

The Organist as a Creator of Interaction in the Liturgy



‘In Thy Music, we will SEE the Music, In Thy Light, we will HEAR the Light...’¹ In 1977, French composer and organist Olivier Messiaen (1908–1992), a Roman Catholic, lectured on the existence of music in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. He believed there were three types of sacred music: *liturgical*, *religious*, and one that breaks through to the beyond and is expressed through *sound-colour [sic]*, resulting in a sensation of *bedazzlement*. According to Messiaen, liturgical music ‘celebrates God in His Church’ while ‘*religious* music discovers at every hour and everywhere’. Above these two is *coloured [sic]* music which ‘does that which the stained-glass windows and rose-windows of the Middle Ages did: they give us *bedazzlement*’ (Messiaen 1978: 2, 14, 15). As a Finnish Lutheran organist, I find these words of Messiaen speak to me about the mystery, role, and function of sacred music; in particular, how the *coloured* music he mentions interacts with earthly and afterlife realms and the profound experience it can evoke, for example, by *bedazzlement*.

This article discusses – from an organist’s² viewpoint – the role of music in the Lutheran liturgical service³ and how the music creates interaction between the congregation and the liturgy. Although this study does not include the experiences of the congregation, I argue that through my decisions as an organist, I can create interaction and enhance the experience for those present. This article explores the significance of experiencing the Gospel through music in liturgical services. It draws on research from my artistic doctoral study that has used French Roman Catholic organ music from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in modern Finnish Evangelical Lutheran liturgical services. In Finland, French organ music has been used more as music for concerts, not as

1 ‘Dans Ta Musique, nous VERRONS la Musique, Dans Ta Lumière, nous ENTENDRONS la Musique...’ The concluding words of the lecture of Olivier Messiaen. Translation by Timothy J. Tikker.

2 The position of church musician in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland includes the roles of organist, singer, and choir leader, and, in addition to this, a teacher of Confirmation classes and responsibility for the maintenance of church organs. I have narrowed my research to the closest role to me, namely the role of the organist.

3 In Finland, Lutheran services usually include Communion services, Service of the Word, or Liturgy of the Hours. In this article, I will refer to these services as ‘liturgical service’.

part of liturgical services.⁴ Despite this tradition, in my research, I wanted to combine two of my special interests: French organ music and Finnish Evangelical Lutheran liturgical services. During the study, I noticed that using a significant amount of solo organ music from the context of the Roman Catholic Church and foreign culture has underlined the different roles of music in the Finnish liturgical service.

The framework of this article is based on Finnish Lutheran liturgical service and the basis of the liturgical theology of music behind the present official Service Book of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (*Suomen evankelis-luterilaisen kirkon Kirkkokäsikirja*). It also includes French organ music and organ improvisations of my study, *musical words* as a reinforcer of interaction and the feeling of agency, and dialogicity as an instrument of experience.

Using autoethnography, I have reflected on how I, as an organist, can create interaction in the liturgy as an improviser, an accompanist, an arranger, and a soloist, by incorporating different musical elements and words. I have supplemented my research with written source data on liturgy and the theory of a collaborative creative process that enhances the involvement of those present.

Music is vital in liturgical services, including Lutheran services in Finland. It has the power to evoke emotions and convey messages that are difficult to express in words. By listening to music and singing together during the liturgy, we can share a collective experience. As an organist, I am eager to find ways to enhance this experience by using organ music. I am interested in exploring how to connect music, liturgy, and people through different musical expressions and create opportunities for interaction between these elements.

Artistic research, autoethnography as a method, and the position of the researcher

This article is based on my artistic doctoral research that deals with serving as an organist in liturgical services. The primary method of analysis used in this research is autoethnography. I have written about my work through case studies and reflected on it in relation to my research questions. What is the role of music in the Lutheran

⁴ In the year 2003, Sirkka-Liisa Jussila-Gripentrog, a Finnish organist, wrote an article in *Kirkkomusiikin käsikirja* (The Handbook of Church Music) about the repertoire of organists in the services. She also mentions French organ music and how there is a lot of useful music. However, she adds that it is difficult to achieve the sound intended by the composer on instruments other than the French Romantic organ (Jussila-Gripentrog 2003: 394). This describes the situation in the early 2000s when there was a preference to play organ music with authentic instruments. This perspective did not contribute to the use of French organ music in liturgical services in a country where there are only a few French Romantic instruments.

liturgical service, and how does the music create interaction between the congregation and the liturgy from the viewpoint of an organist? Typical of artistic research, I apply my professional skills and experience as a liturgical service organist in my research.

