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Blending the Sacred and the Profane: Paul Chihara's *Missa Carminum* (1975)

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Abstract | Inspired by the idea of Leonard Bernstein's (1918-1990) controversial theatre piece, *Mass* (1972), Paul Chihara (b. 1938) was prompted to compose a non-liturgical mass also, but to question religious practice more passively. Whereas secular culture and religious ritual clash in Bernstein's *Mass*, Chihara strives for an empathetic blend of the two in *Missa Carminum*: "Folk Song Mass" (1975). Animated by his love for popularised folk music and informed by his Roman Catholic education, Chihara's admixture is also the first mass to explicitly parallel physical human love with love of the divine. For Chihara, *Missa Carminum* "is prima[ri]ly a love song: it is more Eros than Agape!"¹ In proposing a broad application of religion to encompass all of everyday life, yet remaining Christian in its caste, *Missa Carminum* is situated in the later stages of the metamorphosis of the mass. Once an exclusively liturgical musical form, it was appropriated by composers who created religious music explicitly for secular venues from as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Drawing on music analysis and communications with the composer, this article explores Paul Chihara's reconciliation of the opposing realms of the profane and the sacred in *Missa Carminum*. It also demonstrates *Missa Carminum*'s Christian foundations and its erotic aspects. Finally, it identifies a transformation in the composer's theology, revealing a shift in emphasis from everyday life in the *Kyrie*, *Benedictus* and *Agnus Dei* movements of the earlier *Missa Brevis* version, to a strong focus on Christ in the two new movements – the *Gloria* and the *Sanctus* – of the full version.

Background

Paul Chihara's (b.1938) *Missa Carminum*: "Folk Song Mass" (1975) was composed at a time when the musical form called "mass" was undergoing a key phase in its metamorphosis from liturgical church music to ideologically-driven concert music. The evolution of the genre from mass to concert mass began with the Viennese concerted masses of the late eighteenth century, particularly those of Haydn and Mozart.² Conceived of as cohesive concert works of symphonic proportions that nevertheless met the requirements of church ritual, and were certainly performed during church services, the later masses of Mozart and Haydn paved the way for ever more elaborate masses to be composed by Beethoven, Berlioz, Bruckner and many others throughout the nineteenth century. Throughout that time, however, the lavishness and length of the masses met with the disapproval of Roman Catholic reform movements, notably the Cecilians, who felt that such musical extravagance

¹ Paul Chihara, email message to author, 23 Oct 2011. I have corresponded with Chihara regarding *Missa Carminum* since 29 Sept 2011, and met with him once in Los Angeles in February 2013. His willingness to engage with the questions I have asked is greatly appreciated.

² This introduction draws on research undertaken by the author during the completion of a larger project which explores the origins, development, and history of the concert mass. As this article deals with a particular stage in the metamorphosis of the concert mass, its origins will not be discussed in any detail here.

overtook the liturgy in importance and so was entirely inappropriate.³ The reformists eventually found their champion in Pope Pius X (1835-1914), who issued a *motu proprio* on music in 1903.⁴ From this time onwards, masses sung in Catholic churches after 1905 were generally modest a capella works with very little instrumental accompaniment other than perhaps an organ.⁵ Sixty years later, the reforms issuing from the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) reinforced the unsuitability of large-scale masses in liturgical celebration by encouraging members of the congregation to be participants rather than spectators in communal worship.⁶ As Virgil C. Funk puts it:

A funny thing happened on the way home from the Second Vatican Council—all of a sudden, parish choirs disappeared. The abrupt loss in repertoire, the insistence on participation at all costs, and, more subtly, the redefinition of ministerial roles have all contributed to the demise of the choir.⁷

Thus, even the singing of a capella polyphonic masses by a small choir was discouraged, while hymnody, which the congregation could join in with, flourished.⁸

³ For an exploration of these ideas, see Chapters 3 and 4 in James Garratt, *Palestrina and the German romantic imagination : interpreting historicism in nineteenth-century music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For localised studies, see Eckhard Jaschinski, “The renewal of Catholic Church Music in Germany/Austria, France and Italy in the Nineteenth Century, (13-28)’ Paul Collins, “Emissaries to ‘a believing and a singing land’: Belgian and German Organists in Ireland, 1858-1916,” and Ann L. Silverberg, “Cecilian Reform in Baltimore 1868-1903” in Paul Collins, ed. *Renewal and resistance : Catholic Church Music from the 1850s to Vatican II* (Bern; Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010), 13-28; 29-53; 171-88. Ultramontanism was also influential in its anti-Nationalistic assertion of the primacy of the Pope over National leaders. In terms of music, the Papal preference for renaissance-style music was considered binding. For Ultramontanism in the English context, see T.E. Muir, *Roman Catholic Church Music in England, 1791-1914: A Handmaid of the Liturgy?* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 28; 48.

⁴ Pope Pius X, “Motu Proprio,” Vatican, accessed 7 July 2014, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_x/motu_proprio/index.htm. An English translation is available at “Church Documents *Tra le Sollecitudini* Instruction on Sacred Music Pope Pius X Motu Proprio promulgated on November 22, 1903,” *Adoremus Society for the Renewal of Sacred Liturgy*, accessed 7 July 2014, <http://www.adoremus.org/MotuProprio.html>.

⁵ In Melbourne, Australia, for example, the performance of large-scale masses during celebrations of the liturgy flourished for decades after the 1903 *motu proprio*. This was due to a newly wealthy Irish Catholic migrant population having a taste for theatre, and the inherent difficulty for the Holy See to control such a far-flung diocese. See John Henry Byrne, “Archbishop Daniel Mannix and Church Music in Melbourne, 1913-1963,” in *Renewal and Resistance: Catholic Church from the 1850s to Vatican II*, ed. Paul Collins (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 263-9.

⁶ The reforms introduced into Roman Catholic Churches after Vatican II included the saying of mass in the vernacular – the language of the congregation – (rather than Latin), the priest facing the people throughout the service rather than having his back to them, and an acceptance of the right of others to hold different religious views without censure.

⁷ Virgil C. Funk, “In this Issue,” *National Association of Pastoral Musicians* 3, no. 6 (Aug-Sep 1979): 2.

⁸ See, for example, Ralph A. Keifer, *The Mass in Time of Doubt: The Meaning of the Mass for the Catholic Today* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Pastoral Musicians, 1983). Debate over what constitutes suitable Church music and opinions on the reforms of Vatican II abound, but as the work under consideration in this article is a mass for the concert hall, not the church, the debate will not be engaged with here.

In tandem with the reforms of Vatican II, the idea of composing a mass exclusively as a concert item accelerated in the 1960s. Knowingly or not, they were drawing on the precedent set early in the nineteenth century, particularly by French composers such as Luigi Cherubini (1760-1842) whose Mass in F setting the standard liturgical texts premiered in a glittering evening gathering at the Parisian residence of the Prince of Chimay in 1809.⁹ A century later, Leoš Janáček's (1881-1928) *Glagolitic Mass* (1926-7) for orchestra, choir and soloists was composed explicitly for the concert hall. In this mass, Janáček sets an early version of the liturgical rite that Greek missionaries had translated into a dialect of the Slavonic language in the 860s.¹⁰

Going further than these composers, however, Frederick Delius's (1862-1934) atheistic *A Mass of Life* (1905) retains the liturgical movement names of the mass but not the liturgy itself, instead setting excerpts from Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.¹¹ Yet, it would not be until the 1970s that alternative formats of the mass, such as Delius's, would come into vogue. As shown below, in masses of the later twentieth century, the composer's own sense of the religious and the spiritual would begin to take ascendancy.

