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TWO REDEMPTORIST COMPOSERS OF
THE DUTCH PROVINCE:
BROTHER ANSELMUS (CARL BONTEN) (1881-1946)
AND
FATHER JOANNES HAAGH (1857-1919)

SUMMARY

1) Brother Anselmus C.S.S.R. (Carl Bonten): « A talented musician, somewhat covered with dust ». 2) Father Joannes Haagh: « A Dutch Representative of the school of Regensburg ». 3) Some concluding remarks.

Saint Alphonsus de Liguori was an accomplished musician, and he composed a number of hymns used during the missions to instruct the simple folk and divert them. And his *Duetto* is quite well known. After the example of their founder, some Redemptorists, too, have composed Church music that has been performed in liturgical functions in the monastery and in Redemptorist churches. This artistic talent manifested itself in the Dutch province; and we propose to present two (quite different) examples of these Redemptorist composers who worked in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The name is justified, even though Anselmus lived a long time in Surinam, since that country was part of the Kingdom.

Later we hope to treat of a third person, who was very important in the fields of Church music and liturgy during the first half of this century: Father Jacobus Bogaerts (1848-1923). His *St. Alphonse Musicien* was published in Paris in 1899. Apart from this work Bogaerts wrote several articles on Church music and liturgy, some of them published in *St. Gregoriusblad* (periodical of the Gregorian Society). We are still gathering information in order to give a balanced account of his life and work. For the moment we restrict

ourselves to the two men, Anselmus and Haagh.

The matter of the present article is treated under three heads: 1. Life and Work of Brother Anselmus; 2. Life and Work of Father Joannes Haagh; and 3. Some remarks on their importance in the context of the pastoral activity of the Congregation in the Netherlands.

1. *Brother Anselmus C.S.S.R. (Carl Bonten): « A talented musician, somewhat covered with dust »*¹.

Carel Theo Bonten was born on 19th October 1881 in the city of Leiden. After he finished primary school he went on to the technical school at the « Noordeinde », where he studied drawing. Apart from that he attended the evening college called « Mathesis scientiarum Genetrix », where he continued studies in language and mathematics. He was a boy of delicate health, and for that reason was unable to satisfy his intention of becoming an architect. His father, Henri Cornelis Willem Bonten, was a dealer in pianos, organist and music teacher. His mother, Theodora Christina Gabriel, wanted Carl to become a musician like his father rather than an architect. When Carl wished to study physics after he had to leave the evening college, his parents did not give their permission. He was not especially attracted to music, preferring city life in The Hague and Scheveningen.

His father took him to a number of piano factories and organ-makers, such as C.C. Bender in Leiden, Van Oudheussen in the Hague. As a sort of compromise Carl took lessons in polishing, varnishing and lacquering and studied German with a view to dealings with German traders and manufacturers. In the end it was decided that he had to become a musician. Having a music teacher as father, he had been taught the piano from the age of six. At the age of sixteen Carl himself gave private lessons in the piano and also played at balls and festivities in Leiden and the neighbourhood. This life, free and happy, he found agreeable. On one occasion he played the piano for seventy hours in the course of eight nights. He was a successful and well-known dance pianist in Leiden and elsewhere. In 1899 he became a student at the Institute of Music directed by Mr. Sissingh,

¹ This short study has already appeared in *St. Gerardusklok*, 63 (1986) 125-127; 140-152. As sources we relied on J. PETERS, « Broeder Anselmus (Carel Bonten) » in *Ter Informatie*, no. 12, June 1977, pp. 8-12; *Necrologium III*, Subsectorum Collegii C.S.S.R. Wittemiensis, pp. 140-145; Dossier *Anselmus* in Archives of the Dutch province, Roosendaal; Archives of the Mission in Surinam, Nebo house, Nijmegen.

a famous music teacher at that time. Here he was trained in the classics and the modern classics, such as Max Reger, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, as is still evident in the copies he made from their works for his private practising, collected in a volume of some 300 pages.

Meanwhile he continued as a private teacher to earn a living. On 19th November 1900 he gave a lecture on modern techniques of piano playing for the Society of Musicians and Composers in Rotterdam. Later he had occasion to give two courses for the members of this Society. During Easter 1901 he gave a short course in music for a group of ten Ursuline Sisters in Venray. He was invited also to conduct courses for Dominican Sisters in Voorschoten and Jesuits in Katwijk. For some years (1899-1902) he played the organ in the church of St. Lodewijk in Leiden.

At that time the Redemptorists gave a mission in Leiden with Father Scheepers as leader. Carl Bonten could not attend the mission on account of his activities and studies, but he went to Father Scheepers for confession. The advice he received was to have a strong influence on his future life.