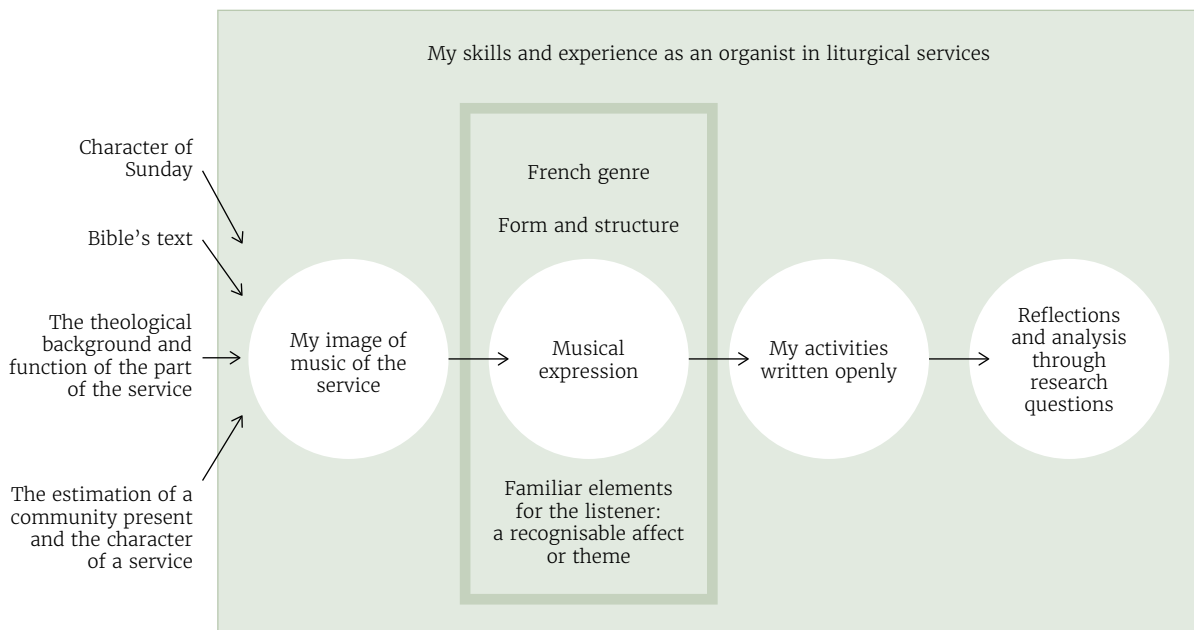
As a research field, artistic research is quite young relative to scientific research. For example, in Sweden, the concept of artistic development work was introduced in 1977 at the university. In the 1990s, the field expanded into artistic research. Today, Swedish universities provide two different perspectives on artistic research, one of which emphasises artistic development work, and the other that is closer to scientific research (Jullander 2007: 75, 82, 84). In Finland, artistic Doctors of Music have been graduating for more than 30 years. Finnish artistic research has underlined the conscious relationship between experience and research, where the language of research is based on the principles of scientific research (Hannula et al. 2003: 13–18). The focus is reflecting on the creative process, artistry, and experience (Vehviläinen 2020: 160).

I see artistic research as a new opportunity to study the liturgical service. It can be used to approach the liturgical service from an entirely new viewpoint, for example, through the experience of a musician. Artistic research creates and expands common understanding in an area that has never existed before (Hannula et al. 2003: 45). It also enables art to bring a different perspective on things already researched scientifically (Varto 2020: 120). Artistic research starts with the author, as in this paper with me, as an organist. The author is an expert on their own activities who, as the author, the solver, and the executer, has learned their methodical way of moving forward (Varto 2020: 93–94).

This type of artistic research on liturgical service has not been undertaken much in Finland previously; only Martti Laitinen, Doctor of Music, in his thesis, *The Musician's Artistic Work and Liturgical Context*, has focused on the artistic work of an organist and a choirmaster in all their diversity in the liturgical services. In Sweden, Doctor of Philosophy Per Högberg has in his dissertation 'written about the artistic process that is integrated within the performance of congregational song in interaction between organ, organist and singing congregation' (Högberg 2013: 329). Also, Doctor of Philosophy Karin Johansson has written in her dissertation about organists' descriptions, constructions, and definitions of improvisation in words and music both in liturgical and concert contexts.

Autoethnography systematically describes and analyses the experiences of a researcher to understand organisational, social, and cultural phenomena. As a method, it is both the research process and its result. In artistic research, autoethnography is a frequently used method because the author of autoethnography is both the researcher and the object of the study (Tienari & Kiriakos 2020: 272). The following Figure 1 shows a model of my method which is based on autoethnography.

