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Crossing borders – some Dutch and American influences on the 1930s Swiss chant revival

Kelly Landerkin

1. Introduction

In 1929, when through a string of coincidences Ina Lohr (1903–1983) arrived in Basel from Amsterdam, she was a young woman at the beginning of her musical profession; it could not have been foreseen at the time that her presence would have a lasting impact on Basel's musical direction.¹ Her previous training in Amsterdam had given her a broad, vigorous and liberal education in the performing arts; she was an accomplished violinist and had already shown considerable potential as a composer, but her own deep religious devotion drew her more to the church than to the concert stage. Yet Lohr's introduction that very year to Paul Sacher led to a cooperation of mutual profit and musical import, and one that ensured her long-term residency in Basel. For Sacher and his Basel Chamber Orchestra, Lohr became an invaluable asset. In her capacity as his assistant, Lohr's analytical skills and knowledge of early repertoires contributed to the programming of public concerts but were also instrumental in the preparation of the performing scores, even those of their own contemporaries. Their enthusiasm for ancient music led to the founding of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in 1933. Here Lohr was able to assert her influence on the curriculum of both amateur and professional students, and as the main teacher of theoretical subjects in that house, to impart her knowledge and passion to students through direct supervision. Central to Lohr's work and impact was her erudition on the sub-

¹ Anne Smith, "Ina Lohr: transcending the boundaries of Early Music", url: www.rimab.ch/content/research-projects/project-ina-lohr-1/papers-from-the-project-ina-lohr/ina-lohr-transcending-the-boundaries-of-early-music-a-smith (30 May 2017); Ina Lohr, 1980 audio recording "Gründung der SCB", Basel, Paul Sacher Stiftung (= Basel, PSS), Ina Lohr Collection, CD 4.

ject of liturgy and ecclesiastical music, and her classes on Gregorian chant and Protestant church music were a cornerstone of the general program of studies.² But Lohr was only one of a number of influences on Swiss plainchant practice. This paper will discuss some aspects of the contemporary situation of Gregorian chant in Dutch society and international connections forged by influential chant practitioners in Holland, Switzerland and the United States. It will explore how they may have worked upon Ina Lohr's understanding of Catholic plainchant, especially upon the hotly debated point of rhythmic interpretation, and how she in turn influenced her students and colleagues.

Two differing approaches to chant practice were actively cultivated in Holland during Lohr's musical formation in the 1920s. On one side were the Caecilianist and mensuralist approaches to chant interpretation, connecting melody and note length to the declamation of the corresponding text. A representative of this interpretation was the teacher of Gregorian chant at the Amsterdam Muzieklyceum, Hubert Cuypers. The other approach was the equalist interpretation propagated by the Benedictine monastery in Solesmes, which assumed an underlying, consistent pulse for the rhythmic flow. Solesmes' influence was growing in Dutch chant circles at the time, especially through the outreach work of Justine Ward (1879–1975), the esteemed American music pedagogue whose Solesmes-based method enjoyed popularity across the United States and Europe in the early part of the 20th century. As a leading figure in the music education platform to the Netherlands, Ward offers an interesting counterbalance in the context of Lohr's upbringing. Although their paths seemingly never intersect, these two figures each in their way shape the reception of Gregorian chant for their generations and those that followed.

2 Documents and course materials, Basel, PSS, Ina Lohr Collection, IL 20/21.

2. Dom Mocquereau and Justine Ward

The efforts of Dom André Mocquereau of Solesmes to mobilize the congregation in the active participation in Gregorian chant have received wide press in the course of the past century.³ Some of these efforts were met with appreciation: in particular, Mocquereau's work in publishing facsimiles of early manuscripts, under the title of *Paléographie Musicale*, which allowed the population at large to learn to read plainchant in ancient neumes, paved the way for the acceptance of the Solesmes' transcriptions as authentic, and served as the basis for the official Vatican editions. Other efforts were more controversial, especially aspects of his approach to rhythm. There was strong and particular opposition to Mocquereau's editorial markings – as many lacked a basis in the chant sources – and especially to his subdivisions of melodic gestures into *ictus* groupings, which emphasized notes he considered to have an inherent strength.⁴ These liberties seemed to a wide public to be an unwarranted infringement on their sovereign right to a personal and individual interpretation, and hardened negative impressions of the mainstreaming of this neo-Solesmes⁵ tradition.

Mocquereau's approach however, laid the groundwork for numerous other publications that helped to facilitate performance by the laity in general. One of the most influential of these was developed by the American

3 Dom André Mocquereau, *Le nombre musical grégorien: ou rythmique grégorienne, théorie et pratique*, Rome and Tournai: Desclée, 1908/1927; idem, *Paléographie Musicale: Les principaux manuscrits de chant grégorien, ambrosien, mozarabe, gallican, publiés en fac-similés phototypiques par les Bénédictins de Solesmes*, Solesmes: Imprimerie Saint-Pierre, 1889–1930.

4 See, for example, Amédée Gastoué and Maurice Emmanuel, "Bibliographie", in: *La tribune de St. Gervais* 14 (Nov. 1908), 264, <https://archive.org/stream/latribunedesaint190814pari#page/264/mode/2up> (30 May 2019). Gastoué and Emmanuel criticized Mocquereau's "personal interpretation of the medieval rhythms. It is time to protest against this pretention, so little justified. The practitioners of plainchant must not let themselves be ruled by a scholar who defends his own glory with such partiality." All translations into English are by the author unless noted.

