

Sacred Music in the United States since 1900

By Edwin London

The trip down Church Street has not, in this century, been felicitous for the sort of music one might call American Serious. In regard to use of tonal art, the Church continues to worry deeply about the wide range of possible effect posited between static and “all-is-flux” concepts. For the needs of the Church (in the spirit of argument choose any denomination, though this statement applies in particular to the old-line corporates with the most highly evolved rituals), music history functions more than as study of static past; rather it appears too as Dream Image, a stupendous moving picture, with sound at the center, produced at great existential cost, starring all the biggies strutting, and other abutters, wryly bred for lesser tasks, interfaced in a massive dithyramb-bam-crackle-poppity-pop of substantive chaos—hoo-wee—instructional all the more.

Though only oxymoron would say it quite that way, the previous utterance describes one believer's picture (fell in I did to a sweet life on Earth as 'tis in Heaven) —but there are as many vistas as witnesses (plenty exist) wherein are reviewed, devised, revived, and devoured alternate visions, from pragmatic, reasonable, and practical to irrational and unfeasible, including the too conveniently accepted solution: synthetic interfaithless missives of ordered historicity—all laws immutable—the past perceived as frozen architecture—programmed to be observed and obeyed for use by predestined puppets, devout but devoid of any gamut of dynamic tolerance. The fixed Church triumphant, its music immovable, its do-re-mi set, its Muzak intact. An exaggeration?

The sad fact is that almost no new music of substance has been incorporated into the liturgies of worship houses in this century. Multiplying the number of people in attendance since January 1, 1901, by the amount of time spent in pews adduces a result abundantly clear: the output of myriad Church Hours measured in significant music accepted for use in service from those commonly asserted to be noteworthy American composers is very slight indeed. The hypothesis may be tested in different ways:

1. Compare the past masters working within the Institution (Pastors of the Mast of the Sonic Ship of Church), those who dominate previous religious time-space—Palestrina in Catholic Italy, Bach in Lutheran Germany, to name two—that is, appose their produce with, say, that of America's fabled church organist/hymn hummer Charles Ives in

special regard to Church music. Note how Ives's oeuvre is behooved to move over, dwarfed by the contrived parallel. It is easy to see why Ives did flee after a few psalms or three into the serenity of commerce and the privacy of transcendental thought. There was “more enterprise in walking naked.” Following generations of American composers have found their talents unwanted for liturgical use.

2. Prepare a representative list of composers working in America the past fifty years or so and scan the fruits of their labor. Yes, we do find a good cross section of works on sacred subject matter, in various styles, easy to difficult, but Church Street, one way, is in operation: the works listed in the Appendix as suitable for liturgical use are de facto not apt for inclusion in services, even though in many instances they had at origin an Institutional nudge—that is, encouragement and commission for just such use.

Does this mean that the Church explicitly forbids frontal modernism replete with new attitudes for fear contemporary music may incite and excite the congregation in unwholesome ways, rather than bestow modest, genteel, and appropriate homiletic insight? (Out of sight—out of mind?) The canon (select a sect) is equivocal; the effect, alas, is not:

(YES)

Roman Catholic

The Church has always recognized and favored the progress of the arts, admitting to the service of religion everything good and beautiful discovered by genius in the course of ages—always, however, with due regard to the liturgical laws. Consequently modern music is also admitted to the Church, since it, too, furnishes compositions of such excellence, sobriety, and gravity, that they are in no way unworthy of liturgical functions.

Still, since modern music has risen mainly to serve profane uses, greater care must be taken with regard to it, in order that the musical compositions of modern style which are admitted in the Church may contain nothing profane, be free of reminiscences of motifs adopted in the theatres, and be not fashioned even in their external forms after the manner of profane pieces.

