



# WATCH TOWER

BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

THE RIDGEWAY LONDON NW7 1RN

TELEPHONE 020 8906 2211

March 27, 2008

TO ALL BODIES OF ELDERS

Re: Music at Theocratic Events

Dear Brothers:

A number of reports have been received indicating that some congregations consistently play the music for singing so softly that it is difficult for some to sing in a heartfelt manner. In other cases, it appears that the volume of the music is normally so loud that it drowns out the voices of the congregation. The brothers who operate the sound system in the Kingdom Hall are encouraged to avoid both extremes. Some thought must be given as to how this can be accomplished.

Brothers assigned to operate sound systems must take seriously the fact that instrumental music is rightly featured in true worship, whether it is played to be listened to or used as an accompaniment to singing. Music and song are gifts of God by which Jehovah's faithful servants can render praise and thanksgiving as well as give expression to deep emotions of both sorrow and joy. Jehovah's angels have raised their voices in poetic expressions of praise upon observing the wondrous works of our magnificent Creator. (Job 38:7; Luke 2:8-14) The Bible record shows clearly the wide range of expression in music and song. Consider for example the triumphant song of victory on the lips of Moses and the sons of Israel on being delivered from the Egyptian military forces at the Red Sea, or the numerous prayers and supplications of David set to song in the Bible book of Psalms. Also give thought to what would have been the tenor and tone of the singing of Jesus and his eleven faithful apostles at the conclusion of the Evening Meal and before going out to the Mount of Olives.—Matt. 26:30, fn.

It is important to take note of the tenor and indicated tempo of our Kingdom Songs. Some of them are expressions of fervent prayer to Jehovah, the giving of thanks, or heartfelt supplication, while the words of others remind us of our Christian responsibilities. Some songs are written to bring comfort. Others reassure us of Jehovah's protection and the promised reward for faithfulness. All of us enjoy raising our voices in singing the lively encouragement to remain steadfast and to keep busy in Jehovah's service, declaring his glory, and making new disciples.

So it is that a little increased volume may be appropriate for singing full-throated the lively, more vigorous songs. However, many prayerful expressions would naturally be rendered with a somewhat softer voice and perhaps with slightly less volume. Keep in mind that the music is to lead those singing the song. The important thing is for the brothers who handle the sound equipment to remain always alert, attentive to their assigned responsibilities in this matter.

Many congregations have the custom of playing Kingdom Melodies over the sound system before and after meetings. This practice should not be allowed to drown out or

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overshadow the interchange of encouragement that comes from Christian association and theocratic conversation. At times, such as at assemblies and conventions, musical interludes are scheduled for the enjoyment of the audience and as indications for all to be seated and enjoy the programme. The volume of such musical interludes should be at a reasonable, comfortable level, not meant for drowning out conversation. If on occasion there should be different opinions as to the application of what has been set forth in this letter, no individual should resort to forcing his personal opinion on others. All matters are to be resolved by the local elders in the spirit of love and co-operation, and especially for the overall good of the congregation.

May you find these comments both helpful and encouraging. We should avoid making specific rules about somewhat technical matters. However, if we understand the spirit to be observed on every occasion with regard to the use of music in our worship of Jehovah this will assist us greatly in determining what is appropriate. Similar principles apply with regard to all public and private gatherings of Jehovah's true worshippers—wedding receptions, dinners, and other such social gatherings. Of course, at all times and under all circumstances, our endeavour is to do all things to God's praise and glory.—1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17.

Please be assured of our warm Christian love and best wishes.

Your brothers,

*Watch Tower B. & J. Society*  
OF BRITAIN

P.S.: The information in this letter is to be shared with brothers who operate the sound equipment at Kingdom Halls, Assembly Halls, and other theocratic events.