

The Quilisma

September 2018

Gesture and Sound: Choral Conducting II

We have been fortunate to secure the services of Dr. Adam Luebke, the conductor of the Buffalo Philharmonic Chorus. Last year Adam worked with us on incorporating style in choral music. This year the emphasis will be on conducting. Save **Tuesday, September 25th** for this wonderful opportunity at **Our Lady Help of Christians Church** in the choir loft at **7:00pm**. The church is located at 4125 Union Road at Genesee Street in Cheektowaga. Be prepared to sing, discuss, and, perhaps, to conduct. This will be a hands on experience. Dr. Leubke is a graduate of Saint Olaf and Westminster Choir Colleges. He earned his doctorate from Florida State University. Currently, Dr. Luebke is on the faculty on SUNY Fredonia. His credentials are impeccable, so we will learn a lot!

Cantor Workshop II

Saint Lawrence Church will be the setting for our cantor workshop directed by Mary Lynn Pleczkowski from Pittsburgh. Our guest was formerly chair of the cantor section for NPM and still adjudicates cantors for certification. Mary Lynn's enthusiasm will spark your own desire to be an excellent cantor. We will sing through several psalms with volunteers serving as cantors. In addition, you will be shown the process for certification by NPM which can validate your skill level for promotion or salary advances. The program will be held on **Monday, October 1st at Saint Lawrence Church at 7:00pm**. The church may be found on 1520 East Delevan Ave. in Buffalo, not far from Pine Hill Ridge Road.

Organ School

The guild is bringing Dr. Brian Gurley from the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Albany to our diocese on **November 16/17**. He will be assisted by Maria Chomicka, Joanne Jasinski, Patrick Barrett, and Peter Gonciarz. Friday afternoon will be devoted to organ technique, Friday evening will be a shared organ recital, and Saturday morning will be devoted to accessible organ literature. Dr. Gurley received a Master of Sacred Music from the University of Notre Dame under the master organ teacher Dr Craig Cramer. He earned a doctorate in choral conducting with a minor in organ performance from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. This exciting seminar will be held at **St. Francis of Assisi Church in Tonawanda**. Participation fees will be \$15 per day for members and \$20 for non members. Players of all levels of ability are welcome. Please let Bill Fay know if you plan to attend. musicman08@verizon.net or call (716) 873-0180.

Saturday, Nov. 16

- 2:00 Registration
- 2:15-2:45 The care and feeding of the church organist (Dr. Gurley)
- 3:00- 4:15 Organ technique, hymn playing (Dr. Gurley)
- 4:30-5:30 Organ master classes for beginner, intermediate, & advanced players: Maria & Peter, Joanne, Brian
- 5:30 Dinner on own
- 7:30 Organ recital (Brian, Maria, Peter, Patrick) - free will offering

Sunday, Nov. 17

- 8:30 Registration and coffee bar
- 9:00-9:50 Accompanying choirs- adapting choral scores to the organ
- 10:00-10:50 Accessible organ literature for Advent- Epiphany (Joanne)
- 11:00-11:50 Accessible organ literature for Lent-Pentecost (Patrick)
- 12:00 Lunch on site - free will offering
- 12:30-1:20 Accessible organ literature for funerals and weddings (Dr. Gurley)
- 1:30-2:00 Panel discussion (Joanne, Patrick, Peter, Maria, and Dr. Gurley)

The Church Musicians' Guild of Buffalo
A Chapter of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians

Mentoring the Next Generation of Music Ministers

By: Bill Fay, President

There is concern among veteran music ministers that there may be a void in the next generation of church musicians. Several factors are at play here. It is common knowledge that there are fewer young people studying the organ. In fact, several prominent music schools have dropped the organ major in the past 15 years. There are recorded fewer than 500 organ majors among accredited schools of music. Enrollment in the humanities has declined as majors in business and health sciences has mushroomed. Second, we know that the millennials tend to not be church goers. Some have called this the generation of the NONES. Third, the cost of higher education has forced students and their parents to consider the ability of graduates to pay student loans when employed after graduation.