The new-style masses for profane spaces included the Electric Prunes' psychedelic rock album *Mass in F minor*, composed by David Axelrod and released as an LP in 1965 to moderate chart success.¹² There is no indication that Axelrod, or his

⁹ François-Joseph Fétis, "Cherubini," in *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens* (Paris 1884). As translated and cited in Jean Mongrédien, *French Music from the Enlightenment to Romanticism 1789-1830*, trans. Sylvain Frémaux (Portland, Or: Amadeus Press, 1996), 170. Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* was performed in a concert hall in St Petersburg in 1824; nevertheless, Beethoven had commenced composing the mass several years earlier for the installation of his friend and patron, Archduke Rudolph, to the position of Archbishop of Olmütz in 1820. Although he did not complete the mass in time for the installation, this does not change the fact that it was initially intended for a church performance, not a concert performance. See David Wyn Jones, "The Missa Solemnis Premiere. First Rites," *The Musical Times* 139, no. 1864 (Autumn 1998): 25. John Knowles Paine arranged a concert performance of his *Mass in D* in Berlin in 1867 in the hopes that it "would provide a substantial boost in helping to establish him as a composer in the United States"; hopes that would be gratified when the *Mass* was scheduled for a performance in Boston, 1868. See John Calvitt Huxford, "John Knowles Paine: His Life and Works" (The Florida State University, 1969). It appears that the Boston performance did not, however, go ahead. See David Paul DeVenney, "A conductor's study of the 'Mass in D' by John Knowles Paine" (D.M.A., University of Cincinnati, 1989). Smythe's *Mass in D Major* premiered in Albert Hall, London in 1893, while Beach's *Mass in E-flat Major* was performed in the Handel and Haydn Society Hall, Boston in 1892. There is little evidence that other composers were writing for non-liturgical performance prior to the twentieth century although movements of masses have been performed in concerts since at least the eighteenth century when the Academy of Vocal Music (later The Academy of Ancient Music) was established in 1726. The history of the concert mass is the topic of the author's forthcoming PhD thesis.

¹⁰ The Macedonian dialect was used.

¹¹ Requiems are not the topic of this study, given that they are composed for distinctly different reasons to the standard mass. Nevertheless, composers may have been inspired by the examples of Brahms's *A German Requiem* (1865-8), which sets scripture rather than the liturgy or György Ligeti's partial setting of the liturgical texts in his *Requiem* (1963-5), which makes the text subordinate to the music. Similarly, Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem* (1965), which interpolates poems by Wilfred Owen amongst the liturgical texts, demonstrates that the requiem form was undergoing a similar metamorphic process as the standard mass.

¹² The Album debuted in the Billboard Top 200 LPs on 7 January 1968 at number 198, climbing steadily to number 135 by 17 February before dropping out by 6 April having remained in the

Manager, Lenny Poncher, who instigated the project, had any personal religious motivation for creating the mass.¹³ Rather, they were simply tapping into two phenomena of their time – psychedelic culture and the Vatican II Reforms – and bringing them together in the commercial space of the popular music market, in the hope of creating a product that would sell well. Four years later, the impact of *Mass in F Minor* on popular culture was demonstrated when the Kyrie was used as an ironic sonic commentary during a brothel scene of the counter-cultural film *Easy Rider*.¹⁴

In later examples, the impetus to create non-liturgical masses was not commercial but personal. David Fanshawe brought African religions and Islam into the Christian mass in an explicitly multi-faith gesture in the early 1970s. Premiering as *African Revelations* in London in 1972, the work was later revised and renamed *African Sanctus: A Mass for Love and Peace* and enjoyed substantial success.¹⁵ Other masses that not only move the mass from the church to the concert hall, but also push the boundaries of the form both musically and spiritually, are Daniel Lentz's *wolfMass* of 1985, which focuses upon the spirituality and endangerment of animal predators, and Luis Bacalov's *Misa Tango* of 1999, which strives to appeal universally to all of the Abrahamic faiths. In one final example, which not only takes the form into the concert hall but also obliquely questions Christian morality with regard to homosexuality, Chanticleer Choir's composite *And On Earth Peace: a Chanticleer Mass* of 2007 commemorates the 10th anniversary of the death of the choir's founder, Louis Botto, who had suffered from AIDS.¹⁶ By this point, the concert mass had metamorphosed completely, if not exclusively, into a broadly theological vehicle for expressing an ideological viewpoint.

charts for 13 weeks. These positions were obtained from the relevant week-by-week Top 200 Album Charts published by Billboard.

¹³ In an interview transcribed on the *Retrophobic* website, the Electric Prunes' lead guitarist, Mark Tulin, states it was Axelrod's idea to create a mass; however, Andrew Male, reporting an interview with Axelrod himself, advises that it was Poncher's idea. Similarly, John Cody states that it was Lenny Poncher and another producer, Dave Hassinger, who wanted the band to record a rock mass. Poncher and Hassinger were joint owners of the rights to the Electric Prunes' name, See "Electric Prunes: Interviste," *Retrophobic* (28 April 2007), accessed 7 July 2014, http://www.retrophobic.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=383&Itemid=27#ENGLISH; Andrew Male, "Those are the Breaks," *Mojo, Solesides* (June 2001), accessed 7 July 2014, <http://www.solesides.com/winblad/david%20axelrod/axelrodmojo0601.html>; John Cody, "Mass was the first 'Christian rock' album," *JohnCodyOnline.com Words & Music* (2010-2012), accessed 7 July 2014, <http://www.johncodyonline.com/home/articles/2010-07-DavidAxelrod.html>.

¹⁴ The section containing the Kyrie occurs towards the end of the movie and can be viewed on YouTube: "Kyrie Eleison – Easy rider," accessed 7 July 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwDq1AEHF2g>.

¹⁵ Two scholarly studies of *African Sanctus* confirm its ongoing popularity: Tina Louise Thielan-Gaffey, "David Fanshawe's *African Sanctus*: One Work for One World - Through One <usic>" (University of Iowa, 2010); Meredith Kennedy, "Europe Meets Africa: Cultural Connections in David Fanshawe's *African Sanctus*" (California State University, Long Beach, 2007).

¹⁶ *And On Earth Peace: A Chanticleer Mass*, vol. R2 145354 (Rhino Entertainment Co - Warner Classics, 2007), inside cover of CD Liner Notes. The *New York Times* reports that the Choir's press representative confirmed that the cause of Botto's death was AIDS. "Louis Botto, 45, Choir Founder," *The New York Times*, 1 Mar 1997, accessed 7 July 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/03/01/arts/louis-botto-45-choir-founder.html>.

***Missa Carminum* as Concert Mass**

Paul Chihara's *Missa Carminum: "Folk Song Mass"* (1975) was created at the point when secularism was beginning to accelerate in the Western world. Although still very much a Christian work, its contribution to the ideological metamorphosis of the mass lies in the mixing of the standard liturgical texts with those of folk songs – most of which, as is revealed below, speak of unrequited love – to propose the conceptual dismissal of the divide between the sacred and the profane realms of earthly life.

