

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN CHURCH

I

Historical View

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN CHURCH: AND THE ENCYCLICAL ON MUSIC

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Of the many points treated in the encyclical of Pius XII on sacred music, the question of the use of instruments in Church is also considered. The three qualities proper to liturgy as mentioned in section III of the encyclical are "let it (the music) be holy, let it be an example of genuine art, and let it exhibit the quality of universality . . ." (*sancta sit, verae artis specimen praebeat, universalitatis prae se ferat notam.*)¹ After applying these norms—restate-ments of the *Motu Proprio*—to chant, Renaissance polyphony and modern composition, the document refers these qualifications to the organ and other musical instruments also.

As treated elsewhere by the author, the organ has been associated with ecclesiastical music from the earliest times.² Yet there are other instruments which can be called into service in the production of truly sacred music as long as there is nothing profane or noisy about them.³ The question of profane and religious instruments, of course, comes back to the general discussion of profane and religious music.⁴ The instruments, as instruments, are in themselves neither religious nor profane, but may be employed for either purpose. Thus the reed *aulos*, used by the Greeks with percussion instruments in Dionysiac rites and dances, was in itself simply an instrument and nothing more. The same *aulos* was introduced into marching and drilling, according to Athanaeos.⁵ This double oboe (Oboenpaar),⁶ however, and percussion instruments could easily have led astray the early Christian congregation due to their accidental external connection and association with pagan environment and ceremonies. Yet the Jewish cognate was used in the Old Testament: the *halil*. The Septuagint translates this as *aulos* and the Vulgate as *tibia*. In the Second Temple the sound of from two to

¹ Pius XII, *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina*, in *Acta Apostolica Sedis*, Jan. 28, 1956, p. 15.

² Smith, F., O.F.M., *The Organ in the Light of Pius XII's Encyclical on Sacred Music*, in *The American Organist*, February, 1957, p. 44f.

³ Pius XII, *op. cit.*, p. 19 ". . . dummodo nihil profanum, nihil clamor et strepens redoleant, quod sacrae actioni et loci gravitati neutiquam conveniat . . ."

⁴ Smith, F., O.F.M., *The PreReformation Kirchenlied and Congregational Singing*, in *Franciscan Studies* (St. Bonaventure University) December 1956, pass.

⁵ Strunk, Oliver, *Source Readings in Music History* (New York, Norton, 1950) p. 51.

⁶ Sachs, Curt, *Die Musik der Antike*, in *Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft*, (New York, Musurgia, 1931) ed. Buecken, I, p. 24.

twelve pipes was heard twelve times annually during certain feasts. The New Testament records the use of the *halil* at funerals and funeral processions.⁷ Oboes are still *tolerated* in the Catholic Church, and instruments may be used even at funerals, if the usual prescriptions are observed.⁸

The *halil* was but one of the instruments used by the Jews. The *mna'anim* was the Hebrew name for the Egyptian *sistrum* (Greek: *seistrion*), which together with the *shawm* (not mentioned among the Jewish instruments) were two musical instruments of pagan Egyptian origin.⁹ The instruments used by the Jews in their temple services, such as the *nevel*, *kinnor*, *shofar*, *uggav*, *tof*, *paamonim*, etc., are the Jewish version of the common instrumental patrimony of the Mediterranean. Orchestras of the Egyptian temples had many points in common with those of the Temple of Jerusalem. When the psalmist (Ps. 150) called on all the temple instruments to praise Yahweh, he called upon instruments that had been used by secular and pagan Mediterranean musical interests, and which, therefore, had been used for pagan and profane purposes. But the total effect of the sentiment of the psalmist concerning the duty of all instruments and all things that had breath to praise the God of Israel, is tremendous:

Praise the Lord in his sanctuary,
praise him in the firmament of his strength.
Praise him for his mighty deeds,
praise him for his sovereign majesty.
Praise him with the blast of trumpet,
praise him with lyre and harp,
Praise him with the timbrel and dance,
praise him with strings and pipe.
Praise him with sounding cymbals,
praise him with clanging cymbals.
Let everything that has breath
praise the Lord. Alleluia.¹⁰

⁷ Gradenwitz, Peter, *The Music of Israel*, (New York, Norton, 1940) p. 53f.
Idelsohn, A. Z., *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York, Tudor 1948).

Sachs, Curt, *The History of Musical Instruments* (New York, Norton, 1940) pp. 118 and 119, cf. *halil*.

⁸ Hanin, A., S. J., *La Legislation Ecclesiastique en matiere de Musique Religieuse* (Desclee, Paris, 1933) pp. 87 & 93 Compostellana Rescripts.

Romita, Fiorenzo, *Il Codice Giuridico della Musica Sacra* (Roma, Desclee, 1952) canon 60, No. 3, p. 25.

⁹ Gradenwitz, *op. cit.* p. 33.

¹⁰ *The Holy Bible*, vol. iii, *The Sapiential Books: Job to Sirach*, ed. Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (St. Anthony Guild Press, Paterson, N. J., 1955) p. 351.