On 26th July 1902 he passed the exam for the Dutch Society of Musicians and Composers and shortly after was accepted as a member. The famous (at least in the Netherlands) composer, Bernard Zweers, read some of Carl's compositions for piano and urged him to study composition at the conservatorium. Vol. IV in the music archives contains compositions of the period 1901 - 1904. Carl took lessons from a number of experts and wished to go to Paris and Berlin, the musical centre in Europe at the time; but his plans came to nothing. He gave up teaching because he no longer found it agreeable, and he began to concentrate on a career as a soloist. Dutch and foreign managers attentively followed his first concerts, and some plans were made for concerts in Brussels and Antwerp. It did not work out as Carl wished. For some months he had been considering his life as a musician, and he was not satisfied. He went through a period of doubt and disillusion.

In his brief autobiography, written when he entered the Congregation, Anselmus (as he was now) wrote that God used several means to lead him to the cloister. He had an uncle who worked as a Jesuit in America and one of his nieces was a Redemptoristine in Sambeek. On his First Communion Day he received a present of *The Glories of Mary* by St. Alphonsus (in a Dutch version, of course). Every day he read a little from this book. While he was studying at

the Sissingh Institute he once told a Jesuit that he wanted to become a priest and join the Jesuits. He even started studying Latin. But the life of a musician attracted him once again and he went to Amsterdam, in search of more opportunities. He lived at 158 P.C. Hoofstraat. After a time his work lost its appeal and he became discouraged. It was another crisis. He talked over his doubts and desires with people whose advice he had come to trust, and finally he decided to join a religious institute.

His parish priest, Serbroek, advised him to visit the Benedictines, but Mgr. Lans, Deacon in Amsterdam, recommended that he present himself to the Redemptorists. Carl Bonten finishes his *curriculum vitae*: « Mgr. Meeuwissen as Superior of the Dutch province, accepted me on 11th September 1906. The first novitiate lasted until 18th March 1907. The second novitiate began on 1st October 1910 and was crowned by perpetual vows on 2nd April 1911 ». This second novitiate was in 's-Hertogenbosch, and the profession had been planned for 1st April, but Anselmus asked to be allowed to take his vows on 2nd, because the 1st is April Fools Day. He said he was afraid that nobody would believe that his joining the Congregation had been intended seriously.

Living in the enclosed world of the monastery must have been quite a change after so many years as a free musician. From a respected pianist he became a laybrother with many housekeeping duties. Certainly at that time being a laybrother meant living on the lowest rung of the monastic hierarchy. This enormous change in his life did occasion some problems for himself, but also for his superiors. Father J. Lohmeijer, superior of the province after Mgr. Meeuwissen (1907 - 1912), wrote to Father G. Lambrechts, novice master, asking what to do with Anselmus during his novitiate. He had in mind that Anselmus was a professional musician, something altogether exceptional among the laybrothers. It was decided that he could play a piano for half an hour a day so as not to lose his ability and technique. He used a piano with a keyboard only; and that was an extraordinary exception for those days!

Between the first and second novitiates (1907 - 1911) Anselmus lived in Roermond and after taking his vows he lived in Amsterdam. On 24th October 1913 he left for the mission in Surinam, arriving in Paramaribo on 11th November. The journey, by ship of course, seems to have been quite fast — less than three weeks. In Surinam his duties were mostly those of musician, teacher and organist in the cathedral. Although some of his early piano pieces were

published in Amsterdam before he joined the Congregation, most of his *oeuvre* was composed in Paramaribo. He was the leader of the male choir in the cathedral and as well as his students he had also an orchestra, for which he composed and arranged a number of works. It consisted of about seven violins, a cello, a double bass, two clarinets, flute and piano, which he generally played himself. In addition some of the members of this orchestra composed marches and waltzes for performance on festive occasions. There is a volume in the archives donated by Mr. Chris Alvares, a former member of the orchestra. Frater Anselmus (the laybrothers were called Frater in Surinam) taught his boys the theory of music and was very diligent in training their voices. Every afternoon after school the boys gathered for collective and individual training. It was evident that a professional musician and teacher was doing a good work here. Many of the boys have reaped the fruits of this education. Some have become well known musicians themselves, for example Lou Lichtveld (= Albert Helman, writer and musician), Christ Alvares, Cornelis Berenis and Gil Hermelijn. To the boys who seemed exceptionally talented he gave lessons in several instruments, such as the clarinet, flute, harmonium, piano and organ. For these instruments he composed studies and small concert pieces. He gave particular attention to training organists, and he made his pupils capable of accompanying the most common Church hymns and songs. Later on these boys became organists in one or other of the Catholic churches of Surinam. Chris Alvares, for example, succeeded Anselmus in the cathedral of Paramaribo.

