

our animality. The commodification of our lives has brought a loss of memory more widespread and lasting than anything Stalin could achieve in his attempts to re-write history. MacIntyre's essay is a work written in hope. The hope that human beings have a future: a hope engendered through friendship and given birth in the fragility of our human nature.

DAVID GOODILL OP

MUSIC, THEOLOGY, AND JUSTICE edited by Michael O'Connor, Hyun-Ah Kim, and Christina Labriola, *Lexington Books*, Lanham, 2017, pp. xxi+228, £70.00, hbk

Why music and justice? (Theology goes without saying.) Until early modernity, temperance was the paramount virtue in musical ethics, but now we look for justice. Since making music (or 'musicking') is inherently social, justice is implicated, first, in the personal relationships between music-makers (and audiences), who need patience, attentiveness, and intersubjective empathy. Thus, 'good musicking' is 'a school of virtue'. Musicking is also formative for social life, including political engagement, community building and liturgical worship. Thirdly, both the content and context of musical performances can directly promote justice, be they protest songs at a political march or hymns in church.

This theologically rich and sensitive volume is the fruit of an international conference held at the University of St Michael's College, in the University of Toronto, in October 2014. The dauntingly wide intersection of music, theology and justice is intelligently approached through the Christological titles of Prophet (or teacher), Pastor (or king) and Priest. Music enables individuals and communities to bear prophetic witness to God's kingdom, eschatologically present, albeit imperfectly. Music builds community and fosters awareness of our shared humanity. Music mediates between heaven and earth, both in real liturgies and (arguably) in quasi-sacramental secular contexts. These Prophetic, Pastoral and Priestly roles for music are helpfully surveyed in the editors' Introduction and the summary essays concluding each part. Such a structure provides a powerful interpretive tool, bringing coherence to an otherwise highly diverse collection ranging from medieval chant to extreme metal music. That said, one can identify other persistent themes – harmony, bridge-building, bodiliness, eschatology – that further enhance the coherence of this volume.

To distinguish itself from noise, all music depends on some organising principle. Order and justice invite musical metaphors. As Shakespeare's Ulysses warns, 'Take but degree away, untune that string,/ And, hark, what discord follows!' Several contributors uphold music's potential to integrate, join together, harmonise. Conversely, Satan in St Hildegard's

Ordo Virtutum (ch. 10) is utterly unmusical! One could say, music helps social ‘composition’ against the forces of decomposition.

By harmonising difference into new ‘compositions’, music has mediatory power: it bridges the physical/spiritual worlds, analogous to Christ’s incarnation bridging the human/divine. This bridge-building capacity is evident throughout the book. In Depression-era Tennessee, Zilphia Horton’s labour songs, setting new words to popular Christian hymn tunes, bridged social divides: white/black, rural/urban, secular/religious (ch. 1). The Pontanima (literally, ‘soul-bridge’) choir of Sarajevo is ‘a living, breathing project of reconciliation’, bringing together the diverse ethno-religious communities of war-torn Bosnia to appreciate ‘the music of the despised other’ (ch. 6). Despite accusations of ‘syncretism’, such beauty goes ‘beyond rationalistic control’. More astoundingly, Mechthild of Hackeborn, the thirteenth-century ‘nightingale of Christ’, explicitly understood her musical worship as ‘co-redemptive’, fulfilling a priestly role of intercession and bridge-building as she joined her ‘sacrifice of praise’ to Christ’s uniquely efficient sacrifice of the Cross (ch. 11).

Building these social and spiritual bridges requires a performative act, which in turn follows from music’s physicality and our bodiliness (see especially ch. 13). The spectre of Cartesian dualism is exorcised by the inherent ‘sacramentalism’ of musical performance, even for artists like Sting who explicitly reject organised religion (ch. 5). Meanwhile, traditional concerns for temperance, against the overly ‘sensuous’ nature of music, do not prevent Hildegard from praising the body as ‘the vestment of the spirit’, whose proper function is ‘to use its voice to sing praises to God’ (ch. 10). While several contributors engage with pure lyrics (and their subtexts), they refuse to remain in intellectual abstraction: lyrics are part of a holistic performance. Attention is paid to how musical gestures carry meaning; one author-composer thus analyses her own song expressing Jon Sobrino’s liberation theology (ch. 3). Also important are costumes, staging, and other effects with quasi-sacramental power; for instance, Daft Punk wear robot outfits as they seem to preside as ‘priests’ over the ecstatic dancing crowds, ostensibly reconciling humanity to itself after technological alienation (ch. 9). Similarly, punk adherents see their music not as a consumer product, but as a way of life, ‘a potentially liberating set of communal practices’ (ch. 2).

Music engages the body and recruits the imagination, beyond merely propositional truths.

Throughout the book, eschatological concerns preponderate: we protest and lament that the world as it is, is not the world as it should be. Music expresses this eschatological tension, both the cry for existential ‘authenticity’ in a suffering world, and the inchoate experience of God’s kingdom ‘justifying’ us already. Some chapters lean too heavily one way or the other, so it was refreshing to read Don Saliers’s balanced description of the paradoxical ‘double helix of lament and doxology’,

especially in the Psalms (ch. 12). Even in the face of despair, music brings meaning and hope.

At times, these paradoxes of Christianity could be more carefully navigated. In revealing ‘blurred lines’ of various dichotomies (especially sacred/secular), contributors occasionally risk collapsing one side into the other. One could contest certain moves: wondering whether God could ask for forgiveness (p. 52), reinterpreting original sin through process theology (p. 77), and equating ‘the erotic life force pervading the natural cosmos’ with the ‘divine Spirit’ (p. 142). But Christian orthodoxy should not be a bar to this dialogue between theology and culture, not least for musicians who reject ‘official’ religion.

Finally, while good musicking is intrinsically virtuous, of course music can coexist with, and contribute to, injustice. The book does not explicitly acknowledge the virtue of ‘religion’ as part of justice, yet our ‘vertical’ relationship to God is inseparable from ‘horizontal’ care for humanity and our common home. Justice cannot be fulfilled by sacramentalism without the sacraments, activism without grace, protest without prayer; nor by doxology without lament, liturgy without hospitality, or theology without a listening ear. Zilphia Horton insisted on the Christianity underpinning her songs. Would she regret the secularised trajectory of ‘I/We Shall Not Be Moved’, from Christian spiritual to labour song, civil rights anthem and, finally, Premier League football chant? Either way, this timely book is an essential contribution to a renewed dialogue of theology and culture.

MATTHEW JARVIS OP

CONFESSION: THE HEALING OF THE SOUL by Peter Tyler, *Bloomsbury*, London, 2017, pp. 219, £14.99, pbk

It might be helpful to begin by noting what this book is not. It is not a history of the sacramental practice of confession as it has developed in the Roman Catholic Church, nor is it a comparative study of the place of confession as a pastoral ministry across the Christian churches. It is not an examination of the practice of confession as it is found within the different world faiths, nor is it an exploration of the apparently similar experiences and practices found in psychotherapy and in popular media. But elements of each of these contribute to this wise and challenging book, and our understanding of each is itself deepened by the comprehensive reach of the discussion.

What fascinates Peter Tyler, who is both an academic theologian and a practising psychotherapist, is how confession can function in enabling and fostering integral human growth, and how confession might be *the* necessary experience and practice to heal the gap that has opened up