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Praise God This Hour of Sorrow

Major Key Dominant Hymn Culture of America

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ABSTRACT

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This project began when I received a request from the Laestadian Lutheran Church to record a CD. This CD was to include approximately thirty funeral and everlasting life hymns. Although these were funeral hymns, the majority was in a major key and I wanted to research the reasoning for this. The purpose of this work is to find the reasoning for a major dominant hymn culture in my home congregation. To find the reasoning I have researched both the history of American hymn culture and the Laestadian Lutheran Church. I have also looked at the use of music in the funeral service and the purpose of the music. American funeral culture has also evolved over time and has had a large impact on the music used in funeral services.

I found there were many different reasons for a major dominant hymn culture. In the beginning, America was heavily influenced by England but as they developed their own history and culture this quickly changed. America is known as the melting pot of the world and this is also seen in religious beliefs. There were many different denominations and each had their own idea of how music should be used in the church. Music was also largely impacted by the large amount of African slaves, whom had a very different musical background. These different beliefs, cultures and musical styles began to blend together and America began to find their own voice in music. Although the Laestadian Lutheran Church origins are from Finland, a very minor key dominant hymn culture, the American culture is seen to slowly begin to affect the hymns that were sung regularly.

Keywords:

hymns, Evangelical Lutheran Church, hymnology, funerals

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2015 I received a request from the Laestadian Lutheran Church to do a CD recording. This CD was to include thirty funeral and everlasting life hymns. The hymns would be played in their entirety and would not include congregation singing. When I was asked to be a part of a CD recording of funeral hymns I began to examine the hymns more closely. Although the CD was only funeral and everlasting life hymns, the majority was in a major key. I then began to examine the American funeral culture, which I also found to be much different from Finland. As an American student living in Finland I have discovered many cultural differences. It is many times assumed that Americans are happier, positive and willing to show it, while the Finnish are more somber. While studying music, I began to notice that this thought could be seen in the music of the countries. Hymns in the worship services were consistently in minor keys, which was very different from the American culture I was accustomed to. This was very interesting considering a large majority of the hymns in the Laestadian Lutheran Church hymnal were translated from Finnish hymnals.

I began researching why this has happened and have found many reasons for it. Although the beginning of American music culture is largely founded on what had happened in England, they slowly began to find their own identity. American funeral culture has also evolved with the new social ideas through the years and the funerals have become much more a celebration of the deceased's life, than a very solemn, somber occasion. This has had a large impact on the type of music in the services and how the music is used. Although there are limited materials for the Laestadian Lutheran hymnals, I was able to talk with those who were on the hymnal committees for both the 1980 hymnal and the 2008 hymnal. I also had the opportunity to interview members of the most recent 2008 hymnal committee to learn of the process of publishing a new hymnal.

2 HISTORY OF AMERICAN HYMN SINGING

2.1 The Pilgrims and Solemn Hymns

In 1776 the colonies joined together and became their own nation, the United States of America. Most American music history is very similar to that of England's. Although they had become their own nation many ways of life stayed the same as in England. Legal, cultural and social institutions were patterned after this, but most importantly the religious beliefs stayed the same. The early hymn singing in America was mainly that of psalm tunes.

2.1.1 Psalm Tunes

Psalm tunes consisted of texts from the Book of Psalms that were set to a melody. The pilgrims brought many different collections of these psalm tunes with them on their journey. The most commonly used collection was a 97-tune book titled *The Whole Booke of Psalms*. This included melodies of composers such as John Dowland and Thomas Tallis. This book included familiar melodies such as: Nunc Dimitis, Magnificar and Te Deum. A very familiar bible portion is shown on the title page of the book. From the book of James, chapter 5; If any be afflicted, let him pray, and if any be merry, let him sing Psalmes (James 5:13).

This was used for approximately twenty years until many became dissatisfied with it. From this the *Bay Psalm Book* was conceived. This collection had two big changes. The language changed to one easier for the congregation members to understand. The other difference was that no melodies were printed. There was still no attempt to create American composed melodies. The pastor in the services would set a tune for the congregation to sing. These psalm books were used for many years and it is estimated that during this time (1620's—1770's) almost three hundred books, including over 4000 tunes were used. (Chase 1955, 9—11.)