Among the different kinds of modern music... less suitable for...public worship is the theatrical style...[which] of its very nature is diametrically opposed to Gregorian Chant and classic polyphony...Besides the intrinsic structure, the

rhythm...[adapts itself] but badly to the requirements of true liturgical music.¹

(BUT)

Roman Catholic

A very wide field of diverse liturgical practice is now open, within the limits set by the present discipline and regulations...Not all priests appreciate how wide the opportunities are for planning lively and intelligible celebration.²

(YES)

Anglican Protestant Episcopal

The term "modern music" worries many people; even to mention the term causes the "die-hards" both in the church and without, to squirm. But let no "die-hard" ever believe that his opinions, or his likes or dislikes can stop the wheel of artistic progress. There has always been "modern music." The art one generation calls new or modern comes to be accepted by the following generation, and it has always been so. The radicals of one generation become the conservatives of the next, and this will probably always be so. Many churchgoers of today use the term "modern music" to refer disparagingly to an idiom as yet unfamiliar to them.³

(NO)

American Protestant Episcopal

When it comes to the definition of good music, differences of opinion and taste inevitably arise, and it is not possible to lay down any absolute canons of taste. The most that can be done is to call attention to certain characteristics which should be found in good church music. The rhythm should have life and movement without heaviness. The melody of all parts, not of the treble only, should be shapely in outline and neither angular nor dull; in general it should be diatonic, and chromatic intervals should only sparingly be used. The harmony should be, for the most part, simple, avoiding excessive use of discords which introduce a note of vulgarity or triviality and which pall with repetition.⁴

(YES)

Reform Judaism

Traditions are not slices of the past brought into the present; they are rather interpretations of the past. Traditions are carried on by people. These people exercise their instinctive right to select and interpret these traditions before handing them on to the next generation. However, the process of selection and interpretation is not always for the best. Not all human beings are gifted with either wisdom or clairvoyance. The truth is that our synagogue music has had a haphazard growth. Some things are very good, others passable, and

some things very, very bad. To hold on to what is bad through some mistaken loyalty to "tradition" is shortsighted. Traditions are not divine, they are man-made. Every generation has the right, even the duty, to re-evaluate, to keep what is good and to discard and replace the bad. Such re-evaluation gives meaning to the term "tradition."⁵

(NO)

Reform Judaism

I consider the most important contribution to synagogue music to be the return to nusach haftillah, which is our rich musical tradition of the synagogue, and the efforts to purify and perpetuate it. What it did for the service in the past, it can do for the synagogue today.⁶

This is not to portray Pius X, the Archbishops of York and Canterbury, or A. W. Binder as philistines. The contrary may in fact be the case. It is just the inadmissibility, by their assertion, of music not sanctified by tradition that is the mitigating factor. New music, it is generally stated, may have impact and meaning; let it be, however, *somewhere else* at some other time, but not liturgically connected.

The course most present-day composers have open to them, if they want to deal with religious matters in their work, is to locate their constructs outside the service but within the church (the church as concert hall) or to use a secular setting (the theater or recital auditorium as pulpit). It may come to pass that the formal ritual of religious devotion will in time include the collaboration of composers of today who have commitment to religious feeling and a vocational understanding of form and ritual.

¹ *Motu Proprio* of Pope Pius X on Sacred Music (1902) appears in *Music Since 1900* by Nicholas Slonimsky (New York: Coleman-Ross, 3rd edition, 1949).

² "Music in Catholic Worship," from a pamphlet published by the Bishop's Committee on the Liturgy.

³ *Ideals in Church Music*—an official statement prepared by Leo Sowerby for the Joint Commission on Church Music of the Protestant Episcopal Church (Greenwich, Conn.: Seabury, 1956).

⁴ *Music in Church*—report of the Archbishops' Committee. A revision of the Report of the Committee appointed in 1948 by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York (The Church Information Office, Westminster, 1957);

⁵ *A Jewish Composer by Choice*, a program handbook published by the National Jewish Music Council, New York, 1961, contained writings on sacred music by Isadore Freed.

⁶ *Studies in Jewish Music*, the collected writings of A. W. Binder (New York: Bloch, 1971).

APPENDIX

A representative list of choral compositions on sacred texts by composers working in the United States in the twentieth century. The list contains a variety of style orientations, and the works vary greatly in length and performance difficulty. Many, but perhaps not all, are suited for liturgical use.

