

LETTERS

READ

Appropriate Music?

SCENE ONE: Today I participated in a military parade. It was wonderful, with all the marching stepped to the rhythm of an exciting waltz.

SCENE TWO: My niece returns from a rock concert. She is very excited and tells me how the band blew everyone away with a captivating performance of a Gregorian chant, while everyone was madly dancing.

Ok, now if I ask you what is strange in these two scenes, I am sure 100% of you (ok ... 99%) will say that soldiers do not march to the rhythm of a waltz and that a rock band is not going to entertain fans at the sound of Gregorian chant. I can only say: you are right. It seems so evident for everyone that there is no need even to discuss it.

In the same way, I have never quite understood why people think it normal to sing pop music during the liturgy. I mean, is it appropriate? Of course not. But when we ask why this is possible we are told that this is what the people like. But look: people like sex, alcohol, games, money ... are we going to include all of these in our future liturgies to attract people? As I have always said the problem is not pop music. I also listen to pop music and sometimes compose songs in pop and rock style (when I compose musicals I need to use a style that is appropriate to musicals). The problem is not pop music, but pop music in the liturgy.

I cannot understand how some people fail to see that pop music is indeed a bearer, for the most part, of certain worldly values, and that the music and the style remain strongly associated with those values that are in direct contrast with the values and teachings of the Catholic Church. So, to bring this association directly into the heart of the church, that is the liturgy, is not a good thing.

People say that this music can be redeemed like the organ that was used by the early Romans for pagan and secular purposes. This is not true. The organ was transformed into a Christian musical instrument, and the old use was completely abandoned; but the same cannot be said for pop music when its commercial use is infinitely more pervasive and powerful than the use the Church

may have with it. Why then is it so difficult to understand that there are things that are appropriate to the liturgy and things that are not? If you still are not convinced about my arguments, that's up to you. Go out and dance wildly in three quarter time with the soldiers.

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Antiphony Cover

I would like some information concerning the image of the Antiphony on the cover of the May issue.

We own a very similar volume to the illustration on the front page. Our *marginalia* and illuminations are not nearly the quality of this one. However, the notation and text scripts are almost exact.

Thomas Bender
Library Director
Notre Dame Seminary
New Orleans

The cover of the May 2013 issue of AB featured a page from a Spanish Antiphony (the choral parts of the Divine Office). This elaborately illuminated page by an unknown miniaturist/illuminator is dated ca. 1490, and is in an unidentified private collection. We used the image as it appears the Web Gallery of Art: wga.hu.

This manuscript page includes part of the antiphon for the Ascension, including the first response (in small letters mid-page):

V Aceendit Deus in jubilatione, Allelyu. (Versicle - God is ascended with jubilation, Alleluia)

R Et Dominus in voce tube, alla. (Response: And the Lord with the sound of trumpets alleluia.)

In the present English translation, this same responsory is "God mounts His throne to shouts of joy. A blare of trumpets for the

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