



Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh



Forth in Praise

Liturgy Commission Music

COMPOSERS' CHECKLIST

Help in setting to music the texts of the new translation of the Roman Missal

‘Some musicians who do not have a great deal of experience of composition and publishing music may benefit from the advice of more experienced church musicians. This may include helping:

- to notate accurately what is sung and played,
- to write effectively for the chosen musical resources within a particular style,
- to understand the demands of the liturgy,
- to present the music professionally.’

English Liturgy Office, Information Sheet 1, December 2011

This checklist has been devised to help composers setting the new liturgy, and also those who may be asked to look over composers' work. The left-hand columns are self-explanatory, and the right-hand boxes can be used (a) to mark off the areas which have been correctly handled, and (b) to enter reminders or comments where work still needs to be done.

Although some material published by the English Liturgy Office has, with permission, been used in this exercise, the Forth in Praise checklist is the result of a diocesan project and cannot be assumed to give guidance to the criteria used by the national publication approval committee of any country. However, as the authors' intention has been to follow current best practice, there are doubtless many points of agreement with such committees.

GENERAL POINTS

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| <p>Indication of Ministry The people's part must be clearly indicated (e.g. where there is a descant or SATB writing).</p> | |
| <p>Missal Tones Where necessary, the celebrant's introduction should be included and suitably pitched (e.g. before Memorial Acclamations).</p> | |
| <p>Eucharistic Acclamations If Sanctus is submitted, the other Eucharistic acclamations should also be present (all three Memorial Acclamations and Great Amen).</p> | |

TEXT

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| <p>Title Identifies the piece.</p> | |
| <p>Correct version of text The current approved version should be used.</p> | |
| <p>Spelling Must be correct if the music is to be distributed or published.</p> | |
| <p>Punctuation and capitalisation Must be correct if the music is to be distributed or published.</p> | |
| <p>Hyphenation This affects how individual syllables may be sung. Single-syllable words should not be split, e.g. Lord __, not Lo-rd. See separate sheet on ICEL hyphenation.</p> | |
| <p>Repetition Should not distort meaning of text, nor unduly lengthen it.</p> | |

MUSIC

When using the following parts of the checklist it should always be borne in mind that congregations consist mainly of untrained singers who do not read music.

(1) Melody

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| Key-signatures Key-signature should be clearly shown, as should any subsequent changes of key-signature. | |
| Range The pitch range should be within acceptable limits for the average untrained voice (generally written from B flat below middle C to the second E flat above). | |
| Tessitura The tessitura – the part of the range most used – should not be at the outer limits of the range, where singers require extra effort and technique. | |
| Slurs Slurs should be in place when more than one note is sung to a syllable. | |
| Phrasing Phrase lengths should accommodate the need for breathing, taking into account the limitations of breath control in untrained singers. | |

(2) Tonality

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| Accompaniment In the accompaniment, the composer should demonstrate command of basic major/minor or modal harmonies, and handle dissonance appropriately. | |
| Melody-only music If there is no accompaniment, the tonality should be convincing and unambiguous. Suitable indications of harmony, such as chord symbols, figured bass or guitar tablature, should be used if appropriate. | |

(3) Rhythm

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| <p>Tempo The tempo should be clearly stated at the start, as text or metronome mark, with any changes clearly marked.</p> | |
| <p>Time-signatures Time-signatures in metrical music should be correctly positioned, with any changes clearly marked.</p> | |
| <p>Chanted sections Non-metrical chant should be clearly indicated as such.</p> | |
| <p>Flexibility Syllables should be given adequate duration and not be squashed together. They may be spread out with a longer bar, or an extra bar.</p> | |
| <p>Syncopation Any syncopation should be convincing, with the off-beat accentuation clearly shown.</p> | |
| <p>Accentuation of syllables Accented syllables should coincide with strong beats according to the time-signature, unless the text is greatly spread out or there is deliberate syncopation.</p> | |
| <p>Lead-in help There should be a clear introduction. Elsewhere, the accompaniment should also provide help for the people's entry after a long note or rest.</p> | |

Much of this material is adapted, by permission, from online information sheets issued by the Department for Christian Life & Worship, Process for permission to publish musical settings of liturgical texts, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The authors acknowledge their debt to them, and strongly recommend that composers consult these documents at www.romanmissal.org.uk/Home/Music/Composing-Music

Compiled by Robin Bell and Evelyn Stell for the Liturgy Commission of the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, Scotland, September 2012

This checklist is still under test, and feedback from composers would be welcome.

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