Although uncommon, the matching of unrequited love with the liturgy is not without precedence: the cantus firmus in Guillaume Dufay's mid-fifteenth-century *Missa se la face ay pale*, for example, utilises a ballade on this theme. The fact that a loved one might inspire the ecstasy of imagined, but impossible union parallels the reality that God too is inaccessible except through a mystical personal encounter that can be neither corroborated nor replayed. Further, as Chihara himself argues:

This tradition of erotic in religious love was especially strong in the seventeenth century during the Counter-Reformation, with its mystical meditations on extreme physical and mental transformations – the erotic becoming ecstasy engendering moments of spiritual arousal.

And the Pre-Raphaelites in England (many of whose members were Roman Catholic) constantly crossed the line between physical and spiritual fulfilment. Medea, Ophelia, Proserpine were often painted in a style reminiscent of Renaissance images of the Virgin Mary.¹⁷

But in terms of the music for the mass, whereas Dufay only used a single song and did not set its text, Chihara not only selects and uses multiple songs in his mass, but he also sets some of the words from them, mixing them in with the traditional liturgical texts. By way of example, the chart appearing in Figure 1 demonstrates how this is worked out in the Gloria of *Missa Carminum*. In bringing the liturgy and the folk song excerpts together, Chihara builds a thesis about love, matching earthly eros with a love of the Divine – of God. As Chihara puts it, "the Missa is prima[r]ily a love song: it is more Eros than Agape!"¹⁸ Elaborating on this distinction between the sexual nature of eros and the platonic nature of agape, he states later that *Missa Carminum* "was in the spirit of courtly love – that is a deification of erotic love as a tribute to spiritual purity."¹⁹ Thus, Chihara appears to present a paradox. His music is to imitate courtly love, and yet the folksong texts he sets are rarely "courtly" but rather those of common folk. In fact, Chihara is simply attesting to the fact that the themes of courtly songs of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance are relevant to everyone, regardless of status.

¹⁷ Paul Chihara, email message to author, 3 July 2014.

¹⁸ Paul Chihara, email message to author, 23 Oct 2011.

¹⁹ Paul Chihara, email message to author, 3 July 2014.

Locations of Texts and Melodic Materials in the Gloria of Paul Chihara's *Missa Carminum*

MELODIES		TEXTS	
 Freely composed (Chihara)		All Roman Rite unless otherwise depicted	
 I was born in East Virginia		X I was born in East Virginia	
 Sally Gardens		0 Sally Gardens	
 I wonder as I wander		+ Kadosh Adonai who comes in the name of the Lord	
 Silver Dagger			

Introduction: "Gloria in excelsis Deo" - beginning of chant melody from Mass IV *Cunctipotens Genitor Deus* (Mass for the Feast of the Apostles): Tenor Solo

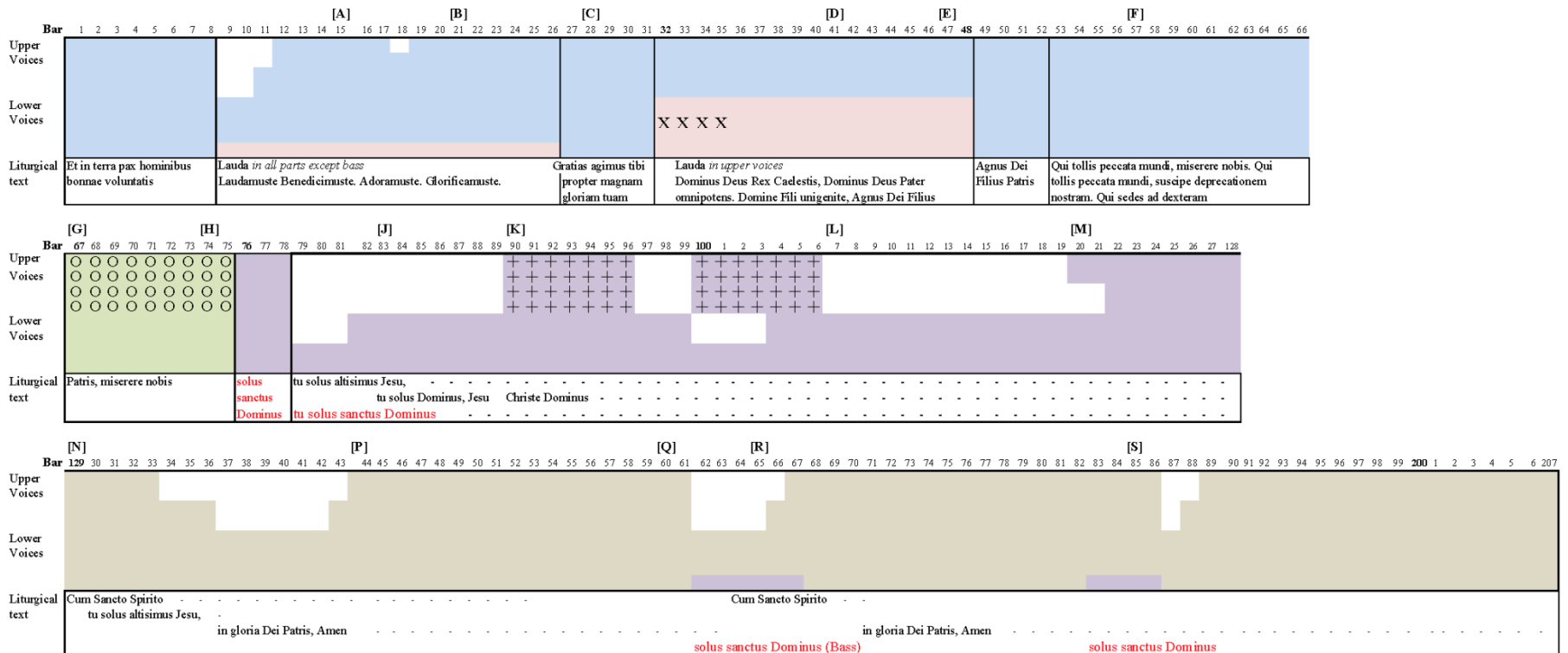


Figure 1. Locations of Texts and Melodic Materials in the Gloria of Paul Chihara's *Missa Carminum*: "Folk Song Mass" (1975)

Although Chihara can be perceived to have taken on a risky project, *Missa Carminum* is not an ad hoc quasi-spiritual experiment in emotionalism; rather, as will be shown below, it is a carefully thought out and researched piece of music. First, Chihara engages the services of a folklore expert, Erika Brady.²⁰ Second, he adapts techniques from medieval and renaissance polyphonic masses to a more twentieth century harmonic idiom. Third, he brings the folk songs he selects into contact with the prescribed liturgical texts in a manner that reveals a comprehensive understanding of Catholic ritual, selecting parallels between the liturgy and the folk texts that are fully thought through.

Indeed, although *Missa Carminum* would only be deemed suitable for liturgical use by liberal-minded clerics, Chihara's work, as will be demonstrated shortly, remains fully Christian – if not Catholic – in its caste. This is not a multi-faith piece intent upon bringing disparate religions together, as Fanshawe's *African Sanctus* was.²¹ My reading of *Missa Carminum* is that it is a Christian mass that argues that a Christian's belief in the Trinity – that is, the three persons in one God: God the father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit – should permeate all aspects of the believer's life. In other words, not merely those aspects that Western society typically attributes to religion, such as church going, structured prayer, the sacraments and so on, but every activity of human existence. According to the musical thesis that I propose Chihara expounds, a Christian mass should be suitable for performance anywhere, whether in what is traditionally thought of as a secular venue – the concert hall – or the Church.

