

Yakub E. Kartawidjaja

# Music in Martin Luther's Theology



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To my beloved wife and daughter, Jo and Ode, who have taught me to persevere.

*Musica maximum, immo divinum est donum, ideo satanae summe contrarium, quia per eam multae et magnae tentationes pelluntur. Diabolus non expectat, cum ea exercetur.*

-- Martin Luther, WATr 1: no. 968, 1–3.

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## Preface

This book is the fruit of a PhD dissertation devoted to a study of Martin Luther's thoughts on music. The past several years of experiences of musical and theological studies have shaped my interest, resulting in further study of Luther's theology and his thoughts about music. This study would be impossible without the personal and academic support of numerous individuals in the Netherlands and Indonesia.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my first promotor, Prof. Dr. Herman J. Selderhuis, for his invaluable advice, especially to read Luther's own writings and to write in a way that I could express my thought freely. I truly appreciate his friendly guidance and frequent visits to my desk to offer help. His encouragement, combined with his sense of humor, always delighted me and motivated me to keep working. I also wish to thank Prof. Dr. Konrad Küster as my second promotor for reading my work and giving many helpful comments. It has been a privilege to write this dissertation under their supervision.

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I also deeply appreciate all the assistance provided by the staff of Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn, from borrowing books to preparing a bicycle for my use. I am particularly thankful to Nikè van der Mijden, Wilma van der Zande, and Melle Rozema. My gratitude must also be expressed for my friends Gerard and Esther Bosker, Rachel Selderhuis, and Doo-Hyeok Jeong, for all the help and hospitality while I was new to the Netherlands. My gratitude also goes out to Jacob and Elizabeth van der Rhee for providing me the best environment to study, bringing me to their church, walking in the woods, and inviting me to warm discussions at their home, with cheese and wine, every week.

I especially thank Prof. Dr. Herman J. Selderhuis for the opportunity he gave me to publish this work, and the editors of Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht for helping to publish it so that this writings could be shared with a wider audience. My sincere thanks also go to Dr. Jim West, for his expert proof-reading of the text. Worthy of special mention are some of my Indonesian colleagues in Apeldoorn: Audy Santoso and Ivan Raharjo for their support and prayer.

In Indonesia, my special gratitude goes out to my pastors and my mentors, especially to Dr. Stephen Tong who was the first person to introduce me to Reformed teaching and thereby shaped my life. He also prayed for me before I left for the

Netherlands and gave me a beautiful watch which serves as reminder that time keeps moving and therefore I have to be responsible to God. I am deeply grateful for his personal advice to be patient in this study. He has become a role model for me on how to be a true servant of God, serve him faithfully, work hard for his kingdom, and give all the glory to him; to Dr. Benyamin F. Intan who opened the opportunity for this study and made all the necessary arrangements for funding. I am truly grateful for his understanding, which allowed me to write this dissertation in the Netherlands.

My deep appreciation goes to the elders, brothers and sisters in Gereja Reformed Injili Indonesia Pondok Indah, who provided me with their prayers and funding throughout the years of my study.

I wish to extend my sincerest gratitude to my beloved wife Josephine who has always been a steady support through all my years of education in both music and theology. I acknowledge her care and deep understanding in whatever I do. My adorable daughter, Odelia, who always makes me smile, has always been lovely and supportive. I am grateful for their constant prayers and encouragement to complete this journey. This book is dedicated to them.

Finally and most importantly, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to God, who saved and called me in this precious calling. During my entire study in the Netherlands he provided me invaluable opportunities to experience who he is. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**Yakub E. Kartawidjaja**

Apeldoorn, Spring 2019

## Abbreviations

- BC The Book of Concord. The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert. Minneapolis. Fortress.
- LW Luther's Works. American Edition. 55 vols. Edited by Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehmann. St Louis: Concordia and Philadelphia: Fortress.
- StA Martin Luther Studienausgabe. Herausgegeben von Hans-Ulrich Delius. Evangelische Verlagsanstalt GmbH, Berlin/Leipzig.
- WA Martin Luther. Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. 66 vols. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1883–1993.
- WABr Briefwechsel
- WADB Deutsche Bibel.
- WATr Tischreden