Instruments, therefore, as instruments, are neither profane nor religious, except, as music itself, religious *secundum quid*, in that they may be adjudged suitable for introduction into religious use. Yet it was the Church's experience that elements harmful to the faith and piety of the faithful could well enter the sacred precincts by means of instruments, as environmentally connected with secular or immoral practices.¹¹ It was with this in mind that Clement of Alexandria decried the use of the trumpet, timbrel, aulos, etc., all except the *lyra* and *kithara* of David. As he called the Word *Our New Song*,¹² now he also appealed to the use of but one instrument, one of peace: the *Word*. This is, of course, allegorical. In the *Paidagogos* Clement gives an allegorical interpretation to psalm 150: the trumpet was the blast of doom's day; the tongue was the harp of the Lord; our bodies organs and the sinews strings; cymbals meant the sound of man's tongue producing words, etc.¹³ The famous Alexandrian school with Origen in the lead outdid itself in allegorizing about musical instruments. For Origen, the trumpet was the efficacy of the word of God; cymbals, the soul inflamed with love of Christ, etc. Allegory did not appear only because the Church was forced to justify the fact that instruments crept into use in the sacred precincts despite bans to the contrary, as some have maintained.¹⁴ This was a partial reason. The school of Alexandria would have allegorized, ban or no ban. For Athanasius, instruments also had an allegorical content. St. Augustine, for his part, also regarded musical instruments in symbolic fashion: "On the timbrel leather is stretched, on the psaltery gut is stretched; on either instrument the flesh is crucified."¹⁵ The kithara, which in David's hands calmed the morose Saul, was for some the victory of Christ over Satan.¹⁶ Chrysostom, who wrote: "Let her (Laeta, daughter of a friend) be deaf to the sound of the organ, and not know even the use of the pipe, the lyre and the kithara," also wrote in a homily on the Acts that the kithara was the symbol of Christian love in

¹¹ Halter, Carl, *The Practice of Sacred Music* (St. Louis, Concordia, 1955) p. 21.

¹² Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, ed. Putnam.

¹³ Clement of Alexandria, Christ the Educator, in *Fathers of the Church*, vol. 23 (Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1954), transl. Simon P. Wood, C. P., p. 131f.

¹⁴ Reuter, Evelyn, *Les Représentations de la Musique dans la Sculpture Romane en France* (Paris, Leroux, 1938) p. 8 ". . . force lui fut de céder et, alors, cherchant à sa faiblesse une excuse, elle (l'Église) soumit les instruments à une édifiante et naïve interprétation symbolique destinée à racheter, par l'intermédiaire du signe, ce que leur son contenait d'impur."

Gilbert & Kuhn, *A History of Esthetics* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1953) p. 119 Cf. Chapter five, "Medieval Esthetics" on the philosophical background and meaning of symbolism.

Lang, P. H., *Music in Western Civilization* (New York, Norton, 1941) p. 54.

¹⁵ Reese, Gustave, *Music in the Middle Ages* (New York, Norton, 1940) p. 61f.

¹⁶ Gradenwitz, op. cit., p. 47: David's instrument was most probably not a harp but a kind of lyre.

which all virtues came together in a consonance, like the strings of the kithara, when properly played. Eusebius disapproved of all musical instruments much in the same fashion, but excluded even the kithara, calling rather the human soul the kithara, on which a fitting hymn of praise was to be sung to God. Salvian, the Presbyter, brings out the case against music in its relation to the theatre, when he decried music halls along with circuses and theatres for the obscenities.¹⁷ St. Valerian mentions the dangers of seductive songs and a libidinous voice and also mentions "unfortunate men palpitating to every note of the flute."¹⁸ No wonder that musical instruments were allegorized and sublimated.

Luther, for his part, gave a similar exegesis of the musical instruments. For him the psaltery was Christ in his divinity, sitting among the ten choirs of angels. Thus "to praise with the psalter" meant to meditate on heavenly things and on the angels. Christ, again, was the harp, and like the strings of that instrument was stretched out on the cross.¹⁹ And Luther further states that St. Jerome would condemn him as a musician—Luther played on the flute and the lute—but justifies himself by saying that Jerome had his faults also.²⁰

Indeed, Jerome did inveigh against pagan music, as did also Basil, Arnobius and Ambrose, in addition to those already mentioned. But, as we have seen, they had to cope in the early Church with the forces of paganism, magic incarnations, orgiastic rites, etc. The mentality of the Church Fathers is understandable. A similar situation is to be seen in the teachings of the rabbis of the Hellenistic period, and later in the writings of the theologians of Islam, all opposed to pagan music because it constituted a part of pagan rites.²¹ Restrictions on the part of the Church Fathers applied not only to instruments in church but also to the quality and execution of music allowed in the sanctuary,—Clement of Alexandria, for instance, disapproving of the "chromatic modulations" in use among court dancers.

Besides the organ, it is hard to say with certainty just what other instruments were used, and when, in the early Middle Ages. The miniature from the Utrecht Psalter of the ninth century may

¹⁷ Salvian the Presbyter, in *Fathers of the Church* (New York, Cima, 1947) transl. J. F. O'Sullivan, pp. 155 & 156.

¹⁸ Valerian, Homilies, in *Fathers of the Church* (Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1953) transl. George E. Ganes, S. J., pp. 339 & 340.

¹⁹ Buchwald, Georg, *Martin Luthers Leben und Lehre*, (Guetersloh, Bertelsman, 1947) p. 189 Die Musik in gottesdienstlichem Gebrauch, 5

²⁰ Luther, Martin, *Saemmelte Werke*, (ed. Erlanger 1854) vi, p. 111.

