

Folk-Rock in Church Raises Some Sour Notes

Whether it's "soul," "rock," "folk" or "psychedelic," the integration of the modern musical idiom into religious services and liturgies has taken hold. How long will it last?

From a Sabbath rock oratorio at a synagogue in Tenafly, N.J., to a "soul Mass" in Pittsburgh, to a Baptist "musical" in Atlanta, teenagers and oldsters alike have taken up their guitars and amplifiers seeking a more lively expression of faith in God.

Yet, even religious music, though ostensibly tuned to the cries of the contemporary world for peace, brotherhood and world development, can hit a sour note. And a subtle chorus of sour notes has been rising.

A Lutheran publication, Church Music, echoed a recurring strain that modern liturgical music, folk or whatever, "lacks the profundity" of more traditional offer-

ings and "cannot carry the weight of meanings that the liturgy must convey."

In the Catholic Church where there have been many progressive and innovative approaches to the popular idiom in church music, mixed feelings and a variety of interpretations greet the question of whether such trends will endure.

Brother Brendan Boyle, a Dominican from Chicago, who with Brother Gregory Breaul has composed and recorded a host of religious songs in current idioms, said he thinks his music will pass out-of-date and that it should.

Calling today's efforts a "period of experimentation," he claims that though the traditional may be out today it will be missed and brought back.

Though Brother Brendan feels that more mature music is needed, he also believes that

much of today's "psychedelic and pop music" is involved, mysterious and, with the current interest in Eastern religions, reflects the need for the mystery of God.

The Church Music article followed somewhat along this line of thinking, calling for a "fusion of good folk music and traditional church music to achieve a new, vital, and long-lasting liturgical style of real significance."

The publication said, however, that the full potential of folk music in the church would not be realized until it was produced by musicians who have a solid background in theology and liturgy.

Despite these misgivings from various sectors of the religious community, the American Music Conference, a non-profit, public service organization, claimed that popular music is better than ever. Noting "cau-

tious" signs of interest in the Protestant and Jewish communities, it estimated that at least half of all Catholic parishes in the country have folk Masses.

Recently a Sabbath rock oratorio, written by Gary W. Friedman of Yonkers was performed in Temple Sinai in Tenafly, N.J. Using the contemporary rock-blues beat, the composer arranged the traditional Friday night service for string quartet and rhythm section along with the traditional cantor.

In Washington, D.C. last Summer, a Catholic liturgical week closed with a new jazz Mass that used the musical idioms of calypso and the "gospel rock" of black Protestant churches.

In Atlanta recently, a 55-minute musical production which had a score that ranged from rock, jazz, blues and swing to country, soul and melodic hymns, and which touched on

all the thorny issues of the times, received a standing ovation from Baptist youth and students.

The musical was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention.

There is feeling among proponents of pop music that the use of modern idioms can promote religious unity and understanding and also break down certain racial barriers that exist among churches.

In Pittsburgh just last Christmas, 1,200 persons turned out at the Catholic Cathedral of St. Paul for a Christmas "soul Mass," offered by a black inner city priest.

It featured a jazz quintet and a Protestant gospel singing group. An interpretive dancer by a young black parishioner and a poetry reading took the place of the Prayer of the Faithful.

In Chicago, one of the nation's largest producers of music for "creative worship," published the first rock n' roll Mass and now offers a mariachi (Mexican rhythm) Mass and a funeral Mass in the style of the "soulful sound" of New Orleans music.

A hymnal the company produced for young Christians has sold over 2½-million copies in two years.

A clue to balanced operation may have been offered by a Mexican Catholic Church official. Faced with criticism of popular music during Mass, he said:

"The main point . . . is to see whether these modern rhythms can invoke religious fervor. In my opinion," he added, "all types of music can obtain this objective, if written to the elevation of God."

'Brand New Me': A Song of New Life

By THE MISSION SINGERS

"A Brand New Me," a hit song recorded by Dusty Springfield on the Atlantic label, treats love differently from the way most songs do. Many other songs describe love by attempting to picture inner emotions and feelings.