It was not until the ninth edition of the book that music for the most common tunes were included. The most important thing to note with these tunes is that most were in common meter. This was the beginning of a movement for "regular singing". In the early eighteenth century a large move-

ment began in opposition of the way the psalm tunes were being sung. Many disliked the freedom taken in singing them and that they were not in accordance to the written tune. This was the topic of many sermons and essays. The “singing school” was created to help solve the problem. Music became an essential part of the schooling for children so that all could properly read music. Remarkable improvement was seen in the congregational singing in churches. (Chase 1955, 28—29.)

In the early 1700's hymns that were not based off of a bible text began to be composed. There was a belief that songs were needed that reflected the current circumstances of the people (Hamm 1983, 125). In 1707 Isaac Watt published a collection of *Hymns and Spiritual Songs*. These new songs became immediately popular. This new way of “regular singing” involved singing only the written notes and for the length in which they were written (Chase 1955, 28). Psalm singing severely declined and was highly looked down upon by the educated. While psalms were the main type of music taught in the singing schools in the beginning, it quickly changed. Soon hymns, spiritual songs and anthems became the main focus. While psalm singing was no longer common, it was still a large part of the lives of the congregation members. Composers began to use the psalms in a new way. They began to paraphrase texts and become much more free. They became free to the extent that many of the texts were no longer recognizable.

2.2 African American Music

The music of the African American slaves was a large enrichment in American music. It was noticed almost immediately that the music that they played and sang was much different from the European baroque music of the time period. The first type of religious music was referred to as spirituals. While they were associated with the psalms and hymns, they were very different. One of the defining characters in African-American music is the call-response. This involved one person singing out lines and the rest of the group responding with the same line each time. Their music was much more rhythmical, less focused on harmony and paid greater attention to the melody.

A unique quality of music in the African lifestyle was that it was considered universal. This allowed each the freedom to compose their own music and songs. These songs often related to their every day life and personal experiences. During the time of slavery in America, the music of the African American's was considered "informal". They did not perform in public places, but during the time of war they often sang at bonfires with the soldiers. (Chase 1955, 33.) Music was as important in life as breathing was for the slaves. As stated, music was a part of everyday life. They sang of their work, their joys and their troubles. It was also a way to separate them from their life situation. Due to the addition of movement and dancing to their singing it often included sped up tempos and extra refrains and choruses. This made its way into the protestant hymn singing where tempos became faster.

The basis of the spiritual music was a mix of African American culture and Christian teachings. Through the African-American music a cultural and historical shift can be seen. In the 1920's began the rise of gospel music. The message of gospel music is seen in its name, as the definition of gospel is good news. Although gospel music is often linked to African American music it is a blend of many denominations including Methodist, Baptist and the Pentecostal church (Burmin 2006, 64). During the time of the Great Migration gospel music was at its peak. At this time approximately 6 million African-American's moved from the South to the North looking for better opportunities in life. They attracted many people to their services due to the occasions tending to be more informal and easy to understand (Burmin 2006, 51). While gospel music had become more popular, protestant hymns were still most commonly used.

2.3 The Great Awakening

John Wesley, a young minister, embarked on a mission trip to the colonies in 1735. On the same ship as Wesley was a group of twenty-six Moravian missionaries, a German Protestant sect. During the trip they experienced a severe storm terrifying the passengers. While everybody was panicked, the missionaries were calm and began to sing their own hymns. Wesley was inspired to begin studying their hymnbooks. The Moravian missionaries were very enthusiastic hymn singers

and their hymns were unlike the usual minor key hymns. He was so affected by the new radical way of the hymns that his mission became to spread the Gospel and introduce these new hymns. Wesley's work reached far and new hymnals were published. The new hymnals had an emphasis on three matters: direct salvation through Christ, salvation as an emotional and personal experience and the elation of the forgiveness of sin. (Chase 1955, 44-48.) It is important to note that these three matters are the same central subjects in the hymnal of the Laestadian Lutheran Church today. American hymnody and the Negro spiritual grew out of these ideas.

During the time of the Great Awakening a significant number of African Americans were converted to Christianity. The emphasis of personal experiences rather than the instruction through the catechism seemed to affect this (Burmin 2006, 53). Although many were converted there was still a large resistance to their presence in the churches. This especially applied to their music, which was many times referred to as an evil. In the South the "invisible church" began to form where the African American's could worship freely in private.

