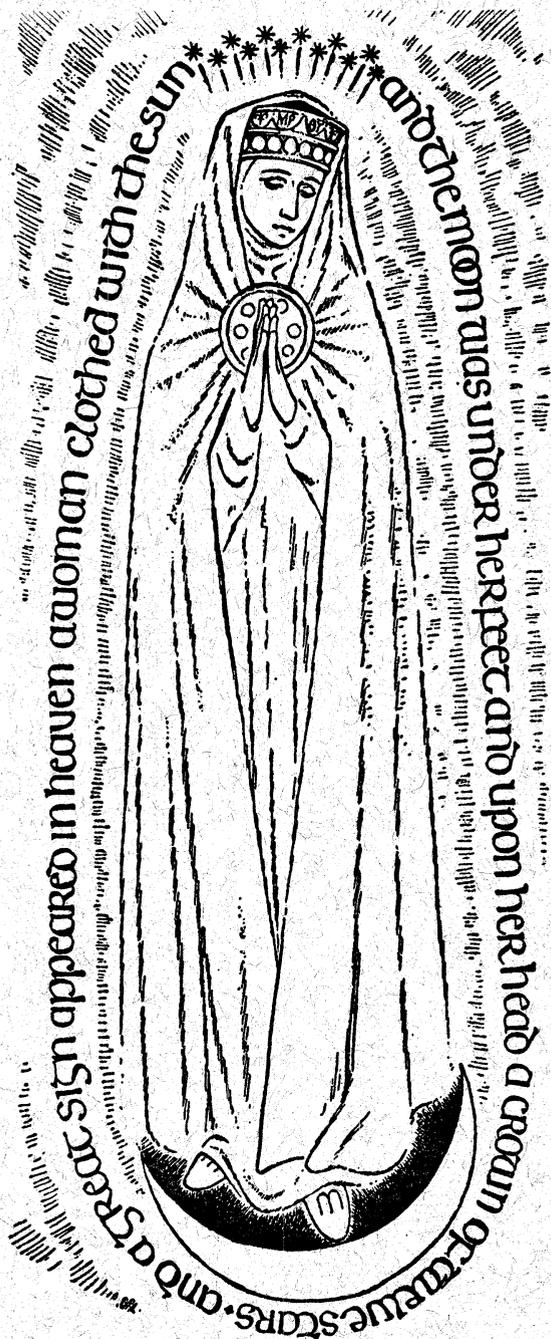


# CAECILIA



*Refrain*

Ho - ly Ma - ry, O Moth - er mer - ci - ful  
 God's own Moth - er, O Moth - er boun - ti - ful,  
 Sin - less Moth - er, O Moth - er beau - ti - ful, Joy - ous  
 Moth - er, our glad - ness plen - ti - ful, Ho - ly Ma - ry!

*Verses*

1. Vir - gin Moth - er, im - mac - u - late thou art,  
 2. Ma - ry, fair - est flow'r that e'er the world has seen;  
 O sin - less Maid, most dear to Je - sus' heart,  
 Thou heav - en's joy, O an - gels' love - ly Queen;  
 O Heav - en's Queen, thou hast a - lone re - mained of all  
 All hearts be thine, O Moth - er of all grace; Bring them  
 man - kind, un - sul - lied and un - stained, Ho - ly Ma - ry! Holy etc.  
 to God, O bles - sed of our race, Ho - ly Ma - ry! Holy etc.

VOLUME 82 Number 5

JULY — AUGUST, 1955

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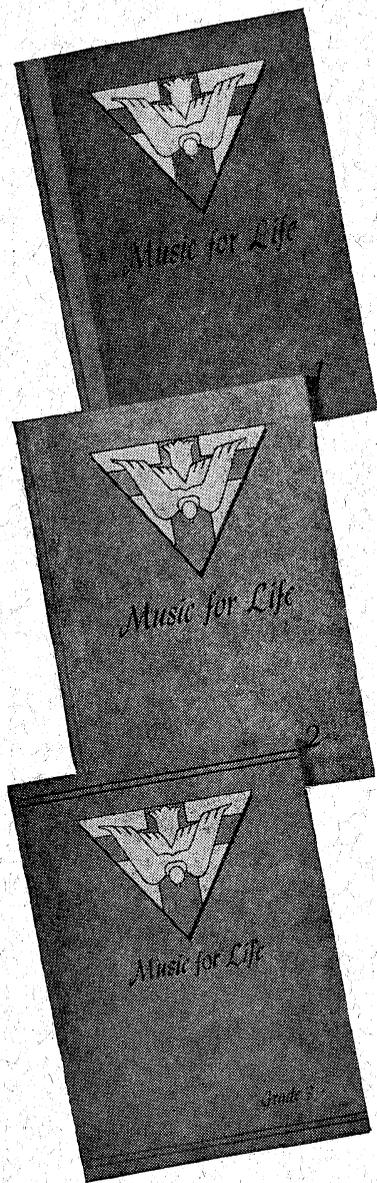
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# CAECILIA

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CATHOLIC CHURCH  
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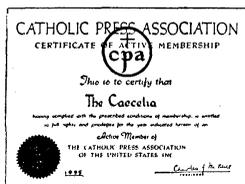
JULY — AUGUST, 1955

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC IN THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

by John Julian Ryan

WHEN I RECEIVED the invitation to give this talk on the importance of music in the curriculum of the Catholic High School, I was, to put it mildly, somewhat startled. Who was I to talk to trained musicians about music, a subject in which I have had little or no formal training? And I should certainly have turned the invitation down had it not been carefully phrased to assure me that it was not on *music* that I was to talk so much as on the *importance* of music in the High School Curriculum.

On this particular subject, I felt I might have some few things to say that you might care to hear since I have, for some ten years now, been specifically concerned with the problem of integration and since for more than thirty years I have been concerned with working out a philosophy of art in the broadest sense of that term, as well as with the teaching of an art allied to music, namely, poetry.

Perhaps, therefore, if I first lay down the criteria by which we are to judge the need for a given art in an education and then go on to a consideration of the problems to be encountered in teaching this art and the methods that may best be adopted in meeting these problems — perhaps I may be able to stimulate you to some useful and practical thinking on the subject. G. K. Chesterton once said that if he were running a business, he would occasionally bring in someone from the outside to make suggestions, one who knew very little about the exact technique of it, to give to those in charge the advantage of what has been called the "innocent eye." I ask you please to accept my talk today on some such basis as that.

Now, when as Catholic educators we sit down to evaluate any given subject in a curriculum, or any given method of teaching it, we must first of all ask ourselves, it seems to me, what it is that any truly Christian education should enable the student who receives it to do and then in what way the given subject, when properly taught, will enable him to do this. Consequently, I shall begin

here by sketching very briefly the functions which the Christian should be able to fulfill in this world, and then consider how music might enable him to fulfill these readily. Thereafter, we may consider what obstacles we face in trying to afford the musical training that would seem best, and finally some few of the guiding principles we may safely follow here in striving to establish or carry on a sound program of musical studies.

What, then, ideally, ought every Christian be able to do and do skilfully? Well, obviously, and first of all, he ought to take his full part in the most important action on earth, the great Christian Mystery, the *mysterium fidei*, the Mass — especially the Mass celebrated in its ideal form. Secondly, he ought to be able to take part as the Church wishes him to do in the Sacraments, in all forms of communal prayer and contemplation by which all the hours and actions of his life may be sanctified. Furthermore, he is supposed to be able to act as spokesman for all others, even for all voiceless creatures in praise of God their Creator, and to cause others by his eloquence to become members of Christ and to share in those great works of eucharistic praise and oblation. He should be able to *live* Christ throughout all phases of Christ's life, sacramentally, during the liturgical year. He should be able to rejoice in bearing his own cross as one made meritorious by the Cross of Christ: this in all his daily actions.

Again, he will inevitably be called upon to rule and to be ruled. He must, therefore, become prudent in the management of his personal, domestic, social, political affairs, feeling a due loyalty and patriotism — *pietas* — for every institution and group with which he is associated. His feelings must be put to the due service of these loyalties; he must here be enthusiastic and loving, wholeheartedly charitable, just and prudent — without being in the least sentimental or passionate.

Then, too, he should be a dedicated scientific artist in all that he does; intensely devoted to the use of scientific method in the service of the artistic method that is required for the full prosecution of any task. He must use his talents, and use them fully, in the service of charity: developing them in

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Address given by Mr. Ryan at the Music Education Workshop held November 6, 1954, sponsored by the Catholic Office of Education, Washington, D. C.

such a way that he becomes a Christian master of the arts of living.

In all this, he must learn how to treat himself fairly while exacting of himself that heroism which is, in Christ, the privilege of the Christian. He must, to be more precise, know how to indulge in true recreation, in the pleasure that re-creates him and makes him ready once again for his service in the army of Christ. Above all, he must make use of every human aid that will enable him to be *willingly* one with Christ in the full martyrdom of death or the lesser martyrdoms of sickness, frustration, and failure.

Now, any discipline that enables a student to do these various things well is obviously worthy of inclusion in the curriculum of a Catholic school. And as I have ticked off these *desiderata* one by one, I am sure that many of you have immediately recognized what an important part music can play in the attaining of them. But merely to make assurance doubly sure, let us go over them once again in relation to musical training particularly.

First of all, the Mass. How necessary is music to the full participation in this most vital of all actions — the action on which depends the whole salvation of mankind? The answer was given by the Pope himself when, in *Mediator Dei*, he described the *sung* Mass as the ideal form of Mass. Consider, then, the implications of the following line of reasoning: The most important action on earth is the Mass; the fullest exercise of the priesthood of the laity lies in active, intelligent, whole-hearted participation in the Mass; the form in which such participation is best achieved, ideally, is the Sung Mass; the only institution in which the required skill in singing can be achieved by *everyone* today is the school. Dare we say, then, that a school is all that it should be which fails to provide as good a training in the art of music as it provides in other arts?

Frankly, after that question, I feel that I could legitimately enough stop my talk right here. But I will go on to a consideration of how music can aid the student in other forms of worship and spiritual activity, as well as in prudential action and artistic.

For just as the Sung Mass is the ideal form of the Mass, so, traditionally, the prayer service of the Universal Church, which is the extension of the Mass, has always normally included some singing.

From the earliest times, Christians, being members of One Body, have naturally felt and expressed their unity by singing their prayers together, especially in the form of hymns. (The singing of the Psalms communally seems not to have been the very earliest practice.) The two primary communal prayers by which they sanctified, respectively, all the hours and actions of the day and of the night — namely, Lauds and Vespers — consisted of hearing and welcoming the Word of God in a Scripture reading, praising Him in gratitude by a Psalm or two, voicing their communal prayer in a collect, and singing a hymn. The Word of God was received and answered by the voicing of prayers that were also the Word of God or an inspiration of that Word. And with their singing they joined voices with others who sing the eternal chorus of Heaven. (How better could we sanctify the hours of the school day and the hours after school than by praying Lauds and Vespers together!)

Again, what better way of acting as spokesman for all the inarticulate creatures of creation, praising God for them as they would praise Him themselves could they but do so, than by singing the praises the Holy Spirit has given us in the Psalms (“The Praises”)? Or what better way of attracting to Him those who would become one with Christ than by letting them appreciate what it is to pray and praise with the profound, unsentimental piety of the Chant? Just as, what greater disservice can we do these souls than drive them away from Christ by the almost sickening pietism of some of our sentimental music?

And if military songs are often (the *Marseillaise*, for instance) of incalculable value in strengthening soldiers for the martyrdom of the defense of the homeland, think how much easier it is to die for Christ, in Christ, when one has heard (or sung) properly, — when one has really appreciated the meaning and beauty of — that heavenly chant, the *Exultet*. What music has done indeed, both directly or indirectly, to produce the race of martyrs — those “other Christs” in the fullest sense — it would be impossible to say.

