

had better access to continental developments than his English contemporaries, whose monarchs were continually at war with the French.

The Union of the Crowns

The next body-blow to Scotland's music was the Union of the Crowns and the disappearance of the Scottish court and all its musicians to London. The traumatic repercussions of this event have universal significance in Scottish life, and are only now being put to rights. In music, the result was the spread of a fatalism and the self-destructive belief that Scotland's barren musical landscape was somehow endemic to the Scottish character and that we really were a nation without music in our souls.

The historical and political consequences of this event have meant that Scotland became peripheral to the development of European classical music throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. John Purser's book is, however, a history of the traditional music as well as the classical music of Scotland, and these "lost" centuries were indeed a golden time for Gaelic music and for the repertoire of the pipes, fiddle, harp, and voice—in fact, that huge wealth of music which most successfully captures the true essence of Scotland's cultural character.

When the book reaches the 19th century, I find Purser's advocacy of Scottish composers less discerning. His outrage at the neglect of figures such as MacKenzie, MacCunn, and Wallace is understandable, considering how little they are performed in their own country. However, the honest musician in Purser is irrepressible, and if one delves into the text, one can discover Purser's true opinions. Alexander MacKenzie, admired by Liszt and friend of Grieg and Paderewski, is first described as "one of the most important . . . and inexcusably neglected British composers of his age." But later we read that "his was not a searching style . . . he not only enjoyed being part of the Establishment [in London] but saw it as his business to perpetuate it." Enough said!

Scottish music today

His final chapter on Scottish contemporary music is a brief taster and a starting point for the research of others, but it does raise some important unspoken questions. Is the new Scotland to be an enlightened, civilized place where music takes a more central cultural role than before? If so, we need to nurture a young, educated, and unprejudiced audience to replace the middle-aged conservatives whose very presence in the concert halls stifles the innovation and boldness required to continue the tradition.

In a few decades' time these people will have died out, and classical music could be left without an audience. The necessary activism to counteract this disaster is already under way. It is an activism which should take great pride in our musical heritage and which has received a tremendous shot in the arm from John Purser's scholarship and this inspiring book.

Church music debate hides deeper issues

by Nora Hamerman

Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste

by Thomas Day

Crossroad, New York, 1991.

177 pages, hardbound, \$19.95

The name of Archbishop Rembert Weakland of Milwaukee came back into the public limelight again in mid-July, when the notorious Benedictine abbot was quoted in the *Washington Post* criticizing a recent Vatican intervention into the American Catholic Church. The issue was a letter to the American bishops, which stated that pastors should actively oppose legislative initiatives which attribute civil rights protections to homosexuality, and upheld the right of society to restrict the right of homosexuals to be teachers, scout leaders, and serve in the military forces.

Once again, Weakland made himself the spokesman for the "gay rights" lobby in rejecting an explicit intervention from Rome. It is hardly surprising; the archbishop has long been the rallying-point for those who choose to cavil with the pope's defense of the sanctity of marriage and of human life, including adding "qualifiers" to undermine the absolute prohibition on abortion, the murder of the unborn. One anti-Weakland group of Catholics claims to have assembled a dossier proving that his Milwaukee archdiocese is a hotbed of homosexual child abuse and other perversions, and even went so far as to link such corruption to the sickening case of Jeffrey Dahmer, the "gay" mass murderer who rampaged in an apparent atmosphere of societal and police negligence in Milwaukee.

But there is another angle. Weakland is the pivotal figure in the so-called liturgical reform which has been going on in the U.S. Catholic Church since the late 1960s, a reform which has resulted in what are called "folk masses" in most parishes, for which the widely used "revolutionary" hymnal is *Glory and Praise*. The composer of the title song, "Glory and Praise," Dan Schutte, S.J., a defrocked, former priest, is reported by one conservative Catholic newspaper to be an activist in "Dignity," the curiously named homosexual-lesbian lobby against the church's teaching on sexual morality.

The results of Archbishop Weakland's innovations in church music are the subject of this recent volume by Thomas Day, which has become popular with some traditionalists because it attacks the imposition of a liturgical music which, as Day says, resembles the theme song from "Gone with the Wind" or the waltz played over loudspeakers at an ice skating rink. The book is hilarious and to a degree, informative, but it ultimately misses the point.

