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Songs of Taizé

Works composed by the Taizé Community often appear in liturgical hymnals. Regardless of the Christian denomination as well as the country and language of origin of these songs, they are played in Catholic churches during the celebration of the Holy Mass and at Protestant gatherings and prayer meetings. These works are commonly called the Taizé canons, even though, strictly speaking, not all of these pieces are canons. The fact that these songs are sung throughout the world during ecumenical prayer services and gatherings points to their popularity and the fact that they have become a symbol of the Taizé Community. This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that the Taizé canon is based on a variety of musical sources that combine simple musical forms, clear rhythms, and balanced harmonies with rich and novel melodies. Because of Jacques Berthier and Joseph Gelineau's compositions, the Taizé Community's music is simple yet original. And thanks to the compositional involvement of members of the Taizé Community, particularly of Brother Jean-Marie and the community's Prior Alois, new compositions have continued to reflect the characteristic style of the Taizé repertoire that has developed over many years. As a *libre propos* on the topic of the Taizé Community's musical compositions, this article presents the relationship between the musical sources, lyrics and languages, and musical compositional techniques of the Taizé songs that undoubtedly reflect the ecumenical character and vocation of the Taizé Community.

Key words: Taizé Community, music, lyrics, musical forms, song, canon, prosody, polyphony, litanies, Protestant chorales, Orthodox songs, ecumenism, art.

Introduction

Ecumenism

The ecumenical community known as Taizé is named after the small French village in which it was founded. Before 1940, Taizé was an ordinary village in the Burgundy region of France and located 100 kilometers from Lyon and a few kilometers from the ruins of the great Benedictine Abbey in Cluny. Thanks to the Taizé Community's founder, Brother Roger, Taizé has become an important place in France and Europe, and the hill on which the village is located remains a world-renowned ecumenical center. Immediately after the Second World War, members of the Taizé Community visited German military prisoners of war and cared for orphans as a part of the community's mission to "seek reconciliation and hospitality." Since its founding, the Taizé Community has had a strongly anthropological approach to its vocation. The community focuses entirely on the human person – usually the poor, suffering, and lonely. As Yves Congar noted in the dairy¹ that he kept during the Second Vatican Council: the "human being" exists. It is from this idea that the idiosyncratic anthropology of Taizé arose. Brother Roger Schütz founded the Taizé Community, became its first prior, and wrote the rule that the community strives to follow each day. Soon after the community's founding, new brothers—both Protestants and Catholics—began to join. Since the brothers who belong to the Taizé Community represent different Christian denominations, the community is ecumenical.

When Brother Roger founded the community in Taizé, it did not set out to welcome the youth from throughout Europe and the world. And, although the community was known for its hospitality, it did not anticipate that it would become such a far-reaching movement. As more and more visitors began to come to Taizé, the members of the community questioned whether the visitors would have a negative effect on the brothers' daily monastic life, which aimed to realize the "allegory of the community."² As early as the 1950's, young people joined the brothers in their daily prayers and stayed in Taizé for a few

¹ Y. Congar, *Mon journal du concile*, Paris 2002, vol. 2, pg. 185.

² S. Scatena, *Taizé una parabola di unità. Storia della comunità dalle origini al concilio dei giovani*, Bologna 2018, pg. 876.

days of retreat. With time, the brothers of Taizé realized that they could combine their monastic life, personal calling, and the presence of the ever-growing group of young people. Throughout the years, the meetings that the community hosted developed their own idiosyncratic rhythm. And, over a period of 50 years, the musically gifted members of the Community along with composers such as Joseph Gelineau³, Jacques Berthier⁴ and Brother Robert⁵ developed a repertoire of songs that are performed during the three prayer meetings that take place every day in the Church of Reconciliation in Taizé.⁶ In addition to the proclamation of the Word and silence, a particular type of singing takes place during the liturgies celebrated in Taizé. This kind of singing plays a significant role in and is a permanent feature of the Taizé Community's daily monastic liturgy.⁷