5 The term "neo-Solesmes" was used by contemporary critics to distinguish the new direction of Dom André Mocquereau from the approach of his teacher and predecessor, Dom Joseph Pothier.

music pedagogue Justine Bayard Ward.⁶ A Catholic convert from Episcopalianism, Ward took the reform and advancement of plainchant as her personal calling, and chose to focus specifically on the education of the youth as the most effective path, creating a learning environment that would best suit young minds.⁷ In 1920 she began working with Mocquereau, combining the teaching of folksongs and nursery rhymes with the introduction of plainsong according to the Solesmes approach, formulating her newly fashioned system of musical pedagogy to reflect his teachings.⁸

Ward applied Mocquereau's understanding of rhythm in a manner appropriate to the teaching of children, integrating movement into the learning process and into the expression of sung chant. In this way she was able to help children internalize the flow of the melodic line: "It is not easy, in our day, to describe rhythm, and particularly the free musical rhythm of Gregorian chant, because even those educated musicians who vaguely sense in practice the beauties of *rhythm*, recognise in theory nothing beyond *measure*".⁹

Ward also employed a number of creative didactical devices, including finger and number notation systems, adding markings to transmit the desired suppleness and flow, while also pragmatically offering the eye the necessary information for learning the tones.¹⁰ Mocquereau complimented Ward's didactical application of gesture and props as aesthetic tools, writing in the foreword to her method: "Some European readers may perhaps smile

⁶ Pierre Combe, *Justine Ward and Solesmes*, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press 1987; Justine Ward, *Music fourth year: Gregorian chant*, Washington: Catholic Education Press 1923.

⁷ Justine Bayard Ward, "The reform of church music", first published in: *The Atlantic Monthly* 97 (Apr. 1906), 4–5, and republished as "The chant of the church", in: *Popular liturgical library*, series 4, no. 5, Collegeville: Liturgical Press 1930.

⁸ Jolande van der Klis, *Oude muziek in Nederland. Het verhaal van de pioniers 1900–1975*, Utrecht: Stichting Organisatie Oude Muziek 1991, 94.

⁹ Ward, *Music fourth year* (see n. 6), XVII, quoting Mocquereau, *Le nombre musical grégorien* 1, 1908, 19.

¹⁰ See also the systems of Emile J. M. Chevé and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

at these small tricks and find them childish. They would be quite wrong; all means are good if they bring quick, decisive results”.¹¹

The success of Ward’s method led to its establishment throughout the American Catholic school system, and it spread rapidly to other countries, the first of which was Holland in 1928. Following an opportune introduction in Solesmes to Father Henri Vullinghs and Joseph Lennards, Justine Ward was soon invited to give lectures and performances at that year’s Gregoriusvereeniging meeting in Utrecht. She brought with her a *schola* of highly able American girls. She had made sure to gain the approval of Dom Mocquereau before their public appearance. His reaction was positive: “As soon as the first notes are heard [...] the whole audience is charmed; [...] discretion in the nuances, suppleness and daintiness of the Solesmes rhythm which governs and envelops all the melody, truly everything is perfect [...] they may go to Holland and elsewhere, with full confidence [...]”.¹² Their presentation impressed the participants so much as to lay the groundwork for the foundation of a Ward Institute in Holland, in cooperation with Vullinghs and Lennards, and to name Justine Ward an honorary member of the Gregoriusvereeniging. A Dutch translation of her method was published in 1929.¹³

The Ward Method soon also found use in the public school system as well as in Protestant institutions. To this purpose, a new edition was published in 1935 with Justine Ward’s approval, in which the performance and interpretation of Gregorian chant were replaced by a new focus on psalm settings in the Dutch vernacular; strophes and texts considered too Catholic were hereby removed. This change resulted in the loss of a central focus of the Ward Method, the propagation of Gregorian chant in Latin, and may have been an early sign of a gradual shift in the Dutch form of Wardian pedagogy, which in 1933 had begun offering courses in non-sacred musics such as folksong and dance as well as instrumental lessons on recorder play-

11 Dom Mocquereau, *Revue grégorienne* (1922); cited in Combe, *Ward and Solesmes* (see n. 6), 14. Translation original.

12 Letter from Mocquereau to Ward (22 Aug. 1928), cited in Combe, *Ward and Solesmes* (see n. 6), 40.

13 Justine Ward, *Gregoriaansche Zang volgens de leer van Dom Mocquereau. Handboek voor de school*, Doornik: Desclée 1929. Translation original.

ing. Justine Ward herself did not countenance this direction, as she feared it would result in the weakening of her devotional goals. Thus ensued a dissolution of the ties binding the Ward Institute and the Gregoriusvereeining, but the efforts of this new, more secular direction were not completely stymied. The year 1940 brought with it a cooperation between the Ward Institute and the organization founded by Jop Pollmann, “Het Nederlandsche Lied”, which positioned the Ward Institute as a reluctant player in a fraught political landscape.¹⁴

As Mocquereau had alluded to in his preface to the Ward manual, there was indeed tangible ambivalence in Europe regarding the Ward Method. In early 1932, Ward’s efforts in Holland were impaired by the long-brewing altercation between proponents of differing interpretations of chant. The public feud was between followers of the Solesmes school, principally informed in the region by the Ward Method, and those who favored Caecilian or mensuralist chant performance and an approach unfettered by Solesmes doctrine. The divide caused considerable insecurity and upheaval within individual congregations. Vullingsh, then director of the Ward Institute in Roermond, appealed to the Congregation of Rites to use its authority to intervene on his behalf. The statement that followed was a forceful rebuke of mensuralist interpretation and represented a full endorsement of the Solesmes approach.¹⁵ The Ward Institute in Holland was once again able to advance its platform for the next several years until the war broke out in full.

Adverse forces were not exclusive to Ward’s work in Europe. Despite a general attitude of support, her method was also subject to open public criticism at home in the United States, as displayed in a 1931 article by Alastair Guinan in the American Catholic music journal, *The Commonweal*: “[...] many of us smile when we are informed that the dignity which is at present lacking in much of our service music will be supplied when the children of the parochial schools have been taught to sing the melodies of the *Kyriale* in

¹⁴ Gisbert Brandt, *Die Ward-Methode und ihre Anwendung im Musikunterricht an niederländischen Schulen*, Schriftliche Hausarbeit, Seminar für Musik und ihre Didaktik, Universität zu Köln, 1984, 66; Gabriel Steinschulte, *Die Ward-Bewegung*, Regensburg: G. Bosse 1979, 332; van der Klis, *Oude muziek in Nederland* (see n. 5), 94.

