

Begbie, Jeremy S., and Steven R. Guthrie, eds. *Resonant Witness: Conversations between Music and Theology* (Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Studies). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011.

Resonant Witness, Conversations between Music and Theology, edited by Jeremy Begbie and Steven Guthrie, is a thought provoking text for Christians contemplating the relationship between music and theology. Begbie is a professor of theology at Duke Divinity School, and Guthrie is an associate professor of theology at Belmont University. Both are well qualified to probe these important questions.

Section 1 describes music as a liberal art. It explains how classically, music was seen in relationship to mathematics and thereby to the organization of the entire cosmos. Augustine (354-430) understood the power of music to sway the hearts of men and knew that it could be used for good or for ill. He suggested that Christians no longer allow music to be a diversion from godliness but a means of restoring godliness. Philip the Chancellor (1160-1236) began his work with Aristotle's Physics and then contemplated music as an invisible substance, to be shaped as a carver shapes wood or a potter clay. The early reformers were often hard on music, but Martin Luther (1483-1546) was a fan, considering it second only to theology in bridging the gap between God and man. He saw nature as musical, and music as having a tight bond to preaching. Begbie's essay starts by describing the divine origin of beauty, and then describes the created, subsidiary beauty of the work of masters such as J.S. Bach (1685-1750). The section ends with the discussion of Pythagoras and the relation of music to mathematics, both in ratios and in themes. The question "was mathematics created or discovered" is a fascinating question in this essay.

Section 2 relates to music and culture. In the premodern world, all of life was "enchanted", and music encompassed the universe. In the modern world, music has been relegated to one of many objects in the universe. This change impacts its ability to speak theology. *St Francis of Assisi*, by the French Catholic composer Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992), is an attempt to use the music of modernity to reveal the Christ of history. Pickstock contemplated the state of music in postmodernity, and then discussed how Messiaen's music aligned time and pitches to speak theologically in a new way.

Section 3 discusses music and theology. Secular fans of J.S. Bach argue that he was a musician who happened to make his living writing church music, but Plantinga argues that he was in fact a faithful Christian who proclaimed Christ through his music. The famed 20th century theologians Karl Barth (1886-1968) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) were heavily influenced by the music of Mozart and others. Barthwick and his co-writers examine the relationship between musical time, earthly time, and eschatology, describing the progress or illusions of progress, ending or death, and rebirth in music, on earth, and at the end of time. Benson's essay considers improvisation as variation within limits, not limitless change, and how it applies to music, the church, and all of life under God.

Section 4 concludes with music and worship. It begins by examining how music affects the body, the emotions, and the mind. Fassler's essay reviews the musical work of Hildegard of Bingen in relation to the Biblical *Song of Songs*, focusing on the sacrifice of St. Ursula. Guthrie's work argues that while music touches the emotions, it strengthens the mind as well. In part, music acts by encouraging the work of the Spirit and by building community among believers. Believers in South Africa used music, especially Freedom Songs, in their struggle against Apartheid. Finally, O'Connor argues forcefully that Jesus was a singer in His earthly life.

Conclusion

Resonant Witness, Conversations between Music and Theology is a worthwhile book for anyone wishing a deeper understanding of the relationship between the arts, especially music, and the work of God in the world. Certainly, it is essential for graduate students in philosophy and the arts, and for music ministers. It is deep water for people without a solid background in musical theory, and the philosophy of music. Nonetheless, it is worth the wade.