

the chorale-*Jahrgang*, at pp. 124-25. The Sunday after Christmas is listed there as December 1 (it should read “December 31”); among the ensuing dates, the one described as the “Sunday after New Year’s Day,” January 5, fell on a Friday that year. In fact, as we have all experienced with the Second Sunday after Christmas (but before Epiphany), the Sunday after New Year’s Day does not occur every year; one had been observed in 1724, on January 2, and it did not happen again until 1727, the year to which Dürr and others assign the duet-cantata BWV 58, which Wolff lists here, seemingly impossibly, for 1725. Amid so much detail, this is a very minor mix-up, but a puzzling one.

Choral Music Reviews

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John Edward Cantrell. *The Saint Michael’s Psalter*, SATB, org. (Self-pub., 2021; ISBN: 978-0-578-85020-7), 276 pp., \$86.66.

Compiling musical settings of the entire book of Psalms is one of the most prodigious tasks for composers, editors, and liturgical musicians. Whereas many psalters are anthologies of chant tones drawn from a wide variety of sources, crafting Anglican chant tones for all 150 Psalms and pointing them is an unusual feat. John Cantrell, choirmaster and organist of St. Michael’s Episcopal Church on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, has published a psalter built exclusively on original Anglican chant tones, exploring his own personal musical language with roots in jazz and other American folk idioms. The handsomely produced volume is a delight for the eyes with its refined visual layout, attention to typographical detail, and urbane styling. Engaging essays in the foreword chart Cantrell’s aims and outline the evolution of the project. Creating a satisfying musical realm in the space of twenty chords (except for Psalm 22, all the tones are double chants) is the musical equivalent of haiku, where succinctness of expression must nonetheless follow certain predetermined operations while seeking to create a novel artistic experience. Cantrell succeeds consistently with an approach grounded in a clear assimilation of the tradition yet infused with a far-ranging musical vocabulary. Since he also provides the pointing, Cantrell includes indications for full choir, alternation of *decani* and *cantoris*, and verses for treble or bass voices. These extra-musical considerations

have implicit authority coming from the composer of the chant tone, and this endorsement of performance practice fuses musical and textual sensitivity. Surprising harmonies and chords with an abundance of color stretch the norms of Anglican chant, and Cantrell’s unique and particular language is quite sophisticated. These tones are for experienced singers willing to invest some effort. From time to time his sense of adventure exceeds the bounds of accessibility, and even advanced choirs will find some of the voice leading challenging. The composer mitigates this by allowing for all unison performance (with the organ or other keyboard instrument providing the harmony). He also embraces the improvisatory nature implicit in the jazz and American roots music that serves as a musical basis for the chant tones. Cantrell refers to the notes on the page as the “foundation,” encouraging musicians to build upon them as freely as a jazz performer would elaborate on a lead sheet. In another sign of practicality, music programs are expected to purchase only a single bound copy of the psalter with permission granted to make individual photocopies of psalms for the full ensemble. Cantrell’s pointing methodology is clear and in conformity with norms of published psalters. His one novel marking is using the letter (B) where a (2nd) is customary to indicate repetition of the third and fourth quarters (i.e. to accommodate an uneven number of verses). He also indicates syllabic assignments for cadential chords that include a suspension or other decorated resolution by using boldface for the syllable or syllables assigned to the first note and regular type for the second note. The Psalms all appear in the language of *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1979. Cantrell is currently preparing a second volume with psalms in Coverdale translation. The psalter is self-published, thus Cantrell has created a website specifically for the psalter (<https://thesaintmichaelspsalter.com>). Choirs that regularly sing psalms, either at Eucharist or Evensong, would be well served by adopting some, or many, of these chants into their repertoire in the interest of keeping the tradition fresh and vibrant.