²¹ Gradenwitz, *op. cit.*,

be an artistic testimony to an already established custom of using instruments in Church.²² The *lyre*, *chrotta*, *musa* and others are mentioned in early sources, but their exact role, if any, in church music is difficult to pin down. The fact that writers such as Cassidorus and others continued the symbolism and allegory of the Fathers helps becloud the issue. It is often hard to say whether the instruments they describe were actually used, or whether they were obsolete instruments that simply furnished the occasion for an allegorical comment. In his *De Institutione Musica* Boethius mentions the *tibia* by name, and mentions other types such as strings, percussion and the instrument run by water, the *hydraulis*.²³ Instrumental music for him is the third in his classification. Music of the universe and that of the human voice precede it.²⁴

The *liturgical drama* which arose also brought many instruments into church use. The drama in question originated from the practice of *troping*. The famous Christmas trope of Tuotilo is among the earliest,²⁵ and outstanding is the Easter presentation, *Quem quaeritis*.²⁶ These dramas mark the beginning of instrumental music as also the use of the vernacular in Church. A study of the liturgical drama would lead to a partial deepening of our concept of early instrumental church music.

We know that during the 13th century the tenor of motets sung in church were often performed in church by means of instruments.²⁷ During the 14th century instruments frequently doubled with voices in the singing of melismatic melody lines in the madrigal, and the voices failing, the melisma became an instrumental solo.²⁸ As far as opening melismata are concerned, it is possible to postulate instrumental performance as primary. Such style of madrigal performance doubtless had its counterpart in the precincts of the church. Often enough the instrument in question would be the mixture organ. The *caudae* of the *conductus*, moreover, may have been instrumental, and the three voices above the freely invented Latin text were probably taken by instruments, accompanying homorhythmically. By the 14th century, the number of instruments used

²² McKinney & Anderson, *Music in History*, (New York, American Book Co., 1949).

²³ Sumner, W. L., *The Organ* (New York, Philosophical Library, 1955) cf. p. 17f. for a detailed discussion of the water organ.

²⁴ Strunk, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

²⁵ Lang, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

²⁶ Haas, Robert, *Auffuehrungspraxis in der Musik*, in *Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft* (New York, Musurgia, 1931) IIb, p. 61.

Van Waesberghe, Jos. Smits, *A Dutch Easter Play*, in *Musica Disciplina*, vol. vii (Amsterdam, American Institute of Musicology, 1953) p. 15f.

²⁷ Reese, Gustave, *Music in the Middle Ages* (New York, Norton, 1940) p. 312.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 370.

in church, in addition to the organ, has been conjectured as considerable. Whatever instruments happened to be on hand would be employed, though there would be no orchestra in the modern sense of that word.

The encyclical of Pius XII on sacred music mentions the string family as highly desirable among instruments, after the organ, because of its ability to move the souls of the Christian faithful. The encyclical mentions a definite play on the emotions—which may come as a shock to stoics—“with a certain unspeakable impulse they express the emotions of the soul, whether of sorrow or gladness . . .” (“ . . . seu maestos seu laetos animi sensus ineffabili vi quadam exprimunt.”)²⁹ Joannes de Groccheo mentions the same thing, and singles out the *viol* as first among the string instruments. Of all the instruments in modern times, the string family probably blends best with the organ and the choir. It has a long and illustrious history, originating in the East. The first evidence of the bowed instruments is to be found in the Spanish 10th and 11th century manuscripts.³⁰ The Byzantine *lyra* became Europe's chief bowed instrument in the Middle Ages, under the name of *viele*, *fiedel*, *viola* and *fiddle*.

Joannes de Garlandia's *Introductio Musicae* defines *musica falsa*—after *Ars Nova* was afoot³¹—and mentions with other contemporaries the close connection between *musica falsa* or *ficta* and the use of instruments. However, the human voice was probably included under the designation of instruments.

Among the early contemporaries of Dufay, Jean Franchois presents us with an *Ave Virgo* with a *Trompetta Introitus*. This was to be performed in the lowest part with a slide-trumpet, after which the voices executed the *taleas* of the isorythmic motet.³² Among the works of Dufay, himself, the *cantus firmus* Mass is most important, as he was probably the first Frenchman to work in this form. Since the *cantus firmus* was in rather long time values, it would not be easily distinguished unless it were played by an instrument such as the slide-trumpet, with or without the voices of that part.

In the Renaissance, secular and religious music were brought closely together. Church music was used for secular events, and while the church had always employed wind instruments, as we have

²⁹ Pius XII, in *op. cit.*, p. 19.

³⁰ Sachs, Curt, *The History of Musical Instruments*, (New York, Norton, 1940) p. 275.

³¹ Ursprung, Otto, *Die Katolische Kirchenmusik*, in *Handbuch der Musikwissenschaft*, VIII, p. 145f. *Instrumentalbegleitete Kirchenmusik im Stil und kuensterischer Umgebung der Ars Nova*.

³² Reese, G., *Music in the Renaissance* (New York, Norton, 1954) p. 42.

seen, it now assimilated also those instruments which made up intimate chamber music: the lutes, *viola da braccio*, *da gamba*, *violone*, probably also the *theorbo*, or archlute.³³

Gafori has a *Missa Trombetta* in the early 16th century. And in the *Choralis Constantinus* of Heinrich Isaak, the first polyphonic setting of the Propers of the Mass covering the entire church year, the style of writing of *cantus firmus* indicates the probable use of instruments to negotiate quick changes in register, long note values, and a rather wide range.