However, there are bright lights shining here in Buffalo. I am thinking of the youth music ministry at Saint Benedict's Church where Chelsea Brodka serves her church while attending college. We gave her the young adult music ministry award last May. We have some dynamic young organists in the guild, including organists Maria Chomicka, Peter Gonciarz and John Myers who have earned master degrees in organ performance. Catherine Humphrey has motivated a numbers of teens to cantor at masses in the southtown churches. Note should be made of James Bobak, a student at Christ the King Seminary. James won the guild organ scholarship and is a degreed composer. I am thinking of the John Paul II Schola Cantorum which is comprised of young adults, some of whom are the children of Steven Quebral. Michael Hauser's young adult sons sing in their father's choir at Saint Jude's Church and sometimes attend guild events. On August 22 a new organization, Cantata Omnes, performed at Saint Michael's Church. This ensemble developed of out of the experience of the young people who make music at Saint Benedict's Church. We admire the young men who attended Saint Francis High School and were mentored by David Nease. At least a half dozen graduates of this school have made significant contributions to music ministry. Our newsletter editor, Brian Meyer, is one of these men. It would behoove us to encourage young people in our parishes to study the organ and our contemporary musicians to learn ensemble skills. Cantors could benefit from NPM certification to increase and validate their skills.

I recall the model of music ministry given by my mother. My mother was the organist of our church in Rochester, New York. I remember singing high mass with her; she would sing the propers and I would join in on the ordinary. The Saint Gregory and Saint Basil hymnals were our "newspapers" at home. Now that my mother is in failing health, I look back with nostalgia on the unique atmosphere in which I grew up. My mother began singing high mass while in high school for \$1.00. Her ministry was further developed at Nazareth College where she was taught to play the Gregorian masses. She got to play the organ for her baccalaureate mass.

However we learned our craft- from family, or learned it from parish staff or experienced formal music training in our high schools and colleges, the effort must be made to promote the next generation of liturgical music ministers. I recall that Dr. James Kosnik received the patronage of his pastor, Msgr. Maximilian Bogacki, at Assumption Church. However, most of us are not that lucky to experience the keen interest of their pastors. With the shortage of priests, liturgy and liturgical music receive less attention. We need to step up to the plate for this task. Encourage your young people to participate in your music program. Let children experiment with the organ, start children's choirs, offer piano classes. Let us remember that children are far more open to different styles of music than their elders. We will host a children's choir festival in March to encourage this. We will be the most successful when we graciously let the younger musicians take our place on the bench.

Around Town

- Our condolences go to **Regina Doherty** on the passing of her son-in-law last spring.
- We also express our sympathy to **Tim Socha**, whose mother died in August.
- Congratulations to **Peter Gonciarz** on his marriage on September 7 to La'tasha Williams at Saint Joseph's Cathedral.
- Kudos to **Joel Kumro** who performed in an organ recital at the NPM convention in Baltimore. CMG members **Bill Fay, Ed Witul, Patrick Barrett, and Mary Weimer** attended.
- **Don Jenczka** is the new music director at Saint Philip's Church in Cheektowaga upon **Audrey Shafer's** retirement.
- **Maria Chomicka** and her ensemble Cantate Omnes entertained a large crowd at Saint Michael's Church on August 22.
- **Bill Fay** has been invited to join the national committee for chapters for NPM. His assignment will be to help with mentoring chapters that need assistance.

Save the Dates

- **Tuesday September 25:** Dr. Adam Luebke at Our Lady Help of Christians Church, 7:00pm
- **Monday October 1:** Mary Lynn Pleczkowski at St. Lawrence Church, 7:00pm
- **Friday/Saturday, November 16/17:** Dr. Brian Gurley at St. Francis Assisi Tonawanda

In Memoriam

MEISTER - Roberta S. "Bobbie Sue"

August 16, 2018, of Kenmore, NY. Beloved daughter of the late John T. "Jack" and Marie A.; cousin of Susan M. Meister, Dawn (Dennis) Kavanagh, Kevin (Linda) Meister, Debra (Mike) Chase and the late David (Katie) Meister; survived by many close friends and other relatives and Godmother to numerous children. Roberta was a 1971 graduate of Nardin Academy, a vocalist and instrumentalist to Catholic Services for over 30 years and she was a retiree from Erie County Social Services, where she worked for over 30 years.

CMG Children's Choir Festival

By: Gail Shepherd

Our CMG Children's Choir Festival will be Sunday, March 3rd at Our Lady of Hope Church on Grant and Lafayette in Buffalo. Choirs from Our Lady of Hope, Notre Dame Academy and SS Peter and Paul in Williamsville have already committed to participate. Each choir will sing 2 or 3 pieces individually and then all will join together for the grand finale! We'll gather at 2:00pm to prepare, take a little break at 3:30pm, then present our Festival at 4:00pm.