Albright, William	<i>Mass</i>	<i>manuscript</i>
Amram, David	<i>By the River of Babylon</i>	<i>Peters</i>
Aschaffenburg, Walter	<i>23rd Psalme</i>	<i>Presser</i>
Bassett, Leslie	<i>Collect</i>	<i>World Library of Sacred Music</i>
Binkerd, Gordon	<i>Ad Te Levavi</i>	<i>Associated</i>
Bloch, Ernst	<i>Sacred Service</i>	<i>Broude Bros.</i>
Chihara, Paul	<i>Magnificat</i>	<i>Peters</i>
Copland, Aaron	<i>In the Beginning</i>	<i>Boosey & Hawkes</i>
Cowell, Henry	<i>Psalms 121</i>	<i>Associated</i>
Dello Joio, Norman	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Marks</i>
Erb, Donald	<i>Kyrie</i>	<i>Presser</i>
Felciano, Richard	<i>Hosanna to the Son of David</i>	<i>World Library of Sacred Music</i>
Finney, Ross Lee	<i>Pilgrim Psalms</i>	<i>Fischer</i>
Foss, Lukas	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>Fischer</i>
Gaburo, Kenneth	<i>Mass</i>	<i>World Library of Sacred Music</i>
Harris, Roy	<i>Mass</i>	<i>G. Schirmer</i>
Harrison, Lou	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Peer</i>
Hindemith, Paul	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Schott</i>
Hovhaness, Alan	<i>Magnificat</i>	<i>Peters</i>
Ives, Charles	<i>Psalms 24</i>	<i>Presser</i>
Johnston, Ben	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Foster</i>
Korte, Karl	<i>Psalms 13</i>	<i>E. C. Schirmer</i>
Krenek, Ernst	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Barenreiter</i>
London, Edwin	<i>Day of Desolation</i>	<i>Boonin</i>
Mizelle, John	<i>Mass</i>	<i>manuscript</i>
Persichetti, Vincent	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Elkan-Vogel</i>
Pinkham, Daniel	<i>Seven Last Words of Christ</i>	<i>E. C. Schirmer</i>
Rhodes, Phillip	<i>Kyrie</i>	<i>Peters</i>
Riegger, Wallingford	<i>Evil Shall Not Prevail</i>	<i>A. Broude</i>
Rochberg, George	<i>Psalms 43</i>	<i>Presser</i>
Salemi, Peter	<i>Gradual and Alleluia</i>	<i>manuscript</i>
Schoenberg, Arnold	<i>De Profundis</i>	<i>MCA</i>
Sessions, Roger	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Marks</i>
Shifrin, Seymour	<i>The Chronicles</i>	<i>Peters</i>
Sowerby, Leo	<i>Mass</i>	<i>World Library of Sacred Music</i>
Stravinsky, Igor	<i>Mass</i>	<i>Boosey Hawkes</i>
Thompson, Randall	<i>Alleluia</i>	<i>E. C. Schirmer</i>
Thomson, Virgil	<i>Requiem Mass</i>	<i>Gray</i>
Walker, George	<i>Gloria</i>	<i>New Valley</i>
Weinberg, Henry	<i>Vox in Rama</i>	<i>Presser</i>

Note: It is interesting that composers of the stature of Milton Babbitt, John Cage, Elliott Carter, Pauline Oliveros, Harry Partch, Roger Reynolds, Gunther Schuller, and Charles Wuorinen have not published music on sacred texts.

SALVATORE MARTIRANO MASS

The tale of Life's Great Adventure—for a trek within which memory is not only a convenience but a requisite governing benign progression—continues to resound. One finds it necessary to recall in order to arouse (tickle-tickle) the wires of thought—thereby manufacturing new things out of old fabric. Can one make old vestments out of new cloth? A *Mass*? Truth is, it is a Judeo-Christian pun and creative act of consequence.

The Catholic Encyclopedia tells us that the Mass is the manner of celebration of the Holy Eucharist in the Roman rite, a celebration dedicated to the memory of Christ and His redemptive work, not simply to recall as in a picture but rather, too, to reenact Christ's redemptive work sacramentally in the form of a mystery rite. The historical clothing of the event belongs to the past; the salvific act is eternal.

THE MASS IS A SACRIFICE

THE MASS IS ALSO A SACRED MEAL

1. Consecration of bread
(transubstantiated into the body of Christ)
2. Consecration of wine
(transubstantiated into the blood of Christ)
3. Breaking of bread
(as Christ's body was broken)
4. Communion of bread
5. Communion of wine

Since Guillaume de Machaut (c. 1300-1377), the music for the Mass has been more than an ordinary event expressed in single-line singing, chant style, composed by nameless creators. The lineage is long, the history full, and they need not be discussed here, except to pick up the narrative.