For example, "Holly Holy," by Neil Diamond, speaks of the inner strength gained through love. "A Brand New Me" provides an opposite thrust. The singer pictures her emotions only by describing outside, physical objects.

Her description is meant to reflect her personal feelings. "This is my same old coat, and my same old shoes." Because these physical items now seem new, the singer herself has a new lease on life.

"You touched my life, just by holding my hand." The singer seems in awe of the transformation that has taken place in her life. His love has altered her very existence, and she can't explain why. All she can say is, "Just because of you, boy, just because of you."

And well she might be impressed. It is an awesome power to be able to walk into a person's life and completely change it. That's what this song is about.

Another example of this kind of power is the story of Christianity: about the power of a Person to transform other persons.

Doesn't Christianity believe that Christ has touched human existence and radically affected it? Christianity says that "just because of" Christ, we are all "brand new."



DUSTY SPRINGFIELD

"I tell the same old pokes, get the same old grins. Now the jokes sound new and the laughter does, too. Every day of my life is as fresh as morning dew."

The world is the same, but it's different. Those "same old places," those "same old

the music bag

"A BRAND NEW ME"

This is my same old coat and my same old shoes. I was the same old me with the same old blues. And then you touched my life just by holding my hand. Now I look in the mirror and see a brand new me.

I've got a brand new voice, and a brand new smile. Since I've found you, baby, I've got a brand new style. Just because of you, boy, just because of you.

I've got the same old friends, I've got the same old sins. I tell the same old jokes, get the same old grins. Now the jokes sound new and the laughter does, too. And every day of my life is as fresh as morning dew.

Just because of you, boy, just because of you.

I go to the same old places, to see the same old faces. Look at the same old skies, see them all with brand new eyes. (Published by Parabut Music Corp.)

faces" all look new when you view them through "new eyes." The difference is not really "in" the world, in "those same old skies," but rather in the way you look at the world. Of course, the way you look at the world makes all the difference in the world.

For the singer, that's what love is all about: instead of seeing the world through her own eyes, she sees through four eyes—her own and her beloved's. "And the two shall become one flesh" turns out to be more than just a pious quotation.

Love has given her a "brand new smile." She's found something worthwhile outside of herself, beyond herself, and yet a part of herself. That's love. That's worth singing about.



Circus Star

Festus (Ken Curtis), versatile star of "Gunsmoke," the No. 1 rated TV Western, will appear at all performances as a guest star of the Shrine Circus. Besides Festus and his troupe, the 46th annual edition of the show at the War Memorial afternoon and evening Feb. 18 to 21, will feature 24 famed circus acts, trained animals, and dozens of clowns."

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Social Action Church's Theme

Parishioners of St. John of Rochester Church, Perinton, have scheduled their annual "Social Action Sunday" on Feb. 8 with the aim to assist a Rochester innercity agency.

Fisher Adding Continental Touch

Students at St. John Fisher College are going continental—literally.

The Rev. Dr. William Marceau, chairman of the Department of Modern Languages, announced last week that language students entering the college in September 1970 will be required to spend two semesters in the country where their major language is spoken.

Presently St. John Fisher College gives bachelor degrees in French, Spanish, German and a minor in Russian. It is anticipated that by next year Italian will be added to the list of modern language degrees.

St. John Fisher College will work with New York University, Hamilton College, University of Iowa, University of Ohio, University of Wisconsin and Loyola University in the program.

All Congregations Invited to Mass

Ithaca — Members of church congregations in the Ithaca area have been invited to a Mass at 5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 8, in St. Catherine of Siena Church. The Rev. Ransom Hammond will preach, and the Mass will be explained for guests.

Following the Mass the guests are invited to a tureen supper to be served by the Women's Council of the parish.

Churches Join For Lent Services

Corpus Christi Church will join seven other neighborhood churches in a series of Ecumenical Prayer Services on Thursdays during Lent.

The first service is slated at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 19 in Parsells Avenue Baptist Church. Episcopalian Bishop Daniel Corrigan, acting dean of Bexley Hall Seminary, will discuss "Penance and the Modern Man."

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