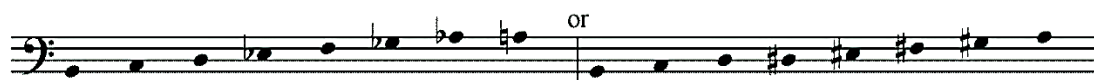


TE DEUM LAUDAMUS: AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION FOR
MEN AND BOYS CHOIR AND ORGAN
A CREATIVE PROJECT
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF MUSIC (M.M.) IN MUSIC COMPOSITION
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Te Deum Laudamus: An Original Composition for Men and Boys Choir and Organ

My background in music composition includes organ and choral music. I play the organ, and have been composing choral pieces blending varying styles. One of my most significant interests has been the application of the octatonic scale shown, with two alternate spellings, in Example 1. Likewise my score includes some variations in spellings to allow recognition of triads or, in other cases, scalar patterns.¹

Example 1, Octatonic Scale used in Karst, *Te Deum Laudamus*



Among my recent works is a setting of *Psalm 42* for seven-part choir, composed in 2010, in which nearly every note was bound to the above scale. My setting of the Latin *Gloria* text in 2011, however, incorporated other tonal elements, including other modes and cluster chords. My newly completed *Te Deum* composition discussed in this paper is an expansion of the latter example, since it continues to use the synthetic mode while combining it with other tonal elements.

¹ As an example, B, D-sharp, and F-sharp may be spelled as a triad to prompt recognition of a B-major chord, while D, E-flat, F, and G-flat might be spelled to help the performer (s) recognize an ascending tetrachord.

Aside from courses in music theory and history along with composition lessons, independent study has allowed me to explore ideas. Influential books for me included Arnold Schoenberg's *Style and Idea*, which connects post-Wagnerian Romanticism and modern genres of the 20th century. Also significant for me was Gaudin's *A Practical Approach to Sixteenth-Century Counterpoint*; I spent significant time with its exercises. While I have attempted composing using serial techniques, I became more interested in post-Wagnerian harmony, sound synthesis in electronic music, modes, and chord clusters.

There were a number of influences of choral music that led to ideas for this work. Modern influences include the choral music of William Mathias, specifically his Op. 87, *Let the People Praise Thee O God*, and the simpler and earlier Op. 44 No. 2, *Lift Up Your Heads O Ye Gates*. Both works call for prominent organ accompaniment that speaks in dialogue with the choir.²

Jean Langlais' Op. 85, *Missa Salve Regina* for choirs, brass players, and organ was yet more influential on my work. A recent recording of the piece at the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis, Minnesota, demonstrates the vital role of reverberation for the proper setting of the music. Byzantine and Gregorian chant, early Western polyphony, Renaissance counterpoint, and the works of subsequent generations are art forms that reach far beyond their value as music alone—they are fused with the multimedia of Classical and Medieval iconography and perhaps more importantly the acoustics of such vast spaces that convey the grandeur of five or more seconds of reverberation. Such places also confer a brilliance of frequency response to the timbres of the voices and

² Mathias, William. *Let the People Praise Thee, O God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 2-3.
Mathias, William. *Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 2-3.

instruments. My current work, along with the Langlais Mass setting, attempts to continue this tradition into new forms.

The use of dialogue between instruments and voices is a central theme in the Langlais mass, as noted in Example 2a. Each verse of the Kyrie alternates with instrumental gestures, the sum of which establishes a prominent instrumental role.

The tonal system used by Langlais was influential on my music to a lesser degree. Example 2b demonstrates his use of harmony, with references to the Ars Nova of fourteenth-century France and Italy. In m. 18 an A major chord is followed by descending open-fifth dyads on G, F, and E. In mm. 19-20 a Landini cadence to D follows.

A useful element in the Langlais mass is the homophonic texture with rapid syllables at the beginning of the *Gloria*.³ Since the *Te Deum* text, like that of the *Gloria*, is immense compared to the few syllables the *Kyrie*, I have likewise made occasional use of such textures to limit the scope of my piece.

Example 2a, Langlais, Op. 85, *Missa Salve Regina*, table describing the form of an excerpt from the Kyrie

Measure	1	11	20	24	27	29
Event	Entrada Organ	Kyrie 3 voices a capella	Interlude Organ	Kyrie w/ 2 voices with organ	Gesture Organ	Kyrie 3 voices

³ Langlais on Langlais In *Pipe Dreams* <http://pipedreams.publicradio.org/listings/2011/1119/> (accessed on July 2, 2012). Langlais, Jean, *Missa Salve Regina*. (Paris: Editions Costallat, 1955), 3-39.

Example 2b, Langlais, Op. 85, *Missa Salve Regina*, Kyrie, m. 18 Landini harmony

18

Tenors
e - - - - - le - i - son.

