a small group of singers—six to ten—in the choir loft, an assistant organist at the console. If possible have two or three people of musical discrimination with you in the nave. Move around to get the effect of the choir from all parts of the church. Let the singers sing *mezzo-forte,* unison or parts. It doesn't matter. The first six measures of "America" will do. The organist omits the pedals until you find the best manual voices. You will find that most Flutes and Diapasons are too thick, that they cover the singers. Strings alone are usually too thin, giving no support. I have found that the best voice at *mezzo-forte* is a Geigen Principal (also called Violin Diapason) and the kind that is best is one that has a hard, "horny" tone, not at all "pretty." The current variety of Swell Diapasons is usually too thick. The traditional combination of Stopped Diapason and Salicional will vary from fair to poor, depending upon the scaling of the individual voices. Sometimes an Oboe may be added with good effect. If there is a four-foot Octave in the Swell it may add support without losing transparency. Finally, let the organist try the pedal. A very

light sixteen-foot tone will be sufficient. Many Bourdons and similar stops are much too heavy. If you have a sixteen-foot Dulciana, Gemshorn, or Quintaton, you are fortunate, for these voices are excellent. A Violone will be fine for *forte* effects.

To find the best voices for accompanying a solo singer the experiment is the same. The Geigen will do for *forte* to *fortissimo* effects, depending on the singer. As the singer's voice soars to higher registers you will do better to build by adding four-foot tone rather than eight-foot. For softer effects, stops of the Gemshorn family are ideal. They include Gemshorn, Erzahler, Cone Flute, and Spitz Flute. All have both body and transparency. Such stops as the Dulciana, Aeoline, Dolce are usually too soft for anything but an extreme *pianissimo*. The undulating stops, such as the Vox Celeste and Unda Maris, are useful only for very soft effects, and then only when the beat-rate of the stop is quite slow. I have frequently found the undulating stops tuned so fast that they sound out of tune. This is ruinous to a good accompaniment. If your Vox Celeste is so adjusted, you should instruct the tuner to slow it up.

For large choruses singing *forte* and for congregational singing you can build your accompaniment by adding four-foot tone and higher

pitches instead of by increasing the eight-foot tone. Remember that the voices furnish the bulk of the eight-foot tone. A good *fortissimo* needs an astonishingly large amount of four-foot tone. Consequently, a regular organ *fortissimo* will have too much eight-foot tone in it. The Great Diapason can often be omitted. Heavy Flutes, such as the Gross Flute, Tibia, Doppel Floete, had better be omitted. If the organ is deficient in four-foot stops and Mixtures, the four-foot couplers may be used.

If this combination sounds weird without the singers, never mind; it is not intended for solo playing. Remember that your best accompanying combinations may be quite useless for solo playing. You should make sharp distinction in your mind between accompaniments and solo performance. The warning cannot be repeated too often—*keep sixteen-foot manual tone out of all accompanying!* A few very new organs are provided with true sixteen-foot chorus stops, but the general run of sixteen-foot stops adds nothing but mud to the ensemble; and sixteen-foot manual couplers are ruinous to clarity.

It will be well to reserve one of your general pistons for the combination just described as you will be using it constantly in service playing. I would suggest that part of your pistons be reserved strictly for accompanimental voices.

One should be for your best *fortissimo*. You will generally find that the Crescendo Pedal and Szforzando Piston are much too thick. On the average organ these accessories are set abominably, containing sixteen-foot manual tone with sixteen-foot couplers in addition. On many organs I have found them useless even for solo playing, and a recitalist is certainly placed at a disadvantage in having to play an entire program without the aid of these devices. Organ maintenance men generally need a whole lot of education about how to set up a good ensemble.

A word about the use of the Swell Pedal. This should be used primarily to maintain a nice balance between singers and organ. Voices in their low register are easily covered up. In their highest register they are difficult to drown out. Try to arrange your registration so that with the box closed it balances the low register of the singers. Then, as the voices ascend, open the shutters proportionately.