A classic example of the use of instruments in church is the *Ecce Beatam Lucem* of Striggio at Florence. It was performed in 1569 with eight *tromboni*, eight *viole*, eight *flauti grossi*, and *strumento da penna* and a *liuto grosso*.³⁴ The Gabriellis, of course, are famous for their polychoral vocal-instrumental compositions at San Marco, Venice. They need no special elaboration. This was the time of the "colossal baroque" and the splendor of the liturgical service at San Marco knew no limits. Interesting is the title of Andrea Gabrieli's early motets, "*Motecta . . . tum viva voce, tum omnis generis instrumentalis cantatu commodissimae.*"³⁵

The orchestral effusions of the Baroque and Romantic eras were in a way already outlined in the 16th century. In 1526 Erasmus was said to have complained at the use of such varied instruments as pipes, flutes, trumpets and trombones in church. The organ was accompanied by trumpets, trombones and even kettledrums, in union with the choral parts. Haydn was later to use *timpani* in the *Agnus Dei* of the *Mass in C Major*, the *Missa Tempore Belli*, foreshadowing Beethoven.³⁶ And even Bruckner was to use a *timpani* roll at the "*et resurrexit*" of his *D Minor Mass*.³⁷ During the Renaissance, Dufay and his contemporaries, Ockeghem, Obrecht, Josquin, Brummel LaRue, to mention but a few major composers, employed instruments in church. As every student of music history realizes, the pure Renaissance *a capella* style is a figment of the imagination. The term itself did not come into being till the Baroque Era, and is displayed in a title of Ghizzolo's works.³⁸ A *capella* style was but one of three possibilities during the Renaissance. The other two possibilities were: all instruments; or, a combination of voices and instruments. Monteverdi employed the *stile antico* con-

³³ Lang, *op. cit.*, p. 239f.

³⁴ Reese, in *op. cit.*, p. 487.

³⁵ Reese, *ibid.*, p. 496.

³⁶ Geiringer, Carl, *Haydn, A Creative Life in Music* (New York, Norton, 1946) p. 302f.

³⁷ Wolff, Werner, *Anton Bruckner, Rustic Genius* (New York, Dutton, 1942) p. 258.

³⁸ Bukofzer, Manfred, *Music in the Baroque Era* (New York, Norton, 1947) p. 13f.

sciously in his sacred compositions of strict liturgical character, and employed the *a capella* style with reduced instrumentation, or with voices along.³⁹ The proponents of a pure *a capella* style in Caecilian historicism surely must have been cognizant of titles, such as "*provocibus vel instrumentis*" in very many of the manuscripts of the *Antiquitates Musicae Ratisbonenses*.

The orchestras that played in church during the Renaissance were better balanced and coordinated than those of "Gothic" tradition. But it was to be the Baroque Period that was to see the fusion of voices and orchestra into one glorious concert of living faith in the temple of religion. The Gabriellis at San Marco have been mentioned. Besides them, however, there are innumerable other composers who brought into the church the glorious sonority of orchestral-vocal music. Unfortunately, the liturgical balance was often upset, so that in many cases the ban on music was liturgically justifiable. The motets of Monteverdi, Grandi, Pace, Saracini and countless others brought baroque monody into church use, and Gregorian chant, the peak of medieval monody was no longer used as *cantus firmus* in the composition of Masses. Viadana's Masses for solo voices and continue are the exception. There was, of course, the school of Anerio, Allegri, Nanino, Soriano, etc., which espoused the cause of *stile antico*. Even Monteverdi wrote in *stile antico*, not as an attempt at archaicism, but rather simply by way of the natural outgrowth of the so-called polarity of styles in the Baroque Era. This, despite the fact that he was the proponent *kat' exochen* of the *prattica seconda*, as shown briefly by the defence of it against the academic Artusi in the *dichiarazione* preceding the *Il quinto libro de' madrigali*. The commentary on the forward was written by his brother, Giulio Cesare Monteverdi.⁴⁰ Schrade points out the apparent reluctance, however, with which Monteverdi composed in the *stile antico* both at Mantua and at St. Mark's in Venice.⁴¹

Besides the better known Masses of Carissimi, LeGrenzi, Landi, Lotti, etc., there were also the Masses of Chapentier, Lully and Dumont in the court of Louis XIV. We have here the beginnings of the *messe basse solennelle* also. The motets of Lully, such as the famous *Miserere*, were scored for a brilliant Lullian orchestra complete with kettledrums.⁴²

The height of the baroque gave us the incomparable duo, Bach

³⁹ Schrade, Leo, *Monteverdi, Creator of Modern Music* (New York, Norton, 1950) p. 317.

⁴⁰ Strunk, *op. cit.*, p. 405.

⁴¹ Schrade, *op. cit.*, p. 247f: Sacred Music in Mantua; p. 314f: The Composer at San Marco.

⁴² Bukofzer, *opus cit.*, p. 163.

and Handel, the former with the magnificent *Mass in B Minor*, evidently not suited to liturgical purposes today, the latter with compositions for the Catholic Church during his Italian period with the *Arcadia*. Here Handel did as the Romans by setting psalms to music, as, for example, the *Laudate Pueri* and the *Dixit Dominus*.⁴³

With Pergolesi and Jomelli, Hasse aided in the introduction of sonata and rondo form into church music, and the symphonic Masses often became more the property of instruments than voices. For the perfection of the symphonic Mass, we look to Mozart and Haydn.