¹⁵ Brandt, *ibid.*, 55–58; Steinschulte, *ibid.*, 243–254.

the thoroughly emasculated fashion made – alas – too familiar by the work of a faction prominent among Gregorianists”.¹⁶ We can be in no doubt of Guinan’s intended target, as Guinan follows this passage with a quote from Ward’s article, “The Reform of Church Music”, which had just reprinted the year before.¹⁷ Here she makes a plea for plainchant as the only viable music for the liturgy, setting it apart from all other musics, and claiming that: “Modern liturgical music, if it succeeds in being non-scandalous, becomes, at best, negative [...]”. Although such a statement could be read in favor of the Early Music Movement, it is perhaps better understood in the light of the 1903 papal *Motu Proprio*, in which Gregorian chant was given pride of place as the reigning musical form of the liturgy. Her remarks were widely received regionally as well as abroad: the *Commonweal* article survives among the effects of the Dutch gregorianist Hubert Cuypers, with this passage specifically underlined for special notice. This article, along with an accompanying letter portraying Ward as “dangerous” to the mensuralist cause, places Ward within Cuypers’ field of vision and offers an additional impetus for his public trouncing of the Solesmes position in the early 1930s, to be discussed below.¹⁸

The Ward Method’s impact on the Dutch music landscape was substantial. The vast majority of students in Holland – and nearly all church musicians – who had musical instruction in the mid-20th century were educated according to the Ward Method, and towns in which Ward centers were established enjoyed a high level of musical activity in private formations and public music schools. Due to this influence, Brandt posits an implicit connection between Ward’s teachings and the Early Music Movement: “[...] it is an obvious conjecture that the leading role played by the Netherlands in today’s interpretation of early music can be directly connected with the Ward Movement, which occupied itself from its founding especially with modal music”.¹⁹ This is most probably an overstatement, as it denies the Protestant

16 Alastair Guinan, “Plainsong only?”, in: *The commonweal* (19 Aug. 1931), 381.

17 See n. 7.

18 See n. 38.

19 Brandt, *Die Ward-Methode* (see n. 14), 72: “Nicht zuletzt ist es eine naheliegende Vermutung, dass die führende Rolle, die die Niederlande heute bei der Interpretation Alter Musik spielt, direkt mit der Ward-Bewegung in Verbindung gebracht werden kann,

leaders of the Early Music Movement their due credit in its development,²⁰ but the pervasive presence of the Ward Method in Holland during a formative stage of activity in ancient repertoires may certainly have been a contributing factor.

Dom Mocquereau passed away in early 1930, but Ward's popular approach reached a large audience of young churchgoers, who through her method quite naturally gained access to and internalized Mocquereau's Solesmes system. Her efforts in the teaching of Gregorian chant to children were honored by the Vatican with a Medaille d'Or.²¹ The Ward Method stands alone among the manuals developed for schoolchildren at that time in its didactical application of movement and notation systems to plainchant. Its successfully age-appropriate pedagogy was in line with the progressive education movement of the time, perhaps the main reason why the Ward Method still enjoys use today.

3. Hubert Cuypers

Whereas the work of Justine Ward can be seen as an example of Mocquereau's influence as a catalyst for popular proliferation, participation, and interpretation according to the Solesmes method, a contrasting position to the neo-Solesmes influence in Holland is represented by Hubert Cuypers (1873–1960).²² Cuypers' own strong interest in a natural text declamation and word accent drove his compositional process just as it informed his interpretation

die sich ja schon von ihrem Ursprung her besonders mit Modaler Musik auseinander-setzt."

²⁰ Jed Wentz, "H.R. and the Formation of an Early Music Aesthetic in The Netherlands (1916–1921)", url: www.rimab.ch/content/research-projects/project-ina-lohr-1/papers-from-the-project-ina-lohr/h-r-and-the-formation-of-an-early-music-aesthetic-in-the-netherlands-1916-1921 (29 May 2019).

²¹ Dom Paolo Ferretti, "Mrs. Justine Ward received at the Vatican", in: *The Caecilia* 9 (1933), 265–266.

²² *Hubert Cuypers 80 Jaar*, Amsterdam: Huldigingscomité Hubert Cuypers 1953, 28–33.

of chant.²³ His rhythmic interpretation of early plainsong leaned toward the mensuralist approach of Dom Jeannin, whom he championed publicly.²⁴ In program notes for a performance of Notker's "Sancti spiritus assit nobis gratia" in July 1931, he stated that it was "most probably originally sung with single and double notes in measured rhythm. This mensuralist rhythm seems to have been lost since the 11th century [...]"²⁵ His archives include a transcription of this piece, in proportional note values, reaffirming the direction of his rhythmic interpretation. But Cuypers' correspondence with the composer Alphons Diepenbrock confirms that he also saw his own priorities – in respecting the word-accent of the text as well as a well-proportioned musical phrase – just as well reflected in the equalist, "natural oratorical rhythm" of Dom Mocquereau's mentor, Dom Pothier, which formed the basis for the Solesmes interpretation. Upon hearing a live performance, Cuypers com-

23 Letter from Herman Rutters to Hubert Cuypers (23 Sept. 1909), The Hague, Netherlands Music Institute, Hubert Cuypers Collection, 157/089.28: "Vergis ik mij erg, als ik meen dat juist in die eigenaardige aanwending der rhythmiek het geheim schuilt van een gezinde verbinding en dat Uw studie van het Gregoriaansch daartoe veel heeft bijgedragen?"

24 Letter from Ewald Jammers (25 Sept. 1935), to Hubert Cuypers Jr., Nijmegen, Catholic Documentation Centre (= CDC), Hubert Cuypers Collection, 25: "In kurzer Zeit wird von mir ein Buch über den Choralrhythmus erscheinen, in dem ich zu Jeannin usw. Stellung nehme; ich möchte auch zu den mensuralen Theorien, die jener Notiz in der *Revue grégorienne* zufolge bzw. dem Vorgehen des H. Vullinghs zufolge in Holland existieren, Stellung nehmen. Ich darf in Ihrem Herrn Vater einen Hauptvertreter des holländischen Mensuralismus vermuten – aber ich habe bisher keine theoretische Veröffentlichung feststellen können; Sie sehen also, dass Sie mir da etwas helfen können. Sonst müsste ich in meinem Buche schreiben: „Der Mensuralismus Jeannins scheint im Holland (durch Cuypers?) eine besondere Fortführung erhalten zu haben; näheres war aber nicht festzustellen.“

