

From and To the Ends of the Earth

Attendees from Beijing to Cork County, Ireland, and every time zone in the U.S. gathered from 8:45 to noon (Central Time!) June 7-18 for the Bi-Annual “Congregational Song” course offered jointly by the Church Music Institute and Brite Divinity School. Convened by Dr. Charlotte Kroeker, guest lecturers represented areas of specialty in the long history and practice of congregational singing, anchored by a new text, *The Congregation Sings: A Biblical Mandate* by Dr. Robert Mann, to be released by GIA Publications in Fall, 2021. Rev. Dr. Michael Joncas of the University of St. Thomas unearthed Biblical origins of song from ancient times that persist in practice today. Rev. Dr. Paul Westermeyer opened the dramatic changes in singing brought by the Reformation. Dr. James Abbington of Emory University covered the influences of Watts, English hymnody, and African American music as they found their way into American religious song. Dr. Don Saliers brought to life the tunes and texts of the Evangelical Revival and Wesleyan hymnody as they have shaped congregational singing. Dr. Zebulon

Highben of Duke University Chapel and Dr. Mary Louise Bringle of Brevard College, both current hymn writers, brought historic trends and practice into focus with current issues as contemporary worshippers seek to “sing a new song” faithfully.

Not only were the lecturers stimulating and interesting, but the attendees brought their own perspectives and learning to each other. From experienced clergy to young seminarians, from seasoned musicians to recent graduates, from clergy and musicians serving more traditional congregations to those in very different circumstances – all had much to contribute to the conversation and to each other.

While another “Congregational Song” course will not be offered until 2023, watch for information on “Music in Christian Worship,” a foundational course in the theology and practice of music in worship, slated for Summer, 2022



Erik Routley (1917-1982)

As churches face new circumstances in unusual times, the wisdom of Erik Routley offers some possible solutions. Thanks to Nancy Graham, currently working on his definitive biography, for locating this piece.



Why Not a Church Music Society?

by Eric Routley

Honesty in our worship music demands a maxim which most of us find not difficult to accept, namely, that what we do should be done as well as possible. Yet another, which is not as easy, is to face our church as to what it now is, not as it used to be or as we wish it were.

What is the choir supposed to be doing in our churches? It is primarily there, I think we say, to lead the singing. Now the displeasing, but unmistakable, fact is that many of our churches cannot support a choir that will lead the singing. Here and there you will find a well-trained choir of thirty or forty voices that can produce the strong and homogeneous body of sound necessary if the congregational singing is to be 'led'. But how much more often does the choir consist of five sopranos, three of whom weren't at practice, two altos, a tenor who should not be singing tenor, and two basses one of whom is not to be trusted with an interval greater than a third? These faithful folk are sometimes under the pulpit, sometimes in a chancel, or sometimes far above and behind the minister's head. In any case, they are often twenty-five feet, and sometimes farther, from the nearest

member of the congregation. They may know the music, but at that distance, and with uncertain resources, how can they help their neighbors sing?

Suppose that somebody comes along who says, "Go and sit down there with your families and friends and help them to sing." I am suggesting just that to our struggling churches. Substitute the choir for a church music society, or whatever you want to call it. The members of such an organization pledge to help with the music, not just stay in the loft. Let all who can read music and hold a part come along on a regular evening for an hour and let forty minutes of that time be given to the weekly hymns and psalms that the musicians may ponder them, and where necessary, learn them. Let the minister be there to explain why the hymns have been chosen and discern their difficult lines. Then on Sunday, these singers take their place with their families and friends, singing confidently and happily, neither fettered by ignorance nor puffed up by professionalism – the strong helping the weak. The choir was jam, but this music society could be the yeast. Thus improved, this singing will deepen the consciousness that they are taking

an active and indispensable part in that great drama which is our worship.

Back to the rehearsal. The remaining twenty minutes can be spent on some close work on music which they will perform by themselves on some high day -- carols at Christmas and Easter, a simple cantata, or a series of anthems to make up a recital. This will give the musicians something to work for while removing much of the spiritual wear and tear and the temptations to vanity and publicity. It will also abolish at a stroke, the blasphemer who resigns if they are not given their fair share of solos. Beyond all this, the little community will have the great advantage over the large and well-equipped church. The dichotomy of choir and congregation, the artificial separation of worshippers, will not be the rule, but the exception, and the singing body of the little church becoming the envy of the great church which preserves the choral tradition.