Mozart and Haydn brought their musical genius to the altar during the classical period, and Mozart, particularly, was quite prolific in ecclesiastical compositions. There are eighteen Masses and the unfinished *Requiem*—completed by Suessmayer after the composer's untimely demise. In addition there were Litanies, Vespers, Kyrie's Offertories, Introits, *Te Deums* a *Tantum Ergo*, etc.⁴⁴ One fruit of his study of Bach was the great *C Minor Mass* which brought his contrapuntal vocal and instrumental proficiency to the fore. This Mass was performed in Salzburg at the *Petruskirche* in 1783.⁴⁵

Haydn's Mass of St. Caecilia was likewise unsuited to liturgical purposes, and this type of Mass composition, approaching the Neapolitan cantata style, was abandoned by the master himself, as unliturgical. After the *Missa Celensis*, Haydn stopped composing Masses until 1792, due partially to a decree by Joseph II banning more complicated instrumental forms from church use.⁴⁶ The six Masses composed between 1792 and 1802, however, are liturgically more acceptable. The vocal solos were greatly reduced, polyphony became more important, and the master strove to give more adequate interpretation to the text.⁴⁷

It was Michael Haydn whose music was probably more acceptable liturgically than that of the great Haydn, Joseph. His two *Missae Quadragesimales* were recognized as great works by Joseph Haydn and Mozart.⁴⁸

⁴³ Abraham, Gerald, *Handel, a Symposium* (London, Oxford, 1954) Chapter V: The Church Music, by Basil Lam, p. 156.

Deutsch, Otto, *Handel, A Documentary Biography* (New York, Norton, 1954) p. 19.

⁴⁴ Turner, W. J., *Mozart, the Man and his Works* (New York, Tudor, 1938) p. 435.

⁴⁵ Haas, Robert, *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* (Potsdam, Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1950) p. 74f.

Turner, *op. cit.*, p. 324, 330.

⁴⁶ Geiringer, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 302.

⁴⁸ Weinman, Karl, *History of Church Music* (Ratisbon, Pustet, 1910) p. 194.

Beethoven's *Mass in C* and his *Missa Solemnis* fall into the same class as Bach's *B Minor*, as far as liturgical suitability is concerned. No one can or would call into doubt their worth as concert Masses, however. These compositions are masterpieces of orchestral-vocal work, even if the voice leading at times reminisces of instrumentalism.

Analogous in concept to the Catholic Caecilian Movement under the patronage of Ludwig I of Bavaria, was the Berlin restoration of music according to the prototypes of Bach and Palestrina—the latter favored—under Lutheran Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia. Mendelssohn himself composed for the Berlin Cathedral in archaic fashion. During this period of revival of choral societies and of reverence for rediscovered glories of the past, reactionism was able to justify itself quite easily, in view of the type of church music being produced by the greats of the Romantic era. It was also the time of the foundation in Paris of the *Institution Royale de Musique Classique et Religieuse* by Choron. All of this was diametrically opposed to the orchestral style of the classic masters. And it was here that the modern false idea of a *capella* style originated.⁴⁹ In contrast to Berlioz, Liszt, Gounod and Franck stood the figures of Caspar Ett, Karl Proske, Mettenleiter, Schrems, Franz Witt, Haberl, Mitterer, Diebold, Wiltberger and others of the *Caecilienbewegung*.⁵⁰ Ett and Aiblinger wrote Palestrina-like church music but often with orchestral scoring. The forces of historicism supplied liturgically “proper” music to the churches in sharp contrast to the work of the real masters. The works of the latter were often unsuitable for the church, or adaptable only with the broadest musical resources, as in the case of Berlioz' *Grande Messes des Morts*. The latter reshifted the texts of the liturgy and would not be acceptable today for Church use.

Standing in stark contrast to the Caecilian works were the Masses of Franz Liszt, such as the *Missa Choralis*, *Coronation Mass* and *Missa solemnis*, the latter two scored for orchestra.⁵¹ Gounod composed fifteen Masses, one for orchestra alone, voices *ad lib!* None of these, even much of Franck's church music, are liturgically “proper” in the sense that they would integrate well with the established liturgy of the Church. However sincere were the compositions of Rossini, as the *Petite Messe Solenne*, and the *Requiem* or *Te Deum* of Verdi, these works are more for the concert hall than for the liturgical service. In the age when the orchestra was supreme,

⁴⁹ Bukofzer, *op. cit.*, p. 158f.

⁵⁰ Weinman, *op. cit.*, p. 161f.

⁵¹ Sitwell, S., Liszt (London, Cassell, 1955) p. 236f.

these works were masterpieces of the union of voices and instruments. The artistic effect was grandiose.

Probably the only composer of this period who used orchestra with voices in Mass compositions liturgically acceptable, and the middle ground between Romantic frenzy and dull historicism, was Anton Bruckner. Probably the most famous of his Masses was the *E Minor* scored for voices plus wind instruments. The work is adapted to the liturgy, in that the priest's opening intonation, for one thing, at the *Gloria* and *Credo* is omitted by the composer. The *D Minor* and *F Minor* Masses have a richer orchestral scoring, and the *F Minor* has a musically closer connection with the text of the liturgy.⁵²

In modern times, of course, we have the controversial Poulenc *Mass in G*, the Stravinsky *Mass*, the *Missa Brevis* of Zoltan Kodaly, the archaic *Mass in G* of Ralph Vaughn Williams, a *Mass* by Roy Harris, recent Masses by Rev. R. Woollen.⁵³ The instrumental factor other than organ does not loom as problematic in these compositions.

