

Marier, Ted.

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THE
CATHOLIC
HOUR

*An Introduction to Sacred
Music*

Ted Marier and
Mother Josephine Morgan

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An Introduction to Sacred Music

ANNCR: This is THE CATHOLIC HOUR. Today, the Catholic Hour begins a special series of five programs on MUSIC IN CATHOLIC WORSHIP. Presented by the National Council of Catholic Men in cooperation with the National Broadcasting Company, these broadcasts will explore the nature and purpose of Sacred Music and its role in the life of the Church.

In producing this unusual series, the CATHOLIC HOUR has the cooperation of the Pius X School of Liturgical Music of Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, in Purchase, New York. All of the music and commentary you will hear was especially recorded for this series during the recently completed summer sessions at Pius X School. The student body, consisting of priests, sisters, and laymen from all parts of North America, devoted much of their time to preparing these musical presentations as their contribution to the CATHOLIC HOUR's mission of communicating the treasures of the Universal Church to the American Public.

In these five programs, the CATHOLIC HOUR will depart from its customary uninterrupted talks to present studies in word and music which will demonstrate the importance and beauty of "Music in Catholic Worship". Today's broadcast is entitled "An Introduction to Sacred Music". Your host will be Mr. Theodore Marier, distinguished Catholic musician and member of the faculty of the Pius X Summer School. Mr. Marier.

MARIER: Music has always been a part of the worship of the Church. Just what is "Sacred Music", and when, where, why, and how is it used? We all know that Church music is important, but what else do we know about it? For instance, listen this:

MUSIC: KYRIE XVI

MARIER: That was an example of Sacred Music — Gregorian Chant. Now listen to this:

MUSIC: AVE MARIA

MARIER: That was also Sacred Music. Both types of music just heard are part of the musical heritage of the Church. What distinguishes this music as particularly appropriate for use in Divine Worship? Why is this considered good Church music and other compositions bad Church music? In these programs we're going to take a close look at this subject of Sacred Music and try to contribute something to the growing interest in it. To do this we

are fortunate to have the cooperation of the Pius X School of Liturgical Music, the oldest school of its kind in the United States. Since this school is to be our base of operations in telling the story of Sacred Music, I'll ask its director, Mother Josephine Morgan, of the Society of the Sacred Heart, to give us a little background on her school. Mother Morgan.

MOTHER MORGAN: Thank you, Mr. Marier. The Pius X School of Liturgical Music was founded in 1917 by Mother Georgia Steven, of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and Mrs. Justine Ward. It is the music school of Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, and like the College, is directed by the Religious of the Sacred Heart.

St. Pius X was chosen as the patron of the School because its foundation was an effort to support and make effective the measures promulgated by the holy pontiff in his MOTU PROPRIO of 1903. Here he exhorted the bishops to make "special efforts...to restore the use of the Gregorian Chant by the people, so that the faithful may again take a more active part in the ecclesiastical offices, as was the case in ancient times."

Since its foundation, the school has had the privilege of training almost 28,000 musicians — priests, brothers, seminarians, sisters, lay people: sing-

ers, organists, choir directors, and teachers of every kind in the art of sacred music. In 1956, the School was affiliated with the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome, and was empowered to confer the degree of Bachelor of Sacred Music on men and women.

MARIER: Thank you, Mother. Now that we've given our audience an idea of the history and purpose of the school, I believe it's time to demonstrate its work, and illustrate the wide range and beauty of the Church's music.

Incidentally, all of the music on today's program will be sung by the sisters, priests and laymen who are students here at Pius X School. Thirty-six religious orders from all parts of North America and British West Indies are represented.

A few moments ago, we heard a phrase of Gregorian Chant, that ancient and official musical Language of the Church, a music that derives its name from St. Gregory the Great who died in the year 604. This is the plain chant, simple yet beautifully expressive. In it we find the marks of the Church — it is one, — one vocal line expressing the unity of the Church. The chant is also apostolic — dating back to the earliest times of the Church. It is holy, having its only purpose the worship of God. It is universal — music is sung wherever the Church

prays. As our first example of the chant, we're going to sing for you now the KYRIE XVI as it is sung by the people during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on ordinary feastsdays. It is a very simple chant and a very old one, reminiscent of the type of melody used in the ancient litanies. Notice that the melody is based on do-re-mi of the major scale. How expressive these notes become when accompanied by words "Lord, have mercy on us." Christ, have mercy on us." And again, "Lord, have mercy on us." KYRIE ELEISON.