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In his work *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, Cardinal Ratzinger wrote, "When man comes into contact with God, mere speech is not enough."⁸ For youth throughout Europe and the world who are seeking the meaning of life, Taizé has and continues to serve as a special place where they encounter God. Such encounters with God undoubtedly "enliven the various dimensions of human life and transform them into a song of praise."⁹ Along with Brother Jean-Marie, one of the cantors of the Taizé Community, it is possible to state that "nothing replaces

³ Joseph Gelineau is a French Jesuit who was born in 1920 in Champ-sur-Layon. As a religious, he composed many songs (canticles and psalmodies) that greatly aid in the celebration of the Eucharist. He participated in the Second Vatican Council as an expert in matters pertaining to the liturgy. He also became well known for his compositions for the Taizé Community. In 2008, he died at the age of 87. His grave is located in the Jesuit cemetery in Grenoble, France.

⁴ Jacques Berthier was born in Auxerre in 1923. He worked as a composer and organist, first in the cathedral of Auxerre and then at St. Ignatius of Loyola church in Paris. In 1955, he began to compose works for the Taizé Community. After taking a break for a few years, at the request of Brother Robert, Berthier resumed writing short songs for meditation in different languages in 1975. He died in 1994 in Paris. Berthier wrote 232 songs in 20 different languages.

⁵ Robert Giscard was born in 1923. He entered the Taizé Community in 1949. Initially he served as the community's doctor and later composed music. He and Jacques Berthier created the songs of Taizé that are recognizable throughout the entire world. Giscard died in 1993.

⁶ Por. Robert de Taizé (ed.), *Benissez le Seigneur. 27 chants de Taizé avec versets de solistes et accompagnements*, Taizé 1990, pg. 4.

⁷ Br. Alois, *Nuove musiche per nuove comunità*, "Musica e Chiesa", Roma 2017, pg. 139.

⁸ J. Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, San Francisco, 2000, pg. 136.

⁹ Ibidem.

the beauty of human voices joined in song, which opens the gate of trust in God.”¹⁰ Song externalizes what is generated within the human heart; it is a way to enter into the mystery of God, of whom one can sing (*Dieu est chantable*).¹¹

The Phenomenon of Songs

Works composed by the Taizé Community often appear in liturgical hymnals. Regardless of the Christian denomination as well as the country and language of origin of these songs, they are played in Catholic churches during the celebration of the Holy Mass and at Protestant gatherings and prayer meetings. The fact that these songs are sung during ecumenical prayer meetings indicates that they are phenomenon that has become symbolic.¹² From its very beginning, the Taizé Community has been contemplative. For this reason, it has given song pride of place as a means to express what lies at the heart of faith. In addition, the Taizé (and not other) songs are unusual in the way that they uniquely express the spiritual sensibilities and needs of the youth who come to the Burgundian village. These songs also convey a deep understanding of the ideas promoted by the Taizé Community’s founder, Brother Roger. It is not without reason that the compositions are based primarily on vocal arrangements that are characteristic of sacred music and on works for the organ. Many of the Taizé songs convey a deeper understanding of young people and their needs as a community and unite them through the language of music, which transcends nationalities and Christian denominations.

The ecumenical character of the Taizé Community unites young people from different parts of the world. When these young people sing the songs of the Taizé Community, it no longer matters where they come from, what languages they speak, or the way in which they pray. Taizé songs are based on a variety of musical forms, compositional techniques, and cultures; as such, they are musical expressions of

¹⁰ “Pour ouvrir les portes de la confiance en Dieu, rien ne remplace la beauté des voix humaines unies par le chant.” L. Grzybowski, *La magie des chants de Taizé*, [in:] “La vie,” http://www.lavie.fr/religion/spiritualite/la-magie-des-chants-de-taize-24-12-2013-48128_22.php (12.18.2018).

¹¹ L. Jakoniuk, *L’Exultet – une catéchèse vecue*, [in:] “Rocznik Teologii Katolickiej”, XII/2 (2013), pg. 189.