The worship services focus point was music. There were speeches and prayers included, but the most important part was the congregational involvement in singing. The allowance of expression was an essential part of services. The excessive use of shouting during praise and dancing was strongly resisted by the missionaries. (Chase 1955, 54.) The African Americans in the North stuck strongly to their Methodist beliefs. Here also the most important part was the involvement of the congregation in singing. The high level of involvement and spirited singing shocked many non-black observers. Their songs were also strongly rejected especially when many texts were put to secular melodies.

It was not until the time of the civil war, in the beginning of the 1870's, that African American music began to be accepted as a style of music allowed to be performed in public. Acceptance was seen first in the younger generation in the universities. Spiritual music began to be performed in choirs. While the texts stayed the same they were often sung in a style more similar to the European form. Harmonies were added and dance was eliminated as part of the music. (Burmin 2006, 62—63.) The strongest message of the Great Awakening was the people taking religion into their own hands. With this, the hymns became more important and by the same token, for the people.

Religious beliefs were no longer intellectual, rather an emotional reaction of salvation. This belief became the driving force in American music. During his mission work John Wesley came to realize that the easiest way to spread the happiness of the gospel was through hymns (Chase 1955, 48). The new standard of hymn singing began to follow the method of John Wesley. What was once considered radical became normal. This was seen to different extents in all sects. Groups such as the Shakers were at one of the end of the spectrum in singing, dancing, shaking, running and leaping to express their joy while others other sects remained self-contained. Slowly America began to have their own composers of music. Inspired by the coronations from England, these composers had tendencies to compose lively, skipping, tunes with large intervals. Many tunes used for hymns would also be appropriate, if not more so, for situations involving folk tunes. An example of this is the melody used for "York", which is now a lively patriotic, folk song. These were especially popular among those living in the rural areas. (Chase 1955, 133.)

3 THE LAESTADIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

3.1 Beliefs

The Laestadian Lutheran Church takes its name from Martin Luther and Lars Levi Laestadius. While Luther is well known from the time of the reformation, Laestadius is not known as well outside of the Scandinavian countries. Born in 1483 in Germany, Martin Luther was a key factor in the reformation. He rejected many of the teachings of the Catholic Church, most importantly the use of music in the service. Luther believed that the congregation should be a part of the service through singing hymns, which had been formerly reserved only for choir members. Luther wrote many hymns, 22 of which are included in the 2008 hymnal, and had a significant impact on the use of music and hymns during the worship service. (Ylioja & Waaraniemi, referred 6/1/16.)

Lars Levi Laestadius was the rector of the Pajala congregation in the years 1826-49. His way of spreading the message was through mission trips. In the year 1844 he was awakened through one of his mission trips and began the preaching of the gospel. Through his awakening he became the leader of a movement that began in the Swedish Lapland border area. In the 1860's this movement began to make its way to the America's through Finnish Immigrants.

The church is founded on the bible and the Lutheran Confessions, with the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus being the focus. As is stated on their website: "The kingdom of God is to be found on earth according to the teachings of Jesus. It is a kingdom of grace on earth and a kingdom of glory in heaven. The kingdom of God is one-minded in faith, doctrine, and love (llchurch.org, referred 6/1/16)." The hope of eternal life is the most important matter in suffering and death. This can be seen in the Sacred Acts of the church. Sermons bring up such matters as: death is a natural part of life, the traveler being at rest, the ending of sorrow and tribulation, but most importantly the love of God and the Kingdom he has prepared in heaven. Often the feelings of yearning and longing are mentioned of turning into comfort and living hope.

3.2 History of the Congregational Hymnal

The most important hymnal of the hymn and song tradition of the American Laestadian Christianity was published in 1903. This was called the *Wähäinen Virsikokoelma*, or a small collection of hymns. It included 151 hymns, of which most were from the 1701 Finnish hymnal. There were many other small collections of hymns, mainly in the Finnish language. Paul Heideman and Leonard Typpö were responsible for many of the new hymns and published collections. Leonard Typpö (1868—1922) was asked to be a preacher in 1893. He wrote hundreds of songs and was considered to be a “modern poet”. His songs arose from happenings in his daily life. Paul Heideman (1890—1973) studied theology in Helsinki, Finland. He then moved to America and became the fulltime pastor in Calumet, Michigan. In 1923 one of his hymnals, *Hengellisiä lauluja ja virsisä*, or Spiritual Songs and Hymns, was published. (Ylioja & Waaraniemi, referred 6/1/16.) This was one of the first hymnals to include a large amount of English songs. It is important to note that many of the hymns included in all hymnals of the Laestadian Lutheran Church come from the Siionin Laulut Hymnal and the Virsikirja.