The entire history of the composition of Masses, motets, etc., for church use shows us what a great role instruments played in enhancing the liturgical workshop. Among Protestant denominations, the Moravians at Bethlehem, Pa., now outstanding for their Bach presentations, introduced instruments into church from their inception in this country.⁵⁴ The reason that the Church banned some baroque, classic and 19th century Masses was not that they were not great works of art, but that they did not integrate well with the established liturgy, especially that of the Mass.

Modern Masses, even when scored for instruments, are in themselves as suitable for use in divine service as is their integrating factor vis-a-vis the sacred liturgies. The fact that they are modern in idiom does not enter into direct discussion. Modern idiom should be pursued, since the Church favors the progress of the arts in all lines. Yet there is such a thing as church legislation on the use of instruments that must form a necessary part of this discussion. Modern composers will have to bear in mind the canonical *status quo* if they score Masses, motets and such like for instruments *obligato*, or for orchestra as such.

⁵² Wolff, *op. cit.*, p. 256f.

⁵³ Hume, Paul, *Catholic Church Music* (New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1956) pp. 56, 64.

⁵⁴ Maurer, Joseph A. *Moravian Church Music—1457-1957*, in *The American Guild of Organists Quarterly*, Jan. 1957, p. 6.

II

Legislation

As we saw, the Fathers of the Church very early objected to the use of instruments in the Church. These objections were subsequently followed up by legislation. Simultaneously, however, we realize that often a *praxis contra legem* also accompanied the laws, much in the same way as it did the prohibition of the *Kirchenlied* during the *Hochamt* (High Mass) in Germany.

The Council of Trent banned sensuous and lascivious music from the liturgy, in the *Decretum de observandis et evitandis in celebratione Missae*.¹ Whatever in orchestral music, therefore, was too closely linked to the sensuous merely for sensuousness' sake, or reminisced of worldly influences, was apt also to distract the faithful from prayer and waft them into a world quite apart from that of liturgy. This was the Tridentine ideology. As we saw in the case of the *Kirchenlied*, however, caution must be used in pinning down exactly what is *voluptuaria et lasciva*. *Voluptas* as immoderate pleasure certainly should be banned from church, but this does not mean that all pleasure should be taken out of church music, vocal or instrumental. Pleasure is, after all, a God-given element of human activity, and no instrument is in itself an *ipso facto* producer of *voluptas*. It will therefore become a question of association, as it was in the early church: association with Dionysiac orgies. Since, however, one will look hard in XVI century history to what we would now-a-days style as Dionysiac orgiastic rites, (unless we look at the beginning of the *Carnivale* festival) we are brought to the practical conclusion that the number of instruments of the Gothic and Renaissance exuberance conflicted with the more serene (but not dull) style of more conservative elements within the church.

The Constitution of Alexander VII (Feb. 11, 1749) mentions those instruments that are tolerated in church in the Holy Year encyclical, *Annus Qui*.² Along with the instrumental music of the organ, those of other families of instruments must not be of a theatrical style nor too long. Stringed instruments were allowed and fagotti. Forbidden were timpani, hunting horns, trumpets, oboes, flutes, salteri, mandolins and all instruments of a theatrical nature. This instruction decimated the orchestra of the late Baroque and

¹ Pius XII, *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina*, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Jan. 1956, p. 9, footnote 11.

² Hanin, A., S. J., *La Legislation Ecclesiastique en matiere de Musique Religieuse* (Desclée, Paris, 1933).

Romita, Fiorenzo, *Ius Musicae Liturgicae*, (Rome, Turini, 1936).

Papal Documents on Sacred Music, in *The White List* (St. Greg. Soc'y, 1956).

early Classic periods. That would mean, legislatively, the subsequent orchestral Masses of the Haydns, Mozart and lesser lights. It is easy to see the exclusion of mandolins and perhaps salteri, but it is hard to envision the prohibition on trumpets, especially in view of their noble fanfare role at the Mass for years. Once more, the legislation was not directed against the instrument as instrument, but against the use of the theatrical style of the baroque and classic opera, to which the people were greatly addicted, once opera became of public domain and was no longer the property of princes. Haas mentions the reform movement of Archbishop Jerome in his critical biography of Mozart, and shows how in the *Missae breves* (K. 49, 65) for the Sunday service at Salzburg, Mozart restricted the orchestra to strings and organ, and showed leanings toward the stricter style of Fux and Eberlin. The four Masses of the period 1773-1774, however much under the influence of the reform of the archbishop in question, show a more developed orchestra and the influence of orchestral form as such.³

The Vicar of Leo XII, Cardinal Zurla, issued a decree on music, (Dec. 20, 1824) to the effect that among other things instrumental music was forbidden in church without special permission. Absolutely banned was music which qualified as noisy or inappropriate to the Church.

Cardinal Patri reiterated these ideas in his *Instructions for Directors of Music* (Nov. 20, 1856). Once more, special permission was necessary for the employment of instruments in Church. Forbidden was the use of drums, timpani, cymbals, all percussion and any noisy instruments. A *monitum* to composers pointed out the fact that the Church merely tolerated instrumental music, and that they must compose accordingly.

Article 12 of the *Regulations on Sacred Music* of Leo XIII (Sept. 21, 1884) points out once again that noisy instruments were forbidden: drums, bass drums, cymbals, bagpipes, the piano and so on. There seems to have been a rash of prohibitions on noisy and percussive instruments during the Romance Era, a legal testimony to their actual use in church. Continued legislation became imperative, just as it was necessary for the recent encyclical on music to point out and reemphasize certain phases of the *Motu Proprio*. Ordinarily much legislation on a subject points to widespread abuse.