'Communal sensitivity'

As Day recounts, the revolution was spearheaded by Bishop Weakland, who wrote an influential article in 1967, which is quoted by almost all the musical Modernists, attacking the whole tradition of old liturgical music as irrelevant, and incomprehensible to "the people." Weakland, among others, was selling the bill of goods according to which Vatican Council II (1962-65) directed the faithful to win souls by descending to the level of popular culture. As quoted by Day, Weakland pronounced in that article:

"If . . . the liturgical experience is to be primarily the communal sensitivity that I am one with my brother next to me and that our song is our common 20th-century response to God's word here and now and coming to us in our 20th-century situation, it will be something quite different. We will not expect to find the holy in music by archaism, but in our own 20th-century idiom."

Day notices about this:

"At the rhetorical climax of the article we do not find words like 'Christ' or 'worship' or 'sacrifice' or 'thanksgiving for redemption.' Instead, the highpoint is the expression 'communal sensitivity.' The liturgy becomes the community sensing itself. . . . Some readers may have come to a screeching halt at the archbishop's use of the words 'our own 20th century idiom' of music. Exactly what does this mean? Rock? Jazz? Stravinsky? Lawrence Welk? Messiaen? Country and Western? Rap? The author does not say. He gives no examples."

Since 1967, of course, all of those forms of the 20th-century "idiom" have invaded the churches. And they are not so distinct from one another as Day implies. For instance: The depressing, atonal meandering of the modern "serious" liturgical compositions which dominate the repertoire of the professional choir and organists at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., sets the conceptual framework for the maudlin ditties of the "folk mass," exactly as traditional hymnody both inspired, and echoed, the sublimely ordered compositions of the Classical composers.

'Ego renewal'

The infantile emotional state manifests itself on the parish level in the form Thomas Day describes in a chapter entitled "Ego Renewal." He lists a series of current favorites in the "folk mass" repertoire which "ooze with indecent narcis-

sism." Among them, some churchgoers may recognize "All That I Am," (wherein the word I appears 15 times on two small printed pages), "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace," which turns St. Francis's very private prayer into "an obnoxious form of boasting"; "We Are the Light of the World," "On Eagle's Wings," and "Be Not Afraid." Day says that the music seems to say, "Have a nice day, God." Sometimes it sounds like the "sound track of a three-hanky romantic film starring Greta Garbo or Bette Davis."

Moreover, it cannot be sung! except by the "folk group" leading the liturgy or by the cantor, "Mr. Caruso," whose throbbing voice is plugged into a giant amplification system blasting out feedback.

Day's best insight is that some manifestations of the new liturgical music pose a problem that goes far beyond bad taste. This occurs where the "composer sets the text so that the congregation sings God's words, usually without quotation marks, in a somewhat bored, relaxed, almost casual style. This is startling and unprecedented in the history of Christianity." Thus, he underlines: "Through the miracle of 'contemporary' music, the congregation (and each individual in it) becomes the Voice of God." In some songs, the congregation is the loving God *and* the loved individual! God is turned into "the endearing mascot of the believers at the folk liturgy." Needless to say, this wipes out the distinction between God and man, and dissolves Christ into a pantheistic mush.

The 1984 edition of the hymnal *Glory and Praise*, except for "Amazing Grace" and a few Christmas carols, does not include a single hymn, piece of church music, or liturgical response written before 1970. That is because, as Day asserts, the mere momentary intrusion of an old-fashioned Kyrie Eleison or standard hymn, will expose the pieces in *Glory and Praise* as adolescent trash.

Only one solution

Yet how odd that Mr. Day avoids connecting Weakland's liturgical "reforms" and his liberal sexual platform, just as he avoids promoting the alternative to both ills, which requires a vigorous, joyful, and uncompromising revival of the music composed for the Catholic liturgy by the giants of western music: from Leonardo da Vinci's contemporary Josquin des Prez; to Palestrina and Byrd in the later Renaissance; to Vivaldi and Scarlatti in the era of the Baroque; to Haydn and Mozart at the time of the American Revolution; to Schubert and Beethoven in the last century, and including the many fine, less-known composers who worked in the respective orbits of these towering figures. Not to mention the great "Protestants" Bach and Handel, whose universal music could not be excluded from Christian worship without leaving a terrible void.

Of course the sung masses of these great musicians may still be performed in the concert hall, and should be; but to fail to perform them also as they were intended, within the

liturgy of the church, is a cultural crime which can only be compared to stripping the beautiful old churches of the world of all their religious art and hanging it in museums. Or turning these beautiful churches into museums and sending the faithful to worship in a structure that looks like a cross between a drive-in movie theater and a parking-ramp.

