

Liturgical Music: Bodies Proclaiming and Responding to the Word of God

PASTORAL PRELUDE

The significance of music to the irreducibly bodily nature of Christian liturgy should not be underestimated. The validity of this statement is readily evident in the practical, pastoral scene of the post-Vatican II church in the United States. In Roman Catholic parishes that are sizable (and "clergy rich") enough to offer several Masses on the Lord's Day, a common pastoral pattern has emerged whereby the presence or absence of music for each liturgy, as well as the "style" of music at each, is established. One still finds in some of these parishes that the earliest Mass on Sunday has no ritual music and that a number of those who attend that liturgy have made known their desire that there be none. The decision to participate in a Lord's Day liturgy devoid of song is an intentional act concerning the "acoustical space"² of the worship being offered; it has no small impact upon the spatial, bodily, and temporal qualities of the liturgy — e.g., its pace and rhythm, the extent to which the participants do or do not share in the action together, and (often of no small concern) the overall length of the service. For these sorts of reasons many parishioners either seek out or avoid such an early morning Mass. They may well have several other options from which to choose, including a children's (or "family") Mass, liturgies exclusively featuring either "contem-

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¹In writing this article I am indebted to Andrea Goodrich, Adjunct Chaplain for Liturgical Music, College of the Holy Cross (Worcester, Mass.), who provided me with the sources on music and sound therapy, engaged in several recorded conversations, and collaborated with me in presenting a workshop on the subject at Holy Cross on 7 July 1998.

²For a treatment of this concept, based on the work of Walter Ong, see Edward Foley, "Toward a Sound Theology," *Studia Liturgica* 23 (1993) 127–28.

porary" or "traditional/classical" music (but both meeting the preferences of adults), or one engaging the musical tastes of teenagers and young adults. Ethnic identity, to which music provides an integral contribution, may also define one or more liturgies in today's parish, such that there is a Latino or Hispanic Mass, or one for Vietnamese or other communities from Southeast Asia or the Pacific.

The important point to note about these parochial situations is that people (lay and ordained alike) often express strong preferences for or against these musically varied liturgies. In their *Ten-Year Report*, the authors of *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers* accurately signal a pastoral danger in this regard, observing that "the various forms of musical leadership that emerge during particular Sunday assemblies" can "express and create divisions within a community at the very heart of its identity."³ The fact that people react strongly to various genres of music in liturgy, to the extent that some make it known that they would *never* attend a certain type of Mass, indicates that questions concerning the role of music in liturgy not only are matters of taste but also entail judgments touching on people's values. These judgments, far from being simply rational, that is, based on abstract conceptual ideas, entail our corporality, the traditional, social, and natural dimensions of our bodiliness.⁴ Some people appreciate the use of the pipe organ, strophic hymns, or Gregorian chant because these provide them a sense of participating in tradition. Others might reject these musical forms for that very reason, while positively valuing ritual music that resonates with music in contemporary culture. People's natural bodies also respond to the rhythm, harmony, and tempo of a particular musical composition, as well as to the qualities of vibration, volume and tone produced by a specific instrument. At the extremes, some people cannot tolerate the sound of the pipe organ, just as others get a headache from hearing electric guitar and drums.

That pastoral staffs in many parishes have taken so seriously questions concerning whether and what kinds of music to incorporate into their Sunday liturgies indicates their engagement with

³*The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers: A Ten Year Report* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications 1992) no. 22.

⁴Here we draw upon Louis-Marie Chauvet's theory of corporality.

the central but also most challenging mandate (both theoretically and practically) of Vatican II's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: "the restoration and promotion" of the people's "full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy" — and this as the "right and obligation" of *all* believers "by reason of their baptism."⁵ Among the various arts, the Council placed "sacred music" in highest esteem, arguing that "it forms a necessary and integral part of the solemn liturgy" because of its ability to enhance both words and ritual actions, "whether making prayer more pleasing, promoting unity of minds, or conferring greater solemnity upon the sacred rites."⁶

Taken together, these assertions of the Council provide ready analysis for why some people in American parishes resist the use of music while far more others have made the types and quality of liturgical music a major criterion in choosing among Sunday Masses. In all cases, what is at stake is people's understanding of and degree of commitment to the reform and renewal of the liturgy. Insofar as various polls and surveys continuously find the majority of Roman Catholics in the United States supportive of the liturgical reform, we should not be surprised to find the majority committed to participating in Sunday Masses robust with music, even if many critically desire an improvement in the quality thereof. On the other hand, the small minority who prefer the early morning "musicless" Mass would seem to be seeking a continuation of the pre-Vatican II "low Mass," attending the ritual performed by the priest, widely scattered throughout the pews, and largely silent or only muffled in their speaking of the prayers at varied paces.