Let us consider an accompanimental layout for a small to medium-sized organ. A Geigen or a small, light-voiced Diapason is indispensable. It may be on either the Choir or the Swell. This will take care of *mezzo-forte* effects. A four-foot Octave to go with it will be a great help in building toward a good *forte*. A proper four-foot Octave on the Great is essential for

both accompanying and solo playing. Without it there can be no good organ ensemble. Most Great Octaves are too timid. If you can afford a Twelfth and Fifteenth, they should be included for their great usefulness in congregational singing. A Great Mixture will add a blaze of glory unobtainable in any other way.

For soft effects the Gemshorn is the most versatile. It is a pity not to include it in even the smallest scheme. It is usually found on the Great or Choir.

In the Pedal division a Gemshorn or a Dulciana is excellent for accompanying, but these stops are a bit costly. A Quintaton is equally good and not so expensive. For *forte* effects a Violone or Metal Diapason is better than the large-scaled wood Diapasons so often found in this country.

Chorus reeds will be needed if your scheme is to be fairly large. They are useful for *forte* to *fortissimo* effects. They add a decisiveness and authority that is most desirable in congregational singing. A stop of the Trumpet variety is best, light in weight but of great brilliance. Thick-toned reeds, such as the Tuba, French Horn, Oboe-Horn, are solo voices and need not be considered here.

Someone may ask, "Will all of this accompanimental layout make an organ that is un-

interesting for solo playing?" On the contrary, these voices all take their proper place in the standard organ ensemble. The solo voices of the organ need proper accompaniment the same as singers do. I have often played on organs where nothing was provided to accompany the Swell Oboe, or the Choir Clarinet. None of the voices I have mentioned is unusual, and any competent organ-builder knows how to make them. They are to be found in many modern organs and in most of the very old. They will not be found in the type of organ formerly associated with the silent cinema. Happily that type is now obsolete, but, less happily, many such instruments have found their way into our churches.

I have suggested a list of accompanimental stops. Add to this a Gedekt, Vox Celeste, Melodia, Dulciana, Oboe, and, if you must have them, Vox Humana, Chimes, and Harp, and you will have a very complete little organ on which you can play almost anything in organ literature.

In any type of playing—solo or accompanimental—use as few stops as possible to get your effects. When playing *fortissimo,* omit all of the softer stops which do not actually contribute to the ensemble. You will be surprised how it will clean up your playing. A soft note that is badly

out of tune can "sour" the full organ.

In conclusion, I want to take another shot at those maintenance men. Use all of your powers of persuasion to get your Crescendo Pedal set properly and your Celestes tuned correctly. You never use the Crescendo Pedal for soft effects, so why include soft stops in it? They will only muddy up your ensemble. Your *crescendo* should begin at *mezzo-forte,* and build up to the most useful *fortissimo* that you can find. Nothing should be included unless it contributes. Omit all stops used only for solo effects. Omit all beating stops, such as the Vox Celeste. Omit Harp, Chimes, Vox Humana. (One of the largest organs in the country originally had the Harp and Chimes on the Crescendo Pedal!) Omit all Tremulants. If the organ is large, don't go beyond a comfortable *fortissimo,* one that you can slam on at random without fear of slapping your listeners' ears. You will have the Sforzando Pedal for your loudest climaxes.

And last but not least, *omit all sixteen-foot manual couplers,* and sixteen-foot manual stops as well, unless they are true chorus stops. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred you will not want your playing muddied up by them. On the rare occasions when the sixteen-foot is wanted (when the manuals are played high up in the treble) the sixteen-foot voices can be added by

hand. I know of nothing that contributes more to gross ugliness in music than the constant use of sixteen-foot manual couplers.

The accompanimental virtues are transparency, support, and reticence; and the greatest of these is transparency.

XV

Selecting Music for the Church

SELECTING music is at best tiresome drudgery. If you work at it too long your critical faculties will become so foggy that you will not be able to discriminate between good and bad. If you want the selection to be more than a haphazard affair you will have to prepare for it in two ways. You will have to have some definite critical principles and you will need a clear-cut plan of procedure.