25 Program notes by Cuypers for a Schola Cantorum concert (3 July 1931), Nijmegen, CDC, Hubert Cuypers Collection, 15: "De tree volgende zangen ... worden gezongen in den naar alle waarschijnlijkheid authentieken stijl met enkele en dubbele noten en maat-rhythmiek. Deze rhythmiek ('mensuralisme' genoemd) schijnt sinds de 11de eeuw verloren geraakt te zijn, en plaats gemaakt te hebben voor den z g. cantus planus met principeel gelijke noten, zooals zulks in de liturgie is voorgeschreven."

mented: “The overall impression was the closest I have ever heard in my life to that which is in my imagination”.²⁶

Despite his affinity with the priorities of Dom Pothier, Cuypers became disillusioned with the intractability of the new Solesmes rhythmic interpretation according to Dom Mocquereau.²⁷ This brought Cuypers into direct conflict with the neo-Solesmes doctrine and eventually led around 1930 to his public rejection of it, most vividly in his series of articles shedding a new light on the “Gregorian question”.²⁸ He railed against what he called the axiom of inviolability of the neo-Solesmes interpretation which had gained favor in Holland.²⁹

Two letters from Ewald Jammers in September 1935 offer a surprising connection between Cuypers and Vullinghs of the Ward Institute, suggesting that mensural chant transcriptions obtained from Vullinghs and published in the *Revue du chant grégorien* were in fact the work of Cuypers or his immediate circle.³⁰ In pursuing evidence for this connection, Jammers had hoped

²⁶ Hubert Cuypers *80 Jaar* (see n. 22), 28; Petra van Langen, *Muziek en religie. Katholieke musici en de confessionalisering van het Nederlandse muziekleven, 1850–1948*, Hilversum: Petra van Langen & Uitgeverij Verloren 2014, 199: “De totaalindruk kwam mijn phantasie voor ‘t eerst van mijn leven nabij.”

²⁷ van Langen, *ibid*; Martin J. M. Hoondert, “The appropriation of gregorian chant in the Netherlands, 1903–1930”, in: *Christian feast and festival: the dynamics of western liturgy and culture*, ed. Paulus G. J. Post et al., Leuven etc.: Peeters 2001, 643–676.

²⁸ “Nieuw licht in het Gregoriaansche vraagstuk”, a series of three articles in the January, February and March 1931 volumes of the *Caecilia het Muziekcollege*; Henri van der Burght’s article “De Gregoriaanse kwestie”, in: *De Gemeenschap* (1935) details a radio interview with Cuypers in September 1930 defending his position: www.dbnl.org/tekst/_gem001193501_01/_gem001193501_01_0082.php (30 May 2019).

²⁹ An article (4 Oct. 1931) in *De Tijd* speaks explicitly of the “axioma van Solesmes’ wetenschappelijke onaantastbaarheid”; Dr. Bonaventura Kruitwagen, “De knuppel in het gregoriaansche hoenderhok”, *De Maasbode* (8 June 1931). In Nijmegen the CDC Hubert Cuypers Collection, 19, offers details of Cuypers’ view on performance practice in the Netherlands.

³⁰ Ewald Jammers postcard (13 Sept. 1935) to Hubert Cuypers Jr: “Die Revue du chant grégorien haben eine mensurale Choralübertragung abgedruckt, die H. Vullinghs nach Rom geschickt habe. Woher hat denn H. Vullinghs diese Übertragung? Was sind seine Quellen? Vermutlich doch Arbeiten Ihres Vaters oder seiner Freunde.”; Ewald Jam-

to include Dutch modes of interpretation in his upcoming book, and assumed Cuypers to be a leading figure of Dutch mensuralism according to Jeannin's approach. No direct contact between Cuypers and Vullinghs can be ascertained through this exchange, but it is telling that Jammers' second mis-sive includes the following statement: "The person of Rector Vullinghs does not interest me in the least, nor the way he works. Much more interesting to me are the descriptions of mensuralism [...]" (see note n. 28). This remark reveals a certain distance between Cuypers and Vullinghs, and although the personal politics of the rift in Holland may not have been internationally consequential, the local rhythmic debate itself was clearly of universal interest.

Cuypers was well established and enjoyed correspondence with colleagues on both sides of the issue.³¹ His opinion carried weight in Dutch musical circles, and he was also in the happy situation of being able to demonstrate his aesthetic interpretation with his excellent vocal ensembles, above all with his Schola Cantorum. Chant was an important part of their work, and the beautiful singing of the youth in particular garnered high praise. Cuypers' work on "Gregoriaan spreekgezag" with children emphasized "the accent of the word [...] the meaning of the content [...] connected with a flowing musical rhythm".³² His formations toured frequently to critical acclaim, and won praise and prizes both within Holland and abroad.

Cuypers' public reckoning with Solesmes provoked reactions from active dissenters in the liturgical music scene – both to their rhythmic standpoints

mers letter (25 Sept. 1935) to Hubert Cuypers Jr: "Die Persönlichkeit von Herrn Rektor Vullinghs interessiert mich gar nicht, und wie er seine Sache verfährt [sic]. Mich interessieren viel mehr die Darstellungen über den Mensuralismus, d.h. also theoretische Abhandlungen über die rhythmische Bedeutung der Neumen usw."

31 His archives include letters from Jeannin, Gastoué, Jammers, Angie, Bonvin, McDonald, Murray, Dom David of Solesmes, and many more.

32 Herman Leonard Berckenhoff, "Gewijde Musik", *Kunstwerken en Kunstenaars*, Amsterdam: De Degel 1905, 67–69: "Dat het Gregoriaansch spreekgezag den jongen zangers als tot natuur geworden is, bleek uit de weinige aandacht, die zij behoeften te schenken aan de directie van hun voorganger, den heer Cuypers, die de declamatie met den vinger ever pointeerde – want eigenlijk dirigeren is bij het Gregoriaansch natuurlijk uisgesloten. Deze zang mondt den roomschen kinderen als hun moedersprake."

and to the imposed straightjacket – from within Holland as well as internationally. Of particular relevance for this study is his connection with the circles of Ludwig Bonvin in Switzerland and in the United States.

