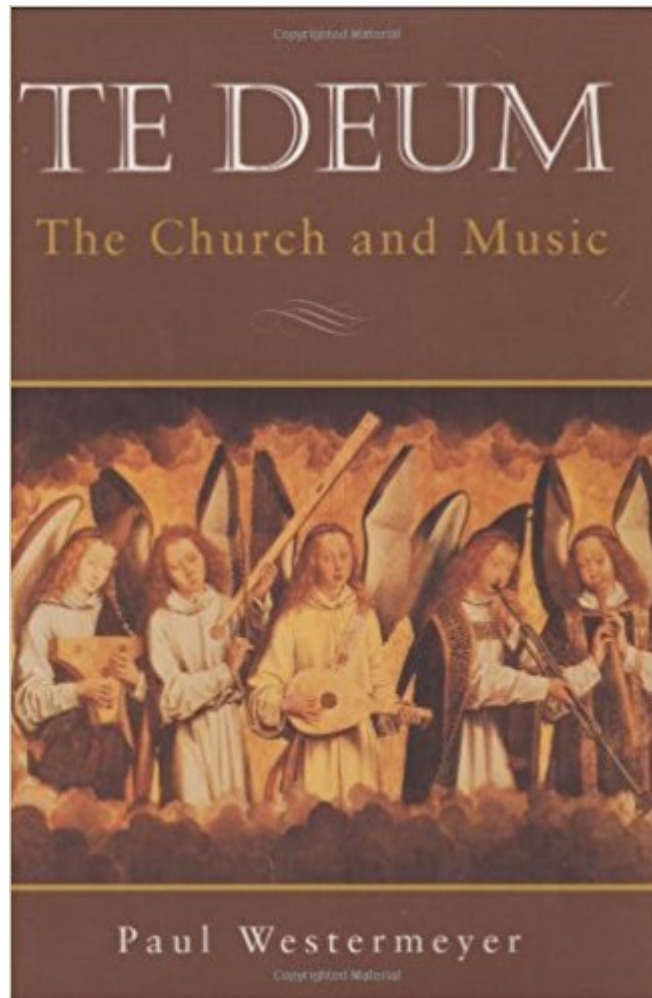




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Te Deum: The Church And Music



Synopsis

A concise introductory text, *Te Deum* provides a basic framework for understanding within history the development of the vast treasury of psalms, hymns, canticles, spiritual songs, and other sacred music within the Christian tradition. This is the first text which addresses the nature of church music from both a historical and theological context.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Westermeyer is professor of church music at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, where he teaches, directs the music, and administers a master of sacred music degree program with St. Olaf College.

I ordered this book looking to brush up on my knowledge traditional service music for the church. In that respect, it was an accident. If you are looking for a book that describes the place of the sequence or gradual, look elsewhere. If you want to know what, besides the Trisagion, distinguishes an Anglican mass from a Roman Catholic mass, you won't find it here. What you will find is a survey of how music has been used in Christian worship that stretches back to the beginning and beyond to the Old Testament usage of the psalms. The author explains major trends and practices and does so from the perspective of the entire Christian spectrum. He explains the historical reasons for these trends and practices theologically and culturally. He does not "have an axe to grind" concerning any

particular tradition; his task is to explain how the tradition came to be. he does so clearly and the result has been a treat. The book is written so that it is accessible by just about anyone. No knowledge of music theory or theology is needed. All that is needed is provided within the text itself. For those who are interested, the text is well footnoted and a plethora of additional resources are provided to enable the reader to track down anything of particular interest. I did not get the book I originally sought. I got an unexpected treat.

The one area where Westermeyer potentially falls short is in his review of contemporary worship styles. He touches on the subject in the last couple chapters, but his perspective seems less objective than the rest of this fantastic book. Throughout *Te Deum*, Westermeyer skillfully weaves numerous sources together in order to give a clear and almost chronological review of church music from the earliest examples (including influences from outside the Christian realm) until the 20th century. His understanding of and passion for the subject matter is clear in his writing, and reading this book cover-to-cover provides an overview of Christian music history unlike anything I've found prior. It is impressive that a man who's passion is for creating and researching music in the Church, is able to set his own opinions and ideas aside in order to give an extremely well-balanced look at the subject matter. Only on a couple of occasions did I feel that Westermeyer was putting his own convictions into the mix, and that was very brief and in taste. It would be disappointing to imagine that someone could write a book like this without any bit of emotional attachments one way or another. Some might find this reading a bit dry, because there's a lot of information here. But I'm impressed with Westermeyer's ability to make it a bit more interesting. He is able to take a lot of information and present it in a scholarly manner that is at the same time, readable. Admittedly, I really like this kind of subject matter, so the "typical" worship leader might find this to be a bit tedious, but it certainly deserves a place on your shelf. As a reference, the book is a great tool, and the index is quite extensive. On a final note, I think that Westermeyer is a great guy. I've met with him on a couple of occasions at Luther Seminary in St. Paul MN where he directs the Master of Sacred Music program. He is passionate and knowledgeable about his area, but quick to seek new opinions and knowledge.

Wonderful book on the history of church music! I use it with my high schoolers as a text for those interested in leading church music. It is an excellent resource! Thank you Mr. Westermeyer.

Great book for those wanting to learn history and tradition of music in Christian worship.

Provides a great history of music throughout the church and analysis of the practices used. This is a great book to discuss and relates to today's issues in music ministry.

This book will be a disappointment! If you are reading for a historical account there is little to recommend it. There are few facts and multitudes of unsubstantiated assertions, guesses, and opinions. The author does not use prime sources in general. If you are a Christian wanting to study the use of music this book will be misleading. The author does not believe in the inspiration of the scriptures and starts by characterizing the Bible as a myth. His historical account of the Old and New Testament use of music is shallow, non-factual, and mythological. There are few pages covering these substantial areas which ignores Biblical accounts, rules, and explanations for the use of music in these time periods: (complete with misquotes from scripture and replacing Biblical accounts with his own mythology). He attempts to explain the development of music in worship from the perspective that God is not involved at all, but rather explained by natural humanistic evolutionary secular development minus any facts. I recommend reading a serious, factual work like *Instrumental Music in the Worship*, by M.C. Kurfees.

comprehensive and easy to handle account of music in liturgy.

The book is very well written and a theology, history, study, and overview on different cultures and varieties of church music. I strongly recommend reading just to learn something new.

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