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On the Death of a Church Musician

Mike Vanden Bosch

To acknowledge the applause, she had been taught to bow at the end of her recitals. After accompanying others at their recitals, she also took a token bow if the star remembered to acknowledge her.

More times than anyone counted, she played on the organ or directed music from the masters—Mozart, Handel, Beethoven, Bach and many more. At the end of each piece, the listening worshippers understood that they

should not applaud. Nor did the musicians expect any applause—*Solo Deo Gloria* was ingrained in their hearts from childhood and all knew that any clapping would have been a sure sign of either a pagan in their midst

or of understandable but unacceptable juvenile exuberance.

Hence, no bows, and of course, no encores.

No-one felt miffed. All was as it should be.

A church musician died on September 2, 2006—nothing new there. Thousands of church musicians have died before, and around the world, thousands have died since. But I want to pause a moment to

applaud all church musicians. They go to church during the week to practice. They go to church early on Sunday morning to prepare to praise their God. There was a time when churches still had a “preparatory

service” the Sunday before communion so that members could pay a little extra attention to prepare their hearts to meet their Lord at the communion table, but that is rarely done these days. However,

choirs, organists, pianists, and worship leaders still practice—spend time to prepare something special for their Lord. They choose the music carefully to complement the pastor’s message and then practice the music

until certain that they can present it as a worthy gift for their Lord. False notes or even bored faces are not deemed a fitting offering for the Creator of the universe. Even non-musicians agree on that, if they notice.

For Kim (Vanden Bosch) Wolffis and church musicians around God’s world.