I will speak of the procedure first. If you go into a music store and ask to be shown what they have in the way of Church music, a smiling clerk will hand you a series of folders containing hundreds, maybe thousands, of sample copies. They may be sorted for certain of the Church seasons—Christmas and Easter, perhaps—but by and large they are not graded, either for difficulty or for suitability. You will have to do that yourself. As a large part of this sample music will not apply to your own particular problems, you should be prepared to make a very large discard. Here is where you need a definite plan.

1. Discard immediately all pieces that do not conform to the rules of your church.

2. Discard immediately anything having a text that is unsuitable, unliterary, or which is repetitional. I have more to say about this later.

3. Discard next on the score of difficulty. As soon as you see that a number is beyond your capabilities, throw it out. Don't waste time in wishing that you might be able to perform it. If you do you will never finish the work.

4. Discard all selections that are obviously trite, uninspired, or commonplace. As soon as you discover evidence of musical unworthiness, discard immediately. It isn't necessary to eat all of an egg to find out if it is bad.

The discarding process I have described should go quite rapidly, and your critical faculties will not be dulled by it. You will have but a small stack of music left, but you may be sure that what you have screened out would be of no use to you. Study what remains for its musical and devotional qualities. You may end up with a very small stack of music indeed but surely that will be the cream of the lot. Here are some critical principles to be used as guides in the final selection.

I. THE TEXT

1. The text must be suitable for the purpose for which it is to be used. Frequent defects to

watch out for are maudlin sentiment and gloominess.

2. It must contain no unnecessary repetitions. The way some composers distort the text is positively criminal.

3. It must be of high literary quality. Nothing but the best is worthy of use.

4. It must be singable. Some excellent texts will be found unmanageable by singers.

The questions for you to ask, then, about the text are:

Is It Suitable?
Is It Poetic?
Is It Singable?

II. THE MUSIC

1. The music must be within the capabilities of the chorus that is to sing it. This book is concerned only with easy music. Music which has the following properties is usually practical for even the smallest choir:

a) Four parts or less.
b) Homophonic; that is, all parts conforming to the rhythm of the principal melody, as in a hymn tune.
c) Range of the parts, especially soprano and tenor, kind to the voices.

2. The music, to be really suitable for a small choir, must *not* have:

a) Persistent division of parts.
b) Florid contrapuntal writing.
c) Extreme range.
d) Frequent use of chromatics or of tricky modern harmonic effects.

3. The music must be of suitable length. Numbers which take over three and one-half minutes for singing are generally too long for the average service.

4. It must have distinction and provide inspiration. That which is commonplace is not acceptable for use in church.

5. It must be effective for voices. It is not always possible to tell about the vocal effectiveness of a choral number by playing it on the piano or organ.

The questions to be asked about the music are:

Is It Practicable?
Is It Distinctive?
Is It Effective?

III. THE MOOD

1. The mood the music creates must be free of secular association. The following devices will usually establish a concert-room atmosphere:

a) Melody that is obvious, (i.e., "Narcissus"); sweet, (i.e., "Londonderry Air"); chromatic, (i.e., "My Rosary".) This is characteristic of the popular song.
b) Rhythm that employs rapid, dotted notes, rollicking triplets, syncopation, rhythmic sequences. These are the devices of the dance.
c) Harmony that employs bromidic chord formulas, chromatic or modernistic harmonies that suggest the swing band or the radio chorus. These form the pattern of the commercial show.

2. The mood created must be conducive to worship. The following constructions are characteristic of a great deal of the finest worship-music:

a) Melody that is diatonic rather than chromatic; rugged rather than suave; aloof rather than obvious.
b) Rhythm that is free, speech-like, not restricted by bar lines or by time signatures.
c) Harmony that is diatonic and modal in suggestion. Dissonances result from free-moving part-writing rather than from modernistic harmony.

3. It must be objective and impersonal in its

effect. It must offer no incentive to vocal or instrumental display. Very likely it will seem austere at first.

4. It must create the mood of worship. It must remind you of stained-glass windows, of the silence that goes with prayer, of the faint odor of incense, of the presence of the Almighty.