Basses
e - - - - - le - i - son.

Orgue

Example 2c, Langlais, Op. 85, *Missa Salve Regina*, Gloria, m. 1 excerpt of text in syllabic fashion

1

Allegro

T
Et in Ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus

B
Et in Ter - ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus

Org.

Organ music of the twentieth century also influenced my work. Messiaen's early organ composition *Apparition de l'église éternelle* is notable for its use of parallel cluster chords, some octatonicism, hypnotic slow pace, and thick organ registration.⁴

⁴ Messiaen, Olivier, *Apparition de l'Église éternelle*, pour orgue (Paris, H. Lemoine 1934), 2-4.

Messiaen's *Le banquet céleste* was yet more instructive for me. An excerpt from its score is shown in Example 3, in which different octatonic scales appear in each measure. In m. 12 the beginning motivic chord of (B, C#, E#, and A#) and the solo voice display the octatonic scale of B-C#-D-E-F-G-G#-A#. In mm. 13 the scale changes to A#-B#-C#-D#-E-F#-G- A, with accidentals deviating from the scale on E#.

Example 3 Olivier Messiaen, *Le banquet céleste*, 1928, m. 12

(R: + bourdon 16)
(chantant)

12

Org. *f*

(clair)
f
(staccato bref, à la goutte d'eau)

Despite the breadth and variety of existing organ and choral music, I believe that there remain opportunities to pioneer new combinations of techniques that may lead to a new style. Moreover, many settings of music in common use are bland since they are designed for less skilled choirs. My setting of the *Te Deum* may be more difficult to perform, as it attempts to fuse divergent musical languages from different generations and cultures to create an expressive, neo-Romantic effect.

My work is scored for men and boys choir and organ. It calls for six choral parts, each with seven or more singers, and a sizable organ in a cathedral-sized room where the acoustics yield six to nine seconds of reverberation. The instrumentation calls for a high-

wind pressure 8' State Trumpet organ stop of brilliant, piercing timbre located in the west gallery opposite of the choir, which is located on the east side of the room.⁵ Also required is an organ large enough for smooth transitions in timbre and volume through the use of crescendo and expression shoes, found on most organs of substantial size.

Some accommodations of instrumentation could be made if resources are limited. In lieu of the antiphonal reed a brighter tuba or 8' Bombarde located with the main organ and playable on the choir or positiv division will suffice. Additionally a small ensemble of trumpet players will also work with smaller organs that lack a large solo reed stop. Since, however, the composition makes use of special effects of phrasing found in liturgical chant and other genres that use large rooms, such effects will require at least a few seconds of reverberation.

Example 4 shows the English text of the *Te Deum*.⁶ Its exuberant quality is favorable for the heroic instrumentation as described above.

Example 4, *Te Deum* text

We praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.
 All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting.
 To thee all Angels cry aloud: the Heavens, and all the Powers therein.
 To thee Cherubin and Seraphin: continually do cry,
 Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord God of Sabaoth;
 Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty: of thy glory.
 The glorious company of the Apostles: praise thee.
 The goodly fellowship of the Prophets: praise thee.

⁵ In medieval architecture, the gothic cathedral's rear choir loft is commonly on the west side of the building, while the choir area near the chancel is located near the east end of the building. The explanation here is to call attention to the separation of the choir from the antiphonal trumpet..

⁶ *Te Deum* in ChoralWiki, home of the Choral Public Domain Library
http://www3.cpd.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page (accessed on July 2, 2012).

Example 4, *Te Deum* text (continued)

The noble army of Martyrs: praise thee.
 The holy Church throughout all the world: doth acknowledge thee;
 The Father: of an infinite Majesty;
 Thine honourable, true: and only Son;
 Also the Holy Ghost: the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory: O Christ.
 Thou art the everlasting Son: of the Father.
 When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man: thou didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.
 When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death: thou didst open the Kingdom of
 Heaven to all believers.
 Thou sittest at the right hand of God: in the glory of the Father.
 We believe that thou shalt come: to be our Judge.
 We therefore pray thee, help thy servants: whom thou hast redeemed with thy precious
 blood.
 Make them to be numbered with thy Saints: in glory everlasting.

O Lord, save thy people: and bless thine heritage.
 Govern them: and lift them up for ever.
 Day by day: we magnify thee;
 And we worship thy Name: ever world without end.
 Vouchsafe, O Lord: to keep us this day without sin.
 O Lord, have mercy upon us: have mercy upon us.
 O Lord, let thy mercy lighten upon us: as our trust is in thee.
 O Lord, in thee have I trusted: let me never be confounded.

The central melodic motive comes from the psalm tone shown in Example 5, which I composed for this piece to set the first line of text. In the manner of vernacular quasi-Byzantine chant of Syria and Lebanon, the drone of the chant provides a continuous tonic reference and a meditative sound. The chant appears at the beginning of each of the three movements. The melodic shapes of the chant form the central melodic motives of the choral and organ parts and are identified in the figure below.

