The Limits and Ambivalences of Postcolonial Consciousness in Mbunga's Church Law and Bantu Music

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Abstract

This article focuses on a book entitled Church Law and Bantu Music: Ecclesiastical Documents and Law on Sacred Music as Applied to Bantu Music by a Tanzanian Roman Catholic priest, the late Stephen Mbunga. In this book, Mbunga strongly defends the use of African music in Roman Catholic Church services in Africa. He interprets Catholic laws and various directives given by top officials in the church and argues that the use of African music in that church is consistent with and can be done in accordance with these laws and directives concerning church music. He also proposes practical ways through which musicians can undertake the task of composing African music that are appropriate for church services. This article identifies and discusses various deadlocks in Mbunga's project and argues that Church Law and Bantu Music, like many other African nationalistic projects, is characterized by ambivalences of the postcolonial consciousness and is shaped largely by the postcolonial condition of its time.

Keywords

Church law; Bantu music; Sacred music