¹² See J.M. Kubicki, *Liturgical Music as Ritual Symbol: A Case Study of Jacques Berthier’s Taize Music*, Leuven 1999; and C. Calitz, *Liturgical Singing as Ritual Symbol*, “*Verbum et Ecclesia*” 32 (1) 2011. (<https://verbumetecclisia.org.za/index.php/ve/article/view/430/651>) (12.18.2018).

a universal language. Through Taizé songs, young people have a sense that they belong to a community and, in his own way, each person can come to a deeper understanding of the content of the songs; participate in sung prayers in his own language; and, having a sense of belonging to an ecumenical community, become part of a broad circle of youth who are enthusiastic about their faith. “Indeed, man’s own being is insufficient for what he has to express, and so he invites the whole of creation to become a song with him...”¹³

The phenomenon of the songs composed by the ecumenical Taizé Community is due to the fact that the compositions are based on a variety of musical sources that combine simple musical forms, clear rhythms, and balanced harmonies with rich and novel melodies. Thanks to works by composers such as Jacques Berthier¹⁴ and Joseph Gelineau,¹⁵ both of whom were involved with the brothers of the Taizé Community and closely collaborated with Brother Robert Giscard for many years, Taizé songs are simple yet original. After the main composers passed away, Brother Roger encouraged the brothers who were musically gifted to write new works. Decades have passed since the first compositions were written for the Taizé Community, and, due to the efforts of the Community’s members, particularly Brother Jean-Marie and Prior Alois, new compositions have been written and continue to reflect the Taizé canon of music’s characteristic style, which has developed over many years.¹⁶ Through the work of composers as

¹³ J. Ratzinger, op. cit., pg. 136.

¹⁴ Examples of songs composed by J. Berthier are contained in the hymnal published in 2018-2019. “*Chants de Taizé, Taizé 2018*” (abbreviated hereafter as CDT). See CDT: 1-3, 5-26, 29, 32-33, 35-38, 40, 41, 43-46, 48-50, 52-58, 60, 61, 68-72, 79-86, 92-93, 117, 143, 147, 154.

¹⁵ For examples of J. Gelineau’s compositions, see CDT: 4, 51, 62, and 64. Joseph Gelineau also composed many church songs, psalmodies, and hymns that are well known in France. Many of these compositions are sung during monastic celebrations, including those that take place in Taizé. Y. Chiron, *Frère Roger 1915-2005. Fondateur de Taizé*, Perrin 2008, pgs 127-128.

¹⁶ Currently, four brothers within the Taizé Community, supported by the Swiss composer, are working on compositions and harmonies. First, the brothers find a text that will be helpful in promoting prayer. Then, one of the brothers composes the music and runs his composition by the other brothers in the community. The brothers try out the new composition during the summer months. They and the youth listen to the words and the music. If the composition is well received, then it is included within the Taizé canon of songs. Often new songs are created for the European Youth Meeting, which is organized each year in a different European country. It is for this reason that new songs are often in the language of the country that hosts the European Youth Meeting in a given year. See Br. Alois, *Nuove musiche per nuove comunità*, “Musica e Chiesa”, Roma 2017,

well as the Taizé Community's own work, the community found the optimal way to create short songs that are rich in musical ideas, based on a variety of musical forms and sources, and present distinct musical styles. Taizé songs are based on different types of music from *a capella* to vocal pieces with instrumental accompaniment, which occasionally includes improvisation by soloists. Thousands of people participate in the gatherings that take place in Taizé, and some of the songs that they sing include homophony and polyphony, while wind instruments, the guitar, and the organ also often accompany the more formal songs.

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Musical Sources

The sources of the Taizé songs are interesting, and their historical and cultural inspiration can vary greatly. For example, Taizé compositions include antiphonal songs, Orthodox hymns, and the clear structures characteristic of Protestant chorales. Many songs follow the rules of the musical technique of canons that were popularized by the well-known canon *Jubilate Deo* written by the German composer Michael Praetorius. The expression "Taizé canons" is commonly used to refer to every kind of Taizé songs. Term "canon," however, does not necessarily always refer to the technical musical form, since many of the Taizé songs are, in fact, not canons. Most likely the media popularized this misnomer, which has become a permanent expression among those associated with the Taizé Community to refer to the entire repertoire of Taizé songs.