Salvatore Martirano, Roman Catholic of Italian extraction, born in 1927 in Yonkers, New York, jazz pianist, Marine vet, oddball, conservatory grad. '51 (Oberlin, Ohio; all's well with Elwell*), moves on to the school, Eastman at Rochester, studies counterpoint and Rogers* with heart, tries shagging rug, ties ties, ragging shrug to raging stag (a rogue staging spectacles), not to offend Bach but rather to show ban list (for all Gounod we will never meet again—see 1922 Pronouncement proscribing *his* Masses), or whatever tea leaves kenneled, rustled, and Ilytched depict. The beneficent result is discovery of oenology and composition of the Mass a cappella 1952-55. God a' mercy. Oh.

This observer consults notes, remembers prior (withdrawn) "Kyrie" (from *Magic Stones*—student opera, 1951), Boccaccio's poor fool Calandrino asleep in church—culled, drawn—cowed in Draino. Magic indeed, and stoned? Well, Christ have mercy, it is entirely possible. The Martirano Mass before 1952 might have been a remote idea at the back of the composer's head—pleasures of sixteenth-century counterpoint syndetic with blood-related altar-bound Catholicism (the mystery interval stretching dreamlike between breakfast's Bloody Marys to the Manhattans of dinner on a Sunday), perhaps some debt owed, some debt imagined. God have mercy. Then there came the trip to Florence and study with Luigi Dallapiccola in 1952.

Sinking and rising line, Glory be (E flat C). The composer may have abandoned fugato later in his career, but not yet. The motive to link chain and chase similar identities is a predictable device in the tradition. As for texture at the key stone ("Pater Omnipotens"), the obligation is too arch, too outré. But in 1952-55 the parts were still divivable and divisible in the Mass. Giotto had a role in all this ("Quoniam Tu Solus Sanctus"). The compass of the Mass equals the anger of the anger (redundant emphasis) of the angel (irony)—gentle St. Francis of Assisi, his remains ("Cum Sancto Spirito") as

immortal as the Bird. But listen to the composer's words, his beliefs (January 7, 1977):

I felt good, out of the office, a great supper with old friends (thanks, Liz and Jerry)

old-fashioned, cold soup,
steamed mussels with melted butter,
cold octopus swimming in lemony
oil with celery, slabs of beef,
salad, string beans, [broccoli di] rape,
zuppa inglese, nuts, coffee,
cognac, champagne, etc.

I ended the concert in the middle of a phrase imitating the last bar of Opus 31, No.1. By midnight the Sal-Mar was packed away in a 5-by-8 U-Haul-It and I was heading west on I-90, about fourteen hours away from a performance and recording sessions of the Mass.

The headlights of passing cars reminded me of the light from that door which would open and shut every ten to twenty seconds.

In September of 1952, under a blinding afternoon sun, I remember opening a door into a dark space. Human forms in paint, stone, and cloth became clear as I followed diagonally across to the opposite wall. Up a narrow flight of curving stair and there, encased in rock and bathed in artificial light, were the remains of San Francesco d'Assisi. Shock and horror. This was no Zozimov. Rag, hair, and gray bones. "*To fremo.*" A shove from behind moved me forward, up more stairs, and through a door at the top. It was real and unbelievable light that streamed through stained glass above and behind the altar. I found a bench and sat. Streams of changing orange reflected from the frescoes of Giotto. My body was one vibrating funny bone, sensuous and out of time.

*Martirano studied with Herbert Elwell at Oberlin and Bernard Rogers at Eastman.

CONSUBSTANTIALEM:
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost
fiction, fact, and personal opinion
religion, politics, and Art

The head of a Greek statue makes a great missile if you're standing on top of Hadrian's Tomb and some infidel tries to break in. If you're interested in all the really evil guys read E. R. Chamberlain's *The Bad Popes*. It may be a miracle that the Holy Roman Catholic Church survived at all after that gang got through with it.

I studied Palestrina's polyphony and Ingegneri's homophony with Gustav Soderlund. Maestro Dallapiccola gave me lessons in the art of composition that helped me keep my p's, d's, b's, and q's straight.

Ah, that man, scurrying around the room pulling scores out of his library and, short as he was, kneeling beside my chair with a finger poised like the sword of a matador, pointing at a bar of music, "*cento in Francia*": a half note on the beat, in the return of Leporello's offbeat countdown, "Feel the lift, Salvatore"; or "*Sub Pontio Pilato*," the first eighth note is off the beat and, following a rest in the "Crucifixus" of the B minor, "It's airborne" ("*vola sul'aria*").

