Organic Zombie & Synthetic Soul: The Unity Between Preservation & Progress in Contemporary Church Music

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the relationship between modernism and traditionalism in contemporary church music. Beginning with a once-revolutionary organ at St Anne's Anglican Church in Sydney's west, the essay examines how the church has adjusted to rapidly changing social conditions over the course of the 20th Century. I utilise the concepts of 'zombie categories', 'liquid modernity' and authorised idealism to address common misconceptions that progress and conservation are diametrically opposed ideologies. In addition, I attend to the challenges presented by hybridity in an attempt to produce a delicately balanced report. The key discussion of the paper lies within the examination of tension. I examine the church’s staggered system of acceptance regarding progressive music, and how the gap between spiritual and secular music continues to lessen with contributions from both sides. I wrestle with the movement of the church from musical trailblazer to conservative; in stark contrast to the evolution of jazz, rock, blues, funk and hip-hop outside of the church. This is especially pertinent due to these genres roots in gospel music. More importantly, I delve into the underlying convictions that drive both liturgical modernists and traditionalists. This was when the research proved most surprising. Indeed, as I contrasted the two school of thought, I found that their shared desire for an ideal and the lack of authority to ratify that ideal, in particular, were of prodigious noteworthiness. It is here that the discussion of hybridity, and the logic of its inherent paradox, diverts the essay’s focus from tension to resolve.

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whole, which is manifesting itself in particularly large scope on the space of Kievan Rus’—the Rus’ of St. Vladimir. Salvation in Christianity, or deliverance, is the saving of
the soul from sin and its consequences. Variant views on salvation are among the main fault lines dividing the various Christian denominations, being a point of
disagreement between Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, as well as within Protestantism, notably in the Calvinist–Arminian debate. The fault
lines include conflicting definitions of depravity, predestination, atonement, and most pointedly, justification.