We invite others to join us, and we want to encourage everyone. So, if you'd like to send individuals and only join us for the finale-just let us know. Or you could combine choirs from various parishes. Or send your school choir. All are welcome. Contact Gail Shepherd: gcshepherd@roadrunner.com or (716) 632-2559.



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—*The Times Reporter, Portland, Maine*

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following a day-long church and community festival and picnic

The Church Musicians' Guild of Buffalo

A Chapter of the National Association of Pastoral Musicians

Book Review: 'How the Choir Converted the World: Through Hymns, With Hymns and In Hymns'

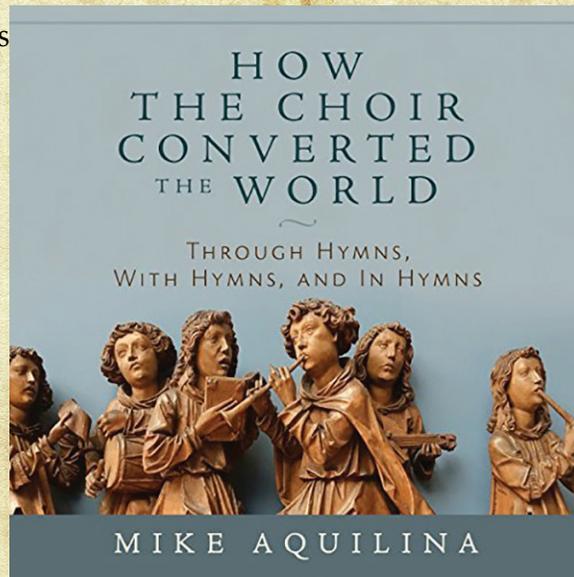
(By: Mike Aquilina, Steubenville: Emmaus Road Publishing, 2016)

By: Glenn Hufnagel

Mike Aquilina is a prolific author. According to his website, <http://fathersofthechurch.org>, he has published more than 40 books and many video titles. He appears frequently on Catholic radio and EWTN and has collaborated with Dion diMucci on two recordings. A graduate of Penn State, he is widely read in ancient and Church history and versed in Latin, since he does his own translations of Roman historians and poets and Church Fathers. The acknowledgements and cover blurbs credit faculty from Steubenville and Ave Maria Universities.

With such company, we might suspect a conservative agenda, and indeed, when heresies emerge within the first 200 years of Christianity, the lines are always drawn between the "orthodox" believers and the errant heretics. Nonetheless, Aquilina's narrative suggests some cogent questions for the contemporary Church. A foreword by John-Michael Talbot sets the scene. He states that "music is sacramental." And then: "Words can point to a reality. Music can usher people through the door into actual experience." He asserts that "the West needs revival now! . . . Part of that revival can come through great music that is fully engaging for folks who want to worship God in a way that both reflects and stirs the spirit and soul." (Or, in Christ's words, worship in spirit and in truth.) He senses that Catholics in America "want to want revival, but do not yet really want revival. Wanting to want revival means we want things to get better without

any change on our part personally. So, we do nothing, and mediocre parish after mediocre parish is consolidated into one large mediocre parish. (Michael Joncas warns against this slide into mediocrity in his article in the May issue of Pastoral Music: programming 'tried and true' selections of minimal musical and theological density. The texts tend not to grapple with the ambiguity and complexity of human experience but settle for easy 'truths' without the self-implicating and world-overturning power of Jesus' parables" [p. 25].) Talbot concludes that there is cause for optimism, noting explosive growth of the Church in Africa.



Aquilina picks up the optimism: "If we did it once, we can do it again." He asserts that "music saved the world." His original interest in the Church Fathers was in their theology. But that was not what made Christianity work for the unlettered multitude. It was beauty that catechized the faithful. Taking an esthetic tack, he states: "Grace builds on nature, and our embodied human nature delights in music. . . . People were able to see that Christianity was true because they first saw it was beautiful. . . . Jesus was not an argument or a set of propositions, a creed or a council. . . . He was a song they couldn't get out of their heads." "When we see how the Fathers changed the world with music, we're seeing a blueprint for changing the world today." And Aquilina sets off to trace the role of music in worship in ancient Judaism, citing the Old Testament canticles, especially the Song of Miriam: "Miriam was a prophetess. In fact, the same Hebrew word means both 'prophecy' and 'make music.' Then, the connection between the tambourine and women dancing. We'll find that connection throughout Jewish, Christian and pagan culture: wherever women are dancing, there are tambourines, and wherever you hear a tambourine you should expect to see women dancing." Then, the fall of Jericho and the rededication of the Temple by Nehemiah: "The record of organized

any change on our part personally. So, we do nothing, and mediocre parish after mediocre parish is consolidated into one large mediocre parish. (Michael Joncas warns against this slide into mediocrity in his article in the May issue of Pastoral Music: programming 'tried and true' selections of minimal musical and theological density. The texts tend not to grapple with the ambiguity and complexity of human experience but settle for easy 'truths' without the self-implicating and world-overturning power of Jesus' parables" [p. 25].) Talbot concludes that there is cause for optimism, noting explosive growth of the Church in Africa.