Years later, he remarked with a smile, "But today it takes one who is very young or very old to set the Mass to music." Did he mean there's no room for D. H. Lawrence's Christ cavorting around town with the prosties, or Hemingway's "Good Friday," or Malaparte's depiction of the Stations with nude dancers in Venice? S. P. Q. R.

A life was extinguished by government decree. The Mass was created by the apostles and their friends because they couldn't face the horrible brutality of the crucifixion. The pictures, statues, and music kept the idea alive without the pain. In an excruciating moment I identified with the *povero Cristo*.

"Take 1...." What? The Dolby went out? "That never happens." A furtive look down, left, right....No matter, there was a replacement. "Take 2...." I was enjoying the sound, still groggy from lack of sleep, and feeling the vibration from the fourteen-hour drive back to Urbana. "Take 40," the Amen in the "Credo" is really beautiful. Whose music is that? "Take 64," the Amen in the "Gloria" is really nice too. Good job, gang, Ed. Good job, Andrew, Jerry, Mark, thanks.

Holy Moses, the little touch at the end is frank and merry and well follows the ground, rounds the form, continues the trip. *Pleni Sunt Coeli*. And blessings follow. After the Mass there is *O, O, O, O, That Shakespeherian Rag* (1958), the secular voices, bard on Avon, joined by jazz combo. *Cocktail Music* (1962) and *Octet* (1964) are communion with stronger spirits fortified by combinatorial recipes. Later in '63 Martirano writes a few songs for high-school chorus and then no more choral music. And of course no more music to be contemplated as part of religious service, unless...Consider the descent into *Underworld* (1965), *Ballad* (1966), and *L's GA* (1967), an earthly mission *In Nomine Domini*, in versions of inversion. Since 1968 the Sal-Mar construction has constituted the vessel through which the composer pours his wine of musical thought. It is a machine designed to produce in real time, composition as fact and process. Whirl without end, almost an automatic pilot, it continues, in circuitous manner, endlessly to issue forth, even as the world drifts. *Miserere nobis. Dona nobis pacem. Mirabile dictu.*

River run road returns to beginning, Martirano, professor of composition, University of Illinois, resumes in the year 1977 composition with pencil. The Mass reincarnate? Who would be so presumptuous as to suggest that? One can never step in the same river twice.

Note: Salvatore Martirano's Mass was given its world premiere in December 1959 over the West German radio. The broadcast originated in Hamburg, and the work was performed by the Norddeutsche Rundfunk (NDR) Chorus conducted by Max Thurm.

The Ordinary of the Mass

KYRIE

Kyrie, eleison.

Kyrie, eleison.

Kyrie, eleison.

Christe, eleison.

Christe, eleison.

Christe, eleison.

Kyrie, eleison.

Kyrie, eleison.

Kyrie, eleison.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

GLORIA

[Gloria in excelsis Deo.] Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoremus te. Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus Sanctus. Tu solus Dominus. Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe. Cum Sancto Spiritu + in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.

[Glory be to God on high.] And on earth peace, good will towards men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us. For thou only art holy; thou only art the Lord; thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory + of God the Father. Amen.

CREDO

[Credo in unum Deum,] Patrem omnipotentem, factorem coeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium. Et in unum Dominum Jesum Christum, Filium Dei unigenitum. Et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero. Genitum, non tactum, consubstantialem Patri: per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos homines, et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine: et Homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis; sub Pontio Pilato passus, et sepultus est. Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas. Et ascendit in coelum: sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria judicare vivos, et mortuos: cujus regni non erit finis. Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem: qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre, et Filio simul adoratur, et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per Prophetas. Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptisma in remissionem peccatorum. Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum. + Et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

[I believe in One God] The Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God; Begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God; Begotten, not made; Being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made: Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, And was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, And was made man: And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried: And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures: And ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of the Father: And he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe In the Holy Ghost, The Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets. And I believe one Catholic and Apostolic Church: I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins: And I look for the Resurrection of the dead: And the Life + of the world to come. Amen.

SANCTUS

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts, Heaven and earth are full of thy glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High.

BENEDICTUS

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis.

Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

AGNUS DEI

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world: have mercy upon us.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world: have mercy upon us.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world: grant us thy peace.

DONALD MARTINO

Seven Pious Pieces

for Chorus of Mixed Voices Unaccompanied
(Piano or organ ad libitum).

