



The Catholic Institute of Sacred Music

at St. Patrick's Seminary, Menlo Park, California

presents our third annual

Public Lecture & Concert Series

Spring 2025 Term

Thursday, March 27, 2025, 7:00 p.m., PDT

Catholic Missionaries, Gregorian Chant, & Local Music in German East Africa, 1891-1961

Lecture, Dr. Anna Maria Busse Berger, UC Davis

Sancta Maria Hall & Online, Free Admission, Reception following the Lecture

The most important German missionaries in German East Africa arrived from the Benedictine monastery of St. Ottilien in 1891. They argued early on that African music was similar to medieval music, and thus introduced Gregorian chant with great success in all of their mission stations. One of their missionaries, P. Meinulf Küsters, a trained anthropologist and curator at the Munich Anthropology Museum, was in close contact with the comparative musicologists Erich Moritz von Hornbostel and Marius Schneider and made recordings for the Berlin Phonogramm Archiv. When Schneider published his *Geschichte der Mehrstimmigkeit (History of Polyphony)* in 1934 he sent it to Küsters in Tanganyika. A few years later, another priest, Jean Baptist Wolf, found the book in the library, compared Schneider's transcriptions to the *Graduale Romanum*, noticed the similar tonal language, and introduced the chants which were most similar to Ngoni songs into the liturgy. In short, it was a conscious effort by a missionary to imitate local music from a study of transcriptions of this very same local music made a few years earlier by a comparative musicologist in Berlin (who had never been to the area) of the very same music with which he was surrounded.



St. Patrick's
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Registration available at:
CatholicInstituteofSacredMusic.org