The Composer and his influences

An energetic, engaging personality with a complex strand of empathy bred from post-World-War II experiences of, first, virulent prejudice and then affirmative action policies that treated underrepresented minorities preferentially, Paul Seiko Chihara was born of Japanese parents in Seattle, USA, in 1938. At the age of four, he was taken to the World War II relocation camp, Minidoka.²² Located in Idaho, Minidoka was one of several camps set up to provide basic accommodation for west coast Japanese-Americans who were required to move inland several months after the Japanese Navy attacked the U.S. Naval Station, Pearl Harbour, in Hawaii on 7 December 1941.²³

²⁰ Chihara thanks "Miss Erika Brady, folklorist, for her research assistance and suggestions" in the inside cover of the published score, Paul Chihara, *Missa Carminum : "Folk song Mass" : mixed voices (SATB-SATB) a cappella*, Edition Peters (New York: Henmar Press, 1978). Brady is now a professor of folklore at the University of Western Kentucky.

²¹ Multi-faith masses include Carman Moore's *Mass for the 21st Century* (1994), Luis Bacalov's *Misa Tango* (1999), Karl Jenkins's *The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace* (2000) and Chanticleer Choir's *And On Earth Peace: A Chanticleer Mass* (2007).

²² Reflections upon this experience appear in Paul Chihara, "Farewell to Minidoka," (Unpublished memoirs, 2010).

²³ Anyone with 1/16th Japanese blood or more was affected, resulting in 12,892 people being relocated from Washington State alone. See Elizabeth Becker, "Private Idaho," *New Republic* 206, no. 18 (1992). The relocation was a result of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order

Contrary to the feelings of “heartache, terror, rage and humiliation” that Chihara says his parents felt, for him “it was an adventure”.²⁴ Although perhaps natural for a young child to be less troubled by the humiliation of an internment camp than an adult, Chihara also attributes his positive memories to the presence of Roman Catholic missionaries who voluntarily moved into the camp to assist with the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of those incarcerated there.²⁵ Sixty-nine years later, in 2011, he acknowledged that such experiences had cultivated a need throughout his life to “attempt to reconcile opposites, usually violently conflicting opposites”.²⁶ This is clearly evident in *Missa Carminum*.

On encountering Bernstein’s controversial theatre piece entitled *Mass*, which premiered in 1972, Chihara was inspired to create something similar, but to “do it better”.²⁷ This is not to say that Chihara was deriding the quality of the creative output of his elder colleague, under whose direction he had sung at Tanglewood as a member of The Development Singers choral program of the Berkshire Music Center in 1965.²⁸ Rather, Chihara envisaged a different way of appropriating the traditional mass to Bernstein; a method that saw it fitting within – not fighting against – the Western politico-cultural and religious status quo of the 1970s; a method that was conciliatory rather than oppositional. He would take Bernstein’s idea and, through a process of conceptual metamorphosis, create a different type of work. Whereas Bernstein’s *Mass* reflects Bernstein’s passionate nature by advancing a violent

9066 signed on 19 Feb 1942. See “Proclamation 7395--Establishment of the Minidoka Internment National Monument,” *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, 2001/01/22/ 2001.

²⁴ Chihara, “Farewell to Minidoka.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Paul Chihara, email message to author, 23 October 2011. Taken from his home in Seattle to the US relocation camp Minidoka in 1942 at the age of four, Chihara’s performance career began with impromptu singing in the canteen there. Musically, it was a time of listening to popular songs and watching Japanese and Hollywood movies, particularly musicals. For further information about Chihara and his work, see the extensive interview by David Deboor Canfield, “The Viola in his Life: An Interview with Paul Chihara,” *Fanfare* 4 April 2013. Also see Richard Swift and Steve Metcalf, “Chihara, Paul,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, accessed 7 July 2014, [http://www.oxfordmusiconline \(05579\)](http://www.oxfordmusiconline (05579)).

²⁷ Paul Chihara, interview with author on 9 Feb 2013 and email message to author on 28 July 2013. Chihara’s first mass was performed by the Cornell Chorus at Cornell University in 1965.

²⁸ In 1965, the Berkshire Music Center created a new Performance Department which awarded 100 scholarships to vocalists, instrumentalists and composers to attend an intensive postgraduate summer program, of which, Chihara advised in email correspondence of 3 July 2014, that he was one. See also Eric Leinsdorf, “A New Approach,” in *Tanglewood Berkshire Festival, First week July 2, 3, 4, 1965* (Boston: Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1965); Internet Archive, accessed 7 July 2014, <https://archive.org/stream/bostonsymphonytan6566bost#page/n35/mode/2up>. Chihara advises he received a vocal scholarship in 1965 and composition scholarships in 1966 and 1967. He is listed in the Boston Symphony Orchestra Tanglewood concert program for 10 August as a piano assistant and a violist in the Orchestra of the Berkshire Music Center (Boston Symphony Orchestra, “A Gala Evening of the Berkshire Music Center, Erich Leinsdorf, Director, 10 Aug 1966,” in *Boston Symphony Orchestra Concert Programs, Summer, 1965-66* (Boston: Boston Symphony Orchestra, 1966) Internet Archive, accessed 7 July 2014, <https://archive.org/stream/bostonsymphonytan6566bost#page/n729/mode/2up, n732, n737>).

interrogation of both social norms and religious practice, Chihara would create an empathetic blend of the two.²⁹

Having theorised that Bernstein was also conflicted about openly declaring his homosexuality at the time he was creating *Mass*, and that this contributed to its ructious nature, in *Missa Carminum*, Chihara presents the physicality of eros as a non-controversial, natural, even spiritual element of human existence, simply because this was his experience.³⁰ As historian Howard Brick notes, those engaged in American west coast culture in the 1960s and early 1970s (as Chihara was) “acclaimed Abraham Maslow’s ideal of self-actualization while celebrating the psychedelic experience and mystical doctrines.”³¹ One of the consequences of this cultural attitude, Brick continues, was that “free love melded with religious quests”.³² Indeed, in speaking of the 1960s and 1970s (when he was in his twenties and thirties), Chihara confirms this, stating “it really was free love back then.”³³

The Work’s Creation

It was in the early 1960s while living in Paris and working under the watchful eye of his then composition teacher, the renowned Nadia Boulanger, that Chihara first set the entire Ordinary of the Mass. Then, in 1965 at Tanglewood, what would become a “lifelong commitment to choral music” was cemented by his experience with the Demonstration Singers.³⁴ Immersed in a diverse collection of songs and other works, both religious and secular, it was at Tanglewood too, that the notion of bringing the liturgy and folksongs together germinated.³⁵ Several years later, Chihara began an

²⁹ For a contemporary study of Bernstein’s *Mass* see “Chapter 4: Bernstein’s *Mass: A Theatre Piece: A Vatican II Reading*” in Rebecca Marchand, “The Impact of the Second Vatican Council on the American Concert Mass” (University of California Santa Barbara, 2007), 99-152. Bernstein’s mass is also discussed in the author’s forthcoming PhD Thesis.

³⁰ Paul Chihara, interview with author 9 February 2013. This is not to imply that the abrasive character of Bernstein’s *Mass* can be directly attributed to his homosexuality, but rather that this idea was an important influence on Chihara. Biographies that discuss Bernstein’s sexual orientation include Meryle Secrest, *Leonard Bernstein: A Life* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1994); Humphrey Burton, *Leonard Bernstein* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994). See also Nadine Hubbs, “Bernstein, Homophobia, Historiography,” *Women & Music* 13 (2009): 24-42.