Figure 1. Model of the method used.



Outside the green box are the elements that have been given from outside: which Sunday it is in the Church year, what the biblical texts are like, what kind of theological background and function the different parts of the service have, and what kind of congregation will attend the service. Inside the green box are my activities as an organist of the liturgical service. According to Karin Johansson (2008: 102–103), ‘the ritual setting [...] creates a framework with a centre to which all playing should relate’. First, I create from the given external elements an image that produces the musical expression. According to my skills and experience as an organist, I have decided to use the style and form of French organ music – both in composed works and improvisations. I also highlight recognisable affects and musical elements to provide musical expression. By writing, I reflect on and analyse my process through my research questions. The picture contains all the music I have played, whether it is composed, arranged, or improvised.

As a musician, I use music as a tool to study history, plan and play services, and reflect on my research questions. Through reading, writing, and playing, I gain a deeper understanding of the background and context of the music. My decisions, expressions, and experiences of the services included in my degree are the material of the research. The case examples relate to my chosen organ works, arrangements, or improvisations. I have my notes on the preparation of the events, musical material from my arrangements and ideas of improvisations, and recordings of the services and two planning meetings. In addition, I have read source literature related to the liturgical service and relevant organ music.

For around two decades, I have worked as an organist in two distinct Evangelical Lutheran churches located in the Helsinki area. As a researcher, I strive to maintain objectivity but acknowledge my background as a Nordic Lutheran organist. I began my

studies and career around the year 2000 when the current Service Book of Liturgies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was approved. Over the last two decades, I have been fortunate to witness the evolution of liturgical services and participate in them as an organist through ongoing education.

The Finnish Lutheran liturgical service and the basis of the theology of music behind the present official Service Book

This study has been carried out in Finnish Evangelical Lutheran liturgical services. Like other Christian worship services, today's Finnish Lutheran Communion service has four parts. These parts are: the Gathering, God's word, The Lord's Supper, and the Conclusion. There are three kinds of music in the service: 1) *ordinarium* parts of the Communion service, 2) hymns, and 3) other music such as the opening music, the psalm of the day, response, offertory, communion, and the conclusion, which can be realised as instrumental music, choral music, or by a solo singer. Hymns and other music are part of the *proprium* parts of the service. The current Service Book does not specify the type of music to be used during the service, but it provides information about the service itself.

The proclamation of God's word and the sacrament of Holy Communion are the core of the service. The prayers, confession, and praise by the assembly are inseparably linked to them. The good works of the triune God and the whole history of salvation are present in a Communion service, encountering people and the circumstances in which they live . (Kirkkokäsikirja 2003: 17.)⁵

From my perspective as a researcher, the text of the Service Book also refers to the music in the liturgy. The music of liturgical service is based on the word of God when it arises, for instance, from the Bible's texts of the day. Sacred music expresses prayer, confession, and praise. For Martin Luther 'praise is the musical response of the church to the good news of the Gospel' (M. Anttila 2013: 201). The triune God and the history of salvation come to light through the music and the *ordinarium* parts. As Anttila (2013: 201) points out, 'the liturgical service of the new covenant consists primarily of praise, it is both preaching and singing about God's great works'. The *ordinarium* parts of the liturgy repeat the history of salvation at each Mass.

⁵ 'Messun ytimenä ovat Jumalan sana ja sen saarna sekä ehtoollisen sakramentti. Niihin kytkeytyvät erottamattomasti seurakunnan rukous, tunnustus ja ylistys. Kolmiyhäinen Jumala ja hänen hyvät tekonsa sekä koko pelastushistoria ovat messussa läsnä ja kohtaavat ihmisen hänen elämäntilanteessaan.' Translation by the author.

There has been very little theological research or discussion on the theology of music in Finland since the reform of liturgical service in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Therefore, today's theology of liturgical music still reflects the debate that took place during the reform, during which the Service Book Committee wrote two documents, *Jumalan kansan juhla* (an interim report called 'The Feast of the People of God' in the year 1992) and *Perustelut* ('Reasoning' in the year 1997). The need for a theological discussion of music arose from the visible effects of Pietism on liturgical music. An example of the influences of Pietism in the literature on liturgy from the early twentieth century is Uno Paunu's textbook on liturgy. According to Paunu, singing solo music in the liturgy was discouraged as it could draw too much attention to the individual performer, like in a concert (Paunu 1943: 96). Influences of this statement could still be observed even in the late twentieth century. The third document that takes a stand on the theology of music in the liturgy is *Palvelkaa Herraä iloiten* ('Serve the Lord with joy') Service Book Guide of 2009, which the Bishops' Conference has officially approved. It is therefore justified to briefly refer to the background and content of these documents.

