

would classify Carmer as a friendly non-Mormon.) Yet the text is a masterful literary evocation of the moods and emotions of Mormon history. For example, as the sad and forlorn little procession, carrying the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum, approached Nauvoo in late June 1844, it encountered a heavy and intolerable sound: "The sound was a composite of measureless cries of sorrow. Swelling and receding, it was a vast ululation of lament" (p. 122).

Carmer's description of the inherent tragedy in many early Mormon experiences, and his attempt to take Joseph quite seriously, causes the Prophet to be portrayed too solemnly. Joseph the frolicsome — Joseph the light-hearted friend of backwoods farmers and vagabonds — Joseph the exultant playmate of children — seldom makes an appearance.

The Farm Boy and the Angel concludes with a section "from the Author's Notebook," which contains some examples of pioneer vocabulary, folk expressions and idioms, specimens of Mormon humor, popular pioneer medical remedies, and Mormon proverbs and aphorisms. A new one to this reviewer was the complaint of a down-and-outer that a successful man needs three wives — two to beg and one to sew sacks!

A POVERTY OF INVENTION: A REVIEW OF *SING WITH ME*

Ruth Stanfield Rees

Sing With Me: Songs for Children, The General Church Music Committee. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. \$2.95. Ruth Stanfield Rees, the mother of four children, is working on a Ph.D. in musicology and participates in many aspects of the church music program.

*"If there is anything virtuous, lovely,
or of good report or praiseworthy,
we seek after these things."*

—Joseph Smith

*"For . . . the French contrive music in the
newest manner for the new times,
while the English continue to use one
and the same style of composition, which
shows a wretched poverty of invention."*

—Tinctoris (c. 1476)

Like the sacramental prayers, the use of hymns is fixed in the Mormon worship service, and like Scripture, the hymns are used uncritically. But unlike the sacramental prayers or the Scriptures, a great deal of time in our services is devoted to hymns. Therefore, compiling a hymnal is no small matter. The "compleat" hymnal, we expect, would be doctrinally sound and very practical. We would also expect such a hymnal to be virtuous, lovely, of good report and praiseworthy.

Sing With Me, the new songbook for L.D.S. children, is for the most part doctrinally accurate and contains many usable pieces, and in this respect it is a welcome improvement over *The Children Sing*. Some of the new

pieces speak to our children in contemporary musical and verbal idioms. There is a movement away from the diction of popular nineteenth-century poetry to a more direct and meaningful kind of expression, an expression which is not less spiritual but which is less abstract in its content. Some of the songs are truly delightful. However, the book is seriously handicapped by the use of composers who lack training and imagination. It would seem that in seeking for that which is lovely and praiseworthy, we have not sought hard enough. *Sing With Me* shows an unfortunate poverty of invention. An analysis of the book, section by section, affirms this impression.

Sing With Me predictably relies heavily on previously published material. According to the preface it includes "established favorites from *The Children Sing* as determined by a survey of stakes throughout the Church, *Deseret Sunday School Songs*, favorite songs which have appeared in *The Children's Friend* and *The Instructor* and other supplementary publications . . . , and new songs especially composed for this volume. . . ."

There is clearly a need to begin with an established repertoire, but popularity polls have their pitfalls. To begin with, we must remember that establishing favorites is the business of adults — children have only adult favorites from which to choose. Furthermore, most of the material available through the Church has been very limited in style. The long Christian musical tradition, which is richly diverse, has been ignored in favor of music written essentially by Mormons in essentially one style — that of the late nineteenth century. To disregard centuries of great music and depend on Mormon composers, new and old, seems like a kind of premeditated cultural deprivation.

A desire for a children's musical tradition is valid. However, we must not limit that tradition to songs which we ourselves enjoyed or to those which our parents enjoyed before us. The tradition of our children should include Christian music from many times and many places. In *Sing With Me* the entire repertoire of Protestant congregational music is represented by a few gospel songs of the frontier. (Even our adult hymnal, which is no musical monument, is more generous.) In *Sing With Me* major composers are represented by bits and pieces of works never intended for group singing. There is not one work by a major composer that is printed as it was written. One is reminded of the John Thompson method of reducing entire symphonies to easy pieces for beginning piano students. Furthermore, *Sing With Me* doesn't include a single work by musicians who were primarily church composers. The periods during which sacred choral music was the dominant form of musical expression are not represented at all. A few selections (with good translations) by Bach and Palestrina would certainly enhance a book which relies so heavily on homegrown music. A few dignified chorales would be welcomed by many in the Church. And the inclusion of some medieval and early renaissance music, which is now available in modern editions, would appeal to simple as well as sophisticated tastes.

The section entitled "Songs of the Gospel" contains the best and the worst music in the book. The composers are highly diversified — there are

over sixty of them — and so is the music, falling along a continuum of complexity from the simplest of hymns to rather elaborate pieces which are presumably to be used for special occasions.

