

Calvin University

Calvin Digital Commons

Symposium on Worship Archive

Spectrum of Congregational Song Structures

Calvin Symposium on Worship

Michael Hawn

Perkins School of Theology

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.calvin.edu/uni-cicw-symposium>

Recommended Citation

Calvin Symposium on Worship and Hawn, Michael, "Spectrum of Congregational Song Structures" (2023).
Symposium on Worship Archive. 37.

<https://digitalcommons.calvin.edu/uni-cicw-symposium/2011/allitems/37>

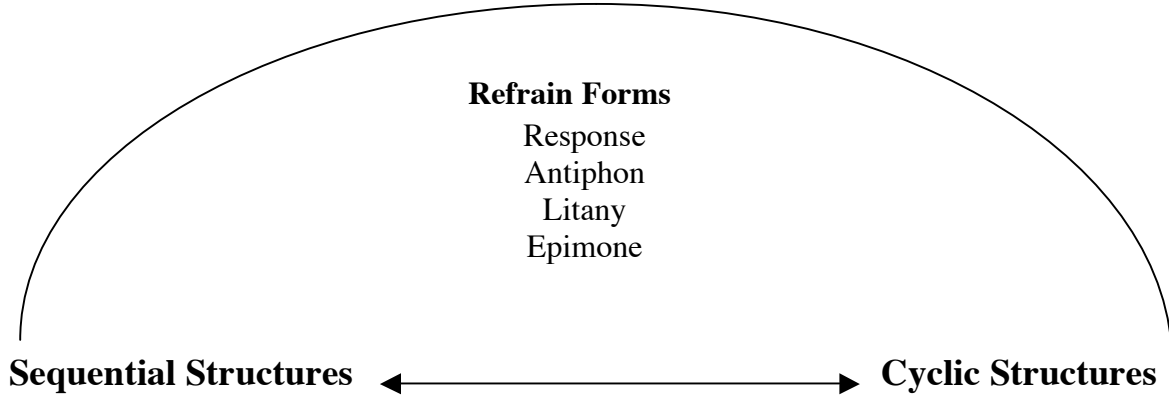
This Event is brought to you for free and open access by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship at Calvin Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Symposium on Worship Archive by an authorized administrator of Calvin Digital Commons. For more information, please contact dbm9@calvin.edu.

Spectrum of Congregational Song Structures

©C. Michael Hawn
Perkins School of Theology
Southern Methodist University

Calvin Symposium on Worship Session C16

Comparison between Sequential and Cyclic Musical Structures



Strophic
Textual orientation
Eye oriented
Literate tradition
Predictable performance time
Linear in structure
Verbose
Comments on ritual activity
Content oriented
Moves toward climax in content

Musical Considerations for Sequential Song

- Includes strophic hymns where the same music is repeated for successive stanzas
- Includes through-composed music and texts where there is no repetition of the music
- May include texts with brief textual repetition (usually on the last line) or epimone
- The essence of the text is essentially monochronic (teleological)
- Harmonic variations, varying instrumentations, and descants may provide musical variety from stanza to stanza

Theme and Variation
Movement orientation
Ear oriented
Oral tradition
Open-ended performance time
Episodic in experience
Concise
Participates in ritual activity
Community oriented
Moves toward total participation and integration of participants

Musical Considerations for Cyclic Song

- Maintains a steady beat once the song begins
- Each repetition of a cycle needs some small variation
- Often uses a soloist (cantor) to sing over the cycle
- Improvisations by soloist over ends of phrases
- Often accompanied by physical response
- Integration of choir and congregation as a unit
- Polychronic (vs. monochronic) sense of time
- Textual improvisations to fit ritual context