Text by Robert Herrick from the 1647 edition of
His Noble Numbers Or, His Pious Pieces, Wherein...

At present chairman of composition studies at New England Conservatory of Music and formerly on the faculty of Yale, Pulitzer-prize-winner (*Notturmo* for chamber ensemble) Donald Martino is an accomplished and serious composer. Born in Plainfield, New Jersey, in 1931. Studied at Syracuse University, at Princeton, and later in Florence. His principal teachers have been Ernst Bacon, Roger Sessions, Milton Babbitt, and Luigi Dallapiccola. Like many of his generation, he combined youthful orientation in jazz with aspirations of another order—to compose compelling and earnest music. He has fulfilled with much credit to himself these lofty ambitions in distinguished essays such as the Trio for violin, clarinet, and piano (1959); *Parisonatina al'dodecaphonica* for cello (1964); Concerto for Piano and Orchestra (1965); *B,a,b,b,i,t* for clarinet (1966); *Mosaic* for orchestra (1967); the monumentally conceived *Pianississimo* (A Sonata for Piano) (1970); and the *Paradiso Choruses* for soloists, chorus, orchestra, and tape (1974). Martino identifies himself, as do his works, as fully committed to serial technique. However, *Seven Pious Pieces* is in an anomalous harmonic style, to say the least, in terms of his total output. The composer has written (December 17, 1976):

Seven Pious Pieces, like the later *Paradiso Choruses*, stand very much outside the mainstream of my music. At no time before *Seven Pious Pieces* (1971) or after *Paradiso Choruses* (1974) have I written or been tempted to write music even remotely tonal sounding, except for jazz arrangements or theater songs (all before 1959). Even my very early student works were conceived as atonal or at least nontonal.

Why then some thirty years after it would have been reasonable to compose tonal music, did I, in *Seven Pious Pieces* (the case of *Paradiso* is very different), so unexpectedly choose to do so? The reasons are disparate and many:

1. The *Pieces* were intentionally exceptions to the mainstream of my music in that one of their purposes was overtly commercial. In such ventures composers often take a pseudonym. I chose not to do so because I felt that these works did not represent a “compromise” of artistic integrity and because, in reality, they derive from concepts that are twelve-tone in origin (see No. 6 below) and only thereby can they be properly explained.

2. They were written for the E. C. Schirmer Music Company at the earlier whimsical dare of my editor, Thomas Dunn, to direct myself to the nonprofessional choir, preferably the church choir. At the time, knowing nothing of the “church-music world,” I took this dare to mean the emulation of E. C. Schirmer's most accomplished and successful house composer, Randall Thompson.

3. They were regarded as the fitting antipode to another work that was intentionally extraneous to the corpus of my music: *Augenmusik: A Mixed Mediocritique* for Actress, Danseuse, or uninhibited Female Percussionist. *Augenmusik* was meant to be a satirical criticism of mixed-media works of the prior decade. While I labored on this profane (X-rated) humorous offering, it seemed to me fitting that as a penance I devote my free time to a sacred work. I composed *Augenmusik* from Monday through Saturday and I wrote *Pious Pieces* on the Sabbath.

4. Note that in No. 3 above I use the term “free time.” *Pious Pieces* were meant to provide relaxation, change of pace, from other activities. But by this I do not mean less serious, simply different from.

5. At one point I jokingly bragged that I could and would “write an anthem every Sunday morning for the rest of my life.” After seven Sundays I had exhausted the anthems in me.

6. The *Pious Pieces* are dedicated to my first teacher of composition, Ernst Bacon, whose charming setting (c. 1950) of “The Soule” I intentionally paraphrased. Bacon's setting is itself a “paraphrase” of a Protestant chorale. For years I had carried with me Bacon's setting along with a bundle of other equally beautiful music of his. But not until one day in the fall of 1971 did I stumble across it while rummaging through my scores in search of an illustration for one of my students of some then relevant but now forgotten musical idea. “The Soule,” the first of the set to be written, was meant, for pedagogical reasons, to illustrate how a twelve-pitch-class piece could be made to seem tonal. In fact, all seven of these pieces are “demonstrations of the following well-known but usually studiously avoided partition of the chromatic scale”:

C D E F G A / F# G# A# B C# D#.