4. Ludwig Bonvin

A regional bridge of communication between Holland, Switzerland, and the United States was built through the figure of Ludwig Bonvin (1850–1939), a Swiss priest hailing from Sierre in the canton of Valais. Having pursued his novitiate in Exaten, Holland, Bonvin was sent early in his priesthood to teach music at Canisius College in New York, an institution founded by a Dutch Jesuit.³³ There he quickly gained a reputation as an inspiring composer, and successfully published his compositions in Germany and the United States in the decades around the turn of the twentieth century. Around the same time, Bonvin began to devote himself to theoretical and philosophical discussions of music, and especially questions of chant interpretation and performance. His active participation in these debates is well-documented in articles in the *Gregorius-Blatt* and *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* (Germany), *Der Chorwächter* (Switzerland) and *The Musical Quarterly* as well as *The Caecilia* (United States) between the 1910s and 1930s.³⁴

In a 1913 article for *Der Chorwächter*, Bonvin advocated an approach to rhythm according to the source work and conclusions of Antoine Dechev-

³³ The Bonvin Collection, Andrew L. Bouwhuis Library, Canisius College, url: <http://library.canisius.edu/archives/bonvin> (30 May 2019).

³⁴ A selection of relevant publications includes: “Zielt Guidos Vergleichung der Neumen mit Versfüßen”, in: *Gregorius-Blatt* 36 (1911); “Undeelbaarheid der ‘temps premier’ / Betreffe der ‘unteilbaren Primärzeit’ im Choral”, in: *Gregorius-Blatt* 3 (1911); “On Syrian liturgical chant”, in: *The Musical Quarterly* 4 (Jan. 1918); “Lösung eines Rätsel in Guidos Micrologus”, in: *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft* 3 (1921), 585–587; “Die heilige Hildegard als Komponistin”, in: *Gregorius-Blatt* 45 (1920), 57–59 (cited in Honey Mecconi, “The unknown Hildegard. Editing, performance, and reception (an *ordo virtutum* in five acts)”, in: *Music in print and beyond*, Rochester, NY 2013, 300, n. 82); “Über die erste Taktzeit und ihren Akzent”, in: *Gregorius-Blatt* 47 (1922); “The measure in Gregorian Music”, *The Musical Quarterly* 15 (Jan. 1929).

rens.³⁵ With his assertion that the chant of the “Golden Age” from the fourth until the twelfth century was sung in regular proportional values which could be marked and counted, he placed himself firmly in the mainstream of mensuralist interpretation.³⁶ He continued a year later and took the Solesmes supporters to task: “In the aforementioned debate on Solesmes theories I have included some adversarial arguments against them. On these Solesmes is not willing to enter a discussion. Solesmes ‘owns’ and wishes to enjoy its possession in peace. A convergence of the parties with regard to the concept of rhythm is not expected”.³⁷ Even when Mocquereau admitted the corruption of chant rhythm in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Bonvin took issue with his interpretation of it, as “for D. Mocquereau these longs and shorts are not precisely measurable and proportional, but only approximate”.³⁸ Bonvin considered this view to be too vague and subjective, arguing that chant interpretation should be based on concrete and objective criteria both by the early singers and by the interpreters of his own day.

After emigrating to America from Switzerland, Bonvin became the editor of the American journal *The Caecilia*, which alongside *The Commonweal* canvassed the popular liturgical movement as well as serious academic and ecclesiastical issues. This duty kept him in direct correspondence with many active participants in the plainchant discussions, both in the Old and the

35 Ludwig Bonvin, “Dechevrens’ Forschungsmethode oder: Auf welchem Wege wurde von ihm der Rhythmus der Neumen entziffert?”, in: *Der Chorwächter* (May 1913), 49–52; “Der gegenwärtige Stand der Rhythmusfrage im gregorianischen Gesang”, in: *Der Chorwächter* (Dec. 1914), 5–8 and 15–18.

36 Ludwig Bonvin, “Der gegenwärtige Stand” (see n. 35), 16: “Ich habe in Vorstehendem der Auseinandersetzung der Solesmer Theorien zugleich einige gegnerische Einwände beigemischt. Auf eine Diskussion derselben lässt sich Solesmes nicht ein. Solesmes ‘ist im Besitz’ und will sich seines Besitzes in Ruhe erfreuen. Eine Annäherung der Parteien bezüglich des Rhythmusbegriffes ist nicht ersichtlich [...]. Der gregorianische Gesang ist ursprünglich wie jede andere Musik, zu allen Zeiten in Noten von verschiedenen proportionellem Dauerwert komponiert und gesungen worden, in Dauerwerten, welche gleiche Zeiteile bilden oder sich zu solchen zusammensetzen, so dass die Melodie nach diesen Zeiteilen sich regelmässig markieren (taktieren) lässt.”

37 Ibid., 16.

38 Ibid., 17: “[...] nur sind für D. Mocquereau diese Längen und Kürzen nicht genau abgemessene und proportionelle, sondern nur ungefähre.”

New Worlds, and, perhaps continuing a connection forged during his novitiate in Holland, in 1932 he invited Cuypers to write an article on behalf of the mensuralists.³⁹ Cuypers obliged and came under heavy criticism from Solesmes followers in America, and twenty years after his *Chorwächter* articles Bonvin pointedly waded into the discussion in his defense:

For more than three quarters of a century Mensuralists have been presenting proof for their contention that, like every other kind of music, the Gregorian melodies were composed and performed in notes of various proportional time-value. They have never been refuted. If Solesmes fights shy of entering into a discussion with Mensuralists, she should at least furnish some positive evidence for her own thesis. Solesmes teaches that in Gregorian Chant all notes have the same value, and that this is an essential and characteristic feature. Music of that sort undoubtedly forms a great exception from the general practice in music. Such an exception must be proved [...]. The Equalists have always and everywhere contented themselves with mere assertion.⁴⁰

Bonvin and Cuypers continued to engage in a lively correspondence during the early 1930s. Seeking the approbation and support of a like-minded colleague, Bonvin enclosed a German translation of the aforementioned *Caecilia* article in one of his letters, appending to it a closing plea for corroborating evidence from Cuypers' pen: "Therefore, for clear, objectively satisfying proof from the Gregorian authors of the Golden Age and from the rhythmic neumed codices, Ludwig Bonvin – and certainly countless other chant lovers – would be very, very grateful".⁴¹ A further affirmation of respect from his

³⁹ Herbert Cuypers, "Rhythm in gregorian chant", in: *The Caecilia* 10 (1932), translated by Arthur Angie; he offers a further explanation of his standpoint in a letter published in *The Caecilia* 5 (1933), 158.

