

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF ANGLICAN CHURCH MUSIC IN ANCIENT AND MODERN PERSPECTIVES

Christian C. Mozie

Abstract

Anglican Church music is that type of music that is written for Christian worship in Anglican order of services forming part of the liturgy. It traditionally consists of musical pieces composed to be sung by a church choir, with or without instrumental accompaniment. However, as a result of the emergency of contemporary patterns in modern Christian worship, the traditional structure of the Anglican order of worship, especially as it relates to its musical setting, is being altered and threatened. The younger generation seem to appear disenchanted and disillusioned whenever the traditional Anglican Church music is being rendered in liturgical services to meet their taste, there have been distortions and in some cases, outright disregard to the form and pattern of Anglican Church music to align with the contemporary Christian music style. In its attempt to accurately unearth the gap between the ancient and modern Anglican Church music, library research, participant-observer and interview methods of research were engaged. The research discovered that the Anglican Church originated with a spiritually – dynamic, via media approach that makes room for liturgical flexibility. It, therefore, recommends a comprehensive Church music chemistry that would deeply satisfy the spiritual and mental taste of ancient and modern faithful.

Keywords: Anglican Church, Music, Ancient and Modern, Perspective Evaluation.

Introduction

Anglican Church music is that part of the Anglican traditional worship and other Christian denominations which are identified as Anglican. It can also be used at the personal ordinaries of the Church. Adult singers in a cathedral choir are often referred to as lay clerks, while children may be referred to as choristers or trebles in certain places of worship; the more archaic term *quirister* is used. An Anglican choir typically uses SATB (Soprano, or treble, alto or counter-tenor, tenor and bass) though in many works some or all of these voices are divided into two for that or all of the pieces, in the case the halves of the choir (one on each side of the aisle) are traditionally named *decani* (or 1, for the higher voice) and *cantoris* (or 2, for the lower voice). There may also be soloists, usually only for part of the piece. There are also works for fewer voices such as those written solely for men's voices or boys' or women's voices.

The contemporary Anglican Church especially in Nigeria is modernising the music through the use of local instruments within the context of the people worship to aid in building their quest both for the old and the young, giving our traditional music as Anglican to suit the challenges of our age.

Clarification of Concepts

Leuenberger (2004) states that before the reformation, the Anglican Church had been existing as the Church of England. In the early 1530s, the break with Rome under King Henry VIII set in motion the separation of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church and the reformation in England. The Church of England's Latin liturgy was replaced with scripture and prayers in English. The Great Bible in English was authorized in 1539 and Thomas Cranmer introduced the Book of Common Prayer in 1549. These changes were reflected in Church music and works that had previously been sung in Latin began to be replaced with new music in English. This gave rise to an era of great creativity during the Tudor period, in which the composition of music for Anglican worship flourished.

Hoch (2015) states that during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, musicians of the chapel royal such as Thomas Tallis, Robert Parsons and William Byrd were called upon to demonstrate that the new Protestantism were no less splendid than the old Catholic religion. Following the event of the English civil war and the execution of King Charles, Puritan influences took hold on the Church of England. Anglican Church music became simpler in style and services typically focused on morning and evening prayers. During the restoration period, musical practices of the Baroque era found their way into Anglican worship and string or brass instruments sometimes accompanied choirs.

Music

Music is a vocal or instrumental sound or both combined in such a way as to produce beauty of form, harmony and expression of emotions. It is the written or printed signs representing vocal or instrument sound. Music is a universal language of the soul. It has no language barrier. Both young and old understand, enjoy and appreciate good music. People play music sing songs written in a language other than their own. Music is a sacred art we use in holy places for worship in Churches, temples, mosques and shrines.

Ancient

Ancient can be defined as belonging to the very distant past and no longer in existence. It refers to from a long time ago, having lasted for a very long time. It means old, belonging to a time long ago in history. It is a period in history before the end of the Roman Empire.

Modern

Modernism is seen as relating to the present or recent times as opposed to the remote past. It can be to a person who advocates in practices a departure from traditional styles or values. It could be referred to as characteristic of the present or the immediate past; contemporary in the modern American family, a characteristic of a period extending from a relevant remote past to the present time modern history.

Perspective

It is the art of representing three-dimensional surfaces to give the right impression of their height, width depth and position about each other. It is a particular attitude towards something or way of regarding something, a point of view or a particular way of considering something. It is to think about a situation or problem and also the way one looks at something or an art technique that changes the distance or depth.