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Prologue

Before we begin to undertake this study, first, I would like to pose one simple question: why examine this topic: *Music in Martin Luther's Theology*? The answer is that I was a musician who made a life-changing decision to leave this career in order to pursue God's calling into ministry. And in my theological study in recent years I have become fascinated by Reformation history, especially by the life and work of Luther, who propagated the doctrine of justification through faith alone, and who dared to write and publish the 95 theses that changed the course of world history. Moreover, I was also interested in Luther's *Anfechtung*, especially in his personal encounter with the devil, which in his case explains why he valued music more highly than some of the other reformers did. It is, therefore this combined interest in Luther's theology and my passion for music which have strongly influenced my decision to integrate both subjects into the present study. My interest soon grew as I saw that the research centered on Luther's thoughts about music have developed and flourished recently. For instance, to note but a few of the most recent studies, from the first academic dissertation on Luther and music by the Lutheran scholar Karl Honemeyer's *Luthers Musikanschauung* (1941), to an extensive work by Robin A. Leaver titled *Luther's Liturgical Music* (2007), to insightful books by Miikka Anttila, *Luther's Theology of Music: Spiritual Beauty and Pleasure* (2013) and Robin A. Leaver's *The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther's Wittenberg* (2017). However, most of these previous studies examined Luther's musical thoughts without much investigation of the relationship between his theology of gift, the devil, and joy and their relationship with music.<sup>1</sup> This present study thus seeks to fill that gap by interpreting Luther's theology of music in the light of his theology of the devil, focusing principally on his *Anfechtung*.

## 1.2 Outline of the Study

### 1.2.1 Object

The present study aims to analyse the impact of Luther's theology on his thoughts about music. I am aware of the complexity and broad literature on Luther and music, therefore this study limits itself to an analysis of the topic by focusing on the

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1 See details of previous studies in chapter 1.2.3.

three most important statements of Luther about music in his unfinished treatise *Περι της μουσικης* [*On Music*].<sup>2</sup> The first statement is that music is “a gift of God and not of man” [*Dei donum hominum est*], second, music “creates a joyful soul” [*facit letos animos*], and third, music “drives away the devil” [*fugat diabolum*].<sup>3</sup>

This approach is prompted by the fact that Luther's understanding of music cannot be separated from his theological concepts. He makes the correlation between real faith and music in the preface to the *Babst* hymnal:

For God has cheered our hearts and minds through his dear Son, whom he gave for us to redeem us from sin, death, and the devil. He who believes this earnestly cannot be quiet about it. But he must gladly and willingly sing and speak about it so that others also may come and hear it.<sup>4</sup>

This writing clearly suggests that Luther's understanding of music was undergirded by his theology. Therefore a solid understanding of Luther's theology is necessary for understanding his thoughts on music.

### 1.2.2 Method

This research examines Luther's theology of music from an interdisciplinary method which combines a historical analysis with a theological interpretation. The focus of this study is not liturgical nor hymnological but strictly theological, so there will be no discussion with regard to the theoretical nor practical aspects of music, such as concerning rhythm, modes, or the melodies of Luther's hymns. I will approach the analysis from the basis of the following questions: How do his statements that music is a gift of God, that it drives away the devil, and that it creates a joyful soul relate to each other and to his theology in general? What is the impact of his theology of the devil on his thoughts about music? Was he the originator of these three statements that music is a gift of God, that it drives away the devil, and that it creates a joyful soul, or was he influenced to adopt that view by others? What is the uniqueness of Luther's thoughts about music?

To answer the questions, the second chapter begins with a broad view which examines the history of musical theology in the early church to the late medieval view from the most important ecclesiastical authorities, and evaluates their influences on

<sup>2</sup> WA 30.2:696.

<sup>3</sup> WATr 6: no. 7034, “Denn die Musica ist ein Gabe und Geschenke Gottes, nicht ein Menschen Geschenk. So vertreibt sie auch den teuffel, und machet die Leut fröhlich.”

<sup>4</sup> WA 35:477, 6–9, “Denn Gott hat unser hertz und mut frölich gemacht, durch seinen lieben Son, welchen er für uns gegeben hat zur erlösung von sunden, tod und teuffel. Wer solchs mit ernst gleubet, der kans nicht lassen, er mus frölich und mit lust dauon singen und sagen, das es andere auch hören und herzu komen.”

Luther's musical viewpoint. Followed by investigating a more specific view where Luther was born and raised, that is, his life in connection with music in different educational settings, from his childhood to university level, to show how music played an important role in his life. Moreover, I also present a systematic survey of Luther's musical reform in the area of pedagogy, performance and production, in the university, church and society.<sup>5</sup> Luther's standing in his time and his musical background described how music played an important role in his life. They serve as an essential starting point in this study for further discussions of his thoughts on music.

The third chapter analyses Luther's thoughts that music is a gift of God whose primary function is to expel the devil. I will begin to evaluate Luther's writings about gift in his theological writings (3.1). As for Luther's theology of music, I will examine his most systematic account of music, *Encomium musices*, which will be analysed according to the following schema: sound and harmony, art of birdsong, human voice, the power of music, the Holy Spirit's instrument, and artistic music (3.2). I then analyse the relationship of Luther's theology of gift and his thoughts about music as gift of God (3.3).

In the fourth chapter, this study examines Luther's statement that music drives away the devil. I investigate Luther's theology of the devil in its relation to his *Anfechtung* (4.1). For Luther's thoughts on music in relation with the devil, I will investigate his letter to Ludwig Senfl (1530), his poem *Fraw Musica* (1538), and the *Tischreden* (4.2). Finally, in the last section, I will analyse the relationship of Luther's theology of the devil and his thoughts about music in relation with exorcism in his hymn *Ein feste burg ist unser Gott* (4.3).