Example 5, Karst, Te Deum, m. 1, chant

Chant

Motive 1 Motive 2 Motive 3

We _____ praise thee, O God: we ac-know-ledge thee _____ to be the Lord. _____

Drone

The piece is in three continuous movements. The first and final movements are exuberant and are most closely related motivically and thematically.⁷ The more contemplative middle movement is more distantly related from the other two. All three movements are meant to imply a long procession.

Each of the three movements consists of a chain of short sections. Pauses separate the sections, and they are to be timed for dramatic effect, much of which is enhanced by the reverberation of the room. In the manner of liturgy found in antiquarian rites of solemn and stately ceremonial, the pauses are as important as the music. Contrasts between sections, perhaps at the expense of unity, are prioritized. Example 6 shows a table outlining the movements and their sections. As with the Langlais table from Example 2a, the instrumental sections that alternate with the choral sections are noted.

⁷ For clarification motives shall refer to motives 1, 2, and 3 in Example 3 while the term “theme” will refer to use of the motives as part of a larger figure.

Example 6, Karst, Te Deum, Table of Form

First Movement

Theme	Chant	Fanfare I	Theme A	Theme B	Theme C	Fanfare I	Theme A ¹
Measure	1	2	14	24	34	44	47
Key	B	B	B	B	F-B	B	B

Second Movement

Theme	Chant	Entrada	Chorale A	Entrada	Chorale A
Measure	57	58	67	75	84
Key	B	B	B → E	E → B	B → E

Second Movement (continued)

Verses	Entrada	Chorale A ¹	Entrada	Chorale B
92	106	115	123	128
B → B	B	B → E	E → B	E → B

Third Movement

Theme	Chant	Fanfare	A Variant	Fanfare	A Variant	Theme C	Theme D
Measure	133	135	139	149	152	156	168
Key	B	B	B	B	B	F → B	D → B

Such contrasts in texture and emotion are important from the beginning. The contemplative chant precedes a trumpet fanfare, which is followed by a full organ gesture in m. 6 and a varied reply in m. 10. Because of the location of the loud solo trumpet stop, the beginning of the piece will present phrases alternatively played at opposite sides of the room. The abovementioned works of Mathias and Langlais inspired such an opening.

The haughty beginning is followed in m. 14 by a more playful introduction of the text at a brisk tempo. The homophonic presentation of the text is accompanied by

alternating organ chords on beats one and four. Example 7 demonstrates the choral introduction of new text and its motivic relationship with the chant.

Example 7, Karst, Te Deum, mm. 14-16

Moderato ($\text{♩} = \text{c. } 90$)

S

mf

Motive 1

Combination of motives 2 & 3

All the earth doth wor-ship thee: the Fa - ther ev - er - last - ing. To thee all

An important part of this work is the use of dynamics. In m. 19 the above figure is varied in a new passage with stretto entrances of the remaining voices along with a massive crescendo. The organist is expected to simulate the *Rollschweller*⁸ while at the same time using the expression pedals with the right foot as the left foot plays the pedalboard part.

While much of the piece is centered on the octatonic scale, I departed from the octatonic collection at dramatic moments of the text. Example 8 illustrates the passage of mm. 24-28, which frames the words “Holy, Holy, Holy...” In m. 24 Landini chords appear as neighbors of open-fifth B—G# dyads that derive from the Langlais mass.⁹ The Landini chords in my piece include the enharmonic equivalents of C#, E#, and G# (not

⁸ The *Rollschweller* is a device best known for use in German organs. It resembles a cylinder that, when activated by the foot, will automatically begin adding stops or removing them. The volume change by the *Rollschweller*'s automatic registration changes, especially on the way up, create heroic crescendos. Duplicating the effect on most American organs requires careful attention to detail. In this piece the organist must be careful to make the changes gradually.

⁹ The figures described as Landini chords are, from the view of our tonal system, a major chord neighbored with an open-fifth dyad. The dyad's tonic is a major second below the Landini chord. In mm. 24-28 shown in Example 8 the Landini chord is spelled as C#, E#, and G#. The neighboring dyad is spelled as B, F#, and the B at the octave. The E# of the Landini chord is a leading tone by a half step to the #F, which is the fifth of the dyad.

the same spelling) among other pitch classes.¹⁰ I add extra notes to those of my Landini neighbor chords to form cluster chords, thus thickening and complicating the harmony. In mm. 27 “Lord God of Sabaoth” is sung and played in cluster chords that move in parallel neighbor motion by a minor second.