³¹ Howard Brick, *Age of Contradiction*, ed. Lewis Perry, Twayne’s American Thought and Culture (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1998), 115. Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) was the psychologist who created Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Paul Chihara, Interview with author, 9 Feb 2013.

³⁴ Paul Chihara, email message to autho, 3 July 2014.

³⁵ *Ibid.* It may be tempting to think Chihara had also been influenced by Charles Ives’s use of folk songs or perhaps Ligeti’s Requiem mentioned in a note above, but, in an email message on 5 July 2014, Chihara advises that neither composer had any direct influence on *Missa Carminum* over and above the fact that “both Ligeti and Ives were very prominent musical role models to the young composers of the sixties, especially those of us who were part of the Gunther Schuller/Tanglewood avant-garde.” With regard to Ives specifically, Chihara advises that “though I heard nostalgia and genuine national pride in his music, what I never felt was religious fervor or reverence for the Divine (unless the American tradition is considered a sort of religion) in his music.” In the case of

experimental Kyrie that utilised folk music, with the idea that he might go on to compose a second full mass. The result of this experiment was a merging of two lines from the English folksong *Sally Gardens*, with the traditional liturgical text of the Kyrie: “Kyrie eleison / Christe eleison / Down by the Sally Garden, my love and I did meet / But I was young and foolish and now am full of tears.”³⁶ The opening bars of the Kyrie appear in Figure 2.

The figure shows a musical score for the opening of the Kyrie. At the top, a Tenors part is written in treble clef with the lyrics "Ky-ri e, e-le-i-son." Below this is a piano accompaniment for a string quartet (I and II), marked "Dolce cantabile". The piano part includes a section labeled "A" with a reference to "Missa Deus Gratias Agimus XIth cent., 4th mode". The lyrics for the piano part are: "Christe-e-lei son. Chri-ste-e- Ky-ri e, Sal-ly Gar-den, my Ky-ri e, down by the Sal-ly Gar-den, Ky-ri e e-le-i-son, Ky-ri e e-le-i-son, e-lei".

Figure 2. Opening of the Kyrie from Paul Chihara's *Missa Carminum Brevis* (c1972)³⁷

Ligeti, Chihara goes on to state that “as for the marvelous multi-polyphonic textures in Ligeti, who can resist or ignore them? But in my *Missa*, these textures do not exist. I want the melodic juxtaposition of traditional and popular music to be heard clearly and independently, and their resultant harmonies to be both surprising but clearly understood. I do not overlay lines for the sake of mystification or effect but for the enhancement of details and clarification of ideas.... What did influence me was Lutoslawski, whose *Trois Poemes d'Henri Michaut* (1963) was (I am convinced) the model for Ligeti's *Requiem* (1964-5).”

³⁶ All lyrics cited here come from the published score of the full version of the mass: Chihara, *Missa Carminum*: “Folk song Mass”.

³⁷ Source: Steven Fraider, “The style of Paul Chihara in the *Missa Carminum Brevis* and its Influence on Interpretation” (California State University, Fullerton, 1976), Appendix, 1.

Blending the Sacred and the Profane: Paul Chihara's Missa Carminum (1975)

Happy with the “results and direction” of his new Kyrie, Chihara went on to complete a *Missa Brevis* adding two movements in a similar vein: a Benedictus and an Agnus Dei.³⁸ This version of the work would attract both a choral director’s stylistic analysis and, later, a commercially available recording by the Chorus of the New England Conservatory.³⁹ When a commission for a first performance by the Los Angeles Master Chorale was offered by Roger Wagner, Chihara composed the Gloria and Sanctus.

Sharing the program with Aaron Copland’s prestigious *Old American Songs* conducted by Copland himself, the full version of *Missa Carminum* premiered on 15 January 1976 at the Ambassador Auditorium in Los Angeles, and was recorded by the Chorale five days later.⁴⁰ The score was published in 1978. In 2013, during a retrospective program of works performed by the Master Chorale over the preceding fifty years, the Kyrie was performed again, prompting *LA Times* Music Critic Mark Swed to comment that in “merging a traditional liturgical setting with folk songs... [the Kyrie]... achieve[s] the kind of genuine cultural commonality that ultimately became a hallmark of the chorale.”⁴¹ In stating that the choir likes to present works in common with contemporary culture, Swed confirms that Chihara’s mass, which challenges religious norms, represents the anti-establishmentarianism that was one aspect of west coast culture of the 1970s.

Comprising five movements, the title of each movement except the Gloria ties a specific folk song to the traditional Latin name.

- I Kyrie-Sally Gardens,
- II Gloria
- III Sanctus-Willow Song
- IV Benedictus–The Houlihan
- V Agnus Dei–I once loved a boy

³⁸ Paul Chihara, email message to author, 28 July 2013.

³⁹ Fraider, “The Style of Paul Chihara in the *Missa Carminum Brevis*.” This appears to be the only scholarly study of the work – either in its *Brevis* or full form. The recording of the shorter form is *Missa Carminum Brevis*, *Paul Chihara*, CRI, American Masters, 9-11, 1999, re-released by New World Records in 2007, NWCR815. The CD Liner notes relating to this recording can be found at <http://www.newworldrecords.org/uploads/fileaQaQD.pdf> (accessed 7 July 2014).

⁴⁰ See LP album and notes, “*Missa Carminum* (“Folk Song Mass”)” in *Paul Chihara: Symphony in Celebration; Missa Carminum* (“Folk Song Mass”), Roger Wagner Chorale, Roger Wagner Conductor, 1977, Candide Vox QCE 31101.

⁴¹ Mark Swed, “Review: Los Angeles Master Chorale shows its range as it nears 50,” *Los Angeles Times* 24 Sept 2013, accessed 7 July 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/culture/la-et-cm-master-chorale-celebration-review-20130924-story.html>.

Song	Lines set	Sung by	Movement & Rehearsal Mark
Sally Gardens	Down by the Sally Garden, my love and I did meet	Altos & Tenors	Kyrie [A]
	But I was young and foolish and now am full of tears	Altos	Kyrie [F]
	But I was young and foolish and now am (only) He bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree	Sopranos Sopranos & Altos	Agnus Dei [H] Gloria [G]
I was Born in East Virginia	I was born in East Virginia	Tenor II	Gloria – Dominus Deus [C]
Kedusha/ Benedictus	Kadosh Adonai who comes in the name of the Lord	Sopranos & Altos	Gloria [K] Benedictus [J]-[L]
Kedusha	Kadosh Adonai	Sopranos	Benedictus [H]
	Kadosh Adonai, Kadosh Adonai, ts'va-ot. M'Lo chol ha-aretz K'vodo	Basses	Benedictus [I]-[J]
	Kadosh Adonai, Kadosh Adonai, Baruch ha'ba, B'shem Adonai	Sopranos	Benedictus [I]-[J]
	Kadosh Adonai, Baruch B'shem Adonai	Tenors	Benedictus [K]
The Willow Song	The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree Sing all a green willow, her hand on her bosom, her head upon her knee. Sing willow, willow, willow, willow My garland shall be We sat sighing by the Sycamore tree	Tenors & Basses	Sanctus [B] – [F]
		Tenors	Benedictus [G]
Houlihan (I ride an old paint)	...I lead an old Dan, We're goin' to Montana (Louisiana; or maybe Alabama) to do the Houlihan Bill Jones had two daughters and only a song, So one went to college. The other went wrong. His wife was devour'd in a free for all fight and still he keeps singing from morning till... Ride around little dogies, ride, we're goin' to Montana to do the Houlihan. We work in your towns; we work in your farms, and all we have to show is the muscle in our arms and blisters on our feet, and callous on our hands. When I die take my saddle, turn my face to the west and I'll ride the Prairie	All voices sing some of the lines, often singing different lines at the same time	Benedictus - Sung throughout (with other texts as noted elsewhere in this table)
I once loved a boy	I once loved a boy, and a bold Irish boy, I would come and would go at his request. And this bold bonnie boy was my pride and my joy, And I built him a bower in my breast.	Alto	Agnus Dei [A]-[C]
	And this girl who has taken my bold bonnie boy, May she make of it all that she can	Tenor	Agnus Dei [B]-[C]
	For whether he loves me or loves me not, I will walk with my love now and then	Alto	Agnus Dei [H]