Here, the link between the sexual agenda of the Rembert Weakland crowd and their cultural agenda becomes devastatingly relevant, not a mere matter of clever gossip. Christianity distinguishes two opposite kinds of love: *eros*, the selfish love which seeks to possess a desired individual; and *agapē*, God's love for mankind, in which human beings may strive to participate. In between, theologians speak of *philia*, a third Greek word, brotherly love toward mankind as a whole, moving in the direction of the divine. On this ladder of love, the pursuit of *eros* leads to hell and that of *agapē* toward heaven. Great music, such as the sublime masses of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, is essentially *agapic* in character; the "ego renewal" music which has washed over the churches is pure *eroticism*. There is no Aristotelian "golden mean" of the sort Thomas Day seems to seek, where one can be "anti-*eros*" but not "pro-*agapē*."

The author defends himself against the charge of cynicism, remarking, "True cynicism is to be found among those who have taken a religious act (or interaction between God and humanity) and turned it into group therapy; the music always seems to be assuring everybody that the good news of the New Testament goes something like this: 'I'm okay, you're okay, God's okay'—in that order."

True; and yet, Day *is* cynical. On the dust jacket, we can read approving comments of his book by two of the biggest cynics in American Catholicism—William F. Buckley, the right-wing Anglophile liberal, and Andrew Greeley, the left-wing Anglophile liberal. Why?

After complaining about the inescapable presence of rock music in daily life, Day writes in a footnote, "I should confess that I like rock, but I despise it whenever it becomes totalitarian." To "like" rock music in any context is to admit that one has been bestialized; comprehensible in our media-brainwashed youth, but hardly excusable in a Thomas Day, who is, after all, chairman of the music department at Salve Regina College in Rhode Island. Rock music is always totalitarian. Essentially *erotic*, it embodies the worst tyranny of all—the spirit's enslavement by animal appetites.

The blackout of Cardinal Ratzinger

In the summer of 1985, Pope John Paul II sponsored the performance of Mozart's Mass in C ("Coronation") at St. Peter's Basilica, not merely as a concert, but as the music of the liturgy. This event is well known, even in the American church. In some parishes—such as one near Washington D.C. which recently used Haydn's "Timpani Mass," performed by its own choir, professional soloists, and a small orchestra, as the music for its Pentecost liturgy—it has been

emulated. Yet Thomas Day chooses to not mention it. Nor does his book include a single reference to the great Roman Catholic prelate who has intervened on the profoundest level into the issues of liturgical music for nearly 25 years: Cardinal Ratzinger.

It was on Nov. 17, 1985, that Joseph Ratzinger, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, German-born but now living in Rome, delivered a landmark address on "Liturgy and Church Music" to an audience in Sicily. He emphatically restored the value of the poetic principle in liturgy, against an over-emphasis on literal intelligibility of the text, which goes all the way back to the 16th century in church debates. Thus he gave the conceptual basis for making Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven's masses the touchstone of a true reform of liturgical music. Not long after, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* was sung at the Vatican.

In that speech—reprinted in extended excerpts in *EIR* of April 11, 1986 after it had appeared in *Osservatore Romano* in March 1986—Cardinal Ratzinger stated that "word" in the Biblical sense is more than "text." It is "a living reality: a God who is meaning communicating itself and who communicates himself by becoming man." He added, "Liturgical music is a result of the demands and of the dynamism of the Incarnation of the Word, for music means that even among us, the word cannot be mere speech." He denounced rock music (in which, as everyone knows, every single word of the text is fully enunciated and clear) as "Dionysiac," i.e., satanic.

Thomas Day's book was copyrighted in 1990—five years after that intervention. Nowhere, even in the concluding chapter where he offers practical advice, does he cite Cardinal Ratzinger. Can this be ignorance? Or does the author believe that the Roman example is somehow irrelevant to the American experience?

Now Available!

J.S. BACH

The Six Suites for Solo 'Cello

Eliane Magnan, 'Cellist
Ibykus Series

Set of Two Compact Discs

\$38.00 Add \$1.50 postage and handling for first set of 2 CD's,
\$.50 each additional set.

Make check or money order payable to:
Ben Franklin Booksellers, 27 South King Street, Leesburg,
Virginia 22075. Telephone (703) 777-3661. MasterCard and
Visa accepted.