As for the need for music in the conduct of our personal, domestic, social, military, and political affairs — some estimate of this can be gained by our simply reflecting on how many kinds of songs we have that determine our basic attitudes here: the songs for social occasions, the Auld Lang Syne,

the college songs, the songs about home, the work songs, the love songs, the folk songs, the songs about heroes, the military songs, the national anthems, the songs of satire. Consider, too, how different our lives might be if all these songs were of Christian tone and inspiration — how much more *prudent* our actions in the various fields of life would be.

Again, consider how music can give a student some understanding of the discipline of a scientific *artistic* training: how it can teach him to think synthetically as well as analytically; to put together as well as take apart; to think in terms of purpose; to respect the requirements of a strict form as dictated by that purpose; to respect his material as having its own rights and inner logic; to respect the limitations, the capabilities of the instrument; to see how, if he would change any one of these factors, he must change accordingly every other, and so on. Above all, from music he may learn how even the most inspirational of arts may be, in the strict sense, scientific: in short, how art, while imaginative, is a truly *intellectual* virtue. The very same general principles which he finds in a well-conducted course in crafts or painting or poetry he will find here manifested in what is perhaps their purest form. Recognition of them and obedience to them in music make doubly easy his recognition of them and obedience to them in all other arts.

Positively, then, there are many reasons why a sound training in music should prove of great value to the Christian student — aiding him, as it does, to perform well his functions of worshipping, contemplating, bearing witness to Christ in all his actions, suffering martyrdom for and in Him, governing or being governed, maintaining human relations with others, and making things properly.

But sound training in music is perhaps even more important relatively — a fact liable to escape notice since the abuse of an art can be more degrading than the proper use of it may be elevating. (And, alas, there is no art more abused, put to more degrading ends on *all* levels, than the art of music!) As Père L. Bouyer, in a book which you should all read (*LITURGICAL PIETY*, Notre Dame University Press) points out, nothing, for instance, seems to have been more harmful to the spirit of Christian worship than that product of the Baroque period, the

Grand Opera. This form of sentimental secular art, in which sense is regularly sacrificed to sound, beauty to glamor, the mystery of reality to mere mysteriousness (how many Americans, at least, would enjoy the opera as much as they do if they really knew what was being said?) has proved an almost poisonous influence mystically.

Father Bouyer writes as follows:

“We must remember here that the great cultural creation of the period, and its most popular one, was the opera. And in the opera an exaltation of sensual passion is combined with a mythological kind of imagery almost completely decorative, flowering in courtly music and ballet. So the faithful of the same period sought to find a religious equivalent of the opera in the liturgy. Churches came to resemble theatres in plan and decoration. The liturgical pomps displayed in such churches tended to smother the traditional text of the liturgy under an increasingly profane kind of polyphony, the text itself having little more importance either for the performers or the hearers than did da Ponte’s poems for devotees of Mozart. And, in the end, the liturgy was embalmed in productions which treated it as reverently and as indifferently as the King’s corpse at a royal funeral; it became, as it were, the pretext for an “occasion” similar to a *soiree* at court complete with a *divertissement* by Lully. The chief focus of liturgical life, therefore, was no more the Mass, which included too many elements out of harmony with the mentality of the times” [As it does today. What American *wants* to attend Sacrifice?] “Instead, Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, a ceremony created and developed just in time to satisfy the new tastes of the age, managed to assimilate perfectly the courtly ceremonial then fashionable. In the Presence of the Divine King, a kind of heavenly grand opera could be performed, with all the display of lights, jewels (mostly false), exquisite polyphonic singing, and pageantry which commonly accompany a royal reception. And all this was pervaded with that type of sentimental piety, those pantings after Divine love, capable of competing successfully with the ecstatic expressions of human love fashionable in the poetry of the time . . .”

And today we have not only Grand Opera, but

almost all dance music disposing us against the proper understanding and use of music for sacred purposes. On this point, let me quote from the work in the series GREAT RELIGIOUS COMPOSERS on Guillaume de Machaut, by Sigemund Levarie. In the chapter called, "Problems of a Religious Composer," the author has this to say in commenting on the *Motu Proprio* and what it identifies as profane music unsuitable for sacred rites:

"The holiness of music permitted in church has been defined by the *Motu Proprio* as that quality that excludes all profanity, not only from the score, but also from the manner of performance. The given examples of profanity seem to come from apparently unrelated realms. But theatrical style, pronounced rhythm, conventionalism, secular language, improvisation, solo performances, exhibitionism, supremacy of instrumental over vocal expression, and prevalence of noisy percussion instruments — these characteristics reveal a common root to the critical musician. Although the *Motu Proprio* does not single out or even name the constitutional antagonist of church music, we recognize dance music as the carrier of all the profane qualities listed before and as worthy of our special attention."

Worthy of very special attention, I might add, since for most modern young Americans, real music now means dance music — anything else is for the long-haired boys.

So long, then, as we are concerned with getting our students ready for active participation in the Mass, which is best done by the right singing of it, and certainly not by passive listening to the wrong kind, we must see that sound musical training is a vital necessity if only as, shall we say hygienic — as at least preventing our student from falling into erroneous habits of prayer and worship. How else are we to protect these students from being predisposed against good sacred music and from identifying piety with so-called "corny" or "schmaltzy" music?

There is enough of a tendency to identify dumbness with goodness and alertness or sophistication with worldliness, sloppy sentimentality with sanctity, already — as we see in the horrible plastic and pictorial art in most of our churches. Literal-

ly, for the love of God, let us not confirm this fatal delusion by our choice of music also.

Not only will saccharine or melodramatic music repel the more intelligent of our students, it will make their task of converting others, or of witnessing to Christ, doubly hard.

Especially will it be hard for some of them to resist the substitute religion which is provided by the higher forms of musical entertainment, the concert or the symphony, or to deal with those outside the Church who are addicts of those substitute religions. For a symphony or a concert is often very dangerous in that it can put its listeners through what seems to them a profound mystical experience—all without adverting to a single Christian reality. They can go to Mass by listening to Bach's Mass — and moreover, in doing so feel superior to the poor Italian fruit vendor around the corner who really goes to Mass, because he cannot appreciate what they appreciate. It is for this reason (and I remind my audience that I myself lived in Boston for many years and taught in Cambridge) that many well-educated Bostonians are almost impossible to convert or make truly religious: they have gone from Puritanism to Congregationalism to Boston-Symphonyism, gaining, they think, by each step, a purer and purer religion. What they have gained has been, of course, at the loss of one Christian truth after another.

I am not saying here that the music they generally listen to cannot be listened to profitably by Catholics. Far from it. Rightly, Catholics should be able to find the good wherever it is in any form of thought or expression — the grain of truth in every lie, the goodness in everything defective. They should be able to respond to the joy of Mozart, to the appreciation of man's indomitable will as expressed by Beethoven, to the deep sense of the *lacrimae rerum* in Tschaikovsky, and so on. The Catholic should be led to contemplation, indeed, in three ways: by what the music says; by the marvelousness of its structure; by its manifestations of how much in the image and likeness of God a great composer can be. But he must know how to see and respond to these things *duly* — that is, not in any sense worshipfully or sentimentally, in a mood of pseudo-mysticism.

As for the enervating, the demoralizing effect of the wrong kind of music on those who might otherwise be strong enough to witness to Christ in all they do and willingly to suffer martyrdom in

and for Him — who that has listened to our popular music (or, for that matter, our contemporary classical music) would say that it is suited to maintaining the morale of the members of the Church Militant? If we do not allow our athletes to break training and live on creampuffs, ice cream, coca-cola, and cigarettes, neither should we allow those who are to be athletes for Christ to do likewise. Think what is meant by taking up one's Cross joyfully, by making an oblation of oneself and one's sufferings in the *Sacrifice* of the Mass, by doing all things well in the spirit of obedience to God's Will (like the Little Flower); and then think of the music which we allow to be fed to those who are to do these things.

Moreover, that music can have a negative effect on the Catholic in performing his duties in all departments of his life is very obvious; for what would our civilization be like if the songs we have already mentioned — the love-songs, the college songs, the military songs, and the rest — were truly Christian in every sense of the word? How many divorces, for example — to cite but one evil — are directly or indirectly the result of that sentimental view of romantic love, that set of false expectations, fostered by *Tin Pan Alley*? And what is true of romantic love and marriage is also true of other things: music can so induct its subjects into a world of fantasy and day-dreaming as to rob them of all readiness in dealing with reality — that readiness which is, as the psychiatrists tell us, the sign of maturity.

As for the effect of bad music, or music abused, on the virtue of art, it is obvious that it can encourage all kinds of incompetence, on the one hand, and a false appreciation of mere technical competence on the other.

Incompetence and distraction from the true joy of craftsmanship and of work are fostered by the common habit of listening to music at *all* times, not only during conversation, but during hours of work and study as well. We have come to adopt the habit of doing everything to a musical obbligo — like a child who can't work without a gum-drop in his mouth. What this means is that we no longer look to our work as affording the challenge and joy of craftsmanship or to any work as something enjoyable in itself. It must all be sweetened up by melody. What it also means is that we are gradually becoming over-stimulated

persons who do our work unthinkingly and are content with the routine, sub-human tasks of mass-production. (Music has, indeed, become a sop to the machine-tenders, one more lure for those who would destroy craftsmanship by bribing men to become machine-like morons in order to "enjoy" a leisure of mindless dissipation.)

Can we in any way cooperate with this sort of thing? Must we not, if only for these negative reasons, strive valiantly to teach our students how to guard against these dangers that lurk in apparently "pure" and innocent forms of art?

So far, I have spoken of what might be called the specific, direct effects of music, both positive and negative. Now, I shall try to make clear why, even ignoring these, an educator might reasonably be led to conclude that music is a necessary discipline.

For an educator should see immediately, I believe, the validity of the following line of reasoning: The student whose heart does not enable him to act readily in accordance with the dictates of his head, may know many, many things and yet, for all intents and purposes, act like a far worse fool than someone who knows far less than he. The disciplines which, as it were, harness together the heart and the head are the fine arts. Of these, the one that does so most directly, as Aristotle pointed out, is music. Therefore — I let you draw your own conclusions.

The connecting of heart and head is all the more necessary since we are not only subject to the disruption of original sin (which the Pope calls the main obstacle to education) but are inclined not to be anything like as intellectual as we like to believe we are.

The unhappy truth is that we deceive ourselves when we suppose that most of our thinking is as consciously reasonable as it is supposed to be. As a learned friend of mine once shocked a good — or rather a poor — Thomist by saying, "It is only in textbooks that man is a rational animal."

To bring this fact home to you, let me ask you to perform a little experiment, one which I have performed with interesting results more than once, with groups like yourselves. If you have paper and pencil handy, put down the following list of statements; if not, just keep them in mind. I will repeat them later anyway.

- 1) Never overeat.
- 2) Action and re-action are equal and opposite.
- 3) Honesty is the best policy.
- 4) Every act of self-denial stops some wheel from turning.
- 5) The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.
- 6) Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the land.

Now, I should like to have you perform the experiment of evaluating these statements as wisdom — as applying to all people at all times and as leading to ultimate happiness. Put the most important first; the next most important next; and so on.

Now, since we are all of the same religious belief, general political belief, culture, tradition and even occupation, we should all come to essentially the same evaluation here. For we are all trying to instill in our students the same sense of values — enable them to have recourse naturally and easily to the right principles in the right order of preference so as to live wisely and Christianly. And yet what have we? I should like a show of hands on how many have followed my line of preference: —

- 1) Blessed are the meek.
- 2) Every act of self-denial.
- 3) The price of liberty.
- 4) Action and reaction.
- 5) Never overeat. (“Honesty is the best policy” should not be on the list at all, since it is basically a false statement. Honesty is not a policy; it is a virtue.)