Citation: Ministers Bulletin, March 1951. Published by the Life and Works Department of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

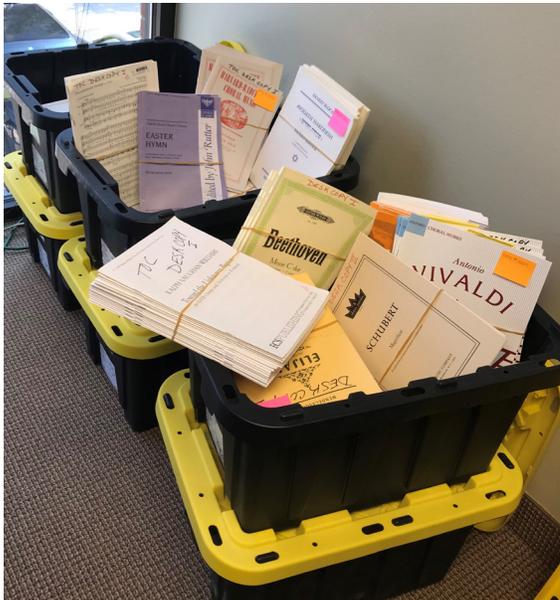
CMI Receives Tim Sharp Choral Library Holdings

As he transitioned from the Executive Director of the American Choral Directors Association to his new life in Tennessee, CMI Board Member Dr. Tim Sharp generously packed some of the finest sacred choral music from his library to send to CMI. This summer

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Dr. Mann and the library staff have been processing the music into the library holdings. Included are the finest editions of anthems, cantatas, oratorios, requiems, masses, and sacred services of such composers in the classical canon of Western

music as Britten, Pärt, J.S. Bach, Holst, Mendelssohn, Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Rachmaninoff, Willcocks, Handel, Vivaldi, Rheinberger, Schubert, Beethoven, Bruckner, Mozart, Vierne, Duruflé, Bloch, Rutter, Haydn, William Byrd, and C.P.E. Bach. Also included are hymnbooks; guides, philosophies and practice of church music; collections of hymns by various writers; collections of anthems, hymns and worship resources by varied composers and authors. Such treasures are available to all who delve into the libraries of CMI. Thank you, Dr. Sharp, for sharing your finest and best with the constituencies of CMI! We wish you God's goodness in your new life in Tennessee, and especially in your new position as Minister of Music for Immanuel Baptist Church in Nashville!



Hot Off the Press Photos from the August 6-7 Summer Intensive



Save the Date!

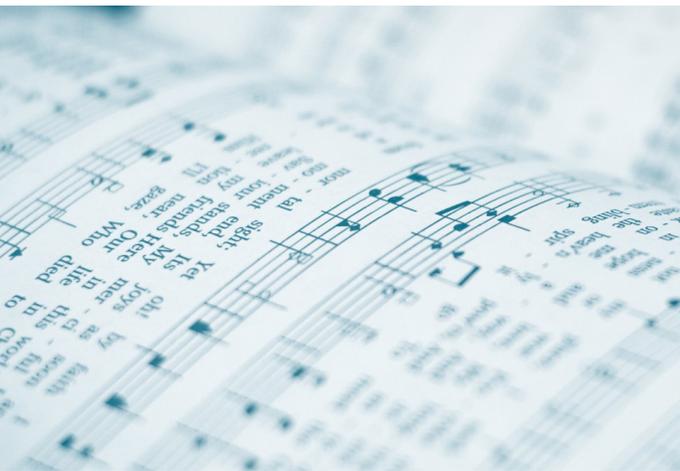
GIVING DAY - September 23rd

Can We Count on You?

The work of CMI depends on the generosity of donors during this time of the year to serve clergy, musicians, and congregations for transcendent congregational worship. Mark your calendar and watch for ways you can maximize your gift! Thank you!

LECTURE - Oct. 17th, 4:00-8:00pm

Rev. Peter Marty Lecture, Discussion, Evensong: Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas, TX
Free registration for lecture, and meal at churchmusicinstitute.org. Evensong open to public.



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CMI
CHURCH MUSIC
INSTITUTE

Dr. Charlotte Kroeker, *Executive Director*
214.751.7669 | info@churchmusicinstitute.org
8100 Lomo Alto Drive, Suite 260, Dallas, TX 75225

www.churchmusicinstitute.org

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