

2 Assess the significance of the role of music for Christian worship.

(12)

Music is often considered to play an incredibly significant role within Christian worship as it allows Christians to be able to express themselves and their passion for religion in a way that mere words or prayer could not. However, this could be criticised when analysing religious art in Christianity, as art also seems to be an expression or interpretation of faith, such as in paintings of the "Madonna and the Christ Child" or the Renaissance paintings of Mary which offer a unique perspective of her as relevant to all eras. Regardless, this appears to be a weak argument, as artwork is typically created individually and independently of others – unlike music, which is sung and performed often by a large community of worshippers, allowing the Christians involved to feel united as a community and as one holy Church. This position is strengthened by St Cyprian's view of the Church as one body, as he states that the Church is one united body of Christians, which music thus appears to achieve as everyone expresses their faith together.

Secondly, many consider music to be instrumental for Christian worship, due to the fact that it has brought many people into the Church, particularly in Protestant Churches like Charismatic Christianity that have upbeat and uplifting songs. Within modern society, this is absolutely a strength as the stereotypically traditional hymns of the Catholic Church may feel outdated when compared with our contemporary music culture, causing people to feel that the Church is disconnected from society; however, if the Protestant denominations are presenting a more charismatic approach

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to their music, it may help the church adapt to modern ideals and encourage new members to join. Karl Barth's idea of exclusivism can be applied here, as if ~~the only~~ Christianity is the only religion that ~~can~~ has the truth, recruiting and evangelising new members for the church is the only way to connect them to salvation. However, many would simply disagree that the modernised music of churches like Charismatic Christianity is the best way to approach this, arguing that something more upbeat removes the significance and sacredness of Jesus' sacrifice and Christian beliefs, making ~~the~~ worship simply an enjoyable practice rather than a quiet, personal connection with God as demonstrated through prayer.

Finally, others would argue that music is important within Christian worship due to the fact that it is so broad and flexible - there are no confines when creating a piece of music, allowing the musician a seemingly infinite realm of possibilities for expression of their belief in God. On the other hand, though, music would likely be criticised by Wendy in this case, who would argue that due to God's transcendent nature, ~~the~~ ~~the~~ we are unable to adequately express anything about him, even through music. This critique is also a weak one when we compare music to reports of religious experience, whereby many felt they had a religious or spiritual experience from the religious music played, in that they may have felt a deep and personal connection to God, or a longing to return to the church if they had left. This is clearly a strong perspective, as it highlights how music can ignite powerful emotions within us and strengthen our faith, helping believers to reaffirm their position; and assisting them in their worship as they feel closer, and that they have more



faith in God than they ever would without it.

(Total for Question 2 = 12 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 20 MARKS

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