If the mood of the music meets these specifications you can answer "Yes" to these questions;

Is it Free from Secular Taint?
Is It Impersonal?
Is It an Inspiration to Worship?

XVI
Education in Church Music

IT IS AN EDUCATIONAL axiom that you must start with that which is known and proceed to that which is unknown. Whether your church is advanced or backward in its music, you must start with what you have and go forward slowly and by degrees. No one should expect a miracle. It may take generations to accomplish the results you hope for.

Every church should have a definite teaching plan for its people about its music. No church is so good that it cannot be improved. None is so bad that it is hopeless. A sound program for church music must begin with a sound program for worship.

The proper place to begin the educational campaign is in the Sunday School. It is of the utmost importance that the youth be started on the right path to worship and to worship-music. A few minutes of every session should be devoted to instruction in corporate worship and the music that goes with it. The children must first be taught to understand and respect the forms and traditions of the Church. They must be taught correct habits and techniques of worship. Only when they have this foundation will

they be able to comprehend the music that goes with it. People often underestimate the ability of children to understand religious truths. Even young children can understand most of the teaching of the Church if it is presented in simple language. They can understand also most of the hymns. The texts should be carefully explained. The meaning of unusual words and the symbolism should be explained. For years I sang "Here I Raise My Ebenezer" thinking that Ebenezer was a little Negro boy. People often fear that adult hymns are beyond children, but few of them are. The Sunday School is where the noblest hymns should be taught. Otherwise, how can an appreciation of their greatness be developed? One cannot build a superstructure of granite on a foundation of mush.

Repeated efforts should be made to induce people to attend hymn-sings. Even if your efforts fail, you should at least try. Every hymn-sing should include a few old favorites (never mind how bad you may think they are), a few of the greatest hymns, and a few unfamiliar ones. Do not fail to take the opportunity to pass out bits of pertinent information.

Organ recitals can be very educational. Here again should be included something familiar, something great, and something new. Much

organ music is based on hymn tunes. Let the congregation sing the hymn before you play the selection.

Seek out ways and means of passing on information. Many of the historical facts of music can be made fascinating if told in an interesting manner. They might be printed in the church bulletin. Let the minister make brief explanation before the service, at the announcements, or before the sermon.

If you can create enough interest start a study class. It will be worthwhile even if but a small handful of people attend, as long as they are genuinely interested. There are plenty of good books for study and many fine recordings for demonstration.

A choir concert on a small scale can be of great help and it needn't be elaborate nor take a great deal of extra work. Often the regular Sunday music can be used. Such a program, however, should not be a haphazard performance of miscellaneous music. Have a plan back of it. You can arrange your program to exemplify a period or periods of composition. It can illustrate different types of worship—Anglican, Lutheran, Catholic, Jewish. Your theme could be "Music of Many Nations." Some people have tried programs illustrating the good and the bad. That is a bit dangerous as someone is

almost sure to be offended. You should have an occasional request program. It is a good way to dispose of some of the old favorites that are sure to be asked for which are really so bad that you hesitate to put them on your list.

Above all, don't get discouraged and quit because the results are not apparent. It may be your grandchildren who will profit from your efforts.

Lists of Books and Music

Most readers will not be interested in lists of music. Some organists and choir leaders may find them useful. For them I have prepared a list of music for choir and organ which, in my opinion, would be useful in a small church. This list* may be had from the publisher.

Book lists, too, are pretty dull reading. However, there are several books of such general value and interest that I recommend them for everyone. They should be in every town library. They are:

Our Heritage in Public Worship, by D. N. Hislop. T. and T. Clark, Edinburgh.

Liturgical Prayer, by A. F. Cabrol. Burns, Oates and Washburne, London.

Worship, by Evelyn Underhill. Harper.

An Outline of Christian Worship, by W. D. Maxwell. Oxford.

Protestant Church Music in America, by A. T. Davidson. E. C. Schirmer.

Church Music in History and Practice, by Winfred Douglas. Scribners. (Out of print but still available in many libraries.)

* *List of Choir and Organ Music,* compiled by Joseph W. Clokey, Morehouse-Gorham Co., New York, 25 cents.