Yet, I believe I can show mine to be *rational*ly the right one.

But the important thing is how we arrived at this evaluation, not merely that our evaluations differ from one another. What I should like to have you ask yourselves and answer honestly is: how did you arrive at your evaluation? Did you not *feel* that one of the statements was a more important truth than another? On both scores, then, is it not wise for us to assure, not merely similar assents to truths, but similar consents — not merely similar basic notions, but similar basic sentiments? And can we neglect the most directly emotional of the fine arts in assuring these sentiments? (A sentiment, let us remember, is a feeling about a truth or a profound reality which is understood and appreciated both intellectually

and imaginatively: The crucifix; an image of Our Lady; the flag; the statue of Liberty; all arouse in us — or should arouse in us — true and deep sentiments. So, too, should every prayer in the Mass, from the *Kyrie* on, especially when sung or intoned.)

I could go on to show you how, if you do not have music foster *sense*, it will be used to foster *nonsense*: become, indeed, a source of de-educating the student by habituating him to become excited over nothing much, or over some sentimental foolishness. I will merely say, however, that if any one doubts this fact, let him read the words of most of our college songs. The sentiments which young men and women who are being given intellectual training are supposed to utter willingly and whole-heartedly! Mostly, they are such stuff as no High School teacher of Freshman English would let his or her pupils get by with.

So far, I have been talking about what might be called the direct value of music. If I had time, I could, I believe, go on to show you its very great value, as I have come to appreciate it, to the teacher of English: how it can be used to make students aware of what can be called in a very exact, rather than an analogical sense, word-music; how the knowledge it affords of the difference between quantity and accent can straighten out our otherwise unbelievably mistaken prosody; how an understanding of cadence will not only make clear a fundamental difference between prose and poetry, but also — and I really wish I had time to dilate on this topic — the fact that our Lord was not in any metaphorical sense, but quite literally, a poet, as also was Our Lady. (Of one thing I am sure: The person who has no sense of measure, rhythm, tone, and cadence, should never be allowed to teach English, certainly not English composition or the appreciation of poetry.)

There are other subjects, of-course, with which music has a close and illuminating relationship (think how a chord, for instance, can be used to suggest the unity of the Hypostatic Union.) But I must leave this subject aside, and go on to a final and practical consideration.

If music is anything like as important as I make it out to be, what should we do about it? And how hard will it be to do this?

Well, without trying to lay down any set curriculum for accomplishing these ends, may I sug-

gest that you should try to make sure that every one of your students can make reasonably good use of his or her voice; can think and feel sensitively in musical idiom; can pick up a simple chant and sing it after humming it over a couple of times; will know by heart the most important chants of the common and of the Liturgical Year, as well as a number of such excellent hymns as you will find in the *Pius X* or the *Westminster Hymnals*. Your student should know a fair number of traditional songs for various occasions; be aware of the technical excellence but relative emptiness of modern dance music; and aware also of the dangers of music as discussed here. Above all, it should seem to him that music is a natural way of saying some things — whether prayers or congratulations or whatever — much more effectively than they could be said in any other way. And he should have heard enough good music to feel the rightness and depth of it.

Not that I believe these moderate objectives are easy to attain, despite the fact that one might think that a good course in solfeggio for two years and some regular practice in the Sung Mass, as also in general community singing, might be enough here. If such a course were conducted rightly, the ends should be easily attainable; but I have no delusions about how hard it will be to get them so conducted.

There are, alas, many obstacles to overcome here, such as, the general lack of knowledge of the true spirit of the Liturgy (and how can a boy or girl sing properly?): the failure to distinguish the art of singing prayers to God from singing songs delightfully to man; the failure to prefer having *everyone* gain a knowledge of the grammar of music to having a *few* gain some slight mastery of the art of music; the failure to realize that there are hardly any tone-deaf people; the failure to realize that this art is not for the favored few; the failure to realize that polyphony should be taught only *after* the chant and should never be set up in the student's mind as the norm for chant; the failure to realize that basic understanding and appreciation follows best from the *practice* of an art, whether the student becomes a great artist or not; the failure to meet the threat of dance music, the threat which can only be met by showing (as St. Thomas would) a just appreciation of it and enabling the student to get such an appreciation of it himself; the general belief that music is some-

thing unnatural or something perfectionist; unless it is great classical music, it is not music; the failure, finally, to realize that music need not be expensive — unless we wish to turn out geniuses and aesthetes; we all have voices, and there are plenty of halls.

And yet, I believe that if you simply keep these dangers and delusions in mind, and begin by making full use of the *Motu Proprio*, the *Mediator Dei*, the *Mystici Corporis*, and the Gradual, with all its undotted notes which free us from Gregorian controversy, as well as the *Pius X* and the *Westminster Hymnal*, and any good collection of the best traditional songs and the best records of Bix Beidebecke and Glenn Miller, you will go far indeed to solve your very great problem, and give music its due place in your curriculum.

Mr. Ryan, author of *An Idea of a Catholic College* (Sheed and Ward 1945) and *Beyond Humanism* (Sheed Ward 1950), over a period of some 30 years has taught English and related subjects at Harvard University, Holy Cross College, Boston College, and Conception Seminary. For five years he has been advisor to the Workshop Program at Catholic University of America and has participated in and co-directed the Secondary School Workshop and participated in the Art Workshop. He is a director of the National Liturgical Conference and is consultant to the Notre Dame University Press on Liturgical Studies.

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## ACHILLE P. BRAGERS

1887 — 1955

ON MAY 29th OF THIS YEAR, ACHILLE P. BRAGERS died in New York City of a heart condition. With his passing, Church musicians and the work of the church music apostolate have suffered a great loss. As organist, teacher, composer, counsellor, and friend, Achille Bragers helped to shape the careers in church music of countless organists in the United States. His quiet and unflagging devotion to his vocation in the field of church music was and will be a source of inspiration and encouragement to all who came in contact with him personally or through the medium of his published works.

In the picture shown on this page Mr. Bragers is receiving the Catholic Choirmaster's Liturgical Music Award given him by the Society of Saint Gregory on March 12th, 1951, the Feast of Saint Gregory. HIS EMINENCE, FRANCIS CARDINAL SPELLMAN of New York made the presentation. With His Eminence and Mr. Bragers is shown REV. JOHN C. SELNER, S.S., President of the Society of Saint Gregory. This award, presented shortly after the announcement of his retirement, was the last distinction to come to Mr. Bragers during his life.

Achille Bragers was born on Saint Valentine's Day, 1887, in a small town near Brussels, Belgium. At the age of 15 he accepted the post of organist in his native village. In 1907 he graduated from the Lemmens Institute at Malines which was then under the direction of EDGAR TINEL. The same year he moved to America and became organist and choirmaster at the Cathedral in Covington, Kentucky, where he worked for some three years. In 1918 he became a naturalized citizen of this country and in 1922 he was invited by MOTHER GEORGIA STEVENS, R.S.C.J., to become a member of the faculty of the then newly-formed Pius Tenth School of Liturgical Music at Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart in New York. At this institution for the next quarter of a century and more he dedicated himself to a work that was to be the most fruitful of his career.

The start of Mr. Bragers' tenure at the Pius Tenth School marked the beginning of his spe-



Cardinal Spellman, Father Selner and Mr. Bragers

cialization in the field of Gregorian Chant accompaniment. The skills which he himself acquired in this phase of his professional life he passed on to the many students who came to the school for instruction. His method of accompanying the chant has been preserved in a book on the subject which is widely used as a teaching manual. What is perhaps more significant than his class and private teaching of chant accompaniments from the point of view of the number of people who have been helped by his contributions is his list of published chant accompaniments (See list below.) The volume and quality of these are unmatched. In the aggregate they have helped to make the singing of Gregorian Chant acceptable and functional where otherwise chant might never have been used at all and they have been instrumental in eliminating from general use the old style romantic-type accompaniments that formerly were so harmful to the chant. If he had completed the Kyriale and Proper of the Time alone his task would have been considered gigantic. Before he died he completed all but 40 pages of the Proper and Common of the Saints, the first volume of which (Advent through June) will appear in published form in November of this year. The unfinished portions have been completed by former pupils of his.

Although his written accompaniments are widely used, admired and consistently provide a prayerful background and support to the chant melodies, these are but a faint reflection of the mood of prayer which he himself through his organ playing could produce during a liturgical service. When he joined his skillful accompaniment of the chants of a mass, for example, or of vespers, with his inspired transitional improvisations, the resulting total experience of the service became unforgettable.

His published compositions in a modern idiom, though not nearly so numerous as those of chant, are like his other works well-known and used. Both the Reginae Pacis and Sacred Heart Masses have appeared in several arrangements for different combinations of voices.

Achille Bragers' imitators and pupils are many; his friendship was precious. Musicians found him a keenly sensitive artist whose self-effacing work was his prayer. His friends knew this too and in addition loved him for the mild and gentle person that he was, a true Christian soul at peace with God.

*May the choirs of angels sing in joy to welcome thee*

*And with Lazarus who once was poor  
May thou find eternal peace at last.*

"In Paradisum"

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- 1995 Easter Vigil Service
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- 907 Missa cum Jubilo and Missa alme Pater
- 1440 Missa Lux et Origo
- 1965 Requiem Mass and Libera
- 1320 Proper of the 1st and 3rd Christmas Masses  
and Feast of Circumcision
- 1321 Proper of the Easter Mass
- 1803 Proper of Mass for Our Lady of Guadalupe
- 1838 Proper of the Mass for the Assumption of  
B.V.M.
- 889 Christus Vincit
- 1945 Christus Vincit —Christ Lord of Glory
- 1960 Te Deum Laudamus

(Continued on Page 195)

## THOMAS MERTON TRANSLATES EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS HYMN

Leaflets containing a translation of the official hymn of the 36th International Eucharistic Congress which opened in Rio de Janeiro this month were distributed to the pilgrims in attendance at the Congress. The translation was made by THOMAS MERTON (Fr. Louis, O.C.S.O.), of Gethsemani Abbey, Kentucky).

Composed in Portuguese, the English translation of the hymn is as follows:

O come, O hasten  
From every side,  
The royal table  
Is richly spread.

Waters fall from heaven,  
Soak the earth with rain.  
Vines bring forth their clusters;  
Wheatfields give their grain.

The rough-handed farmer  
Gently strips the vine  
Bread comes from the wheatfields,  
Grapes turn into wine.

Grace comes down from heaven  
To Our Lady's breast.  
Mary, like a monstrance,  
Passes, bearing Christ.

Christ at mortal tables  
Comes and takes His place.  
In His Blessed Hands  
Signs are charged with grace.

Bread becomes His Body  
Wine is changed to Blood  
His the Cross and Passion  
Ours the grace and food.

March, O holy people,  
Strengthened by this Bread;  
In life, in death, victorious,  
March home to your God.

Other translations of the Congress hymn have been prepared in Spanish, French and German. The original hymn was composed by FATHER MARCOS BARBOSA, O.S.B. of the Benedictine monastery of San Benito in Rio de Janeiro.