Anselmus was most active in composing Church music for choir and organ, but he has also to his credit some so-called profane music. He wrote dance music for the orchestra in Paramaribo, but also for the students' orchestra in Wittem. He also composed music for songs. A curious collection among these songs are the « dry season songs ». Father W. Ahlbrinck C.S.S.R. wrote the texts of these songs whose purpose was to cheer up the people during the dry season, which was often quite unpleasant in Surinam. In the collection there are some merry texts and melodies. Naturally Anselmus was the man to compose songs and cantatas for feasts like jubilees and ordinations. To give a complete picture of his activity as composer we could publish the full list of his works, but even that would not be sufficient, since it is necessary to hear music and not just see titles. For the military band in Paramaribo he wrote marches and fox-trots which were often played in his time. The old folk song, « 't Lieve Land met zijn la-

chende boorden » (The Lovely Country with the Laughing Borders) was put to music by him. We need to have a good picture of the artistic world in a small town such as Paramaribo was. As a professional musician working not only in the cathedral but in the « world » Anselmus was one of the leading figures. By way of contrast in Europe he is almost unknown as a composer, also because only a few of his works have been printed.

He won enormous success with his oratorio « The Holy Family ». There are two scores in the archives in Wittem. In the Surinam papers the critics were all very enthusiastic about the performances of this work². They note in their articles their regret that Frater Anselmus is going to leave Surinam on account of his health (1933). This masterpiece, a designation it deserved at that time, even though it may not be according to our contemporary standards, is worth analysing, not only for the music, but also for the theological concept implicit in devotion to the Holy Family.

Anselmus was at times hot tempered, but he also had a good sense of humour. He is the subject of several anecdotes. On one occasion he composed and performed a piece for choir in a service over which Mgr. Van Roosmalen presided³. The bishop was known to be sparing with his compliments. He asked Anselmus after a successful performance who was the composer, and he was told it was a certain Wolfram, an unknown composer whose work was popular with the choir members. That « Wolfram » was really Anselmus came to the bishop's ears years after. Another story. The Brothers of Tilburg, a large number of whom were then working in Surinam, asked Anselmus to write a cantata for a jubilee, telling him he could make it as demanding as he wished, as they had an excellent choir. Anselmus responded with a cantata so complicated that the Brothers had to confess that they could not perform it and ask him to simplify some of the passages. Anselmus complied with many a chuckle at having given them a lesson in humility. A third anecdote tells of the origin of his work, « O Doctor Optime », in which his style of composition shows much originality and daring⁴. After a

² Cf. an article in *De Surinamer*, 19th May 1918 entitled « Een Kunstavond », a review of the cantata of the Holy Family on 13th May 1918 in the building of the Roman Catholic Patronate in Paramaribo. Even the Governor G. J. Staal was present with his family. Two further articles in the same paper in 1931 and 1933 have been published also in *Petrus Donders Tijdschrift*, 13 (1932/33) 99-101.

³ For information on persons and places see S. J. BOLAND, *A Dictionary of the Redemptorists*, Romae, 1987. Mgr. Roosmalen was Vicar Apostolic in Surinam from 1911 to 1946.

⁴ We have a handwritten copy dated Amsterdam, 1912. It is a piece for three voices, two tenors and a bass with accompaniment in D-major.

rehearsal with the choir in the Redemptorist church in Amsterdam Anselmus remained in a small room behind the organ. Nobody knowing he was there, the church was locked. Sitting like a prisoner in this tiny room he composed the motet.

In 1933 he returned to the Netherlands after twenty fruitful years in Paramaribo. He had been home for a holiday in 1928, staying most of the time in Amsterdam. The people of Surinam were sad to see him leave their country. Anselmus was stationed in the studentate in Wittem, where he became organist and the leading figure in matters musical. Several Redemptorists who are still with us have been able to work under Anselmus as conductor, organist and teacher. One of them has become a musicologist and composer and it so happens he is a member of the commission of promoters of my doctoral thesis: Dr. Ben Kahmann. His brother, a learned biblical theologian, Professor Dr. Jo Kahmann, was leader of the choir in Wittem when Anselmus was organist (about 1935). This short *excursus* has been for the purpose of showing the influence of Anselmus not only in Surinam but also in the Netherlands.

Besides being house-musician Anselmus also had a task in house-cleaning. Some of the Fathers who have known him at that time have told me he was always thinking, singing and making notes, while he cleaned a little bit here and there. It is typical of the internal hierarchy that a laybrother was not given time to develop his talent, in this case music, but had to do works that kept him humble. I do not know whether this occasioned Anselmus any pain.

During the period he was in Wittem Anselmus wrote several devotional hymns for all kinds of congregations, religious societies and special services in the Redemptorist church. Once again he was the one who took care of the music at feasts. He brought some of his manuscript books of music from Paramaribo, as we can see from the dates in vols. II and III, but he also rewrote some of his compositions and collected them in large volumes. Thanks to this we still have most of his music in our archives.

Early in 1946 he suffered in his legs, and it was discovered that he had a thrombosis. On 19th February he was anointed. While he lay in the infirmary, very ill and unable to compose, he read avidly, especially Church history, hagiography and music. He could hear the music in the church on the house radio; and he was not always pleased by the performance. On Saturday, 25th May he became unconscious and died that evening, almost sixty-five years of age.