Lyrics and Language

Within the Taizé songs, the lyrics are the most important element that makes up the melody and determine the subsequent musical elements as well as the formal structure of the songs. While the lyrics of many of the songs are in Latin, some songs are composed in German, English, Spanish, Russian, Polish, and many other languages.

pg. 142; L. Grzybowski, *La magie des chants de Taizé*, [in:] "La vie," http://www.lavie.fr/religion/spiritualite/la-magie-des-chants-de-taize-24-12-2013-48128_22.php (12.18.2018).

The Bible¹⁷ as well as the writings of the Fathers of the Church,¹⁸ the masters of the contemplative life,¹⁹ contemporary Christian authors, and the Taizé Community's founder, Brother Roger,²⁰ are sources of inspiration for the the Taizé songs. Lyrics are the primary musical feature around which the pieces are composed; once the lyrical layers have been determined, the musical elements follow. The text's clarity and its adherence to the rules of prosody are the basic and very evident formative and creative principles behind Taizé songs—principles that are an intrinsic element of the rule of the predominance of the meaning of the lyrics.²¹ The hymnals that the Taizé Community publishes every year intentionally include translations of the lyrics into many languages as a means to overcome the barriers that exist between the different cultures, ages and generations, and denominations of those who participate in the prayer meetings.²²

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Compositional Techniques and Methods

Taizé music is rich in a range of techniques and compositional methods that draw from a variety of sources. This feature—the fact that a single song can be based on a variety of musical examples, styles, and compositional techniques that span many centuries and countries—is

¹⁷ The psalms—see CDT 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 18, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 35, 38, 58, 59, 65, 108, 112, 123, 124, 127, 128, 129, 131, 133, 134, 137, 138, 140, 141, 142, 150, 151, and 155; other Old Testament texts—see CDT 8, 16, 17, 42, 107, 152; as well as New Testament texts—see CDT 3, 6, 19, 25, 30, 34, 37, 41, 47, 49, 64, 67, 100, 106, 114, 115, 119, 125, 130, 132, 135, 136, 140, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 154, and 158.

¹⁸ For passages from the writings of St. Gregory of Nazianzen, see CDT 149; St. Ambrose, see CDT 153; St. Michael de Fleu, see CDT 156; and St. Augustine, see CDT 9, 159.

¹⁹ For passages from the writings of St. Teresa of Avila, see CDT 50; St. Francis of Assisi, see CDT 66; and St. John of the Cross, see CDT 122.

²⁰ For passages from the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, see CDT 139; and Brother Roger, see CDT 157.

²¹ C. Grandjean captured this idea very well: “...une belle musique et de belles paroles ne font pas forcément un beau chant. La qualité de la prosodie, c'est-à-dire l'adaptation de la musique et du texte est très soignée et cela dans toutes les langues, de même que l'harmonie....” M. Page, *Taizé: Pas de musique sans silence*, <https://www.cath.ch/newsf/taize-pas-de-musique-sans-silence/> (12.18.2018).

²² «(...) L'addition de ces diverses qualités des paroles, des mélodies, de la prosodie et de l'harmonie fait le succès du répertoire de Taizé auprès de gens d'âge, de culture et de confessions différentes (...).” M. Page, *Taizé: Pas de musique sans silence*, <https://www.cath.ch/newsf/taize-pas-de-musique-sans-silence/> (12.18.2018).

an integral part of the ecumenical character of the musical practices employed by the Taizé Community. Apart from the strictly choral parts of the compositions, the songs also include improvisational parts for soloists. The unmeasured and free rhythms of these solos recall choral practices, the lyrics of which guide the musical form. The compositions' main emphasis on prosody is characteristic of psalmodic and declamatory songs.²³ In Taizé songs, references to medieval sequences are evident in melismatic passages²⁴ that are written for single expressions such as "Alleluia" or "Kyrie eleison." These diatonic forms coincide with the melodies sung by the choral parts. The medieval features of the songs overlap with other more contemporary musical features such as the harmonic sound of the chords. Sometimes improvisational melismatic singing by soloists accompanies this texture. Free improvisation is possible in such instances because the chords that create the harmonic and colorful background for the parts of the soloists and the song as a whole are often static.