RECENT SCHOLARLY MOVEMENT

If the close relationship between post-Vatican II developments in liturgical music and active involvement (or not) in the Mass of Paul VI has been evident in the practical field, the topic has been no less vital in theoretical circles as well. The rhetoric of official ecclesiastical statements concerning church music has set the agenda

⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 14. In *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, vol. 1, rev. ed., ed. Austin Flannery (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans 1992).

⁶ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 112.

for inquiries of liturgical theologians into the nature and function of music in liturgy. In 1903, Pius X asserted music's "integral part" in the liturgy, a point made all the more provocative by Vatican II's wedding of the word "necessary" to "integral" when declaring music's liturgical function.⁷ Subsequent documents by the U.S. Bishops Conference, published in 1972 and 1982, have taken as axiomatic the notion that music is integral to liturgy.⁸ It is this repeated but unelaborated insistence on the integral role of music in liturgy that has led certain theologians to inquire as to why and how this is the case. A necessarily brief review of recent contributors to this conversation will point toward the need for closer consideration of the bodily nature of musical activity.

Edward Foley has sought to establish the integral role of music in Christian worship by moving from a sort of phenomenological analysis of the experience of sound, through an argument for not only the compatible but enhancing relationship between music and ritual ("*The 'Why' of Ritual Music*"⁹), to a proposal that Christian ritual music is best understood as sacramental in nature, insofar as the concept of sacrament has been broadened since Vatican II to include all aspects of the church's public acts of worship. In the process, Foley concentrates on such experiential qualities of sound as its impermanence, intangibility, and ability to engage people "personally." He finds these experiential categories eminently supportive of the Judeo-Christian belief in a personal, relational God who communicates through the historically perceivable but elusive sound-act of the word. Thus, music uniquely contributes to the sacramental process of divine revelation.

Although he does not adopt the terminology of sacrament, Don Saliers likewise draws on the depth and breadth of twentieth-century philosophical reflection on signs and symbolic language in order to assert that "the liturgy is intrinsically musical."¹⁰ By

⁷Ibid. For critical commentary on this point, see Foley, "Toward a Sound Theology," 121, 137.

⁸See *Music in Catholic Worship* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference 1972; rev. 1983) no. 23; and *Liturgical Music Today* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference 1982) no. 5.

⁹Foley, 130.

¹⁰Don E. Saliers, *Worship as Theology: Foretaste of Glory Divine* (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1994) 160-61. See also his earlier essay, "The Integrity of Sung Prayer," *Worship* 55 (1981) 290-303.

"musical" here Saliers means the way in which all human speech in the liturgy, even that which is spoken or read, is extended through such musical qualities as rhythm, pitch, intensity and tone to shape a unique acoustical milieu for those engaged in worship. Saliers and Foley were both major contributors to the Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers, whose 1992 report, not surprisingly, establishes music's integral role in liturgy in terms of its being a "unique language of faith" and having "sacramental power . . . rooted in the nature of sound," its "raw material."¹¹ In a move that prevents misunderstanding just what is being claimed when music is said to be integral to liturgy, the document speaks of the "inherently lyrical" quality of Christian worship, which is to say that "the liturgy flourishes in a heightened auditory environment," that "blurs" the boundaries "between what we consider music and nonmusic" and provides beautiful and vital "sonic elements" that "inspire and engage believers in prayer."¹²

More recently, Judith Marie Kubicki,¹³ while drawing on the work of Foley and Saliers (among others), has found that the questions of why and how music is integral to worship have still not been adequately addressed. Kubicki also turns to the symbolic nature of music, relying heavily on the thought of Louis-Marie Chauvet (among several other philosophers and theologians). What Kubicki notes in Chauvet is a more extensive theory of the bodily character of symbolism and symbolic exchange, which she finds pertinent "for a theory of music as ritual symbol since music-making, more than any other artistic enterprise, involves the body in an intimate and integral way."¹⁴ Kubicki, however, still does not pursue *how* music does this in and among human bodies. She concentrates, rather, on the debate concerning whether music is expressive or evocative of emotion (the *cognitive* agenda set by Suzanne Langer¹⁵) and, like Foley, concludes with the promise of music's aptitude for serving the communicative process of divine revelation.