The *Motu Proprio* (Nov. 22, 1903) reminds the church musician that the music proper to the church was vocal music, and that besides the organ other instruments could be used only within due

³ Haas, Robert, *Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* (Potsdam, Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion, 1950) Zweite Auflage, p. 75f.

limits, with proper safeguards and with the special permission of the local Ordinary of the diocese. The organ or other instruments must never overpower the vocal music, but rather sustain it. Instruments must be governed by the same principles that apply for any type of church music: holiness, goodness of form, universality. As we notice, the encyclical of Pius XII mentions the same thing but in different words. Once more the use of the piano is interdicted, as also are noisy instruments such as drums, cymbals, bells and so forth. Doubtless, this continued repetitiousness is witness to the fact that besides continued disobedience to the church on the part of musicians, the Pope also made copious references to previously existing legislation on the subject. He himself was to be used as source material by Pius XII on the same subject, though Pius XII does not go into particular in the prohibition of certain instruments in the encyclical, *Musicae Sacrae Disciplina*.

The *Motu Proprio* brings up the subject of bands, and forbids the use of band music in church. In special cases with due permission a limited number of wind instruments were allowed, if judiciously used and proportionate to the place, and provided that the style of the music be ecclesiastical. The use of band music outside of church, however, were permitted, with the Ordinary's leave, with the proviso that no profane pieces be used. It was rather counseled that the band limit itself to accompanying the singing of the hymns employed by the faithful in their processions. This last instance is of practical import for Corpus Christi processions in those places where the band is actually used.

In the *Papal Letter to Cardinal Respighi* the Pope mentions the scandal that could be given to non-Romans coming to Rome and hearing instruments used in church as they were in the theatre, though they themselves did not use instruments in the church of their own provenance. In this he quotes the *Annus Qui* of Benedict XIV.

The *Regulations for the Province* of Rome repeat ecclesiastical documents to the effect that the organ is the only instrument proper to the church, that others require special permission, to be granted on rare and exceptional occasions. The use of a band for processions outside church is again permitted, with due permission, provided that the band use only sacred music or preferably limit itself to the accompaniment of hymns.

On April 15, 1905 the *Compostellana Rescript* was signed regarding the use of instruments in church. The use of the violin, viola, violoncello, double-bass, flute, clarinet and trumpet came up

for explicit statement, and received an affirmative answer, in compliance with the usual conditions and the wording of the question preamble. This amounts to an explicit canonization of the string section of the orchestra, and of the basic woodwind and brass sections. Another question asked about the use of instruments in the *Office for the Dead* and the *Requiem*. Instruments, came the reply, were forbidden in the Office but allowed at the Mass, with the usual limitations, plus those of the *Requiem Mass* music regulations. The use of the harmonium for these same purposes was also permitted.

Of interest are the replies to the three questions submitted by the music commission of Joseph Cardinal M. de Herrera y de la Iglesia. This is also called the *Compostellana Rescript*, after the Cardinal's diocese. (Nov. 13, 1908) The first question submitted asked whether in *musica sacra organica* oboes, clarinets and trombones could be used. The answer given was that oboes and clarinets could be tolerated provided that they were employed moderately and that each time the Bishop's permission be granted. Asked, secondly, if percussion instruments *timbales seu tympanos* were to be considered as noisy and distracting (*fragorosa et strepitantia*), the Sacred Congregation replied by referring to article 19 of the *Motu Proprio*, banning the drum from church use. Finally, the third question, whether these same could be used in sacred music and church orchestra, met with a negative reply. The rescript was signed by S. Cardinal Cretoni, Prefect, and D. Panici, archbishop of Laodicea, secretary.

The Apostolic Constitution *Divini Cultus* of Pius XI mentions the fact that attempts were being made to reintroduce instruments into church, and forbade it. Orchestra, it is here stated emphatically, is not a more perfect ecclesiastical *musica sacra* than the human voice. The church does not thereby intend to obstruct the progress of music, but simply wishes to reiterate the fact that the voices of the people and clergy are more acceptable than instrumental music. The organ is, rather, the instrument sanctioned by time and ecclesiastical documentation.⁴

The encyclical *Mediator Dei* does not deal specifically with the topic of instruments other than the organ. In speaking of modern music, it states that nothing profane should be allowed in church or anything written only to startle the faithful. This could apply indirectly to instruments in church.⁵

Last, but not least, Canon Law states that all lascivious or improper music (*lascivum aut impurum*) whether for organ, instru-

⁴ Pius XI, *Divini Cultus Sanctitatem* in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. xxi, 1929 p. 33f.

⁵ Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, vol. xxxix, Dec. 2, 1947, p. 590.

ments or voice, must be banned from use in church.⁶ This terminology goes back to the Tridentine prescriptions, as was seen in Chapter I. Canon 1264, 1, continues by stating that liturgical laws on sacred music are to be observed. (Section two of the same canon then deals with the singing of religious women at liturgical functions.)