In “The Soule,” the abrupt alternation of tritone-related diatonic hexachords (the tritone relation figures prominently also in the Bacon setting) seemed particularly appropriate to lines of text such as

When once the Soule has lost her way,
O then, how restlesse do's she *stray!*

In the example that follows, each letter stands for the diatonic hexachords associated with it. Tritone-related letters form a twelve-tone set, as in F B. The structural harmonic motion of "The Soule" is

F B, F B, D A_b; G D_b, D_b G; A E_b; A_b D.

The transposition circuit *implies* a twelve-tone set or two sets of sets:

F A_b, B D; D_b (E) G (B_b);

A (C) E_b (F_♯); (F) A_b (B) D.

+ + + +

missing transpositions

A traditional tonal analysis of any of these songs can be made by anyone who is ingenious in the application of secondary-dominant labels and/or who is a fanatic.

It is fascinating to discover the insight Martino brings to the undertaking. His assimilation of fin-de-siècle harmonic practice (daring in the period), when composers such as Hugo Wolf, Mahler, and Schoenberg were straying into chromatic minefields, uncharted areas of enharmonic danger, not yet forsaking triadic or tonal structures but on the verge of breakthrough into new-found lands, is complete. In his unusual Herrick settings, Martino, with a sophisticated intake of latter-day combinatoriality fully digested, returned to the pre-serial-period battle zone to deal forthrightly with the ambivalent analytic interpretations that two conflicting systems of organization might indicate on the surface. His ingenious solution: the *Pious Pieces* can be considered either way, tonal or serial. However, these are not mere exercises; they are deeply felt religious statements, multifaceted vehicles of artistic display. The irony of historical allusion manifests itself in a quite expressive touch, for example in "Teares" where the men's voices create an atmosphere not foreign to the Brahms *Liebeslieder Waltzes* while the text speaks of tears and death. Note too the angular and dissonant treatment of the words "For if thou dost, thou then shalt see / Nothing but loathsome sores" in "His Ejaculation to God." "Mercy and Love" and "The Soule" are relatively straightforward metrical text settings with well-placed phrase extensions resulting in purposeful asymmetrical balance. With its use of suspensions, sonorous octave doublings, and sudden surprising tonal shifts, "Eternitie" brings to mind the universe of the Adagietto of the Mahler *Fifth Symphony*. However, the octave doublings in "His Ejaculation to God" have more of the air of verismo opera about them. Little melodic snippets in "Eternitie" occur in wholly different contexts in

"Teares," just as the Adagietto theme of the Mahler is brought back in the finale of the symphony—experientially altered but its identity intact.

Despite the sometimes racy, flippant rationales provided by Martirano and Martino for the composition of the works on this disc, Mass and *Seven Pious Pieces* are highly personal sincere statements of artistic principle, religious in nature as well as in design, fully admissible for use in liturgical circumstance. One hopes that others will come to share this view.

Note: Donald Martino's *Seven Pious Pieces* was given its world premiere in the spring of 1976 at Jordan Hall, Boston. The work was performed by the New England Conservatory Chorus conducted by Lorna Cook de Varon.

1. *To his ever-loving God.*

Thou bidst me come; I cannot come; for why,
Thou dwel'st aloft, and I want wings to flie.
To mount my Soule, she must have pineons given;
For, 'tis no easie way from Earth to Heaven.

2. *Mercy and Love.*

God hath two wings, which He doth ever move,
The one is Mercy, and the next is Love:
Under the first the Sinners ever trust;
And with the last he still directs the Just.

3. *His Ejaculation to God.*

My God! looke on me with thine eye
Of pittie, not of scrutinie;
For if thou dost, thou then shalt see
Nothing but loathsome sores in mee.
O then! for mercies sake, behold
These my irruptions manifold;
And heale me with thy looke, or touch:
But if thou wilt not deigne so much,
Because I'me odious in thy sight,
Speak but the word, and cure me quite.

4. *The Soule.*

When once the Soule has lost her way,
O then, how restlesse do's she stray!
And having not her God for light,
How do's she erre in endlesse night!

5. *Eternitie.*

O Yeares! and Age! Farewell:
Behold I go,
Where I do know
Infinitie to dwell.

And these mine eyes shall see
All times, how they
Are lost i' th' Sea
Of vast Eternitie.

Where never Moone shall sway
The Starres; but she,
And Night, shall be
Drown'd in one endlesse Day.

