Learnings Songs for a Lifetime

By Nicholas Zork

The songs we sing stay with us for a lifetime. They take root in our minds. They resonate in our bones and leave indelible traces in our bodies. From a mother's lullaby to the pop song that we can't stop whistling -- as hard as we may try -- music can be irresistibly memorable.

In her New York Times blog, Sara Davidson discusses the work of Alice Claire, a music therapist at the University of Kansas who uses music to help people with Alzheimer's. Ms. Claire has found that people remember songs long after other things are forgotten -- even other people. Davidson writes, "Music memory is preserved better than verbal memory, according to Ms. Clair, because music, unlike language, is not seated in a specific area of the brain but processed across many parts. 'You can't rub out music unless the brain is completely gone.'"

When we choose music for worship, we must consider not only what songs will be effective right now but what songs we want people to remember for years -- even decades -- to come. What songs do we believe are worth becoming inextricably embedded in the minds, hearts and bodies of the worshipers in our congregations. What songs do we want to stay with them after other memories have faded?
One of the incredible matriarchs in my family is no longer able to recall most of the wonderful memories she created. But there are still songs that remind her of who she is and who she always will be. In recent months, as even basic language skills have increasingly eluded her, she has been able to remember and sing most of the words to many favorite hymns and other songs. She has given lasting memories to all who have known her. I’m so grateful that various people, mostly long ago, have given her thethe lasting memories of those refrains -- songs of the past that continue to sustain her hope for the future.

What songs do you hope will continue to resound in you, your loved ones and your community members when other memories grow silent?

Share your thoughts in our Facebook dialogue.

**Worship Planning**

Planning Inspiring, Inclusive Worship

By [Hyveth Williams](http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/...Utg04eF7I7DCsgAQAhFNSOHDR3dXPhzmpTOtiazJRZeVnRRE59n0dZ1xCHS1K0RHg%3D)

Good worship, whether labeled contemporary, traditional or blended should include the following:

1. **An Environment that lends itself to the goals of the worship service.**
   
   “Anyone attending a funeral in a school gymnasium or an ordination in a concert hall becomes aware of the importance of environment for worship. Although it’s notoriously difficult to define what makes a space suitable for worship, certainly there are environments that to most people seem utterly unsuited,” wrote Laurence Hull Stookey.

2. **Structure or liturgical forms (rituals in public worship), and intentionally so.**
   
   There must be form or structure in every worship service before content because it’s the gateway to creativity and provides a formula through which the content is delivered. Rather than spontaneously scrambling each week, a clear structure helps the worship planners and participants keep the service flowing toward the same goal of leading the worshipper into the presence of God where transformation is anticipated.

3. **A Worship Committee representing the variety and diversity of the congregation.**
   
   Among its many responsibilities, this Committee should function as creators rather than spectators who authentically participate in the life of the congregation, plan worship and provide an important forum for educating the congregation about worship. This Committee should consider the physical environment to enhance the worship space, special worship services and other related activities to avoid extremes.

4. **A Worship Team, not those leading the congregation in singing, but in this case those coordinating the mechanics of the service and overseeing implementation of the weekly program.**
   
   This Team includes the audio and visual operators, the coordinator of the service and others responsible for the

Featured Hymn

The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal contains numerous outstanding hymns that are rarely sung. One great example is "Sing We of the Modern City" (no. 194). Fred Kaan’s hymns text employs language not often found in congregational songs, which can engage worshippers’ imaginations and experiences in fresh ways:

*Sing we of the modern city,*

*Scene alike of joy and stress;*

*Sing we of its...*
platform set-up for each service.

[Editor's note: Hyveth Williams will be a featured presenter at the 2013 Andrews University Music and Worship Conference and will offer a workshop on planning inspiring, inclusive worship. For more information and to register: www.cye.org/mwc.]