Counterpoint

The variety of musical techniques used in the composition of Taizé songs is impressive. Many medieval compositions use counterpoint (*nota contra notam* or *punctus contra punctum*).²⁵ This practice arose in polyphonic music in the thirteenth century when precise musical notation and scoring began to be more common. Counterpoint was specifically used in *conductus*. The transparent harmonic texture that is characteristic of this technique makes the lyrics clear and serves to achieve rhythmic discipline. The Taizé Community often uses this technique in its songs because it enables equal singing as well as a rhythmic regularity and stability that make it easy for all vocal types and singing abilities to participate. Not all Taizé songs, however, make use of these historical compositional techniques.²⁶

Polyphony

The simple technique of polyphony, which is void of isorhythm, can also be found in Taizé songs.²⁷ The independent voices within the

²³ See, for example: CDT 18, 36.

²⁴ *Alleluja* 10, CDT 71.

²⁵ *Laudate Dominum*, CDT 10; and *In manus tuas, Pater*, CDT 30.

²⁶ *Dieu ne peut que Donner son amour*, CDT 51; and *Grande est ta bonté*, CDT 64.

²⁷ *Jubilate Deo*, CDT 311 and *Benedictus Dominus Deus*, CDT 47.

framework of simple musical sentences and closed melodic phrases lead to the slight embellishment of the melodic part. The freely formed counterpoints most often consist of transitional sounds as well as independent counterpoint lines sung by the remaining voices. This type of polyphony usually clearly culminates in a return to previously determined cadences.²⁸

Four-Part Harmony

Four-part harmony, which is based on classical harmony,²⁹ is a clear and often-used texture in Taizé songs because it is the most universal musical language and most closely related to contemporary and widely known practices in music. Composers often refer to major and minor tonalities in a four-part harmonic system. The traditional choral voices: soprano, alto, tenor, and bass move within a limited ambitus (range). In songbooks adapted for songs sung in a group, choral works based on four- and one-part harmonies are performed like a canon. Therefore, after the voices course back, the most often-used texture is the traditional four-part harmony along with *ad libitum* instrumental accompaniment, which is present in the Taizé songs.³⁰

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Canons

Many Taizé songs are canons, which is one of the oldest musical textures in polyphony.³¹ During the Renaissance, the compositional technique of canons was the basic way to create music. Classical examples of such canons are Michael Praetorius' (1571 -1621) *Jubilate Deo* and Melchior Franck's (1579-1639) *Da Pacem Domine*, both of which can be found in the Taizé songbook.³² The history of musical literature even reveals that canons for 36 voices,³³ which were also based on polychoral compositional technique, exist. The first songs written for the Taizé Community use this compositional approach to

²⁸ *In te confido*, CDT 46; and *Jubilate coeli*, CDT 61.

²⁹ *Confitemini Domino*, CDT 18; and *Jubilate, Alleluja*, CDT 27.

³⁰ Br. Alois, *Nuove musiche per nuove comunità*, [in:] Musica e Chiesa, Roma 2017, pg. 141.

³¹ *Gloria ... et in terra pax*, CDT 6; *Veni Creator Spiritus*, CDT 22; *Gloria, gloria*, CDT 25; and *Ostende nobis*, CDT 29.

³² *Jubilate Deo*, CDT 31; and *Da pacem... in diebus*, CDT 42.

³³ Johannes Ockeghem (b. 1410 or 1420, d. 1497) is likely the author of the 36-voice canon *Deo gratias*, which is written for a 9-part choir.

create the songs' musical structure.³⁴ The canon, which is based on the compositional technique known as *ostinato*,³⁵ is one of the simplest and, therefore, most effective forms of polyphony. The canons composed by Berthier contain all of the basic features of this kind of music.³⁶ From a technical point of view, a canon is not difficult to compose. In addition, a canon's melodic ambitus is relatively narrow, its phrases can be sung in one breath, and the entirety of the piece plays out on a simple harmonic plane that stays within the chords of the cadence. The Taizé collection of songs contains a double canon³⁷ as well as canons for two,³⁸ three,³⁹ four,⁴⁰ and five voices.⁴¹ Sometimes a choir or soloists accompany. Canons are often sung by *cori spezzati*, meaning by separated choirs, which creates an intricate polychoral texture and allows for additional topophonic effects. When considering the entire form of the Taizé Community's repertoire of songs, it is clear that composers demonstrated considerable compositional creativity. The Taizé collection of canons known as *Cantate Domino* is of particular interest because these canons were composed using a common harmonic scheme and the same metric system. These canons can be performed in a variety of sequences and combinations through a different arrangement of consonance each time. The *Cantate Domino* canons can also be performed in a variety of spaces.

