

Chant: A Weapon in the Spiritual War

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There is an ideal hierarchy in music:

melody, harmony, and rhythm.

Gregorian chant contains all three of these in perfect order. It cannot be subverted in itself.

Chant can only order the passions, soothe the soul and body, and raise the mind to God.

It is one of the most powerful weapons against spirits of darkness and the concupiscence of the flesh.

Chant as a Weapon

The power of Gregorian Chant is in its perfect order. The devil only knows disorder. Man's fallen nature inclines him towards disorder; while he knows that his passions should be subservient to reason, the lower faculties always seek to subvert and overpower the intellect, thus enslaving him to the flesh and silencing the voice of God in his soul. This is the spiritual war: the battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. All three of these are overcome by order. One must saturate himself in order and dedicate himself to it, engaging tirelessly in constant warfare against disorder.

"It is too difficult" one might think. But do not despair; if the flesh is weak, have a willing spirit.

Whether one is only beginning the battle against self or is deep in it, there is a powerful weapon waiting in the arsenal. To use it requires no work on the part of the soldier, only silence and open ears.

Ideal Music

Music is made up of three distinct parts: melody, harmony, and rhythm. Ideal music contains all three of these aspects in proper order.

I. Melody is the purest aspect of music which appeals predominantly to the intellect and engages the soul above the body.

II. Harmony is subservient to melody. It supports and enriches the melody and creates depth. It appeals to the intellect and emotions. The emotions should be engaged in a moderated way subservient to the engaging of the intellect, thus enhancing the love for God and spiritual things and expressing joy, sorrow or other passions in their proper place.

III. Rhythm is subservient to both melody and harmony. It provides structure and time to music.

Creation is rhythmic: the seasons, the food chain, the water cycle, the human body, everything.

Rhythm is essential to life. Ideal rhythm in music fits with the rhythms of nature, especially in the human body (respiration, heart beat, digestion, etc.), and supports the melody and harmony without overpowering them. Rhythm has immense power over the body. If rhythm is disordered, the results are catastrophic (hence the Bacchanals in the Old Testament, the demonic possession of voodoo priests

during drumming rituals, the Jazz era's sexual liberty and organized crime, the "free love" revolution in the 1960s, murderous mosh pits at death metal concerts, and the overall debauchery that takes place at night clubs and "music" festivals today, to give just a few examples).

Chant: Perfectly Ordered

Gregorian Chant is monophonic, modal, and meterless.

Monophonic: a single melodic line

Modal: built on tone centers based on scale degree: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti

Meterless: without strict tempo or meter, free-flowing

Monophonic = Melody

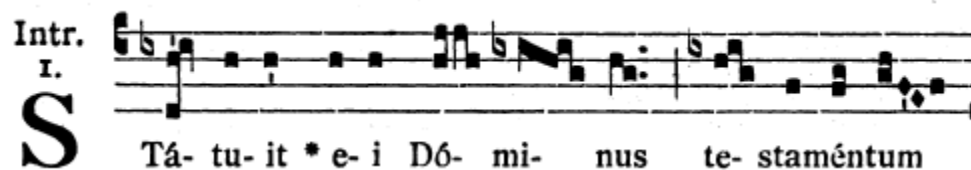
Gregorian Chant is monophonic, meaning it is made up of melody. Melody therefore sits in its proper place above all other aspects of music in chant, making it the purest form of musical expression.

Modal = Built-in Harmony

Gregorian chant is not harmonized in the strict sense of the word, that is, traditional chant is not sung with accompanying harmonic lines or chords, but a capella. But harmony is inextricably built into chant through active tones, overtones, and reverberation in the modal melody. Chants are built around modes and often remain in one specific mode from start to finish. The intervals between notes create active tones which, while the melody continues on, continue to reverberate and create harmony within the chant itself. This is most clearly heard with large intervals.

The Introit "Statuit" is a perfect example of active tones.

Here I will explain how active tones, overtones, and reverberation create harmony within a melodic line.



The image shows a musical score for the Introit "Statuit". It features a single melodic line on a five-line staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody begins with a large initial 'S' and is written in a square-note style. Below the staff, the Latin text "Tá-tu-it * e-i Dó-mi-nus te-staméntum" is written in a Gothic-style font, with the first note of the melody aligned under the 'S'.

The very first note sung continues to reverberate, especially in a Cathedral or large church, creating harmony within the melodic line. The active tone is the first note, which remains "active" in the room after the singer has moved on to the next notes.

Therefore, the harmony in chant is found within the melody and is therefore incapable of overpowering the melody.

Meterless = Ordered Rhythm

Chant is meterless, but that does not make it rhythmless. While it is not strictly measured like the beating of the human heart, it is not without rhythm. The rhythm of chant is found in the length of

notes and phrase markings, which makes it possible to sing with multiple voices in unison. Without rhythm, chanting together would be impossible.

Chant is free-flowing and smooth and therefore reflects the timelessness of eternity. Its rhythm can be compared to a breeze or the gentle flowing of a stream, as opposed to the steady beating of a heart. Because there is no meter, the free-flowing rhythm of chant is in its proper place, subservient to both melody and harmony.

Chant Heals Both Soul and Body

The power that music has on the soul is immense. If one listens to disordered music, he becomes disordered. If one listens to ordered music, he becomes ordered.

Gregorian Chant is the highest, purest form of musical expression because it contains all three aspects of music in perfect order. It heals the soul by ordering the lower faculties to their proper place beneath the intellect and will, and raising the mind and heart to God. Chant also greatly benefits the body by slowing the heart rate, reducing anxiety, lifting the mood, and improving blood circulation and digestion, to name a few of its effects.

Gregorian Chant is not dry or unemotional as its critics describe it. Its deeply emotive nature is perfectly subservient to its intellectual nature, and thus goes under the radar of those who are saturated in the music of this world and seek an adrenaline rush from overly passionate music.

Chant has such power over the forces of darkness due to its goodness, truth, and beauty, that they flee before it. This is why revolutionaries have sought to remove it from the Church and bury it under loud, prideful, and tasteless music. However, despite relentless attacks by the agents of Satan against it, Gregorian Chant remains the official music of the Church and one of the greatest means of ordering the soul.

Sound penetrates the soul.

You may close your eyes, block your nose, and refrain from touch and taste, but even if you block your ears, the vibrations of sound will penetrate your body even to your soul. Even the deaf man is not unaffected by the music around him. The power of frequencies goes far beyond our ability to hear them.

Gregorian Chant sung well is one of the most powerful weapons against the forces of darkness. Listen to it often and let it speak for itself.

Ad Jesum per Mariam,

Eliza