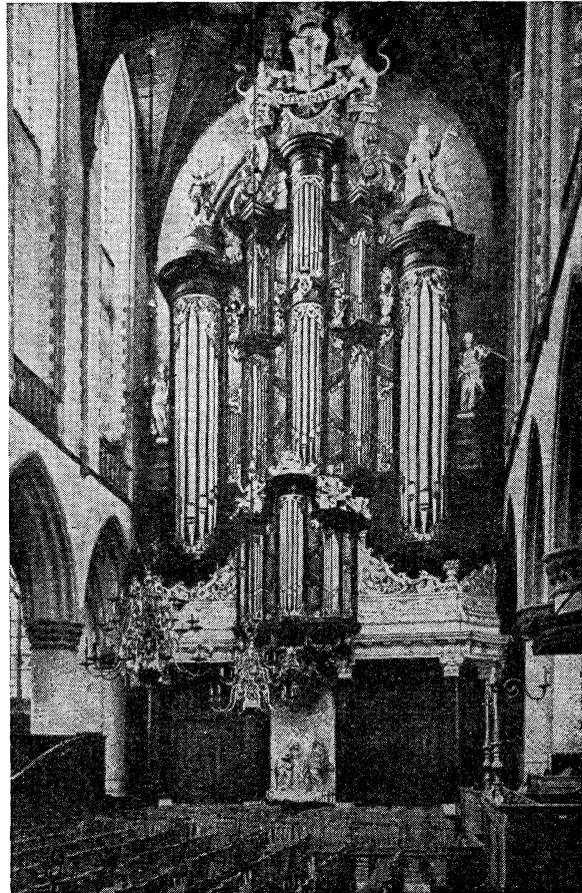
## New Center for the Art of the Organ in Haarlem, The Netherlands

THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL ORGAN Improvisation Contest took place at Haarlem, The Netherlands, July 6th through 14th of this year. In the great Church (see organ casement picture on this page) an improvisation contest took place on the first day. This was followed by a concert given by the participants of the improvisation contest in a program of their own option. Members of the jury which included M<sup>L</sup>L<sup>E</sup>. JEANNE DEMESSIEUX of Paris, PROFESSOR JOSEPH ZIMMERMANN of Cologne, and GEORGE STAM of Utrecht, gave a concert on July 7th. In the Municipal Hall on July 8th, a concert for organ and orchestra took place. The winners of previous years gave an improvisation concert on July 14th.

Starting on July 9th and continuing through July 30th, organ courses were held at Haarlem under the supervision of internationally famous masters. During this period the students had the opportunity of studying with some of the finest leaders in the organ world. In addition to the opportunity afforded students of practicing and studying with acknowledged masters, the summer school acted as a meeting place for a young generation of growing organists, who have an opportunity here to exchange ideas and enthusiasms with one another. Certificates are issued to all the participants. In organ playing the teachers were M<sup>L</sup>L<sup>E</sup>. JEANNE DEMESSIEUX, and MR. FRIEDRICH BIHN of Hamburg; in improvisation, MR. ANTON HEILER of Vienna and GASTON LITAIZE of Paris.

The fact that the organ courses stress improvisation is evidence of the seriousness of purpose which prompted the founding of this annual summer course.

The following is an article on the history of organ improvisation by HENNIE SCHOUTEN, and is reprinted from the announcement of the international organ improvisation course for 1954 which took place in Haarlem.



Organ of Great Church

### On the History of Organ Improvisation

When the Organ, in old ages a secular instrument, made its entrance in the churches, a development started, which would lead to an age-long flourishing of organ building, organ playing, organ composition and improvisation.

In the Middle Ages already the art of improvising was industriously practiced. And in the sixteenth century rather high demands were made upon the spontaneous creations of the organists. A "Regolamente" of 1541 mentions that the candidates for the situation of organist of the San Marco at Venice had to improvise a fantasia on

a musical phrase, taken from the liturgy ("Without confusing the voices, as if four singers were singing") and besides this to join three imitating voices to a given cantus firmus. It stands to reason that only organists, who had made profound studies, were able to meet such requirements. It is, however, obvious that the masters of the 16th century taught improvisation to their pupils in a very methodical manner. In a book, published in 1557, the Spanish composer Tomas de Santa Maria gave the advice to take from a composition any voice, to place this in the soprano and to improvise three voices against it. Only when the pupil mastered this technique was he allowed to place the cantus firmus in the other voices.

Bach, the great organ composer, was a master in improvising too. His improvisations, to praise which his contemporaries vied with one another, have, of course, been distinguished by a wealth of brilliant ideas. But he was certainly not the only composer of his time who mastered the technique of improvising in a perfect manner. Every organist, who, with a chance of being successful, wished to compete for a vacant place as organist of an important church, had to be proficient in the art of improvising. Mattheson described a competitive examination at Hamburg, where the candidates had to improvise a choraltrio, a fugue and a passacaglia. And Telemann, on such an occasion, set for elaboration no fewer than four chorals and four fugue-themes.

But during Bach's lifetime already the art of organ playing and so the art of improvising too declined. It is characteristic that old Reinken, who had heard an improvisation upon the choral "An Wasserflüssen Babylons" played by Bach, commented: "I thought this art had died out, but I see that it is still living in you."

The church began to lose importance as a centre of musical life. The great composers of the 19th century were hardly interested in the organ. Many magnificent organs, which in former years had inspired real artists to masterly improvisations, were played by mediocre organists in the 19th century. The average organist did not aim at a well-founded technique of improvising, but tried to compensate his incapacity by a surplus of sentiment.

(Continued on Page 192)

## OUR MUSIC THIS MONTH

In this Music Supplement will be found excerpts from four recent settings of the Ordinary of the Mass. Each is for a different voice grouping and each bears the stamp of liturgical propriety and skillful craftsmanship.

*MASS IN THE MAJOR MODES* by Rev. Russell Woollen; for Congregation or Unison Treble Voices and Choir of Three Equal Voices and Organ; Cat. No. 2065; 32 Pages; Score \$1.00; Voice Part for Populus and Treble Voices 20 cts. net.

Motifs drawn from each of Modes 5, 6, 7, and 8 form the bases of this unusual composition. The Treble Voice part — especially written for boys' voices — is optional. Free rhythmic formations and major triad parallelism are strong features of the musical framework. (Kyrie only printed here)

*MASS IN HONOR OF SAINT ANTHONY* by Richard Keys Biggs; For SATB Voices and Organ; Score 80 cts. net; 20 pages; Soprano Voice Part 20 cts. net. Cat. No. 2073.

Published some time ago as a Mass for SATB Voices and Organ, this well-known composition now makes its appearance in an STB setting thus bringing it within the grasp of newly-formed choirs of boys and men. The melodic line of the Kyrie offers the dominant musical material for the entire composition. (Kyrie and a portion of the Gloria printed here.)

*MISSA "TE DEUM LAUDAMUS"* by Dom Lorenzo Perosi; for 2 Equal or SATB Voices and Organ; 28 Pages; Score 80 cts. net; Two-part Voice Part 30 cts. net. Cat. No. 2061.

The first American edition of a mass that was once widely used in Europe. On its merit it deserves to be better known in this country. Its stately and majestic strains render it especially suitable for feast day performances. The melodic strands taken from the chant "Te Deum" will be easily recognized. (Kyrie and Sanctus only printed here)

*MASS IN HONOR OF THE QUEENSHIP OF MARY* by Sister Florentine, P.H.J.C.; for Three Equal Voices and Organ; 16 pages; Score 80 cts. net; Voice Part 35 cts. net. Cat No. 2078.

A composer whose music always registers favorably especially among convent choirs has given us a mass in honor of the new feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A special feature of the composition is the short-form Credo. (Kyrie and portion of Credo only printed here)



# MASS IN THE MAJOR MODES

For Congregation or Unison Treble Voices and  
Choir of Three Equal Voices and Organ

## KYRIE

Modo Gregoriano

Rev. RUSSELL WOOLLEN

ORGAN

*mf legato*

Musical notation for the organ introduction, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef) with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The music is marked *mf legato*.

TUTTI *f*

Musical notation for the first phrase, featuring a vocal line and organ accompaniment. The vocal line is marked *TUTTI f*. The lyrics are: *Ký - ri - e e - lé - i - son, - Ký - ri - e e -*

Musical notation for the second phrase, featuring a vocal line and organ accompaniment. The lyrics are: *lé - i - son. - - - - - Ký - ri - e e -*

Musical notation for the third phrase, featuring a vocal line and organ accompaniment. The lyrics are: *- - - - - lé - i - son.*

Approved by Archdiocesan Music Commission of Boston.

Dec. 2, 1958

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Made in U.S.A.

*meno f*  
Congregation  
Chri - ste - lé - i - son. Chri -

*meno f*  
Treble Voices  
Chri - ste - lé - i - son. Chri - ste -

*meno f*  
I  
Chri - ste - lé - i - son. Chri - ste -

II  
Chri - ste - lé - i - son. Chri - ste -

III  
Chri - ste - lé - i - son. Chri -

*meno f*  
Ped.

*ff*  
ste - lé - i - son.

*ff*  
ste - lé - i - son.

*cresc.*  
*ff*

Chri - ste - e - lé - i - son. *p*

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son. *p*

Chri - ste - e - lé - i - son. *p*

Chri - ste - e - lé - i - son. *p*

*dim.* *p*

Detailed description: This system contains five vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are 'Chri - ste - e - lé - i - son.' The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic line in the left hand, with a 'dim.' marking and a 'p' dynamic.

*mf* Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son. - Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son.

*mf* Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son. - Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son.

*mf* Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son.

*mf* Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son.

*mf* Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son.

*mf*

Detailed description: This system contains five vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts continue with the lyrics 'Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son. - Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son.' The piano accompaniment continues with a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic line in the left hand, with a 'mf' dynamic.



# MASS

## In Honor of St. Anthony

For Soprano, Tenor, Bass and Organ

RICHARD KEYS BIGGS

Andante con moto

### KYRIE

*mf* TUTTI

Ký - ri - e e - lé - i - son. Ký - ri - e e -

lé - i - son. Ký - ri - e e - lé - i - son.

SOP. *mf a tempo* *cresc.*

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son. Chri - ste e -

TEN. *mf* *cresc.*

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son. Chri - ste e -

BASS *mf* *cresc.*

Chri - ste e - lé - i - son. Chri - ste e -

*a tempo* *mf* *cresc.*

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lé - i - son. Chri - ste e - lé - i - son.  
lé - i - son. Chri - ste e - lé - i - son.  
lé - i - son. Chri - ste e - lé - i - son.

The first system features three vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, and Bass) and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in a soprano clef, and the piano part is in a grand staff. The lyrics are: "lé - i - son. Chri - ste e - lé - i - son." The piano accompaniment consists of chords and moving lines in both hands.

**TUTTI**  
*mf* Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son. Ky - ri - e e -

The second system begins with the instruction "TUTTI" and a dynamic marking of "mf". It features a vocal staff and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son. Ky - ri - e e -". The piano accompaniment includes a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand.

lé - i - son. Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son.

The third system continues the vocal and piano parts. The lyrics are: "lé - i - son. Ky - ri - e e - lé - i - son." The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a supporting bass line in the left hand. A "rit." (ritardando) marking is present above the vocal staff and below the piano staff.

# GLORIA

*Allegro con spirito*

S. *f* Et in ter-ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus bo-nae vo-lun - tá -

T. *f* Et in ter-ra pax ho-mi - ni - bus bo - nae vo - lun - tá -

B. *f* Et in ter-ra pax ho - mi - ni - bus bo-nae vo-lun - tá -

*Allegro con spirito*

tis. *f* Lau - dá - mus te. *mf* Be - ne - dí - ci - mus te. *dim.*

tis. *f* Lau - dá - mus te. *mf* Be - ne - dí - ci - mus te. *dim.*

*rit.* *f* *mf* *dim.*

rá - mus te. *f* Glo - ri - fi - cá - mus te. *mf* Grá - ti - as

rá - mus te. *f* Glo - ri - fi - cá - mus te. *mf* Grá - ti - as

á - gi - mus ti - - bi pro - pter ma - gnam gló - ri - am

á - gi - mus ti - - bi pro - pter ma - gnam gló - ri - am

*rit.* *mp* Moderato

tu - am. Dó - mi - ne De - us, Rex cae - lé - stis, De - us

*rit.* *mp*

tu - am. Dó - mi - ne De - us, Rex cae - lé - stis De - us

*rit.* *mp*

Moderato

*rit.* *dim.* *mp*

Pa - ter o - mni - po - tens. Dó - mi - ne Fi - li u - ni - gé - ni - te,

Pa - ter o - mni - po - tens. Dó - mi - ne Fi - li u - ni - gé - ni - te,

# MISSA "TE DEUM LAUDAMUS"

(For 2 Equal or SATB Voices and Organ)

LORENZO PEROSI

Arranged by A.M. Portelance

## Kyrie

**Maestoso** *mf*

I SOPRANO  
(\*)

II ALTO

TENOR  
(ad lib.)

