

# How Sweet the Answer

*thoughts on singing and music*

Chant's Encounter with the Divine  
- Frederick Chapman

Where sky and mountain meet in far Tibet,  
The sacred tones of chant hang in the air;  
The singing seems to have no source, and yet  
Ethereal music's heard from everywhere.

Within the West's great gothic hallowed halls,  
The simple melody the monks intone  
Resounds and echoes, haunts us, and enthralls,  
For through such meditations, peace is known.

Oh may we form one sacred instrument  
To manifest these mysteries of old,  
And in the stillness, listen with intent  
To hear that which we seldom can behold.

Like monks in some great East- or Western shrine,  
So can we, in music, sense the divine.

*Dedicated to David Gordon  
Written during the lunch break in David's "Joy of Singing"  
workshop in Toronto, Canada in 1996  
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We are living in a world where the individual must learn to command the raw materials of expression. He must not be dependent all the time on the ready-made, the finished product. It's the transferring, the changing of the raw into what is the expression of your own self - the whole joy and satisfaction and frustration of life is built into this.

- Yehudi Menuhin

I don't care who likes it or buys it. Because if you use that criterion, Mozart would never have written Don Giovanni, Charlie Parker would never have played anything but swing music. There comes a point at which you have to stand up and say, this is what I have to do.

- Brandford Marsalis

How Sweet the Answer  
- Thomas Moore (1799-1857)  
from his "Irish Melodies"  
Set to music by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

How sweet the answer echo makes  
To music at night  
When, roused by lute or horn, she wakes,  
And far away, o'er lawns and lakes,  
Goes answering light

Yet love hath echoes truer far,  
And far more sweet  
Than e'er beneath the moonlight's star,  
Of horn, or lute, or soft guitar,  
The songs repeat.

'Tis when the sigh, in youth sincere,  
And only then -  
The sigh, that's breath'd for one to hear -  
Is by that one, that only dear  
Breath'd back again.

"The human voice and music can combine to transform persons into poets, great lovers and visionaries. It is the best of all trades to make songs, and the second best, to sing them."  
- Alan P. Tory and Hilaire Belloc

If I can get out of the way, if I can be pure enough, and if I can be generous and loving and caring enough to abandon what I have and my own preconceived, silly notions of what I think I am - and become truly who in fact I am, which is really just another child of God - then the music can really use me. And therein lies my fulfillment. That's when the music starts to happen.

- John McLaughlin