Of interest to the practical musician should be the interpretations of these canonical prescriptions by recognized canon lawyers in the Church. In general, canon lawyers, in commenting on canon 1264, tend to limit themselves only to the content of the canon, without branching further. The exception to this is the commentary on canon 1264 by Ulric Beste, who in his *Introductio in Codicem* gives one of the finest interpretations of musical situation available.⁷ It is exact and to the point. He breaks his discussion of section one into six parts, not including an introductory article. In the section *De Instrumentis* he presents a fine breakdown of ecclesiastical legislation, stating with ecclesiastical documentation in mind that the human voice is superior to instrumental, reviewing the place of the organ in church services, presenting succinctly what we have already given in detail on the use of instruments within and without the church. Of interest is also a *responsum privatum* of Pius XI to Rev. Beatus Reiser, O.S.B. (June 29, 1930) concerning the use of the orchestra in church: where it has hitherto not been introduced, it should not be in the future; where it can be done away with without too much difficulty on the part of the faithful, it should be abrogated; but where it is an inveterate custom, the use of orchestra should only gradually be cut back till it disappears; in exceptional cases with the Ordinary's permission, Mass with orchestra can be permitted. Though this is only a private reply, it gives the mind of at least Pius XI on the matter. As to the words "*lascivum et impurum*", Beste is faithful to the Tridentine ideology which considered that music lascivous and improper which smacked of bad theatre and songs equally infected.

John Ferreres, S. J., gives but brief notice to the question of sacred music, in logical conformity to the plan for his volumes, *Institutiones Canonicae*.⁸ What he does present is the kernel of truth and the two main sources: the Motu Proprio, and the Council of Trent: *Musicae impurae exclusione . . .*

⁶ Canon 1264 in *Codex Iuris Canonicae*.

⁷ Beste, Ulric, O.S.B., *Introductio in Codicem* (St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, 1938), p. 619f.

⁸ Ferreres, Joannis, S. J., *Institutiones Canonicae II* (Barcinone 1918) p. 69f.

Dominicus Pruemmer's *Manuale Iuris Ecclesiastici* simply paraphrases canon 1264.⁹ In the *Epitome Iuris Canonici*, Vermeersch-Creusen are more satisfactory.¹⁰ On the words "*lascivum et impurum*" they have an interesting paragraph. Improper song is more easily discerned than improper instrumental music. This is logical, since words can have more effect than music alone. Of interest also is the citing of a decree of Alexander VII (April 23, 1657) which according to Augustine (using Terry's *Catholic Church Music*) Alexander VII designated that music as lascivious which was associated with profane dance. However, this does not appear to be Alexander's real idealogy on the subject according to the authors. If it was not Alexander VII's, it was of certain Church Fathers, as we have seen.

Bouscaren's *Canon Law Digest I*, is helpful in summing up the principles of the *Divini Cultus* of Pius XI, treating in VII of the use of instruments in church.¹¹

Fr. Woywod's *The New Canon Law* gave only what amounted to a translation of the canon on music.¹² But his *Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* gives some details and sources in the commentary, including reference to the Instruction to the Archbishop of Baltimore on banning theatrical music in church.¹³

The Second Baltimore Council has a brief paragraph on sacred music, but does not deal directly with the question of musical instruments.¹⁴

As for the canons of the *Acta et Decreta Concilii Plenarii Baltimorensis Tertii*, no explicit mention is made of instrumental music other than the organ, and here the Council of Trent is quoted on the subject of *lascivum et impurum*.¹⁵

For one of the most complete and competent coverages of the subject, the volume of Monsignor Romita *Ius Musicae Liturgicae* is

⁹ Pruemmer, Dominic, O. P., *Manuale Iuris Ecclesiastici* (Freiburg & Breisgau, Herder, 1920) p. 444.

¹⁰ Vermeersch-Creusen, S. J., *Epitome Iuris Canonici II*, (Rome, Mechlin, Dessain 1930) p. 363, no. 586.

¹¹ Bouscaren, T. Lincoln, S. J., *The Canon Law Digest I*, (Milwaukee, Bruce, 1934) p. 597f.

¹² Woywood, Stanislaus, O.F.M., *The New Canon Law*, (New York, Wagner, 1918) p. 259.

¹³ Woywood, Stanislaus, O.F.M., *A Practical Commentary on the Code of Canon Law II*, p. 63 (New York, Wagner, 1925). This work has recently been revised and brought up to date by Rev. Fr. Callistus Smith, O.F.M., J.C.L.

¹⁴ *Acta et Decreta Concilii Plenarii Baltimorensis II* (Baltimore, Murphy, 1877) p. 187, no. 361.

¹⁵ *Acta et Decreta Concilii Plenarii Baltimorensis III* (Baltimore, Murphy, 1886) p. 59f.

hard to equal.¹⁶ Here all phases, including instrumental music, are amply treated, though the book needs to be brought up to date.

We see, then, two different pictures: one the historical position of instruments in church music, and the legislative side. Both are often misunderstood. There are historicists who consider the *ars perfecta* of 15th and 16th century with its so-called *leggi inviolabili* in too severe a light, as solely vocal without instruments at all.¹⁷ This is an exaggeration. On the other hand, there are those who do not comprehend the liturgical ideology underlying the legislative bans on musical instruments in church, and that prohibition and limitation comes not from a desire to curb art, but rather to preserve an island of sacredness in a worldly atmosphere. A balanced view must be attained in order to grasp the church's historical and legislative position concerning the use of instruments in liturgical services.

¹⁶ Romita, *op. cit.*, pass.

¹⁷ Schrade, Leo, *Monteverdi, Creator of Modern Music*, (New York, Norton, 1950) Cf. the discussion on *ars perfecta* and the difference in religious and profane music, p. 17f.