Now, forty years later most of his music has vanished: only

paper remains. No more than a few of his songs are still known, for example some of his hymns in honour of Our Lady and St. Gerard and three melodies for the *Tantum Ergo*. Outside the monastery he is hardly known. Books on the history of Church music in the Netherlands do not mention him. Maybe that is mainly because no more than some piano sonatas composed before he became a Redemptorist have been published⁵. All the rest exists only in manuscript. Nevertheless, his work has been of great significance in Surinam as well as in the Netherlands. The quality of his music is certainly comparable with that of Perosi, Anselmus being the more advanced in the use of modern techniques. He was too original as a composer to fit into the scheme of a Caecilian Movement in those days. His fellow Redemptorist, Father Joannes Haagh, of whom we are about to write, was less original, not a professional and excellently fitting into the scheme of the Caecilian Movement. His works have been printed and his name has been mentioned (a few times only, it is true) in the history of Church music.

It is high time to rescue the manuscripts of Anselmus from the dust — not to hail him as a genius, but to learn more about the history of Church music, especially the practical aspects of that history. There have been many books and articles on the doctrinal aspects; but to me it seems more interesting to know what the people sang in those days and who wrote the music. Brother Anselmus Bonten was one of those composers, and his music was very often sung.

2. Father Joannes Haagh: « A Dutch Representative of the School of Regensburg »⁶.

Information about Joannes Haag is to be found in various places. Some of these sources are autobiographical writings; others are notes by his confrères, Jac. Bogaerts and Henri Mosmans⁷.

⁵ Some published works:

For piano: *Beauté de la nature, Doux bonheur; Fête dans l'auberge du bois.*
For organ: *Toujours gai; Un soir au bord de la mer.*

⁶ This article was published in *St. Gregoriusbled*, 111 (1987) 84-91.

⁷ J. HAAGH, *Curriculum vitae*, 's-Hertogenbosch, 1875, Archives of the Dutch Province, Roosendaal; *Necrologium Rev. Patris Joannis Haag C.S.S.R.*, *ibid.*; J. BOGAERTS, « In Memoriam J. Haagh C.S.S.R. » in *St. Gregoriusbled*, 45 (1920) 7-11; J. BOGAERTS, « Ter Herinnering Musicus Pater J. Haagh » in *Van Onzen Tijd*, 19/550 (5th July 1919) 169-172; H. MOSMANS, *Het Redemptoristenklooster Wittem. Een bijdrage tot onze vaderlandsche Kerkengeschiedenis, 1836-1936*, Roermond, Maaseik, 1935; H. EVERS, *Historisch Repertorium met betrekking tot Wittem als bedevaartsoord*, HTP-Katern nr. 2, Heerlen, 1986. Articles from papers with no indication of title or date are found in cuttings in the Archives of the Dutch province. They are of about 13th May 1919.

In his *curriculum vitae*, written about 1875, Joannes Haagh tells us that he was born on 5th August 1857 in Rijen, not far from Roosendaal in the diocese of Breda. He had four sisters and two brothers. According to him his parents belonged to the simple middle class. In his necrology the writer adds that his parents were good Catholics. Of course, a Redemptorist Father could come only from a good Catholic family... Joannes has nothing to say about his primary school, but Jac. Bogaerts tells us that he was an exemplary pupil and a good singer, who could sing easily from hearing and read music at sight⁸.

Father G. Verbunt, parish priest in Rijen, urged Joannes to do his studies well so that he also might become a priest. This Father Verbunt was friendly with the Redemptorists, and he invited them to give a mission in Rijen in 1869. Joannes was acolyte and accompanied the the Fathers on their visits to the sick. According to the classic story of a vocation, Joannes should have wished to join the Redemptorists after this experience. According to his own account this wish vanished from time to time, but Father Verbunt did not cease his urgings. He went to the trouble of asking Father Rector Vermeulen, spiritual director of a convent of Sisters in Dongen, to give Joannes supplementary classes of a Saturday. Joannes persevered in this way for three years, even though his attraction to the priesthood seemed to decrease. But Fathers Verbunt and Vermeulen did all they could to keep his interest alive. Verbunt had already contacted the Redemptorists and had spoken with Joannes' parents. Joannes offers an attractive picture of how his family influenced him. His parents and family proposed to pray to God for a solution. After a few days Joannes' mind was made up: he went on with his studies, firm in his intention to be a priest. The account in his *curriculum vitae* shows once more the power of prayer.

There was a Redemptorist preaching a retreat to priests in Hoeven, and Joannes presented himself to him to be interviewed. He then received orders to go to the Superior of the Dutch province. A short time after he left home, already feeling homesick and made his way to the juvenate in Roermond. Once there, his homesickness vanished and he found himself happy in the company of the future Fathers.

In 1874 he entered the novitiate in 's-Hertogenbosch and in 1876 he went on to Wittem, the studendate for the Dutch and Bel-

⁸ Cf. *Van Onzen Tijd*, 19 (1919) 169-170.

gian students. On 19th October 1881 he was ordained by Mgr. Th. Laurent, former Vicar Apostolic of Luxemburg.

