Music in Christian Life: The expressive power of the WORD

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1. Preparing a choir to pray and sing a sacred text – what is involved?

2. What is prayer?
   + a picture of prayer in a Gregorian Introit Antiphon: “Invocabit me”
   + a Christian theological basis of prayer
   + a picture of prayer in a second Gregorian Antiphon: “Oculi mei”

3. How should we sing a prayer?
   *Psallite sapienter* Psalm 46: 8
   i.e., with skill, art, understanding, wholeness, wisdom, spirit….

4. The ‘nuts and bolts’ of singing a sacred text.
   + syllabic differentiation as understood by Classical and Post-Classical Latin rhetoricians
   + “syllabic differentiation” in the primitive sources of Gregorian Chant
     in an Office Antiphon in the syllabic genre
     in a Communion Antiphon of semi-ornate genre

5. Current research regarding the manuscript traditions of Gregorian Chant:
   + the Church in dialogue with culture
   + “rediscovering ourselves”
   + musical composition at the service of a sacred text: Gregorian Communion: *Lutum fecit*
Gregorian Introit, First Sunday of Lent *Invocabit me*

*Invocabit me, et ego exaudiam eum:*
*eripiam eum, et glorificabo eum:*
*longitudine dierum adimplebo eum.*

*Ps. Qui habitat in adjutorio Altissimi,*
in protectione Dei caeli commorabitur.

He will call out to me, and I will hear/answer him;  
I will deliver him, and I will glorify him:  
with length of days I will fill/content him.  
Psalm 90: 10

Ps. He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High,  
shall abide in the shade of the Almighty.  
Psalm 90: 1

*exaudiam eum, eripiam eum, glorificabo eum: adimplebo eum.*
What is prayer? Why is prayer possible?

Christian faith is faith in a God who **speaks** and who **listens**. The Christian God has revealed Himself in **words** and deeds with which he **addresses** men and women. Revelation, in **words** and deeds, calls for a **response** in **words** and deeds, and thus Revelation expands into **dialogue**, a life-long dialogue which can lead a Christian to union with God.

The whole Bible is, indeed, a **dialogue**: a **relationship** of God with His people. This relationship of God with His people flows from His being the Creator. The Christian God is a divine "Person", the Revealer and the Creator who freely **addresses** the creature/person and to whom the creature/person can, in freedom, turn in prayer.

We can pray (**speak**) to God because God himself is "**speech**", because He is "**Word**". His nature is **to speak, to hear, to reply**. Only because there is already **speech**, "Logos" in God can there be **speech** "Logos" to God. (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was **in communication with God**” John 1:1). Since there is relationship within God himself (Trinity), there can be participation in this relationship.

Gregorian Introit, Third Sunday of Lent Oculi mei

Oculi mei semper ad Dominum, quia ipse evellet de laqueo pedes meos: respice in me, et miserere mei, quoniam unicus et pauper sum ego.

Ps. Ad te Domine levavi animam meam: Deus meus, in te confido, non erubescam.

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Look on me, and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.
Psalm 24: 15-16

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. In you, O my God, I trust, I will not be put to shame.
Ps. 24: 1-2
How should we sing in prayer?

Psallite sapienter
Vulgate, Psalm 46: 8

"Sing praise with all your skill" (Grail Psalms)
How should we sing in prayer?

Vulgate, Psalm 46: 8

_Psallite sapienter_

"Sing praise with all your skill" (Grail Psalms)
Sing in an understandable way, sing with understanding.
That is, the singer must understand and be understood.
This kind of singing is not limited to a mere rational mode.
Sing from, and toward, the Spirit,
Sing in a way worthy of, and appropriate to, the Spirit”.
Singing should have something of the essence of wisdom:
the brilliance and clarity of wisdom, but also, integration towards wholeness.

The imperative "Psallite" runs through all of Scripture, it is the concrete version of the call to worship and glorify God which is revealed in the Bible as the most profound vocation of human beings. This means that **musical expression is part of the proper human response to God's self-revelation, to his becoming open to a relationship with us.**

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI)
Sana, Domine, animam meam, quia peccavi tibi.

Heal, O Lord, my soul, for I have sinned against you.
(Psalm 40, 5)
Syllabic differentiation in Classical and Post-Classical Latin rhetoric

“*There is in speaking a kind of hidden melody…*” (cantus obscurior)

*Est autem etiam in dicendo quidam cantus obscurior.*

Even in the spoken [language], after all, there is a kind of hidden melody.

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*Cicero* 1st cent. B.C.E. *Orator XVII, 57.*

“Accent is the soul of the word…” (anima vocis)

"*Et est accentus, ut quidam putaverunt, anima vocis et seminariurn musices, quod omnis modulation ex fastigiis vocum gravitateque componitur ideoque accentus quasi adcantus dictus est.*

"The accent, as some have claimed, is the soul of the word and the beginning of musical art, since every melody is composed of acute and grave sounds, therefore the accent was considered close to song".

*(Accent = ad-cantus)*

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*Martianus Capella* 5th cent. C.E. *De nuptiis, lib. III, De arte grammatica*
Syllabic differentiation

1. Tonic syllable - Pole of animation
2. Final Syllable - Pole of relaxation
3. Pre-tonic and post-tonic syllables
Sána, Dómine, ánimam méam, quía peccávi tíbi.

Heal, O Lord, my soul, for I have sinned against you.
(Psalm 40, 5)
Sana, Dómine,

animam méam,

quia peccavi tíbi.

Heal, O Lord, my soul, for I have sinned against you.
(Psalm 40, 5)
Ana, Dómine, * ániam me-am, qui a peccávi ti-bi.
I will tell of all your marvels: I will rejoice and exult in you: I will sing psalms to your name, O most high.

Graduale Novum, Regensburg/Rome 2011
Syllabic differentiation in an antiphon of semi-ornate genre.

\textit{Nar-rá -bo}

\textit{óm-ni-a}

\textit{mi-ra-bí -li-a}

\textit{tú-a}
Gradual, adiastematic, open field, notation of Metz (Metense or Lorenese)
Narrabo omnia mirabilia tua a lactabor essuita in ecclesiam

Laon, Bibliothque municipale, 239 10th cent., after 930, p 55
Einsiedeln, Stifbibl. cod. 121 (beginning of the 11\textsuperscript{th} century)
Graduale, adiastematic notation of St. Gall, open field
Narrabo omnia mirabilia tuae
et tabor et exultabo in te psallam
nomin tuo altissime
Musical composition at the service of a sacred text:

Communion Antiphon for the 4th Sunday of Lent: Lutum fecit

Lutum fecit ex sputo Dominus,
et linivit oculos meos:
et abii, et lavi, et vidi,
et credidi Deo.

The Lord made mud with spittle, and anointed my eyes:
I went away, and I washed, and I could see, and I believed in God.