3.3 Influence of the Virsikirja and Siionin Laulut Hymnals

As was stated earlier, the Laestadian Lutheran Church origins are in Finland. When members of the church began to immigrate to the United States for work, they brought their Finnish roots and traditions with them. Many spoke Finnish at home and at the services. Most sermons for many years were still in Finnish, as were the hymnals. Approximately seventy-five percent of the hymns in the 2008 hymnal are translated from the Virsikirja and Siionin Laulut hymnals, 192 hymns from the Siionin Laulut and 265 from the Virsikirja. (Ylioja & Waaraniemi, referred 6/1/16.)

The 1938 Virsikirja had the greatest influence on the 1980 hymnal. The 1938 hymnal, in comparison to the former hymnal, was well received. It took into account hymns of different revivalist movements that were commonly sung in events outside of the State Church of Finland. This hymnal also included many secular and Finnish folk melodies. In 1986 a new hymnal was published, which had more effects on the 2008 LLC hymnal. The 1986 hymnal was more ecumenical and international. For example there were many more hymns from England included (Sakasti.fi,

referred 6/1/16). During my time in Finland I have also discovered that many of the major key hymns that are used from the Virsikirja are not commonly sung here. In a Liturgy and Hymnology class we sang through the entire Virsikirja. It was shocking to find that the major key hymns were much more familiar to me than they were to any of the Finnish students. One such example is VK 630. This is found on the recorded CD, *O Blessed Host Arrayed in White*, which I had sung many times in my home congregation.

The Siionin Laulut is the hymnal of the Vanhoillislestadiolaisen herätysliike, or the Conservative Laestadian revivalist movement. There were various other hymn collections, but the first version of the Siionin Laulut Hymnal was published in 1916. Music committee members translated these into English. The Siionin Laulut hymns are often seen as prayerful and awakening. One of the defining factors in these hymns is that the melodies are often seen as secular songs, which are then given new words. (Pajamo, 593.) The majority of the minor key hymns are from the Siionin Laulut and Virsikirja, while many of the Major Key hymns have been taken from other protestant hymnals.

3.4 1980 Hymnal

In 1973, after a schism, the (AALC) was organized. The rights to the hymnal belonged to the group that left and thus began the project of a new songbook (Ylioja & Waaraniemi, referred 6/1/16). There were two committees for the book; one committee worked on already published English songs and the other worked on translating hymns. The project lasted seven years. During the reviewing process important factors were rhyme, meter and translation accuracy. The majority of committee members had no musical training, but were regular congregation members. The hymnal plus three supplements included 250 hymns. Many of Catherine Winkworth's translations were used in both the 1980 and 2088 hymnals. She is well known for translating German chorales into English. In 1854 she published her own book of German hymns that she translated. (Ylioja & Waaraniemi, referred 6/1/16.)

3.5 2008 Hymnal

In the year 2008 a new hymnal was published. This hymnal included 604 hymns, more than twice the amount of the prior hymnal. The three books that had the most influence on this new book was the 1980 hymnal (and three supplements), the *Virsikirja* and the *Sioniin Laulut* hymnal. Many new hymns were included, especially new Christmas, Easter and communion hymns. In an interview with Rick Nevala, a member of the music committee, he stated that they received feedback that the funeral hymns were too morose. This applied to both the texts and the melodies. Rick also stated “We felt we needed to acknowledge the facts about death but wanted the release from this body to heaven’s joy to be more readily found in our funeral songs.” Many of the funeral hymns used in the 1980 hymnal were revised, such as the time change in hymn 263; *They Soon Will Lay My Body*.

When asked about the number of major keys songs in the hymnal he said, “Major vs. minor didn’t come up in that sense. We realized after selecting songs and hymns for the book that our selections ended being more in major.” Most of the new melodies were unfamiliar *Siionin Laulut* hymns or taken from other Lutheran hymnals. It is interesting to note that while about seventy-five percent of the hymns are from the Finnish hymnbooks, they are still very different. The LLC hymnal is very major dominant, while the Finnish hymnals are more minor key based.