MUSIC: KYRIE XVI

MARIER: There we heard an excellent example of Gregorian Chant. Its spirit conveys to any listener something of the humble, hopeful expectation, of all men for the mercy of the Lord.

Although the chant may appear to be a rather restricted musical form because of its simplicity, it is capable of expressing the wide range of moods in the liturgical life of the Church. Let us listen now to Antiphon and Psalm from the Matins or Morning Prayers of Christmas. Appropriately, the verses of the psalms are messianic in character, foretelling the coming of Christ. The choir and people alternate in singing the verses of the psalm and repeating the antiphon. This is probably one of the most ancient chants

we have. "Ipse Invocabit Me". "He will call to me: Thou art my Father. Alleluia."

MUSIC: ANTIPHON AND PSALM

MARIER: For another facet of Gregorian Chant, let's turn to a hymn from the night office, or Compline. As we hear this brief song of praise and petition, we can imagine how it must please the Holy Trinity, rising as it does when night falls on the monasteries of the world. "Te Lucis Ante Terminum," "Before the Closing of the Day".

MUSIC: Hymn "TE LUCIS ANTE TERMINUM"

MARIER: Proceeding to yet another mood of the chant, we hear an excerpt from the Mass for the Dead. With great feeling and expression, the tones of the chant bear the plaintive cry of the people "Absolve, O Lord, the souls of all the faithful departed from every bond of sin". "Absolve, Domine".

MUSIC: ABSOLVE

MARIER: Although many of the chants have been preserved for us since before the sixth century, some of them didn't develop until centuries later. For example, the texts of the Mass of the 8th Sunday after Pentecost were sung at the pilgrimages to Jerusalem during the Middle Ages. From that Mass, we've selected the Alleluia and versicle. Note

the folk-song character of the Alleluia melody as it is intoned by the cantors and then taken up by all the people. The versicle expresses the greatness of God. "Magnus Dominus".

MUSIC: ALLELUIA

MARIER: Thus far in our program we've seen a few of the many colors and moods of Gregorian Chant, officially part of the prayer and worship of the Church. Let's turn now to a newer type of music, polyphony, or part-singing. This musical form is admitted to Divine Worship because the Church teaches that "when it is endowed with proper qualities, it can be a great help in increasing the magnificence of divine worship and of moving the people to religious dispositions." Another official statement of the Church says that "many polyphonic compositions, especially those that date from the 16th century, have an artistic purity and richness of melody which renders them completely worthy of accompanying and beautifying the Church's sacred rites."

To bridge the gap between Chant and polyphony we've chosen the AVE MARIA by Vittoria. You will notice how the composer began with the phrases of the Gregorian Ave Maria and developed it into a harmonious, four-part composition. Here then is the familiar angelic salutation, Ave Maria — Hail Mary.

MUSIC: AVE MARIA

MARIER: Another example of what the Church means when she says that polyphonic music can increase the magnificence of Divine Worship is Van Bercham's "O Jesu Christe". Here we see how words and music are integrated into a beautiful expression of the minds and hearts of the people. And it's not just a matter of singing a prayer. The two elements, words and music, become a new prayer, both reaching to God as a single offering of our praise. You'll hear what I mean in "O Jesu Christe",

MUSIC: O JESU CHRISTE

MARIER: Take one last example, this time a hymn sung in English. In commenting on this aspect of religious music, the Church clearly expresses its value in the life and worship of the faithful. She states that through hymns the people "are greatly helped to know, appreciate, and memorize the truths of faith. Therefore, they serve also as a sort of catechism...They give a kind of religious grandeur to the more solemn assemblies or gatherings. They bring pious joy, sweet consolation, and spiritual progress to Christian families.... They are of great help to the Catholic apostolate and should be carefully cultivated and promoted."

The English hymn we have selected to

conclude our broadcast will be sung by the entire school. Here is: "Praise to the Holiest".

MUSIC: PRAISE TO THE HOLIEST
MARIER: Today we have tried to give you some idea of the scope and beauty of sacred music and an indication of its importance in the worship of the Church. Next week, and on succeeding Sundays, we'll go a little deeper into our subject. One program will be devoted solely to Gregorian Chant, another to Polyphonic music, another to hymns, and our last broadcast to music of the Mass. We hope you'll join us.

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