The fifth chapter examines Luther's statement that music creates a joyful soul, which is a logical consequence of exorcism. First, I will evaluate Luther's understanding of joy in his theological writings (5.1). In the following section, I examine Luther's thoughts about music in: *The Last Words of David* (1543), the *Babst* hymnal (1545), and his interpretation of Ps 4:1 (5.2). Then in the last section, I will analyse the connection between Luther's theology of joy with his understanding of music in his hymn *Nun frewt euch, lieben Christen gmeyn* (5.3).

In the sixth chapter, this study presents a comparison between Luther and his contemporaries' view of music.

In the final chapter, I will conclude the investigation of the impact of Luther's theology of the devil on his thoughts about music.

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5 The detailed discussion of Luther's literary texts productions on music will be presented in each chapters from 3–5. Only Luther's related works will be analysed in the study.



### 1.2.3 Sources

This study focuses on two elements of Luther's writings: First, his theological writings of gift, the devil, and joy; and second, his writings about music. There is much information about his theology and music in his writings which offer sufficient materials for a complete study. I will present all of Luther's writings that are used in this study.<sup>6</sup> Luther's theological writings collected in the *Kritische Gesamtausgabe* [WA], the *Studienausgabe* [StA], and the English edition of Luther's Works [LW]. His thoughts about music are collected in the following sources: *Formula Missae* (1523), his preface to Johann Walter (1524), *Deutsche Messe* (1525), treatise *Against the Heavenly Prophets* (1525), Luther's unfinished draft treatise *On Music* (1530).<sup>7</sup> *Praefatio zu den Symphoniae iucundae* (1538), the poem *Fraw Musica* (1538), Burial hymnal (1542), treatise of *The Last Words of David* (1543), preface to the *Babst* hymnal (1545), in his commentaries on Genesis and psalms, the *Tischreden*, Luther's letters to Spalatin (1523), Agricola (1530), Ludwig Senfl (1530), Matthias Weller (1534), and Marcus Crodel (1542), and in Luther's hymn works *Ein feste burg ist unser Gott* and *Nun frewt euch, lieben Christen gmeyn*. All of these writings served as the most important sources for this study.

## 1.3 History of Research

There was a growing tendency to treat Luther and music in a more independent manner throughout the nineteenth century. From German Lutheran churches, liturgical traditions to England in the later eighteenth century which interest in Lutheran hymnody and music, then to North America. Thus I present here briefly articles on Luther and music that were published in Germany (1825), *Berliner allegemeine musikalische Zeitung*; in France (1830), *Revue musicale*; in the USA (1820), *The Euterpeiad, or Musical Intelligencer 1*; and finally in England (1837), *The Musical World 7*. Then in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries various studies also appeared: Johannes Rautenstrauch (1907), Karl Anton (1916), Hermann Abert (1924), Hans Joachim Moser (1925), Friedrich Blume (1931), and Christhard Mahrenholz (1937).<sup>8</sup>

In the decades following the Second World War, when a significant number of church music institutions were created, numerous journals and short articles about Luther's thoughts on music were written. Here I present briefly the most noteworthy scholarship: In 1941, the first academic dissertation on Luther and music, *Luthers*

<sup>6</sup> For complete information on Luther's literal and musical works, see chapter 2.3.3.

<sup>7</sup> WA 30.2:696.

<sup>8</sup> For more detail see Leaver 2007, 4–5.

*Musikanschauung* by Karl Honemeyer appeared, with a focus on Luther's thoughts in its historical background. One of Honemeyer's most interesting findings is the school book of an unknown boy in Chemnitz (1506–1508) that contains a *laus musica*, a musical poem exhibiting a close reminiscence of some of Luther's texts. He discusses the view of music in scholastic theology, monastic education and humanism. He makes the assertion that the musical theology of German mysticism could have influenced Luther.<sup>9</sup>

In 1946 Walter Buszin wrote a most influential article titled *Luther on Music* containing a compilation of Luther's writings on music. It contains more of historical account of Luther's involvement with music, and therefore it helps to established his position in the history of music. He concluded that Luther's whole approach to music ultimately helped substantially to produce not only great hymns, but also great choral and instrumental music.

In 1948, a book with the title *Luther and Music* was published by Paul Nettl and although dependent on the translations of Buszin it nonetheless includes wider research. It provides useful insights into Luther's understanding of music and about J.S. Bach's understanding of theology. He ascertains that by the time of Bach, Germans and their culture were the dominant force in European music; before that, it had been the Italians. And it was Martin Luther's understanding of music that put Bach on the road to musical greatness, especially in vocal music. And he may well be right to say that the songs of Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, and Hugo Wolf would have been impossible without Luther.