¹¹ *The Milwaukee Symposia for Church Composers*, nos. 10, 13.

¹² *Ibid.*, backnote 3.

¹³ Judith Marie Kubicki, "The Role of Music as Ritual Symbol in Roman Catholic Liturgy," *Worship* 69 (1995) 427-46.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 431.

¹⁵ See *Ibid.*, 436-40.

Helpful and learned as these attempts have been, we find that these liturgical theologians' theoretical efforts to support the practical implementation of the musical/lyrical dimension of Christian liturgy do indeed invite further efforts at exploration. Perhaps the good inclinations of Foley and Kubicki to focus upon the theoretical principles that might establish the integral role of music in Christian worship are nonetheless limited by an excessive isolation of this question of "why" from the more pragmatic issues of "how." The "how" at issue here, however, is not a question of the techniques of liturgical music *per se* but, far more fundamentally, the question of how we human beings breathe, sense vibrations as sounds (hear), and produce sounds of our own (including music). This is to return to Foley's first consideration, namely, the experience of sound, but from a different angle and, therefore, with recourse to different resources.

Our primary concern is with the physiological process of sensing and producing sound and music, as well as with the spiritual and mental role of *intention* in these bodily processes. We shall avail ourselves of research being done in the burgeoning field of sound healing and music therapy. Our theoretical approach, then, shifts from language-based theories of symbol to work being done in the area of health and integrative healing of body, mind, and spirit. Lest one judge such an approach too quickly as following a latest fad or trend only tenuously related to Christian tradition, we remind the reader at the outset that the connection between Spirit (breath¹⁶) and Word not only pervades the Bible but also lies at the origins of trinitarian reflection.¹⁷ In addition, we must remember that the discursive work of teaching was only one major characteristic of Jesus' ministry, one which functioned in a complementary

¹⁶ Donald Gelpi, in an effort to avoid the dichotomy of matter and spirit, refers to the third person of the Trinity as Holy Breath, arguing that "breath" more aptly translates the Hebrew *ruah*. See Donald L. Gelpi, *God Breathes: The Spirit in the World* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier 1988).

¹⁷ See George T. Montague, *The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition* (New York: Paulist Press 1976) 45-68; Bernard J. Lee, *Jesus and the Metaphors of God: The Christs of the New Testament* (New York: Paulist Press 1993) 80-122; Yves Congar, *The Word and the Spirit*, trans. David Smith (London/San Francisco: Geoffrey Chapman/Harper & Row 1986) 9-20; and Jürgen Moltmann, *The Spirit of Life: A Universal Affirmation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press 1992) 39-77.

fashion with his work as a healer.¹⁸ Our own contribution to the questions of why and how music is so integral to Christian worship, therefore, presumes this background of Scripture and tradition, wherein are revealed divine plans of creation and redemption that fundamentally include designs for bodily wholeness and the integral healing of body, mind, and spirit.

SCIENTIFIC AND THERAPEUTIC RESEARCH ON SOUND
AND THE HUMAN VOICE AND EAR

The church's recognition of the unique and privileged manner whereby the word of God in sacred Scripture comes to life in the liturgy through the pattern of proclamation and response, as well as the integral role of music in that process, can find its basis not only in the social-cultural and traditional dynamics of ritual performance but also in the physical or natural processes whereby human bodies produce, receive, and share sound. There is a difference in reading a text silently or even aloud to oneself and proclaiming it through speech and song in the social context (time and space) of a liturgical assembly. The difference lies most fundamentally in the body, in the production and reception of the vibrations within and among the bodies of worship. The words of worship are not conveyed among the participants or, for that matter, offered to God by means of some sort of mental telepathy but, rather, through the soundings of bodies. The point here is to recognize that the transformative impact of proclamation and response upon the faithful occurs not only on the cognitive level of ideas conveyed but down to the very cellular level of vibrations in the body.¹⁹ The pattern and quality of vibration is integral to the health and sense of well-being in persons, impacting moods, forming dispositions, and fostering habits and memories that shape the outlook and ethical action of persons.