4 FUNERAL HYMNS

4.1 Purpose for the Funeral

Funerals are held for two main purposes. The first is to allow the family and friends to mourn the loved one that has passed away. The second purpose is to celebrate the life of the deceased. These purposes are clearly reflected in the music in a funeral service. It is also important to note that while funerals traditions have remained the same in the churches, such as the Laestadian Lutheran Church, this does not hold true for those who do not hold religion as an important value. A survey by researchers at Trinity College of Hartford, Connecticut found that more than a quarter of Americans do not expect to have a religious funeral (DeBellis 155).

4.2 Cultural Shift of Death in America

American funerals tend to now be more upbeat and festive occasions. Celebrating the life of the deceased has become more important than the mourning process. The social culture very likely has an effect on this. Society now prefers to avoid such deep issues and the importance of religious beliefs has declined. According to a 2014 Pew Research Center survey, more than a fifth of all American adults, and a third of young adults claim no religious affiliation. This has in a way effected the purpose of the funeral service. It is no longer about the religious idea of the resurrection and heaven; rather it is mainly focused of the story of the deceased.

There are many books about how to plan your own funeral including *The Party of Your Life*. In this book it gives advice that funeral songs will have the most powerful impact on the guest's emotions. The music will give them the cue whether to laugh or cry. The book advises, "the music will be the thread that ties together every aspect of your life and death." (Dillman, 85.) Many funerals have moved to the complete end of the spectrum where the majority of the music is not spiritual. A unique aspect of American funerals is that they are not reserved for only close family in friends as is common in many other countries. Very often neighbors, coworkers and other casual acquaintances also attend (Mitford, 206—210).

4.3 Purpose of Music in the Service

It has been shown since the times of the bible, that music has an effect on human emotions. King Saul sent for David to play his harp and calm his troubled soul. Child development researchers have found scientific evidence that each person is wired for song and music. This develops when a fetus is only four months old. Music has been seen to have calming effects on the fetus and the sounds of the womb serve as a concert for the fetus. (Stevens, 9—15.) There have been many studies done with people that have experienced trauma in their lives.

One particular study done by Christine Stevens used group music therapy sessions with different types of trauma including family member's death, war veterans and abused children. In these group sessions, a common goal quickly became to make "good music" that created an atmosphere of harmony. This sense of harmony allowed each individual to be more open and trusting. They were able to share their feelings and increase bonding with loved ones. (Stevens, 107—115.) A funeral service director had many observations of suffering during his time of work. The main thing he noticed was that a positive attitude helped the grieving members. This was especially seen in the music selections of the service. Songs filled of hope and joy encouraged family and friends to share happy memories of the life of the deceased rather than mourning their loss. (DeBellis, 155.) Music is often able to say that which the family and friends are not able to.

4.3.1 Music of the Typical American Funeral

There are three different types of music used in the funerals: Classical, Popular and Worship. Classical music is usually reserved for a wake or procession. Popular music such as, "Ain't No Mountain High Enough", is reserved for any situation, funeral service or the memorial event afterwards. These songs often reflect on the life and personality of the deceased. Worship music is selected to respect the death of the loved one and to worship God. The most common of these is Amazing grace. While searching through different articles suggesting funeral music, hymns and classical music were rarely mentioned. In fact, many suggested that hymns and organ music are "too solemn" for a funeral. Music recordings are slowly replacing live music, such as piano and

organ. This is likely due to the increase in popular music and decline in classical music in funeral services. (Dillman, 85—88.)

4.3.2 Music of the Laestadian Lutheran Church Funeral

There are many purposes for the music in a service. It is a way to remember the loved one that has passed away. This could mean a favorite hymn of the deceased or a hymn that bring memories of them to the guests. One of the main purposes of the music is to comfort the family and friends of the deceased. Many of the funeral hymns in the hymnal speak of the joy of everlasting life, no longer having temporal suffering and focuses on the joy that a believer has in death. Although there is much pain and suffering for the family and friends, they can rejoice in the reward their loved one has received.

Hymns are always a part of the service. In the 2008 hymnal there are 8 funeral hymns and approximately thirty everlasting life hymns. There are three hymns included in the funeral service format. Hymns are also often included at the cemetery service and at the memorial service. Classical music is often used for the processions in the service, however hymns may also be used. It is also very common for a family member or friend to play an instrumental piece or sing a solo.