BASS  
(ad lib.)

ORGAN

**Maestoso (Thema)**  
(8.4)

Ký - ri - e e - léi -  
Ký - ri - e e - léi -  
Ký - ri - e e - léi -  
Ký - ri - e e - léi -

son. (Ký - ri - e e - léi - - son.) Ký - ri -  
son. (Ký - ri - e e - léi - - son.) Ký - ri -  
son. Ký - ri - e e - léi - - son. Ký - ri -  
son. Ký - ri - e e - léi - - son. Ký - ri -

(\*) When sung by 2 Equal Voices, use Soprano and Alto staves and small notes inserted therein.

Nihil obstat: Rev. Russell H. Davis, *Censor Deputatus.*

Imprimatur: † Richard J. Cushing, D.D., *Archbishop of Boston.* Jan. 14, 1955

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e e - léi - son, e - léi - son.

e e - léi - son, e - léi - son.

e e - léi - son, e - léi - son.

e e - léi - son, e - léi - son.

ALTO SOLO

(Chri - ste e - léi - son. Chri - ste e - léi -

BASS SOLO

Chri - ste e - léi - son. Chri - ste e - léi -

(8)

son. Chri - ste e - léi - son.)

son. Chri - ste e - léi - son.

(8.4)

Ký - ri - e e - léi - son. (Ký - ri - e e - léi -  
Ký - ri - e e - léi - son.  
Ký - ri - e e - léi -

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. It contains the lyrics "Ký - ri - e e - léi - son." followed by "(Ký - ri - e e - léi -". The second staff is another vocal line in treble clef with the lyrics "Ký - ri - e e - léi - son.". The third staff is a vocal line in treble clef with the lyrics "Ký - ri - e e - léi -". The fourth staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The piano part features a series of chords and moving lines in both hands, primarily using block chords and simple harmonic motion.

- - son.) Ký - ri - e e - léi - - - - son.  
Ký - ri - e e - léi - - - - son.  
- - son. e - léi - - - - son.  
e - léi - - - - son.

The second system of the musical score also consists of four staves. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef with the lyrics "- - son.) Ký - ri - e e - léi - - - - son.". The second staff is a vocal line in treble clef with the lyrics "Ký - ri - e e - léi - - - - son.". The third staff is a vocal line in treble clef with the lyrics "- - son. e - léi - - - - son.". The fourth staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef with the lyrics "e - léi - - - - son.". The piano part continues with harmonic support for the vocal lines, featuring sustained chords and melodic fragments.

# Sanctus

**Maestoso**

SOP. *p* (San - ctus, San-ctus,)

ALTO

TEN. *p* San - ctus, San-ctus,

BASS

ORGAN **Maestoso** (8)

*f* Ple - ni sunt coe - li et

*p* (San - ctus Dó - mi-nus De - us Sá - ba - oth.) *f* Ple - ni sunt coe - li et

*p* San - ctus Dó - mi-nus De - us Sá - ba - oth. *f* Ple - ni sunt coe - li et

ORGAN (8.4)

# MASS in honor of THE QUEENSHIP OF MARY

Sr. M. FLORENTINE, P.H.J.C.

## KYRIE

*Allegro moderato*

I  
II

*mf*

Ký - ri - e — e - lé - i - son.    Ký - ri - e — e - lé - i - son.

III

*mf*

*Allegro moderato*

*mf*

Detailed description: This system contains the first vocal entry of the Kyrie. It features three vocal parts: I (Soprano), II (Alto), and III (Tenor). The piano accompaniment is shown in grand staff notation. The tempo is marked 'Allegro moderato' and the dynamic is 'mf'. The lyrics are 'Ký - ri - e — e - lé - i - son. Ký - ri - e — e - lé - i - son.' The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4.

Ký - ri - e — e - lé - i - son.    Chri - ste — e - lé - i -

Detailed description: This system continues the vocal and piano parts from the first system. It features the same three vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'Ký - ri - e — e - lé - i - son. Chri - ste — e - lé - i -'. The tempo and dynamic markings are consistent with the first system.

Imprimatur: †Most Rev. John F. Noll. D.D. Archbishop-Bishop of Fort Wayne, Ind.  
Sept. 19, 1954

son. Chri - ste e - lé - i - son. Chri - ste e -

The first system of the musical score consists of two vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal staves are in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are "son. Chri - ste e - lé - i - son. Chri - ste e -". The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the vocal melody.

lé - i - son. Ký - ri - e e - lé - i - son. Ký - ri -

The second system continues the musical score. The vocal staves have lyrics "lé - i - son. Ký - ri - e e - lé - i - son. Ký - ri -". The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic support, including some rests in the vocal lines.

e e - lé - i - son. Ký - ri - e e - lé - i - son.

The third system concludes the musical score. The vocal staves have lyrics "e e - lé - i - son. Ký - ri - e e - lé - i - son.". The piano accompaniment provides a final harmonic resolution.

# CREDO

Recitativo

Patrem omnipoténtem, factórem coeli et ter - rae, visibílium ómnium, et invisi -

bí - li - um. Et in unum Dóminum Je - sum Chri - stum, Fílium Dei uni - gó - ni - tum.

Et ex Patre natum ante ómnia sáe - cu - la. Deum de Deo, lumen de lúmine, Deum verum de

De - o ve - ro. Génitum, non factum, consubstanti - á - lem Pa - tri: per quem ómnia

fa - cta sunt. Qui propter nos hómines, et propter nostram sa - lú - tem, de -

scén-dit de coe - lis. Et in-car-ná-tus est de Spí-ri-tu San-cto

ex Ma-ri-a Vír-gi-ne; et Ho-mo fa-ctus est. Crucifíxus étiam pro

no - bis, sub Póntio Piláto passus, et se-púl-tus est. Et resurréxit tértia

*Wedding Music.* Organ music and easy compositions for unison or two voices. McLaughlin & Reilly. \$2.00.

*Our Father and Hail Mary.* C. Alexander Peloquin. SATB, organ ad lib. McLaughlin & Reilly. 16c ea.

*Cantate Domino.* Rene Quignard. 2 equal and organ. McLaughlin & Reilly. 18c.

*Five Motets.* (3 BVM, O Salutaris, Tantum Ergo) Joseph McGrath. 3 equal a cappella. McLaughlin & Reilly. 30c.

*Indulged Prayer Songs.* Jan Nieland. (1 set of three prayers for unison and organ; 1 set of four prayers for SATB and organ). World Library of Sacred Music. 30c ea.

*Adoremus in Aeternum.* J. Deschamps. World Library of Sacred Music.

*Asperges and Vidi Aquam.* Carroll Andrews. Gregorian Institute.

Weddings we have always with us, and M. & R.'s compilation should fit the needs of many smaller parishes whose choir directors are searching for liturgically fitting music. The contents are sixteen Latin numbers, ten English, the proper of the Nuptial Mass, and four organ pieces (Raffy and Biggs). All of the songs and hymns are more or less well known. Like his other recent compositions, Peloquin's *Our Father and Hail Mary* display a respect for tradition as well as an imaginative freshness; passing dissonances weave in and out within the prevailing diatonic texture. Both pieces will repay investigation. Quignard's *Cantate* employs a traditional harmony; the opening figure, animated in character, appears in various guises in both voices and organ, and secures a neat unity. A piece for festive occasions. McGrath's motets are simple settings of several standard texts. Jan Nieland's indulged prayers consist of free-rhythmed lines which are characterized more by reverence than profundity. The English words are an asset.

The Deschamps antiphon in honor of the Blessed Sacrament is a pleasingly dignified composition in a traditionally harmonic vein. Carroll Andrews' *Asperges* and *Vidi* are simplified arrangements of the chant melodies, performable by several voice combinations.

*Catholic Hymns.* Gregorian Institute Hymnal, compiled by John C. Selner, S.S. Gregorian Institute of America. Organ Accomp. \$3.00; Mel. Ed. \$1.00.

*Following the Mass by Song.* Ten English Hymns. Carlo Rossini. J. Fischer & Bros. 80c.

Father Selner's little booklet of a dozen and a half hymns, published about ten years ago, has now reached its "Third and Augmented Edition," — numbering seventy selections, the majority of

## REVIEWS

which have been either composed or arranged by Father Selner himself. A few Gregorian Chant tunes have been included (notably the four Marian antiphons in English dress,) and other well-known pieces such as Lambillotte's *Panis Angelicus*, Maher's *Soul of My Savior*, Gruber's *Silent Night*, along with anonymous favorites like *Adeste Fideles*, *Hail Queen of Heaven*, *Dear Guardian of Mary*, and so on. Practically every season and major feast is represented by one or more hymns; the use of English words has been given preference wherever possible, with Faber, Caswall, and other sources used for the verses.

Though Father Selner's original tunes are "traditional" in their harmony and general melodic features, a number of them contain enough character and individuality to deserve a place in the repertoire of American hymns. Tunes like *Holy, Holy, Holy*, or *Evening Hymn*, and *O Godhead Hid*, keep coming back to mind when one has sung them several times.

The hymnal is designed specifically for unison singing. As such it deserves inspection, but like other worthy compilations of recent years, its contents will for the most part be new and unfamiliar for the average congregation.

The ten unison songs for which Father Rossini has written an organ accompaniment are "traditional tunes of the XVIII century," set to words that follow in thought the various parts of the mass. The verses in general fit the actions of the service well, though strangely neither the sources of the melodies nor the authors of the words are revealed. The booklet seems a little high priced for its size, and the cover is merely thick paper.

### Organ Music

*Pièces d'Orgue.* Dom Paul Benoit. J. Fischer & Bro. \$2.00.

Though his style does not display the progressive tendencies found in many contemporary European composers, Dom Benoit reveals a versatile handling of the organ's resources. Chromatic coloration, somewhat rhapsodic lines, discreet use of sequence, varied rhythmic patterns and a moderately active pedal are among the features of his writ-

ing. As in previous publications, he tends to draw his inspiration from Gregorian melody, and hence there is a prevailing sense of modality in his harmony. Nine compositions are included in the present book, most of them requiring three staves.

#### Records

*History of Music in Sound*. Vol. III. Ars Nova and Renaissance. Victor 2 12", LM 6016.

Some months back, this column ran a review of the first four albums of *L'Anthologie Sonore*. The present set is similar to *Anthologie* in that it presents a history of music by means of performance. It has this advantage, however, that it is designed to act as a companion to the *New Oxford History of Music*, an invaluable set of books now in process of publication. The present album covers the general period of late Medieval and early Renaissance music — from 13th century French polyphony to early 16th century instrumental and vocal music. Virtually all the great names are represented: Adam de la Hale, Machaut, Landini, Dunstable, Dufay, Binchois, Des Prez, and others. There is also a fair share of anonymous works. It is clear that this is a veritable treasure trove.

Teachers or those who are preparing to be teachers of music will be incomparably better educated for having investigated the music of earlier ages. Heaven knows how frustrating it is to study the history of music via books and lectures — and in the meantime not know *how the music sounded*. It hardly needs to be pointed out that the best teachers, the best choir directors, the best organists are those who are constantly endeavoring to increase their knowledge and better themselves. So many of the improprieties that go on in church music nowadays are due to pure ignorance. The eager and conscientious musician and director will see in records such as these just the thing he needs to help him acquire background, taste, musical judgment, and the other intangibles that distinguish the knowing musician from the misdirected dabbler. He will be inestimably helped by the booklet which comes with the records, analyzes the music, and presents all or a good portion of the musical notation for each selection.