The physiological activity that provides the basis for human listening, as well as all forms of human vocalization, is vibration.

¹⁸ For an overview of the significance of teaching and healing in Jesus' mission, written with a view to sacramental liturgy, see Bernard Cooke, *Sacraments and Sacramentality*, rev. ed. (Mystic, Conn.: Twenty-Third Publications 1994) 168-78.

¹⁹ See Don G. Campbell, *The Mozart Effect: Tapping the Power of Music to Heal the Body, Strengthen the Mind, and Unlock the Creative Spirit* (New York: Avon Books 1997) 158.

Ongoing research in anatomy, neurophysiology, and therapeutic treatment has led to an increasing appreciation of the ear's vital role in the balanced, healthy integrated activity of the human brain with the entire body, as well as the special relationship between the ear and the voice. A pioneer in this field has been the French physician and auditory neurophysiologist Alfred A. Tomatis, whose unorthodox approaches to the structure and function of the human ear and its relationship to body, mind, and spirit have realized such theoretical and therapeutic breakthroughs as to garner him not only critical scientific acclaim but also several French cultural awards.²⁰ Most notable for our present study is Tomatis' demonstration that the ear and the human organs that produce vocalization comprise the same "neurological loop," whereby changes in the activity and receptivity of one directly appear in the functioning of the other.²¹

Over the course of some fifty years Tomatis has created what has been described as "a new paradigm of the ear's development" by taking into account not only the ear's auditory function but also its role in the vestibular system.²² Thus, in addition to processing sound and integrating it in speech, the ear regulates the body's sense of the vertical and horizontal, contributing to motor coordination. Moreover, through the medulla (or brainstem) the auditory nerve connects the ear with all of the body's muscles, with the vagus nerve connecting the inner ear with all the major organs. The ear's vestibular function thereby influences ocular, labial, and other facial muscles, affecting such activities as seeing and eating. Research suggests that the interaction between auditory vibrations in the eardrum and parasympathetic nerves throughout the body result in the control and regulation of — to name just some of the

²⁰ See Bradford S. Weeks, M.D., "The Physician, the Ear and Sacred Music," *Music: Physician for Times to Come*, ed. Don Campbell (Wheaton, Ill.: Quest Books 1991) 42.

²¹ Tim Wilson, "Chant: The Healing Power of Voice and Ear," An interview with Alfred Tomatis, M.D. with commentary, *Music: Physician for Times to Come*, 11. In his commentary, Wilson reports that The French Academies of Science and Medicine officially acknowledged Tomatis by naming this physiological phenomenon for him. The scope of Tomatis' therapeutic impact in the field of neurology is attested by the fact that there are over two hundred Tomatis Centers internationally. See Campbell, 52.

²² Campbell, 52.

major organs — the larynx, heart, lungs, bladder, kidneys, and stomach.²³ Tomatis has studied the evolution of the ear from the jellyfish through human beings, finding that the ear enables the entire body's receptivity to vibrations (from whatever source) and provides the key to the development of vertical posture in humans.

The theoretical force, as well as practical implications, of his work Tomatis encapsulates in a startling saying: "And so we've come to realize that the skin is only a piece of differentiated ear, and not the other way around!"²⁴ This reverses the conventional idea that ear tissue is derived from skin cells; on the contrary, the sensory cells throughout the body evolved from the tissue that produces the cortical cells of the ear. The ear functions, to speak metaphorically, as the gateway of stimulation or "charge" to the brain.²⁵ It is on this basis that Tomatis has been able to realize success in treating a wide range of human maladies through regulating the frequency, range, and rhythms of sound applied to the ear. Also crucial to the therapy, and thus to his theory, is the subject's posture, the proper form of which is a function of verticality: "What the ancients knew was that once one reaches perfect auditory posture, the body reaches out and literally incorporates all the sound that comes from outside. . . . It is impossible to arrive at good language without verticality, or to stimulate the brain to full consciousness."²⁶

On the basis of his integrated theories of the cochlear and vestibular functions of the human ear Tomatis is credited with first recognizing the important distinction between hearing and listening.²⁷ In dealing with patients who have auditory problems, Tomatis tests not only the ear's physical capabilities but also the extent to which the patient is utilizing their potential. Listening is an

²³ See *ibid.*, 53.