music in Israelite liturgy begins with the trumpet." And then, the music of stringed instruments, "which had such a strong effect on the mind that it could induce prophetic ecstasy in those to whom the Lord wished to speak." One of those was David, composer of psalms. And Isaiah, "doubtless a singer. He was certainly a poet."

The next chapter cites Catullus and Lucian with lurid details of pagan fertility rites. Warnings by some of the bishops and Fathers led to the early Christians' seemingly strange ambivalence about music, since, in Greek and Roman culture, art, entertainment and religion were all facets of each other. Idolatry aside, the frenzy of these rituals broke down ego boundaries and melded the participants into one body. Rock concerts and football games do the same. Ironically, that is what we expect as well from a rousing entrance hymn.

Next, on to the Church of the Apostles, where hymns are quoted in Ephesians, Philippians and elsewhere. Aquilina highlights how connecting a melody with a text makes the latter easy to learn for a mostly illiterate congregation. To be sure, the early Church sang psalms as they had at the synagogue, but "spiritual songs" might have been improvised on the spot, as rappers do today. After scripture was read, there was a time of sharing, when there might be news from other communities, or perhaps an original hymn (1 Cor 14:26). Good hymns would be passed on orally, not written down, unless one of the epistle writers happened to think of one at just the right moment. Sometimes, "they sang just because they wanted to sing," whether they were suffering, joyful, or in prison, like Paul and Silas. Gentile converts might "try adapting their own musical traditions to their new faith." Dancing and the use of instruments were part of Old Testament tradition. "Wouldn't it attract more worshipers to Christ if they could find the same music they liked at Christian worship?" But converts wanted something other than what they'd had as pagans. Anything remotely related to idol worship was to be avoided. The Fathers preferred unison singing. St. Ignatius of Antioch introduced antiphonal singing. Congregational responses were added to the Eucharistic Prayer and other parts of the service to keep the people involved. St. Basil "was sure the

congregation would remember the melody of the responsorial psalm and go home singing it. The words would go with the tune, and the message of those words would stay with those people forever." "Christians sang with one voice because they were one body, not only with the rest of the congregation, but with all of creation."

Chapter 5 is a conundrum: "Why Catholics Can't Sing" (no credit to Thomas Day). The point is not immediately obvious. The early Church was beset with factionalism and competition from a variety of heresies, all of which are defined. The heretics had "catchy tunes" sung by women's choirs which gave the orthodox Christians stiff competition. "Women's choirs grabbed attention where men's could hardly be heard." (Aquilina will refer to "catchy tunes" twelve times from here till the end of the book.) Apparently, fear of heresy caused many Christians to forswear music. Christian ascetics also gave it up. In the 300s, there was a fundamentalist streak: only psalms from Scripture could be used, not "private psalms." St. Ephrem of Edessa, now in southeastern Turkey, decided to counter the heretics' "catchy tunes" by organizing his own women's choirs and teaching them music "crammed full of sublime and spiritual thoughts" about Christian beliefs. "It seems that Ephrem taught the ultimate equality of men and women in the coming Kingdom of God. Not every Christian writer liked the idea of women singing in public, but Ephrem would have his little bit of the Kingdom of God on earth." Hymn writers like St. Hilary emerged. The chapter concludes that most "orthodox Christian writers were coming to the same conclusion: music was the most effective weapon in the fight against heresy." So, why can't Catholics sing? Because of fear of heresy? Because they would rather listen to the choir? The conclusion is unclear.

As Arianism raged, Ambrose became bishop of Milan in 374. "He found a way to compose hymns that everyone could sing together and remember." He introduced antiphonal singing, which had not caught on in the West as it had at Antioch. But in 384, the emperor came out as Arian, and Ambrose was pressured to "hand over a couple of churches so that Arian worshipers could use them." The orthodox

believers formed a mob and barricaded themselves inside the basilica. Ambrose got them singing, and the soldiers who were preparing to break down the doors retreated. He too was “a big proponent of women’s singing in church.” Then, who should come to Milan but Augustine? Augustine had flirted with Manicheanism, but Ambrose “made the faith an exciting intellectual adventure.” By 390, Augustine had written an esthetic treatise, *De Musica*, in the style of the Greek philosophers. “If music is an application of pure mathematics, then it is something more than sensual pleasure. It’s an insight into the mind of the Creator, who made all things with mathematics.” From Augustine’s time on, music would be an accepted part of the liturgy with a firm justification behind it. . . . We only had to find the right use of music to produce the right effect – to lead us upward rather than downward.”