Example 8, Karst, Te Deum, choir and organ reduction m. 24-28

24 *fff* Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly: *mf* Lord God of Sa - ba-oth; *mf*

The second movement is—as noted earlier—a contrast from the first. In m. 58 the reply to the chant is not with a fanfare but with a solemn entrada in the organ reed stops. Subsequently the choir enters in m. 67. Several alternating sections of the second movement begin in Renaissance-style modal harmony, become chromatic, and return to style of harmony from which they began.

Yet the final passage of the movement ends in a different manner, as shown in Example 9. This ending is an overt reference to Renaissance harmony, with no modulations to octatonic passages or distant keys. Thus it offers a remarkably consonant sound as a contrast to the previous sections. Also notable is the inverted, rhythmically

¹⁰ Furthermore C# resolves down to B, E# resolves upward to F#.

augmented form of Motive 1 that sets the text “Make them to be numbered with thy Saints.”¹¹

Example 9, Karst, Te Deum, mm. 128-132

128 *f*

S Make them to be num - ber'd with thy Saints: in

M Make them to be num - ber'd with thy Saints: in

A Make them to be num - ber'd with thy Saints: in

T Make them to be num - ber'd with thy Saints: in

B Make them to be num - ber'd with thy Saints: in

B Make them to be num - ber'd with thy Saints: in

¹¹ The notes of this inversion are E, F#, G, F#, and E, and subsequently E, D, E, and F#.

Example 9, Karst, Te Deum, mm. 128-132 (continued)

131

S
glo - - - ry ev - er - - - last - - - ing.

M
glo - - - ry ev - er - - - last - - - ing.

A
glo - - - ry ev - er - - - last - - - ing.

T
glo - - - ry ev - er - - - last - - - ing.

B
glo - - - ry ev - er - - - last - - - ing.

B
glo - - - ry ev - er - - - last - - - ing.

The final movement offers repetition and development of material from the first movement, with somewhat different textures. Example 10 shows a climactic theme in the final movement, which is a recapitulation of its earlier introduction in the first movement. As with much of the other thematic material, the figure in Example 10 is likewise related to the chant, this time to Motive 1.¹²

Also notable about the passage shown in Example 10 is its relationship with the global octatonicism of the piece. The chromatic mediant relationships move in succession to the major key centers of F, D, B, and A-flat. The four pitch classes are the

¹² The motive here appears as F-D-E-D-F, and is subsequently repeated at other pitch levels in other voices.

locations within the octatonic scale where major chords are located. Additionally the four notes themselves form a fully diminished chord. Despite the chromatic mediant chords derived from the octatonic scale, the passage is not strictly octatonic—the F in the left hand is followed by an E-natural. Two measures later the D in the bass drops to a C-sharp, and so on.

Example 10, Karst, Te Deum, mm. 156-166

The musical score for Example 10, Karst, Te Deum, mm. 156-166, is presented in two systems. The first system (measures 156-161) begins with a fortissimo (fff) dynamic. The second system (measures 162-166) ends with a 2/4 time signature. The music features complex harmonic structures with chromatic mediant relationships and octatonic scale elements.

The end of the final movement, although comprised of new material, refers to chorales of the second movement. What is different in the final movement is that the tone of the harmony refers to nineteenth-century style as opposed to the sixteenth-century style of the previous movement. Nevertheless the passage is similar to the chorales of the second movement in that it is sung *a cappella* and its diatonic beginning becomes chromatic only to return—this time in a quasi-diatonic fashion—to B-major. Since the

final chord is approached from D major, which is a chromatic mediant, the end is not functionally tonal. Yet the end sounds consonant because of its contrast with the preceding chromaticism.

In previous pieces, I have become accustomed to using the octatonic mode for long passages. Combining it elegantly with other tonal languages in this piece is challenging. I especially struggle to avoid the impression of abrupt juxtapositions of tonal systems that are otherwise alien.¹³ A method I use to overcome this obstacle is to employ chromatic mediant relationships that are found in other kinds of chromatic music.¹⁴ Other techniques include my use of accidentals to raise or lower notes to blend passages of differing tonal systems, and also the employment of cluster chord passages that contrast with open-fifth dyads, as shown in Example 8.

Composing this piece has allowed me to further develop my tonal language. My future pieces will include more elements exploring synthetic scales and their bridges to major and minor key systems, Renaissance harmony, and atonal music. While the octatonic scale, if mastered, can produce an enormous variety of sounds and colors, it nonetheless has an unmistakable sound which may at times lead to undesired predictability.

An additional area for my growth as a composer will be my further exploration of drama in music. While I have been experimenting with dramatic use of timed lapses between musical thoughts this piece helped me advance a technique I have been using for

¹³ Unless done for dramatic effect.

¹⁴ Example 10 demonstrates the most obvious example of my use of chromatic median relationships.

several years. Such dramatic gestures, if designed with elegance, will contribute to more dramatic, artful new music.

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