In 1954, an unprinted German dissertation about Luther and music, *Die theologische Bedeutung der Musik im Leben und Denken Martin Luthers* by Christoph Wetzel was defended and it consists of three parts: the historical background, music in Luther's biography, and a more systematic account on the purpose of music. For Luther's conception of the purpose of music, Wetzel sees it as a helpful device to make people more receptive to the Word of God.<sup>10</sup> There are two basic con-

9 In his opinion the German mystics may have taught Luther about the connection between singing with one's heart [*corde*] and one's mouth [*ore*]. Johann Tauler sees three ways to praise God, of which the highest is complete silence. "Wenn solche Gedanken von Luther bei Tauler gefunden wurden, so mochten sie ihn wohl in den frühen Kampffahren um 1520 bei seinem Urteil über die veräusserlichte Kirchenmusik, bei welcher der von religiösen Glut erfüllte Mönch die innere Kraft des Glaubens vermisste, mitbestimmen. In der späteren Zeit verstummen solche Äusserungen, und nichts wäre verkehrter, als in ihnen den massgeblichen Zug in Luthers grundsätzlicher Haltung gegenüber der Musik zu sehen" [p. 79]. Honemeyer, 1985, 75–79. Later, Wetzel (1954, viii) sees Honemeyer's idea of the possible influence of German mysticism in Luther's theology of music as poorly substantiated. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 3.

10 "Der Musik kommt hier also keine weitere Aufgabe zu auf die Menschen einen natürlich-sinnlichen Reiz auszuüben und gewisse in der Natur des Menschen liegende Hemmnisse beiseite zu räumen: so z. B. die Trägheit des Herzens und Willens sich aufzumachen, um dem Wort zu begegnen. Und dann erfüllt die Musik ihren Zweck darin, dass sie es durch ihre, Süßigkeit' menschlich angenehmer

victions in his dissertation that Wetzel subsequently developed: that music is a part of the temporal realm [*weltliches Regiment*] and that its office in the church is to praise God.<sup>11</sup> In 1961, Wetzel continued to develop his ideas in his *Die Träger des liturgischen Amtes im evangelischen Gottesdienst bei dem Apostel Paulus und bei Martin Luther*. Here he tries to find a proper place for music in the Lutheran doctrine of worship. Wetzel's precise standpoint is the office of the church, in which he distinguishes between the preaching office [*das Predigtamt*] and the praising office [*das Lobamt*], the latter being the office of church music. Wetzel's objective is to guard Lutheran primacy of the Word in relationship to music, therefore he states that the purpose of music is not to proclaim the gospel, but to praise God.<sup>12</sup>

In 1967 Oskar Söhnngen wrote a book on the topic as well, his *Theologie der Musik* which serves as a general introduction to the theology of music which provides a basis for a Protestant theology of music.<sup>13</sup> Söhnngen discusses the history of music from the New Testament through the Reformation, highlighting the various manifestations of musical forms.<sup>14</sup> A large section of the work is dedicated to church music. At the end of the book, Söhnngen provides a tentative Trinitarian account of music.<sup>15</sup> Söhnngen's study is a major source for many articles on Luther and music, and also contains a separate chapter on the musical thoughts of the young Luther.<sup>16</sup> In 1971, Winfried Kurzschinkel had published an encyclopedic account on the

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macht sich täglich unter das Wort zu stellen. So ist die Musik geradezu cooperator Evangelii, weil sie *domina et gubernatrix affectuum humanorum* ist." Wetzel 1954, 185. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 3–4.

11 Anttila 2013, 4.

12 "Es ist nicht sachgemäss, wenn innerhalb der lutherischen Theologie vom Verkündigungsauftrag der liturgischen Musik geredet wird. Viel angemessener findet der Sachverhalt in dem Begriff, Lobamt seinen Ausdruck. Überall, wo betont vom Verkündigungs-charakter der Kirchenmusik geredet wird, ist man in der Gefahr, Luthers Anschauung zu verkennen und Chor und Orgelempore zur zweiten Kanzel zu befördern." Wetzel 1961, 316. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 5–6.

13 "So dürfte deutlich geworden sein, dass für den Versuch einer Theologie der Musik auf evangelischem Boden nur bei Martin Luther Anknüpfungsmöglichkeiten gegeben sind. Das schliesst nicht aus, das sich auch von den anderen Reformatoren, Huldreich Zwingli und Johannes Calvin, manches Wichtige für die Erkenntnis des Phänomens der Musik und für die Beantwortung der Fragen nach der Möglichkeit und den Voraussetzungen ihrer gottesdienstlichen Verwendung lernen lässt. Aber zu einer theologischen Bewertung der Musik, geschweige denn zu einem *Topos de musica* im System der evangelischen Dogmatik kann man von ihren Positionen aus nicht vorstossen." Söhnngen 1967, 260.