*Ockeghem: Missa Prolationum*. The Fleetwood Singers, James Fleetwood, director. Kingsway 12", KL 221.

As Mr. J. Vincent Higginson aptly remarks on the notes for this album, this "is the first and only

complete recording of a major work of the renowned 15th century composer Johannes Ockeghem." Oldtime historians used to write of works like this that they were mathematical puzzles rather than artistic compositions. There is no denying that the music is highly "intellectual" in the sense that it can be best appreciated only by those who understand the involved canonic devices employed. Fifteenth century modal harmony, of course, does not have the rich luxuriance of Palestrina's counterpoint; but judged on its own merits and according to its place in history, this mass is a highly integrated work in which skill and beauty find themselves perfectly fitted to one another. The Fleetwood Singers, an ensemble of 13 mixed voices, are clearly a well trained group, and their recording is a successful and important addition to the library of sacred music.

#### Book Notices

*Choral Recitation of the Divine Office*. Dom Alphege Shebbeare. (No. 1 of "The Church Musician's Bookshelf.") Gregorian Institute of America. 1954. 73 pp.

On the basis of the title, one would conclude that the contents of this book were very specialized indeed. Actually, however, Dom Shebbeare has so much to say about the principles of good singing, and especially about good chanting, that I believe every average choir director will find something of value and interest in these pages. The author explains with succinctness and clarity the Solesmes rhythmic system, showing its application to psalmody and other parts of the divine office. Besides, there are pages dealing with tone quality, pronunciation and articulation, together with some wise introductory remarks which are very enlightening and have application to church music in general.

*Fundamentals of Conducting*. Frank Noyes. — Brown Company, Dubuque, Iowa. (Spiral back, paper covers.) 86 pp. \$2.50.

This profusely illustrated guide to conducting is devoted entirely to instrumental music, but a sensible musician will be able to transfer many of the principles to choral conducting also. Part I (*Practical Aspects*) is concerned mainly with the problems of rhythm and beats. Part II (*Theoretical Aspects*) discusses the attributes of a good conductor, symbols on a score and score reading, tempi, and so on. As the title indicates, it is the fundamentals that are explained and stressed.

The author is not effusive; his book has rather the qualities of an outline, but he makes his ideas clear and to the point.

*Music Education in the Secondary School.* (Proceedings of the Catholic University Music Workshop for Secondary Schools, Summer of 1954.) Edited by Richard H. Werder. Catholic University of America Press, 1955.

The main portion of this booklet is devoted to nine papers which were presented by such recognized teachers and administrators as Monsignor Thomas Quigley, Father Cletus Madsen, Theodore Marier, Margaret Leddy, Lloyd Geisler, and Sister Mary Janet Miller. The place of music in our Catholic high schools is the central topic around which the papers revolve. Father Madsen provides some interesting ideas on music as a means of expression, though he limits himself almost entirely to liturgical music. Miss Leddy's paper on Boy Choirs is a realistic summation of the problems encountered; the solutions she proposes bear the marks of practicality and good sense.

*Rev. Francis J. Guentner, S.J.*

Breckenridge, W. K.: *Hints for Piano Normal Studies.* New York: Vantage Press, 1955. 177 pp.

The Preface clarifies the idea and purpose of piano teaching "hints." The suggestions included in this volume are specifically intended for young and presumably inexperienced piano teachers and especially for those "who after having been graduated from a school of music, decide to teach and find that in the stress of learning or finishing a recital program, they have underestimated the problem involved in teaching others, and have neglected to equip themselves with an adequate teaching repertory." It is not intended for the elementary piano teacher, the author states, since the primary grades "have purposely been omitted as belonging to a different field." It would seem that an important area has been neglected, however, since most young, inexperienced teachers are likely to find themselves dealing with child beginners rather than the more advanced student to whom these "hints" apply.

The volume is divided into two sections: the first consists of a series of forty-six short essays of one, two or three pages on the various problems of the piano teacher; the second section is an Appendix of a little less than half the complete work, with a list of piano teaching materials for grades three through seven.

Among the essays in the first portion are "Choice of Material," "The Thumb," "The Touches," "Daily Setting-Up Exercises," "The Pedal," "Agogics," "The Shy Pupil," "Queer Mannerisms," "Going Abroad to Study." These articles reveal the author to be an experienced teacher who states his observations in a terse subjective style. His "hints" are clearly based upon opinions formed as the result of his own wide teaching experience. Information on technical matters — "Embellishments," "Repeats," "The Ritardando" and others — is generally conventional and reliable. Many of his points are brief and sketchy, perhaps too much so to be of the most practical value to the young teacher. "Some Dance Movements — Ancient and Modern" and other topics of a similar general nature are extremely concise — each main point defined in a brief sentence or two with a little more elaboration than one would find in a standard dictionary of musical terms. There is more explanation and clarification on such topics as "Memorizing," "Relaxation." There are the usual classic and generally anonymous remarks attributed to "a famous pianist" which are often interesting and to the point. Now and then in such articles as "Practice" the author appears to be addressing a recalcitrant pupil rather than a teacher co-worker.

The latter half of the book will appeal to many teachers because of its list of teaching materials. Included are exercises, recital pieces, etudes and studies for each grade level; duets; two-piano compositions; and piano in combination with a variety of other instruments. The list of solo materials is a limited one with the classic and traditional composers for the instrument in the great majority — there are a few compositions by modern composers mentioned. There is an interesting list of "Variations for Programs" and quite a complete itemization of Liszt's works among the "Transcriptions for Piano Solo".

These "hints" will undoubtedly give the young teacher an idea of the numerous problems — technical, musical and psychological — which the professional teacher faces. However, it seems likely that fuller exploration, clarification and elaboration will be necessary for the achievement of complete understanding which the conscientious teacher will surely desire.

There is bound to be some controversy with respect to the author's subjective treatment of "In-

terpretation" and "Imagination." The association which a composition calls to mind for one person is likely to vary somewhat from that of another. The generalization, however, that the piano student must get away from the "idea of notes and get into the realm of effects" through imaginative effort is certainly correct. Through his "hints" the author seems to be making a sincere effort at contributing to the educational resources of the piano teaching profession.

*Dr. Richard H. Werder*

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## History of Organ Improvisation

*(Continued from Page 172)*

Fortunately there were still organists, who proved that the old tradition had not become entirely lost. There were more — there were even improvisers of genius. Bruckner reaped laurels with his improvisations at Notre Dame at Paris, César Franck delighted his auditors by the brilliant way in which he gave form to his ideas, in St. Clotilde's Church on every Sunday. One no less than Liszt, who was a great improviser himself, was deeply moved when he had heard Franck in the basilica of St. Clotilde.

Franck impressed by the high flight of his ideas; in Saint-Saëns' improvisations the outstanding contrapuntal combination faculty was especially admired. Max Reger must also have been a born improviser. A colleague, who heard Max Reger improvise was impressed as well by the impetuosity with which the master developed his ideas as by his incomparable easiness in solving all kinds of contrapuntal problems.

By their tuition Franck and Saint-Saëns also contributed much to the revival of the art of improvising. In France the traditions of these masters were followed by organists like Widor, Guilmant, Gigout, Tournemire and Vierne. Marcel Dupré, who at present is the teacher of the organ-class at the Paris Conservatory, has set down his method in a book. As well by the publication of his "Traité d'improvisation à l'orgue" as by the concerts, which the French master gave in The Netherlands — concerts which always ended with improvisations upon given themes — the interest of Dutch organists has been strongly stimulated.

We are glad that the renewed interest made Haarlem a centre of the art of the organ — a centre from which a still growing influence is emanating and which is kindling increasing enthusiasm for the art of improvisation, so long neglected, but now resuscitated.

*In the Next Issue*

"STEPS TO A READING CHOIR"

by Dr. J. Robert Carroll

and

"PITCH FALLS IN CHANT"

by Theodore N. Marier

## A MUTE CANNOT TEACH ONE TO SPEAK

by Miguel Bernal

### THE FALLACY

To some people the sight of a composer having recourse to the piano or to the organ for inspiration is positively shocking, scandalous even, and a tacit confession of his incompetence. They maintain that a capable composer, well versed in the tricks of his trade, needs only a pen and a sheet of paper on which to pour out his musical creations. "A mute," they repeat after Schumann, "cannot teach one to speak." How can a piano, which is a silent instrument, rouse the composer to inspiration?

Knowing that this sophism, like a teasing phantom, often disturbs our young students, I shall take great pleasure in giving the ghost a merry chase.

### MUSIC IS MADE TO BE HEARD

In the art of composition there are two main factors; technique and inspiration. We learn technique by means of rules. No rules will ever teach inspiration, which is a gift from on high, a gift compounded in various degrees of good taste, personality, originality and genius. Sometimes, it breaks forth unexpectedly like a spark; more often it is the reward of persevering effort, not unlike the angel's blessing granted to Jacob at the end of their long-drawn-out tussle. The selection of technical means and especially the search for beauty often leave the composer in a state of painful perplexity. Beethoven's famous note-book offers evident proof that it took him years to grasp the ideal theme, that same theme which in his compositions seems to us so fresh and spontaneous. Chopin went through agonies before resolving to put down the musical ideas which surged from his brain. Mendelssohn made endless corrections in his works, even after their final performance, 'post festum' as he used to say. Cesar Franck's one and only symphony cost him a lifetime of gestation.

Now this work of selection, check and recheck, has always been accomplished by creative musicians not only with pencil, paper and eraser, but above all by means of the auricular judgment, which was made easy to form with the help of the piano, an instrument eminently polyphonic and

capable of presenting us not only with one but with multiple and simultaneous lines of sound.

Indeed, the piano has always been the favorite instrument of composers. Mozart, Beethoven, Franck, Debussy, Chopin and the immense majority of musicians have composed over its keyboard. Berlioz, who played only the guitar and the flute, never ceased lamenting bitterly this gap in his musical education, this lack of a practical knowledge of the piano which would have spared him so many moments of fatigue in his work of composition.

The piano is the writing-desk of the composer on which he elaborates and develops the ideas awakened under the stimulus of a cross-country walk (Beethoven), a fashionable social gathering (Chopin), the fascination of colors, silks and perfumes (Wagner), or Christian contemplation (Franck), in brief, of all the various excitants which usually react upon each individual writer. If a composer's dreams could come true, he would have at his disposal not only a piano, but also a quartet, a choir, and an orchestra, because he knows well that only by hearing his productions is he able to detect his errors to recognize some novel combination he has stumbled upon.

The piano does not teach and will never teach composition; but it is an excellent means of testing musical inventions of the mind before consigning them to paper. The composer imagines, let us say, a harmonic sequence, a thematic combination. He first plays them, and if they satisfy, he writes them down; otherwise, he imagines and tries something else.

Beethoven wrote to his noble pupil, Archduke Rudolph, on July 1, 1823: "Let your Imperial Highness continue to note briefly as an exercise, whatever idea occurs to you at the piano. This practice not only stimulates and develops the imagination; it also teaches to apprehend instantaneously the most fleeting ideas."

The piano is like a palette provided with all sorts of colors; just as the painter is not satisfied with imagining a color combination, but must try it so that his eye may pass judgment upon it, so also, the composer who works at the piano holds under his fingers all the musical sounds which can

possibly be used; he experiments with the combination which he has imagined, listens to it and submits it to his auricular judgment. To demand that he should write without testing by ear, would be equivalent to asking a painter to paint with his eyes closed. It might be possible, but inconvenient surely, and unnecessary.

### A CHIP OFF THE BLOCK

When one composes at the piano, music passes from the mind to the instrument, not from the instrument to the mind. The piano is incapable of bettering a blockhead; and one who has creative talent does not owe it to his familiarity with the white and black keys.

