

Ripley Dorr) with their warmth and richness and perfect blending quality. But the biggest surprise is in the "men's" section. It is hard to realize that these fine tenors and basses are actually high school boys, adolescents, so mature is their tone, and so vibrant and sonorous their quality.

In his interpretation of the program Msgr. Schmitt reveals his vast understanding of the whole range of choral literature. In the polyphony we hear the fascinating interplay of independent voices. In the bright numbers there are unanimity, crispness of attack, and vitality of rhythm, and in every kind of music, a sympathetic appreciation of the intent of the composer.

Altogether, this new record is a "must" for every lover of fine choral music. And, I might add, stereo offers no advantages over the monophonic recording.

*William Ripley Dorr*

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## DEMONSTRATION ENGLISH MASS

Dennis Fitzpatrick

\$4.98

In an early policy statement on reviews, *Caecilia* averred that it would be more interested in praising the good than panning the bad. This record is under review, therefore, only because there has been a not inconsiderable propaganda backing its distribution. Its own Madison Avenue broadside assures us that it is in the hands of every American bishop. This reviewer has not been able to listen to the entire record at one sitting; but he heard a live demonstration of the whole kit and kaboodle at a clinic last June. He does not quarrel as much with the structural experiments of public worship as he does with almost everything of a textual and musical nature. The composer eschews the Gregorian settings of the simple responses in favor of what is erroneously billed as "American Chant." It is, of course, neither American nor chant. This writer is shackled with not a few lacunae in his musical education, but he is by this time not so dull as not to recognize bad tonal relationships when he hears them. The responsorial elements of Mr. Fitzpatrick's effort are ludicrous, no matter how well meant, no matter the avowed years of preparation.

The most successful portion of the demonstration musically, is the adaptation of the Canon of the Mass to the formula of the *Exultet*. The figured Communion motet, based on the *O Filii*, is unimportant. To repeat, one cannot reasonably object to liturgical experimentation at this point, though he should prefer that it be done on a somewhat more modest scale. Surely Mr. Fitzpatrick must be greatly embarrassed by the blurb on the record-jacket which declares him to be the greatest gift to the Christian world since St. Ambrose.

Nonetheless, critics of the record would do well to note carefully that it does portray a *High Mass*, though not of great or even good musical content.\*

Trouble is, one of the syndicated columnists for the Catholic press, Donald McDonald, who begins by acknowledging his ignorance of matters liturgical and musical, has urged every Catholic son and daughter in the country to buy the record. When Father Schuler challenged his competence in the *Bulletin* of St. Paul, the record received a second national recommendation from the aforesaid columnist. I remember Mr. McDonald as a respected liberal editor of the *Davenport Messenger*. How his liberalism fares as an instructor of journalism at Marquette University would be a little difficult to guess. But, in this instance, like a good many Catholic liberals these days, he turns purple when anyone dares to disagree with him in a field entirely beyond his own competence. I do not mind saying here that the whole foolish matter of liberal versus conservative, as reported by the press in Council matters, galls this editor beyond expression. A "conservative" columnist has gone so far as to say that, at the council, the two tabs must be reversed. That is, that the political conservative is an ecclesiastical liberal because he desires a hide-bound adherence to the most ancient tradition; and that the political liberal is an ecclesiastical conservative because he holds that the ancient tradition was not necessarily the best. How silly can you get? I should not mind if the current liturgical "liberals" appealed to their own imaginations, rather than the tenuous and very often inaccurately stated matter of ancient tradition.

Further, I have excellent reason to state that I know of no more monolithic, and therefore basically illeberal, press than the

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\* On the structural side, I would only mention the boy-scout hand-shake which replaces the *Pax*, and which the promoters wish to be fairly noisy. It is no reflection on the reverential, if let's-play-house, attitude of the ministers and participants of the dry-run I observed to state that the lady with whom I shook hands accused me of trying to steal her bracelet.

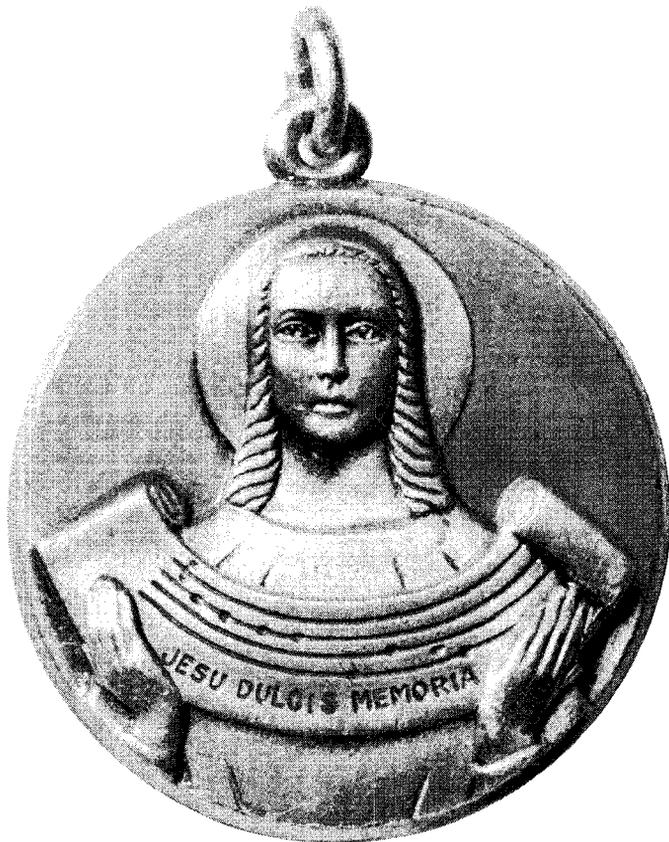
Catholic press at this moment. William Randolph Hearst would stand aghast, and Chesterton and Heywood Broun would laugh aloud. Some months ago, Evelyn Waugh made bold to register some disagreement with the party line, and he had to go to Mr. Buckley's *National Review* for publication. Waugh's stated case was no paragon of strength, but it was enough to cause almost everyone, from the *Commonweal* boys on down, to mount to the great crusade. Do not for a moment misunderstand me. I bow in my liberalism to no one, even though it was acquired at that "quaint" product of the Council of Trent, the seminary. (I am quite sure that I am the only American priest ever to have been elected president of a *bona fide* union local.) I can scarcely have needed that fresh air which is engendering the ecumenical spirit; I got it years ago, when I was appointed curate to Father Flanagan at Boys Town. In what other "Catholic" institution will you find a Protestant chapel and a salaried Protestant chaplain? I am not against the "reforms" contained in the Council's Schema on the Church. There is not much in it that we were not taught by Father John Gruden a quarter of a century ago. I am not against liturgical reform or the introduction of the vernacular into public worship. What educator could be? But I must decry to such small audience as I have the mouthings of charlatans who pass as Evangelists.

And so when Donald McDonald pronounces upon the value of this particular record—with as much pomposity as ever emanated from the Curia and with no authority at all—when he assures the readers of the Catholic Press that this is the thing to expect, I must say that I don't really expect it. Not any more than I expect Barry Goldwater. There simply must be a larger treasury of Christian common sense. And, if it should be lost for a while, it will emerge again when the shallows of misguided enthusiasms have abated. One need have no fear that the human heart and that mind which, as the psalmist says, is signed with the light of God's own countenance, will not in the end turn, as flowers do to the sun, to the highest beauty it can reach.

*Francis Schmitt*

# CAECILIA

*A Review of Catholic Church Music*



## A LETTER TO HANS KÜNG

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