At the renewal of the present Service Book of Liturgies of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, liturgical service has been understood as the celebration of God's saving presence. Due to renewal, among other things, the formulas of the Communion service changed and music became more substantial as an element of worship (*Perustelut* 1997: 37, 44). Also, the Liturgy of the Hours material was clarified and published in a separate book, increasing its use (Kotila 2007: 9–12).

The interim report *Jumalan kansan juhla* states that music is a gift of God's creation, as Martin Luther wrote. Singing and playing in the service is the response to the good works of God also, and the function of music is to tell about them. When we sing together, we express ourselves and create a sense of community (*Jumalan kansan juhla* 1992: 148–150).

The *Perustelut* ('Reasoning') document defines the liturgical service as celebrating God's triune presence. The purpose of the whole service is to remember God's salvation. Christ is truly present in the Word and sacraments. Christ is present in the Word when the Word is spoken, read, and set to music. Thus, the full service, through its various elements, proclaims God's Word, addressing the congregation present in multiple ways (*Perustelut* 1997: 43–44).

The Service Book Committee continuously notes that God makes all music according to the Bible: 'God's people are urged in the Psalms and Revelation to join in a new song' (Psalm 98: 1; Rev. 14: 3). Thus, 'the created reality becomes the language of meanings and contents, where form and content make a single, inseparable entity' (*Perustelut* 1997: 77). In the *Perustelut* ('Reasoning') document, the Committee has primarily raised the content of the music as a starting point for the music in liturgical services. The text and its music should support content and communicate a common subject according to the context

of time and culture. The document reminds us that ‘a song about content also has an emotional dimension’. During the discussion about different musical genres in liturgical services, the Committee refers again to the Bible. There are numerous instances of various musical methods used to worship God. In the New Testament, for example, it is advised to ‘sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs as you praise the Lord with all your heart’ when congregating (Ephesians 5:19). Additionally, the book of Psalms offers many other relevant passages (*Perustelut* 1997: 76–81).

The third document, *Palvelkaa Herraa iloiten* (‘Serve the Lord with joy’) Service Book Guide of 2009, keeps Luther’s Theology of Music important – how music is the gift of God’s creation. *Palvelkaa Herraa iloiten* also takes a stance on the music of services. It reminds us that there has always been music when Christians have gathered together. The service is based on the Bible, the tradition of the Old Church, and the Lutheran confession. In the Finnish Lutheran service, the liturgical tradition, hymn singing, and the function of music are also a part of the tradition. According to *Palvelkaa Herraa iloiten*, key attributes of the music of the liturgical service include purpose, content, and community (*Palvelkaa Herraa iloiten* 2009: 103–105).

Reflecting on the *Perustelut* (‘Reasoning’) document as a musician of liturgical services, the statement that service is celebrating God’s triune presence is notable for me. My attention was drawn especially to this sentence: ‘Christ is present in the Word when the Word is spoken, when it is read, and when it is set to music.’ For me, this means that when Christ is present in music, it brings the element of mystery to the service and its music. The music itself is immaterial. Sounds, tones, and voices, through different interpretations and genres, especially in instrumental music without words, can express something that words cannot explain. Even God’s triune presence can be present in various types of music. In my research material, one example of this is the Dogme of Jeanne Demessieux. First, God is presented through massive *tutti* chords, the second part describes the life of Jesus Christ with uneven beats in an accelerating *crescendo* towards fermata, rest and resurrection, and the third part of the Holy Spirit is like a gust of wind (Demessieux 1947: 21–29). Experiencing the mystery of music in the liturgical context is like a new song that God’s people are urged to join in the Psalms and Revelation.

The musical content of the research

The non-verbal music in the liturgical service never exists in a vacuum. It is always heard and experienced by those present related to the words spoken, the people around them, the space itself, its objects, and the ritual. The music is in a form of tension with the liturgy. For instance, when music is set next to a ritual, like a procession, the movement

of that procession and the music are transformed, each interpreting the other (Wengert 2007: 62).