²⁴ Wilson, 17. For the full reference for the main article in which Tomatis reports his research on this point, as well as further bibliography of Tomatis's writings, see Weeks, 45, 54.

²⁵ Tomatis explains: "It is thanks to the ear that external stimuli are able to charge the cortical battery. I say electrical because the only way we know of measuring the brain's activity is through an electroencephalogram, which gives an electrical answer. But of course it's not electricity that's inside." Wilson, 17.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁷ See Weeks, 44.

active exercise that includes the practice of one's will power, while hearing is the less rigorous process whereby the body and ear receive a panoply of vibrations, only some of which are distinguished as sounds. The human experience of sound is precisely a human production. While we conventionally consider sounds as existing outside of ourselves, strictly speaking, what exist are vibrations. It is our own bodies and minds which engage vibrations in such a way that we *listen* to them as sounds. This is why people who are deaf can listen to and produce music; they are able to sense reverberations in their bones, skin, and organs, picking up the rhythms and pulses and actively processing them as music.²⁸

In the process of what sound researchers and therapists call "entrainment," the entire body engages in the process of listening. One's breathing and heartbeat enter into a synchrony with the more powerful pace, rhythm, and pulse of the vibrations in music, with the ear translating these impulses to the brain, thereby effecting one's consciousness as well.²⁹ As Campbell explains, the principle of entrainment is the key toward *some* understanding of why music helps with healing. In many indigenous cultures, entrainment by music sets the trancelike condition for healing to be practiced, and since ancient times music has been used in sacred ceremonies to transform people's consciousness.³⁰

²⁸ See Campbell, 40–41. Foley also discusses the distinction between "vibratory disturbances" and their actively being processed as human sound. See "Toward a Sound Theology," 123–24.

²⁹ See Jonathan Goldman, *Healing Sound: The Power of Harmonics* (Shaftesbury, Dorset/Rockport, Mass.: Element Books 1992) 14–15; see also, Campbell, 123. Campbell cites the significance of the work of Swiss engineer and doctor Hans Jenny for the experimental field of healing with sound and music: "[Jenny] showed that figures can be formed by vibrations, for instance by vibrating crystals with electric impulses and then transmitting the vibrations to a medium such as a plate, a diaphragm or a string. He also produced vibratory figures in liquids and gases. By changing the pitch, the harmonics of the tone and the material that is vibrating, a new form results. When harmonic ratios are added to the fundamental tone, the variants create either splendid beauty or chaotic stress." "Introduction: The Curative Potential of Sound," *Music: Physician for Times to Come*, 4. See also, Campbell, *The Mozart Effect*, 33–34.

³⁰ See Campbell, *The Mozart Effect*, 136; and Goldman, *Healing Sounds*, 15. For an anthropologist's description and analysis of music, dance, and trance in rituals of healing, see Bruce Kapferer, *A Celebration of Demons: Exorcism and the Aesthetics*

One further step in his research has been crucial to the theory and effective practices of Tomatis. This element of his work can lead us back to our consideration of liturgical music: "We have largely overlooked . . . the sounds generated from inside the body, particularly the ear's relation to our own voice. This function I call self-listening or auditory-vocal control."³¹ The production of rich overtones by a voice with good timbre supplies positive stimulation to the brain and charges the entire body. Tomatis came to appreciate the benefits of both producing and receiving sound for physical, mental, and spiritual well-being when he was called by the abbot of a Benedictine monastery where the monks had become chronically fatigued and listless. The abbot had convinced the community that in the reforming spirit of Vatican II (as he interpreted it) they should dispense with chanting the office and use the six to eight hours gained per day for more useful purposes. The directly opposite result, however, ensued. Whereas the monks, when chanting continually, had needed rather little sleep, they now were constantly tired. When Tomatis was summoned, he found more than three quarters of the monks listlessly slumping in their cells.³² Their condition was further exacerbated by other . . . doctors having prescribed that they abandon their simple vegetarian diet and eat meat to gain strength.