In his career as a Redemptorist Joannes filled many posts: teacher, missionary and administrator in various capacities. From 1881 to 1884 he taught in the juvenate in Roermond and after that was appointed lector of Canon Law in the studendate of Wittem. He remained there until 1888; but his heart was not entirely in his teaching. We next find him a missionary attached to the house of Wittem. In 1889 he made his second novitiate in Roosendaal and spent a short time in 's-Hertogenbosch. In 1890 he was transferred to the house in Amsterdam as a missionary. This period of travelling was not yet finished. The house of Wittem needed a Father to preach in German and French for missions in regions of these languages. Joannes Haagh was sent to Wittem in 1891, apparently because of his proficiency in German and French.

To this active pastoral activity there followed a time when he was employed in administrative posts. In 1895 he was transferred from Wittem to 's-Hertogenbosch and in 1898 to Roosendaal, where he became rector in 1899. During his rectorate he had a fitting place for the choir built at the back of the church. During his time as rector the Redemptorists had some conflict with the mayor. The point at issue was that the Redemptorists did not obtain permission from the civic authorities for their activities outside their monastery. Father Haagh was able to smooth over the conflict. From 1901 to 1907 he acted as bursar in the houses of 's-Hertogenbosch. and Roermond. He was then stationed in Amsterdam, where he was rector from 1912 to 1915. In that year he was once more appointed rector in Roosendaal. In 1918 the Redemptorists celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their foundation in Roosendaal, and this jubilee received all desirable cooperation from the mayor: apparently the old trouble was completely over. After his term as rector Haagh became minister in Roosendaal. His health was deteriorating, and for some years he had been diabetic.

Because there were not enough Fathers in Roosendaal to give missions Haagh had to join two other Father for the mission in Ossendrecht (5th to 15th April 1919). He came home directly after the mission quite ill, with a rapidly growing tumour on the neck. After a first operation he wrote to Mr. A. ter Steege, conductor of the church choir « Voci et Amicitiae ». This conductor had invited him for a performance of Haagh's *Kruiscantate* (cantata of the Holy Cross) on 13th May. Haagh wrote that he was in the hospital of Charitas

in Roosendaal after a successful operation but was still suffering from a high fever and some pain. He further explained that he had a tumour and would need a long time to recover. For that reason he would not be able to attend the performance⁹. A second operation proving unsuccessful, he was anointed on 8th May. He died on 13th and was buried on 16th in the cemetery of the house of Roosendaal. The church was filled with people of every class: he was a man widely respected and loved. In his life he combined pastoral work, administration and music. It is to his music that we must attend now.

3. J. Haagh the Musician.

The title we have just proposed is taken from an article written as an 'In memoriam' by Father Jac. Bogaerts¹⁰. Bogaerts knew Haagh very well. They were companions not only as Redemptorists but also in matters of Church music. It must be remarked that Bogaerts frequently mingles anecdote with history.

As we said before, Joannes was a good singer in primary school. While in the juvenate in Roermond he had the opportunity to play and to be taught by his fellow student, Willem Smit, son of the organist in the Redemptorist church in Amsterdam. In Wittem Haagh conducted the students' choir from 1876 to 1881. His first compositions belong to this period. Some years later Haagh described the choir of those days¹¹. The house in Wittem served as studendate for several provinces and there were many students (71 in 1871) from the Netherlands, Belgium, England, Ireland, United States, France and Germany. With the foundation of other studendates the number of students in Wittem decreased. In 1878 there were thirty-one, of whom sixteen were from Belgium. This was the choir Haagh had to conduct. He writes cynically: « Masses and hymns by composers like Verhulst, Heinze, Viotta, Hol, Van Paesschen and others were performed with success; but no real Church music to talk about ».

The initiative for the reform of Church music in Germany organised around famous men like F.X. Witt and F. Haberl with Re-

⁹ Cf. one of the unspecified articles (newspaper cuttings) in the Archives of the Dutch province.

¹⁰ *Van Onzen Tijd*, 19 (1919) 169-172.

¹¹ Cf. « Stille Krachten. Vijfde Hoofdstuk III. De Provincial. Een Wegbaner voor de liturgische beweging » (a series of articles on Father Petrus Oomen) in *De Volksmissionaris*, 36 (1914/15) 232-236. The writer quotes Haagh.

gensburg as centre and propagated by the Caecilian Society, was followed in the Netherlands, for example by the foundation of the Saint Gregorian Society (1876). Father Petrus Oomen, superior of the Dutch province from 1874 to 1887, was interested in the reform movement. He contended that « the Church should be free to and ought to assert her rights concerning liturgical music and that all worldly (profane) music should be banished from the sacred place as a profanation »¹². In 1877 he ordered that in liturgical functions in the houses in future only Gregorian (plain) chant should be performed in order to increase the unity of Catholics. Further the polyphonic compositions of Palestrina, Vittoria and others should replace « the music of the theatre »¹³.