Music is also a crucial part of culture, especially in the liturgy. *The Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture*⁶ finds that 'Christian worship relates dynamically to culture in at least four ways'. In the design of the music for services of the study, the four aspects of the *Nairobi Statement* on worship – transcultural, contextual, counter-cultural, and cross-cultural – have been realised. First, according to the Statement, Christian worship 'is transcultural, the same substance for everyone everywhere, beyond culture'. Both the French Roman Catholic Mass of the nineteenth century and the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Communion service of the twenty-first century have the same main elements of the service, based on the services of the first millennium Christians (Miné 1836: 64–65; *Kirkkokäsikirja* 2003: 17–37; Griffiths 2012: 38–41). Formulas consist of four parts: the Gathering, the Word, the Communion, and the Conclusion. They also include the *ordinarium* and *proprium* parts, which are largely identical. Secondly, the Statement clarifies how worship is contextual 'varying according to the local situation (both nature and culture)'. In my plans, I have considered the practices of the local church, the requirements of the community and the local instrument. Worship is counter-cultural, according to the Statement, when it is 'challenging what is contrary to the Gospel in a given culture'. Playing organ music in the Finnish service is not contrary to the Gospel, but in my experience, it is counter-cultural in the Finnish worship culture to have mainly organ music in the service. Fourth, the Statement mentions that Christian worship 'is cross-cultural, making possible sharing between different local cultures'. Using music from another culture is obviously transcultural. The repertoire choices were also influenced by my experience as a liturgical organist for 20 years.

The music I used as research material has included composed French organ music, hymns, and liturgical melodies of five liturgical services. Composed works of services I selected from the limited repertoire of the study, considering the sacred texts of the church year. Considering the content of the texts of the day, the character of the event, the expected composition of the congregation, the church space and the organ of each service, and discussions with the service team, I created a set of music for the service.

The repertoire included individual works and larger compositions, mainly from 1850 to 1950. I would especially like to mention the Evening Mass of Easter, where I played Charles-Marie Widor's (1844–1937) *Symphonie romane* as the main composition. There was also a special work, a series of *Sept Méditations sur le Saint Esprit* of Jeanne Demessieux (1921–1968), in the Evening Mass of Pentecost. The French repertoire was largely based on

⁶ *The Nairobi Statement on Worship and Culture* is from the third international consultation of the Lutheran World Federation's Study Team on Worship and Culture, held in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 1996.

liturgical and biblical texts. Nevertheless, not all the works in services were originally or historically intended to be part of the liturgy.

The melodies of the hymns of the services were mainly French and based on the present official Hymnbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (1986). In three services as liturgical melodies, I used official melodies from the Service Book. For the fourth service, I collected liturgical melodies from the manual of *Codex Westh*⁷ from the sixteenth century to pair with Widor's *Symphonie romane* based on a Gregorian melody. The *ordinarium* parts⁸ of the last Mass of my degree were improvised by me using the music of Demessieux as musical inspiration.

In my arrangements of hymns and liturgical melodies, I applied French historical practices. My intention had not been to reconstruct historical practices, for example, in connection with the accompaniment of hymns. Through historical research I have found different and new perspectives from historical sources as an organist to carry out the music of the service. My improvisations were based on the image I had built of the Bible text, the hymn, or the historical background associated with the part of the Communion service in question. I also used musical elements and structures of written organ music of services as material for my improvisations. My idea was to establish a connection between different types of music through my arrangements and improvisations.

I played these liturgical services in five different churches with five different instruments. Two of the organs were so-called eclectic universal organs, one was a copy of a French romantic organ, another a copy of a French baroque organ, and one a romantic Nordic instrument. Using the various spaces and instruments in different churches prompted me to contemplate the interaction between the organist and the congregation. As Per Högberg says in his dissertation: 'The church room, the congregation that celebrates the service, and the organ all stand in relationship to one another' (Högberg 2013: 332). For example, in the churches of my first and second services, the organ was on the floor level with the congregation in front, while at the other services, the organ was in the organ loft. As an organist, the experience of accompanying the congregational singing changes concretely, depending on whether the congregation is singing at the same level towards your back, or if you are in the organ loft behind and above the congregation. Am I part of the community at the same level, or do I lead the community from above?

⁷ *Codex Westh* is the first and one of the most remarkable collections of Finnish manuscripts from the 1540s. The contents of the collection are based on the life of worship of that time (Tuppurainen 2012: 7–9, 11).

⁸ The main sung *ordinarium* parts of the Communion service in the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church are *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei* and *Benedicamus*.

Interaction in the liturgical service by the organist

Christians live out their faith in the liturgy. People and God are in dialogue with each other (Hulmi 2019: 16). As the Service Book Guide says: 'Through the heard and visible Word, the triune God addresses us and makes us partake of all the gifts of salvation. A person responds to God's address in prayers, hymns, and songs' (*Palvelkaa Herraa iloiten* 2009: viii).