5 CD PROJECT

5.1 CD Planning Process

In August of 2015, Paul Waaraniemi of the Laestadian Lutheran Church asked if I was willing to serve as an organist for a CD recording. Paul is from Loretto, MN and the Publications Director for the LLC. The Laestadian Lutheran Church currently consists of thirty-three congregations. There are also a few locations where congregation members have moved, but an official congregation has not yet been formed. Of these congregations, there are fourteen congregations that do not have an organ in use, some may use an electric keyboard or piano, while others have nothing. At this time there are no formally schooled cantors, although there are some that have other music schooling. While there have been workshops and camps held to help improve the level of hymn playing in all congregations, there is still much to be learned. Most of those that participate in hymn playing in the congregations have no training. For this reason, among others, the LLC introduced a new series of CDs.

This series includes three CDs, involving hymns without congregational singing including themes such as Christmas hymns and Service hymns. The project I was requested for will be the fourth in the series. There are three uses for this project: teaching, accompaniment and enjoyment. As was mentioned, there are many congregations that do not have an organ. One of the main locations that use this is Ecuador. The LLC does much mission work in Ecuador and there is a great need for this type of work. There are four main areas in which services are held, and in each of these areas, their only way of accompaniment is through these CDs.

Although the hymnal was published in 2008, the chorale book has not yet been released. In the new book there will be many new arrangements for hymns that were in the older hymnals. All verses were played for each hymn using the new arrangements that will be in the chorale book. This was to allow it to be used as an accompaniment in congregations that did not have that possibility and allow these new arrangements to become familiar. As a teaching tool, the goals were to show proper timing, tempo and good example of playing for services. It was requested to include introductions and our own intros were welcomed. The introductions were meant to include a wide skill range so that they were attainable for all organists. Due to the large amount of hymns, I

asked Niina Ylilkulju to assist me and play ten hymns, while I played twenty. We recorded in January 2016 at the Oulu Cathedral with Tuomo Kangas as a recording engineer.

5.2 Hymns

The hymns for this CD inspired the topic of my research. Although the theme of the CD was funeral and everlasting life hymns, the majority of the hymns were a major key. As I began to examine the texts in relation to the melodies I noticed a large part focused on the joy of everlasting life rather than the suffering, sorrow and pain of death. Hymns such as 263 begin with the words “They soon will lay my body with the earth to rest”, but is also directly followed by “my soul is free at last”. I have categorized the hymns into three categories.

The first of these are lullaby type hymns. Hymns such as “Safe in the Arms of Jesus” (SHZ 594), “I Know of a Sleep in Jesus’ Name” (SHZ 262) and “Stars are all Kindled” (SHZ 261) belong to this category. This relates to timing and the messages of the hymns. This can also be seen in the introductions. I planned for softer, relaxing styles or for example “Stars are all Kindled” the left hand was to imitate the twinkling of the stars in the sky. The registrations were also meant to show this. Mostly flute stops were used and in “Safe in the Arms of Jesus” a sixteen-foot flute was added to the manuals for a different effect.

The second category is pertaining to yearning for the homeland and eternal life. Hymns that fall into this category include: “Sabbath of Rest is Calling You” (SHZ 260), “Away! Away the Call Resounds”(SHZ 264), “Heavenward Our Pathway Wends” (SHZ 593). In this category, the majority of the minor key hymns can be found. In many of these hymns, the registrations include many reed solos. Between the reed registrations and the introductions it has a calling effect. In “Sabbath of Rest is Calling You” I took a free, modern approach to the introduction. This allowed a quiet, mysterious effect using only eight-foot principal and flute stops to create a solo voice. In “Away! Away the Call Resounds” I used the oboe as a solo stop. In the introduction I staggered the melody to have an effect similar to a horn calling from the heavens.

The last category is hymns of praise. There were many of these hymns that thank God for ending the suffering and the eternal life of heaven. While there are many examples I will focus on a few different types of praise hymns. The first of these is “Joy in Heaven” (SHZ 587). This is the only hymn on the CD that I used the mixture stop in the in the registration. The text, melody and arrangement allow for a large registration, praising with the angel’s throng. Hymn 600, “O Blessed Host Arrayed in White” is another type of praise hymn. The text is taken from the book of Revelations and I thus thought it fitting to use the modern style for the introduction. This was much more energetic than the other modern introduction used on the CD. I used a very bright registration to allow for the brightness and shining shown in the text.

The title of the this project comes from the hymn 265, “Praise God! This Hour of Sorrow”. This is a much different style of hymn than the previous two, but the text is that of praise. This hymn focuses on the hope of tomorrow and eternal life in a quieter fashion, but still bright. As part of the project I was requested to put the hymns in order for the CD. I used these categories to help determine the order. I began with the yearning and calling for the homeland, then the lullaby hymns and the hymns speaking of the actual death and lastly the hymns of praise.

