

*For my father, John Kennedy Mackenzie,
who in Cranshaws, Stornoway, Fraserburgh, and Prague,
made the pulpit sing*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I reveal in the text my fundamental debt to those who magicked words and music into my life. As regards the Baird Lectures which became this book I have five acknowledgements to make. Barrie Allcott and Ray Bruce of CTVC fitted filming in Scotland, Prague, and Jerusalem round the dates of the lectures, and put up with my working on them on location; Donald Erskine, Chairman of the Baird Trust, and Angus Sutherland, its Secretary, cheerfully accepted the logistic risks such filming posed, and made the lecture evenings pleasant occasions; Jock Stein of the Handsel Press sympathetically midwifed editorial changes for publication; my colleague, Elizabeth Robin, organised the practicalities of both filming and lecturing before turning her attention to processing and revising the material into book form; and my wife Elizabeth, with my children Stephen and Alice, made the project possible by advising me to retire early from the broadcasting hamster wheel in order to do some proper work.

The hymn by John Bell and Graham Maule on page 160 is printed by kind permission of the Iona Community.

FOREWORD

by the Rt Revd D.E.Jenkins, Bishop of Durham

This book is a lively report of, and reflection on, what must have been a Performance about performing to the Glory of God and the edification, liberation and delight of our hearts, minds, souls and bodies. I do not imagine that this written form of the Baird Lectures for 1990 on Church Music can fully represent the performing of the lectures with the accompanying and additional

illustrations on the piano in the Hutcheson Hall, Glasgow and at the organ in Renfield St Stephen's Church when Ian Mackenzie originally gave them. I imagine that the impact was immediate, exciting, provocative, amusing and deeply devotional.

Clearly, it is worth the attempt to convey the content of the lectures and for the written word to do its best to deliver the mood, tone and vibrations of the message - for these are as much the content of the message as the immediate sense of what is written. At least this is what I pick up from the script. It is, it seems to me, wholly in the spirit and purpose of these wide ranging reflections and anecdotes on the interaction between art, music, faith, doctrine and life that the author/performer should have been constrained to add a Prologue and six Epilogues which are addressed as practically as possible to the issues of music in Church, both in its performance and, especially, in its congregational aspect.

There is the greatest possible need to restore the confidence of ordinary people, and of those whom I might tentatively call averagely competent amateur musicians, in our combined capacity to enjoy music in worship, to perform it reasonably well and feel free about it - so free that we do our best to be as disciplined and as competent as we can, while not being put off by the over-pursuit of excellence. One of the bad effects of the media age is to present us with amazingly polished productions and performances which we watch - and often rightly enjoy - but we only watch. Often, we feel de-skilled and discouraged about our own performing and participation. The discouragement is compounded in church circles by the feeling that the only answer to our discouragement is to introduce a specially exciting but peculiar style of music - which soon settles down to a rather narrow range and a very particular style and in so doing tends to become an addiction for those who catch it and an offence to those who cannot stand it.

These lectures range widely and perceptively over the whole range of music and are unashamedly traditional as well as teasingly innovative, or one might say, ready for bad taste as well as good. They should therefore encourage many a minister and congregation where music is flagging to relax and make new and

enjoyable attempts at combined and congregational efforts to restore the resonances of music, both sung together and sometimes listened to in our worship.

I believe that the lectures convey such a conviction, and so embody an exemplification of the possibilities of music for restoring depth of emotion, all combined with disciplined participation and the sheer sense of praise and wonder, that they should encourage many to take practical steps to rescue well-intentioned worship services from the near boredom and banality which too often hover around them.

The mysteries of God, the possibilities of persevering love, and the promises of simply living together to share whatever has to be shared, have depths in them which go far deeper than words - no matter how central and essential to our Christian Faith is the Word made flesh and the words of Scripture, tradition and preaching which we have to struggle to communicate, understand and obey. Depth, infinity, wonder and joy must break into our worship and permeate our lives. The praise of God catches us up into possibilities, promises and practices which are at once crucifying and glorious. Music can reflect this - without music the amazing, the wonderful and the dimension totally beyond words is all too often missing. Doubtless, to restore such depth we need not only to renew our music but also to re-develop the proper use of silence and stillness. Ian hints about this too as he reflects, argues, and tells his stories.

So I am grateful for this book, and even more grateful for the performer behind it and the indications of possible performances which it offers to all of us. When preaching at institutions of clergy in my own diocese I tend to speak to congregations of the shared glory, wonder and excitement of Christian Faith and Discipleship. Sometimes I venture to advise the congregation and parish: "And if your new priest and minister starts boring you and fails to give you Heaven, then give him hell (although only in a Christian way, of course!)." I believe this book gives us both inspiration and practical direction about how ministers and congregations can combine, more efficiently and more enjoyably, to share in and witness to, the heavenly possibilities and promises of really down-to-earth praise and celebration of God.