Throughout the history of the Church, there has always been a debate about the interaction between the law of prayer, *lex orandi*, and the law of belief, *lex credendi*. What is the relationship between these two laws? How do they interact in practice in the life of a Christian? *Liturgical theology* is based on lived liturgy which leads to doctrine. It begins with liturgies and the meaning of the whole rite. This has been called *theologia prima*. In the Finnish reform of worship, however, the primacy of doctrine was emphasised. It is only in the last ten years that the importance of the experience of liturgical service has been considered in Finland. Thus, increasingly today, *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* can be thought of as interdependent equal partners (Hulmi 2019: 16–18; Fagerberg 2004: 4, 41).

The concept of interaction is described as 'a situation where two or more people or things communicate with each other or react to each another' (Cambridge Dictionary: interaction). From the point of view of an organist, in lived religion, there are many kinds of interaction in the liturgy.

The first example is the interaction between the organist and the congregation through the music of the liturgical service when the organist accompanies the congregational singing of hymns and liturgical melodies. The organist's way of using the instrument can support or obstruct singers: for example, choices of stops, tempo decisions, the breathability of playing, and phrasing of the music, especially with pedal playing. Per Högberg highlights these elements in particular: the organist's way of registering, the acoustics of the church space and the mechanics of the instrument used, the clarity and simplicity of the accompaniment, and the organist's way of articulating and phrasing. These allow for a breathtaking interaction with the congregation (Högberg 2013: 168–173). The old French tradition of *alternatim*, where the organist and singers alternate with the verses of liturgical melodies or hymns, is another concrete example of interaction between the organist and the congregation (Saint-Arroman 2016: 235).

The interaction of those responsible for the liturgical service, for instance, celebrants, deacons, musicians, and assistants, is significant before, during, and after the service. I believe that collaboration with equal and respectful dialogue, and without unnecessary hierarchy and borders, is the key to creating a liturgical service where different elements serve the message of the Gospel. In my research, music was a significantly large element in the services that were part of the study. As an organist in charge of the music of these

services, it was essential to communicate openly with colleagues, and clearly express the significance of the chosen music. This method allowed them to fully understand and appreciate its role in the overall experience, and plan their duties in relation to the music. Interaction with the responsible persons also helped me build wholeness of liturgical services, like in decisions concerning the order of music or length of my improvisations.

The decisions of the organist regarding the music interact with the rite of the liturgical service in many ways. How do solo organ music, *ordinarium* parts, and congregational hymns in a dialogue exist between each other and the order of service? According to Karin Johansson (2008: 100–101), there are ‘a number of events where improvised music is supposed to illustrate what is happening in the liturgical narrative, and at the same time adapt its expression to it’. She continues and describes two types of interaction in liturgical improvisation. Firstly, she mentions the communication between the organist and the congregation at a specific time and place. Secondly, she highlights ‘the integrated relationship between the individual organist and the conventions and traditions of the liturgical frame’ (Johansson 2008: 104). In my research, I have been inspired by liturgical theology, especially also by the composed music of services. I have tried to pick recognisable musical elements – *musical words* – from the repertoire.

These *musical words* I have used as elements of my improvisations and arrangements during the service. For example, in the first liturgical service of my degree, I played *Les Mains de l'Abîme* by Olivier Messiaen as a response to the text of the Old Testament. The work begins with long *tutti* chords resembling the shout of humans towards God. After this work by Messiaen, the text of the New Testament was read, and the hymn of the day was sung. In my improvised prelude for this hymn, I used the same style of *tutti* chords as Messiaen had in his work. Those chords were like *musical words* that connected the work of Messiaen and the hymn of the day. I also used massive chords as my arrangement of the accompaniment to the hymn. For me, they formed a dialogue between themselves.

I also applied the idea of *musical words* when I planned the accompaniments and improvisations of the liturgical melodies of my doctoral services. For example, there were quick triplet patterns to create a French *Toccata* feel while accompanying the *Sanctus* of the third event. Those quick triplet patterns with typical French *anches* registration were *musical words* that interacted with other French music of that service.

The main musical work of the last Mass of my research was *Sept méditations sur le Saint Esprit* by French composer Jeanne Demessieux. As *ordinarium* parts of this Evening Mass of Pentecost, I improvised my Organ Mass using musical elements from the series of Demessieux. Every movement of this series has a title and a small introductory text from the Bible or the Liturgical Books of the Catholic Church regarding the theme of Pentecost. Therefore, the identification of the *musical words* she had used in the series was obvious, for example, the movements of water at the beginning of the Bible, the voice of God, the

triune God, and the wind of the Holy Spirit. In my improvised Organ Mass, I used the same kind of *musical words* as Demessieux had used to express the continuing prayer over thousands of years of *Kyrie eleison*, the triunity of *Gloria Excelsis in Deo*, or the shouts of *Hosanna* in the *Sanctus*.