14 "Die Stellung des Neuen Testaments und der Reformatoren zur Musik;" 113–66, "Erscheinungsweisen und Bedeutungsgestalten der Musik." The account on the history of theology is often lacking in the studies on Luther and music. Although Söhnngen later comments on the views of Augustine, Boethius, etc., the historical part itself switches from the New Testament to the Reformation. Söhnngen 1967, 11–112.

15 "Versuch einer trinitarischen Begründung der Musik." Söhnngen 1967, 261–340.

16 Söhnngen 1967, 100–12. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 4–5.

theology of music from a Catholic standpoint, *Die theologische Bestimmung der Musik*, which is in many respects indebted to Söhngen. Kurzschenkel considers Luther to be the foremost theologian of music since Augustine. Moreover, he acknowledges the ecumenical potential of Luther's ideas arguing that they need not be confined to any particularly Protestant point of view.<sup>17</sup>

In 1985, Brian L. Horne wrote an article titled *A Civitas of Sound* related to Luther's theology of music on the order of creation. He claims that for Luther, the creation of the world is the revelation of a divine order, which is in the mind of the Creator. Music and theology are therefore the two sole survivors after the disaster of the Fall. Since music also represents the divine order, it is a sure indication of the stability of God in a shifting and unstable world. Horne is mindful of Luther being terrified of disorder, noting the reformer turned to the most formal of all arts, "The most remote from the untidiness of life; that which is least susceptible to false interpretation; that which ... does not 'mean', but only 'is.'"<sup>18</sup>

In 1988, Carl Schalk, a composer of church music, published the book *Luther on Music*, one of the first academically rigorous studies of the subject. His approach is different than Buszin's in the way that he elaborately presents Luther's thoughts about music in a wider context: First, to establish the importance of music in Luther's early life. Second, to show how Luther's developing an understanding of music in the Christian life and worship led him to practical and many faceted involvement in a variety of music's aspects. Third, to bring several different thoughts that dominated Luther's theological understanding of the role of music in the church's life and ministry.

In 1993, the book *Neither Voice nor Heart Alone* by Joyce L. Irwin was published. It tells the story of the later development of a Lutheran theology of music, up to Johann Sebastian Bach. Irwin asserts that Luther's positive attitude to music was cherished in Lutheran orthodoxy and pietism. As a matter of fact, future generations went to the extreme. In contrast to Calvinism, it was even maintained that music is not an *adiaphora*, but an obligation in the church. Criticizing Lutheran scholars broadly and Söhngen in particular, Irwin argues that it is not plausible that Luther

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17 "Zugegeben, die einseitige Hervorhebung von im Laufe der Zeit entstellten, abgesunkenen oder verdunkelten Wahrheiten bot Luther dazu fruchtbare Anregungen, und es ist sein bleibendes Verdienst, in seiner geschichtlichen Stunde die theologische Sicht der Musik vertieft und das Musizieren als eine treibende Kraft im christlichen Leben entdeckt zu haben. Jedoch scheint es nicht so zu sein, die gewonnenen Einsichten unablässig evangelisch-lutherisches Sondergut wären oder bleiben müssten ... Obwohl nun manche Gesichtspunkte lutherischer Musikauffassung eng mit spezifisch reformatorischen Lehren verknüpft erscheinen ... so scheint doch der wesentliche Gehalt von Luthers Musiktheologie nicht angetastet zu werden, wenn wir darauf verzichten müssen, in unsere Darstellung die betreffenden Gebiete lutherischer Theologie mit einzubeziehen." Kurzschenkel 1971, 153–54. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 5.

18 Horne 1985, 28. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 8.

assigned a kerygmatic function to music. This view is based on insufficient sources and a selective reading of Luther. That music can proclaim the gospel is, according to Irwin, a thought first uttered by Johann Mattheson, an eighteenth century composer and music theorist.<sup>19</sup>

In 1994, a book by Christoph Krummacher, *Musik als praxis pietatis. Zum Selbstverständnis evangelischer Kirchenmusik* appeared. He took a critical stance towards the previous studies. He was anxious to show that when Luther speaks about music, he means music as singing, not just as related to the spoken word. He criticizes Söhngen by noting that although he expressly wants to safeguard the theological significance of music, he speaks exclusively about vocal music. Against Wetzel, Krummacher points out the distinction between proclamation and praise does not work. If a musician should abstain from proclaiming the gospel, should the preacher abstain from praising God? His own emphasis on the significance of music in Luther's thinking is the freedom to make music. As a consequence, Krummacher argues, music in the church is not based on the doctrine of the two realms [as in Wetzel] or on it being instituted in the New Testament [as Söhngen sees], but on the Christian freedom to sing.<sup>20</sup>

And in 1995, Hubert Guicharrouse wrote a book with the title *Les Musiques de Luther* that takes into account the musical environment at the beginning of sixteenth century, the theological background and musical agenda of the Wittenberg Reformation. Luther's Bible translation and its musical implications, and nearly all discussions in Luther's works regarding music, musical instruments, or singing.<sup>21</sup>