6. *Teares.*

Our present Teares here (not our present laughter)
Are but the handsells of our joyes hereafter.

To Death.

Thou bidst me come away,
And I'le no longer stay,
Then for to shed some teares
For faults of former yeares;
And to repent some crimes,
Done in the present times:
And next, to take a bit
Of Bread, and Wine with it:
To d'on my robes of love,

Fit for the place above;
To gird my loynes about
With charity throughout;
And so to travaile hence
With feet of innocence:
These done, I'le onely crie
God mercy; and so die.
Welcome what comes.
Whatever comes, let's be content withall:
Among Gods Blessings, there is no one small.

7. *No coming to God without Christ.*
Good and great God! How sho'd I feare
To come to Thee, if *Christ* not there!
Co'd I but think, He would not be
Present, to plead my cause for me;
To Hell I'd rather run, then I
Wo'd see Thy Face, and He not by.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

SALVATORE MARTIRANO

LPs (out of print)

- Ballad* for singer and jazz ensemble. (Don Smith and the University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players; Salvatore Martirano, conductor.) Polydor 24-5001.
Chansons Innocentes. (Candace Natvig, sop.) CRI 324.
Cocktail Music. (David Burge, pf.) Advance FGR-3.
L's GA for gassed-masked politico, helium bomb, and two-channel tape. (Michael Holloway, politico.) Polydor 24-5001.
O, O, O, O, That Shakespeberian Rag for mixed chorus and instruments. (Princeton Chamber Singers and instruments; Thomas Hilbish, conductor.) CRI 164.
Octet for flute, bass clarinet, contra-alto clarinet, celesta, marimba, violin, cello, and contrabass. (University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players; Salvatore Martirano, conductor.) Polydor 24-5001.
Underworld for actor, tape, and instruments. (University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players; J. McKenzie, conductor.) Heliodor HS-25047.

CDs

- Ballad.* New World 80535-2.
Chansons Innocentes. New World 80535-2.
Cocktail Music. New World 80535-2.
Electronic Dance No. 1. Centaur CRC 2266.
Jest fa Laffs. Tim Lane, flute; Eric Mandat, clarinet; Michael Cameron, string bass. Centaur CRC 2170.
L's GA. Michael Holloway, politico. Centaur CRC 2266.
LON/dons. Cleveland Chamber Symphony; Edwin London, conductor. GM GMR 2039.
Look at the Back of My Head For Awhile. Centaur CRC 2266.
Octet. New World 80535-2.
O, O, O, O, That Shakespeberian Rag. New World 80535-2.
Sampler: Everything Goes When the Whistle Blows. Dorothy Martirano, violin. Centaur CRC 2045.
SATBehind Demo. Centaur CRC 2266.
Stuck on Stella. New World 80535-2.
Thrown. Tone Road Ramblers: John Fonville, flute; Eric Mandat, clarinet; Ray Sasaki, trumpet; Morgan Powell, trombone; Jim Staley, trombone; Michael Udow, percussion. Einstein Records 007.
UIUS. Tim Lane, flute; Eric Mandat, clarinet; Michael Cameron, string bass. Centaur CRC 2170.
Underworld. Centaur CRC 2266.

DONALD MARTINO

LPs (out of print)

- B, a, b, b, it, t.* (Philip Rehfeldt, cl.) Advance FGR-17S.
Cinque Frammenti. (Josef Marx, ob.; Bertram Turetsky, contrabass.) Advance FGR-1.
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Fantasy Variations. (Daniel Kobialka, vn.) Advance FGR-6C.
_____. (Paul Zukofsky, vn.) CRI-240.

Notturmo for chamber ensemble. (Speculum Musicae.) Nonesuch LH-7-1300.

Paradiso Choruses for soloists, chorus, orchestra, and tape. (New England Conservatory choruses, opera department, and orchestra; Lorna Cooke de Varon, conductor.) Golden Crest NEC-114.

Quodlibets. (Samuel Baron, fl.) CRI 212.

Set for Clarinet. (Philip Rehfeldt, cl.) Advance FGR 15S.

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A Jazz Set. The CORE Ensemble. New World 80518-2.

A Set for Marimba. The CORE Ensemble. New World 80518-2.

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Fantasies & Impromptus. David Holzman piano. Albany TROY 169.

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Twelve Preludes. Hugh Hinton, piano. New World 80518-2.

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