Experiencing the Gospel and liturgical service as a creative process

Miikka E. Anttila, a Doctor of Theology, has devoted his research to Martin Luther's Theology of Music. In his doctoral thesis, Anttila references the experience of the Gospel using music.

The most important feature of music for Luther is its ability to rule human emotions. [...] Music generates a variety of emotions such as love, hatred, fear, humility, calmness, and joy. As for the overall philosophical theory of emotions, music has a direct impact on affectivity. [...] If one is to understand the theological weight of music in Luther's thinking, one must acknowledge that joy is not a frame of mind but a gift of the Holy Spirit. [...] This means that believing is not simply knowing what the Bible tells us but also applying this knowledge affectively. Then experiencing the Gospel by hearing, reading, and singing is relevant and meaningful. (M. Anttila 2013: 199–205.)

As mentioned, Christ is present in the Word when the Word is spoken, read, and set to music. Music has its content function, but we cannot define its role as a communicator with time, people, and culture by its ability to rule human emotions. Experiencing the Gospel in any way is relevant and meaningful. The instrumental music in the liturgy communicates and interacts with the spoken words of the ritual, the liturgical space, the instruments played, and the people present. As composer Olivier Messiaen (1978: 15) said, 'by *bedazzlement* music can reach something that breaks towards the beyond, towards the invisible, and unspeakable'.

Related to experiencing the Gospel, I believe that the concept of dialogical interaction has particular importance in the liturgical service, where there is a lot of music, primarily when the music is more foreign and from a different culture and church. Professor Eeva Anttila from the Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki has reflected on the dialogue in the texts of Martin Buber (1878–1965). According to Martin Buber, there are three kinds of dialogue.

There is genuine dialogue [...] where each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention for establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them. There is technical dialogue, which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding. And there is monologue disguised as dialogue, in which two or more men, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways and yet imagine they have escaped the torment of being thrown back on their own resources. (Buber 1947: 22.)

According to Eeva Anttila, it is necessary to distinguish dialogue from the broader phenomenon of dialogicity. Buber used the concept of genuine dialogue, where turning to the other is an essential requirement. He has written, '[S]o for a conversation no sound is necessary, not even a gesture. Speech can renounce all the media of sense, and it is still speech' (Buber 1947: 3). The starting point for a dialogical relationship is to be open to another's experience (E. Anttila 2011: 169).

Eeva Anttila concludes in her article that knowledge of art is created in the encounter. Art opens the way to understanding that your own experiences, the experiences of others, and the world, can be interpreted in many ways. There is no single truth, and everything cannot be understood; however, encountering brings another experience into our own hands. Even if the person or thing we face is unfamiliar, we can accept them as part of ourselves (E. Anttila 2011: 170–171). In the liturgical context, where there is plenty of organ music, encounters happen not only between the organist and the listener, but also between the music itself and the listener. The biblical texts of the day and the instrumental music without words reflect each other, and the listener encounters the Word through their experience of the music.

According to *Palvelkaa Herraa iloiten*, the congregation should not be passive during liturgical services. Instead, they should be empowered to plan and carry out the service (*Palvelkaa Herraa iloiten* 2009: ix). In recent years, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has also been involved in many other ways with the social inclusion discourse, which started in the 1990s in Finnish society (Nivala 2008: 166). For example, from 2011 to 2013, a project called *Tiellä – På väg* ('On the way') was carried out to strengthen the experience of the involvement of parishioners. The Official Curriculum for Confirmation classes in 2017 defines involvement as acting, influencing, being, and belonging to part of the group (*Suuri ihme* 2017: 22).

As a professional church musician and an organist, I have considered whether it is feasible to incorporate the concepts of involvement, agency, or participatory processes into the liturgical setting, where the primary task of those present seems to be to listen and be present. What is the concept of social inclusion, involvement, agency, or participatory process in this kind of situation? Is it enough to have agency through the experience

and encountering of art, as Eeva Anttila has written from the viewpoint of a dialogical process?