⁴⁰ Ludwig Bonvin, "A Request for Proof", in: *The Caecilia* 9 (1933), 290.

⁴¹ "Für einen klaren, objektiv befriedigenden Beweis also aus dem gregorianischen Autoren des goldenen Zeitalters und aus den rhythmischen Neumenkodizes würde – und zwar sicherlich mit unzähligen anderen Choralliebhhabern – sehr sehr dankbar sein Ludwig Bonvin." See also in the same letter from Bonvin to Cuypers (3 Mar. 1933), Nijmegen, CDC, Hubert Cuypers Collection, 10: "Ich hoffe wenigstens bald Ihre Antwort auf Ferretti für *Caecilia* zu erhalten. Ferretti & Ward Co. wird, fürchte ich, dem Mensuralismus, nicht eigentlich wissenschaftlich, wohl aber politisch, sich als gefährlich erweisen." A second appell on 29 March of the same year quotes Ferretti, in reaction to a Cuy-

circle is found in a letter to Bonvin from a certain J. G. H., offering explicit and fervent support of Cuypers' position: "I have just read and marveled at Cuypers' article in Volume 4 of *Musica Sacra*. He says nothing more than what you have often said; but he may express himself more strongly than you, and he did too, so that it was simply devastating for Solesmes. I am curious to see how they will react to it. Perhaps you will witness the actual and practical triumph over aequalism after all".⁴² This letter found its way to Cuypers, who must have been highly gratified at the wide-reaching effects of his efforts. His pursuits were intended for reception by many venues – the church, the stage, and in the conservatory. He argued for the right to a personal approach and interpretation, in the face of sharp criticism from the Benedictines, bringing him local as well as international respect and recognition.

The same 1933 issue of *The Caecilia* as quoted above offers us an interesting glance at the intersection of the various chant movements active at the time. Not only do we find a chronicle of the Medaille d'Or awarded to Justine Ward by the Vatican, cited above, but also a lead article on the church music movement in Switzerland. Here Friedrich Frey, a canon of Engelberg and erstwhile president of the *Allgemeine Cäcilienverein der Länder deutscher Zunge*, offered a vivid description of the difficulties encountered in Switzerland's position with regard to the liturgical movement. The influence of its various neighboring cultures strongly affected the Swiss church music scene, and in describing the happenings in his country, Frey was relegated to fracturing the picture into small regions of activity. St. Gallen's exemplary musical culture flourished, indeed its "Gregorian tradition was never interrupted [...] the venerable chant continues to flourish as of old [...]", but the situation in Basel as he described it was but a poor contrast to that celebrated

pers' article in *The Caecilia* 10 (1932) as writing: "There is not a single mensuralist fact established scientifically."

⁴² J. G. H. to Bonvin (20 Apr. 1932), Nijmegen, CDC, Hubert Cuypers Collection, 10: "Er sagt eigentlich nicht mehr als Sie schon öfter gesagt haben; aber er darf sich kräftiger ausdrücken als Sie und hat es auch getan, so dass es für Solesmes einfachhin vernichtend ist. Ich bin begierig darauf zu sehen wie man darauf reagieren wird. Vielleicht werden Sie doch noch den wirklichen und praktischen Sieg über den Aequalismus erleben."

tradition, as “during a century congregational singing was dormant in the diocese of Basel. [...] Notwithstanding many difficulties, it is now making some progress”.⁴³

“What a mighty impulse would be given Church music should a school of liturgical music be established in Switzerland [...]”:⁴⁴ Frey places some of the blame for the lamentable state of church music on the neglect of school choral training which had “a disastrous effect for church choirs”.⁴⁵ This situation, along with the devaluation of traditional structures in the liturgy in the years leading up to the *Motu Proprio*, had led to some occurrences of quite remarkable musical selections for liturgical ceremonies.⁴⁶ But gradually new opportunities for local organists, choir directors and singers, offered in the form of short workshops or extended courses for the amateur as well as those more specifically targeting the serious musician, began to signal an urgency for the cause. The ever-increasing list of offerings seen in advertisements in the *Chorwächter* of the late 1920s and early 1930s also includes announcements from the newly founded Schola Cantorum Basiliensis, taught among others by Ina Lohr.⁴⁷ Frey attested that “the people of Switzerland are willing and ready to make sacrifices for music [...]”,⁴⁸ efforts which were aided by active societies such as the *Allgemeine Cäcilienverein*. But the fact remained that even the regional presence of the highly influential Gre-

⁴³ Frederick Frei (sic), “Church music in Switzerland”, in: *The Caecilia* 9 (1930), 264.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 264.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 263.

⁴⁶ Johann Stehle, “Vor 50 Jahren und heute”, in: *Der Chorwächter* (May 1913), 128: “Ein Ohrenzeuge, der als Knabe dem Begräbnis eines Pfarrers und Dekans in einer Gemeinde des luzernischen Hinterlandes beiwohnte, versicherte, beim Seelamte sei, vielleicht als ‘Offertorium’, gesungen worden: ‘Von ferne sei herzlich gegrüßet’; nach der hl. Wandlung aber habe man den rührenden ‘Kantus’ eingelegt: ‘Wenn die Schwalben heimwärts ziehen’. [...] wenn es ‘hoch’ hergehen sollte, der Intonation des Gloria durch den Priester das ‘Trittst im Morgenrot daher’, das sich P. Zwissig sicherlich nie als ‘Gloria’ gedacht hatte.”