Within “Songs of the Gospel” questions of quality and propriety occur too frequently. In music for group worship, for example, good taste and tradition place limits on the kind and degree of motion which is acceptable in accompaniments. “Called to Serve” is clearly outside the bounds of a dignified worship service. The left-hand style of “Let the Little Children Come” is much less than satisfactory on an imaginative or a spiritual level, but the same style is used in many well-known songs within this section. Other repetitive accompaniments found in the section are somewhat less prosaic but they do not enhance sacred music. A good many of these songs should be firmly assigned to the archives. No matter who wrote them or whose grandmother loved them, they stand in the way of pieces which would be valued for reasons other than sentimental or political ones.

Some of the newer songs seek programmatic effects through accompaniments and must be approached on different terms. There is a tendency to fall into a commercial style, but the results may often be pleasant if the songs are performed properly. For example, “The Priesthood Is Restored” must be played to simulate a brass choir as closely as possible. “Praise” and “I Know My Father Lives” stand out as being very successful among the better new songs. Other pieces which succeed musically have rather unsuccessful texts.

Since there are apparently so many budding composers in the Church, the textual problems in *Sing With Me* warrant discussion. Many of the professional musicians in the Church have contributed to the songbook, but it seems that none of the professional literary people in the Church have done so. While there is no way of determining why this is the case, it would seem reasonable to suppose that no one asked literary people for texts. Great songs don't always have great texts, but it makes no sense at all for a composer to seek a text from anyone but the most highly skilled poet of his acquaintance.

Many of the difficulties of *Sing With Me* are matters of craftsmanship. “A Special Gift” is a case in point. The syntax is inverted twice in the first line. If it were only inverted once the rime scheme would not be harmed and the message would have much greater clarity. The words might read: “Kindness is a special gift,/Such happiness it brings;/When I am kind to others/My heart sings.” “Lovely Appear,” which is carried over from *The Children Sing*, has run irreparably amuck. The imagery of Isaiah is difficult enough in the Bible, but squeezed into Gounod it makes no sense at all.

In other poems writers undertake imagery which proves unworkable. In “Quiet Song,” quiet is used inaccurately as a synonym for reverent. Quietness in children may be synonymous with reverence, but quietness in deep waters and meadows is not a manifestation of reverence but a manifestation of their innate nature. In “The Priesthood” the essential message will forever be overshadowed by the delayed phrase “and Oliver too.”

“To Think About Jesus” presents an entirely different sort of problem. The whole message is incorrect in a rather insidious manner. It is hard “to think always of Jesus.” In fact, it is impossible, and Jesus would be the first to admit that to restless three-year-olds. When the great goodness of Jesus is juxtaposed with relatively minor misbehavior in children — squirming in church — it makes the burden of that misbehavior disproportionately great. Small children should never get the impression that moving their feet in Sunday School had anything to do with the degree of Jesus’ suffering.

Certain “Songs of the Gospel” need special comment. “Beautiful Savior” has for centuries been the very symbol of simple Christian faith. An accompaniment by a Moog Synthesizer would be almost as apt to that simplicity as the razzling, dazzling piano accompaniment here. In view of current ethnic enlightenment, “Book of Mormon Stories” may be offensive in a different way. Open fifths have been arbitrarily associated with Indians — and not always flattering implications. The “McGuffey Reader” music like “Angry Words! Oh, Let Them Never,” “Never Be Late,” and “In Our Lovely Deseret” consists of bad poetry, bad psychology, and warped Christian doctrine. I submit that it is a disservice to the memory of Eliza R. Snow to remind generation after generation that she wrote

They must be instructed young,
How to watch and guard the tongue,
And their tempers train, and evil passions bind;
They should always be polite,
And treat everybody right
And in ev’r place be affable and kind.

It bears mention that several songs in “Songs of the Gospel” seem like songs without a section. “Let’s Be Friendly,” “Quickly I’ll Obey,” “Our Primary Colors,” “Hello Song,” and “Happy Song” all seem to be stuck here for want of an appropriate place to put them.

“Songs for the Sacrament” and “Prayer Songs” may be discussed together. The songs in both of these sections are very simple — hopefully within the grasp of the least talented branch — and will be used a great deal. The increased number of songs will be helpful. Unfortunately, as a group the pieces are tediously alike. Alexander Schreiner’s use of rests in “We Remember Our Savior” and Harry A. Dean’s use of half notes in “At Sacrament Time” are welcome breaks in what seems to be a long string of quarter notes. D. Evan Davis in “Our Savior’s Love” and Robert P. Manookin in “A Prayer Song” provide a little harmonic daring. “For Thy Bounteous Blessings,” arranged by Vanja Y. Watkins, is one of very few songs in the entire book written in a minor key.

The pleasant tune by Haydn which is used for Robert Louis Stevenson’s “Thanks to Our Father” should be reset or eliminated since the melody demands a syllabic setting. Meanwhile, an enterprising composer might use Stevenson’s poem and the first stanza of “Little Knees Should Lowly Bend” (eliminated from *The Children Sing*) as texts.