Variety of Forms and Genres

Taizé songs are based on a variety of forms and genres taken from many Christian traditions, which reflects the Taizé Community's ecumenical vocation. The community's songs include litanies, Orthodox

³⁴ Br. Alois, *Nuove musiche per nuove comunit *, [in:] Musica e Chiesa, Roma 2017, pg. 141.

³⁵ The first songs of Taiz  (canons).

³⁶ See CDT 6, 19, 22, 25, 29, 42, 49, 55, 57, 61, and 154.

³⁷ *Magnificat*, CDT 19.

³⁸ *Veni Creator Spiritus*, CDT 22; *Gloria, gloria*, CDT 25; *Ostende nobis*, CDT 29; and *Jubilate Deo*, CDT 31.

³⁹ *Da pacem cordium*, CDT 55.

⁴⁰ *Gloria... et in terra pax*, CDT 6; *Magnificat*, CDT 19; *Da pacem... in diebus*, CDT 42; and *L'ajuda em vindr *, CDT 124.

⁴¹ *Kyrie 1*, CDT 79 as well as *Kyrie eleison 1*, [in:] Robert de Taiz  (ed.), *Benissez le Seigneur. 27 chants de Taiz  avec versets de solistes et accompagnements*, Taiz  1990, pg. 19.

songs, and Protestant chorales, and also contain features of open works.

Litanies

Taizé songs frequently use simple refrains, particularly litanies, the structure of which is based on prayers comprised of a series of invocations and repeated supplications. Both *ostinato* sequences, rhythmic and melodic variations, as well as a variety other features comprise a large part of these works.⁴² These compositions are based on different musical periods, and they connect musical sentences, particularly preceding and succeeding lines. In accordance with the compositional rules for litanies, these kinds of musical works preserve the interdependence between dominant and tonic tonal harmony.

Ecumenism

Eastern Orthodox Music

The use of Orthodox liturgical hymns as well as Russian lyrics in Taizé songs are only a few examples of the ways in which Eastern Orthodox⁴³ music influences Taizé compositions. Melody is the predominant feature of Eastern Orthodox music. Such melodic features appear in Taizé songs in the psalmodic and repetitive character of the musical fragments. Like Orthodox music, Taizé songs use both subdominant and tonic plagal cadences. These elements, along with the presence of the dominant chord, reflect musical features and techniques that are characteristic of Eastern Orthodox songs.

Protestant Chorales

Protestant chorales, which have a clearly defined purpose, are the most obvious and prevalent source of the Taizé songs.⁴⁴ In fact, features of chorales are present in all of the Taizé compositions and include: four-part texture, melodic chords created using the musical technique *nota contra notam*, different languages, short melodic phrases, as well as simple melodic and rhythmic structures that enable individuals to sing polyphony without having any previous or special musical instruction or preparation. During the time of Luther, organ accompaniment was introduced into sacred music, and such accompaniment is

⁴² *Notre âme attend*, CDT 7; and *Singt dem Herrn*, CDT 24.

⁴³ *Sviaty Bože*, CDT 109; and *Bogoroditse Dievo 2*, CDT 110.

⁴⁴ *Bleibet hier*, CDT 3; and *Singt dem Herrn*, CDT 24.

also used in Taizé songs. The use of musical instruments that are not permitted during Catholic and Eastern Orthodox sacred liturgies is fully permitted in Protestantism. Such instruments support not only singers but also are also colorfully significant in Taizé compositions.