⁴⁷ “Rundschau”, in: *Der Chorwächter* (Jan. 1934), 17; Pirmin Vetter, “Liturgische Musik im Konzert”, in: *Der Chorwächter* (Feb. 1933), 27–30; “Rundschau”, in: *Der Chorwächter* (Mar. 1934), 58.

⁴⁸ Frei, “Church music” (see n. 40), 263.

gorian Academy at the Catholic University of Fribourg under Peter Wagner could not yet signal a widespread Gregorian resurgence in Switzerland.

Inspiration for successful implementation of the goals of the liturgical movement on a local level was to be found in part within the walls of individual local churches, but also from impressions received abroad. Pater Gähwiler of Henau offered the following account of a performance he witnessed in 1931:

At the Caecilian conference in Cologne I was taken with the boys' choir of the Amsterdam "schola cantorum". These 36 boys also earned the most applause with their simple, unaffected songs and chants. They sang all together from a common score set in large print. I immediately had such a copy prepared for my singers. A large stand is placed on the side altar. On top comes a large sheet, on which the diligent organist writes the melody in large chant notation, so that all of the young singers can see it. The singers are arranged in three rows. In the first row the boys in purple robes, in the second and third rows the girls in white dresses, a garland in their hair. On the highest feast days of the year we sing the introit, the communion and at vespers the antiphons without the organ. The whole congregation takes great delight in the fresh voices of the children, who often present the simple melodies of the service probably somewhat roughly, but delightfully agreeably.⁴⁹

49 "Die liturgische Bewegung und der Choral", in: *Der Chorwächter* (1931), 46: "An der Cäcilientagung in Köln hatte die 'schola cantorum' in Amsterdam mit dem Knabenchor es mir angetan. Diese 36 Buben haben auch am meisten Applaus geerntet mit ihren schlichten, einfachen Volksweisen und Choralpartien. Alle zusammen haben nach einer gemeinsamen, in grossen Noten gehaltenen Vorlage gesungen. Sofort liess ich mir für meine Choralsänger ein Nachbild machen. Ein grosses Pult wird auf dem Seitenaltar aufgestellt. Darauf kommt ein grosses Blatt, worauf der eifrige Organist in grossen Choralnoten die Melodien schreibt, so dass es alle kleinen Sänger sehen können. In drei Reihen sind die Sänger aufgestellt. In der ersten Reihe die Choralknaben, mit violetten Talärchen gewandet, in zweiter und dritter Reihe die Mädchen in weissen Kleidern, das Kränzlein im Haar. So singen wir ohne Orgel an den höchsten Festtagen des Kirchenjahres den Introitus, die Communio und bei der Vesper die Antiphonen. Die ganze Schar der Gläubigen hat eine helle Freude an den frischen Stimmen der Kinder, die oft wohl noch etwas rau, aber herzlich wohligh die schlichten Melodien zum Gottesdienste darbieten".

Although not explicitly named, it is most likely that the “schola cantorum of Amsterdam” that served as inspiration for this novel Swiss performing convention was that renowned ensemble of Hubert Cuypers himself.

5. Ina Lohr

By the time Ina Lohr became a public figure in Switzerland in the early 1930s, Dutch chant efforts were therefore already beginning to exert an influence through various channels in Switzerland. With her arrival in Basel the singing of chant extended beyond the walls of the church and into the training of professional and academic musical circles, specifically at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis.

Lohr’s musical formation in the 1920s at the then-newly-founded Muzieklyceum in Amsterdam had included a required course in Gregorian chant, offered by Hubert Cuypers. She was deeply affected by the repertoire and by his approach to it: “He worked practically, [...] interpreted the texts with hymnic enthusiasm and accompanied with devotion and great musicality, unencumbered by any questions of style”.⁵⁰ Lohr’s affinity with the repertoire awarded her with the opportunity to work on chant with the boys of Cuypers’ Catholic church choir, and his infectious joy in music-making as she described it must have influenced her own attitude. But her later writings reflect a liberalism regarding the plurality of interpretation which seems to surpass Cuypers’ own views. A critique of contemporary chant recordings remarks benignly: “even when you begin with the same principles, you can arrive at different ways to perform plainchant. In our opinion, this is not a disadvantage”.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Ina Lohr, “Sprachmelodik im Gregorianischen Choral und in neuen, deutschen Messgesängen”, separate print from the *Basler Volkskalender* (1967), 78: “Er ging praktisch vor: brachte uns zum Singen aus der alten Notation, deutete die Texte mit hymnischer Begeisterung und begleitete mit Hingabe und grosser Musikalität, unbelastet von irgendwelchen Stilfragen.”

⁵¹ Ina Lohr, “Der Gregorianische Choral auf Schallplatten”, in: *Schweizerische Musikzeitung* 72 (1932), 596: “Interessant ist die Beobachtung, dass man selbst wenn man von

Lohr's recording critique also offers a persuasively complimentary review of the singing of the monks of Solesmes for their homogenous sound – “well-tuned though unaccompanied”, their well-controlled dramatic expression, and their beautiful, gently flowing lines.⁵² Lohr maintained a respectful distance from the debate on rhythm, and publicly abstained from declaring an allegiance to either side.⁵³ She described Mocquereau's method in her teaching notes, calling it “controversial”, but making a point of offering it to the budding professionals in her classes as the officially accepted approach of the Catholic church.⁵⁴ This inclusion of the neo-Solesmes approach in her teaching sets her apart from Cuypers' decided musical bias.

Although Ina Lohr evidently appreciated the beauty of the Benedictine aesthetic, her own performance transcriptions displayed a proportional pragmatism,⁵⁵ inviting communal singing within a clearly defined rhythmic

den gleichen Grundsätzen ausgeht, zu verschiedenen Arten des Choralvortrags kommt. Ein Nachteil ist das unseres Erachtens nicht.”

⁵² Ibid., 595.