Figure 3. The location of the portions of the folksong lyrics set in Chihara's Missa Carminum

Despite containing references to four folk songs, the Gloria stands alone. This provides evidence that Chihara's approach to the mass became more firmly oriented towards Christianity as time passed.⁴² Chihara omits the Credo, partly because it is such a long text, and partly because the "Non-Credo" of Bernstein's *Mass* had evoked a theological revelation in Chihara that "dogma is not what religion is about" but, rather, "God and love".⁴³ Given this revelation, he decided not to set the Credo text because it focuses primarily on the specific beliefs of Roman Catholics. While the standard texts of the other four main sections of the Ordinary are set in full, as shown in Figure 3. Chihara generally only sets a few lines from each of the folk songs, although their melodies are pervasive.

Shifting Emphasis

By first considering the Benedictus-The Houlihan and then the Gloria, it is possible to interpret these two movements as revealing a shift in Chihara's emphasis from the general premise of finding the sacred in everyday life – which motivated the *Missa Brevis* – to a tripartite agenda. For the expanded version of the mass, Chihara appears to include two further specific objectives: first, the assertion of the continued relevance of Christianity; and, second, a more explicit paralleling of eros with divine love. Thus, not only does *Missa Carminum* belong to the early stages of the concert mass's transitioning from institutionally-oriented music in service of the liturgy to religio-ideological music for a wider audience, the work itself also undergoes a metamorphosis as Chihara's thoughts mature and settle. Indeed, in the very choice of the worldly Benedictus rather than the heavenly Sanctus for his *Missa Brevis*, it is clear that Chihara's initial impetus was to promote mundane life as being fully religious. Whereas the Benedictus has the human being as its subject – "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" – the Sanctus has God as its subject: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts". The notion that Chihara focused more closely on the everyday in the *Missa Brevis* is further endorsed by the dominance of both the words and the melody of the folksong in Benedictus-The Houlihan.

Yet, although the primary emphasis on physical this-worldliness became diluted as the work developed, it is not left out of the Gloria. As will be shown below, when faced with the challenges of setting movements that explicitly glorify God, Chihara decides to focus upon Christ. For Christians, Christ is the physical incarnation of the Triune God born into the world in the same shape and form as those with whom he would walk and talk, eat and sleep, study and instruct.

⁴² It is also possible that he did not want to preference one of the folksongs over any of the others by putting it in the title; however, such a suggestion does not accord well with Chihara's considered and decisive approach to the work, as outlined above.

⁴³ Paul Chihara, email message to author, 28 July 2013.

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Plainsong Selection

This is not, of course, to say that Christianity is left out of Benedictus-The Houlihan. The references are simply less prominent than in the Gloria, and also include everyday elements. For example, Chihara had selected the plainsong melody of the Kyrie from *Mass XVIII* of the medieval *Kyriale* for the tenor-solo opening of Kyrie-Sally Gardens. For the two new movements of his *Missa Brevis*, including Benedictus-The Houlihan, he selects the relevant plainsong melodies from the same source, *Mass XVIII*. The masses in the *Kyriale* are for specific purposes, with *Mass XVIII* providing the chant for weekdays in Advent and Lent. According to Christian doctrine, Lent is a penitential period leading up to Easter, while Advent is the four or five week period leading up to Christmas and is marked by a reminiscence of the longing for the arrival of the Messiah. These theological themes of penitence and longing match well with songs of unrequited love. Further, the purpose of *Mass XVIII* – both its use during ecclesiastical periods that focus on human anticipation and human fallibility, and the fact that it is only sung on weekdays, not Sundays or any other special or festive day – brings ordinary human life to the fore.

The Houlihan

This too is the case with The Houlihan. More commonly known as Ride An Old Paint, the folksong tells of the quintessential cowboy who is blistered and calloused. In a nod to the afterlife, he imagines himself riding the Western prairies when he dies. The melody has a joyous 6/8 rhythm that shines a positive light on what might otherwise be considered a grim text. Whereas most might baulk at having nothing to show for their life than “the muscle in [their] arm[s]”, the melody of the song makes plain that blisters, callouses and muscles are badges of honour for the cowboy:

We work in your towns, we worked on your farms,
And all we have to show is the muscle in our arms,
And blisters on our feet, and callous on our hands...

For the most part the song’s content is generic to any cowboy’s life; however, the second verse constitutes something of an enigma because it is highly specific, telling of “Old Bill Jones” who

had two daughters and a song,
one went to college, and the other went wrong.
His wife got killed in a free-for-all-fight,
Still he keeps singin’ from mornin’ till night.

Although the history of The Houlihan’s gestation is uncertain, its likely origin is a night-time improvisation by cowboys riding around the herd protecting the cattle

from predators – whether animal or human – as was the normal course of events.⁴⁴ Two cowboys would ride around the herd in opposite directions, singing continuously so as not to spook the cattle with sudden sounds. If this is accepted as its origins, The Houlihan becomes a working song with a profundity that Chihara might argue is essentially religious: a song with a purpose beyond entertainment that speaks to the soul of the cowboy. More than this, the role of cowboys as the protectors of cattle has great significance in the context of *Missa Carminum* because the role provides a direct parallel to Christ, who is often described in the gospels as the shepherd, protecting and watching over those who would follow him. Thus, the Christian meaning of the text “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord”, which weaves its way amongst The Houlihan lyrics, is reinforced by the centrality of the role of cattle herders to the song. Further, the fact that this particular cowboy song also includes reference to the products of physical love in the mention of a wife with whom Bill had two daughters, suits Chihara’s objective of bringing eros into his work, albeit only scantily so in this particular case.

In the other movements, reference to eros is more ubiquitous, whether in the use of texts from folksongs about love or their melodies. For example, as was seen in Figure 3, excerpts from the Sally Gardens lyrics are found in the Kyrie, the Agnus Dei and the Gloria. The first words of I was Born in East Virginia are heard in the Gloria, while parts of The Willow Song are heard in the Sanctus, and the full text of I Once loved a Boy is heard in the Agnus Dei. In the Gloria, the Silver Dagger melody is also included as is the melody of I Wonder as I Wander. The latter is an exception amongst the others, being a song of love for Jesus.