When Father Oomen asked that music in Redemptorist churches be reformed, Haagh as conductor of the choir in Wittem asked permission to learn this « new direction » in order to teach it to the choir. Father Oomen permitted him to take lessons from the priest H. Böckeler in Aachen. This man was a thorough Caecilian adept, and he founded in Aachen the school for Church music, later the Sankt Gregoriushaus. Haagh went from Wittem to Aachen, a short distance, twice a week and had lessons in theory and practice of this « new direction » in Church music. Several times Böckeler visited Wittem to instruct and conduct the choir¹⁴. In this way Church music in Wittem was reformed in a short time. The older Fathers, however, did not always cooperate. They did not want to be taught these new ways by this young lad: Haagh was still a student. Father Jac. Bogaerts cooperated in reforming the music in a material way. « A magnificent gift has been given us by the goodness of Rev. Fr. J. Bogaerts, namely a *Graduale* for the use of our singers. Two parts in folio printed by Pustet in Regensburg. The price is 130 Dutch guilders »¹⁵. Bogaerts was also granted further study in Church music by Father Oomen. He did a course under H. Böckeler, had lessons from Fr. Konen, a music teacher in Cologne and received some training, too, from the Benedictines of Maredsous. Father Oomen wished to reform Church music in the house of Amsterdam as well, and so he sent there Bogaerts and Father Willem Smit, who had been Haagh's teacher in the juvenate.

¹² Cf. a. c., 232-233.

¹³ *Chron. C.S.S.R. Coll. Witt. ad S. Alphonsum*, pars III, Liber II, 1, « Peculiariorum domus » (= Chronicles of the house of the house of Wittem, part 4), p. 354.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Chronicles of the house of Wittem*, part 7, p. 15.

If we try to form a picture of the music education of Joannes Haagh certain personages stand out: first Willem Smit, then H. Böckeler and the German Redemptorists, Höfer and Steiner. These had come to Wittem when the Redemptorists were expelled from Germany by the *Kulturkampf*. Both had been trained in the tradition of Regensburg. Father Höfer had studied plain chant in the newly reopened abbey of Beuron and Father Steiner had been a member of the choir in Regensburg conducted by C. Proske. It is almost certain that these two Germans greatly influenced the thought and musical practice of Haagh. The chronicles of the Wittem house note under the date of 31st November 1879: « In order to improve the performance of the Church music of the old masters Father Steiner is training some boys of the parish. After a few rehearsals they can now sing the alto in some compositions of Palestrina for five voices »¹⁶.

In this way the reform of Church music in Redemptorist churches and houses was introduced, for this had to be an example for the « ordinary faithful ». Certainly, the reform was easier to implement in the hierarchic closed system of the studendate with a reasonable supply of competent singers than in a simple parish. It was not unexpected, therefore, that the studendate choir won a certain amount of fame in the neighbourhood. We see the same in Amsterdam, where the choir led by Bogaerts and later by the composer Hubert Cuypers also became famous¹⁷. Both choirs were seen as exemplary by the members of the Saint Gregorian Society.

On 9th September 1879 Father J. Aertnijs celebrated his jubilee of twenty-five years of priesthood¹⁸. We read in the chronicles that the choir gave a successful performance of Palestrina's Mass « *Aeterna Christi Munera* »¹⁹. On that day the house was visited by Drabbé, rector of the seminary in Hageveld and by M. Lans, a teacher in the institute. The chronicler adds that Lans came especially to hear the choir because one of his responsibilities was Church music²⁰. M.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Cf. TH. v. D. BIJL, « In memoriam Hubert Cuypers, 26 December 1873-22 Februari 1960 » in *St. Gregoriusbled*, 81 (1960) 96-100.

¹⁸ Father Jos. Aertnijs was a famous moralist especially known for his book *Theologia moralis juxta doctrinam S. Alphonsi Mariae de Liguorio, Doctoris Ecclesiae, 's-Hertogenbosch, 1886-1887*. Father Oomen charged him to write a manual with a systematic account of all liturgical unctions and rites, to ensure uniformity in celebrating the liturgy. *Compendium Liturgiae Sacrae juxta ritum Romanum in Missae celebrationem et Officii recitationem*, Amsterdam, Doornik, Gulpen, 1894.

¹⁹ *Chronicles of the house of Wittem*, part 7.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

Lans is one of the founders of the Saint Gregorian Society.

It is worth mentioning also the contributions of the choir to the *Heiligdomsvaart*, a procession with relics of saints, in Maastricht and Aachen. In Maastricht the choir from Wittem, supplemented by the choir from Roermond, conducted by Haagh, performed the Mass *Papae Marcelli* of Palestrina and plain chant. The deacon of Maastricht was so delighted that a long article, probably written by himself appeared the same day in the *Courier de la Meuse*²¹.