In 2002, Johannes Block published *Verstehen durch Musik: Das gesungene Wort in der Theologie* that approaches Luther's thoughts on music through the hermeneutical perspective of Gerhard Ebeling. In his hermeneutics, the reader tries not only

19 "In spite of all that has been said about music as the *viva vox evangelii* in Lutheranism, there is indeed no evidence that anyone prior to Mattheson dared to suggest that music could serve as well as the sermon for proclaiming the gospel. Söhngen's evidence that Luther regarded music as a means of proclaiming the Word rests on two brief passages from the *Tischreden* which are hardly explicit on this topic and on the Smalcald Articles which specify the various means by which the gospel is made available: preaching, baptism, the sacrament of the altar, the power of the keys and '*mutuum colloquium et consolatio fratrum*.' Only by connecting this phrase with the words of Col 3:16 and Eph 5:18 is it possible to understand music as included in this mode of proclamation. A recent article by Matthias Viertel points out that Söhngen's translation of Col 3:16 connects Word and singing in a way that Luther's does not. Placing more importance on the critical comments by Luther which Söhngen attributes to an earlier phrase of Luther's development, Viertel calls into question the view of Söhngen and others that Luther assigned music a kerygmatic function." Irwin 1993, 147. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 7–8.

20 "Kirchenmusik ist nicht da, weil sie von Gott gefördert wäre, sondern weil der Glaube an Artikulationsmöglichkeiten verlöre, wenn er sich nicht auch der Musik bediente." Krummacher 1994, 51–52. For details see Anttila 2013, 6.

21 Anttila 2013, 7.

to understand the text, but also becomes understood by the text.<sup>22</sup> Accordingly, Block emphasized the existential nature of music according to Luther. From this perspective, understanding music occurs only when one is understood through music, that is, touched and moved by it. The larger context to which Block's study is associated is the self-understanding of practical theology. He aims to define what he calls *hermeneutical hymnology*, in which singing a text requires something more than analysing and explaining it. The singer is personally involved in the song, leading to an existentialist redefinition of practical theology.<sup>23</sup>

In 2007, Robin A. Leaver wrote *Luther's Liturgical Music*, which is much more elaborate and insightful than Buszin's, Schalk's, and Nettle's works, as it contains a balanced view of Luther and music. He discusses the theological significance of music. And he presents Luther's theological understanding of music in general, however, dismissing the notion that Luther was a dilettante as a musician. He argues that Luther's liturgical songs must be understood theologically. His book is replete with tables, figures, and musical examples, so that the volume can arguably be called one of the most extensive sources of Luther and music.

In 2009, an article by Paul Helmer, *The Catholic Luther and Worship Music* appeared which defines Luther's theology of music in cosmological terms. Grounded in the medieval theory of music and well-versed in the numerical symbolism in fifteenth century polyphony, Helmer posits that music was, for Luther, first and foremost *numerus sonans*, a sounding number. Luther's idea of music therefore fell in the continuum of the mathematical discipline of music in medieval universities.<sup>24</sup>

In 2013 a book *Luther's Theology of Music* by Miikka Anttila was published which explores Luther's understanding of music with an emphasis on aesthetics, in particular the pleasures of music. He emphasizes the relationship between the Word and music, which is to delight human hearts. There is a long discussion on a historical theology of music in relation with the delights of music from Antiquity to the late medieval period, in which it has been an object of praise and suspicion. He relates delight with affectivity in Christian life, so that Anttila sees music as

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22 "Was Verstehen im tiefsten Sinne bedeutet, nämlich dass es nicht nur zu einem Begreifen des Textes, sondern auch zu einem Ergriffenwerden kommt, dass das comprehendere von der Schrift ausgeht und nicht vom Ausleger, dass das Verstehen etwas Passives ist und alle Aktivität beim Text liegt, dass der Text zum Subjekt und der Verstehende zum Objekt wird, zum Gefangenen des Textes, das wird wohl an kaum einen anderen christlichen Exegeten so eindrücklich wie an Luther. Denn: Scripture virtus est hec, quod non mutatur in eum, qui eam studet, sed transmutat suum amatorem in sese ac suas virtutes ... Quia non tu me mutabis in te ... sed tu mutaberis in me." Ebeling 1971, 3. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 6–7.

23 Block employs the words "theologisieren," which means the traditional, objective way of practising theology, and "theologieren" by which he refers to personal, existential encounter with the issue in text. Block 2002, 178–89. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 7.

24 Helmer 2009. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 8.

a gift of God, to respond to his goodness through thankfulness and praise. In particular, singing which express the feelings that display this affective character shows in Luther's theology. In the relation with the exercise of the Word, music in its sweetness has the ability to move human hearts to joy. Thus, the pleasure of music is the greatest and purest joy on earth. For Antilla, the most important features of music in Luther's theology are pleasure and joy.