The Gloria

The remainder of this article focuses upon the Gloria’s specifically Christian aspects and the manner in which eros is made manifest in the music. For this movement, Chihara must select a different mass from the *Kyriale* because the Gloria is not recited during weekday masses, and, so, there is no setting of it in *Mass XVIII*. Accordingly, Chihara selects the melody of *Cunctipotens Genitor Deus* (*Kyriale* number IV), which was sung on the Feast Day of Saints Peter and Paul. Intentionally or not, in choosing the melody of a mass that commemorates the martyrdom of the first and last of Christ’s apostles, Chihara provides the first signal that the Christian focus of this movement will be Jesus, the (for Christians) physical incarnation of God who, as noted earlier, lived a human life.

⁴⁴ johnross, “Re: I Ride An Old Paint 25 Feb 2008 09:08 PM,” Origins: I Ride an Old Paint thread in The Mudcat Cafe, accessed 7 July 2014, <http://mudcat.org/thread.cfm?threadid=7295#43890>. This accords with John Avery Lomax’s description of “dogie songs” which came “straight from the heart of the cowboy, speaking familiarly to his herd in the stillness of the night.” John Avery Lomax, *Cowboy Songs and other Frontier Ballads* (New York: Sturgis and Walton Co., 1910) xix, Library of Congress digitized copy, accessed 7 July 2014, <https://archive.org/details/cowboysongsother00loma>.

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While this connection may not be appreciated by listeners who are not conversant with the chants of the *Kyriale*, the importance of Christ becomes more transparent at bar 76 of the Gloria (2 bars after [H]) when the melody of I Wonder as I Wander begins. The words of this hymn-like folksong (although not set in *Missa Carminum*) are:

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Saviour did come for to die.
For poor on'ry people like you and like I..
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

When Mary birthed Jesus 'twas in a cow's stall,
With wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from God's heaven a star's light did fall,
And the promise of ages it then did recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.

Although certainly talking of the ordinariness of everyday life, this is the only folk song in the mass that is overtly religious. Its melody carries a simple message of love for Jesus that is, unsurprisingly, set by Chihara to a variant of the Latin text “quoniam tu solus sanctus, tu solus Dominus, tu solus Altissimu Jesu Christe” (for you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ).

Chihara further emphasises the importance of Christ when I Wonder as I Wander makes room for a new musical and theological idea, expressed in the phrase “Kadosh Adonai who comes in the name of the Lord,” which is set in bars 90 to 106.⁴⁵ It is at this point that the depth and complexity of Chihara’s thought is perhaps most cogently demonstrated. Despite the song’s American Christian heritage as a folk hymn collected from the North Carolinian Appalachians by John Jacob Niles, when matched antiphonally to a complementary phrase setting the Hebrew words, “*Kadosh Adonai...*” (as shown in Figure 4), the beguiling melody of I Wonder as I Wander does not sound out of place. Christianity’s Jewish heritage is acknowledged. Yet, as will be explained, as the movement continues, Chihara’s endorsement of Christianity’s break away from Judaism becomes more apparent.

⁴⁵ In including the words from the Kedusha, Chihara is following Leonard Bernstein who also set part of the Kedusha in the Sanctus section of *Mass*. But whereas Chihara, as will be shown, appears to use the Hebrew words to assert the primacy of Christianity, the Jewish Bernstein appears to have been making an multi-faith gesture of inclusivity.

Blending the Sacred and the Profane: Paul Chihara's *Missa Carminum* (1975)

The image displays a musical score for Paul Chihara's *Missa Carminum*. It features six vocal parts: Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto, Tenor 1, Tenor 2, and Bass. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (bars 82-106) includes a section for Soprano 1, Soprano 2, and Alto, with the Hebrew-English phrase "Ka - dosh A - do-nai, who comes in the name of the Lord." This section is marked with a blue box and the annotation "Hebrew-English phrase". Below this, the Tenor 1, Tenor 2, and Bass parts are shown, with the Tenor 2 part marked "Melody of I Wonder as I Wander in Tenor 2 part". The second system (bars 95-106) shows Soprano 1, Soprano 2, and Alto parts, with the Hebrew-English phrase repeated. A red box highlights the Tenor 1 part, with the annotation "Melody moves to Tenor 1 part". The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, p espressivo), articulation (accents), and phrasing slurs.

Figure 4. *I Wonder as I Wander* melody set antiphonally with “Kadosh Adonai who comes in the name of the Lord” in Gloria (bars 82-106) of Paul Chihara's *Missa Carminum*⁴⁶

The Hebrew words “Kadosh Adonai” come from the Judaic Kedusha and can be translated as “Holy One”. For Jews, this means God. But Chihara has subverted the meaning of the phrase by following it with the English words “who comes in the name of the Lord.” As mentioned above, these words appear in the Benedictus, which in the Ordinary of the Mass is the concluding portion of the Sanctus; they do not

⁴⁶ Transcribed from Chihara, *Missa Carminum: “Folk song Mass”*: 36-38. Bar numbers are not included on the score, but have been derived by the author.

belong to the Gloria.⁴⁷ But whereas the line of the Benedictus is “*Blessed is he* who come in the name of the Lord,” Chihara is effectively saying “*Holy One* who comes in the name of the Lord” in his Gloria. This seems to be a tautological anomaly because “Lord” and “Holy One” are one and the same to Christians. The answer can perhaps be found in the phrase that follows immediately after the English words in the first tenor part: “*Jesu Christe Dominus*” (bars 97-99, highlighted in Figure 4). Here, Chihara has changed the order of the words of the Gloria. In the liturgical formulation, the word “*Dominus*” (Lord) appears in the line before the words *Jesu Christe*: “*Quóniam tu solus Sanctus, tu solus Dóminus, tu solus Altíssimus / Jesu Christe, cum Sancto Spiritu...*” (For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High / Jesus Christ...).

Although this is possibly a convenience in text setting so that the first and second tenors sing “*Dominus*” at the same time, such conflation is not liturgically permissible because the liturgy must be presented exactly as formulated. Chihara is disregarding this convention, mixing and matching the text in a way that further emphasises the centrality of Christ to his Gloria, “*Jesu Christe Dominus*”.⁴⁸ Thus, when the Gloria concludes “For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father, Amen”, it affirms that Christ, as part of the Triune God, is known as both “Holy One” and “Lord”.

In Judaism, however, “Holy One” and “Lord” are names only for God. Given the centrality of Jesus to Chihara’s Gloria, and particularly Christ’s centrality to this section of the movement, the phrase “*Kadosh Adonai, who comes in the name of the Lord*” can be retranslated as “Jesus Christ (as a substitute for Holy One) who comes in the name of the Lord (God)”. Thus, Christ’s Jewish roots are recognised by Chihara through the Hebrew words and the assigning of “Lord” to God. Yet, he also testifies to Christianity’s supersession of Judaism through the very inclusion of Jesus.⁴⁹ Furthermore, in using a phrase from another section of the mass that is in the present tense - “*who comes*” - Chihara achieves two outcomes: first, he breaks with tradition; second, in doing so, he makes another theological statement, attesting that Christ is ever present, ever coming. Just as when Christ was alive the “multitudes... cried out... ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (Matthew 21:9), so too does Chihara’s mass praise the Triune Holy One, God the Father, God the Son and God the

⁴⁷ As is common but not ubiquitous, Chihara breaks the Sanctus up into two movements, with the second portion of the text “*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis*” (Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest) set in the Benedictus-The Houlihan.

⁴⁸ It is acknowledged that Chihara was writing for the concert hall, not the Church, and, so, would not be required to abide by Roman Catholic liturgical requirements.