Tomatis treated the monks strictly by means of sound, returning them to their full schedule of chanting. The results were completely successful. He deduced that the monks needed the high cortical charge produced in their bodies through their singing. This led Tomatis to study extensively the quality of frequencies, pace, and rhythm in Gregorian chant. He finds that persons benefit from both singing and hearing these particular melodies in conjunction with the phonetic characteristics of the Latin language. He argues further that the type of auditory environment created in Gothic

of Healing in Sri Lanka, 2nd ed. (Washington, D.C.: Berg/Smithsonian Institution Press 1991) 245–84.

³¹ Wilson, "Chant," 17. For a comprehensive, illustrated discussion of scientific research on the sounds, rhythms, and pulses within the organs and systems of the human body, see Jane Redmond, *Sounding the Inner Landscape: Music as Medicine* (Stonington, Maine: Caduceus Publications 1990) 76–94.

³² See Wilson, "Chant," 14. See also, Weeks, "The Physician, the Ear and Sacred Music," 47–48; and Campbell, *The Mozart Effect*, 103–06.

church spaces bathes people in a generous stream of overtones sounding overhead, drawing the person up vertically.³³ Thus, the principles of listening and vocalizing, as well as verticality, as these pertain to human health and holiness, come together in Tomatis' narrative of the monks.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PASTORAL MUSIC

While there admittedly are limits to our ability both to review Tomatis' work as a scientist and physician and to apply the results to the reformed liturgy of the church, his practical and theoretical findings do present an opportunity for further reflection on how and why ritual music (and thereby, liturgy itself) makes a difference in the life of faith. We cannot, for example, argue that every voice in the liturgical assembly must necessarily be of a rich timbre or every ear attuned for listening to the degree that Tomatis seeks in healing his patients. The performance of liturgy is not, strictly speaking, a therapeutic activity.³⁴ Neither could we insist that all liturgical structures be of Gothic design, nor would we promote Gregorian chant as the exclusive form of the church's ritual music. We can, nonetheless, recognize in Tomatis' work helpful support for the church's claims about the irreducible value of music in liturgy that pastoral ministers and theologians have been seeking to advance.

Most immediately, we can note that in his assessment and treatment of the ill monks Tomatis drew upon all three categories of Chauvet's concept of human bodiliness.³⁵ The monks suffered diminished health and vigor in their natural bodies as they refrained

³³ See Wilson, "Chant," 24; and Campbell, *The Mozart Effect*, 107–08. Goldman explains the concept of overtones: "[A] string which is struck and vibrates at 256 [hertz] and which we refer to as a C, when we listen to that string we usually hear, first and foremost, the C note. This is referred to as the 'fundamental' tone. However, when that string is vibrating at 256 times a second and that C is sounding, many other notes besides the fundamental tone are also sounding. These are the 'overtones.'" Goldman goes on to explain that overtones are what shape the unique sounds of every musical instrument, as well as the unique speaking and singing qualities of every human voice. *Healing Sounds*, 25–26.

³⁴ See Paul Westermeyer, "Liturgical Music: *Soli Deo Gloria*," *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch Before God*, eds. E. Byron Anderson and Bruce T. Morrill (Collegeville: Pueblo Books/The Liturgical Press 1998) 197.

³⁵ See footnote 3, above.

from singing and hearing their customary hours of chant. The practice of chanting, moreover, is a social activity, effecting at once the viability of the monastic community as a whole, as well as each of its members. Finally, in their performance of Gregorian chant these monks situate themselves within and, indeed, are supported by a body of tradition, contributing corporately and individually to their comprehensive health and human subjectivity. The triple-bodiedness of the symbolism inherent to liturgy as a human enterprise is exemplified in the narrative. The other crucial element in Chauvet's theory of the person as an *I-body*, namely, the function of desire, also plays a role in the activity of liturgical music under the rubric of *intentionality*. This and several other principles can be explored further by considering some specific aspects of ritual music in contemporary liturgical practice. We shall use the gathering hymn as a base for exploration.