⁵³ Even on the cusp of Cuypers' death, Hubert Cuypers Jr., son of the musician and respected linguist in his own right, urged Ina Lohr in a letter (17 Aug. 1959) to consider the chant edition of Dessain/Mechlin which “wants nothing to do with the Neo-Solesmes idiocy” of Mocquereau, reiterating previous statements of the “spirit, terror, and inquisition which was aroused by the Neuf-Solesmes in the field of ‘Gregorian.’” A further letter (27 Aug. 1959) offers yet more heated pronouncements: “The (apparently agreeing) epistolary reactions (from the Jesuit and well as Benedictine sides) are already sufficient to offer new material for an account about the spirit, of the terror, and inquisition which was aroused by the Neuf-Solesmes in the field of ‘Gregorian’ [...] tells me of having received the prohibition from higher powers against maintaining any contact with P. Vollaerts (mensuralist, thus heretical!), etc. Such reactions are for me extremely symptomatic, confirm everything that I already knew about the tactics and method of Neuf-Solesmes (fortunately well documented), and should for you also throw an interesting (and probably unexpected) light on the subject.” Nijmegen, CDC, Hubert Cuypers Collection, 12.

⁵⁴ Basel, PSS, Ina Lohr Collection, IL 14/3: “Nach der Rhythmuslehre von Solesmes (Dom André Mocquereau) bleibt die Länge der Punkte grundsätzlich gleich. Eine Gruppe von 3 Achteln ergibt also keine Triole! Ob diese Lehre stimmt, ist umstritten. Sie kommt erst im 10. Jhdt. auf [...] Vor dem 10 Jhdt. hatten die ‘Neumen’ (Winke) wahrscheinlich rhythmische Bedeutung.”

⁵⁵ For example in Ina Lohr, *Solmisation und Kirchentonarten*, Zurich: Hug 1949/50.

structure. In line with her early training under Hubert Cuypers, she leaned toward the Caecilianists in a certain flexibility of rhythm adapted to the requirements of the text, and reflected a conscious appreciation of clarity and order akin to that of the mensuralists: “Rhythm is – first and foremost – *movement*. And this movement is not random, but *ordered* [...] In this ordered movement there reigns a great, overriding freedom, which we poor people – trapped by ‘measure’, that is by petrified order – take at first glance for caprice.”⁵⁶ Her transcriptions were keenly well-suited to their intended purpose, whether for open publication, or for use by the various groups with which she worked, such as the ensembles of the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and the Basler Kammerchor. For the singers with the BKC she offered interpretative details such as dynamics and rubato markings; for the SCB and in her musicological publications she merely transcribed the tones, allowing for an unbiased interpretation on the part of the reader. These subtle differences are an indication of her awareness of the needs of her specific audiences. Where the musical repertoire was a novelty to the singer she assisted in finding a tasteful interpretation, and if the singer could take responsibility for a personal interpretation she left extraneous information by the wayside. In her transcription of melody, Lohr was a woman of her upbringing as well as of her time, defining the pitches in specific rhythmic values; only later did this fashion yield to the current chant transcription approach without note stems.

Lohr made her mark on the Swiss music scene through her teaching, through her writing in the public forums of the day, through her efforts on behalf of the trial volume of the new Swiss Protestant church hymnal, and by her readiness to put her knowledge to use in the church, both Protestant and Catholic. She was a presence in Switzerland, influential in the local and regional scene, but also for international musicians who worked with her.

⁵⁶ Ina Lohr, “Rhythmische Probleme im Choral”, in: *Singt und Spielt* 9 (1942/1943), 51: “Rhythmus ist in erster Linie *Bewegung*. Und diese Bewegung ist nicht willkürlich, sondern *geordnet*. Jede Bewegung hat ein *Ziel* [...]. Denn in dieser Bewegungsordnung herrscht eine grosse, eine überlegene Freiheit, die wir armen, vom Takt, d.h. von der erstarrten Ordnung, vom geschriebenen Gesetz gefangenen Menschen auf den ersten Blick für Willkür halten.”

She was treasured by many, such as Gustav Leonhardt and Eric Ericson, who claimed her teaching as an inspiration for their future work.⁵⁷

Lohr's respect for the viewpoints of others allowed her to synthesize and reflect upon the ideas of various chant traditions, from Solesmes and Regensburg as well as the Dutch scholars and practitioners of her upbringing. Despite her own interpretative preferences, Lohr also taught chant according to the Solesmes method, following the official position of the Vatican in the context of professional education for church musicians. Although Lohr's articles and teaching materials make little mention of the Ward Method,⁵⁸ as a pervasive force in the chant landscape and musical environment of Holland Justine Ward may have been an implicit contributing factor in Lohr's future endeavors. Lohr also echoes Ward's educational philosophy – and that of the church itself – in striving to encourage both the aspiring professional student and the amateur to an active participation in the official music of the church. Ina Lohr's presence at the Schola Cantorum in Basel brought a new generation of early musicians into contact with liturgical plainchant, which was embraced by them for its simplicity, authenticity and purity. These characteristics may have also played a role in the performance aesthetic of the incipient Early Music Movement in Switzerland and beyond.

6. Conclusion

Switzerland was inspired by Dutch plainchant activities both directly and indirectly. Through the distribution of periodicals, webs of interconnectedness among scholars and practitioners allowed a discourse across continents, creating public spaces for conflict and consensus. The Ward Method, begun in the U.S. and imported to Europe through Holland, lived its own short life in Switzerland, though it never gained the popularity it had achieved elsewhere. The influence of Hubert Cuyper was felt perhaps more strongly, through his own outreach in print, at conferences and other public perform-

⁵⁷ Smith, "Ina Lohr" (see n. 1); Anders Dillmar, "Eric Ericson in memoriam", in: *Svenskt Gudjäntliv*, Skellefteå: Artos & Norma 2013, 16.

⁵⁸ "Leitfaden für den Blockflöten-Unterricht auf Grund der Solmisation", Basel, PSS, Ina Lohr Collection, IL 20/2, states that its approach is freely based on the Ward Method.

ance venues, and through his direct contact with Ludwig Bonvin and Ina Lohr, who incorporated aspects of his teaching into her own approach. Ina Lohr's role at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis and in Switzerland has been unjustly forgotten, and her work in the realm of Gregorian chant was but one of many musical fields in which her expertise fostered access to long-forgotten musical repertoires. Her efforts at Basel's "Teaching and Research Institute" – the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis – helped meld and ground church music within the young Early Music Movement, and the fruits of that work are still felt today.