Religion and the Blues Harmonize on Records

"Is the Christian Church ready for a musical reforma-

The question is pertinent to all religious groups which seek to maintain an "open" attitude toward the modern world.

Its answer, remarkably uniform throughout the diversity of churches, tends toward "yes." There are such reservations and restrictions, however, that the "reformation" some musicians want seems destined to be admitted as a permissible exception to the general rule, not as a complete institutional com-

This reformation would be, basically, the adoption of medern popular idioms and techniques in church music.

An example of how the churches are accepting musical change came at the end of February, when the Catholic Church gave implicit approval to the use of guitars and other popular instruments at special religious services. The Church is traditionally conservative in its musical regulations.

A Catholic Ruling

The Catholic decision, sent to the American bishops by Vatican liturgical authorities, didnot specifically mention the guitar and did not authorize anything which has not already

Its chief practical effect is to give formal support to the "youth Masses." These have been growing in popularity on college campuses and in some parishes ever since Vatican II. The Council gave tentative, approval to a more varied musical idiom adapted to special occasions and particular congrega-

In the new Vatican directive it is emphasized that each bishop has the power to decide which instruments and styles are appropriate for worship in his area. Virtually every bishop in the U.S., acting on earlier general guidelines, has already approved the guitar for youth congregations,

ices for special congregations for whom religion is the voca- formance by a soloist or small A group of Jesuit seminarhave kept to more traditional

Push by Duke Ellington

concerts by Duke Ellington during the relation between jazz and the usual sequence of music for ing the past few years. Since Negro spirituals, this concert a Mass provided some of the tion's emphasis is on popular given sacred concerts in at developments in religious music. effects. least five Christian churches

Cathedral (Episcopal) in San weekly magazine America, the Francisco, in Coventry Cathedral and in a church at Cambridge University in England, and in two of New York's best-known churches, Fifth Avenue Presbyterian and the Cathedral musicians.

weekly magazine America, the in modern pop-religious music. In the past, the relationship between religion and popular music has often been tinged modern styles, ranging from the apparent nonchalance of a talk-ians and Protestant church ing blues to intense ballads with a solid rock-and-roll accombrate with a solid ro sacred concert is scheduled for April 4 in Carnegie Hall, New

a relative rarity - with mixed and have made a number of re-At the other extreme, some jazz ing. critics have said that Elling ton's sacred music, with its large choirs and relatively subdued treatment, is not really

The English pop group, the Beatles, while avoiding specifically Christian themes, has recently taken an attitude that must be considered religious. -Take, for example, the albums "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" and "Magical Mys-

This attitude, difficult to define, may be described as a sort of transcendental mysticism, mysticism, heavily influenced by the teachings of the color-ful Indian religious leader, Ma-harishi Mahesh Yogi.

Mysticism in Pop Music?

Mysticism can be perceived as a pervasive influence throughout the group's recent productions and pinpointed in some songs with particular clarity.

"Within You, Without You," from the Sgt. Pepper album deals with "people who hide themselves behind a wall of illusion" and preaches a clearly religious and preceptibly Oriental message: "Try to realize it's all within yourself; no one else can make you change. And to see you're really only very small, and life flows on within you and without you."

Another pop music group, the Electric Prunes, has gome even farther into religious music with a recorded "Mass in F

While professional musicians have been attracted toward religious themes, the gravitation of priests and ministers toward composing and performing

This trend is reflected occaservice, but its chief, perma-



"Jazz" Mass In Poland

Warsaw — (RNS) — The Roman-Catholic Church in Poland is moving with the times, despite Communist restrictions. Masses with jazz or pop music accompaniment are winning favor among Polish youths. A priest celebrates Mass in St. Christopher's Church at an altar facing a young congregation. Behind him are a popular Polish music, group called "Red and Blacks." The Mass also included songs inspired by the Psalms.

ords and in public concerts. In idiom in his modern, free verticities.

Protestant churches generally these two media we find today sions of material from the Book have also been hospitable to a highly professional level of Psalms. The music is more popular musical styles in serv- competence achieved by people oriented toward concert perity expression.

Interaction between religion and the jazz-folk-popular spec-

Catholic Composers

formances in churches are still who participated in this concert of existential anguish. reaction from churchmen and cordings. Sister Miriam Therese

trum of musical styles was ilthe Lord in Many Voices" conjust released the group's first
lustrated at a concert entitled cert was John Ylvisaker, a Luthn r o fe s s i o na l disc Walkin' Push by Duke Ellington
| lustrated at a concert entitled "Praise the Lord in Many eran who puts special emphasis through the profession at disc. Walking the impact of popular and voices," performed in Carnegie on churches has been accented in a series of Garde Records. Beginning with concerts by Duke Ellington during the relation between jazz and the usual sequence of music for Charles are the concerts by Duke Ellington during the relation between jazz and the usual sequence of music for Charles are the concerts. 1965, Mr. Ellington's band has surveyed many modern, popular concert's most striking musical favorites. Among them are such

He has performed in Grace critic of the national Catholic Avant Garde, which specializes Man of La Mancha. Cathedral (Episcopal) in San weekly magazine America, the in modern pop-religious music. In the past, the

To say that his songs are re as religion. Folk music influences are ligiously oriented and carry a

for that matter, from jazzmen. Winter of the Medical Mission also in the music composed and satires on religion. In December, 1966, an Ellington Sisters, who presented a Folk recorded by the Montfort Missacred concert, not in a church Mass at the concert, generally sion, a group of Catholic semibecause his music is "worldly." a view to congregational sing-Society. Their first professional album is on the Reprise label.

nent impact and documentation Paul Quinlan, a Jesuit senni-Its chief subject matter is social is coming on phonograph rec- narian, uses a more personal protest and anger at slum con-

Jesuit-Singers-on-Disc

and in sacred concerts. They tion and music an avocation. ensemble than toward communians, the Woodstock Singers, also issued its first album pri-Also featured at the "Praise of Aardvark Records, which has Broadway tunes as Sunrise, Sun-Supervised by Father Clem- Mr. Ylvisaker's second alburn, set from Fiddler on the Roof ent J. McNaspy, S.J., music Cool Livin', is also recorded by Many of J. Manch.

meaningless either as music or

particularly noticeable in the moral message seems an under hostility between religion and But despite this activity, the fact remains that Ellington per-Catholic composer-performers that ellington per-Catholic composer-performers that often conveys an acute note that often conveys are not that of denounced "secular" songs. Some of the same anguish is Musicians have countered with

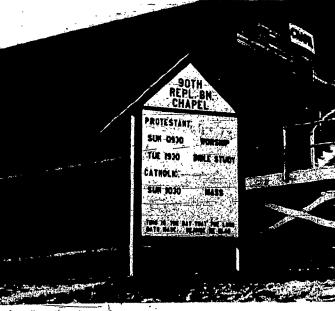
using the popular song as a but in Constitution Hall, Wash- writes for choral performance narians who live in slum areas medium for self-examination ington, D.C., was opposed by the Her music (though often very of St. Louis while they study and reform as well as for ex-Baptist Ministers' Conference lively) seems to be written with for ordination in the Montfort ploration of modern religious

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