Chapter 8 is a brief essay on the hymn *Te Deum*, the “Catholic fight song,” known in English as “Holy God, We Praise Thy Name.” The final chapter, “*Da Capo al Fine*,” traces the evolution of church music at least till the classical era. “The early Christians responded to the world around them – but they didn’t imitate it and give people music that was almost as good. . . . They didn’t settle for pale imitations of the catchy tunes the heretics had turned out. . . . They came up with styles that were distinctly their own and used them to make music that was better than what the world around them was offering.” As the centuries passed, “music took on more and more importance in Christian liturgy. It became more and more of an art.” Gregorian chant emerged. Then scribes added neumes to the texts of chants, and around 1020, Guido of Arezzo invented the musical staff. With notation, polyphony flourished, though the ancient world had been able to perform harmony and polyphony on an intuitive basis. “Great composers were moved to greater greatness by the greatness of the subject.” But: “Is that still true today? Are we putting our very best efforts into music for Christian worship? Or are we just giving people music that’s almost as good as what the secular world can give them?” Aquilina’s conclusion is somewhat anticlimactic. As music has evolved, so has liturgy. The works of the classical composers are more suited to the concert hall than encouraging full, conscious

and active participation in worship. One felt that perhaps he was working up to an explicit critique of contemporary worship music. Would he debate the merits of strophic hymns as opposed to verses and refrains? Some OCP writers attempt to imitate the style of praise songs, but they self-consciously stuff them so full of theology that the music suffers, and we end up with a pale imitation of praise music. That is the lesson Aquilina learned when he began his study of the Fathers. Let music be music. The ball is in our court.

September 3rd: The Feast of St. Gregory the Great

Pope Gregory I (commonly known as Pope Gregory the Great) compiled a patchwork antiphony during his considerable work with liturgical development. He reorganized the Schola Cantorum and established a more uniform standard in church services, gathering chants from among the regional traditions as widely as he could manage. Of those, he retained what he could, revised where necessary, and assigned particular chants to the various services. According to Donald Jay Grout, his goal was to organize the bodies of chants from diverse traditions into a uniform and orderly whole for use by the entire western region of the Church. His renowned love for music was recorded only 34 years after his death; the epitaph of Honorius testified that comparison to Gregory was already considered the highest praise for a music-loving pope. While later legends magnified his real achievements, these significant steps may account for why his name came to be attached to Gregorian chant.

How are we keeping the Church’s tradition of Gregorian chant in our own parishes? The Guild’s own newsletter (“the Quilisma”) is named after a Gregorian chant neume. (*It simply means that the first note sung is held a little longer than the second.*) It can be seen highlighted in red in the new design of the newsletter.

Board Member Spotlight: Brian Meyer

Please meet our newest board member: Brian Meyer. Brian is currently the full-time Director of Music & Worship at Our Lady of Charity Parish (the merger of Holy Family, St. Ambrose, and St. Agatha) in South Buffalo. Under the leadership of Fr. Bryan Zielenieski, Brian is responsible for planning and executing all liturgical functions for the parish. In his two years at the position, Brian quickly built an established choir of 28 people that sings weekly. Besides his musical and liturgical responsibilities, Brian also spearheads all visual and digital communications efforts for the parish.

Prior to OLCP, Brian served as the Director of Music at St. Bernard in Kaisertown and St. Francis of Assisi in Athol Springs. He was taught and mentored by former CMG President, David Nease. Besides his 18 years of service for the Church, Brian also held the position of Executive Creative Director for Match Marketing Group and Paragon Advertising, where he conceptualized and created ad campaigns for clients such as Mighty Taco, Zippo, Delaware North, and Advil. He will be bringing his combined skill set of liturgical music and corporate marketing to the Guild as he now lays out our monthly newsletter.

In his down time, Brian enjoys spending time with his two miniature dachshunds, attending local theater, supporting neighborhood restaurants, and digging in his garden at his home in South Buffalo. He can be reached at BMcopywriter@gmail.com.



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