Worship, Culture and Justice

The Bible and Social Justice

By Sigve Tonstad

The Bible takes an interest in social justice that has been betrayed in the history of Christianity. Many still miss the socioeconomic tenor in Mary's Song, "He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty" (Luke 1:53) or the echo of the Jubilee when Jesus' stood up to read in the synagogue in Nazareth, "He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). In the Torah, the Sabbath belongs to an institutional web that prioritizes the need of the weakest and most vulnerable in society, with explicit concern for servants, immigrants, and even domestic animals. In the prophets, the cause of mercy and social justice march under the banner of the Sabbath. "The interests of the Sabbath are the interests of the poor: the enemies of the Sabbath are the enemies of the poor," says George Adam Smith. I intend to explore these themes with fresh eyes in my talks at the Andrews University Music and Worship Conference in March: the Sabbath and social justice in the Torah, and then the Sabbath and justice in the prophets.

[Editor's note: Sigve Tonstad will be a featured presenter at the 2013 Andrews University Music and Worship Conference, continuing the conversation on worship, culture, and justice. For more information and to register: www.cye.org/mwc.]

Ecos de Adoración

La Música Como Agente de Reconciliación

Por Janette Rodriguez-Flores

Hay un viejo refrán que dice: "para gustos los colores" y cuan cierto es, especialmente cuando hablamos de los gustos y preferencias musicales. ¿Por qué sentimos que cierta pieza musical nos llega al corazón, mientras que otra nos es totalmente indiferente? ¿Cuál es la razón por la que una canción nos gusta, o no nos gusta?

To the Point

In Alabadle!: Hispanic Christian Worship Justo L. Gonzalez offers this insight, which merits consideration for worship practices in all cultural contexts:

"Latino worship is a
Nuestras experiencias individuales, cultura y sociedad influyen la forma en la que percibimos la música. Permitanme darles un ejemplo; cuando era pequeña había un comercial de televisión que usaba el segundo movimiento del Concierto de Aranjuez como música de fondo. Aun hoy en día, cada vez que escucho esa pieza, la primera imagen que viene a mi mente es la de aquel comercial de televisión, pero ¿por qué? Porque esta pieza está ligada en mi mente a un momento específico de mi niñez. Es posible que la misma pieza de música evoque imágenes distintas en ti, o tal vez no evoque nada. La forma en la que tú y yo reaccionamos a la misma pieza de música será diferente debido a nuestras experiencias individuales.

Lo mismo ocurre con la música de iglesia. Habrá quienes al escuchar cierto himno o canto de adoración recuerden el momento de su bautismo, vuelvan a su niñez o añoren volver a su patria, mientras que para otros el canto no tendrá significado alguno. Ahora imagina una congregación entera y descubrirás que cada persona tendrá su propia imagen, distinta a la de los demás. ¿Cómo podemos nosotros como líderes de adoración reconciliar los distintos significados que la música tiene para cada individuo?

¿Cómo podemos crear un ambiente de unidad aun en la diversidad de gustos musicales? ¡Esta es una tarea tremenda! Sin embargo, al estudiar y descubrir la “personalidad” de nuestra congregación, podremos escoger música que sea una bendición no solo para algunos pocos, sino para todos. El resultado será una congregación, testimonio viviente que inspirará aun a los no creyentes a decir: “¡Realmente Dios está entre ustedes!” (1 Corintios 14:25, NVI)

Discuss and find a translation of this article in our Facebook dialogue.
in the round, where everyone can see everyone else, which focuses attention on the participants to reinforce the idea that the Spirit of God is among us. Choosing your focus is easy once you have a firm understanding of what your congregation values in the worship experience.

As you might expect me to say by now, there are very few "right" or "wrong" ideas here; a successful design is one that reflects and reinforces the beliefs of the congregation. But a key step in the design process is to choose your focus, so that all the elements of the design can draw one's attention toward that which is most important for your congregation.

Suggest the focus you believe is most important for your congregation in our Facebook dialogue.