

QUENTIN LETTS: Has that shouty American preacher put a sock in it yet? Posted on May 21, 2018

Has that shouty American preacher put a sock in it yet? For many his sermon was a highlight. But QUENTIN LETTS begs to disagree

Till death us do part — or at least until that shouty American preacher stops jumping up and down in his pulpit.

Prince Harry did his best to look fascinated during the Most Reverend Michael Curry's look-at-me-folks sermon. But after ten minutes or so, the Prince's eyes, which had widened so touchingly the moment he saw his bride, started to droop.

Yack, yack, yack went Brother Curry, emoting, thesping, at times crouching like Olympic skier Franz Klammer mid-slalom.

Meghan seemed rapt. She's an actress, that lass.

While Harry was initially attentive, his eyelids slowly fought to remain alert. They deserved a little mournful trombone solo all of their own, those eyes.

The Most Rev Bishop Michael Curry, primate of the Episcopal Church, gives an address during the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle

With his staged fervour and jabbering crescendo, Pastor Curry certainly seized his moment in front of the worldwide audience. Pentecostal zeal barged its way into the cool quire of St George's Chapel, Windsor.

Preacher-man Curry hollered. He boinged up and down on the balls of his feet. He was a boxer in the ring! But he lost the House, as the parliamentary saying goes.

Inside the royal chapel, fascination was far from universal. Television cameras can be merciless instruments and they caught quite a lot of jaw-grinding and cornice-gazing among the congregants.

Zara Tindall, heavily pregnant, ached for the half-time whistle. Across the slender lips of the Duchess of Cambridge crept a hint of minxy amusement. Camilla P-B (Duchess of Cornwall as is) hid below the brim of her magnificent pink hat.

A guest in the back row of the choir stalls, lacking any such disguise, wore an expression of open mutiny. She was not alone.

As for Her Majesty, she was her usual dutiful, diplomatic self. The Queen's fall-back expression at such times is one of Prussian stillness, as rigid as chilled nougat. She must be a formidable bridge player.

But even she gave a tiny twitch of the shoulder at one point. Beside her sat the Duke of Edinburgh, back to his spry self, his kestrel eyes glinting.

Anglicanism's traditional liturgy refers to wedding ceremonial as 'the solemnisation of matrimony', for the reason that marriage is solemn and is not to be undertaken 'unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly'.

The Most Reverend Michael Curry (left) delivers his sermon while Elton John (right) watches on Saturday's service, alas, was not altogether from Cranmer's Prayer Book and it took a more whizzy approach.

Some will approve of that. Others less so. The modernised wording of the Lord's Prayer always feels unnecessary and intrusive.

For me, the best things about the service, apart from the touching devotion of the bride and groom, and their generosity in admitting the TV cameras to this highly personal moment in their lives, were: Meghan's lone, dramatic walk into the body of the kirk, preceded by that parping fanfare which made one of the pageboys laugh with awe; the Handel introit sung hauntingly by soprano Elin Manahan Thomas; the quiet dignity of Meghan's mother; Sir Elton John's spectacles; cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason, particularly the von Paradis Sicilienne he played during the signing of the register; and the waddle of the tiniest of the bridesmaids as she trudged up the chapel's long nave. What an adorable little duckling.

She and her fellow bridesmaids and pageboys had been delivered to the chapel steps in a couple of classic Daimler limousines. With their noses pushed against the limo window and their chubby little waves, this was a gorgeous 'here comes the gang!' moment.

The children included Prince George, who carried himself handsomely, and Princess Charlotte, who is the spit of her great-grandmother.

Their Middleton grandparents, who were in the congregation, must have been jolly proud of them. If they managed to see them from the cheap seats.

They and other congregants sitting below the organ screen were jammed in tight.

Conservative grandee and sometime defence minister Sir Nicholas Soames, an old friend of the Prince of Wales, was sitting next to former footballer David Beckham. What a dreadful sight Becks's neck tattoo is.

Talking of spectacles, Sir Elton was in a red pair so round and pronounced, they may once have been used as eye-testers by his optician.

It is always handy to have an Elton in church to help boost the singing. The service had just two hymns (Lord Of All Hopefulness, which is a touch drippy, and the great Welsh crowd-pleaser Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer, which Prince Harry sang with gusto).

Michael Curry gestures as he makes his impassioned sermon at St George's Chapel in Windsor

I'd have thought at least one more hymn might have been in order. You should let your guests shout forth their praise.

The bridegroom and his brother had strolled to the chapel in their Blues and Royals frock coats, complete with peaked caps and snooker-referee white gloves. Prince William kept Harry relaxed during the largely English-pastoral pre-match music which included Edward Elgar, Herbert Howells, Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams and more.

I would have liked to hear more of that music, but the BBC kept tearing us away to a studio to hear the witterings of Kirsty Young and an infuriatingly inane Dermot O'Leary.

They kept telling us how 'modern' the day was going to be and what a go-ahead citizen Ms Markle was.

Well, as modern and go-ahead as any day can be which involves a plumed cavalcade, a vintage Rolls-Royce and a great multitude of outdoors admirers whose cheers could be heard inside the chapel the moment Harry and Meghan were proclaimed 'husband and wife' by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby.

Prince Charles had, in Thomas Markle's absence, stepped in to walk the bride to the altar. He scooped up Meghan the moment she reached the sanctuary. Charles has a comforting humour about him and I bet he helped calm any nerves she felt. She was amazingly collected and wreathed in smiles. The looks she and Harry exchanged were a delight.

Archbishop Welby, with two whacking amethysts on the chest of his robes, did the honours with warmth, and the Dean of Windsor provided the polish with a voice that was pure Derek Nimmo.

The gospel singers' version of Stand By Me was performed well, though it did not rise to the ceiling vaults the way Rutter's The Lord Bless You And Keep You did.

If you have an archbishop in the building, why not let him give the sermon? Instead, we were subjected to that chap Curry from Chicago.

He took an awfully long time to say something that was not wildly novel. 'We've got to get y'all married!' he gasped, as though admitting that he had gone on too long, but then he kept going for several more minutes.

The memory of his shameless yankee-doodle pulpiteering will fade, as it invariably does.

Instead, we will just remember Meghan and Harry's delightful rapture — a Christian couple making their vows before Queen, country and the Almighty.

Source: http://bigworldtale.com/world-news/quentin-letts-shouty-american-preacher-put-sock-yet/?mc_cid=8e765903ed&mc_eid=0689f17818

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