Open Work

Interesting features of Taizé songs that are not present in art songs are a lack of dynamic and articulated notation as well as a set duration.⁴⁵ There is also freedom to change and choose different instrumental parts. This feature of the scores gives a conductor a lot of flexibility, freedom, and possibilities from which to choose. Historically speaking, therefore, Taizé songs resemble open works that take shape only when the songs are being performed and depend on the conductor's decisions. Although it is a stretch to compare this practice to twentieth-century *alteatoric* musical practices, such spontaneity is reminiscent of Flemish tricks, thanks to which the composers made room for a certain amount of creative freedom. As Josephe Gelineau mentioned in one interview, within the history of Western music, it is customary in liturgical singing for the end of a song to be carefully determined. This can be seen particularly in the revised liturgy of the hours where the length of time that hymns, psalms, and responsorials are recited or sung is determined very precisely. On the one hand, this approach is practical. On the other hand, however, something valuable is lost. Taizé songs begin and end whenever the conductor so chooses to begin and end them, thereby allowing for freedom, silence, or repetition that creates a space and atmosphere into which the Holy Spirit can enter.

Conclusion

The composers of the Taizé songs are exceptionally gifted and deserving of the highest regard because of the rich sources from which they draw, their awareness of different religious practices and historical musical genres, as well as their accurate assessment and understanding of the function and purpose of Taizé songs. It is a difficult task to create music that has a universal character and draws from many cultures and Christian denominations. The great success of Taizé songs points not only to the merits of the Taizé Community's founder, Brother Roger, but also to the effective collaboration between the Taizé

⁴⁵ The majority of the Taizé songs do not have dynamic and agogic accents, which allows the singers freedom of interpretation.

Community and other composers who have excellently continued the work of previous composers by remaining faithful to the characteristic style and purpose of Taizé songs. One of the many elements that contribute to the phenomenon of the popularity of the Taizé songs throughout the world is the fact that the ecumenical Taizé Community has and continues to create a musical language that can be shared and experienced in common in order to convey the faith and promote interpersonal communication among thousands of young people. This music, in turn, has sparked the interest of even more young people to make pilgrimages to Taizé and other European cities within the context of the European Youth Meetings hosted by the brothers of the ecumenical community. When listening to the compositions written for the Taizé Community from the time it was founded, it is clear that, although these songs are sometimes sung with the accompaniment of many instruments and choral voices, they do not sound like concert pieces because the purpose of these songs is to support and sustain the prayers of the people that rise from the depths of their hearts to God.

Ecumenism

ŚPIEWY Z TAIZÉ

Otwierając niejedną śpiewnik z pieśniami liturgicznymi często można natrafić na utwory, które opisane są jako kompozycja Taizé. Bez względu na wyznanie, kraj i język utwory te, pojawiają się podczas sprawowanych Mszy św. w katolickich kościołach czy podczas liturgicznych spotkań modlitewnych w świątyniach protestanckich. Potocznie nazywa się je kanonami z Taizé, aczkolwiek nie wszystkie, ściśle rzecz ujmując, nimi są. Obecność tych śpiewów podczas ekumenicznych modlitw i spotkań wskazuje na ich fenomen, który urasta do rangi symbolu. Fenomen ten polega na wyjątkowym doborze środków muzycznych, łączących prostotę formy, przejrzystą rytmikę i wyważoną harmonię z bogactwem melodycznych inwencji. Wspólnota z Taizé, dzięki takim kompozytorom jak Jacques Berthier czy Josephe Gelineau, posługując się prostotą nie otała się jednak o banalność inwencji muzycznych. Do dziś w Taizé dzięki zaangażowaniu kompozytorskiemu m.in. takich braci jak Jean-Marie czy Alois, przeor Wspólnoty, powstają nowe śpiewy zachowujące charakterystyczny styl wypracowany przez szereg lat. Niniejszy artykuł jako *libre propos* na temat śpiewów z Taizé, jest próbą pochylenia się nad ich źródłami, tekstami i językiem, technikami muzycznymi zastosowanymi przy ich kompozycji związanymi z ekumenicznym charakterem powołania Wspólnoty z Taizé.

Słowa kluczowe: Wspólnota z Taizé, muzyka, teksty, formy muzyczne, śpiew, kanon, prozodia, polifonia, litanie, chorał protestancki, śpiew prawosławny, ekumenizm, sztuka.

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