5.3 Feedback

I found this project to be quite challenging as an organist. At first glance it seemed most of the work would involve the introductions. I soon realized however that the most difficult part was the playing of the verses. As an organist playing hymns, you listen to the congregation singing and are able to breathe along with them, to allow for proper hymn playing technique. This proved to be very difficult to play all the verses with no congregational singing. I felt that we were able to use a varied assortment of introduction style, skill levels and lengths. The music committee also expressed this thought.

After listening to the recording I feel that the introductions were the strongest section of the project. We were very varied in our styles and they were very well prepared. While there were many different styles of introductions, I planned to use each style at least two to three times. I thought this would help for those trying to learn these new styles by allowing them to hear how these in-

roductions can be constructed. I have thought that the playing of the hymns could have been better however. While the tempos were good, I felt at times my own playing was rushed, especially between the verses. I feel there are three causes for this.

The first of these is so much time was put into practicing and focusing on the introductions, that not enough time was put to practicing the hymns. The second of these was the order in which the hymns were recorded. The first hymns I recorded were the lullaby style, which require a slower, calmer tempo. After playing three or four of these hymns I had a feeling of playing too slow and was very focused on making sure that they tempos were not lagging. The last reason is the absence of the congregational singing. This proved to be very difficult, especially in between the verses.

Feedback was also requested from the music committee. This first idea expressed was the length of the introductions. The introductions were much longer than what are traditionally used in the congregations. While they were longer, it was stated that they were still in reason to what was requested and showed a different way to do things. It was also appreciated that there were other introductions that were much shorter that match current tradition and ability. The biggest matter noted was timing. They were able to easily distinguish that there were two different organists playing. One organist was not as precise in timing, which is noticed in the eighth notes being elongated. The other organist played the exact length of all notes. What is very interesting about his observation is that neither organist is wrong in how they have played. I believe that most organists do not always play exactly precise note lengths, however this is not noticed in congregational singing. As an organist, one must play in the most natural way of singing. It is natural in singing for example, to use agogic in instances where the melody rises and falls.

6 DISCUSSION

This has been a difficult topic to research and understand as so much of it is linked to the social ideas and culture of a very large country. It can be very difficult to find where and why certain ideas have changed. Often one can only look at the larger picture to see why ideas have changed. In this case, many of the wars, slavery and the birth of a new country had large impacts on both the music and the culture. America, which is always many times called the melting pot of the world, includes many cultural, religious and social backgrounds. This means one cannot place one assumption to fit all. Unlike Finland, America does not have the state church, which also means that there are different religious beliefs and many different hymns. For this reason, this study mainly focuses on the effect that the American culture has had on the Laestadian Lutheran Church hymnal.

It is hoped that both this study and the CD project may be used well in the congregations of the Laestadian Lutheran Church. It is important to know as a musician where the music has come from and the people it is played for. Funerals are one the most important duties for an organist. Many times organists are asked for advice in what music is acceptable for funerals and should be well prepared and taken care of. It is my hope that the CD may inspire other organists to learn more about proper hymn playing technique and a desire to learn new ways of creating introductions. These are matters that are needed in the congregations and enrich the congregational singing in the services.

There are a few issues that could be improved which I have found through my work. The most important matter I have found that could be very useful is information about funeral music for congregation members. I would suggest either something on the website or then a pamphlet that would include suggested hymns and also music for the service such as processions and instrumental music. The Oulu congregations have done this on their website for both funeral and wedding music, which also includes different links for members to listen to. In my research I was not able to find any information about music for funerals and memorial services.

Another matter which could use continued improvement is training of the organists. I know that there have been many workshops for this, but there is always more to learn. It may also be helpful to have set registrations that organists may use during the services if they do not know how to

create their own. Emphasis should be put on the relation of the texts and the registrations. I have also noticed that these workshops have been more focused towards the adult players that are playing for services and have been for many years. I believe that this type of training/schooling should begin at a younger age as many in their teenage years begin playing for Sunday school. It will likely be easier to learn to play correctly at the very beginning and thus avoid having to learn everything all over and attempt to remove the incorrectly learned habits. This could be done for example at youth music camps, or in smaller groups in the congregations.

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