Place three individuals at the piano: an ignorant one, an amateur and a real composer. If music were born from the piano, all three would write the same way. But that is not the case. Why? Precisely because these three are guided not by their fingers but by their heads, nor is it the instrument that advises them but each one's unequal intelligence. The first probably tries to "pound out" a popular tune; the second invents a melody and seeks an accompaniment for it, while his memory supplies him with half forgotten fragments of dances and songs; the third, on the contrary, seeks in his own heart and in his own head the wanted theme, the dreamed-of harmony, the solution of some technical problem while, at the same time, his hands roam over the keys trying to sketch the idea, submitting it to the judgment of his ears, which in the end must decide whether the realization is adequate and worth putting down.

Now let us suppose that at a given moment these three individuals, by chance or caprice, let fall their fingers on the keyboard and strike a melodic turn, a harmonic sequence or a rhythm which seems obsolete, strange and eccentric. Since, even in a case like this, one remains bound by the limitations of his intelligence, those three will react in a different way.

The ignorant one will show only indifference; he will not trouble his head about what has happened; he will not even recognize a musical possibility. The amateur will drop the matter with a smile, thinking that he has made a blunder. The true composer, on the contrary, will probably become interested in this occurrence; consciously he

will repeat what his fingers have struck blindly; he will examine how the turn can possibly be used, and in the end he will probably discover that in this chance experiment he has made an original, even a precious find.

Wagner wrote in his *Souvenirs*:

"The arrival of the promised Erard grand-piano made me painfully conscious of what a tin kettle my old grand piano from Breitkopf and Härtel had been . . . The new piano appealed to my musical sense immensely, and whilst I was improvising, I seemed to drift quite naturally into the soft nocturnal sounds of the second act of *Tristan*, the composition of which I now began to sketch out."<sup>1</sup>

### HEARING WITHOUT HEARING

Unless you are tone deaf, after hearing "La Cucaracha" sung four or five times, you will know the tune from memory. Henceforth, it will not be necessary that anyone should sing it for you, not even yourself; all you need to do is to recall the tune. You can hear again "La Cucaracha," although it is not heard. How is this possible? Because from the air on which it was carried, the tune entered your ears; from the ears it traveled to your brain and thus became part of your mental possessions. This musical memory, which is capable of making us imagine what we hear, is rightly called "inward hearing." We can, therefore, define this hearing as the faculty of representing sounds inwardly to ourselves.

Philosophers tell us that nothing reaches the mind except through the senses. In effect, you could never remember inwardly "La Cucaracha," unless you had heard it before; no musician would be able to execute the simplest interval, if he had not previously listened to it; and one who is born deaf is incapable of imagining any sound, since he is deprived of external hearing.

What does all this lead us to? To forestall the strongest objection which can be made against these assertions, namely: How shall we explain that Beethoven composed many of his masterpieces in total deafness? His biographers tell us that when his infirmity began to grow worse, Beethoven used a thin rod, which he placed between his teeth and the strings of the piano. Clearly he

<sup>1</sup> "My Life," Richard Wagner, pp. 681-2.

must have felt the need of an audible check on what he put down on paper.

This practice of Beethoven merely reveals, if you wish, the terrible hunger for sound which the unfortunate master experienced. But the fact that he was able to compose in silence only proves that his inward ear, trained by the multiple experiences of his extraordinarily fine external ear, had become so perfect that he could prescind from audible sound. It means that Beethoven knew beforehand — because he could imagine it — how all the harmonic, melodic, rhythmic and orchestral material which he used, would sound. Finally, we believe that the miracle of a deaf Beethoven is explained by the fact that he had formed his external ear at the piano and by means of other musical instruments which he had heard so many times in a sensory way. And we advance the opinion, without fear of being disrespectful to the great master, that if he had been born deaf, he would not have left us as much as a bad tune.

#### ADVICE TO THOSE WHO NEED IT

Does this mean that only Beethoven could afford the luxury of composing silently? By no means. You probably know some composers who boast of doing by virtue what the illustrious deaf master did by necessity. Unfortunately, the great majority of their works are insipid and pedantic. But if some time you are curious to know to what degree your inward ear has been developed, try also to compose silently without the help of your external ear. You will then notice that, in the traditional style, due to the fact that its harmonic and contrapuntal combinations are very familiar to you, it is possible to compose with some assurance of satisfying results. The same is true of the modern style within the limits of your experience. But when there is question of something new and never heard before, your inward ear is of no use whatever, because there has been no previous experience and consequently you cannot rely on your judgment until the external ear comes to your assistance.

Something similar happens when we read silently a musical score. If it is written in the classical style, we can imagine its aural effect with perfect accuracy. But, if it belongs to an unknown work, who can guarantee that the inward ear will apprehend the strange music?

In conclusion, when anyone comes to trouble you with the well known fallacy, turn the argument against him by saying: "My dear Sir, if the piano could teach composition, we should have to call that man a cheat — and not only an ignoramus — who tried to pass off as his own what are really the creations of the instrument; but if as Schumann said: 'A mute CANNOT teach one to speak,' then *Quare conturbas me?* Why do you trouble me?"

Note: Schumann himself composed at the piano. When Clara, his wife, a famous pianist, was about to leave for Copenhagen in March, 1842, Robert addressed her in these words in his Diary: "The separation has once again brought home to me my strange and difficult position. Must I sacrifice my talent in order to act as your escort in your travels? And must you neglect yours because I am chained to the Zeitschrift and THE PIANO?"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Schumann" by Victor Basch

(Translated by Paul L. Callens, S.J.)

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#### A. P. Bragers

(Continued from Page 170)

1678 Credo (More Ambrosiano)

#### Masses

- 1249 Missa Reginae Pacis (2 Vcs.)
- 1299 Missa Reginae Pacis (STB Vcs.)
- 1500 Missa Reginae Pacis (SATB Vcs.)
- 1702 Missa in hon. Ss. Cordis Jesu (3 Eq. Vcs.)
- 1789 Missa in hon. Ss. Cordis Jesu (SATB Vcs.)
- 1826 Missa in hon. Ss. Cordis Jesu (2 Eq. Vcs.)

#### English Hymns and Choruses

- 1316 Mary's Lullaby (Med. Vc. solo)
- 1352 Easter Joy (2 Eq. Vcs.)
- 1804 To St. Francis of Assisi (Med. Vc. Solo)
- 2017 Holy Mary (Unison)
- 2018 O Christ Whose Glory Fills the Heavens (Unison)

#### Organ

- 1444 Christus Vincit

#### Hymnal

- 1864 Monastery Hymnal
- 1800 Pius X Hymnal (contains chant accompaniments, numerous arrangements and several compositions by Mr. Bragers.)

#### Other Publishers' Items

- Carl Fischer: A Short Treatise on Gregorian Accompaniment
- Catholic Education Press: Hymnal Accompaniments
- Catholic Education Press: The Forty Hours Manual



## MICHAEL L. NEMMERS, A CENTENNIAL APPRECIATION

by Erwin Esser Nemmers, Ph.D.

This is the centennial of the birth of MICHAEL LUDWIG NEMMERS, born August 30, 1855 at St. Donatus, Iowa, near the Mississippi. The writer is his grandson and the particular value of these observations lies in the personal knowledge on which they are based.

### *The Man*

Michael Nemmers is America's pioneer, native-born composer of Catholic Church music. From the objective viewpoint of twenty-five years after his death, November 24, 1929, a survey can undertake an evaluation of what his place is likely to be in the history of our art in the centuries to come. First, some data on his life assist in understanding his work. From 1871 to 1875 he studied at the Catholic Normal School at St. Francis, Wisconsin, under Singenberger and a distinguished faculty who were a cultural island in the turmoil of Western development. Much remains to be recorded in centralized form of the many alumni of this institution who achieved distinction in various fields. The record is similar to that of the Litchfield School in the history of legal development in America.

Michael Nemmers was not limited to church music in its various aspects as composer, teacher, choirmaster and publisher, but worked extensively in secular music, particularly in choral and orchestral conducting. His daughter, ADELINA, went on to four years of concert studies of the piano under THEODORE LESCHETIZKY in Vienna, but died prematurely in 1920 shortly after her return. These facts are important to an understanding of the depth from which the simplicity of the Nemmers' compositions stems. Countless choirmasters have gone through a cycle of almost a life-time before realizing the self-deception involved in failing to distinguish between simplicity founded in depth and simplicity which is merely technically simple. Much of J. S. Bach's work has

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Mr. E. Nemmers is a member of the faculty of the University of Wisconsin.



Michael L. Nemmers

had a similar experience, particularly the smaller piano works.

More detailed biographical data on Michael L. Nemmers appears in the September, 1942 issue of *The Catholic Choirmaster*. Only what is necessary to the present purpose is set out here.

### *His Work*

Art is living consistent with one's times. The hall-mark of great art is its universality, its timelessness. Right here is the basic conflict—how can one successfully *live* in the *provincial* limits of his own time and yet simultaneously *live* in the *stream of history* so that *succeeding* generations will be as much at home as one's own generation. Enough time has elapsed since his compositions first appeared to begin applying the test. The use of his compositions is increasing steadily each year. Some have already seen more than 30 printings. Each succeeding printing is larger than the one before. Recently copies of the original printing of his first composition, "St. Michael Mass," published in 1893, came to our attention where they

had been continuously used more than sixty years as part of a repertoire — not a starvation diet. The copies present an interesting sidelight on pioneer days — advertising space on the covers was sold to wine companies, railroads, business colleges and a variety of enterprises!

The dedication of Michael Nemmers was *to* the simple and *for* the exigencies of the untrained. Self-deceptively it is sometimes forgotten that each generation goes through many of the same problems that faced the preceding generations. To illustrate, the writer has a vivid recollection of “grandpa” Nemmers at the organ, playing the left hand of the score with his feet, and the right hand with his left hand so his right hand was free to direct the choir. Certainly many places today could use this answer to the problem of one person serving as organist-choirmaster.

The details of how Michael Nemmers composed are certainly of interest. He sought three goals: popularity, simplicity and liturgical satisfaction. Each of these can be misunderstood and it is the misunderstanding of them to which lesser composers can attribute their failures. Popularity, correctly understood, stems from *populus*. Writing *for* the people is not a process of condescension or “baiting the hook.” It is the problem of distinguishing sentiment from sentimentality.

Simplicity can be misunderstood. It is not free and easy carelessness. The writer recollects that at the peak of his productivity, Michael Nemmers wrote no more than two masses a year. And this was working *part* of almost every day of the year. The product was only eight or twelve finished pages in each case! Sitting with a stub of a pencil, humming *each* part through, making a change here and there, taking each new section to choir rehearsal for testing, watching the receptivity and reaction of the choir members, their objections, returning to the task of revision. These were the processes the writer observed. Small wonder that the Nemmers choir drew the best voices from all over the city without regard to parish lines. They were part of a process of composition and they knew it. Seldom was the same Mass sung twice in a year and (as will appear below) seldom was the same Mass sung twice in the same way even after it was finished.

The liturgical standard is the one subject to the least misunderstanding — and the easiest to satis-

fy once it is understood. The best evidence of this is the many compositions which qualify for the White List, but die an early death. The difficulty with the liturgical standard is that its observance *simultaneously* with the other objectives increases the complexity of the problem.

An interesting sidelight of all this is the recognition accorded Michael Nemmers by such distinguished composers as REV. L. A. DOBBELSTEEN. Late in his career, Father Dobbelsteen undertook the composition of works for 1, 2, 3 or 4 voices in appreciation of the validity of the artistic objective of Michael Nemmers. Similarly, REV. M. J. VANDEN ELSEN and JOHN FARNSWORTH.

#### *His Compositions — an Analysis*

There is no doubt that Michael Nemmers is *the* pioneer of the “optional” voice development of choral music. From time to time in the history of music optional arrangements had appeared more as a curiosity than as a clearly marked channel.