Evaluation

Evaluation is a systematic determination of a subject's merit, worth and significance, using criteria governed by a set of standards it can assess an organization program, design, project or any other intervention or initiative to assess any aim, realizable concept or proposal, or any alternative, to help in decision making or ascertain the degree of achieving or value regarding the aim and objectives and the result of any such action that has been completed.

Anglican Music in Ancient and Modern Perspectives

Temperly (1983) stated that up until the early 19th century, most Anglican Church music in England was centred around the cathedrals, where trained choir would sing choral pieces in worship. Composers wrote music to make full use of the traditional cathedral layout of a segregated channel area and the arrangement of choir stalls into rows of Decani and Cantoris, writing antiphonal anthems. In parish churches, musical worship normally only consisted of congregational hymns while prayers and psalms were normally said rather than sung. The tradition of a robbed choir of men and boys was virtually unknown in Anglican parish Churches until the early 19th century.

Unger, (2010) noted that. Around 1839, a choral revival took hold in England, particularly fuelled by the Oxford movement, which sought to revive the catholic liturgical practice in Anglican churches. Despite opposition from more puritan-minded Anglicans, ancient practices such as intoning the vesicles and responses and chanted psalms were introduced. Composers active around this time included Samuel Sebastian Wesley and Charles Villiers Stanford. Several grandiose settings of the Anglican morning and evening canticles for choir and organ were composed in the late 19th and early 20th century, including settings by Thomas Attwood and other works which remain part of the Anglican choral repertoire today. Eskew, McElvath, (1980) noted that "The singing of hymns was not an integral part of Anglican orders of service until the early nineteenth century, and hymns, as opposed to metrical psalms, were not officially sanctioned. From above 1800 parish churches started to use different hymnal collections in the formal service like the book of hymns 1769 by Martin Madan, the Olney hymns, 1779 by John Newton and William Cowper and a collection of hymns for use of the people called Methodists 1779 Wesley and Charles Wesley.

Anglican hymnody was revitalized by the Oxford movement and led to the publication of hymnals such as hymns ancient and modern (1861). The English Hymnal, edited by Percy Dearmer and Ralph Vaughan Williams was published in 1906 and became one of the most influential hymn books ever published. It was supplanted in 1986 by the new English hymnal. The popular appeal of Christmas carols owes much to Anglican musicians, published collections such as oxford book of carols (1928) and carols for choirs, and the annual broadcast of nine lesson and carols from king's college, Cambridge have done much to popularize church music following the early music revival of the mid- 20th century, the publications of collections such as the oxford book of Tudor Anthems encouraged renewed interest in 17th-century composers such as Byrd and Tallis.

Moffatt, (1927) noted that "in all but the smallest churches the congregation was until recently confined to the singing of hymns. Over the past half-century or so, efforts have been made to increase the role of the congregation and also to introduce more popular musical styles in the evangelical and charismatic learning congregations. Not all churches can boast of a full SATB choir and a repertoire of one, two and three-part music is more suitable for many parish church choirs, a fact which is recognized in the current work of the royal school of church music and practice.

Malloy, (2007) opined that “Anglican churches also frequently draw upon the musical traditions of other Christian denominations, works by catholic composers such as Mozart, Lutherans such as Bach, Calvinists like Mendelessoln and composers from other branches of Christianity.

The local music of the area with their local instrument is often featured. This is particularly the case in music for the mass in Anglo-catholic churches, much of which is taken from the works of Roman Catholic composers.

Today, within the Anglican Church music, especially in Nigeria, music is modernized to make our worship an interesting gathering. The old hymns and canticles are now accompanied by local musical instruments, western music is also introduced to make the old people in the church enjoy the worship and make the music relevant for the young to participate and worship God in the beauty of his holiness.

Today, in the present Anglican Church, the youth are no longer interested in our traditional singing of hymnal, they seem not to attend choir practices or show anything that motivates them from our songs. In rural areas, the attendance to choir practices is very poor, they can only come only when they are paid or given cash or kind materials. Even when they attend, sometimes they abuse the choirmaster or music director, thereby creating conflict among the people. We observe that the level of education affects their learning capacity and ability to self notation and staff reading.

The choirmaster or music director also request a high cost of payment from the church as his salary even when the church cannot afford to pay such, it also affects the interest of people who are willing to participate in the church choir. During the music festival, the diocesan measure or standard is high that the rural church who could not afford such standard is left out of the celebration. The motivated youths who have learnt the music to attend the celebration, are discouraged and they lost interest in music.

Conclusion

Onyemelukwe, (2000) said, "what we preach, is what we pray, what we pray, is what we sing". The Anglican music is very good and interesting but the church should encourage the old and young through the provision of financial assistance to help motivate all the people to learn and participate in the church music.

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