⁴⁹ An alternate translation of “*Kadosh Adonai who comes in the name of the Lord*” could be “*Holy Spirit who comes in the name of the Lord*”, with Lord being understood to be either Christ or God. Either way, it is the Trinitarian precepts that are being relied upon and brought to the fore. Although this is perhaps an even more cogent substitute, its persuasive force is lessened when Chihara’s focus on Christ is considered.

Holy Spirit, who is, for Christians, present in the present. Following a parallel text in John 14:23, "If anyone loves Me... We [the Trinitarian God] will come to him and make Our home with him", Chihara asserts God's omnipresence. Given the underlying assumption that God's purview covers both the sacred and the profane realms, Chihara can be understood to be arguing that the modern idea of a separation between the two is questionable. In addition, he is correcting the text of *I Wonder as I Wander*, which, although not set, concludes in the past tense "'cause he *was* the King". Chihara affirms in *Missa Carminum* that Christ – as part of the Holy Trinity – *is* the King.

In just these ten bars, Chihara refers to Christianity in a variety of ways. He refers to the roots of Christianity, to Christianity throughout time, and, by means of the gentle Christian folksong from the North Carolinian Appalachians, to Christianity that is local and particular. For Chihara, God is always and everywhere present. Despite his inclination to move away from its doctrinal aspects, Chihara reveals a respect for the central tenets of the Roman Catholic tradition within which he was educated. Conversely, *Missa Carminum* also demonstrates his willingness to break with certain components of tradition by bringing some of the text of the Sanctus-Benedictus into the Gloria and rearranging the words of traditional phrases. Indeed, "following and breaking from tradition" was what Chihara advises he set out to do with his mass, adding "[i]sn't that what the true composer always does?"⁵⁰ Accordingly, although underpinned by some level of faith, Chihara's mass is not meant to serve the ritual celebration of the liturgy; instead, it is created for the audiences of the Los Angeles concert hall for whom he was commissioned to compose the complete work.

Eros in the music of *Missa Carminum*

Although space precludes a full analysis of the entire work, or even just the Gloria, one example of eros in *Missa Carminum* stands out sufficiently to demonstrate the point.⁵¹ This occurs early in the movement with the introduction of the melody of the folksong *I was Born in East Virginia* setting the liturgical words "Laudamuste, Benedicimuste, Adoramuste, Glorificamuste" (we praise you, we worship you, we adore you, we glorify you) over the next eighteen bars. Although *I was Born in East Virginia* is ultimately a song of unrequited love, the second stanza glowingly describes "a fair pretty maiden... with lips of ruby red". Chihara parallels this by setting only the word "Lauda" (praise) in all but the bass part, the latter carrying the folksong melody and one line of the liturgical text. He also sets the word "Lauda" in such a way that the music builds to a climax through a series of nuanced dissonances. As depicted in the chart, which appears in Figure 5 and heard in Music Example 1, a staggered entry of the upper parts with dynamics that increase to *mezzo-forte* in the dissonant upper

⁵⁰ Paul Chihara, email message to author, 23 Oct 2011.

⁵¹ The work is explored in more depth in the author's forthcoming PhD thesis.

parts and *forte* in the active lower parts brings the section to a climax. The climax abates and, as shown in Figure 6,

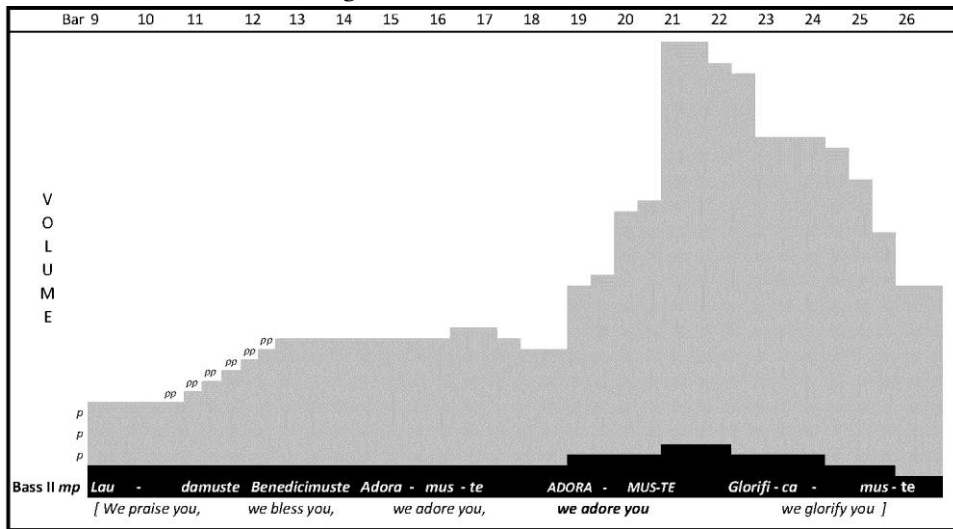


Figure 5. Building to a climax, bars 9-26 of Gloria from Paul Chihara's *Missa Carminum*⁵²



Music Example 1 (Gloria, Bars 9-31)⁵³

Figure 6. Climax abates and moves to homophony in bars 21-28 of Gloria from Paul Chihara's *Missa Carminum*⁵⁴

⁵² Chart prepared by author from the published score, Paul Chihara, *Missa Carminum*, 21-26.

⁵³ Source: Paul Chihara: *Symphony in Celebration; Missa Carminum* ("Folk Song Mass") Side 2, Track 2.

the music suddenly becomes homophonic with all parts singing the words “gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam” (we give you thanks for your great glory), thereby depicting the peaceful satisfaction immediately following spent passion.

Thus, we have a clear and multifaceted reference to the ecstasy of erotic love, not only in an earthly interpretation of the liturgical text, but also through the imagined bliss of attaining the maiden's love in the folksong, as well as in the manner in which the music is constructed. Certainly, the poignant lyrics of *Silver Dagger*, whose melody permeates the final section of the Gloria, attests to the reality that human relationships are often painful; but, for this brief moment early in the movement, the experience of erotic bliss is what Chihara portrays.⁵⁵

Conclusion

While it is impossible to know whether any composer before Chihara has intentionally included a musical depiction of erotic love in a mass, Chihara's openness in doing so is very much a product of his time – a time of “free love”. In this way, and in his argument that the Christian God sees no demarcation between sacred and profane, Chihara's everyday mass fits within the early stages of the metamorphosis of the concert mass. In working within a Christian framework, *Missa Carminum* does not embrace other religions as other masses had already begun to do, but it does represent a break from Catholic tradition. Further, the transition of the work from one focused primarily on presenting the sacredness of ordinary life to one that also attests wholeheartedly to the validity of Christianity, reveals a metamorphosis within Chihara himself. When faced with the promise of a high profile, prestigious public performance, Chihara finds he does not want to dismiss Christianity or even to downplay it; rather, he endorses it. Although Chihara may have lost sympathy with Catholic dogma and theological practice, *Missa Carminum* is nevertheless a fully religious work that endorses the broad central tenets of non-denominational Christianity while also calling for a broadening of the idea of religion to recognise that encounters with ecstasy are simply manifestations of the divine love of God.

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⁵⁴ Transcribed from *Missa Carminum* : “Folk song Mass”.

⁵⁵ There are many versions of the Silver Dagger folksong. In the version sung by Joan Baez, who Chihara advises he admired greatly, the song concludes with the words “Go court another tender maiden / And hope that she will be your wife / For I've been warned, and I've decided / To sleep alone all of my life. For the full song see “Silver Dagger,” in *Joan Baez*, Vanguard, 1960, track 1.

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