Technically it is no great trick to write music for 1, 2 or 3 voices or for 1, 2 or 4 voices by careful attention to harmonic distribution of the voices. It takes skill to develop interesting and independent voice leading under these limitations, however. But to write for 1, 2, 3 or 4 voices greatly increases the problem: it involves a combination of 3-voiced writing at its best, which is counterpoint, with 4-voiced writing which is a rather separately recognized body of knowledge called harmony. It is interesting that many of the earlier masses of Michael Nemmers (“St. Barbara,” “Juvenile,” “Easy Mass for Children,” etc.) and of FATHER DOBBELSTEEN (“Holy Childhood,” “Mother Cabrini,” “Christ the King”) take only the first step (1, 2 or 3 and 1, 2 or 4 voices). Only after developing this skill was the more advanced step undertaken. The significance of the advance can be vividly realized by considering the *Pius X Hymnal*, an excellent work which makes advances over other hymnals in its 1-, 2- or 4-voiced arrangement. Consider the problem of making this hymnal available for three-voiced singing from the *same* score.

The technical problems must not obscure the artistic development. Optional writing seeks mu-

(Continued on Page 200)

# NAMES · PEOPLE · DOINGS

## ST. MICHAEL'S, TORONTO, RECEIVES PONTICAL STATUS

*St. Michael's, Toronto, Receives Pontifical Status*

St. Michael's Boy Choir School, Toronto, Canada, founded by MONSIGNOR JOHN E. RONAN, has become affiliated with the Pontifical School of Sacred Music in Rome and given power to grant degrees. The announcement of this affiliation was made at a jubilee concert, tendered by Msgr. Ronan's choir to JAMES CARDINAL MCGUIGAN, Archbishop of Toronto, on the 25th anniversary of his consecration. His Eminence said: "It is a wonderful recognition of a school begun only a few years ago. The school has already become famous and owes its life and sustenance to Msgr. Ronan."

(For a full story on the founding of St. Michael's School, see CAECILIA May - June, 1951.)

The twelfth summer session on Church Music at St. Michael's Cathedral Boy Choir School ran from July 4th to July 29th this year. As usual, the courses offered included Gregorian Chant, Gregorian Chant Conducting, Solfeggio, Accompaniment, Polyphony, Boy Choir Training, Harmony, Instruction in Pianoforte, Organ, Voice and Liturgy.

## SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS FOR CATHOLIC MUSIC TO ISSUE PROCEEDINGS

The report of the proceedings which took place at the Second International Congress for Catholic Church Music in Vienna, October 4th to 10th, 1954, will be published this summer. Among the articles to appear in the proceedings are:

The Breve of Pope Pius XII to the Congress.

A Complete Listing of the Program and Details of the Performances.

All the reports together with the discussions that followed and the voting on each.

The talks given at all the Conferences.

The list of people who participated (Individual participants and choirs).

The catalogues of exhibitions.

Numerous examples of compositions and facsimilies.

Approximately 400 pages. Paper Cover. \$7.50 — If ordered before August 1st, 1955, price is \$6.00. Bound in half cloth the price is \$1.00 more.

Inquiries and orders may be transmitted to the Kongressburo, Vienna I, Singerstrasse 26/III.

## PUERI CANTORES COMING TO THE U. S. A.

MONSIGNOR FERNAND MAILLET and a group of the Little Singers of the Wooden Cross will make an American tour this fall. These young singers under Monsignor Maillet's direction have sung all over Europe and the British Isles and in the past have appeared in the United States. The reviews which they have received have been most favorable. Already U. S. A. bookings are filling up for the period during which they will be in this country. Interested people should contact the New York office of the International Federation of Little Singers, for further information regarding the possibility of booking this expert group of boy choir singers. The address is 119 West 57th Street, New York, 19.

## DOM MOCQUEREAU FELLOWSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCED

The Gregorian Institute of America announced that its first annual Dom Mocquereau Memorial Fellowship for study at the Gregorian Institute of Paris will be given to MR. GERALD PHILLIPS of Wolcott, Connecticut in the academic year, 1955—1956.

The Fellowship provides one year of study at the Sorbonne and at the Gregorian Institute of Paris, official Gregorian chant teaching center for the Benedictine Abbey of Solesmes, France. The award is valued at \$1500.00 and covers the expenses of travel to and from Europe, tuition and living expenses during the school year.

Mr. Phillips is an alumnus of the University of Connecticut, the Gregorian Institute of America and the University of Chicago. He holds the bachelor's degree in church music from the Gregorian Institute and a Master of Arts degree in music from the University of Chicago. He was glee club director for the University of Connecticut in 1949 and 1950, organist and choirmaster for the University of Chicago in 1952-54 where he was also harpsichordist with the college orchestra. He attended the University of Chicago on full scholarship and later became a teaching assistant at that school. At present Mr. Phillips is organist at Sacred Heart Church, Roslindale, Massachusetts, and also organist and choirmaster at St. Pius X Church, Milton, Massachusetts.

Mr. Phillips wrote extensively on "The Ordinary of the Roman Mass" as a thesis at the University of Chicago, a paper which was accepted by the graduate school of the university in 1954.

Mr. Phillips' studies in Paris will include advanced study and research under the French masters of the Solesmes method of Gregorian chant. The Dom Mocquereau Fellowship is planned as an annual grant of the Gregorian Institute of America.

## C. ALEXANDER PELOQUIN TO BOSTON COLLEGE POST

MR. C. ALEXANDER PELOQUIN, organist and choir director of the Cathedral in Providence, Rhode Island (see Laborers in the Vineyard, CAECILIA, March-April, 1955) has been named director of music at Boston College. Mr. Peloquin will assume his duties in September, and will continue with some portion of his work in Providence. His new duties at Boston College include choral conducting, coaching of instrumental groups, and directing the college band.

Well known in the diocese of Providence as conductor and teacher, Mr. Peloquin has distinguished himself as a composer and arranger. His radio and television Chorale has broadcast a number of programs on national networks. He has been on the staff of the Gregorian School of Music in Providence since its opening. This fall his recently organized Peloquin Chorale will present a "History of French Music in Song."



*Dubuque, Iowa*

More than fifty midwestern parish musicians and choir directors attended the 1955 Loras Institute of Liturgical Music held June 6—11 at Loras College. The group is seen in the above picture in front of North Hall on the college campus, the building in which the institute sessions were held. Included in the picture are (third from left, front row) RALPH V. JUSKO, nationally known liturgical music specialist who offered courses in choir techniques and voice training; REV. ALBERT CARMAN, chairman of Loras College's music department and institute director; REV. CLETUS MADSEN, chairman of fine arts department of St. Ambrose College, Davenport, Iowa, and (in robe) the REV. IRVIN UDU-LUTSCH, O.F.M. CAP. of St. Lawrence College, Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin, who taught classes in Gregorian chant.



*Lincoln, Nebraska*

Under the direction of REV. ZIGMUND S. RYDZ, the newly formed Pueri Cantores of Lincoln presented a spring concert on May 26th in the Saratoga School Auditorium. The group is shown above with the director at the extreme right.

### LAYMAN APPOINTED TO MUSIC COMMISSION

*Chicago, Illinois*

HIS EMINENCE SAMUEL CARDINAL STRITCH has recently appointed HARRY J. STEPHENS, organist and choirmaster for the past thirty-two years at Visitation Church, to be a member of the Archdiocesan Commission on Sacred Music. Visitation Choir, one of the outstanding liturgical choirs of the archdiocese, on Thanksgiving Day will be host to Monsignor Maillet and his Little Singers of Paris at a Solemn Mass, during which the Little Singers will render the Ordinary parts. On the following evening the Little Singers will present a concert in the parish auditorium.

On St. Cecelia's Day, Visitation and fifty other boy choirs will join the Little Singers in singing at a Pontifical Mass to be celebrated by His Eminence Cardinal Stritch, at Holy Name Cathedral.

### MONSIGNOR METER ELECTED TO NEW POST

*Chicago, Illinois*

MONSIGNOR CHARLES N. METER, director of the Cathedral Choristers of Chicago and president of the American Federation of the International Federation of the Little Singers was elected Vice-President of the International Federation of the Little Singers at the annual general assembly held recently in Paris. Monsignor Meter will assume the duties of his new office when the revised statutes of the International Federation receive the approval of the Holy See. Also elected Vice-Presidents of the International group were MONSIGNOR ROMITA of Italy and FATHER PRIETO of Spain.

### CHORAL MUSIC COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

*Drexel Competition of Choral Music Announced*

The annual competition for composers of choral music is being conducted by the Beta Chapter of Pi Mu Epsilon at Drexel Institute of Technology, Philadelphia, 4, Pennsylvania. The purpose of the contest is to encourage the composers and publishers to produce new works suitable to the talents of the average college choral group. A copy of the competition rules may be obtained by writing to the Drexel Competition for Composers of Choral Music at Drexel Institute of Technology.

### REQUIESCAT IN PACE

REV. FRANCIS A. MISSIA, professor of Church Music at St. Paul Seminary for nearly half a century, died this past May from injuries sustained in an automobile accident. Born in Mota, Austria, in 1884, he went to St. Paul Seminary in 1903 and was ordained there in 1908. He was a nephew of JAMES CARDINAL MISSIA, Archbishop of Gorizia, at the foot of the Italian Alps, who died in 1900. ARCHBISHOP JOHN GREGORY MURRAY of St. Paul officiated at Father Missia's Requiem, and the sermon was preached by BISHOP FRANCIS J. SCHENK of Crookston, Minnesota. The complete text of the Bishop Schenk's eulogy for Father Missia will appear in the next issue of CAECILIA.

### INDIANAPOLIS ARCHDIOCESAN MUSIC DIRECTOR RESIGNS

ELMER ANDREW STEFFEN, director of music for the Indianapolis Catholic Archdiocese since 1937 and leader in Indianapolis music life for many years, recently resigned from the post of Archdiocesan Director of Music.

Composer-conductor-soloist, Mr. Steffen will continue as choirmaster at Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral where he organized and directs the Schola Cantorum. A Knight of the Order of St. Gregory, Mr. Steffen has given much over the years to the restoration of Gregorian Chant and the promotion of liturgically correct music. His "Missa Eucharistica" and "Ecce Sacerdos" together with numerous devotional motets and art songs have been published.

Apart from being director of Archdiocesan Music, Mr. Steffen has been Archdiocesan Chairman of the Auxiliary Committee to the Roman Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music; secretary of the Society of St. Gregory and member of the advisory Board of the Gregorian Institute of America.

A strong supporter of secular musical activities, Mr. Steffen was co-founder with DR. FABIEN SEVITZKY of the Indianapolis Symphonic Choir and served many years as its conductor. He was co-founder with PERCIVAL OWEN of the Mendelssohn Choir, predecessor of the symphonic group.

### M. L. Nemmers

*(Continued from Page 197)*

sic such that when it is sung in one voice arrangement it sounds as well, *presents the same unity of thought*, as when sung by another voice combination. When the music "sounds better" in one combination than in another, the objective has not been achieved. This is the nub of the dispute recently appearing in *The Caecilia* between FATHER ROSSINI and FATHER GUENTNER on the subject whether a *fourth* voice can be added to a Palestrina three-voiced composition and yet have artistic validity. Each of these men had some validity in his argument once the smoke of battle has been cleared away. Fr. Rossini is right when he says that a fourth voice *can* be validly added. Fr. Guentner is right when he realizes that the fourth voice must be *integrated* into the composition and this inevitably means some considerable adjustment in the original three voices to maintain proper balance, etc., in short to preserve unity.

This has been a short presentation — but with the hope of eliciting new insights. Let us hope the difference is recognized between what has been described and the problem-solving compositions of the early Netherlanders.

Ed. Note: *Fr. Francis Brunner of the CAECILIA Staff will review in our next issue a group of the latest church music compositions recently published by The M. L. Nemmers Music Company.*

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