Haagh composed several pieces during his time in Wittem, for example the hymn in honour of Our Lady, *Ich sehe dich in tausend Bildern*, a text by the German poet, Novalis²², the motet, *Ego sum panis* for three voices structured on a theme of letters/notes h-a-a-g-h (h in German is B, while in German B is B-flat), written on 11th April 1882, the motet *Tu es pastor ovium* for four voices written in February 1882, the *Lamentationes Jeremiae prophetae*, plain chant with tenor and bass parts added, the text of the first nocturn for Holy Week. This last piece was frequently performed and proved quite popular. As usual, these compositions were available only in manuscript or printed for internal use. Father Oomen, who as superior seems to have set value on cultural development, encouraged Haagh to have his compositions published. A number of hymns already in use in Redemptorist churches were collected and published as *VIII Hymni Eucharistici*, Regensburg, Pustet, 1887, *Cantus sacri diversi, opus 7*, 's-Hertogenbosch, Mosmans, 1901, *XII Hymni et Cantus Eucharistici*, Düsseldorf, 1911 and *Cantus sacri diversi, opus 18*, 's-Hertogenbosch, Mosmans, 1913. In these collections we find most motets with organ accompaniment.

Haagh seems according to his confrères to have been a rapid composer. During missions and tridua he wrote melodies for texts by his confrères. He also composed music for hymns used by religious societies and congregations. In the Handbook of the Confraternity of the Holy Family (1941) we find twenty-eight of his melodies. In 1898 a small collection, *Hymns in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, was published in Amsterdam, and in 1913 another collection of *Eight hymns in honour of Saint Gerard Majella in ecclesiastical popular music*, was printed in 's-Hertogenbosch. In addition he com-

²¹ Cf. *St. Gregoriusbled*, 45 (1920) 9, where Bogaerts gives a Dutch translation of this French version. The original text is to be seen in the *Chronicles of the house of Wittem*, part 7, pp. 53-54 (19th July 1881).

²² This hymn is published also in J. KRONENBURG, *Maria's Heerlijkheid in Nederland*, VIII, Amsterdam, 1914, p. 502.

posed many songs and cantatas for internal celebrations and feasts.

As far as I could discover, the first of his compositions to be printed was *Wij zingen op deez' jubelstond* (In this moment of joy we sing), composed on the occasion of the centenary of the founder, St. Alphonsus in 1887. In Gulpen the Alberts company, which had a close relationship with the house in Wittem, printed 13,500 copies in July 1887. We may presume that the copies were distributed to visitors during celebrations in Redemptorist churches. In the same years *O doctor optime* for double choir was printed in Regensburg. Together with the collection, *VIII Hymni Eucharistici*, also published by Pustet, this work brought Haagh an award of twenty-five Reichsmarks and twelve presentation copies. We are not going to list his complete *oeuvre*, but in fairness to him it is necessary to mention some of his many compositions. In 1889 he had composed a Requiem for four voices, printed in Düsseldorf (Schwann). According to Bogaerts this piece was praised by specialists²³. The composer and censor, Piel, said it was one of the best written for a male choir; it was mentioned in the catalogue of the Caecilian Company in Germany and praised by Mgr. Schmidt, former president of the company. J. Vranken gave it a good review in the Catholic cultural periodical, *Van Onzen Tijd*. In 1910 Schwann of Düsseldorf printed the *Missa Sancta et Immaculata* for mixed choir. This Mass knew a wide distribution. It was printed again in the *Saint Gregorian Collection I* together with some of his motets. We conclude this list with mention of two extensive cantatas. In 1900 there was printed in 's-Hertogenbosch *Cantata for male choir and soli with accompaniment on piano. Lyrics by H. Mosmans C.S.S.R., opus 9*. This cantata was dedicated to the « Committee of World Glory to Jesus Christ ». In 1905 the *Cantata in honour of the Holy Cross for soli and male choir with organ accompaniment. Lyrics by H. Janssen-Marijnen S.J., opus 14*, was published together with a German translation by J. Litz C.S.S.R.

Most of his compositions, printed or in manuscript, are in the archives of the house in Wittem. There must be other compositions in other houses and in the archives of many Church choirs in the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany. They are probably covered in dust.

It is not our intention to offer a critical analysis of his style and ability as composer. We simply propose our general impression. His motets, Masses and litanies are composed in a style that we may

²³ Cf. *St. Gregoriusbled*, 45 (1920) 11.

call *gregorianic* (imitating plain chant). The influence of the Regensburg school, the German Caecilian Movement, is very clear. He imitates the classic polyphonic style even more closely than most German composers. This sort of music was meant for choirs. When Haagh writes music for ordinary people (hymns for liturgies and celebrations of religious societies, companies and confraternities) he uses a very simple idiom, that sounds sometimes simplistic and droning or melodramatic and romantic. His cantatas and songs can be characterised as late romantic. He follows the way an ecclesiastical popular song ought to be according to the theorists of Church music of those days. He thus fits exactly into the scheme of the Caecilian Movement, and can be called a Dutch representative of the Regensburg school.

Although he was not a very original composer and a dilettante, Haagh had considerable influence with his music. Most standard works on the history of Church music do not mention even his name²⁴. But his name and the names of other priests and teachers who composed « mass-production music » for the faithful between 1875 and 1950 must be mentioned in an honest, unprejudiced historical account. These ordinary people and not the geniuses and the famous composers created the sound that was heard in the churches.

