

A L U M N I D A Y P R O G R A M

James Memorial Chapel

May 12, 1952

3:30 p. m.

Sinfonia to "We Thank Thee God" Bach

In spite of its slightly misleading title, the cantata "Wir Danken Dir, Gott" is a secular cantata which Bach wrote for use in connection with an election of town councillors. This is an instance of Bach's borrowing from himself, this music having first occurred in the third Partita for solo violin. As the introduction to this cantata, Bach re-scored this movement for full orchestra and organ, from which Harvey Grace has made this organ transcription.

Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue Healey Willan

Healey Willan has written much fine music for the organ, but the Introduction, Passacaglia and Fugue surely stands out as the greatest. Beneath its dramatic forcefulness and emotional intensity (neither characteristic to be eschewed) one finds scholarly writing in abundance. Following the introduction, the passacaglia theme is stated and then developed and ornamented for eighteen variations. The fugue, which follows culminates in the nineteenth and final variation of the passacaglia theme in a page of music marked nobilmente. Perhaps this word best describes the whole of this composition.

Donald McDonald

Scherzo, Opus 2 Maurice Duruflé

*Hymn Canon on "Aughton" Seth Bingham

On this tune the composer has written three verses:

1. soprano canon 4th above tenor
2. alto (pedal) canon octave below soprano
3. bass canon in augmentation

* First New York Performance

Dieu Parmi Nous (from La Nativité du Seigneur) . Olivier Messiaen

This very descriptive work, "God Among Us" portrays the descent of Christ upon the earth. Throughout, the composer uses a constantly recurring pedal motif, always in downward motion.

Messiaen notates this text: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth...." (John 1:14)

Marilyn Mason

Organ Duets played by C. G. and C. D.

Donald McDonald, candidate for the Master of Sacred Music degree this month, is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music where he received the Alumni Award, presented to the outstanding student, in 1949. Mr. McDonald has been appointed instructor at Westminster Choir College, and has recently been appointed organist and choirmaster at West End Collegiate Church in New York City.

Marilyn Mason, candidate for the Doctor of Sacred Music degree, is on leave of absence from the faculty at the University of Michigan. Along with her work at Union Seminary she has played several recitals in various parts of the country. This summer she will be on the faculty at Columbia University.