The vocal range of young children has been considered throughout the

book and several songs have been transposed; however, the smallest children should be able to sing the prayer songs and a few within the section are still beyond a comfortable range for them.

As a mother, I have taken it as somewhat of an affront that "Mother Songs" are frequently the worst songs that children sing. This is corrected to some degree in "Songs of Home and Family" where limits have been placed on sentimentality. However, while oom-pah-pah accompaniments and texts like "I love mother,/She loves me./We love daddy,/Yes siree" are still extant, we have a long way to go before the statements of our love match the beauty of our love. "Like Sunshine in the Morning" would seem to fit better here than in "Songs of the Seasons."

The "Songs of Home and Family" section has a number of songs for recreational singing. These are drawn from school texts or composed especially for this volume, but many are too self-conscious. If it is as much fun to sing as these songs tell us it is, we shouldn't have to say it over and over. In the future, editors might do well to consult folk music sources for purposes such as this. Many songs are available which are winning yet which avoid the musical cliches and textual effusiveness so apparent here.

"Songs of Our L.D.S. Heritage" should appeal to today's children. Some explanation may be necessary to account for the difference in outlook between the frolic described in "Whenever I Think About Pioneers" and the guarded optimism of "Westward Ho!" But the concrete images of our heritage have inspired some of the most imaginative songs in the book.

"The [Volga] Ox Cart" reminds one that credits within the book need to be regularized, and in some cases corrected. Extensive editing of works by major composers should not go unmentioned. ("Schubert and who else?" one is tempted to ask.)

"Songs of the Seasons" must be approached by absolutely ignoring some songs. "Catch the Sunshine," "Happiness" and several others are just about as child-centered and fun as whitewashing the second half of a fence. This music is "occasional music," but much of the language is so mannered that many children would have to practice all year long in order to understand it when the occasion for singing arose.

Within "Songs for Special Days" there are twelve Christmas songs. When one considers the wealth of carols available, some of the inclusions might be questioned. For instance, it would seem that the compilers could agree on one version of "Away In a Manger" and thereby make room for another good carol. The section contains a song about December, two about New Years, and six about birthdays. But, incredibly, *Sing With Me*, a book intended primarily for Christian worship, contains only two songs about Easter and one of those doesn't even mention the Savior! We must presume that the imbalance here is unintentional, otherwise the religious implications are absolutely unacceptable. It isn't really a matter of Easter getting equal time with Happy Birthdays, it's a matter of it being mentioned at all. In the entire volume the resurrection is mentioned only once. The sacrament songs all deal with Jesus to some extent. Several mention that He died for us,

some suggest that we should not move our feet in Junior Sunday School on that account and that folding our arms would be fine. None of the sacrament songs mentions the fact that Jesus rose from the dead. The celebration of the central event of Christianity is left to one Easter song. If we are to suppose that the two Easter songs in the adult hymnal help significantly to fill the Easter silence I think we are quite wrong. Much of the greatest music of the western world deals with the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. A children's hymnal that has room for six birthday songs and an adult hymnal that lists five "Militant Hymns" in its index should have room for more legitimate Easter music.

It would appear that *Sing with Me* has been prepared with limited vision. There are discrepancies between what we say to our children and what we do for them: we emphasize education and perfection but we don't seem to value it in composers; we emphasize the propriety of prayer language and ignore the possibility of addressing God with greater and greater refinement in music; we stress our understanding of God yet publish few songs that reflect His greatness; we believe in the Holy Ghost but often give Him the meanest musical vehicles with which to work.

For worship we borrow music and verse in order to express feelings which are beyond our own power to adequately express. Ideally, that which we borrow should accord with our highest sensibilities. Perhaps the greatest virtue of *Sing With Me* is that its flexible binding provides for songs to be deleted and added. The challenge to the General Music Committee is to take the best of *Sing With Me* and seek that which is most virtuous and most lovely to supplement it. Our children are malleable and willing to learn. We should give them an opportunity to worship according to their highest sensibilities as well.

DECAPITATING THE MORMONS: RICHARD SCOWCROFT'S NEW NOVEL

R. A. Christmas

The Ordeal of Dudley Dean. By Richard Scowcroft. Philadelphia and New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1969, 272 pp. \$5.95.

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Dudley Dean is a forty-year-old befuddled jack-Mormon professor of English. Wife Hannah has left him and married one of his teaching colleagues — a maudlin, oversexed boor named Ashton — and his devout Mormon mother has just died. Dudley returns to Salt Lake City after an absence of twenty years. He buries his mother, quits his teaching job, and decides to winter in the Wasatch while working on a book and angling for new employment. He sets up in the tower of an old East South Temple mansion, and divides his time between Elinore, a Mormon spinster left over from his eighth-grade