The performance of an entrance or gathering song not only "charges" the body and mind of those so engaged, heightening their awareness and receptivity to the event of word and sacrament taking place, it also orients the person-bodies assembled in relation to themselves, one another, and God. In its purpose of helping "the assembled people become a worshipping community,"³⁶ the song orients the people both vertically and horizontally. The posture for this action is one of standing. Commentaries on this liturgical posture tend to describe its sociological meaning as a sign of respect and attentiveness, while explaining its theological significance in terms of the paschal joy and dignity of the assembled in Christ, as well as eschatological expectation of the Lord's return.³⁷ Tomatis likewise notes the cross-cultural association of verticality with awareness of the divine. His discovery of the "neurological loop" connecting the ear and the voice, however, along with his extensive research on the vestibular function of the ear, provides further insight into why the combined bodily activity of standing, singing and listening heighten the body and mind's awareness of encountering God. The tones and overtones within,

³⁶ *Music in Catholic Worship*, no. 44.

³⁷ See Aimé G. Martimort, "Structure and Laws of the Liturgical Celebration," Irénée H. Dalmais and others, *Principles of the Liturgy, The Church at Prayer*, vol. 1, ed. Aimé G. Martimort, trans. Matthew O'Connell (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press 1987) 180-81.

around, and above the bodies of worship draw people's consciousness divinely "upward." The ear orients each person-body in standing and singing.

Participation in the gathering song, moreover, orients each person horizontally within the social (and traditional) body of the assembly, the body of Christ. Here the function is one of unifying the group as a corporate body of action.³⁸ Citing several patristic sources Aimé Martimort asserts, "by its rhythm and melody [song] produces such a fusion of voices that there seems to be but a single singer. As a matter of fact, once there is question of more than a small group of people, song alone makes it possible for an assembly to express itself as one."³⁹ Given the research of Tomatis and others, we can appreciate more fully the reason for this unifying effect of music. The members of the assembly serve one another by producing the tones and overtones of the music, not only charging each person's body and mind but also producing some degree of synchrony among their bodies as their heartbeats and breath process the entraining rhythm, pulse, and pace of the music. In addition, the potential for this unifying experience in music is a function not only of the ears and voices of the assembly but also of the architectural features of the worshipping space, including the musical instruments therein, as well as the pastoral, technical, and intentional qualities of the liturgical musicians.

The U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy's *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, a set of guidelines to be used in tandem with the Committee's *Music in Catholic Worship*, identifies visibility and audibility as the primary requirements for liturgical space to realize its primary purpose: the formation and support of the assembly in its liturgies.⁴⁰ That liturgical commissions, pastoral committees, and architectural teams have tended to give greater (and unfortunately, at times, seemingly exclusive) attention to the visible quality of church spaces only confirms the argument of neurological researchers and sound therapists that ours is a culture which underestimates the importance of the ear. While round, square or octagonal spaces do afford the opportunity for people to visibly

³⁸ See Foley, "Toward a Sound Theology," 134-35.

³⁹ Martimort, "Structure and Laws of the Liturgical Celebration," 143.

⁴⁰ See *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference 1978) nos. 6, 39-43, 49-51.

perceive one another as members of the assembled body of Christ, the auditory quality of many such spaces has been deeply compromised by the shape and material of the roof or ceiling over them, as well as the upholstered seating and carpeted floors below. The designs of pre-Vatican II houses of worship, of course, pose their own problems concerning both visibility and audibility, and the recourse to extensive carpeting is an unfortunate pattern that seems now to be undergoing a gradual reversal. The crucial issue concerns the ability of all assembled to hear both their own and others' voices, as well as the voices and instruments of the pastoral musicians.

Concerning instruments, *Sacrosanctum Concilium's* extolling of the pipe organ⁴¹ finds merit in virtue of its having "breath" in its windchest(s) and resonant, harmonic vibrations in its pipes. The Constitution's openness to other instruments is conditioned by such criteria as their dignity and suitability, but the latter point is best developed in terms of the resonance, pitch, and rhythm that stringed instruments and drums, for example, can provide. The placement of instruments and musicians is, indeed, important as well, but this concern must again be negotiated not only on the basis of visibility in relation to the assembly but also audibility. As the Bishops' Committee document aptly advises, the electronic amplification of voices is a compromising necessity over against the preferable design of a space that does not require it.⁴² This technology needs to be used sparingly, at minimal levels, so as to prevent both the distortion of the resonances in the cantor's or other musicians' voices, as well as an overpowering of the resonances of the rest of the assembly.