In 2017 Chiara Bertoglio wrote the book, *Reforming Music: Music and the Religious Reformations of the Sixteenth Century*. The book introduces sixteenth century church music without a confessional bias. It begins with four topical chapters: on the sixteenth century, music, sacred music, and the views of various reformers and church leaders about music. Separate chapters follow on Luther, Calvin, the Church of England, the Council of Trent, and Catholic music after Trent. Then comes a chapter on how the different confessions used music to air their disagreements, followed by one that identifies similarities and traces borrowings among confessions. The final chapter on women's music is interesting, although the paucity of sources renders its conclusions tentative, as the author admits.<sup>25</sup> The contributions of women to several Lutheran hymns is well known, but her assertions that the very role of mothers as the catechists of their family was likely to stimulate their creativity is unwarranted. This book is well done; especially its research on Catholicism, as it shows how the study of music in the context of the sixteenth century Reformation can even have influence on today's believers.

Most recently, in 2017 Robin Leaver wrote a book with the optimistic title of *The Whole Church Sings: Congregational Singing in Luther's Wittenberg* related to the origin of congregational hymnody in Wittenberg under the leadership of Luther. It discusses the situation and condition of worship in Wittenberg and the vernacular folk songs used in Luther's time as well as the liturgies that developed in Wittenberg, from traditional masses to congregational singing.

In addition to this, Luther's views of music has been mentioned in numerous articles,<sup>26</sup> dictionary entries,<sup>27</sup> and accounts on church music history.<sup>28</sup> With all this scholarship it might be argued that there is hardly the need for yet another study on Luther and music. However, the previous literary productions contain no works that analytically deal extensively about the relationship and impact of Luther's theology of gift, the devil and joy on his thoughts about music. With this in mind, I hope that this study can bring progress to scholarship on the Reformation.

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25 Bertoglio 2017, 631–32.

26 The most important articles are: Grew 1938, Spelman 1951, Blankenburg 1957, Hoelty-Nickel 1960, Schneider 1997, Mannermaa 1991, and Anttila 2010. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 9.

27 Blankenburg 1960, 1961b, Joncas 2002, Leaver 2001b, Stalman 2004, and Schilling 2005. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 9.

28 Blume 1975, 5–14. Quoted from Anttila 2013, 9.

## 2. Luther as Musician

This chapter analyses the historical background to Luther's thoughts on music in two respects: First, a broad view on how Christian authorities evaluated music beginning from the early church until the fifteenth century, which might have influenced Luther.<sup>1</sup> And second, a narrower viewpoint focusing on Luther's musical background. This long history of musical theology culminates in certain figures from the late medieval era, notably Gerson and Tinctoris, which may have had a direct impact on Luther's thoughts about music. Thus, the first section aims at providing a broad overview of the mixed receptions of music from the church fathers to the late medieval era (2.1). The next section investigates Luther's musical background from early childhood to his monastery education (2.2). The last examines Luther's musical reform in the areas of pedagogy, performance and production for the school, church and society in his active life as a reformer (2.3).

### 2.1 Music: From Antiquity to the Medieval Era

Influential church fathers interpreted the Bible and set down principles to guide the church. Most church fathers rejected the idea of cultivating music simply for enjoyment and held to Plato's principle that beautiful things exist to remind us of divine beauty. This view underlay many pronouncements about music by church leaders and by later theologians of the Reformation. For early church leaders, music was a servant of religion, and only music that opened the mind to Christian teachings and practices was worthy of hearing in church. Believing that music without words cannot do this, most church fathers condemned instrumental music. Although Christians may have used lyres to accompany hymns and psalms in their homes, musical instruments were not used in church. For this reason, the entire tradition of Christian music for over a thousand years was one of unaccompanied singing.<sup>2</sup>

The reason most early church fathers harbored doubts about music was due to the prominence of music in the pagan cults, which was directed particularly towards musical instruments. Justin Martyr (*ca.* 100–165), criticised music performed for Roman holidays as lascivious, "Your pagan public assemblies I have come to hate. For there are excessive banquets and subtle flutes that provoke people to lustful

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1 As this study is strictly theological, so the discussion of music focuses on its theological value, instead of its theoretical, philosophical, and practical aspects.

2 Burkholder 2006, 28–29.



movements.”<sup>3</sup> Clement of Alexandria (*ca.* 150–215), like Justin, says that the pipes, psalteries, choirs, dances, Egyptian clapping of hands, and such disorderly frivolities could influence people to become immodest. But in spite of these reservations, Clement is able to put a charitable construction on the use of instrumental music, if even only metaphorically, for instance, to praise God on the psaltery as the tongue is the psaltery of the Lord. For Clement, the criterion of distinguishing permissible from impermissible music is temperance, “Temperate harmonies are to be allowed. But we are to banish as far as possible from our robust mind those liquid harmonies. For, through pernicious arts in the modulations of tones, they lead persons to effeminacy and indecency.”<sup>4</sup> Justin and Clement differed from Luther on their views towards musical instrumental in which Luther is promoting their use as it helps singing and praising God [chapter 5.2.3]. Clement’s view of “harmony” was similar to Luther’s in relation to carnal music [chapter 4.2.1].