The concept of inclusion is not socially defined and can be approached through a wide range of qualitative content. Involvement can be seen as a community experience, where given, participating, and perceived membership are combined (Nivala 2008: 166–172). According to Laura Huhtinen–Hildén and Anna-Maria Isola, creativity and creative activities can build well-being because they increase the state of inclusion. Creativity makes a space of meaning, possibilities, and inclusion. The state of inclusion is formed with needs, resources, and the experiences of importance that arise in interaction. In the context of creative activities, Huhtinen–Hildén and Isola define inclusion as a subjective experience in which a person feels part of the community. Experience is joining, belonging, sharing, participating, and influencing. The mechanisms of inclusion include needs (like feelings, security, and freedom), resources (like livelihoods, education, trust, nature, safety, and art), and interaction. These three mechanisms affect the state of inclusion and, thus, well-being (Huhtinen–Hildén & Isola 2018: 8–9).

According to Huhtinen–Hildén and Isola, the experiences of inclusion in creative activities are built and strengthened first by *tuning up*, where the action director creates a safe and permissive space for interaction. The second step is *a distance away*, where creative activity enables a safe distance from everyday life. Through art, the experience manifests freshly and innovatively, allowing us *to reword* the process in a new way. Creative activities allow for *the sharing* of feelings and experiences in a variety of ways. It also makes it possible to be seen through *acceptance* as part of the community. These experiences in the various creative process steps are constantly *reflected by language, thinking, and creative experiences*. The process itself is essential, not the outcome (Huhtinen–Hildén & Isola 2018: 10–12).

The liturgical service with plenty of instrumental music, as in my research, can be seen as a creative process where the order of the service creates a safer state to be and experience creativity and the Gospel. The role of the participants in the liturgical service differs from, for example, the role of the concert audience, where traditionally, the role of a person is to listen and receive experiences. In liturgical service, all participants are actors and agencies who serve in various roles. For instance, a parishioner can participate in praising or praying to God by listening to the instrumental music played during the liturgical service.

When I look at the liturgical services of my research, I see myself as a music designer and implementer in the role of director of the creative process. Experiencing art and exceptional music during a service is a shared creative process that can enhance the involvement of those in attendance. As an organist and thus as one in charge of the liturgical service, I have made it possible to have a safe and permissive space with

joint planning of the working group and a written programme with an order of service and backgrounds of the music. I believe that the *musical words* mentioned earlier create interaction between music and people, thereby also making a safer frame of reference for the service. In this way, I have created an opportunity to involve those attending. In the context of the service, the experience of listening to unfamiliar music makes it possible to distance oneself from everyday life. The instrumental music played at the event provides a fresh perspective on the Bible texts by rephrasing the words in a way that resonates through personal experience. The opportunity to listen, be quiet, sing, and experience music together enables the sharing of feelings and experiences. The organist also senses how the people present are in the church space. Participating in the service is, therefore, not a performance but being present through the experience of participation. The starting point of the service is – or at least should be – an atmosphere of acceptance in which everyone is welcome to gather and listen and experience God’s Word, pray, and have communion together.

Conclusions

In Finnish, the word for liturgical service combines the words ‘God’ (*Jumala*) and ‘service’ (*palvelus*). The compound word ‘*jumalanpalvelus*’ has two possible translations: it means serving God or that God is serving. Thus, the interaction between God and the congregation is written in this word of the Finnish language. It has been said that the Lutheran Church is the Church of Word, and therefore it can be easily interpreted that the interaction in the context of the liturgy is mainly spoken or sung words. However, as this article has shown, the role and function of instrumental music as part of the liturgy is considerable. According to Martin Luther, music makes it possible to experience the gospel. *Lex orandi* recalls that liturgy is living and experiencing faith in reality. Thus, music is an important element of participation in this process. As Messiaen expressed it, music makes possible what words cannot say.

The organist can bring out interaction between people, music, and the liturgy through different roles. As a solo organist, accompanist, arranger of hymns and liturgical melodies, and improviser, the organist can confirm the interaction, especially by *musical words*. Incorporating musical elements from the solo organ repertoire into improvisations and arrangements can break down confrontation and disconnection between solos, hymns, and liturgical melodies. These *musical words* are comparable to spoken words of the liturgical service. Are the introductory words, the sermon, or the prayer separate spoken elements of the service, or are speakers using the same kinds of vocabulary and expression in different spoken parts to strengthen convergence?

Liturgical services, where unfamiliar music such as expansive organ solo music from the French Roman Catholic Church is played in a Finnish Lutheran liturgical service, can be viewed as a collaborative creative process that enhances the involvement of those present. Especially in this kind of exceptional situation, it is important to create a safe and permissive space for participants by using the familiar order of the service, providing a programme with information about the music, and coordinating with the celebrant to ensure that the spoken words complement the music. Creating a safe and welcoming environment through deliberate language, music, structure, and physical gestures during any religious service can enhance the overall experience for attendees.

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