The acoustical condition of a given space numbers prominently among the several factors that liturgical musicians must take into account in practicing their ministries. An organist must know the reverberation time of the room and take it into account when accompanying a cantor or soloist, especially if the singer is at a significant distance from the organ. This awareness of resonance and sound delay is also essential to successful hymn playing. The organist must set the pace of the hymn and maintain it despite the fact that the sound of the assembly's singing may well reach the

⁴¹ See *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 120.

⁴² See *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, no. 51.

organist a few seconds "behind" the notes she or he is playing. For these reasons the conscious intent of the organist is of no small importance to the service he or she is rendering to the worshipping church. Depending on whether a space has a lengthy or short reverberation time, the organist needs to detach the notes or connect them in a more *legato* style, respectively. In addition, the competent organist seeks to make the instrument "breathe" by detaching notes at places where the human voices of the assembly would need to take a breath. Regardless of the space, the organist must focus her or his breathing and through it, bring about the quality of sound, pace, and rhythm she or he intends the assembly to enjoy in singing the particular song. The organist who is privileged to play a fine organ that is well voiced to a particular room, and who does so by drawing his or her consciousness through breath in the body, enjoys over time the experience of the musical instrument teaching the musician.

The integration of the mind's intention and the frequency of sound produced in the body is crucial to the ministry of the cantor leading the assembly in its gathering song and, of course, the music of the entire liturgy. Sound and music therapist Jonathan Goldman explains that the concept of intention "encompasses the overall state of the person making the sound and involves the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of that person. . . . It is the consciousness we have when we are making a sound."⁴³ Goldman suggests that one can readily grasp what he means by the concept if one reflects on the contrasting experiences of being bored when listening to a singer who has an excellent and well-trained voice but being deeply moved when listening to someone whose voice is not nearly of such quality or technical precision. The difference lies in the intention — the admittedly difficult concept to describe, let alone quantify — that each of the two singers brings to the performance of the music. Goldman subscribes to the theory that the intention is usually created in the "stillpoint" between our taking breath into our lungs and releasing it in the sound we produce.⁴⁴ It is this factor of intention, this joining of mind and body in the practice of liturgical music, that cantors need to examine and

⁴³Goldman, *Healing Sounds*, 18, 138.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 139.

nurture within themselves so that they may convey this positive sound to the assembly and enhance the possibility of a yet more full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy.

Another approach to the concept of intentionality in liturgical music emerges if we consider the choice and performance of a specific hymn in a specific context — such as a gathering hymn for a parish's worship on a Sunday in Ordinary Time. Numerous liturgical theologians and musicians have profitably explored the significance of joining text and tune in the composition and execution of hymnody. In a recent treatment of the topic, E. Byron Anderson describes how the singing of a hymn commits participants in the purposeful intention of producing sound and rhythm in a manner distinct from ordinary speech such that: "The images, themes, and claims of the text [of the hymn] are realized not as text but as a 'writing on the body' in performance."⁴⁵ Over time, the assembly's singing of the hymn results in a simultaneously personal and communal experience whereby the hymn "begins, so to speak, to take on a life of its own and to have its way with us. Writing in body and mind, the hymn is no longer only the expressive statement 'This is who I am' but a constituting statement, 'This is who you are coming to be'."⁴⁶

The notion of intentionality, then, encompasses both productive and receptive action of body, mind, and spirit by all participating in the ritual music of the liturgy. The specific responsibilities of the presider, ministers of music, and the other members of the assembly, of course, entail further distinctions of intention and performance, the discussion of which we must forego here. Suffice it to note the pastoral importance of decisions concerning selection of ritual music, styles of musical leadership, the fostering of familiarity and, quite frankly, pleasure in the assembly's singing. All contribute to the quality of communal sharing in divine worship, of proclamation and response to the Word of God living and acting in our midst.

⁴⁵ E. Byron Anderson, "'O for a Heart to Praise My God': Hymning the Self before God," *Liturgy and the Moral Self: Humanity at Full Stretch Before God*, 120. Anderson draws on, among others, the important scholarly work of Teresa Berger, *Theology in Hymns?* (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1995); and Frank Burch Brown, *Religious Aesthetics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1989).

⁴⁶ Anderson, 120.



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