4. *Some concluding remarks.*

Without a thorough investigation it is impossible to say how big an influence these two Redemptorist composers exercised on the internal life of the Redemptorists in the Netherlands and on their pastoral activities. We offer, therefore, no more than some suggestions and remarks by way of conclusions.

They had their importance for the cultural development in the Redemptorist houses. Anselmus as a professional musician brought with him a broad knowledge of the music world outside the cloister. He was acquainted with many composers and their music, as we can see in his transcriptions. Not only Church musicians but « profane » composers like Max Reger, Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, Anton Bruckner, Igor Strawinsky, Sergej Prokofieff, Rachmaninoff, Schumann and others. When we look in the inventory of the music archives in

²⁴ A. KAT, *De Geschiedenis der Kerkmuziek in de Nederlanden sedert de Hervorming*, Hilversum, 1939, mentions the name of Father Haagh (p. 269) but gives no further information. In other manuals on Church history or history of Church music one seeks in vain for names and information about the several priest-composers active between 1870 and 1950.

Wittem we can see clearly this influence of Anselmus. There have been many compositions of these composers used by the Fathers and students.

Haagh was a dilettante and did not know so much about the music world outside the monastery. He was completely captivated by the style and thought of the Regensburg school. It is clear, however, that he had a great influence on the reform of Church music in Redemptorist churches, together with men like Jac. Bogaerts, Willem Smit and the superior, Petrus Oomen. Haagh and Bogaerts were also members of the censorship committee of the Saint Gregorian Society, and so they influenced the music permitted for performance in Catholic liturgy throughout the Netherlands.

It would be exaggerating to say that Father Oomen was especially interested in music and the personal cultural development of the Redemptorists. He was concerned with the directives and wishes of the Church in matters of liturgy, Church music and doctrine. He did not encourage personal development but to be good servants of the desire of the Church for reform.

In the *oeuvre* of Haagh and Anselmus we find a fair number of hymns. Too often, in my opinion, singing in gatherings and services of confraternities, sodalities, pilgrimages and missions has not been considered seriously enough as a *locus theologicus*. The hymns give an insight into their mentality and the way ordinary people experienced their beliefs. They also reveal how the faith was proposed to the people by the Redemptorists. These hymns (words as well as music) have been used very often, and therefore certainly influenced the (de-)formation of the spirituality of ordinary people — those who frequented the confraternities, missions, places of pilgrimage and the rest. I can no more than guess as to how far the influence of hymns of Haagh and Anselmus extended. But to give some indication I can say that several of their hymns have become « symbolic » for a certain devotion, St. Gerard for example, and the spirituality behind it. In the near future I hope to shed some more light on this question after finishing my thesis on the hymns used in connection with the devotion and pilgrimage to Saint Gerard Majella in Wittem.

Writing on Haagh as musician I mentioned his twenty-eight melodies in the Handbook of the Confraternity of the Holy Family (1941). This Confraternity has known a wide expansion in the Netherlands and Belgium between 1850 and 1960. The Handbook has been an important instrument in the liturgical and spiritual formation of many people. Especially in this Handbook we can point out the

influence of the Redemptorists and particularly of Bogaerts, Haagh and Anselmus. We find more melodies of Haagh than of Anselmus, because at the time Anselmus began to compose hymns the market had already been flooded by Haagh. Another reason is the way Anselmus composed. His melodies were more demanding in execution and not according to the rules of « popular Church music ».

Comparing Haagh and Anselmus, we come on an interesting theme: the difference between Fathers and Brothers. On this complex problem I permit myself a few remarks. It is typical that a problem arose when Anselmus, a professional musician, entered the community. There had to be some exception to the rule for the Brothers so that he could keep up his practice of the piano. But he had to use a piano without sound! If he had been a Father what would have happened? Coming back to Wittem, he had to discharge house-keeping duties. Why could he not live completely for his music? Was it intended as a lesson in humility? I think so.

Haagh had many of his compositions printed. He had influence and he was supported by Father Oomen, the superior. He had the « advantage » of not being a composer of originality and of fitting exactly into the scheme of a Caecilian Movement. Anselmus, a simple laybrother without influence or support of superiors, saw only very few of his compositions printed and distributed on a large scale. Of course, he was very useful as a musician, but he never had the opportunity of making a name as a composer. It is significant that most of the Fathers in the Netherlands had heard Haagh's name but had forgotten Anselmus. In 1982 we celebrated the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Congregation. With two friends I organised a small concert of hymns of St. Alphonsus and works for organ and solo instruments by Anselmus. None of the assembled Redemptorists could recognise the music of Anselmus. Still he is in my opinion a more important person in terms of being a better musician and composer than Haagh. Both, however, are important and deserve mention in an historical study of Church music and Redemptorist pastoral activity. That was the task I proposed in this article. A few examples of their compositions may give, I hope, a more artistic impression.