On singing, Cyprian (*ca.* 200–258), had reservations about music as the instrument of the devil, and he says, “God also gave man a voice. Yet, love songs and indecent things are not to be sung merely on that account.” Indeed, quite differently from Luther’s positive view, music for Cyprian can primarily be an instrument of the devil leading people away from disciplined Christian living, “[satan] presents to the eyes seductive forms and easy pleasures, by the sight of which he might destroy chastity. He tempts the ears with harmonious music, so that by the hearing of sweet sounds, he may relax and weaken Christian vigor.”<sup>5</sup> Luther clearly disagreed with Cyprian since he relaxed with his table companions, singing not only motets of Josquin des Prez but also on occasion popular love songs.<sup>6</sup> So, in contrast to Cyprian, for Luther, music expels the devil and changes the heart of the people from sadness to joyfulness.

Basil of Caesarea (*ca.* 329–379), lists several functions of psalmody, among which are its power against evil forces, “a psalm drives away the devil.” He argued that the delight of psalmody had been devised by the Holy Spirit in order to draw the human race towards virtue. For Basil, psalms are the delightful means by which people are led to virtue and they are particularly efficacious for the young, as they are easily retained in the memory and can be disseminated by singing. They also calm and comfort and create communion and love in a community. As music has a capacity to restore, its suitability for people of both sexes and all ages, its educational value [particularly in matters of faith], and its power to move by stirring good emotions [“it gladdens feast days; it creates the grief which is in accord with God’s will, for a psalm brings a tear even from a heart of stone”].<sup>7</sup> For Basil, therefore, psalm

3 Justin Martyr. Quoted from Mattes 2017, 116.

4 Clement of Alexandria. Quoted from Mattes 2017, 116.

5 Cyprian. Quoted from Mattes 2017, 117.

6 Nettl 1948, 13–14.

7 Basil of Caesarea. Quoted from Bertoglio 2017, 67–68.

singing is an instrument of the Holy Spirit that helps the children of God to retain doctrine in their memory and thus benefit the growth of their faith. The view of Basil might have influenced Luther's views that music is the Holy Spirit's instrument that encourages virtue and drives away the devil [chapter 3.2.5].

Ambrose (ca. 340–397), the fourth century bishop of Milan, was a musical leader in the early church. He is credited with promoting the singing of hymns as a means of strengthening faith and fortifying belief in true doctrines.<sup>8</sup> Ambrose believed that a psalm softens anger, offers a release from anxiety, and alleviates sorrow. He also pointed out that a child who refuses to learn other things takes pleasure in contemplating a psalm. In other words, it is a kind of play that advances learning more than stern discipline. Like Basil, Ambrose believes that other benefits of music concern social virtues.<sup>9</sup> Luther has similarities with Ambrose in "*sonora praedicatione*" that singing hymns to strengthen faith, even for Luther it grows faith and educates Christians in doctrinal teaching [chapter 3.2.5].

Augustine (354–430), in the tenth book of his *Confessions*, sums up the problem with regards to the power of music. On the one hand, the sensuous pleasure derived from music threatened to distract him from the words being sung and turned his attention away from the contemplation of God. Nevertheless, Augustine recognized the power of music to move the emotions, and enhanced desire to devotion, especially that of the newer and weaker minds among the faithful:

So I waver between the danger that lies in gratifying the senses and the benefits which, as I know from experience, can accrue from singing. Without committing myself to an irrevocable opinion, I am inclined to approve of the custom of singing in church, in order that by indulging the ears weaker spirits may be inspired with feelings of devotion. Yet when I find the singing itself more moving than the truth which it conveys, I confess that this is a grievous sin, and at those times I would prefer not to hear the singer.<sup>10</sup>

He recalled "the tears that I shed on hearing the songs of the church in the early days, soon after I had recovered my faith." Thus Augustine wavered "between the danger that lies in gratifying the senses and the benefits which ... can accrue from singing."<sup>11</sup> Augustine's reservations, similar to those of Justin, Clement, and Cyprian, that is, "I ought not to allow my mind to be paralyzed by the gratification of my senses, which often leads it astray. For the senses are not content to take second place. Simply because I allow them their due, as adjuncts to reason, they attempt to take precedence and forge ahead of it, with the result that I sometimes sin

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8 Seaton 2007, 20.

9 Anttila 2013, 23–24.

10 Augustine. Quoted from Mattes 2017, 117–18.

11 Seaton 2007, 14.